STEP is an initiative in the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education (ODIME) created to enhance the recruitment, engagement and retention of first generation students accepted to George Mason University. Our mission is to empower students through academic skills, access to resources, community building, self-discovery, and the global citizenship needed to compete in today’s college environment and beyond.

- **Who?** First-generation college students who will be attending George Mason in Fall 2016 and who are Virginia Residents. First generation students are those students whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s): (1) did not receive or complete any level of post-secondary education, (2) enrolled at or earned a two-year degree from a community college, and/or (3) earned any level of post-secondary education outside the United States. These students may have older siblings who have completed a degree. STEP is for first-time, first-year students only.

- **What?** STEP has two key components—STEP Summer and STEP Academic Year. **STEP Summer** is a six week residential program from late June to early August (including weekends) for selected, first-year George Mason University students. STEP students earn six credits (two classes), have exposure to living on campus, and build a support network of peers, faculty, and staff prior to the start of their freshman school year. STEP students who successfully transition from the summer portion continue on as **STEP Scholars**. STEP Scholars take UNIV 100 together in the fall and participate in ongoing support throughout their time at Mason.

- **Where?** STEP is held on Mason’s Fairfax campus. Students live in Mason housing with an assigned STEP roommate during the duration of the six weeks, including weekends.

- **Why?** Research and experience shows that first generation students excel in college when provided opportunities to acclimate to the new college culture, complete courses, build meaningful connections, and access resources to promote their college success. STEP is designed to specifically meet the needs of first generation students and/or students belonging to historically underrepresented populations entering George Mason University.

- **When?** The 2016 Student Application can be found online at [step.gmu.edu](http://step.gmu.edu). New student orientation for STEP students is on **Thursday, June 23, 2016** and **Friday, June 24, 2016**. The STEP summer portion runs from **late June to early August**. Applications are being accepted online now. **The priority deadline is Friday, April 15th, and the final deadline is Sunday, May 1, 2016 at 11:59pm.** Students who apply by the priority deadline receive priority consideration.

- **How?** There is **NO cost to participate** in STEP. Housing, meals, summer tuition, books, seminars and field trips are all covered for the summer portion for each student admitted to the program.