What is AAMS?

The African American Male Scholars (AAMS) Initiative (pronounced “aims”) is designed to provide programs, services, and experiences that connect African American male students to university and community resources to support their academic and personal success at Saint Louis University. We provide—

- SLU faculty, staff, and alumni mentoring
- College success workshops
- Leadership development
- Networking opportunities
- Advocacy
- Support
- Referral to campus and community resources
- And much more!

MISSION POSSIBLE:
To enable you to succeed and graduate from Saint Louis University!

Eligible Participants

All interested first- and second-year African American male students who agree to the terms of participation are eligible to be a part of AAMS.

AAMS Components

Mentorship

Mentorship is the central part of the AAMS Initiative. As an AAMS participant, you will be partnered with an African American male Saint Louis University faculty/staff member or SLU alumnus. Your mentor will support you in many ways, including—

- Helping you to understand yourself in the context of the larger community and demonstrate pride in your own cultural heritage.
- Assisting you in building positive relationships with your peers, faculty, staff, and members of the local community.
- Providing exposure to campus and community resources that will enable you to realize your potential for academic success and to impact the campus and community as servant leaders.
- Helping you to advocate for yourself and others.

College Success Workshops

This series of fall semester workshops will connect you to campus resources including academic support services/tutoring, student health & counseling, career services and advising. You will also learn from

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1 We refer to the young men in AAMS as scholars—those who engage the world around them, think critically and creatively, and use knowledge and opportunities to make a positive difference in their communities.
SLU alumni and faculty/staff mentors who will share strategies that have helped them achieve success as students of color.

**Leadership Development Workshops**

This series of spring semester workshops will involve discussions led by campus and community leaders and on-campus and off-campus activities, such as visits to community centers or government offices. You will discuss topics such as building strong cultural identity, models of leadership, working with groups, and creating positive change in your community.

**“Real Talk” Sessions**

In this series of workshops that will occur throughout the academic year, you will engage in dynamic discussions about history, culture, and roles as it relates the African American male community and society. Using relevant and engaging books, articles, and other resources, topics to be explored will be varied and may include: History of African American Men in the United States, Men & Masculinity, African American Male Students in Higher Education, Transitioning to SLU, and Current Issues Impacting African American Men.

**Cultural Service-Learning Projects**

AAMS student participants will complete at least one service-learning project each semester. As part of the projects, you will work substantially with people of color in the Saint Louis community and engage directly with issues that affect Saint Louis’ African American community. Activities may include tutoring and mentoring junior high and high school students and volunteering for community agencies such as the YMCA, Urban League of Metropolitan Saint Louis, Catholic Charities, Northside Community Center, among others. You will have the opportunity to reflect on these experiences individually and as a group.

**Social Excursions**

You will have opportunities to connect with fellow AAMS participants while enjoying campus and local experiences. Excursions may include but are not limited to: SLU and local sporting events, campus events, Black Repertory Theatre, Missouri History Museum, annual dinners, and local cultural celebrations.

**Comprehensive Support**

Although the transition to college can be difficult for many students, we recognize the particular challenges that African American male students may face on their way to success, especially in a predominantly White institution. That is why AAMS is committed to a communal approach, providing a comprehensive level of support throughout your college career that involves your mentor, Cross Cultural Center staff, and your family.

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2 Inclusive term to describe your parent(s)/guardian(s) or up to two people designated as those with a primary interest in your college success.
Mentors

Interactions

There are a variety of activities that you can share with your mentor including talking over a meal, shadowing him at work for an afternoon, watching a movie, or attending a community engagement event. Your mentor will offer a safe space where you can share what is going on in your life inside and outside of the classroom. You will be provided with mentor/mentee contact forms on which your mentor will document the concerns discussed. These forms will be collected by the Cross Cultural Center staff and will assist us in providing support to both you and your mentor.

You will make the first contact with your mentor. You and he can work together to set times at which you both will be available to meet. While you will be required to meet a minimum of twice per semester, you can meet as many times with your mentor as you both like. We strongly encourage that you meet with your mentor at least once a month.

Length of Mentoring Relationship

It is our goal that your mentor remains an important part of your life throughout your college career and even after you graduate. During your first two years in college, you will be required to meet with your mentor a minimum of twice per semester. After the first two years, your mentor will support you on a more informal basis. In your junior year, you will be eligible to become an AAMS peer mentor, providing guidance and support to other incoming AAMS participants.

If you have concerns about your relationship with your mentor that you believe cannot be resolved with him, please contact the Cross Cultural Center staff to discuss the issues and to discover possible solutions.

Cross Cultural Center Staff

The primary role of the Cross Cultural Center staff will be to work with your mentor and your family to support your academic and personal success at Saint Louis University.

Academic Progress

As part of our commitment to your academic success, we will periodically review your academic progress. If there are any concerns about your academic progress, they will be communicated with your mentor and your family. We will work with you, your mentor, and your family to create a plan to address any challenges you are experiencing and to help you reach your academic potential.

General Student Concerns

The AAMS program is dedicated not only to your academic success, but to you as a person. Although your mentor will be the primary person with whom you share your concerns, your mentor may share those concerns that significantly affect your college success with the Cross Cultural Center staff, so that we may work with you, your mentor, and/or your family to address your concerns and/or connect you to helpful resources.
Families

We recognize that families play a vital role in the success of African American male college students. That is why your family will be an important part of your AAMS experience, and why we require that your family has access to review your academic information, including grade reports. *Be assured that we respect your privacy—any private academic information or personal concerns will be shared with discretion and only with your mentor, Cross Cultural Center staff, and your family with the goal of supporting your college success.*

Transition

As you move from your first to senior year, your involvement in AAMS will change. The following table shows how you can progress in AAMS throughout your time at Saint Louis University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Relationship with Faculty/Staff/Alumni Mentor</th>
<th>Relationship with Peer Mentor</th>
<th>College Success Workshops</th>
<th>“Real Talk” Sessions</th>
<th>Leadership Development Workshops/Speaker’s Series</th>
<th>Cultural Service-Learning Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Formal and Supportive</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Formal and Supportive</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Eligible to serve as peer mentor</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Eligible to serve as a peer mentor</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>Required</td>
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</tbody>
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**Cross Cultural Center Staff (AAMS Initiative)**

LaTanya Buck—Director

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