

University Life

First-Gen+ Center

“Serving the *first-generation community* at Mason, including students who are first-gen **and** *undocumented*, have *refugee* status, and those who have families with *limited income*.”

Amber Holton-Thomas, Ph.D. (she/her/ella)
Director, First-Gen+ Center
ahampto@gmu.edu



History of First-Gen+ Center

1

Student Transition Empowerment Program (STEP) began in **1990** as the Summer Transition Program (STP)

STEP became a part of University Life in **2005** within the Office of Diversity Programs and Services (ODPS)

2

What was ODPS became the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education (ODIME).

ODIME merged with LGBTQ+ Resources in **2017**, leading to the beginnings of the Student Access and Equity (SAE) area

3

SAE grew to include STEP, a First-Gen Living Learning Community (partnered with Housing and Residence Life), a First-Gen Peer Mentoring Program, and in **2019** included undocumented student services and UndocuAlly Training.

In **2021**, the decision was made to launch a new department.

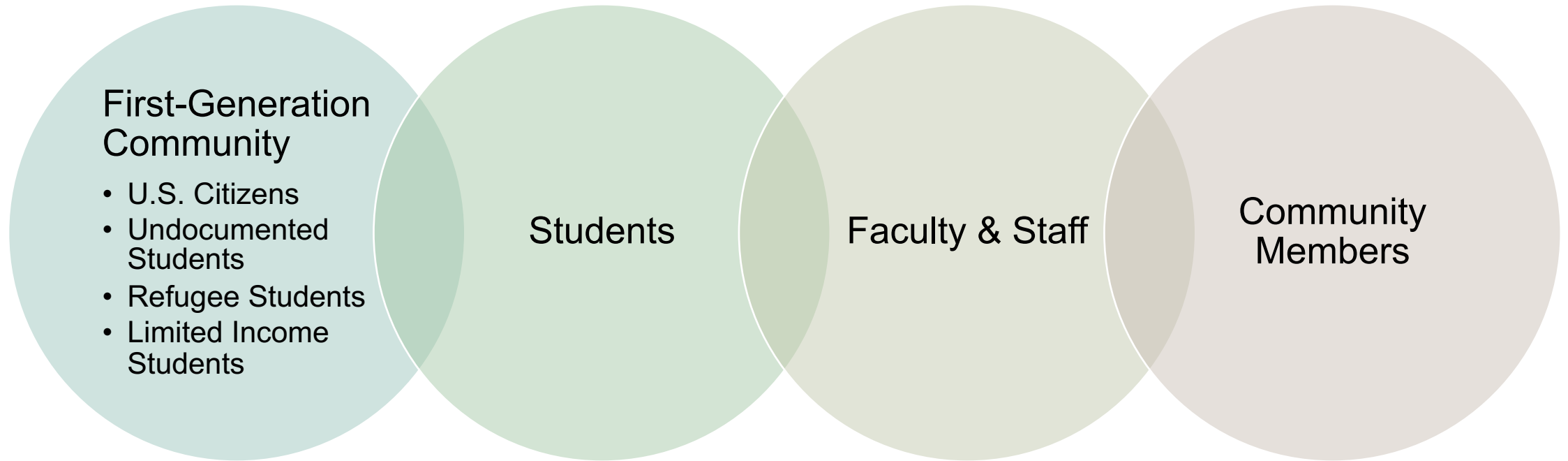
The term ***first-generation college student*** applies to those students whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) either:

- Did not receive or complete any level of post-secondary education
- Enrolled at or earned a two-year degree from a community college
- Earned any level of post-secondary education outside the United States.

Note: Mason does not currently gather data on graduate students or faculty and staff. However, there are active communities who gather from these groups!

Who are first-gen students?

Who we serve



Our Work

The First-Gen+ Center serves as an accessible starting point for students (and their families) to understand and connect with relevant university resources. The team prioritizes data to better understand the student experience and proactively works toward improving the campus to be “first-gen ready” and “undocufriendly” throughout each university area. **We work to enhance the collegiate experience through services, programs, policy awareness, and educating the campus community.**

Staff on the team collaborate across campus and beyond, in order to streamline resources and supports for students, including participating at **local** and **national** levels to share practical and scholarly content as a catalyst for institutions to broaden their work.

Fall

- Early admit STEP recruitment
- First-Gen Week
- First-Gen Peer Mentoring

Spring

- STEP application opens
- First-Gen Graduation
- STEP Graduation

Summer

- STEP Summer (6-week program)

Programs & Initiatives

Task Forces

- First-Generation Student Task Force (co-led with EIP and College of Science)
- Undocumented Student Task Force

Policy and Data

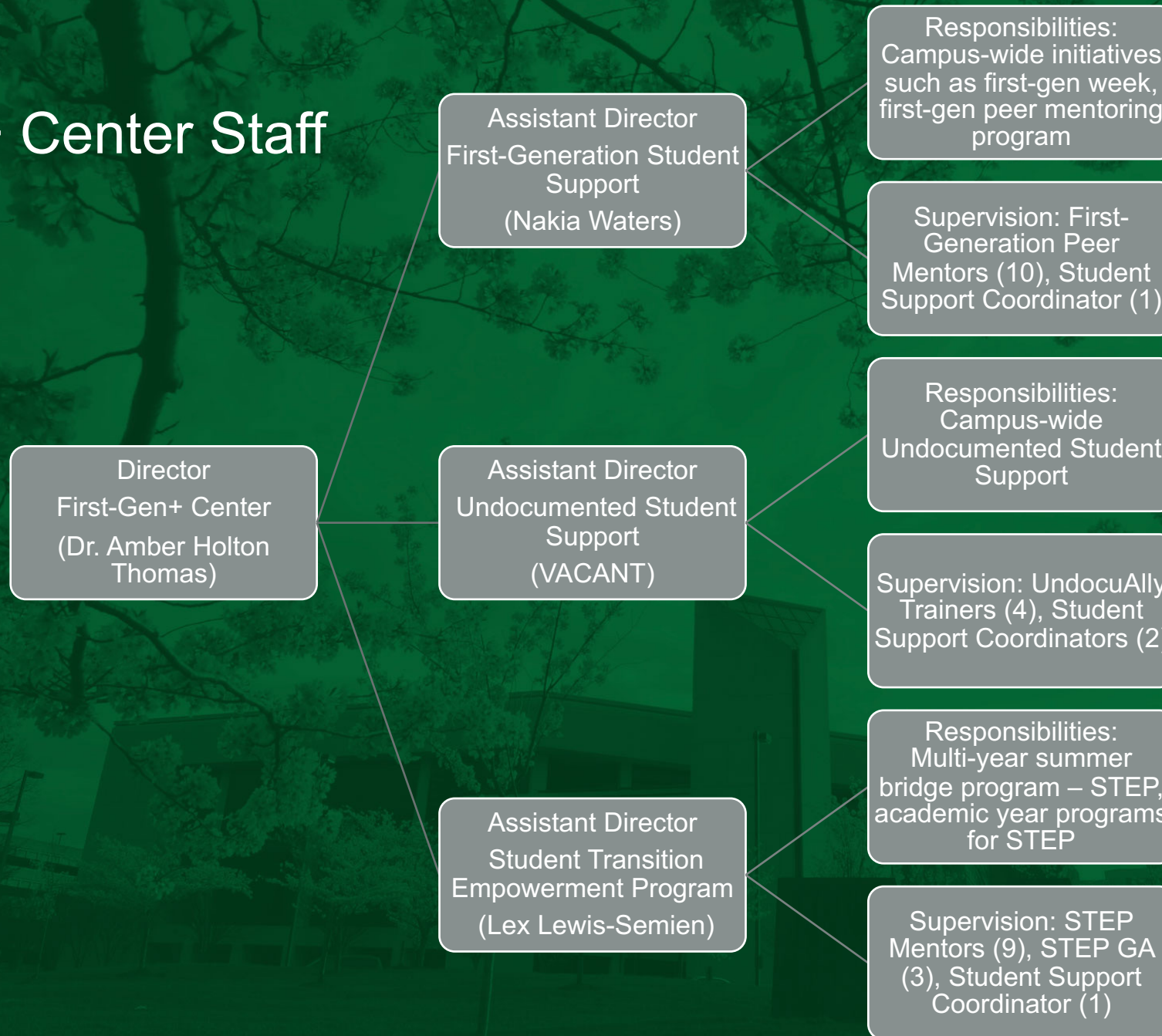
- STEP Retention
- Federal and State Policy for Undocumented Students

Training

- UndocuAlly Training (3 sessions offered each Fall and Spring)

Programs & Initiatives

First-Gen+ Center Staff



Stay Connected!

Social Media: @FGPCMason

Visit: SUB I, Suite 2400

Contact: firstgen@gmu.edu

Learn More: FIRSTGEN.GMU.EDU