




CHESAPEAKE
WATERSHED
SEMESTER

A Semester Program of The Gunston School

*Immersive Learning
for Exceptional Students*





Growing **LEADERS** with
POWERFUL voices, able
to **ADAPT** and **INNOVATE**,
INSPIRED to **LEARN**, and
ENGAGE with the world.

wa·ter·shed

noun

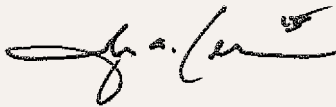
1. an area or ridge of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins, or seas.
2. an event or period marking a turning point in a course of action or state of affairs.

What is your watershed moment?

The Chesapeake Semester seeks students who are intellectual risk takers to join a community of learners who are curious, creative, reflective, open-minded, and thoughtful. Our students embrace the natural environment, and they are passionate about finding scientific, technological, social, and political solutions to sustain our planet.

We are excited to have you on this journey with us.

Sincerely,



John A. Lewis, IV



Emily Beck



Fast Facts

Chesapeake Watershed Semester:

1:4 Faculty to Student Ratio

6 Average class size

4 Core Classes,
plus physical education, community
service & independent study

15 Weeks Total
On Campus: 10 Weeks
Field-study: 5 Weeks

Location:
Centreville Maryland
30 Minutes to Annapolis
1 Hour to Washington D.C. and Baltimore

Watershed:

6 States

64,000 Miles²

17 million people

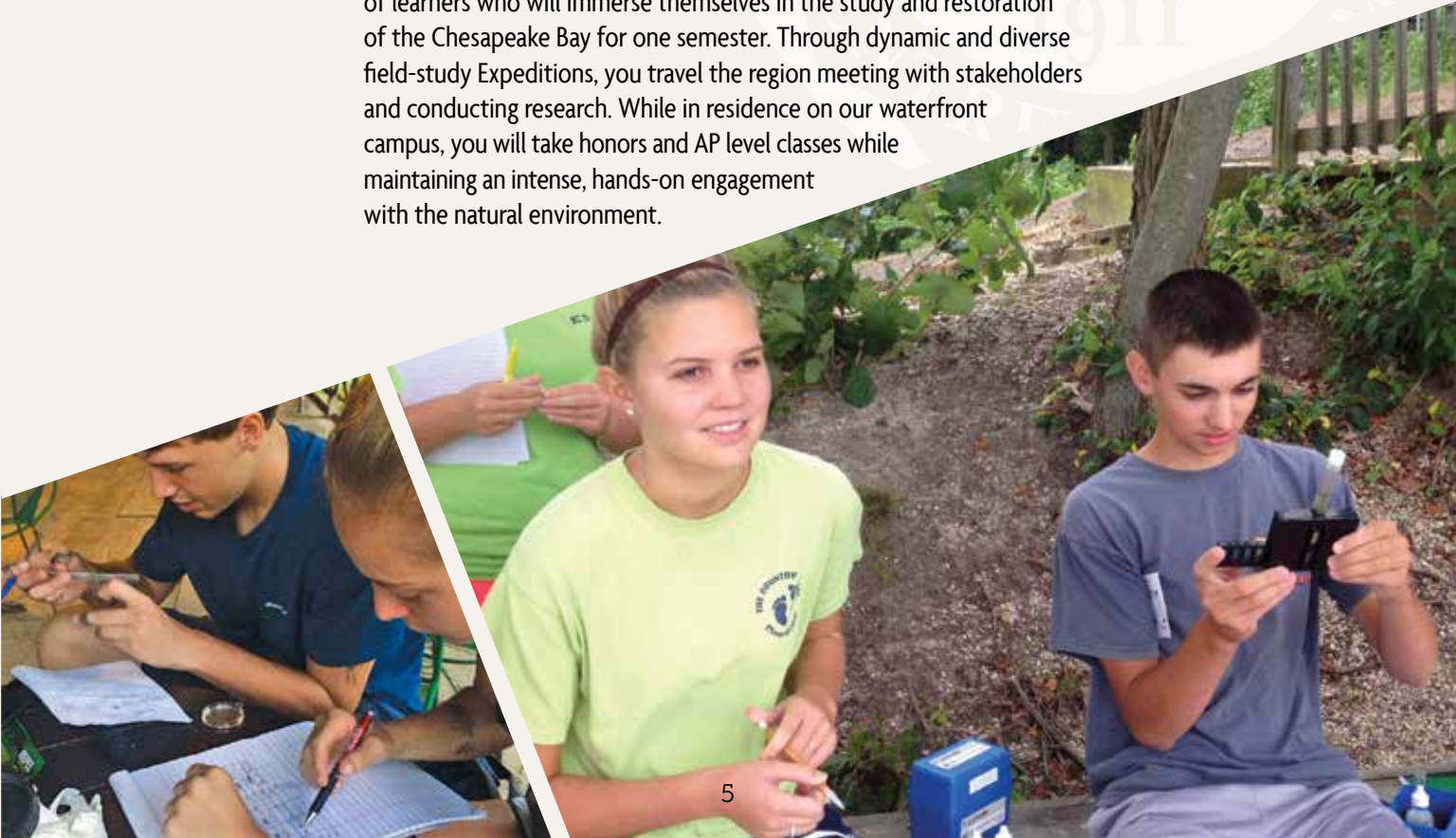
3,000 species

Modes of Transport:
Sail, Paddle, Bike, Mass Transit, Vans, Walking
8 Partner Organizations

Chesapeake Watershed Semester

Imagine spending a semester helping to solve some of the world's most complex environmental problems where your textbooks are replaced with real-world case studies, and where you engage with national environmental and political leaders while also conducting scientific research with cutting-edge technology.

The Chesapeake Watershed Semester is a unique opportunity for highly motivated high school juniors or seniors to join a talented community of learners who will immerse themselves in the study and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay for one semester. Through dynamic and diverse field-study Expeditions, you travel the region meeting with stakeholders and conducting research. While in residence on our waterfront campus, you will take honors and AP level classes while maintaining an intense, hands-on engagement with the natural environment.



Why the Chesapeake Watershed Semester?

Immersive, Place-Based Experiences

We believe that real-world and first-person experiences are vital to developing understanding and knowledge. The Chesapeake Bay watershed provides the canvas for the curriculum, and the academic disciplines create the lenses through which the human impact on the natural environment is understood.

Rigorous, Problem-Based Learning

Students develop a toolbox of skills to evaluate primary sources, analyze data, and establish an ethical foundation from which to draw conclusions. Classes are grounded in real world scenarios and offer students opportunities to engage with stakeholders and share their conclusions. Every student completes a thesis paper or project that reflects their ability to address issues through multiple lenses.

Stakeholder Engagement

Much of the problem-based learning revolves around the central questions related to restoring the fragile and impaired Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. We approach these problems through direct contact with public officials, university researchers, fishermen, farmers, and local historians to fully understand the complexities of the problem.

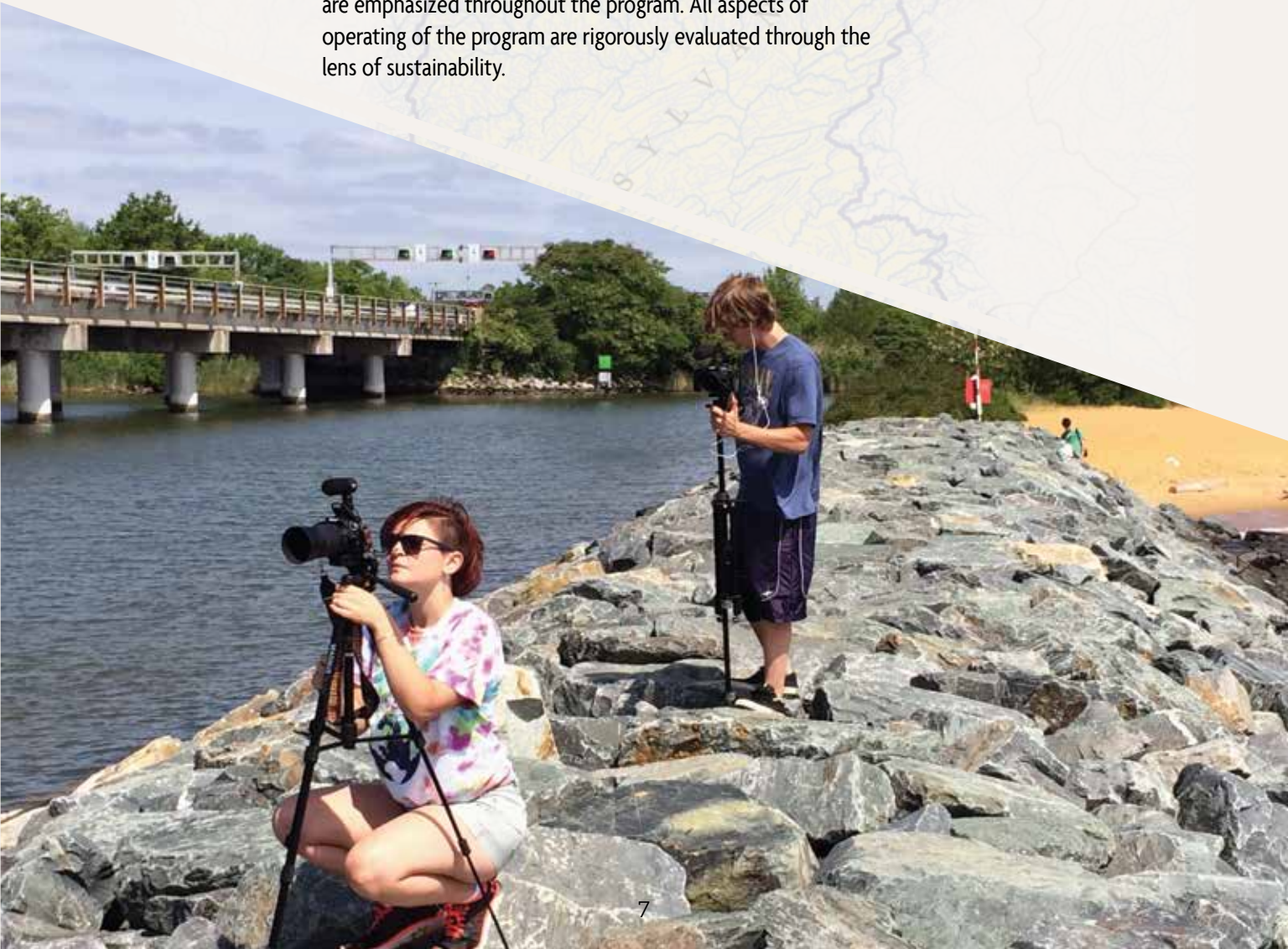
Teaching Leadership

We believe that leadership is a skill that can be learned by every person. Through opportunities in and outside of the classroom, we seek to develop in each student the skills, vision, self-knowledge, motivation, and sense of responsibility necessary to lead effectively.



Environmental Sustainability

Individual and collective action towards greater sustainability are emphasized throughout the program. All aspects of operating of the program are rigorously evaluated through the lens of sustainability.





Academic Program

Core Courses

Environmental Science and Restoration Ecology

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States and home to 17 million people. The restoration of the Bay is a litmus test for humanity; if we pass the test we can keep the planet. In this course we will investigate the pieces, patterns, and processes that affect the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Historical threats such as sedimentation, eutrophication, and land-use remain while climate change, sea level rise and coastal resiliency are becoming increasingly important. Through laboratory and field studies, students will build a robust toolbox of primary research techniques. This course can be combined with another semester of Environmental Science to prepare students to take the College Board's Advanced Placement exam in the spring.

US Government and Politics & Environmental Issues

Using environmental politics and policy as a guiding frame, this seminar introduces students to the key political concepts, institutions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States; in addition, students gain familiarity with the institutions, agreements, and challenges associated with global environmental policy making. Maximizing our proximity to both the state and nation's capitals, students interface with local, state, national, and international environmental leaders in Annapolis, Washington, DC, and beyond. Students wishing to take the AP American Government and Politics exam will be provided with additional tutorial support.



Literature of the Land and Water

The Chesapeake Bay has a strong sense of place and has inspired a diversity of written work. Students read, reflect and discuss fiction and nonfiction work grounded in the region that helps begin conversations on how our traditions have shaped our interactions with the land and water. The course provides a forum for exploring individual reactions to issues raised in Environmental Science and Government classes and allows students to narrate their personal journey through the semester.

Leadership Seminar

All students participate in this capstone course that bookends their semester. The course begins with a field Expedition to strengthen leadership skills and concludes with students presenting their Thesis work. Through weekly conversations and symposiums throughout the term students explore the character and qualities of great leaders; self discipline, self confidence, self awareness, ethics, and poise and public speaking.

Math, Foreign Language and Art

While attending the Chesapeake Watershed Semester students continue their math and foreign language classes through accredited online partnerships. Independent studies in art and photography are offered.

STUDENT—

“The Chesapeake Watershed Semester helped me grow as a leader and strengthened my desire to be an agent of change.”





Our teachers are masters at crafting authentic learning experiences, from meeting with researchers at University of Maryland's Horn Point oyster hatchery to reviewing upcoming agriculture legislation with Chesapeake Bay Foundation lobbyists in advance of meeting with state Senators.



Capstone Project

The hallmark of the Chesapeake Watershed Semester is the cross-disciplinary thesis each student completes, and includes a restoration project design, business plan, and political action guide for a pressing environmental issue in the watershed. Many students focus their projects on their hometowns. Students work with teachers and mentors from the community to design the scope and sequence of the project.

College Prep

Students stay on track for their college and career goals. The PSAT is administered during the fall semester and students receive college guidance from their advisors. Students can take the SAT or ACT while attending the Chesapeake Watershed Semester and many students take AP exams.

Transitions

The Chesapeake Watershed Semester works with your school's Deans and Guidance Counselors to ensure that your academic credits transfer smoothly and you can transition seamlessly into the semester and back home again.

PARENT—

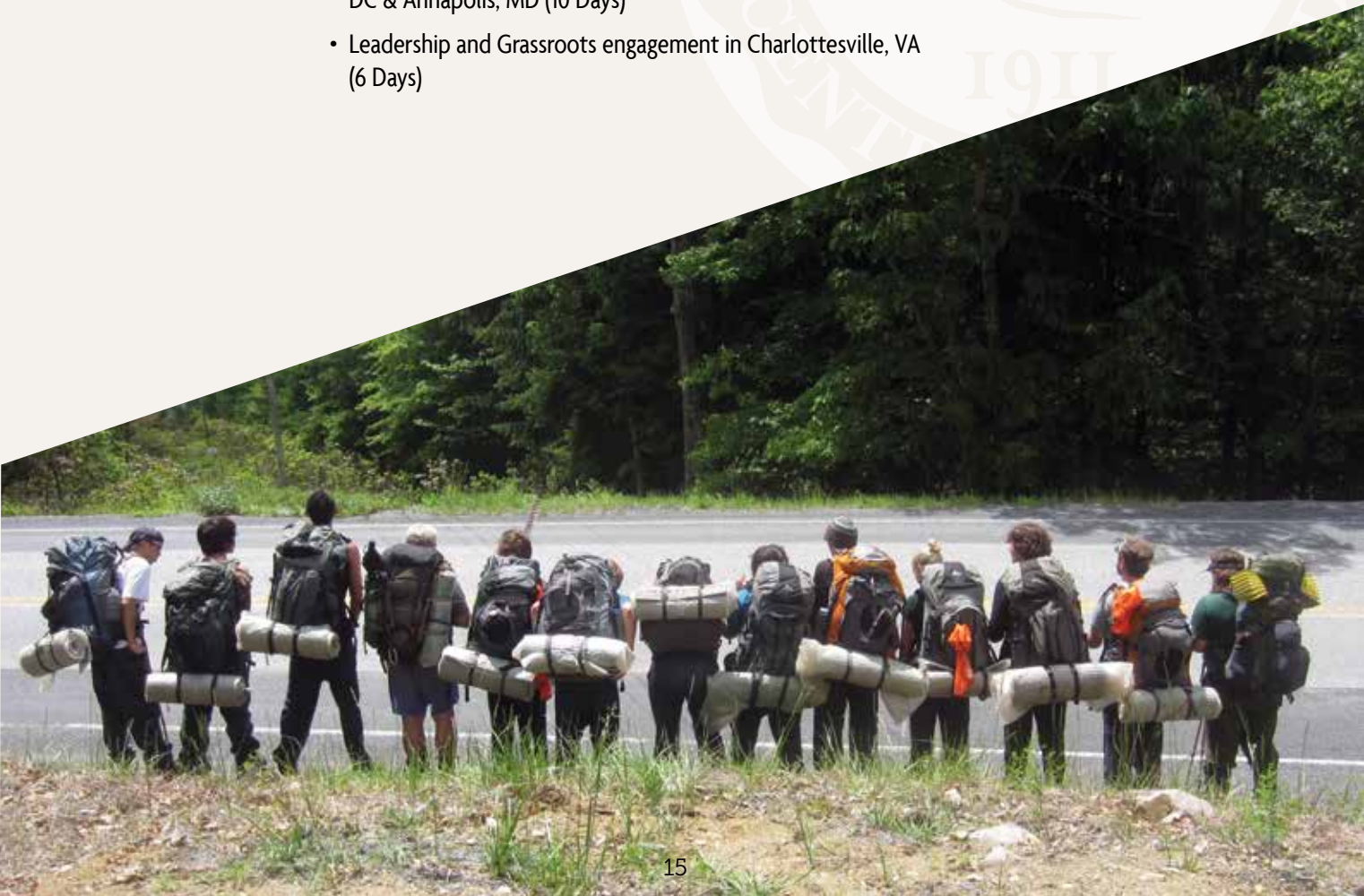
“Semester schools offer students an immersive and transformative learning experience that goes beyond traditional classroom teaching. By working directly with stakeholders on real-world issues, the educational experience comes alive for students in a real way.”



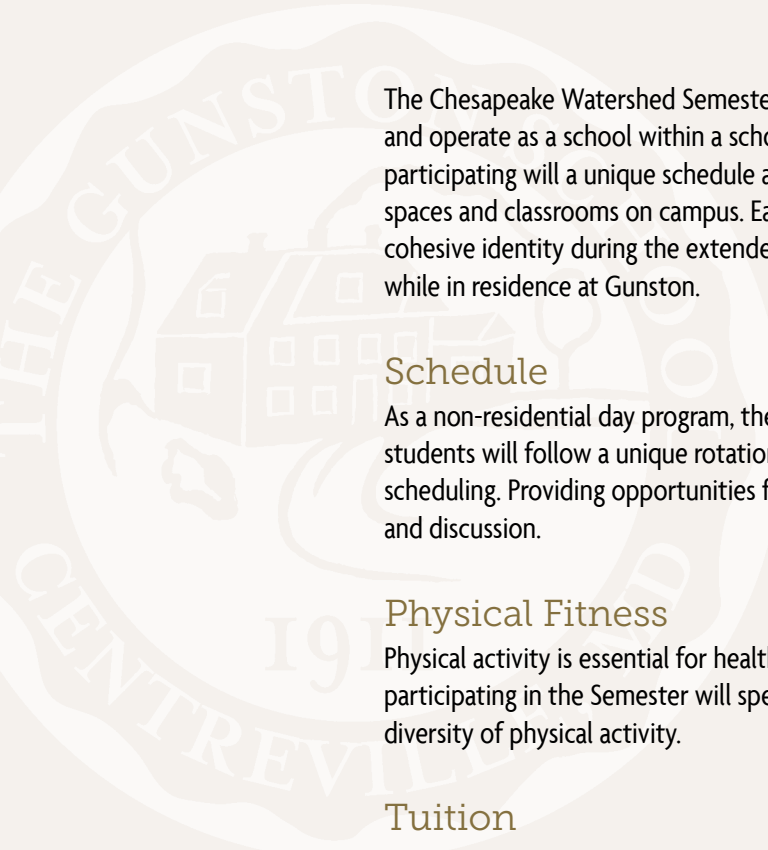
Expeditions

Extended field studies offer students opportunities to engage fully with an ecosystem, community, or internship.

- Kayaking Expedition on the Captain John Smith Trail (8 Days)
- Restoration Ecology & Climate Science with CBF on Tangier Island (5 Days)
- The Environment, Government, and Public Policy Washington, DC & Annapolis, MD (10 Days)
- Leadership and Grassroots engagement in Charlottesville, VA (6 Days)



Campus and Community



The Chesapeake Watershed Semester will begin as a pilot program and operate as a school within a school. The students and faculty participating will have a unique schedule and utilize alternative meeting spaces and classrooms on campus. Each Semester's cohort will forge a cohesive identity during the extended Expeditions that will continue while in residence at Gunston.

Schedule

As a non-residential day program, the Chesapeake Watershed Semester students will follow a unique rotation of extended classes and block scheduling. Providing opportunities for extended lab periods, research and discussion.

Physical Fitness

Physical activity is essential for health and well being. Students participating in the Semester will spend part of each day engaging in a diversity of physical activity.

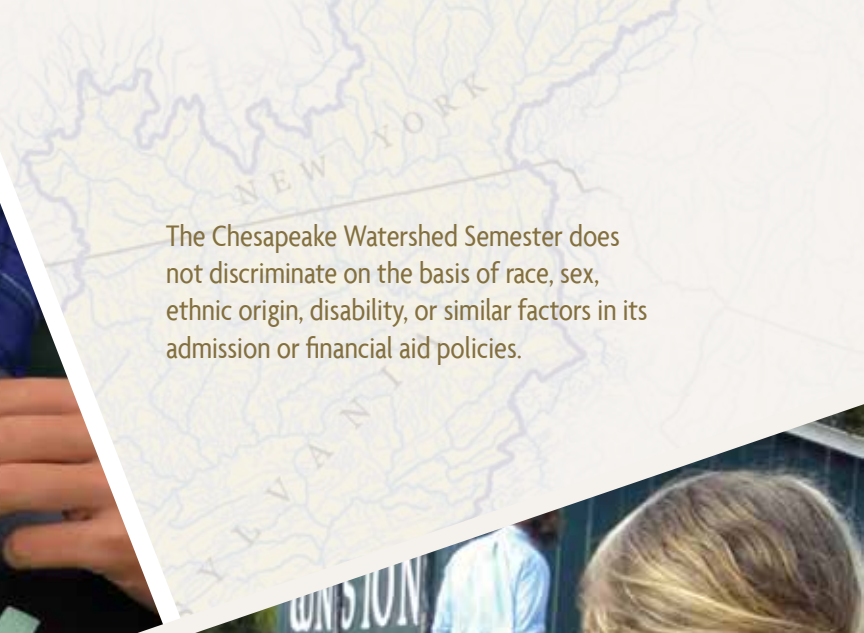
Tuition

Students already enrolled at The Gunston School will have an additional fee beyond Gunston's tuition to cover the additional expenses of the program.





The Chesapeake Watershed Semester does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, ethnic origin, disability, or similar factors in its admission or financial aid policies.



Financial Aid

Our Board of Trustees is committed to making the semester affordable for motivated and talented students who meet our admissions criteria. The Chesapeake Watershed Semester works to the best of its ability to meet the financial needs of each family through our generous financial aid program. Our hope is that every accepted applicant can attend.

Admissions Process

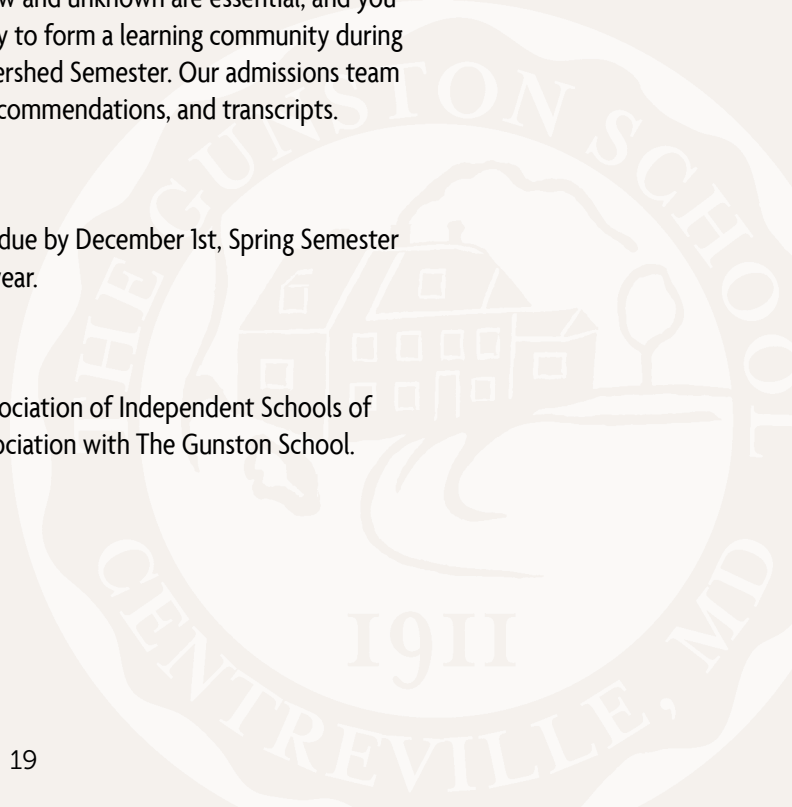
We seek motivated, academically strong students who have a keen interest in expanding their worldview through real-world problem solving. A desire to explore the new and unknown are essential, and you will join other students and faculty to form a learning community during your time at the Chesapeake Watershed Semester. Our admissions team reviews student essays, teacher recommendations, and transcripts.

Timeline

Applications for Fall Semester are due by December 1st, Spring Semester are due by March 1st of the prior year.

Accreditation

We are fully accredited by the Association of Independent Schools of Maryland and DC through our association with The Gunston School.



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CHESAPEAKE BAY
FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure