



# STEPP PROGRAM

Fall 2016 Newsletter

SUPPORTING TRANSITION AND EDUCATION THROUGH PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP



**Fun fact** - In August, we welcomed our 100th first-year student to the STEPP Program! This is an exciting milestone, and we look forward to continuing to greet more students in the future. In this newsletter we will share a few program highlights from the spring and summer and say “thank you” to those who generously contributed to the program’s endowment during the last fiscal year. As we launch a new academic year we remain incredibly thankful for those of you in the STEPP family who provide so many different kinds of encouragement and support to our students and program.

## STEPP Program Highlights

### Thank You for Your Support

We want to take a moment to extend a very sincere thank you to all who contributed funding support during the past fiscal year. Without your generous and ongoing support, we simply would not be able to keep moving forward. Thank you for your dedication to our students and helping us to build an endowment that will enable us to serve future Pirates for years to come. Peter and Rosanna Ciampi, Paul and Dawn Darr, Jimmie and Kathryn Fulcher, Thomas and Sheri Geraghty, Peter and Catherine Guild, Lin and Sarah Hayes, Stuart Hayman, Hannah Jessup, Robert and Kim Jessup, Lex and Kathryn Larson, Tim Morris, the Oak Foundation, the Peter J. Frenkel Foundation, Andrew Scappi, Bryan and Kimberly Sturkey, Edwin and Barbara Tritt, Terry and Ann Windham.

### College Advising Corps Connection

If you are not familiar with the extraordinary work and accomplishments of the College Advising Corps, check them out (<http://advisingcorps.org/>). This group of passionate and talented advisors has recently adopted a commitment that is near to our heart here in STEPP – seeking, encouraging, and supporting high school students with learning differences to consider and apply to college. Over the next several years, we will be exposing their team of over 500 high school advisors across the nation to our transition curriculum, and demonstrating how they can support students to find a college that fits their goals and needs.

### Podcast: LD State of Mind

If you enjoy listening to podcasts, we encourage you to check out *LD State of Mind*, a new podcast envisioned, designed, and managed by students in the STEPP Program and participants of the College STAR initiative. Led by Patrick Young, the podcast features conversations with students, educators, and others interested in different approaches to teaching and learning. The team recorded three episodes last year and has great ideas about new episodes this year. Just go to iTunes and search their podcast selection for *LD State of Mind* or visit <http://students.collegestar.org/> to listen in.



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| <b>October 1, 2016</b> - Family Weekend Tailgate           | <b>February 14, 2017</b> - All Birthdays/ Valentine's Day Celebration |
| <b>October 31, 2016</b> - Halloween Treats and Photo Booth | <b>March 20, 2017</b> - Moustache Monday                              |
| <b>November 16, 2016</b> - Soup Day                        | <b>April 5, 2017</b> - Picnic STEPP-style                             |
| <b>December 6, 2016</b> - Cookies & Cocoa in the Cove      | <b>April 7, 2017 (evening)</b> - Eye-to-Eye Art Show                  |
|  | <b>April 28, 2017</b> - End-of-Year Celebration                       |

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## Analogies

We are often reminded that students in STEPP represent a group of bright and creative thinkers who offer powerful insights that can be beneficial for so many others! For example, from time to time students mention analogies or illustrations that they have developed or that their parents shared with them at a young age. These images helped them understand the challenges that would be associated with having a learning disability, but also empowered them to feel confident that they could meet their goals. We are collecting some of these analogies, connecting them with images or illustrations, and sharing them with young students, their parents, and their teachers in hopes that they can become useful parts of conversations about teaching, learning, and self-advocacy. Emily Bosak provided the analogy below, with a photo submitted by Virginia Payne. Both Emily and Virginia are students at ECU.

*When we are in school, everybody is running a race. During that race, everybody's shoes look exactly the same. Students who learn typically have shoes made out of a light leather material. My shoes look identical to theirs, but are made out of lead. So, naturally the people next to me are going to run faster because their shoes are lighter. Their race is going to be a little bit easier than mine, and my race might take a little longer. I'll still finish the race.*



photo by Virginia Payne

*Other people aren't really going to understand why I'm running the race slower. They don't know what it's like to wear lead shoes - their shoes have always been made of leather. And they especially don't understand because my shoes look exactly the same as theirs. And so, they're just not going to understand, and that's ok.*

*And, I don't understand what the race is like for them either. I've never worn light leather shoes. Mine have always been made of lead. We don't get to pick our shoes. There is nothing wrong with my shoes; they are just made differently - and there is nothing wrong with the shoes of other students because of how they are made. These are simply the shoes we've been given.*

*I need to find happiness with the shoes I have and learning to run my own race. It's all going to be ok.*

## Resources and Tools we Use

Periodically in the STEPP newsletters we like to share resources that we use often or that we think you might find interesting. Take a look at these:

- *The Myth of Average* is a TEDx Talk by Todd Rose about nurturing potential for individuals (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eBmyttcfU4>). If you enjoy this 18-minute talk, you may also like *The End of Average*. In this book Todd Rose further expands on his ideas about how we measure and maximize success in our world today.
- *Understood.org* is a website for parents, students, and teachers that is full of resources related to learning and attention issues.

- *Trello.com* is a web-based tool that helps manage projects. Our team has found this to be a great resource for event planning, tracking projects and tasks that require teams of people, and just keeping us organized.

## Student Spotlight – Carson Butler

Carson Butler, a fourth-year student majoring in Applied Geography, spent the Spring 2016 semester as a participant in a division of the UNC Coastal Studies Institute (<http://coastalstudiesinstitute.org>). The UNC – CSI represents an exciting partnership between several campuses in the UNC system and research and education opportunities along the North Carolina coast. Thanks, Carson, for your passion and commitment to making a positive difference in our community, and for sharing some thoughts (below) about your experience for this newsletter.

*Coastal Research for Undergraduate Students in North Carolina (CRUS-NC) is a semester-long opportunity for students to take courses and conduct research on the coast. I spent this past spring semester in the Outer Banks studying at the Coast Studies Institute located in Wanchese, NC. During my time on the coast I assisted graduate students with research and conducted my own research project. I also took courses that focused on coastal and marine processes, and was able to intern for one of the top surf forecasting companies in the world, Surfline/Wavetrak, Inc. My classmates and I spent our spring break traveling along the NC coast collecting and analyzing data, from measuring beach profiles to taking water samples offshore. It certainly isn't what most college students do over spring break, but it was an unforgettable experience to say the least. Throughout the semester I was fortunate enough to be surrounded by knowledgeable people who were passionate about the coast. This semester meant a lot of things to me, but most importantly it has driven me to pursue my passion for coastal and marine studies. I can't wait to see what the future holds.*



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