AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL
THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT

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On the cover: Artist rendering of the exterior of CHSS’s state-of-the-art academic home and the surrounding Wilkins Plaza
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OUR SUPPORTERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

MAKING AN IMPACT
Dean’s Message

Education Grounded in What Makes Us Human

When I started at Mason in summer 2018, Robinson Hall A was still standing, robots weren’t delivering coffee and pizzas on campus, and Amazon hadn’t yet committed to bringing its second headquarters to Northern Virginia. We have seen significant changes, with more to come. Sixteen months later, two words encapsulate my experiences leading the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in this time of change: pride and exhilaration.

I feel pride in the outstanding accomplishments of our faculty and students. Our faculty’s research, scholarship, and creative activity were instrumental in Mason’s recently renewed classification as an R1-designated (very high research activity) university. The story featured in this report about our outsized successes in securing funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities is just one example of how our faculty regularly “punch above their weight” in research productivity. In addition, former President Ángel Cabrera awarded five Presidential Faculty Excellence Awards this year, and I am delighted that two of our faculty members were honored—Tyler Cowen for excellence in research and Christianne Esposito-Smythers for excellence in social impact.

We are equally proud of our students’ accomplishments. Our graduates take with them into the world an education grounded in an understanding of what makes us human—the very essence of the disciplines that comprise the teaching, research, and public service mission of this college. I hope the alumni stories featured here might lead you to ask: What can’t you do with a CHSS degree? Indeed!

Just as important, I am exhilarated that this college is a force for innovation in teaching and research on this campus and a leader in the humanities and social sciences nationally and internationally. The steel bones of the Fairfax Campus’s newest academic building, rising where Robinson Hall A once stood, are the perfect metaphor for the foundational role that this college plays in educating all Mason students. The college’s new academic home will most definitely be the “center of it all” on the Fairfax Campus. It will house many of the college’s academic units. It will also house innovative classrooms and, importantly, the Mason Innovation Exchange (MIX), a collaborative and innovative makerspace. The creation of new “neighborhoods” of disciplines that don’t currently enjoy physical proximity to each other will undoubtedly facilitate multi-disciplinary collaborations and creative partnerships we can’t foresee. This new building will inspire and support the field-defining accomplishments of our faculty and students as they realize Mason’s ambitions as a university for the world.

I take this opportunity to thank our faculty, staff, students, alumni, partners, donors, and advisory board for everything you do to support this college’s mission.

Ann Ardis
Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
@GeorgeMasonCHSS
Overview of the College

Building on the Past to Guide Our Future

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) is the educational heart of George Mason University. The tradition of broad and integrative learning that our faculty support prepares students exceptionally well for economically successful and civically engaged lives. In today’s global and knowledge-based economy, the competencies that students develop through CHSS courses and cocurricular activities—competencies in oral, written, and digital communication; ethics and critical thinking; research, teamwork, and project management; intercultural communication and global understanding—are not a luxury or a private good. They are life and workplace skills that set students up for success in a broad array of first jobs and for career advancement across a lifetime of opportunities.

The work of CHSS is instrumental in the university’s recognition as an R1 (very high research activity) institution, as designated by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. The college is rooted in intellectual leadership tied to real-world outcomes on regional, national, and global levels. Our faculty are committed partners in innovative programs, service offerings, and strategic alliances that strengthen the public and private sectors of the community. In addition, faculty are highly active in research, with external research funding to the college averaging more than $22 million annually.

FRESHMAN MAJORS

CHSS has two of the top five identified majors for incoming freshmen for fall 2019.

1. Computer Science
2. Biology
3. Criminology, Law and Society
4. Cyber Security Engineering
5. Psychology
CHSS BY THE NUMBERS

CHSS is at the educational heart of the university, emphasizing broad and integrative learning that prepares students exceptionally well for economically successful and civically engaged lives.

CHSS offered

- 19 undergraduate majors
- 13 graduate certificates
- 18 master’s degrees
- 10 doctoral degrees
- 65 minors

To the nearly 8,000 students enrolled in fall 2019.
#8 Mason is #8 of all universities receiving **NEH funding**, 2008-18

Two CHSS departments were internationally recognized in 2019 by ShanghaiRanking:

#22 **Economics**

#36 **Communication**

ShanghaiRanking annually publishes world university rankings and is well regarded as one of the three most significant sources of rankings globally.

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**High Enrollment Growth Programs, Academic Years 2016-18**

**Three-Year Enrollment Trends — Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Head Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMICS</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYCHOLOGY (ALL CONCENTRATIONS)</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Clinical</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Human Factors/ Applied Cognition</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Industrial/Organizational</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Applied Development</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Psychology</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>HISTORY</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRITING AND RHETORIC</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCIOLOGY</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>CULTURAL STUDIES</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRIMINOLOGY, LAW AND SOCIETY</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>LINGUISTICS</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>568</strong></td>
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Source: irr2.gmu.edu/New/N_EnrollOff/EnrlStsProg.cfm

Source: IRA Data Enrollment Data for Degree-Seeking Undergrads
Research of Consequence

The work of the college was instrumental in the university’s recognition as an R1 (very high research activity) institution, as designated by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Our faculty members take great pride in being active scholar-teachers, with research being a vital part of the undergraduate, as well as the graduate, student experience in the college.

The Center for Adaptive Systems for Brain-Body Interactions

The Center for Adaptive Systems for Brain-Body Interactions (CASBBI) is one of Mason’s first transdisciplinary centers chartered by Provost S. David Wu, following a university-wide initiative in 2018.

Drawing from Mason’s Departments of Bioengineering, Psychology, Health Administration and Policy, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Computer Science, and Physics and Astronomy, the CASBBI team seeks to understand and personalize adaptive systems to serve individuals with physical or psychosocial disabilities, with a particular focus on chronic pain, movement impairment, autism spectrum disorders, and addiction.

By identifying disabilities as biological, psychological, and social, the team’s goal is to improve the function and quality of life of affected people through their expertise in multiscale imaging, multiscale neuromodulation, human-movement analysis, and human-machine interaction.

CASBBI’s National Science Foundation Research Traineeship (NRT) Program in brain-body interactions is a bold, new model for community-engaged STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) graduate training. The NRT program will train a versatile, interdisciplinary cohort with the skills necessary to harness the data revolution. This collaboration is a great example of the way specialized scholars can come together to create new knowledge that solves problems requiring an understanding of the multiple dimensions of human life, while training the next generation of leaders in the field.

Now in its second year of work, the team has received recent grant awards, which include $98,000 from the Virginia Commonwealth Research Commercialization Fund and $132,000 from the National Science Foundation.
Mason among Top 10 Universities Awarded NEH Funding in the Last 10 Years

The Chronicle of Higher Education recognized George Mason University as the eighth-highest recipient of funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities in the past decade, with funding received for 37 projects and totaling $5.8 million.

This funding has supported a wide variety of research projects led by faculty in the college, such as religious studies professor John Turner’s NEH Fellowship to finish his book on the history of the Plymouth Colony.

Jesse Lee Kirkpatrick, interim director of Mason’s Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy, and Andrew Peterson, an assistant professor in the institute, led the project “Coming Home: Dialogues on the Moral, Psychological, and Spiritual Impacts of War.”

The Department of History and Art History received a significant portion—a little more than $5 million—of the NEH’s funding to Mason. By itself, the department received more funding than the humanities portfolios at top research universities such as Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and the University of Texas, among many others, and would be ranked as No. 13 if listed based on its funding alone.

These grants have funded research such as Sun-Young Park’s study of the history of the architectural accommodation of disability in modern France and Suzanne Smith’s cultural history project examining African American funeral directing.

The Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, housed in the Department of History and Art History, brought in more than $3.5 million of the NEH funding awarded to Mason over the last 10 years. The NEH’s most recent award to the center, in 2018, supports digital revitalization and content upgrades for “World History Matters,” an online education resource. Kelly Schrum, associate professor in the college’s Higher Education Program, leads the project.

4-VA Grant Helps Bring Communication across the Curriculum

Employers rate communication proficiency as among the most important skills for college graduates, yet they report that it is the hardest to find in potential employees.

“Communication skills are necessary for communicating ideas, for working in teams, and for developing relationships,” says Melissa Broeckelman-Post, introductory communication course director, associate professor in the Department of Communication, and a senior scholar in Mason’s Center for the Advancement of Well-Being.

With support from a 4-VA grant, she is leading a team of faculty and graduate students to help Mason’s faculty integrate communication skills, such as public speaking, into their courses. The collaboration between Mason, James Madison University, and Virginia Tech—with the expertise of the executive director of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte’s Communication across the Curriculum Program—centers on creating online resources and tools, faculty curriculum consultations, and in-class workshops.

In summer 2019, the team established web-based resources for faculty to use on their own and developed individual and small group faculty curriculum consultations and in-class workshop resources to bring communication team members into classrooms.

In the fall, the team will collect and analyze data on the usage and perceived effectiveness of the measures and submit its results for presentation at the National Communication Association’s annual convention, to be held in late March 2020.

Left to right, joining Melissa A. Broeckelman-Post are Susan Lawrence, Heidi Lawrence, and Debra Lattanzi Shutika, members of the team who are building on their 4-VA grant work and planning the Laboratory for Scholarly and Civic Communication.
RESEARCH

What Tools Work Best for Educating National Park Visitors?
Mason Research Aims to Find Out

Susan Howard knows that one seemingly small decision can have big consequences. That’s why the George Mason University doctoral candidate is designing and testing a variety of educational tools to help national park visitors understand the importance of following the rules.

Over the summer, Howard, who is working on a PhD in environmental science and policy, and her team have been gathering data at Great Falls National Park in Maryland to test whether people learn better through video games, rather than from traditional videos or flipcharts.

“We’re collecting data, but we’re also serving as an informal education operation,” says environmental science senior Marcy Delos, a member of Howard’s research team.

Through a video game, Howard can show people how a seemingly harmless action can have major consequences and immediately give feedback on right or wrong answers. Over the summer, the team collected about 1,200 interviews.

Howard’s instructional design approach focuses on the three human behaviors that contribute to disease emergence in the parks: going off the trail, letting a dog off-leash, and littering. Going off the trail, for instance, can disrupt predator-prey relationships. An example of this in Virginia, Howard said, is the relationship between the carrier for the bacteria for Lyme disease, the white-footed mouse, and its predators—foxes and hawks—which can be easily scared off by hikers.
Dylan Donlon-Moyer is the research coordinator and a recent Mason graduate of the Honors College and the Communication Department. She said that one surprise from the study was how kids were learning about the environment and safe hiking habits from their parents’ participation in the study.

“Little kids will come and sit on their parents’ laps or lean over their shoulders and ask what they’re doing, and the parents talk to them as they are reading through,” says Donlon-Moyer.

Howard has been teaching as adjunct faculty at Mason since 2013 and last year was appointed to the position of term faculty in health, medicine, and society in the School of Integrative Studies, part of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Her volunteer work with the National Park Service helped spark her research interests in the link between human behaviors and what she calls “self-inflicted harm.”

Roughly five years ago, while volunteering at Great Falls National Park, Howard received an alert that there was a rabid buck in the park that charged at a park ranger. Howard asked in a meeting how the deer might have gotten rabies in the first place.

The answer was complex: The deer likely contracted rabies from raccoons, which were captured in Georgia and released in Virginia in 1976 by hunters for sport. Ultimately, said Howard, humans are responsible for the spread of rabies in raccoons in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia area that may have led to that deer contracting it.

“If it hadn’t been for that rabid deer, I wouldn’t be in this doctoral program, and I wouldn’t be exploring what are the human behaviors that put in motion triggers of disease emergence,” says Howard.

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**Sponsored Research Powerhouse**

Faculty research, scholarship, and creative works in CHSS continued at excellent levels in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. Sponsored research awards in FY19 exceeded $20 million for the third year in a row, while proposal activity was robust, with 205 proposals requesting more than $95 million submitted to external sponsors, exceeding the previous year’s requested amount by more than 50 percent.

Research and development expenditures—one of the deciding factors in obtaining and maintaining Mason’s R1 status—remained strong at more than $18 million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPONSORED PROGRAMS SUMMARY DATA</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL DIRECT EXPENDITURES</td>
<td>$15,973,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION EXPENDITURES</td>
<td>$2,075,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</td>
<td>$18,048,832</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF PROPOSALS</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALUE OF PROPOSALS</td>
<td>$95,492,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF AWARDS</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALUE OF AWARDS</td>
<td>$20,141,528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OSP Proposals, Awards and Expenditures by Unit for FY19
Curriculum Innovations

Teaching is at the center of our mission in CHSS. The depth and breadth of our faculty research and teaching, along with the broad variety of expertise in the college, allow students—graduate and undergraduate—to explore their passions. These stories illustrate how CHSS faculty continually innovate and explore new ways to engage students through digital pedagogy, new academic minors, and hands-on global learning.

Psychology Department Takes an Online Leap

The Department of Psychology, one of Mason’s largest academic units, is embracing efforts to move its classes online and has developed or redeveloped enough courses to make the entire major available remotely.

Students drove the decision, says department chair Keith Renshaw. “It really is a way to not only fit the needs or desires of our current students, but a way to reach additional students.”

Online instruction is an excellent fit for psychology, one of the largest and most popular programs at Mason. “We have tried to approach it by thinking about how this is consistent with our own mission and values,” explains Renshaw. “We value research and applied research, and so we’re able to draw on the literature on education, online education, and online learning to inform what we’re doing in terms of best practices…. It has forced a lot of us to think about our teaching in a way that we haven’t in quite some time.”

“We’re able to draw on the literature of ... online education and online learning to inform what we’re doing in terms of best practices.

—Keith Renshaw
This past June, Mason students participated in a study-abroad program in Peru.

Hands-On Global Learning

Bioarchaeology, the study of human skeletal remains within their archaeological and mortuary contexts, allows researchers to learn about the lives and lifestyles of past populations. Mason bioarchaeologist Haagen Klaus is renowned in the field, sought after by news organizations to lend context to news on anthropological discoveries.

As a professor, his teaching is hands-on. In June, Mason students joined him in a study-abroad program in Peru that brought them into contact with 14,000 years of archaeological history in the Central Andes. For three weeks, they traveled throughout the country, exploring the labyrinths inside the megalithic temples of Chavín de Huantar, climbing pyramids of the Moche and Sicán civilizations, flying over the Nazca Lines—geoglyphs etched into the Peruvian desert—and exploring magnificent Inca ruins, culminating in two days at the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu.

Women and Gender Studies Program Launches New Minor

In continuation of Mason’s commitment to diversity and innovation, the Women and Gender Studies Program launched a minor in LGBTQ studies in fall 2019. One of the first of its kind in the Commonwealth of Virginia, this minor draws on the history of the LGBTQ movement in the United States, as well as transnational movements on debates around gender and sexuality.

“As one of the first [to offer this minor], I know we as a faculty and staff are up to the challenge of creating a transformative experience for our LGBTQ studies students,” says David Corwin, associate director for academic affairs, women, and gender studies.

Students with this minor gain training from both scholars and practitioners with years of experience in higher education, curricular activism, and community-based organizations. They apply theories of gender and sexuality to a variety of institutions and workplace settings and advocate for social change. Students will also be prepared to go on to graduate school in a variety of humanities and social science disciplines where they can focus on LGBTQ-related research and pedagogy.

“Students are very excited for this minor because it provides a formalized curriculum around the topics they’re interested in. In the first week of the minor becoming available, we had four students declare [it],” Corwin says.

NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

- Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology, MPS (delivered online)
- Foreign Languages, BA—concentration in Korean
- Higher Education, PhD (pending approval from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia)

NEW MINORS

- Design Thinking (developed jointly with the College of Visual and Performing Arts, College of Science, School of Business, College of Education and Human Development, and Volgenau School of Engineering)
- LGBTQ Studies
COMMUNITY

Engagement and Partnerships

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is rooted in intellectual leadership tied to real-world outcomes on regional, national, and global levels. The college is a committed partner in innovative programs, service offerings, and strategic alliances that strengthen the public and private sectors of the community.

Poetry Daily Makes a Home at Mason

Poetry Daily (www.poems.com), a popular daily online anthology, moved to Mason this year, where it is now published in partnership with the Department of English’s Creative Writing Program and with University Libraries.

For 365 days a year, Poetry Daily showcases a poem from a new book, magazine, or journal, along with weekly news and essays about poetry. The online journal’s goal is to make it easier for people to find poets and poetry they appreciate and to help publishers share news of their books, magazines, and journals.

Peter Streckfus, associate professor of English and Brodsky Rome Prize fellow in literature, and Sally Keith, professor of English and Guggenheim fellow, will alternate roles as editorial director and associate editorial director every few years. Aaron McCollough, director of the two publishing arms of Mason’s University Libraries, serves as associate editor, specializing in the production processes of the journal. The intense work of producing a daily publication is shared with interns and students in Mason’s Creative Writing MFA Program, under the leadership of Executive Director Gregg Wilhelm.

Alongside Keith and McCollough, as well as Jennifer Atkinson, Eric Pankey, and Susan Tichy—all poetry faculty in the Creative Writing Program—the journal’s new editorial board comprises 11 other notable poets from across the country.

“Our aim is to bring new, exciting content to the thousands of dedicated readers Poetry Daily has served for 20 years,” says Streckfus. “At the same time, we hope to bring many new readers into contact with the vitality—with the breath and breadth—of contemporary poetry.”
Faculty Podcasts Reach Wider Audiences

To boost public engagement with its 25th annual colloquium, the Cultural Studies Program launched a student-hosted podcast echoing the year’s theme of Capitalism, Climate, and Culture. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the podcast examined the factors contributing to climate change, the extent of the problem, and the ways in which its effects might be mitigated.

Roger N. Lancaster, professor and colloquium coordinator, organized the speaker series, and cultural studies students handled the podcast. Its goal was to communicate scholarship and ideas to a broader audience, offering a wide range of disciplines, from communication, sociology, and public health to language and literature.

“The interdisciplinary approach opens up promising lines of inquiry,” says Lancaster. “How did we get into this mess? How bad is it? Where do we go from here?”

Tyler Cowen, professor of economics and director of the Mercatus Center, hosts a regular podcast, Conversations with Tyler, which invites top thinkers from an array of disciplines to share their insights on a vast range of topics.

With a lineup that has included Atul Gawande, Martina Navratilova, Malcolm Gladwell, Peter Thiel, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Margaret Atwood, and Masha Gessen, Cowen engages his guests with questions that produce insightful examinations of their work and worldviews.

Conversations with Tyler frequently records live episodes in cities such as New York and San Francisco and at George Mason University’s Arlington Campus, offering an opportunity for audience members to ask questions and meet the podcast guests. More information about these events is available at conversationswithtyler.com.
Childhood Obesity Prevention Program for Latino Communities Wins Community Engagement Award

As one of the directors of the VALÉ program, Robyn Mehlenbeck, a clinical full professor and director of Mason’s Center for Psychological Services, is helping local Latino families learn about healthy lifestyles.

Latinos are one of the fastest growing populations in the United States and one of the largest communities in Prince William County, Virginia. Health-based outreach efforts and programs aimed at Latinos are limited, but a Mason program, *Vidas Activas, y Familias Saludables* (VALÉ): A Multidisciplinary Childhood Obesity Treatment Program for Latino Communities, focuses on child weight management for low-income Latino youth, ages 5 to 9, and their families in Prince William County.

Originally funded by Mason’s Multidisciplinary Research Initiative, VALÉ’s programming is in Spanish and pulls evidence-based expertise from exercise physiology, nutrition, and psychology. VALÉ also relies on local partnerships with schools and free clinics.

As parents learn about reading nutrition labels, understanding nutrients, reinforcing healthy eating and activity behaviors at home, and cooking healthy meals, children participate in physical activity and receive instruction about healthy school lunch choices. At the end of each lesson, parents and children come together to share a meal and set goals for the week. Behavioral health skills help families make difficult changes and keep healthy habits going after the program ends.

The Potomac Health Foundation awarded the program the Howard L. Greenhouse Grant, as well as the Best Practice Award for Community Engagement.
Understanding Research on Body-Worn Cameras

Police agencies have rapidly adopted body-worn camera (BWC) technology over the past decade, and researchers with the Department of Criminology, Law and Society have followed its use, analyzing its adoption and effectiveness.

In March, Cynthia Lum, Megan Stoltz, Christopher Koper, and J. Amber Scherer published “Research on Body-Worn Cameras: What We Know, What We Need to Know” in Criminology & Public Policy, comprehensively reviewing the evidence base for body-worn cameras.

The cameras have been adopted as a measure to ensure greater accountability for police actions and to limit use of force in a climate of concern about police authority, racial minorities, and police-community relations. Public and political demand for the equipment, paired with readily available surveillance technology, led to the cameras being adopted quickly, without scientific inquiry into whether the technology operates as hoped for and without unintended consequences.

The study reviews, analyzes, and comments on the current state of empirical research on BWC technology in the context of the current era of policing. The researchers noted an explosion in the number of these studies over a five-year period and concluded that, although the behavioral changes seen as a result of the cameras may be modest and mixed, the perception of the value of the cameras will encourage continued investment and adoption of the technology.

Lum and Koper are faculty members in the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at Mason. Lum is also the director of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, housed at Mason, where Koper is a principal fellow, Scherer is a research associate, and Stoltz is a research assistant.
CAREERS

Preparing Students for Diverse Careers

CHSS alumni know that the opportunities available to graduates with humanities and social sciences backgrounds are wide and varied. Meet five CHSS alumni who used their degrees as a launch pad for successful and engaging careers.

PHOTO BY EVAN CANTWELL
Called to Serve in the Medical Field

Dr. Alexandra Sims, BA Anthropology ’09, is a primary care pediatrician and health services researcher at Children’s National Health System in Washington, D.C. At Mason, she pursued a bachelor’s degree in anthropology, while also completing the prerequisites for medical school. She graduated in 2009 and began her medical career at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences, where she developed her interest in patient advocacy and underserved populations. She completed her pediatrics residency in the community/urban health track at Children’s National Health System in Washington, D.C., and served as chief resident for the 2016-17 academic year. In 2018, the George Mason University Alumni Association named Sims an Alumna Exemplar. She is a devoted child health advocate.

Changing Lives with the Power of the Law

Liana Montecinos, BA Philosophy and Foreign Languages ’09, is an attorney with Benach Collopy LLP. In the face of extraordinary hurdles as a Honduran asylee and undocumented child in Virginia, her education at Mason offered a path to success. With the help of the university’s Early Identification Program, Montecinos earned a scholarship to attend Mason. After graduating in 2009, she went on to study law at the University of the District of Columbia’s David A. Clarke School of Law, where she served as president of the Latinx Law Student Association, community service chair at the National Latina/o Law Student Association, executive director at the nonprofit United for Social Justice, and a senior paralegal at Benach Collopy LLP. She was admitted to practice in January 2019. She now serves her community as an immigration attorney and as the executive director of United for Social Justice.

How does an anthropology major become a pediatrician, you may ask? My path may be similar to yours, if you pull back the layers, and is a testament to the translatable skills of a social sciences degree.

—Dr. Alexandra Sims
Telling Stories through Words and Images

Washington Post video reporter Tom LeGro, BA English ’98, MFA Creative Writing ’01, was part of the team that revealed then-U.S. Senate candidate Roy Moore’s alleged past sexual harassment of teenage girls and the subsequent efforts to undermine the reporting that exposed it. His team’s combined text and video entry won the Washington Post the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. Though he originally considered a career in education, LeGro clicked with Mason’s Creative Writing Program and worked as a photo editor for the Broadside, Mason’s student newspaper (now known as IV Estate). In his last year as a graduate student, he took a part-time job with the Post’s sports desk, and jobs as a news aide, layout editor, and sports copy editor followed. He later worked with PBS NewsHour, and when the show received a grant from the Poetry Foundation to cover poetry, LeGro was able to draw upon both his MFA studies and his journalistic skills for inspiration. In 2013, the Washington Post launched a video initiative and he returned to the paper.

Liberal Arts as an Entry to the Tech World

The recipient of the Department of History and Art History’s 2019 Outstanding Alumnus Award, Sean Sweeney, BA History ’00, learned the field of cybersecurity without undergraduate training in information technology or computer science. Early in his career, Sweeney was a cofounder of a Pittsburgh-based electronic-discovery startup. He then worked as the chief information officer for a national law firm, also based in Pittsburgh, and as a litigation support applications manager for the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. From a position of chief information officer at the University of Pittsburgh, he joined Microsoft, where he is now chief security advisor for the Americas in Microsoft’s Cybersecurity Solutions Group.

Sean says what he learned at Mason—specifically the ability to communicate effectively and conduct independent research and analysis—enabled his success in the technology field.

Mason Partnerships Offer New Career Opportunities

Since 2017, Mason has partnered with Revature, a company that offers graduates and soon-to-be graduates the opportunity to participate in a 12-week coding program that provides intensive training and certification on in-demand technologies. In many cases, those who complete the program earn a position with one of Revature’s many clients. Samantha Wolverton, BA Global Affairs ’15, entered the program while contemplating her next career move and is now a software engineer and software development analyst at Accenture, a global management, consulting, and professional services firm.
Spencer Crew Serves as Interim Director of National Museum of African American History and Culture


“This is a museum that tells the African American story,” says Crew, who was selected this year to become the interim director of the museum. “But it’s told in a way that all Americans could understand.”

An active member of the academic and cultural communities, Crew has served as president of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and has worked at the National Museum of American History for 20 years, including nine as its director. He has published extensively in the areas of African American and public history.

Dean Ann Ardis lauded his appointment. “Spencer Crew has contributed in so many important ways, both as a scholar and as a museum professional, to the preservation of African American history over the course of his distinguished career,” she says. “It’s exciting to have one of Mason’s most distinguished faculty take on this important leadership role at our nation’s newest museum.”

“Spencer understands the Smithsonian, he was heavily involved in the inaugural exhibitions…and he is one of the foremost historians of African American history.”

—Kenneth Chenault, former CEO of American Express and chair of the museum’s advisory council
Presidential Awards for Faculty Excellence recipients Fred Bemak, Rita Chi-Ying Chung, Tyler Cowen, Christianne Esposito-Smythers, and Kathleen E. Wage pose with former President Ángel Cabrera during Commencement 2019.

**Presidential Awards for Faculty Excellence**

Our faculty is committed to excellence, and we appreciate when this commitment is recognized both inside and outside the university community. For a complete listing of our faculty's awards, please see to.gmu.edu/awards2019.

George Mason University’s Presidential Awards for Faculty Excellence are presented each year to five or six faculty members as part of Commencement. This year, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences is proud to share that two of its faculty members were honored.
CHRISTIANNE ESPOSITO-SMYTHERS, Department of Psychology, was the recipient of the Earle C. Williams Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Social Impact, which recognizes a faculty member whose commitment to community service improves the quality of life in the region or around the world and serves as a model to the entire Mason community.

Esposito-Smythers designs and tests treatment and prevention plans for adolescent suicidal behavior, substance abuse, and other high-risk behaviors. She served as chair for the Fairfax County Youth Suicide Review Team, for which she received a County of Fairfax Team Excellence Award, and has served on the Mason Suicide Prevention Task Force, the Fairfax County Mental Health Promotion Team, and work groups for the Fairfax County Children’s Behavioral Health System of Care.

She consults and delivers presentations and clinical workshops to local community agencies, and in collaboration with community partners, she leads the Fairfax Consortium for Evidence-Based Practice, which trains behavioral health clinicians in evidence-based interventions for youth with mental health difficulties.

TYLER COWEN, professor of economics and director of the Mercatus Center, received the Beck Family Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Research and Scholarship. This award is presented to a faculty member in recognition of groundbreaking achievements that have significant social, cultural, economic, or global consequence.

Cowen originally attended Mason as an undergraduate, earning a BS in economics in 1983. He received his PhD in economics from Harvard University in 1987. An Economist poll recently named him as one of the most influential economists of the last decade. Bloomberg Businessweek dubbed him “America’s Hottest Economist,” and Foreign Policy named him as one of its “Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2011.”

Since 2003, he has cowritten the daily blog, Marginal Revolution. His podcast series, Conversations with Tyler, offers insights from top thinkers in varied fields. He has cofounded an online economics education project, MRUniversity.com. His most recent book is Big Business: A Love Letter to an American Anti-Hero (St. Martin’s Press, 2019).

Christy Pichichero Continues Her Work as the College’s Diversity and Global Education Coordinator

A distinctive feature of our university—and one of its great strengths—is the diversity of its undergraduates. CHSS is committed to increasing faculty, staff, and graduate student diversity in order to sustain and enhance Mason’s successes as a minority-majority and access-oriented public research university. Christy Pichichero who has a BA in comparative literature from Princeton University, a BM in voice and opera from Eastman School of Music, and a PhD in French studies from Stanford University, is leading the college’s faculty diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in her role as CHSS’s coordinator for college diversity and global education. Pichichero has more than 20 years of experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion work and has held multiple leadership positions at Stanford, Mason, and in the profession.
Sue Woods Honored with Mary Roper Award

This year, the college was delighted to honor Sue Woods with the Mary Roper Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions and service to the Department of History and Art History and to the university. Woods continually demonstrates the outstanding qualities that embody the Mary Roper Award.

Woods began her work at Mason in 2014 as an administrative support manager in the Schar School of Policy and Government. She then joined the Department of History and Art History in 2016 in her current role as office manager. Woods quickly became indispensable in the department. She is truly outstanding in every aspect of her job. She leads by example, always maintaining a spirit of professionalism and dedication while treating staff kindly and thoughtfully. She has fostered an open, collaborative environment among the staff. The college would not be able to deliver on our mission without the dedication and commitment of staff like her. We honor and thank Sue Woods for all she has done to support our students and faculty.

After graduating from Clarkson University with a BS in biology, Woods became an officer in the U.S. Air Force, where she reached the rank of captain. Her first tour was at Beale Air Force Base, where she served as an aerospace physiologist, providing initial and refresher aircrew with life support training, as well as managing the hyperbaric chamber program. We are delighted that she brought her talents, problem-solving skills, and willingness to learn in a changing environment to the college and to the Department of History and Art History.

College Staff Recognized for Outstanding Achievement

Each year, the Mason community comes together to honor the staff who make the work at Mason and within the college possible by nominating their colleagues for the annual Outstanding Achievement Awards. These awards are presented to individuals who have shown an outstanding commitment to students and the mission of the university. At Mason’s Fall 2018 Outstanding Achievement Award Ceremony, we were delighted that three CHSS staff were honored.

Exceptional Support Award
□ Jon Aponte, Cultural Studies Program
□ Susan Turriziani, Dean’s Office

Martha J. Reiner Quality Customer Service Award
□ Clara Robertello, Dean’s Office

The Mary Roper Award

The Mary Roper Award was first presented in 2001. It is named in honor of longtime Mason employee Mary Roper, who set the standard for excellence through her professionalism and her dedication to her work and the university. She developed a long, successful career at Mason, working in various departments, including more than three years in the Dean’s Office of the college, then known as the College of Arts and Sciences. After a combined 17 years in multiple positions, Roper moved on to serve as the administrative assistant to Mason’s chief of staff, a position she held for 13 years, until her retirement in September 2013.
**IN MEMORIAM**

**Marion Deshmukh and Cóilín Owens**

*With regret and sadness, the college notes the passing of two of its emeritus faculty members this year.*

**Marion Deshmukh**, Professor Emerita of History and Art History, began her career at Mason in 1969. For 45 years she was a professor of German and European history and art history, and she was chair of the Department of History and Art History for 12 years. She also served in the Cultural Studies Doctoral Program.

In 2010, she was awarded George Mason’s first Robert T. Hawkes Professorship, and she received the David J. King Teaching Award in 2011 and the Center for Global Education’s Academic Excellence Award in 2014. She was named Mason’s Faculty Member of the Year in 2013.

Deshmukh led a sustained and ultimately successful 20-year effort to bring a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa—the nation’s oldest honor society—to Mason. She supported German language and culture through her work with the Goethe-Institut in Washington, D.C., including her time serving as chair of the board of the Friends of the Goethe-Institut and as vice president of the Friends of the German Historical Institute.

Deshmukh shaped the future of other scholars and students by raising funds for their support and providing fellowship opportunities. She was the faculty/staff chair for the Merten Campaign in 2012, which raised more than $5 million to support the Merten Scholars Endowment, and created a graduate fellowship in the History and Art History Department. When Deshmukh retired in 2015, the Department of History and Art History celebrated her life and work by establishing the Marion Deshmukh Faculty and Student Scholarship Support Endowment.

**Cóilín Owens**, Professor Emeritus of English Literature, taught Irish literature at Mason for 29 years, retiring in 2004.

He was born in County Roscommon, Ireland, in 1943. He earned degrees from the University of Notre Dame, University College Dublin (now NUI Dublin) and Kent State University. He published two books on James Joyce: *James Joyce's Painful Case* (2008) and *Before Daybreak: “After the Race” and the Origins of Joyce's Art* (2013). In a review by Frank Shovlin, University of Liverpool, the latter book is described as “a Rolls Royce of a book … laden with sparkling new insights into Joyce’s mind and methods, yet written with a lightness, lucidity, and joy that will please even a novice reader.” In 2014, he appeared on NPR’s *The Diane Rehm Show* on the 100th anniversary of *Dubliners* to discuss Joyce’s legacy.

Owens was active in the local Irish-American community, and served as chair of the Irish American Cultural Institute and the Gaelic League. He is survived by his wife, Julianne, sons Seamus (wife Whitney) and Conor (wife Amanda), and grandsons Roenn and Arlan.

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**Marion Deshmukh** co-curates “Postcards from the Trenches: Germans and Americans Visualize the Great War” in 2014.

**Cóilín Owens** in his office at Mason in the early 1980s.
A new building is rising in the heart of Mason’s Fairfax Campus. The Core Campus Project aims to renew the visual, physical, and symbolic center of the university, with the focal point being a six-story academic building that will serve as the new home of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The state-of-the-art building sits next to Wilkins Plaza, named in 2017 in honor of the late civil rights leader Roger Wilkins, who taught at Mason from 1986 until his retirement in 2007. As this crossroads of learning takes shape, it will incorporate trees, natural plantings, spaces for gatherings, and the iconic statue of George Mason IV, the Founding Father who is the university’s namesake.

A new memorial honoring the more than 100 people enslaved at Mason’s Gunston Hall home will anchor this true heart of campus. Informed by the Enslaved People of George Mason project (ecgm.omeka.net/exhibits), which teamed undergraduate researchers with CHSS faculty members and support from the university’s Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR), the memorial offers a fuller portrait of George Mason’s complicated legacy. As one of the most diverse universities in the country, Mason must be a space where everybody can thrive. This project supports that core aspect of the university and CHSS, and it is fitting that it be at the core of the Fairfax Campus.

A New Home in the HEART OF THE FAIRFAX CAMPUS

"This new building will inspire and support the field-defining accomplishments of our faculty and students as they realize Mason’s ambitions as a university for the world."

—Ann Ardis, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dean Ardis signs the main support beam for the new building, joining hundreds of students and the campus community in making their mark on the new structure.

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To contribute to the campaign to raise $500,000 to build the memorial, or to view the design plans and learn more about the research into these enslaved persons, visit giving.gmu.edu/enslaved_people_memorial_fund.

Top: The college’s state-of-the-art academic home will reside on Wilkins Plaza.

Bottom left: An artist rendering of the interior space of the new building includes its active-learning classrooms.

Bottom right: Undergraduate research guided by CHSS faculty fueled the inspiration for the Memorial to the Enslaved People of George Mason.

Renderings courtesy of Perkins & Will
On Giving Day in April 2019, CHSS raised $30,505 for the CHSS Scholarship Fund, which supports merit-based awards for students in the college.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences helps students develop life and workplace skills that set them up for success in a broad array of first jobs and for career advancement across a lifetime of opportunities. Our students advance competencies in oral, written, and digital communication; ethics and critical thinking; research and project management; and intercultural communication and global understanding. We believe an education grounded in the humanities and social sciences both equips students for rich, satisfying, and productive lives and prepares them for any future career.

Our success would not be possible without generous support from alumni, parents, faculty, staff, students, and friends of the college. Gifts to college programs and scholarships enable us to sustain and further enhance Mason’s access-to-excellence agenda in serving our students.

Connect with us at chss.gmu.edu/alumni to learn about our philanthropic and volunteer opportunities.
The CHSS Freshman Achievement Scholarship eased the financial burden of college tuition for me significantly this year and allowed me to worry less about working so that I could focus on my academics. I am very grateful and proud to be a CHSS scholarship recipient.

—Sancia Celestin, BS Psychology Class of 2020

I worked extremely hard my freshman year to take advantage of having access to some pretty incredible professors here at George Mason University and was extremely honored when the CHSS Freshman Scholarship committee acknowledged my efforts. The scholarship gave me time to work as an unpaid intern in Washington, D.C., [during] my very first summer here at Mason.

—Nick Priebe, BA History Class of 2020

My scholarship allowed me the opportunity to study abroad in Switzerland and immerse myself in what I am most passionate about studying, which is international security. Without my scholarship, I would not have had such an amazing and unique experience.

—Maggie Zargarpur, BA Global Affairs '19

The Dean's Challenge Award allowed me to attend both national and international conferences where I shared my research findings with other psychologists. I met other scientists studying similar topics who were interested in collaborating on future studies.

—David Disabato, MA Psychology '14, PhD Clinical Psychology '19

Your Gift Makes a Difference for Students
The College of Humanities and Social Sciences has had tremendous success in garnering private philanthropic support to augment the great work of the college. During the public phase of the Faster Farther Campaign for George Mason University, which began in 2015 and ended in December 2018, CHSS raised $22 million from 3,600 donors.

In fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019), the college received $5.7 million to support our faculty, research, and students through the generosity of 1,400 donors.

You can open doors. You can change lives.

Our college houses a wide range of disciplines, allowing you to support a department, program, or scholarship that is most important to you. Connect with us at chssalum@gmu.edu to ask any questions about giving to the college or to begin a discussion about the range of opportunities that can help create your desired impact.
**Gifts and Pledges by Source**
**FY 2019**

**Ways to Donate**

**ONLINE:** Make a gift or begin a recurring pledge online via credit card at [chss.gmu.edu/give](http://chss.gmu.edu/give).

**MATCHING GIFTS:** Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match a charitable contribution or volunteer hours made by their employees. To find out if your company has a matching gift policy, visit [matchinggifts.com/gmu](http://matchinggifts.com/gmu).

**WRITE A CHECK:** Mail a check made payable to the George Mason University Foundation Inc., to 4400 University Drive, MS 1A3, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

**PLANNED GIVING:** Legacy gifts represent sustainability for key academic and research programs, as well as scholarship funds to help attract and retain students. These gifts provide benefits to future generations of Mason students—and to you and your heirs.