

Laurel School's Capstone Experience

Signature Programming

Mission of Capstone

Laurel School's Capstone Experience, by design, will cultivate purpose, relationships and leadership using one of four lenses—Civic Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Global Studies, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics). Capstone Candidates will explore issues through guided research, intellectual discussion, relevant internships and purposeful travel. Using expert guidance from mentors and support from cohort peers, each Capstone Candidate will create a Research Focus based on her individual interests and agency. This innovative program provides committed, interested students with opportunities to approach real-world issues with interdisciplinary, experiential and community-based strategies while building mentor and peer relationships. In developing a sense of purpose, meaningful mentor and peer relationships, and skills of leadership, Capstone prepares a Laurel girl "to fulfill her promise and to better the world."

The Four Capstone Categories

Civic Engagement

Through an interdisciplinary, experiential and community-based approach, Candidates in the Civic Engagement program will explore what it means to be an engaged citizen working to improve her community, her state, her nation and her world.

Entrepreneurship

Through an interdisciplinary, experiential and community-based approach, Candidates in the Entrepreneurship category will experience the start of a new business initiative, the building and execution of an idea from the ground up and the risk of failure.

Global Studies

Through an interdisciplinary, experiential and community-based approach, Candidates in the Global Studies category will explore global issues by identifying and analyzing a multitude of perspectives, including one's own and those of others.

STEAM

Through an interdisciplinary, experiential and community-based approach, Candidates in the STEAM category will explore many intersections of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics in order to understand and to apply multi-disciplinary strategies to an endeavor.

Capstone Requirements Timeline

January of Ninth Grade: Complete the Capstone application.

February/March of Ninth Grade: Selections of Capstone Candidates announced.

March of Ninth Grade: Each cohort begins to meet bi-weekly for student-led discussions.

May Term of Ninth Grade: Cohort activities focusing on leadership skill development and peer bonding at Laurel's Butler Campus and in Cleveland.

First Semester of Tenth Grade: Bi-weekly, student-led discussions in each cohort; planning for March cohort trips.

December of Tenth Grade: Students may exit or enter the program depending on what is best for individual students.

Second Semester of Tenth Grade: Bi-weekly, student-led discussions in each cohort; planning for March cohort trips.

March of Tenth Grade: Student-planned cohort trips: Civic Engagement to Washington, D.C.; Entrepreneurship to San Francisco; Global Studies to New York City; STEAM to Chicago.

April of Tenth Grade: Using the lens of her Capstone category, each Candidate designs a Research Focus and is assigned a Capstone Mentor.

May Term of Tenth Grade: Relevant Protégé Internship Project for each Candidate.

Eleventh Grade Year: Each Candidate, guided by her Mentor, works on her Research Focus; bi-weekly cohort meetings continue and serve as peer-review sessions for progress of each Research Focus.

Winter of Eleventh Grade: Each cohort works with a younger grade in the Middle or Primary Schools at Laurel in order to share knowledge and experience gained in Capstone.

May Term of Eleventh Grade: Relevant Protégé Internship Project for each Candidate.

Summer of Eleventh Grade: Each Candidate works to complete a draft of her completed Research Focus (a paper or project).

Fall of Twelfth Grade: No work on Capstone as the focus is on the college process—though a student's Capstone Experience certainly could serve to highlight college applications.

January through March of Twelfth Grade: Candidates complete final draft of their Research Focus.

April and May of Twelfth Grade: Candidates make oral defense of Research Focus to Mentor and Capstone committee.

Graduation: Capstone Candidates receive special designation at graduation, becoming Capstone Scholars.

Laurel School's Capstone Experience *continued*

Capstone Glossary

Capstone Candidate: a participant in Capstone

Capstone Mentor: an adult with expertise in the topic of a student's Research Focus who helps guide her process

Capstone Scholar: a designation for completing Capstone received at graduation

Cohort: a small group of grade-level students in a particular Capstone category

Research Focus: a research-based paper or equivalent project designed by each Candidate with guidance from her Mentor

Common Questions About Capstone

What is the goal of Laurel School's Capstone Experience?

While knowledge, research, and a level of expertise in one of the categories certainly will happen for a student, the goal of Laurel School's Capstone Experience is **to provide a greater sense of purpose as well as to develop skills of leadership, collaboration and relationship**—qualities Laurel believes will serve a student for a lifetime in any endeavor.

Will it cost anything?

Yes. To participate in Capstone, a student's family will pay \$500 per year, which includes all components of the experience, including the trips.

Will financial aid be available?

Yes, for families who are eligible for financial aid from Laurel School.

Will it be graded?

No. A student will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis; grades will not be assigned.

Will all Upper School students be able to participate in Capstone?

No. Each cohort will accept a limited number of students.

Does a student need to have previously developed interests or experience in a Capstone category to be a good applicant?

No. While some students may have relevant prior experiences or interests, Capstone wants students who are curious and passionate about collaboratively exploring topics in experiential and interdisciplinary ways.

Will a student's academic record be the only component of the admissions process?

No. The Capstone application process strives to identify students who want to develop leadership skills, relationship and collaboration skills, and some level of knowledge and expertise in a particular lens.

Will Capstone prevent a student from taking particular classes or from participating in sports or extracurricular activities?

No. Capstone will be scheduled to avoid as many academic and athletic/extracurricular commitments as possible.

Will Capstone prevent a student from participating in Laurel School's Passport trips?

No. Many trip offerings certainly would serve the objectives of the Capstone program. While the Capstone cohort trips in the Tenth Grade will be covered by cost of the Capstone Experience, Passport trips offered through Laurel will not be covered by the \$500 per year Capstone price.

My Ninth Grade student (2016-17) is signed up for a 2017 MayTerm Passport Trip or she applied for a 2017 MayTerm Protégé Internship Project, which means she would have a conflict for the Capstone activities during MayTerm of 2017. Can she still apply to Capstone?

Yes. If interested, a student in this situation should still apply to Capstone. If she is accepted to Capstone, we will work out a suitable arrangement.

Further questions about Laurel's Capstone Experience?

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