



STEPP PROGRAM

Spring 2022 Newsletter SUPPORTING TRANSITION AND EDUCATION THROUGH PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP

Wow, 15 years!

Fifteen years of learning alongside some of the most amazing students imaginable; fifteen years of watching Pirates break stereotypes and rise above national statistics; fifteen years of working daily with a core team of the most creative, passionate, and student-focused people possible; fifteen years of support from funders and thought partners who have guided and supported us along the way; fifteen years of new connections with like-missioned colleagues across our campus, community, state, and nation. The list goes on, and for all of this, we are incredibly thankful.



With an initial cohort of two students, STEPP started small. The vision for a support program for bright and talented students with learning disabilities who aspire to earn a university degree and want to become ECU Pirates began separately in the minds and hearts of Walter and Marie Williams and Sarah Williams (not related). In 2006 Marilyn Sheerer, David Powers, and Marcy Romary connected the dots and started something special. The small planning team sought extensive input from leaders across the ECU campus, public school professionals, students, parents, and available research. Our goal was to design an innovative model for comprehensive student support that began during a student's senior year of high school and extended through graduation from ECU. We were committed to doing so through partnerships, and without charging extra fees or duplicating existing campus services. STEPP was, and still is, an example of ECU living our mission day by day.

For the incredible Pirates who have participated in the program, we hope STEPP has made a meaningful positive impact in your lives. We know you each positively impacted the program! Many of our graduates are still doing so through feedback, updates, and funding support. Some are even reaching back with direct support for current students. For example, STEPP Pirate Alumni are now connecting with current students to offer encouragement and advice about life and work after college. The STEPP Transition Curriculum has been downloaded by tens of thousands of students, families, and schools around the world, and (through the College STAR initiative) we now enjoy partnerships with other programs on campuses across the nation. Looking ahead, the possibilities are exciting! The STEPP family continues to grow, and so many new beginnings are on the horizon for ECU. The new leadership Adam Denney brings to STEPP comes at an ideal time to reinvent ourselves around that same original core mission. Even after the significant challenges of the past couple of years with the COVID pandemic, ECU and the STEPP team are emerging even stronger with new skills and strategies that can only increase our toolkit for student support. **We can't wait to see what the next 15 years bring!**

- Dr. Sara Williams, Executive Director STEPP/OFE

STEPP Website Update: STEPP is excited to unveil our updated "Giving" priorities website. Allowing donors to know exactly where their support has the most impact and how they can give, ensures our mission of supporting student success remains intact for the future of the STEPP Program. Thank you to all of our donors for their continued support! <https://stepp.ecu.edu/give/> If you are interested in discussing any giving options, please contact Adam Denney, Senior Associate Director, at denneya15@ecu.edu or 252-737-2661.

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Congratulations to all of our Spring 2022 Graduates!



ANDREW ALLEN Major: Hospitality Leadership

Next STEPPs: "I will be returning to my hometown of Charlotte, where I have accepted a position with JW Marriott hotel in the uptown area. I plan to work for a few years and then potentially go back to school to get a Certified Hotel Administrator degree."

JACOB CASINGAL Major: Criminal Justice

Next STEPPs: "I will be commissioning into the US Army as a 2nd Lieutenant. I will be working as an infantry officer and will spend the next year at Ft Benning Georgia to train for that job."

SUMMER DOUGHERTY Major: Social Work

Next STEPPs: "My next step after graduation is to move to Washington and hopefully find a job. I do plan on going to graduate school in a year or two after graduation. I'm hoping one day to be working with Veterans and other military families as a social worker."

CAMERON FAULCONER Major: Special Education Adapted Curriculum

Next STEPPs: "I will be graduating with a degree in Special Education. I have not begun the job hunt yet, but when I do my hopes are to be in Wilmington North Carolina."

EMILY GRYGIEL Major: Special Education Adapted Curriculum

Next STEPPs: "My next step after graduation is finding a full-time teaching job (special education) back home in Charlotte, NC."

ALEX LOWE Major: Computer Science

MAXIMILLIAN REICHWALD Major: University Studies

MAX STEIN-SEROUSI Major: Sport Studies

Next STEPPs: "I am going to get a job in either Sports sales or Marketing, have not found a job yet but I have been given a few interviews so hopefully land somewhere soon."

MEGHAN STELLO Major: Social Work

Next STEPPs: "After graduation, I will be furthering my education at ECU MSW Advanced Standing Program, which is a one-year master's program that I will start on May 16, 2022."

OLIVIA SWANSON Major: Family Community Services

Next STEPPs: "I have not solidified my plans after graduation. I hope to secure a job in my field, but I am still navigating where I want to live!"

ABBIE THOMAS Major: Psychology

Next STEPPs: "After Graduation I will be attending Florida State University to obtain a MS in Sport Psychology and working towards obtaining a Certified Mental Performance Consultant status."

Be sure to follow STEPP on our social media platforms to stay up to date on all our events and announcements.



Need to contact STEPP?

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If you would like more information regarding endowments for scholarships, contributions to original endowment, and other contributions you can make to the STEPP Program, please contact ECU's Senior Advancement Officer, Melissa Adamson at adamsonm17@ecu.edu.