

A Resolution to Advocate for the Reformation of the Second-Year Transformational Experience Program (STEP)

McKinzie Harper (for herself, Emily Underation, Annie Greer, Joe Warnimont, Sarah Souders, and Mary Honaker) introduced the following resolution, which was referred to the Academic Affairs Committee and STEP Task Force.

* * *

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government represents all undergraduate students at The Ohio State University, and

Whereas the Second-Year Transformational Experience Program (STEP) was designed by the University in an effort to better the student experience and second-year student success, and

Whereas to accomplish this goal, STEP requires second-year students to live on campus and maintain requirements specified on its website¹ to qualify for a fellowship of up to \$2,000,² and

Whereas the \$2,000 fellowship is used to assist students in completing their STEP Signature Project, which is advised by their assigned STEP faculty cohort leader, and

Whereas STEP utilizes faculty as mentors throughout the cohort experience, who receive a \$5,000 tribute for doing so,³ and

Whereas the STEP Task Force was chartered by the Undergraduate Student Government to review STEP, and ensure that second-year students are maximizing their opportunities and experiences, and

Whereas the STEP Task Force surveyed 115 freshman, 59 alumni, 128 sophomores, 59 faculty members,⁴ and

Whereas the STEP Task Force identified concerns with 3 of the 5 program requirements for participating students (attend required meetings, attend and submit reflection of three professional development co-curricular programs, and complete two-part financial literacy program),⁵ and

¹ <https://step.osu.edu/program-overview/step-participant-requirements/>

² <https://step.osu.edu/program-overview/step-fellowship/>

³ <https://step.osu.edu/faculty-engagement/> (step-faculty-mentor-guide-april-2015), Page 5 of the STEP Task Force Report

⁴ Page 3 of the STEP Task Force Report

⁵ Page 9 of the STEP Task Force Report

39 **Whereas** 30% of the 115 freshman students surveyed were unaware of STEP, which is an
40 alarming figure as current freshman will be required to live on campus for a second year and be
41 given the opportunity to participate,⁶ and
42

43 **Whereas** many professors currently serving as mentors explicitly stated that STEP would benefit
44 from making information on the program more readily available to students,⁷ and
45

46 **Whereas** students and alumni suggested improved organization as a must for future success,
47 with some alumni noting they were unable to receive the fellowship due to financial aid conflicts
48 or co-curricular requirement miscommunications,⁸ and
49

50 **Whereas** the STEP Task Force concluded that the open-ended format of meetings with STEP
51 faculty members likely contributed to disparities among different students' STEP experiences,
52 and
53

54 **Whereas** a survey revealed that only 29% of students maintain relationships with their mentors
55 and that 76% of STEP alumni reported feelings somewhat distant from their cohort,⁹ and
56

57 **Whereas** STEP cohort and mentor pairings are currently chosen with the intent of matching
58 schedules and diverse interests, rather than similar areas of study or involvement on campus,¹⁰
59 and
60

61 **Whereas** a strong relationship with faculty members in similar career fields can accelerate
62 student success through networking and career advising, and
63

64 **Whereas** professional development is a cornerstone of the program, and many involved in STEP
65 feel that it could better demonstrate these skills and concepts through a more defined curriculum,
66 and
67

68 **Whereas** half of alumni surveyed indicated that they were never exposed to any professional
69 development or resume-building experiences through the three co-curricular programs required
70 by STEP,¹¹ and
71

72 **Whereas** STEP students reported dissatisfaction with the required financial literacy
73 programming, noting it was burdensome and stress inducing;¹²
74

75 **Therefore Let It Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government finds STEP to be an
76 incredible opportunity for students, provided that major improvements are made to ensure
77 student success, and
78

⁶ Page 7 of the STEP Task Force Report

⁷ Page 7 of the STEP Task Force Report

⁸ Page 8 of the STEP Task Force Report

⁹ Pages 6 and 8 of the STEP Task Force Report

¹⁰ <https://step.osu.edu/faculty-engagement/>

¹¹ Page 9 of the STEP Task Force Report

¹² Page 9 of the STEP Task Force Report

79 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government believes that the goals,
80 expectations and requirements of STEP must be made clear to coordinators, administrators, and
81 participating students in order to improve transparency, and
82

83 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government encourages STEP to
84 create relevant educational and professional development opportunities for participants to use in
85 the cohort setting and across co-curricular opportunities, and
86

87 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government believes that STEP's
88 financial education requirement should be tailored to student participants of different
89 backgrounds and interests, and
90

91 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government encourages STEP to
92 lower restrictions on the STEP stipend and the STEP Signature Project, and
93

94 **Let It Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government believes the stipend
95 should facilitate growth without reservation, in order to maintain significance in value and
96 flexibility in application, and
97

98 **Let It Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government encourages STEP to
99 re-evaluate cohort and faculty pairing procedures and strategically determine cohorts based on
100 similar interests, career paths, and college goals to forge communities that last beyond the
101 duration of the program, and
102

103 **Let It Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government encourages STEP to
104 improve accountability by introducing the use of a Student Evaluation of Instructor for faculty
105 advisors, and
106

107 **Let It Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government recognizes Samer
108 Abusway, Erin Donnelly, Chase Petrie, Adam Whitehead, Michael Branum, Shelby Powers, and
109 Carly Hooker for their efforts in creating the STEP Task Force Report.
110

111

112

113 Floor Vote: PASSED WITH UNANIMOUS CONSENT

114

115

116

117

118

119

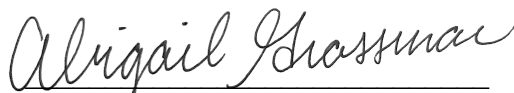
120

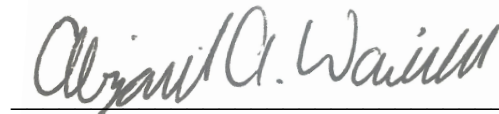
121

122

123

124


Abby Grossman
President


Abby Waidelich
Vice President

Date Adopted: February 24, 2015

Date Terminated: _____