



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 2, 2021

Steppingstone Scholars New Partnership with The University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Global Youth Program Creates Critical Access to College Courses for Socioeconomically Underserved Students

December 2, 2021 (PHILADELPHIA, PA) – [Steppingstone Scholars](#) (Steppingstone) today announced a new partnership with the [Wharton Global Youth Program](#) that will offer socioeconomically underserved students in Philadelphia a pathway to college and business education.

The partnership initially focuses on three specific areas:

- 1) **Dual Enrollment Courses:** High school students will enroll in college-level courses at Wharton, free of cost. Students will be introduced to business education while earning college credits, reducing the time and cost to obtain a college degree.
- 2) **Embedded Courses:** Wharton Global Youth will work with Steppingstone to identify one or more schools in Philadelphia to embed a Wharton School pre-baccalaureate course into the school schedule for a class of students.
- 3) **Engagement of the Wharton Community:** Opportunities will be created for Wharton undergraduate students in assistantships, fellowships, volunteering and work-study positions with Steppingstone. The Wharton Undergraduate Division will help connect Steppingstone scholars with college-level internships and job-placement opportunities. In addition, Wharton faculty will provide expertise, research and advising in the creation of curriculum for Steppingstone programming.

Beginning the spring 2022 semester, students from Lankenau Environmental Science Magnet High School (Lankenau) will participate in the pilot for Steppingstone's dual-enrollment program with Wharton. Students from Lankenau will be shuttled to Penn's campus after school to take a weekly course called, "Energy Education in Philadelphia Schools." This Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) course is supported by Penn's Netter Center for Community Partnerships and will teach students about basic residential energy efficiency measures and practices from an established community-based energy organization, the Energy Coordinating Agency of Philadelphia. Identifying and understanding fundamental core STEM energy concepts, Steppingstone students will later develop a short "energy efficiency" curriculum and lesson plan to teach three sessions in a middle- or high-school science class within the School District of Philadelphia.

Following the program launch beginning with Lankenau, Steppingstone and Wharton Global Youth hope to expand the program and course offerings with a goal to reach students from 25 high schools

across the City of Philadelphia. Later, Steppingstone and Wharton Global Youth will work to identify and embed courses into high schools' class offerings to reach students within their regular school schedules. Within all its programs, Steppingstone will welcome Wharton students as they volunteer, mentor and work with scholars throughout their journey towards college and careers.

"Our partnership with Wharton demonstrates a shared commitment to addressing the systemic racial and economic barriers to obtaining a college degree that too many students in Philadelphia face," said Sean E. Vereen, EdD, President of Steppingstone Scholars. "Less than fifteen percent of the School District of Philadelphia's students complete college six years after their high school graduation, which is core to the issue of generational poverty in our city. Families and students often can't see a path to college, especially due to the cost. This partnership allows us to create a new viable path for Philadelphia's students to pursue college and business education with one of the nation's most respected business programs."

"This unique dual-enrollment program removes many of the impediments that hinder high school students from participating in pre-baccalaureate studies and extends the reach of a Wharton education across socioeconomic divides," said Erika James, Dean of the Wharton School. "We have a tremendous responsibility to impact the pipeline of future business leaders so that it more accurately reflects the world around us. This partnership with Steppingstone will enable deserving students to explore business practices, analyze the world's most complex challenges and to take steps towards becoming leaders capable of transforming the global economy."

Students interested in learning more about the Steppingstone/Wharton Global Youth partnership and/or applying to Steppingstone's Dual enrollment program are encouraged to contact Evy Fraga, Associate Director of College Pathways, at efraga@steppingstonescholars.org.

About Steppingstone Scholars:

Steppingstone Scholars is an educational social mobility organization. For low-income students in the City of Philadelphia there are no clear pathways made specifically for them to go to college and enter the workforce. Since 1999, Steppingstone has been working to address this systemic problem by creating not just one pathway, but many. Serving students ages 10 – 24, Steppingstone offers three (3) solutions-oriented approaches: *Academy*, which provides transformative, rigorous learning opportunities to high-achieving educationally underserved students to access and succeed at highly resourced schools; *Pathways*, which leverages custom resources inside public K-12 schools (neighborhood, charter, and citywide) to create pathways to college and the workforce for educationally underserved students and; *Ventures*, which creates broad enrichment programs that innovate the ways in which schools, nonprofits, and communities can more equitably serve engaged citizens ready to enter college and a changing workforce. This systemic multi-faceted approach helps students identify, create, and confidently walk their pathways through institutions of higher education and work, well-prepared to begin breaking the cycles of disinvestment and socioeconomic inequality that has existed in Philadelphia for generations. For more information regarding Steppingstone Scholars, please visit: www.steppingstonescholars.org.

About the Wharton School:

Founded in 1881 as the world's first collegiate business school, the [Wharton School](#) of the University of Pennsylvania is shaping the future of business by incubating ideas, driving insights, and creating leaders who change the world. With a faculty of more than 235 renowned professors, Wharton has

5,000 [undergraduate](#), [MBA](#), [executive MBA](#), and [doctoral](#) students. Each year 13,000 professionals from around the world advance their careers through [Wharton Executive Education's](#) individual, company-customized, and online programs. More than 100,000 Wharton alumni form a powerful global network of leaders who transform business every day. For more information, visit www.wharton.upenn.edu.

STEPPINGSTONE SCHOLARS CONTACT:

Paige LeGrand

Vice President of Development & Communications

plegrand@steppingstonescholars.org

610.960.5065

###