



INFORMATION PACKET

INTRODUCTION

As part of the internationalization efforts at Azusa Pacific University, the Office of Service and Discipleship is convinced that our responsibility is not only to facilitate global opportunities for university students through our local, national, and international experiences, but to also provide opportunities for students to serve around the world after graduation. We believe that through creating opportunities for students to encounter God, themselves, and one another, then taking them through a process of spiritual and personal formation, we encourage students to be the lived expression of Jesus Christ in whatever setting they find themselves in, after graduation.

Based on conversations with a variety of organizations focused on the mobilization of young adults and in-house debriefings with students after on-going and one-time service experiences, it has become clear that God often uses the mechanism of short-term international experiences to activate individuals for long-term ministry. Upon return from short-term service events, many students share that they sense God's call toward full-time ministry and service. Unfortunately, research shows that the financial stress of having school debt, the need to find a job that will provide income, and working through what to do after leaving college, are obstacles to responding to this call. While students feel the desire to serve, they often do not know where to begin regarding which organization to partner with, how to fundraise, or how to prepare for a significant time of service.

The G.A.P. Years experience is designed to remove or mitigate these financial barriers as we believe that, with these barriers removed, many will make the decision to step into mid-term cross-cultural ministry. Azusa Pacific University will play a significant role in directing graduates toward ministries around the world that have expressed a desire and need for educated workers in a variety of fields.

WHAT IS G.A.P. YEARS?

G.A.P. Years (Go And Prepare) exists as a sending program providing a cohort of students each year ready and willing to serve overseas with Christ-based community development and/or mission organizations that work with unreached/least reached people groups for two years after graduation.

The goal is three-fold:

- To facilitate the gospel message to people who have not heard.



CENTER for STUDENT ACTION

G.A.P. Years
GO AND PREPARE

"A voice cries out, 'In the wilderness prepare a way for the Lord...'"
Isaiah 40:3

- To enable and facilitate APU students to participate in ministry directly after graduation, increasing the likelihood of pursuing long-term vocational ministry.
- To work in partnership with organizations that need human resources to be more effective in their ministry.

Mission Statement

To strategically train, equip, and mobilize Azusa Pacific University graduates to serve with Christ-based community development and/or mission organizations that work with those who are spiritually and physically in need, particularly in least or unreached populations.

Purpose Statement

To provide an opportunity for recent graduates to serve in full-time ministry for two years or more with a Christ-centered global organization. G.A.P Years also serves as a catalyst for graduates who want to serve vocationally.

Program Core Values

- *Least Reached* - The program will focus on the least-reached/unreached parts of the world. Least-reached is defined as people groups that have limited access to the Gospel message and who are also living in physical poverty. They are often considered the least important in their respective society.
- *Intentionally Christ-Centered* - To intentionally send graduates to spread the gospel message to people groups who have not heard.
- *Incarnational* – To look for ministries who desire to live contextually within the culture they serve and yet remain agents of Christ-based life transformation.
- *Strategic* - A directed and specific purpose and vision for the program that includes strategy in how students are mobilized to serve alongside people groups, regions, and organizations.
- *Partnership* – To work with selected organizations and graduates to facilitate healthy, interdependent, and on-going relationships between all who are involved. Major focus will be on assisting in the vision of the national ministry team.
- *Long-Term* – To focus on developing long-term disciples for the kingdom.
- *Missional* - The purpose is to spread the Gospel message and meet physical/material needs. The focus is on whole person development.



HOW G.A.P. Years WORKS

The application process begins each Fall semester and it includes completing an application, submitting references, and a number of interviews. After a thorough screening process, a select number of applicants will form that year's G.A.P. Years cohort. Upon entering the program, G.A.P. Years staff help applicants select an approved organization, apply to work with that organization, and provide support and encouragement throughout the preparation process. There is consistent and intense time spent with students to ensure that they are as sufficiently prepared for the two-year mission/service experience. This includes training, mentorship, and guidance on financial management.

WHAT AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY WILL PROVIDE

In addition to personal support and development, Azusa Pacific University will provide finances for G.A.P. Years students by making financial contributions toward their student loans while serving overseas.

If a graduate does not have student loans or is able to defer their loans, APU will still provide finances over the two-year period.

Benefits of offering financial and loan assistance:

- This significantly aids volunteers as they are trying to obtain full financial support to go on the mission field.
- This removes some additional obstacles that volunteers face when considering their time of service.

Upon completion of the two years, APU communicates with the graduates in regards to their plans and next steps. There will be continued mentorship and encouragement, however, after their two year completion, financial assistance will no longer be provided. By this point, volunteers should have a solid understanding of fundraising and will work more directly with their organization in regard to future intentions to serve.



CRITERIA FOR SELECTING STUDENTS

- Entering into senior year of college or recent alumni of APU.
- Have a strong call to serve in cross-cultural missions among the least reached/unreached.
- Have had significant local, national, and/or international experience through missions, study abroad, and other experiences.
- Actively participating in fellowship with other believers and self-initiated participation in global learning opportunities throughout their time at APU.
- Demonstrated leadership and initiative academically, personally, and professionally.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ORGANIZATIONS

G.A.P. Years works with specific organizations, based on the following criteria:

- They are working directly and intentionally with unreached/least reached people groups.
- The central purpose and message of these organizations are sharing Jesus Christ.
- They are involved in whole person development and outreach.
- They are involved in outreach that is strategic and that has a long-term presence.
- The organizations will send out G.A.P. Years volunteer with or to a team. Volunteers are not sent alone.
- They are working intentionally with the impoverished.

TIMELINE *See key dates at the end of this document*

Fall of Senior Year (September – December)

- Applications are accepted, and selection is made by mid-November.

Spring of Senior Year (January- May)

- Students begin weekly training, coaching, and mentorship.
- Students begin goal setting and working with their organization.
- Preparation and intensity increases as students are accepted on a team and start their fundraising.
- Students attend a one week intensive training in May.

Summer After Graduation

- Graduates continue to raise prayer support and financial support in preparation to depart for their service overseas in the following Fall.



IMPORTANT PROCESS DATES 2023-2024 | ATTENDANCE IS OBLIGATORY

October, 2023

Monday, Oct 2

Tuesday, Oct 3

Friday, Oct 20

Weeks of 10/17-11/11

GAP Years Information Session

GAP Years Information Session

Application Due

Initial & Final Interviews

Nov/Dec, 2023

Friday, Nov 17

Week of 12/15

Cohort Offers Extended

Cohort Offers Accepted

January, 2024

January 5-6

Wednesday, Jan 10

Weeks of 1/13-24

Wednesday, Jan 24

Cohort Retreat

Cohort Meeting *

Individual Mentoring Meetings**

Cohort Meeting*

February, 2024

Weeks of 2/1-28

Wednesday, Feb 7

Wednesday, Feb 21

Wednesday, Feb 28

Individual Mentoring Meetings**

Cohort Meeting*

Cohort Meeting*

Cohort Meeting*

March, 2024

Weeks of 3/1-31

Wednesday, Mar 13

Wednesday, Mar 27

Individual Mentoring Meetings**

Cohort Meeting*

Cohort Meeting*

April/May, 2024

Weeks of 4/1-27

Wednesday, Apr 10

Wednesday, Apr 24

Thursday, May 2

Individual Mentoring Meetings**

Cohort Meeting*

Cohort Meeting*

GAP Years and GE Teams Commissioning

*Cohort Meetings date and time will be established at a later date, depending on the cohort's availability. Duration is three hours. Attendance is obligatory.

**Mentoring is done individually, and appointments will be made available at a later date. Attendance is obligatory



TRAINING

Students will take part in training throughout the spring semester of their senior year. This training will focus on holistic development, developing a wellness plan, ministry plan, and other practical items. Topics will include:

Goal Setting

- What is my purpose for going?
- What would God like to accomplish in and through me?
- What are my expectations/assumptions?
- What are my personal goals and challenges?
- Who and where will I be serving?

Supporter updates

- How to write supporter update letters
- How to maintain relationships with those who are financially supporting your ministry

Spiritual constancy

- Developing Spiritual disciplines
- Setting up a support system
- Coping with things you will see and face
- Working among the unreached/least reached
- Accountability
- Self Care

Self- Leadership

- Wellness - being well spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically
- Values, Personal Mission Statement, knowing who you are

For more information regarding the program, please contact the G.A.P. Years team at gapyears@apu.edu. You can also call the Office of Service and Discipleship at 626-812-3027.