

# "Academic Advisors as Partners in Student Success"

Amy Vaillancourt Mandt (CHSS), Kate Keeney (CVPA), Jada Crocker (CHSS), and Jordan Emely (Carter) were guests on *Keystone Concepts in Teaching: A Higher Education Podcast from the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning*. This podcast is "focused on discussing and sharing impactful teaching strategies that support all students and faculty."



Jordan Emely shared about the experience, "Being able to participate in a podcast that is tailored to faculty members and educators across the country, it was nice to give a "student services" side of the academic affairs side of the house that advising lives in. It felt like a great opportunity for us to talk about the breadth of work that goes into academic advising that isn't just telling students what courses to schedule for, and validated the importance of instructors and faculty understanding the work we do so that we can each help one another."

You can listen to Season 4, Episode 32 on the [podcast website](#).

## 2026 Outstanding Achievement Award Recipients

Congratulations to Jancy Templeton (CEHD), who won the Exceptional Support Award! She and Kayla Turner (winner of the Jade Barricelli Spirit of Advising Excellence Award, CEHD) were recognized at the award ceremony that took place on April 14. You can view a recording of the live stream on the [Outstanding Achievement Awards page](#).



## Advisor Spotlight: I-Chun "Nicky" Wu

Nicky Wu has been at George Mason for about three years. She is an advisor in the Honors College working closely with students in Applied Computer Science, Computer Science, Information Technology, and Cybersecurity Engineering. She also teaches HNRS 110: Principles of Research and Inquiry and HNRS 131: Sustainable Tourism for All. One thing she enjoys most is helping students connect classroom learning to real-world issues and professional skills. Before Mason, Nicky worked for seven years at different universities as a faculty member focusing on sustainable tourism and protected area management. Outside of work, she enjoys watching college basketball, traveling, food, and spending time with her cats.



## Welcome!

Say hello to folks who are new to the academic advising community at George Mason!

**Meg Kline** and **Latonya Wallace**, new academic advisors for Information Sciences & Technology, CEC

**Kate Hilden**, new academic advisor for Elementary Education, CEHD

**Andre Ragsdale**, new academic advisor for History & Art History, CHSS

**Andrew Wahnsiedler**, new academic advisor for Statistics, CEC

**Kristin Zipprich** and **Hannah Foster**, new academic advisors for Costello College of Business

**Megan Pirog**, new associate director of student and academic affairs, CEHD

**Cody Green**, new academic advisor for Computer Science, CEC

**Nicole Gagnon**, new academic advisor for Systems Engineering and Operations Research, CEC

CEIE's advisor Jess Yon welcomed her first child, Waverly Irene, in June 2025. Congratulations, Jess!

## Advisor Mentorship Program

AMP (Advisor Mentorship Program) is back in full swing this year thanks to co-chairs Julio Diaz-Carroll (CPH) and Joshua Fletcher (CEC). Julio says that he has been trying to get involved with AMP since realizing the value of mentorship. He connected with Joshua to revamp the program after it had been on a short hiatus. Joshua says that being a co-chair is another great way to be a leader and represent his college. He also states, "In addition, I really enjoy our open conversations about how advising is going amongst our different departments."

Mentor/mentee check-in meetings take place both in-person (with food!) and virtually. The experience has had its challenges and rewards, and the co-chairs look forward to making the program even better for next year. Overall, the feedback from the participants has been positive. Julio says, "Advisors enjoy connecting with people, so participants have said they enjoy having a professional connection with their peers outside our MAAN meetings."

AMP is a part of MAAN (Mason Academic Advisor Network), and you can find out more about the program on the [AMP website](#).



Pictured L-R: John Hwang (Costello), Kate Keeney (CVPA), Emily DiCecco (CEC), Irma Ailon Rodriguez (COS), Vernell Wilks (CEC), Julio Diaz-Carroll (CPH). Photo by: Joshua Fletcher (CEC)

## Congratulations

Michelle Steiner would like to congratulate Jill Manuel on her appointment as a Research Affiliate with the Center for the Advancement of Well-Being (CWB)!

"Jada Crocker, amazing academic advisor in Criminology, Law and Society, earned her PhD in Education, with a concentration in Higher Education, this spring! Congrats, Dr. Crocker!"  
– Erin McSherry (CHSS)

"Congratulations to CYSE Advisor Nicole Gray on reaching her one-year anniversary with the CYSE Department in May! Her help with our Senior Design Competition and Graduation Celebration was instrumental to the success of both events."  
– Lisa Nolder (CEC)

Scan the QR code to visit the [Advisor Accolades and Announcements Newsletter website](#). There you can also find a link to the submission form if you would like to submit an announcement, shout out, or nomination for the advisor spotlight for an upcoming issue.

[advising.gmu.edu/for-advisors](https://advising.gmu.edu/for-advisors)



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