Welcome

Thank you for your interest in Penn State Undergraduate Education (UE)!

Undergraduate Education is composed of fourteen units which are diverse in purpose but united in our shared commitment to supporting the equitable academic success of Penn State undergraduates across the Commonwealth.

Our staff support students through work that ranges from welcoming new students to campus through orientation programs, helping students manage the financial investment a college education represents, to advising and supporting undergraduates along their academic journey, and enriching the learning that happens both in and out of the classroom. This work touches every facet of students’ academic experience at Penn State and impacts their lives long after graduation.

As you explore the Blue Book, you will learn more about each of these areas of work and the offices that lead these efforts. You will also learn about the strategic priorities that span multiple UE offices and unite our collective efforts. One theme you will notice is a commitment to continually improving our programs, processes, and policies. In addition, we partner with other units University-wide to help align offerings, improve access to opportunities, and develop solutions that enhance student success. This commitment is integral to the culture of UE and reflects our dedication to Penn State students. Indeed, UE staff and leadership are determined to advance Penn State’s position as an international leader in undergraduate education.

I hope that after reading this overview of UE, you are inspired by our work. We have the potential to help students succeed inside and outside the classroom, help prepare students for careers, and help them develop skills that are the foundation for a lifetime of success. To Penn State faculty, staff, administrators, parents, and donors, thank you for your partnership in helping us to achieve our mission. To Penn State undergraduates, know that we are here to support you every step of the way on your path to graduation.

Thank you again for taking the time to learn more about Penn State Undergraduate Education.

Jeff Adams
Interim Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education
Our leadership

Jeff Adams
Interim Vice Provost and Dean

Melissa Johnson
Associate Vice Provost and Associate Dean

Alan Rieck
Associate Vice Provost and Associate Dean

Angela Linse
Executive Director of the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence and Associate Dean for Teaching

Maggie Slattery
Director and Assistant Dean for General Education

David Smith
Executive Director for the Division of Undergraduate Studies and Associate Dean for Advising

Our vision

The vision of Undergraduate Education is to ensure equitable outcomes for all Penn State students through effective collaborations, responsive and adaptable practices and policies, and informed decision-making.
Penn State Values

In UE we strive to embody the Penn State Values in all that we do.

**Integrity** – We act with integrity in accordance with the highest academic, professional, and ethical standards

**Respect** – We respect and honor the dignity of each person, embrace civil discourse, and foster a diverse, inclusive, and safe community

**Responsibility** – We act responsibly and hold ourselves accountable for our decisions, actions, and their consequences

**Discovery** – Through advanced research and scholarship, we seek and create new knowledge and understanding, and foster creativity and innovation, for society’s benefit

**Excellence** – We strive for excellence in all endeavors as individuals, an institution, and a leader in higher education and research

**Community** – We work together for the betterment of our University, the communities we serve, and the world

We also strive to uphold the values of:

**Student-Centeredness** – We are committed to student success and seek to enable students to engage actively in their education and achieve their academic goals

**Collaboration** – We believe that working across organizational boundaries creates opportunities and improves outcomes

**Equity** – We believe in the potential of all students and strive to create meaningful opportunities for all students to belong and achieve success

**Innovation** – We believe creativity and opportunity go hand-in-hand and that breakthroughs inherently involve risk

Strategic Goals, 2020–2025

**Goal 1** – Improve success of minoritized and marginalized students thereby having a positive effect on all students

- Develop and utilize data to guide decisions regarding student success
- Lead in efforts to reduce gaps in graduation rates
- Collaborate to improve professional practices that better equip individuals to respond to student needs

**Goal 2** – Foster institution-wide connection and collaboration

- Grow UE collaborations with students
- Grow connections and collaborations within UE
- Pursue UE collaborations with other University entities
- Build meaningful UE connections and collaborations with individuals and community entities

**Goal 3** – Prioritize and model student-centeredness, equity, diversity, inclusion, and transparency in UE work

- Review and revise policies and processes to be student-centered, equitable, and sustainable
- Promote and model a culture of equity and inclusion among UE professionals
- Practice critical reflection that challenges assumptions
The fourteen units that comprise Undergraduate Education (UE) are diverse and wide-ranging. From the offices that help students begin their Penn State education strong, to those that shape and enhance their experience along the way, UE is committed to working together in innovative, creative ways to provide a world-class experience for Penn State students.

**Leadership**
Office of the Vice Provost and Dean

**Academic Support, Advising, and Tutoring**
Division of Undergraduate Studies
Morgan Academic Center
Penn State Learning
Student Success Center

**Course and Program Resources**
Office for General Education

**Engagement**
Student Engagement Network
Undergraduate Research and Fellowships Mentoring

**Faculty Development**
Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence

**Financial Support**
Sokolov-Miller Family Financial and Life Skills Center

**Intercollege Academic Programs**
Center for Penn State Student Entrepreneurship
Reserve Officers’ Training Corps

**Student Transition Programs**
Office for Summer Session
Prior Learning Assessment
Student Orientation and Transition Programs

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**Office of the Vice Provost and Dean**

[undergrad.psu.edu](undergrad.psu.edu)  
[814-863-1864](tel:814-863-1864)

The Office of the Vice Provost and Dean leads, coordinates, and collaborates on a wide range of undergraduate education matters across the University. The office also serves as a source and clearinghouse for institutional research and data pertaining to student success and retention.

Key responsibilities of this office include:
- coordinate the curricular development and review process
- develop and maintain academic policies and procedures
- ensure academic integrity is upheld at Penn State
- facilitate digital and online learning
- provide leadership and programs in support of undergraduate research
- serve the needs of all UE units through the Office of Strategic Communications, Finance and Administration, Information Technology (IT), and Institutional Research

**Highlights**

- Since its founding through 2020–21, Penn State has awarded 934,486 degrees.
- The Undergraduate Exhibition is held every year in April and is an opportunity for students to share their research with the Penn State community and be considered for a variety of awards.
- The Erickson Discovery Grant allows students to receive financial support during the summer to complete a collaborative research project with a faculty mentor.
The Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) is the academic home for students exploring multiple academic programs before committing to a course of study. DUS serves as a leader in academic advising for the University and other institutions across the nation.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

• enroll and advise students who are exploring majors
• teach students about the larger value of higher education by fostering reflection and intentionality in decision-making
• enable students to persist at Penn State even if they change academic direction
• administer student success technologies such as Starfish and ALEKS
• provide guidance for the development of academic policies, procedures, and supporting resources
• set a standard of excellence for academic advising University-wide, as well as for the continuing development of the academic advising profession both at Penn State and at institutions throughout the nation

Highlights

• DUS is the largest enrollment unit for first-year students across the University.
• DUS students take the same classes other Penn State students take.
• Students who start in DUS take the same amount of time to graduate as students who start in a Penn State college.
• Students and families say they chose DUS and Penn State because they feel comfortable knowing that students will have time and support in choosing a major, without losing time toward graduation.
• DUS students declare their majors by the end of their second year, at the same time as all other Penn State students.

The Morgan Academic Center (MAC) provides comprehensive support services to all student-athletes as they fully engage in the University educational experience, earn meaningful degrees, and prepare for a lifetime of impact.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

• provide comprehensive learning services that support all student-athletes in reaching their potential while achieving academic and athletic excellence
• enhance the collegiate experience of all student-athletes through academic and career planning and encouraging participation in both leadership education and community service opportunities
• produce periodic reports to the University Faculty Senate, NCAA, and Big Ten Conference regarding overall student-athlete academic performance

Highlights

• The MAC provides 32,000 square feet of office and academic support space for all staff and student-athletes.
• The MAC includes individual study space, classroom space, fifteen collaborative learning rooms, a One Button Studio, and state-of-the-art technology throughout the building for both tutoring and mentoring sessions.
• Each academic year, the MAC employs and trains over 100 tutors to fulfill over 500 tutor requests made by over 300 student-athletes.
• 207 Penn State student-athletes have been recognized as CoSIDA Academic All-Americans, the fourth highest among all NCAA Division I institutions.
• 6,697 Penn State student-athletes have been Academic All-Big Ten Conference honorees, the second-highest total in the conference since 1991-1992.
• In October 2019, the NCAA released its annual graduation rates report, which revealed that Penn State student-athletes earned a school record Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of 91 percent.
Penn State Learning

Penn State Learning develops and assesses peer-led, undergraduate learning communities in math, statistics, chemistry, physics, writing, languages, and economics through tutoring, workshops, and guided study groups.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

• help all undergraduates at University Park meet or exceed the skill standards required to succeed as scholars in their chosen programs and to thrive as cooperative citizens and peer educators within a global society
• support individual and group tutoring, learning community development, and collaborative projects with academic departments to assess learning and improve academic assistance resources for undergraduates
• develop tutors through for-credit training courses, ongoing observations, peer mentoring, workshops, and staff meetings
• offer research-based, metacognition resources and programs to help students meet the demands of college-level courses

Highlights

• Tutoring and study groups are included in tuition, are on-campus and online, and are instructor approved.
• Penn State Learning employs or hosts approximately 150 undergraduate peer tutors in writing, math, languages, sciences, economics, statistics, and public speaking.
• Tutors conduct upwards of 50,000 tutorials a year with 12,000 students. Tutors conduct approximately 1,000 online tutorials per year.
• Course-embedded tutors lead approximately seventy Guided Study Group sessions per week for twenty high-enrollment General Education courses.

Student Success Center

Launched in fall 2019, the Student Success Center was created to support the University’s access and affordability strategic goals and initiatives. The center oversees retention and degree completion programs and works directly with undergraduate students to help them overcome a wide array of challenges and achieve their academic goals.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

• administer Complete Penn State, a University-wide program that provides support (including financial) and advocacy for students experiencing hardship during their final two semesters
• lead first-generation student success efforts, including University-wide community-building events (e.g., First-generation College Celebration and First-Gen Student Support Summit)
• provide leadership development and strengthening pathways for campus opportunity and resource engagement and research

Highlights

• As of June 2023, the Student Success Center connected over 3,300 students with completion grants, resulting in over $9.7 million in total awards.
• The center supported over 6,000 students in overcoming challenges to completing their degree on time.
• The center helped Penn State become a First-Gen Forward institution with Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education’s (NASPA) Center for First-Generation Student Success.
• In 2023, the center obtained approval to launch the Eta Psi chapter of Alpha Alpha Alpha (Tri-Alpha), the national honor society for first-generation students.
• The center secured over $60,000 in donor support for retention and completion initiatives.
• Complete Penn State was selected by the Student Philanthropy Network as the class gift recipient for 2023.
Office for General Education

gened.psu.edu

The Office for General Education works to inspire transformative student learning through collaboration, innovation, and scholarship. The office supports faculty and staff in the development and delivery of an intentional, excellent, and innovative undergraduate General Education curriculum and provides resources to help students make intentional decisions in crafting their General Education experience.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

• work to position Penn State as a national leader in General Education and make General Education a hallmark of a Penn State education
• manage support programs, such as the General Education Faculty Scholars Program and various initiatives, to assist faculty in the development and delivery of General Education courses and in creating and using innovative and effective pedagogy
• coordinate and collaborate with the Office of Planning and Assessment to assess the General Education curriculum and use assessment data to improve General Education
• support students in selecting transformative educational experiences within General Education

Highlights

• More than 35 percent of each baccalaureate student’s required credits are General Education (45 out of a minimum of 120 credits).
• More than 1,200 Penn State courses have a General Education designation.
• Sixteen General Education Scholars, with representation from each General Education area and the geographic diversity of Penn State campuses, work with the office in support of General Education across twenty undergraduate campuses.

Student Engagement Network

sen.psu.edu

A joint initiative of the Office of Undergraduate Education, Student Affairs, and Outreach and Online Education, the Student Engagement Network (SEN) connects students with curricular and co-curricular opportunities such as research, student organization involvement, community leadership, study abroad, internships, and much more. The SEN advances the power of participation by connecting students with experiences that empower them to make a positive impact as citizens and leaders of the world.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

• collaborate to enhance and enrich experiences with existing college, campus, outreach, and student affairs programs
• create and develop a greater body of scholarship, a mobile application for all seeking engagement opportunities, and a dynamic means for community members to develop opportunities
• increase the number of students and faculty participating in engagement opportunities
• inform engagement experience constituencies of their impact on students and communities

Highlights

• The Engagement App connects all students to thousands of opportunities, experiences, and events across the Penn State system. Faculty and staff can connect with students on the application.
• The Engagement Space in the HUB-Robeson Center provides an interactive physical space in the heart of campus where students can connect with engagement opportunities.
• The SEN grant program has received more than 5,000 applications from students and awarded $2.5 million in grants to fund over 1,500 engagement experiences.
• The Faculty Academy, which brings together Penn State faculty members who seek to integrate student engagement into their teaching and scholarship, has thirteen faculty fellows and three faculty scholars.
Undergraduate Research and Fellowships Mentoring

urfm.psu.edu  
814-863-8199

Undergraduate Research and Fellowships Mentoring aims to spark personal reflection and professional growth in undergraduates by encouraging students to engage in undergraduate research and pursue national or international fellowships. Penn State students leverage these experiences to attend graduate school, join the scholarly community, become educators, contribute to business and industry, and more.

Key responsibilities of this office include:
- help students discover research and fellowship opportunities that match their goals and interests
- run workshops to help students build skills related to participating in research and/or applying to competitive funding opportunities
- provide competitive funding for students to complete undergraduate research experiences
- educate students about all aspects of the research process, from selecting a project to presenting their findings
- support the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean by providing opportunities for students to present their research findings to their Penn State peers and support students in traveling to conferences to share their work with the broader scholarly community
- advise students through the entire fellowship application process, from selecting appropriate opportunities to putting together competitive materials

Highlights
- Penn State consistently ranks as a ‘Top Producing Institution’ for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.
- Hundreds of students each year engage with URFM through skill building workshops, individual advising, and information sessions.
Sokolov-Miller Family Financial and Life Skills Center

The Sokolov-Miller Family Financial and Life Skills Center helps students gain the knowledge and skills needed to manage their financial resources effectively for a lifetime of financial wellbeing. Through workshops, webinars, online self-study modules, one-on-one coaching, and a life skills mentoring program, students can learn the principles of financial literacy and receive help tailored to their specific challenges.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

• develop and lead financial literacy education workshops, webinars, and online modules throughout the year on a wide range of issues including budgeting, credit cards, student loans, and more
• meet confidentially with students to address their money management concerns
• partner with departments throughout the University to create programs that help students develop long-term strategies for financial stability and offer support for those experiencing financial hardships

Highlights

• The Sokolov-Miller family gave a generous endowment to the center in 2018 to support Penn State’s financial wellness programs.
• Business-focused and similarly qualified students hold paid positions at the center to help promote its programs and services and also work with students to address money management concerns.
• The center gave 223 presentations and webinars to over 4,000 unique participants during 2021–2022.
• Center staff and student ambassadors conducted 340 individual financial coaching sessions during 2021–2022.
• Faculty, staff, and student groups can request a workshop, tailored to their needs, by submitting a request online.

Center for Penn State Student Entrepreneurship

The Center for Penn State Student Entrepreneurship teaches Penn State students the foundational skills needed to position themselves as successful entrepreneurs and innovators. The center leads curricular and co-curricular initiatives that support undergraduate student entrepreneurship, including the Intercollege Minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (ENTI).

Key responsibilities of this office include:

• coordinate all aspects of the ENTI minor across all colleges and campuses
• collaborate with faculty, students, alumni, and other stakeholders across the University to advance Penn State’s mission of teaching, research, and service

Highlights

• In 2023, Penn State was ranked as the No. 23 school for undergraduate entrepreneurship studies in the United States by The Princeton Review in its annual ratings measuring individual schools’ performances. Among schools in the Mid-Atlantic region, Penn State came in at No. 3.
• The ENTI minor is open to students of all disciplines and provides students with specialized knowledge and skills that prepare them to launch an enterprise of their own.
• Penn State Global Entrepreneurship Week happens every fall, with workshops, visiting entrepreneurs, and activities. Penn State Startup Week takes place in the spring and includes featured speakers and workshops.
The Office for Summer Session works with Penn State colleges to expand opportunities for students and to develop creative offerings for summer study. The office provides students with the requisite information about summer session course offerings.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

- coordinate the Learning Edge Academic Program (LEAP) for first-year students entering University Park in the summer
- manage the Student Transitional Experiences Program (STEP) for change-of-campus students and summer programs for international students
- make students aware of the many advantages of taking summer session courses, including the opportunity to catch up on missed requirements or incomplete credits, focus on challenging classes, and receive individual attention in smaller classes
- encourage students to stay on track, get ahead in their program, and to graduate on time
- manage the Summer Success Scholarship program which provides $1.6 million in scholarship support to students across the institution who would benefit from a summer course, but have financial challenges to paying summer tuition

### Highlights

- LEAP participants have higher first-year GPAs and higher first-to-second-year retention rates compared to students who do not participate in the program.
- LEAP provides leadership experiences to forty to fifty undergraduate students each summer through the LEAP mentor program.
- Students who receive the summer success scholarship show positive indicators of success. 98% of students at University Park have either graduated or are still enrolled one year after receiving the scholarship. The percentage of students from first-gen, low-income, and minoritized backgrounds who receive the scholarship is higher than the overall percentage at the University.

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The Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) trains undergraduate students to become commissioned officers in the United States Armed Forces. Students in ROTC must attend service-specific ROTC academic classes, which count for college credit, and participate in weekly leadership labs and physical fitness training as part of the program. Students may receive a competitive, merit-based scholarship, covering all or part of college tuition and fees.

ROTC graduates serve in all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and incur a four-year active duty service obligation (ADSO) and an eight-year military service obligation (MSO) if they accept a commission as a regular officer.

Key responsibilities of these offices include:

- offer students in the ROTC program specialized professional training for military officer positions after college
- develop strong technical and leadership skills in ROTC students
- encourage mental and physical growth in ROTC students

### Highlights

- Military training has been part of Penn State since its founding in 1855 as part of its duties as a land-grant University.
- The first full-time professor of military science was assigned to Penn State in 1878.
- In June 1916, the National Defense Act formally created an ROTC unit at Penn State.
- Air Force is the youngest ROTC program, having been established in 1947 when the Air Force became a separate service.
- The Joint Service Coordinator is an administrative position that rotates annually among the three ROTC commanders and represents the units at Penn State.
- Penn State’s ROTC program is the largest in the Big Ten and one of the largest and highest performing in the nation.
Student Orientation and Transition Programs

orientation.psu.edu
814-865-4178

Student Orientation and Transition Programs (SOTP) facilitates comprehensive learning experiences for Penn State undergraduate students that support a successful academic, social, and personal transition to the University. Our team of full-time staff, student leaders, and volunteers work throughout the year to assist new students and their family members at each stage of their transition. SOTP is operated in partnership with Student Affairs.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

- Change of Campus Orientation/Welcome, a one-day program to assist Commonwealth Campus students in their transition to University Park
- Link UP, a University Park campus visit program for first- and second-year Penn State students throughout the Commonwealth who are considering a campus change
- New Student Orientation (NSO), a two-day program that allows new students to meet other students, begin to develop academic and co-curricular goals, become familiar with resources, and schedule courses
- President’s New Student Convocation, the President’s formal welcome to our incoming class of first-year students at University Park and the World Campus
- Transfer Student Orientation (TSO), a one-day program for advanced-standing students coming to University Park from another college/university
- Welcome Programs, a campus-wide collaboration designed to support new and returning students in their ongoing transition to the Penn State community; Events and programs are offered at the start of spring, summer II, and fall semesters.

Highlights

- On average, one-third of first-time college students begin their college careers with credits earned previously.
- Penn State adult learners earned an average of 21.2 credits for prior learning between 2011 and 2018.

Prior Learning Assessment

priorlearning.psu.edu

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) works to ensure that knowledge and skills acquired by students prior to coming to Penn State, or outside of their Penn State classroom, are consistently evaluated and awarded credit across Penn State’s colleges and campuses. Some examples of prior learning credits awarded to students include transfer credits, credits from Advanced Placement exams, and credit by portfolio. To increase student access and success, PLA strives to ensure that Penn State appropriately awards college-level credentials in a way that upholds the academic integrity and excellence of programs that lead to a Penn State degree. Earning credit for prior learning may shorten time to degree and reduce tuition costs.

Key responsibilities of this office include:

- provide leadership for University-wide efforts in prior learning assessment and serve as the primary point of contact on prior learning assessment for students, faculty, and staff
- develop collaborative processes for implementation and administration of prior learning assessment
- work with faculty and professional staff to develop criteria, tools, and record-keeping for prior learning assessment
- promote a widespread understanding of prior learning assessment policies and processes and the role that prior learning can play in student success by working with Admissions, the Registrar, and advising staff
- plan and coordinate activities and communications on prior learning assessment opportunities to prospective and current students, faculty, and staff

Highlights

- On average, one-third of first-time college students begin their college careers with credits earned previously.
- Penn State adult learners earned an average of 21.2 credits for prior learning between 2011 and 2018.
The Future of Undergraduate Education at Penn State

As the units that comprise Undergraduate Education pursue a shared vision of excellence in undergraduate teaching and learning, we will help to advance Penn State’s strategic plan and President Bendapudi’s vision to strive to create a transformational Penn State experience. We will use our collective expertise to enhance student success and help prepare students to begin their lives after graduation.

Collaborative Partnerships
UE will grow existing partnerships, and develop new collaborations, with faculty and staff from colleges, campuses, and other units University-wide to develop solutions to enhance students’ lives and help them succeed at Penn State. We will capitalize on our expertise in academic affairs and curricular processes and policies, and work with units including Student Affairs, Educational Equity, Enrollment Management, Commonwealth Campuses, Penn State Outreach, and Penn State World Campus.

Academic Leadership
UE will continue to lead key administrative groups that are critical to supporting the University's undergraduate goals and objectives, which includes leading the Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education (ACUE) and the implementation of the Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual (AAPPM).

Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education
Led by the vice provost and dean for Undergraduate Education, (ACUE) is responsible for the design and implementation of academic and administrative policies and procedures that support the University’s undergraduate education goals and objectives. ACUE is comprised of members including, the associate or assistant dean for undergraduate education from each of the colleges/campuses, the University College, the Division of Undergraduate Studies, the Registrar, the University Libraries, and the Penn State World Campus.

Working within the framework of Faculty Senate and University policies, ACUE’s work guides the offering, delivery, and assessment of academic programs and learning opportunities, the admission and enrollment of undergraduate students, and other related matters.

Working with ACUE, UE oversees, develops, and updates the Academic Administrative Policies and Procedure Manual, which houses the policies and procedures related to undergraduate education at Penn State.

Academic Integrity
UE leads University-wide efforts to oversee academic integrity issues at Penn State, including committees, policy updates, management of the academic integrity violation process, and the development of resources for faculty and students.

The history of Penn State’s “Blue Book”
Before the internet transformed higher education, Penn State undergraduates browsed available courses in a thick book with a bright blue cover. After the Undergraduate Bulletin was transferred online, the physical “Blue Book” was relegated to Penn State history. We’ve borrowed the book’s name for this publication to honor UE’s historic role not only in publishing the Undergraduate Bulletin, but also in helping to shape the curriculum that appears therein.