



November 10, 2014

Dear MAAN members!

It is with a special level of excitement that I write to you today. Not just because it is Friday, but this is my first opportunity to write you via the MAAN newsletter as one of the co-chairs. Along with Jon May, I am very excited to partner with him and all of you in helping to make the advising community that much stronger. We are decentralized in nature as the units might do different things, but I really am strengthened by the way everyone comes together for the one common goal: ensuring our students are served in the most beneficial way.

As you are reading this note, I will have just wrapped up instructing participants of the MAC program in the Advising 102 session about policies and degree components. Along with the other instructors and the members of the committee who have put together the MAC program, we are excited that you as MAAN members have taken advantage of the certificate program and have let your colleagues know about it as well. The numbers for the session keep getting higher and we have been able to partner up with the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Admissions to assist in the instruction of sessions where their expertise is most beneficial.

Best of luck to you all as you navigate through the spring semester registration period. Please do make certain to take time for yourself between appointments. I am very happy to be a part of this community and wish you all the best for the remainder of the semester. If you have any questions about MAAN, please do not hesitate to contact me!

Assad Khan & Jon May
MAAN Co-Chairs

MAAN Events

November 11/12-1pm/SUB I, 3A - Learn Over Lunch: Degree Works and Graduation Audits

November 14/5:30pm/Bowl America in Burke - MAAN Social Event

November 18/12-1pm/Johnson Center Dance Studio - Tai Chi for Well-Being

November 20/3-5pm/Merten Hall 3300 - [Advising 105: Working with Special Populations](#)

November 21/10am-noon/Merten Hall 2001 - [Advising 101: Academic Advising Foundations](#)

Please remember to register for any Mason Advisor Certificate modules in advance!

Other Professional Development Opportunities

Mason CARES Suicide Prevention Training
Wednesday, November 12
10:00am-12:00pm
SUB I, Room 3129

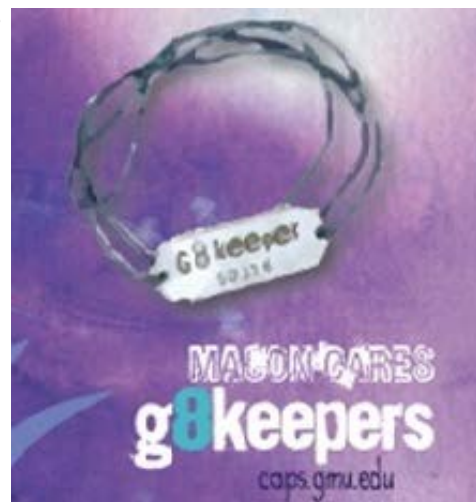
Each year, approximately 1,100 college students die by suicide in the United States. To support members of the Mason community in helping students access assistance, Counseling and Psychological Services at Mason offers Mason CARES (Campus Awareness, Referral and Education for Suicide Prevention), a two-hour "gatekeeper" training. This program informs participants of the warning signs of suicide and coaches them in how to talk about suicide with and respond to students in crisis as well as how to guide them toward obtaining professional assistance.

Mason Cares Gatekeeper training helps participants learn:

- Why people attempt suicide
- Warning signs of suicide
- Myths about suicide
- How to talk to a person about suicide
- How to respond to a person in crisis
- How to make a referral

Faculty/Staff members who complete the training will receive a Certificate of Completion as a gatekeeper for suicide prevention at George Mason University.

Please register [here](#). This training can count towards one of your MAC electives!





Call for Proposals

National Academic Advising Association Region 2 Conference
March 18-20, 2015
The Omni Richmond Hotel, Richmond, VA

Submit your proposal today! Region 2 is seeking a wide range of presentation topics relating to academic advising. We encourage academic advisors, faculty and advising administrators at all levels of experience to submit proposals.

Possible sessions for a conference centered on this theme may include:

- Utilizing research to develop effective advising programs
- Innovative initiatives that connect advising theory to practice
- Collaborating with faculty and administrators to support student persistence
- Best practices for helping diverse groups of students succeed
- Using assessment to enrich the advising experience

Proposal submissions do not have to match the theme- all topics are welcome! Proposals will be evaluated based on relevance to current issues in advising, appeal to conference participants, creativity, ingenuity, and applicability for participants after the conference. And don't forget - a "Best of Region 2 Award" could help you attend the Annual Conference in Las Vegas next year!

Proposals are due by Friday, November 21. Please visit the [website](#) for additional information.

Faculty-Staff Enrichment Day
Living the Mason Values
Tuesday, December 2
Johnson Center

MAAN members will be presenting during the breakout sessions on "Putting Students First: Tips from the Academic Advisor Network."

Please [register](#) in advance.

Save the Dates!

Advising Roundtable

Thursday, March 26, 12-2pm

University Life Professional Symposium
Monday, January 12



For Adults Only!

The following commentary on supporting Mason's adult students was written by Hermione Picket, Coordinator, Adult Learning Programs in the Office of Undergraduate Education.

Spring registration is an anxious time for all of our students, but it can be especially anxious for Mason's adult students. An adult learner is generally characterized as being age 25 and older and who has work, family, and other extracurricular obligations in addition to that of being a student. They may be returning to the college scene after an extended absence or entering the higher education system for the first time. They may be a military veteran, a single parent, or a caregiver for a family member. All of these responsibilities add to the other stresses of being a student.

Why should we be concerned about this population? Well, according to [Mason's 2013-14 Factbook](#), 23% of our undergraduate students were adults over the age of 25. That's nearly one quarter of our undergraduate population, an especially significant number when considering how different these students are from their traditional-aged counterparts. As advisors, we should be aware of their academic needs and understand what helps to motivate them to degree completion. Adult students arrive with a particular set of issues and concerns that need to be addressed. These include:

- Ease of transfer credit process - Adults who are returning to an institution of higher learning want to know that previous credits earned will transfer to the new institution.
- Flexible program design and course delivery - Adults are seeking in-demand programs and courses that are convenient for their busy schedules. Fortunately, Mason delivers courses in a variety of formats: face-to-face, hybrid, and courses that are offered completely online.
- Recognition of experience and work-based learning already obtained - Obtaining credit for prior work experience is very important for the adult learner. Institutions who recognize relevant work experience that can be transformed into academic credit would certainly ease the stress of costs associated with financing their education and perhaps shorten their time to degree completion.
- Issues of self-efficacy - Adult students who have been out of the higher education system for a long period of time may feel apprehensive and unsure that they have what it takes to now be a successful student.



What we can do:

- Advisors can assist with the academic and motivational support these students crave by combining empathy in conversations with students with engagement in their plans for academic success. Sometimes active listening is an important tool for change.
- Advisors need to engage in active dialogue with the adult student about their aspirations and limitations in order to aid them in assessing various pathways to their chosen field.
- Advisors will need to provide academic and motivational advising that is supportive of the life and career goals of adult learners. Although their academic integration is of utmost importance, adults still need to feel that they are a part of their institution and that their institution cares about them.

As adult learners continue to enter our campuses, seeking to reinvent themselves, let us be mindful of the specific needs of this unique population. As advisors, it is imperative that we consider just how different this group is from the traditional college student. Researchers suggest that post-secondary institutions adopt a model for serving adult learners that relate broadly to their real-life issues such as life and career planning, financing, assessment of learning outcomes, the teaching-learning process, student support systems, technology, and strategic partnerships. Meeting the adult student where they are in most need will help them adjust to the institution and persist to degree completion.

Advisor Spotlight

The Advisor Spotlight is back! This month, we'd like to introduce you to Lindsey Thomas, the new academic advisor for Sociology, Anthropology, Religious Studies, and Philosophy in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

What is your background/education?

I received my B.A in Sociology from North Carolina State University and my M.Ed in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of South Carolina.



How long have you been an advisor?

This is my first full time advising position! In Graduate school my assistantships dealt with advising, retention, student leadership and academic success but this is my first position solely focused on Academic Advising.

How did you get involved in advising?

My first experience in Academic Advising was working with non-degree seeking students in a program for individuals with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. I worked with them to help connect their career goals to course work, and also with faculty members to help integrate students in our program into the University classroom setting. I really loved helping students recognize and work towards their aspirations and am glad I get to work with students at Mason to do the same!

What are your advising interests?

I really enjoy the developmental side of advising. I think that everyone has the potential for growth and I enjoy learning from students and helping them to recognize their own voice and ability to handle the situations that life brings.

What are your career goals/aspirations?

This is a great question! I would eventually like to pursue a Ph.D but would like to gain more experience beforehand.

What is something surprising about you?

I love to YouTube baby animals and I'm slightly obsessed with chameleons. I think they're the funniest little things!

Current Issues in Advising



Athletics Advisers' Ethical Dilemma
The Chronicle highlights the challenges advisors for athletics have in determining the appropriate amount of support for a particularly vulnerable population.

[Read more](#)



Connected Learning
The up sides of social media

[Read more](#)

[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to bbanning@gmu.edu by bbanning@gmu.edu | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

