



Spirits Training
Entrepreneurship Program
for Underrepresented Professionals

PRESS/MEDIA KIT

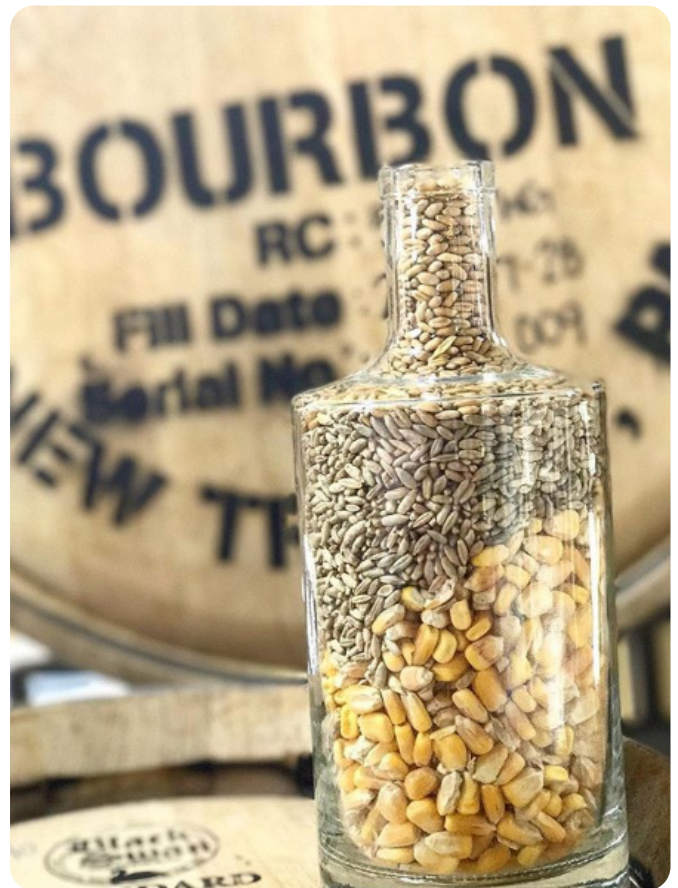




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A comprehensive education and training program to introduce candidates to the major segments of America's small businesses whose focus is on the production of spirits.

Overview

MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide underserved and underrepresented individuals with hands-on training and education, encouragement, and opportunities to enter the spirits community through a comprehensive internship program like no other in the alcohol beverage industry.

VISION STATEMENT:

To diversify the spirits & distilling industry - one face at a time - by providing a hands-on, comprehensive internship program for underrepresented professionals.

VALUES:

- To support, train, develop, and economically empower underserved and underrepresented individuals to advance diversity within the spirits industry to better reflect our society.
- To help the spirits industry prevent the harmful impacts of racism and cultural bias.
- To challenge and change structures that create inequality.
- To celebrate our diverse cultures.

ABOUT THE STEPUP FOUNDATION

The beverage alcohol sector captures the best of what Americans offer within a manufacturing community: passion, innovation, creativity, collaboration, independence, a marriage of skills and disciplines, and outreach among multiple industries from agriculture, to hospitality and tourism, to marketing and sales to industrial processes.

The pipeline to recruit qualified candidates is narrow. Underrepresented communities may lack knowledge or training to access this beverage sector.

The purpose of STEPUP is to increase talent through facilitation of workplace diversity. Specifically, STEPUP, working with distilleries and wholesalers throughout the United States, will provide a comprehensive, hands-on training program with a living stipend and provide job exposure for those of different races, color, national origins, abilities, genders, and sexual orientations.

Successful interns will bring passion, motivation, and an ability to immerse in a program for up to a year, which will expose candidates to all facets of owning and operating a distillery, including working with a distributor.

The STEPUP Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation, provides underserved and underrepresented individuals with training, encouragement, and opportunities to enter the spirits community through a comprehensive internship program.

Facts

501(C)(3)

2
INTERNS
IN 2022 & 2023

10+
INTERNS
IN FUTURE

8
MONTH
PROGRAM

3
DISTILLERIES

1
DISTRIBUTOR

The STEPUP Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation, provides underserved and underrepresented individuals with training, encouragement, and opportunities to enter the craft spirits community through a comprehensive internship program.

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Initially, two applicants will matriculate through the program in 2022 and in 2023, with the anticipation of additional interns in the future. Growing the number of placements per year will be contingent on donor funding, with the expectation of supporting 10+ interns per year.

Interns, mentors, distilleries, and wholesalers are considered by application process. Applications are reviewed by a Selection Committee and final selection is by the STEPUP Board of Directors. Each intern will be assigned a mentor, and matriculate for 8-12 weeks at up to three distilleries and one wholesaler during the course of 2024.



Bios

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors plays a pivotal role to ensure the overall success of the program, from working with subject matter experts to developing and executing the most comprehensive spirits curriculum, to selecting interns, distilleries, and mentors, to providing appropriate resources and oversight to carry out the STEPUP mission. Through its gift of time and talent, the board works hard to earn the trust and respect of interns, distilleries, mentors, and the industry at large. The board agrees that the industry should more closely mirror the community of spirits producers/owners/operators and those consumers who enjoy our products. It will advance that effort throughout many years to come. While board members will come and go, the focus will remain on changing the face of the industry, one intern at a time.



David Cid

Board Member

Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, David began his professional journey through various management roles in the hotel industry. From Finance and HR to F&B, the hospitality industry paved the way for a career that has led him across the globe. In early 2008, David decided on a new challenge and entered the spirits industry. At first, focusing on ambassadorship and the development of educational tools, his role swiftly evolved into developing the premium rum portfolio for Bacardi Ltd. Including new brands like the Single Cane Estates Collection, the Facundo Rum Collection, and the revamping of the multi-million dollar Bacardi Rum Brand, amongst others. Featured on shows the likes of 60 Minutes and Bar Rescue, David is also a frequent lecturer at Universities across the US and Europe and is an Internationally renowned and awarded expert on Sugarcane Spirits.



Rebecca L. Harris

Board Member, Secretary

Becky graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. As a chemical engineer, she worked at companies like Amoco, YDK America, and CIBA, specializing in industrial processes and production systems. Becky brought this knowledge and applied it to something she loved—making the finest distilled spirits in Virginia. Wine, grains, berries, it matters not. If there is a fruit, vegetable, tuber with starch or sugar in it, you can bet that Becky will try to distill it.

Bios

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CONTINUED)



Julie Kinch

Board Member, Treasurer

Julie is an experienced business leader and legal advisor with more than 20 years of executive experience in the alcohol beverage industry. She is the former SVP, Chief Legal Officer for Heineken USA, and played a key role in the strategic and operational management of the company. Prior to Heineken, Julie was VP, General Counsel for Remy Cointreau USA.

Julie was Heineken's first female SVP and Executive Team member and has pioneered diversity and inclusion in the beer industry. As the founder of the Heineken Women's Leadership Forum, she transformed the female representation of Heineken USA. Today, as CEO/Founder of JK Leadership Advisors, LLC she works to help companies and executives promote and support female leadership.

Julie is a regular speaker on issues of corporate culture and diversity and has been featured at executive and academic conferences and was recognized as one of Westchester County's "Women in Business", primarily for her work in the area of gender diversity. Julie holds a BS in Finance from Georgetown University and a JD from Boston College Law School.



Margie A.S. Lehrman

Board Member, President

Margie A.S. Lehrman, CEO, has guided the American Craft Spirits Association (ACSA) since she joined the team in August 2015, shortly after ACSA launched in 2013. ACSA is the only U.S. national non-profit trade group, created and governed by craft spirits producers, whose mission is to elevate and advocate for the community of craft spirits producers. Before joining ACSA, Margie was a senior attorney at Lehrman Beverage Law, PLLC, a firm that concentrates in the area of beer, wine, and spirits law.

Margie blends a regulatory and administrative law background with more than 20 years of senior management association experience. Previously, she worked for the American Association for Justice, (formerly the Association of Trial Lawyers of America), a membership organization with then over 50,000 members. As its Chief Operating Officer, Margie provided leadership and strategic management to ensure that the organization had proper operational controls to effectively grow the organization while maintaining financial strength and operating efficiency. Early in her professional career, Margie worked for the Foreign Policy Association in New York where she developed and executed a national community outreach program. Margie received her J.D. from California Western School of Law in San Diego. Margie earned an undergraduate degree at Marymount College in Tarrytown, New York, and studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, France, graduating magna cum laude with a joint degree in International Service and Politics.

Bios

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CONTINUED)



Chris Montana

Board Member

Chris Montana began his professional career in electoral politics. Starting first as a trainer with a non-partisan organization focused on grassroots advocacy, lobbying, and electoral strategy, Chris then moved to a congressional campaign as a field director, and ultimately landed in Washington, D.C. as a congressional aide. Chris left the congressional office to pursue his education, graduated first in his class at the University of D.C., and then moved back to Minnesota to attend Hamline University Law School. After graduating from law school, Chris joined the law firm of Fredrikson & Byron. While still in law school, Chris had an idea to create a microdistillery in the heart of his hometown. In 2013, he and his wife Shanelle founded Du Nord Craft Spirits (now Du Nord Social Spirits) in south Minneapolis.

Chris and Shanelle led the MN distiller's guild in its first efforts to change the then entrenched three-tier laws in Minnesota. With the help of many other distilleries in Minnesota, the guild was successful in passing cocktail room legislation allowing for unlimited cocktail sales and a restricted form of bottle sales. Chris currently serves as chair of the legislative committee for the MN guild.



Chris Underwood

Board Member

Chris Underwood has dedicated his career working for Young's Market Company (a subsidiary of Young's Holdings), one of the largest wine and spirits distributors in the U.S. Starting in the Los Angeles warehouse in 1996, he went on to become the Chief Executive Officer starting in 2011. As the fifth generation to lead Young's Market Company, Chris oversaw all Young's Market's business operations. With the joint venture with RNDG in 2019, the Young's Market operations were transferred to the RNDG Management team. Chris now serves on the Board of Managers of RNDG West. Chris currently serves as the CEO of Young's Holdings and is a member of the Board of Directors of Young's Holdings, and as a STEPUP Mentor to 2022 intern, Yakntoro Udoumoh.

Chris is a graduate of the University of Southern California, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications and won the 1990 NCAA Men's Volleyball National Championship. Chris is also a Board Member of the Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA), a member of Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) of San Diego, and serves on the OM Foundation Board of Directors.

Bios

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CONTINUED)



Ingrid Wetzell

Board Member

A native of the Dominican Republic, Ingrid Wetzell moved to the United States in the early 80s to study hotel and restaurant management. She holds a Bachelor of Science from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and later graduated from the Executive Development program at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Over the course of her career, Ingrid has worked in the hospitality business as an assistant general manager and later as a human resources director; these positions took her to the states of New Jersey, New York City, and Washington DC. She later relocated to Lake Tahoe to pursue work in the gaming industry's Human Resources sector.

Although Ingrid has over twenty years of experience in human resources, she is a well-rounded professional who has also worked in public safety, engineering and surveying, and food manufacturing.

Ingrid was recognized by the Nevada Women's Fund as one of Nevada's Women of Achievement in 1996 and is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management as well as the National Academy of Engineering. She has also served on the board for the Boys and Girls Club and has been active in Relay for Life.

Ingrid enjoys spending time with her family, music, traveling, and cruising around the world.

Bios

ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board members support the work of the Board of Directors, through collaboration, thought leadership, and insight into multiple disciplines within the industry.



Nicole Austin

Advisory Board Member

When Nicole Austin was hand selected by distilling icon Dave Pickerell to be the first employee for his spirits consulting firm in 2012, the spirits industry took note of her fresh thinking and strategic vision. When The New York Times dubbed her “Bourbon’s Master of the Craft” in 2014, the industry applauded her distilling expertise. When the rye whiskey she helped create won Double Gold at the 2015 San Francisco Spirits Competition, they celebrated her creativity and innovation. And in 2018, when she was named General Manager and Distiller for Cascade Hollow Distilling Co., Austin knew she’d found a home in Tennessee.

Nicole Austin graduated from Manhattan College with a major in Chemical Engineering in 2006, before landing her position as a Master Blender for Kings County Distillery in 2010. She then joined The Oak View Spirits consulting firm where she handled everything from raw material sourcing to contract negotiations. Most recently, Nicole served as a Project Commissioning Engineer for William Grant & Sons at the Tullamore Distillery in Ireland. She’s also been a fierce advocate for the distilling industry as a founding board member of the American Craft Spirits Association and co-chair of Legislative, Convention and State Guild Committees.

In her role as General Manager and Distiller of Cascade Hollow Distilling Co. Nicole leads the strategic direction of the company, which means she has dual responsibilities across operations and marketing for the distillery and its whisky brands. Since joining the Cascade Hollow team, she’s been instrumental in the latest innovations from George Dickel—including George Dickel Bottled in Bond (Fall 2005) that launched in May 2019 and was awarded Whisky Advocate’s “Whisky of the Year” distinction in December 2019. Additionally, Bottled in Bond (Fall 2008) was awarded a 95 rating from Whisky Advocate, topping the 94 rating of the prior vintage. In March 2020, Nicole was also named as Artisan Spirit Magazine’s first ever “Distiller of the Year” where the selection committee weighed Nicole against several selection guidelines including “willing to push boundaries while still understanding and learning from tradition” to “industry advocate to customers and others outside the boundary of the distillery.” In Fall 2020, Nicole launched the Cascade Moon Whisky series—a brand new line of limited edition whiskies that pays homage to the distillery’s history while setting the tone for the future of the whisky category. The industry has celebrated both releases from the line, with Cascade Moon Edition No. 1 awarded with 92 rating from Wine Enthusiast and Cascade Moon Edition No. 2 being called “one of the best whisky releases of 2021” by Paste Magazine. In early 2021, Nicole won the “Distillery Manager” award from Icons of Whisky Awards.

Logo

Logos can be downloaded at this link <https://stepupinternship.org/media/>

MASTER LOGO

For primary use in most cases.



STACKED VERSION

For use only when horizontal space is limited and vertical orientation is necessary.



LOGOMARK ONLY

For use without the tagline.



BLACK

For use when the full color logo is not possible.



WHITE

For use when the full color logo is not possible and there is a dark background.



Images

High resolution images can be downloaded at this link <https://stepupinternship.org/media/>



Images

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Videos



Video is at this link <https://youtu.be/M1AraBGXuXo>



NBC Washington - News4, Virginia Distiller Gives Opportunity to Underrepresented:
Video is at this link <https://bit.ly/STEPUPNews4>

Articles



STEPPING UP TO BETTER THE CRAFT

STEPUb Foundation Brings Diversity to Craft Spirits Industry, Seeks Class of 2024 Participants

When the STEPUb Foundation was created in 2020, it was to part with previous and current leaders of the American Craft Spirits Association. It was done so in hopes of finding a solution to an issue of great concern: Chris Montrose of DuPont Social Spirits, and a STEPUb Foundation board member, needed attending his first distiller's conference and realized that, "I was the only Black guy in the room, I was the only Black person in the room." The May 2020 meeting of George Foust was an incredible turning point that further ignited a need and need to open up a larger conversation with colleagues about representation, participation,

access, and overall diversity, equity and inclusion. It became apparent that more space and access within the spirits industry needed to be created, and now was the time to "step up" and take action. STEPUb stands for Spirits Training Entrepreneurship Program for Underrepresented Professionals. The STEPUb Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation that provides understanding and underrepresented individuals with hands-on training, encouragement and opportunities to enter the craft spirits community through a comprehensive internship program. The program

is approximately eight months long and has the interns traveling to a host distillery, a specialty distillery, a distillery, one entry of our Cornerstone Tasting, and then each intern returns to their host distillery to complete a capstone project. STEPUb provides a comprehensive curriculum to aid and guide each DSP/underwriter with the education of the interns. Each intern is also assigned a mentor for the duration of the program. It is an intentional, practical, and holistic approach to educating and providing access to those of different races, ethnic, national origins, abilities, genders, and sexual orientations.

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Most Americans understand that a diverse workforce contributes to higher performance, innovation, creativity and overall growth for their businesses. But, the need for a program like STEPUb within the spirits industry is apparent not just from observations, but also from data. According to the 2023 DEI Study conducted and published by Diversity and Women of the Vine and Spirits, and the 2020 Cornerstone Diversity Spotlight Report, "Of the industries that did the best job of attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, respondents said that BioPharma fell toward the bottom at about 38% compared to other top industries like high tech (24%), healthcare (19%), and hospitality (10%)." Some of the top reasons for potential candidates not considering a career in the low alcohol industry include "lack of diversity, equity and inclusion (49%)." Since 2015, just 7.4% of venture capital financing went to all sectors in the United States went to Black and Latin founders. "Only 2.7% of global venture funding went to female-only founders, a decline from 2017." STEPUb was created to address these very issues.

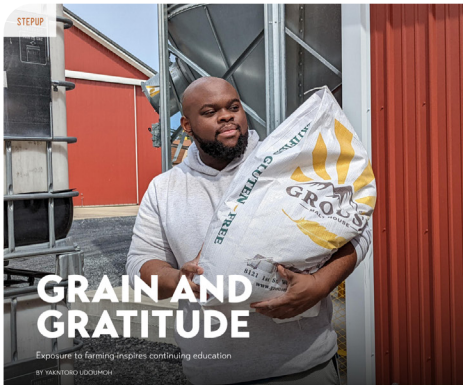
With sustainable growth in mind, the STEPUb internally has two interns enter and successfully complete the program each year. 2022 alumni "Tati" Lukimon and Erin Lee have secured positions as distillers at Squawnee Spirits and FEW Spirits, respectively. Lee shared, "There has been much to be learned through STEPUb that has been immediately useful—understanding distillery processes helped me to understand light through training faster. Now as I've become more comfortable in my role, I am able to contribute to FEW (Spirits) using the knowledge I've gained through STEPUb." The Class of 2023, Ashley Grayson and Amy Sather, will have successfully completed this year's program in September. Each intern, while on their own individual journey, made great strides during the course of this year, greatly exceeding expectations with their exceptional performance. There is no doubt that they will each land their unique experience and learn to the overall betterment of the industry as a whole. Of course, the success of the interns and the program does not happen overnight in a vacuum. Many folks have graciously donated their time to mentor, opened up their distilleries to host, and provided financial contributions to ensure that the foundation is able to carry out

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY

its mission. For Tati Lukimon, a 2022 mentee, "Being a mentor for the STEPUb Foundation was one of the most rewarding experiences in my career. My return was about a distillery in her down job before the official graduation, and she continues to strive and excel with the incredible support of her colleagues, the STEPUb Foundation team and the American Craft Spirits Association members. I am incredibly proud to be a supporter of STEPUb." The craft spirits community is filled with dynamic, kind, and innovative leaders with decades of experience. In 2024, who will be next to STEPUb? Applicants for the Class of 2024 are now open and close Oct. 4, 2023. Please email, phone and DuPont/Social Spirits applicants can apply on the STEPUb website at stepub.org. Any questions regarding details about the program can be directed to Tati@A.L.Lukimon, STEPUb President at tati@stepub.org or Ashley at ash@stepub.org.

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https://issuu.com/americancraftspirits/docs/craftspirits_septoct2023/30



"Let's show you around the farm," Chad Butters, founder of Eight Oaks Farm Distillery, equipped on a black pickup truck, the number eight, the logo of Eight Oaks Farm Distillery, emboldened proudly on the front of the structure, was cocked at an angle, almost signifying a metamorphosis to infinity in terms of the structure's view. All of Eight Oaks' previous year's grain harvest was kept in these stainless steel silos and transferred over to smaller silos near the distillery when needed. The truck stopped and Chad opened the driver side door. I followed out on the passenger side. Today's lesson started as an intricate game of attempting not to fall flat on my face in supposedly non-slip mats as we were attempting to listen to Chad and

seemingly grow larger as Chad and I approached closer in a red pickup truck. The number eight, the logo of Eight Oaks Farm Distillery, emboldened proudly on the front of the structure, was cocked at an angle, almost signifying a metamorphosis to infinity in terms of the structure's view. All of Eight Oaks' previous year's grain harvest was kept in these stainless steel silos and transferred over to smaller silos near the distillery when needed. The truck stopped and Chad opened the driver side door. I followed out on the passenger side. Today's lesson started as an intricate game of attempting not to fall flat on my face in supposedly non-slip mats as we were attempting to listen to Chad and

importance of managing grain temperature and humidity. "Watch this bucket here!" Chad instructed, "and I'm going over here to turn this one on." I leaned forward while Chad reached around a corner towards another silo. I pushed a green button on a gray metal box. A fan spun up producing a strong gust inside the silo. Apparently, Chad had begun this monthly session of cooling and drying what berries. Once a month during dry and dry conditions, the Eight Oaks crew fans their grain, blowing massive amounts of cubic feet of cold dry air per minute to prevent grain spoilage. Encouragingly, Chad's warm humanity had never wavered such as process at any distillery that I had visited, but I imagine it would be commonplace

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... all of these aspects of grain storage came from a cold morning trip to a farm in New Tripoli. Something I would have never experienced without ACSA's STEPUb Foundation.

on any viable farm. With Chad's encouragement that all staff participate in continuing education, I delved deeper into the topic of grain spoilage on my own time, reading scientific papers and notes. Reassuring in my wonder was how kind of grain spoilage may have occurred at craft distilleries during the seemingly monitoring work stoppage at many distilleries due to varying pandemic restrictions across the nation and what could have been done to prevent these hypothetical grain spoilages at small distilleries without cooled grain silos. In an attempt to communicate without any staff participation, two types of spoilage appeared predominantly in warm humid grain storage conditions: mold, from the Aspergillus



https://issuu.com/americancraftspirits/docs/craftspirit_mayjune2022/36

Podcasts

Craft Spirits Podcast: STEPUP Foundation: <https://bit.ly/STEPUPpodcast>

Contact



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<https://www.facebook.com/STEPUPinternship/>

QUESTIONS

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