

ACADEMIC ADVISING

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Administration

- Jeannie Brown Leonard, Dean

Undergraduate Academic Advising

Vision

Academic advising at George Mason University is an integral part of the educational process that enhances student learning and development by supporting, teaching, and connecting students to curricular and co-curricular experiences relevant to becoming an exemplary Mason Graduate: an engaged, reflective citizen and well-rounded scholar who is prepared to act.

Mission

The academic advising community at George Mason University commits to creating on-going, personal and purposeful educational partnerships with students and colleagues. Advisors contribute to student success by providing resources and by teaching students to develop the skills required to become life-long learners capable of effective self-advocacy. Dedicated to putting students first and to being responsive, academic advisors:

- Support students in setting and reaching educational goals.
- Teach students to engage in a process of self-reflection and self-discovery, guiding them to find degree pathways that match their interests, skills, and abilities.
- Connect students to campus resources and co-curricular opportunities to integrate learning and experience.

Students should meet regularly with an academic advisor to discuss academic programs, educational goals, and career plans. Individual departments establish their own advising processes; students should check with their departments for the appropriate procedures. For example, some departments require that students meet with an advisor prior to registration each semester. With their advisors, students plan academic programs to meet the general university degree requirements and specific requirements within their major fields. It is the student's responsibility to read the catalog and know and fulfill the requirements of a specific baccalaureate degree. To assist in the advising process, Mason provides a computerized degree evaluation. Students should access their individualized reports through Patriot Web. It remains the student's responsibility to seek approval for any program change so that the computerized degree plan may be kept current.

An advisor locator is available online (<https://advising.gmu.edu/current-students/advisor-locator>). During their freshman and sophomore years, students in the Honors College plan their schedules with honors advisors.

Every department coordinates advising of its honors students through the Honors College.

Every student should meet with an advisor to plan a program of study. This meeting should cover the following:

- Review of requirements for the degree and major the student has chosen
- Review of the student's record including any deficiencies which must be corrected
- Discuss career or graduate study options open to the student enrolled in such a program
- Assess the student's suitability to major in the chosen discipline.

Students changing majors are encouraged to meet with an advisor in the new major. They may change majors by filing a Change/Declaration of Academic Program Form available from the Office of the University Registrar. These are minimal advising procedures to be followed in all undergraduate segments of the university; individual units may require additional advising sessions.

Student Academic Affairs – Advising, Retention, and Transitions (StAAART)

Web: saa.gmu.edu (<http://saa.gmu.edu>)

Student Academic Affairs – Advising, Retention, and Transitions, is the umbrella unit for the Center for Academic Advising, Retention, and Transitions (CAART). This unit rules on all academic actions submitted by undergraduate undeclared and nondegree students.

StAAART supports students to thrive in transitions.¹ The unit provides students with the tools and guidance to help them achieve their academic and personal goals. StAAART contributes to student success and degree completion by teaching, supporting, and connecting students to curricular and co-curricular experiences relevant to becoming an exemplary Mason Graduate: an engaged, reflective citizen and well-rounded scholar who is prepared to act. StAAART also serves the university community as a centralized source of information on current academic policies, procedures, and student success initiatives.

We value each student as a distinct individual. Our interactions are guided by an understanding of college student development, campus resources, and are designed to support student learning. We focus on students' academic engagement and performance, well-being, and interpersonal connections. Our collaborations are characterized by a comprehensive commitment to student success.

StAAART collaborates widely with campus colleagues to promote successful student transitions. Through our work we provide effective academic and transition advising, offer transition courses, develop student leaders, design and implement retention initiatives, identify and solve problems, improve communication, and influence policies related to academic success and degree completion.

¹ Schreiner, L. A., Louis, M. C., & Nelson, D. D. (Eds.). (2012). *Thriving in transitions: A research-based approach to college student success*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

Center for Academic Advising, Retention, and Transitions (CAART)

Academic Advising

CAART staff members assist students making the transition to Mason, including those who have not yet declared a major or are considering a change of major as well as those terminated from their academic program. Students are encouraged to make an appointment for information about Mason Core requirements, programs, policies, procedures, and other academic concerns. The Center also provides information and guidance for students who are interested in pre-professional programs in the health fields. Advising is available by appointment; consult the website (<https://advising.gmu.edu>) for hours of operation.

Health Professions Advising

Web: prehealth.gmu.edu (<http://prehealth.gmu.edu>)

Health Professions Advising is committed to providing degree-seeking students with the tools that will help them to achieve success. It provides the primary contact for undergraduate students and alumni interested in pursuing postgraduate work in a medical field (allopathic and osteopathic medicine, dentistry, optometry, physician assistant, pharmacy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and veterinary medicine) and comprehensive developmental advising.

Retention and Student Success

Web: retention.gmu.edu (<http://retention.gmu.edu>)

Retention and Student Success provides leadership on planning and implementing campus-wide retention and degree-completion efforts in collaboration with academic colleges, the Division of University Life, and other campus stakeholders. Together with academic advisors, faculty, and staff, we aim to identify challenges to students' success and provide resources and support to ensure a more seamless path to degree completion. Specifically, the Retention and Student Success team manages key retention and advising technologies and supports academic units in leveraging these systems to support retention and degree-completion goals. Retention and Student Success also engages in research, direct outreach to students at risk for leaving the university, assessment of student success initiatives, and provides support in assessing academic advising and professional development among academic advisors campus-wide.

Transitions - UNIV Courses and Programs

Web: transitions.gmu.edu (<http://transitions.gmu.edu>)

The Transitions functions within CAART include academic UNIV courses, student leadership development, and Project Peak (an outdoor extended orientation program for new students). *UNIV Courses and Programs'* mission is to assist and mobilize students to craft a successful college experience and prepare for their future. Our courses serve all undergraduate students as they transition into college, determine their major/solidify their career path, become strong scholars and student leaders, and prepare for life after college. The curriculum in the first year is supported by Peer Advisors who co-teach UNIV 100 Introduction to Mason and facilitate learning experiences through Project Peak.