



The College of Humanities
and Social Sciences

AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL

THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
ANNUAL REPORT 2019–20

CHSS.GMU.EDU



PHOTO BY RON AIRA

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

2019–20 ANNUAL REPORT

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On the cover: The spire of the Johnson
Center shines green to celebrate the Class
of 2020. Photo by Evan Cantwell

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PHOTO BY EVAN CANTWELL



Education is one of our greatest tools in the fight for equity and justice.

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

Dean's Message

Dedicated to Leading the Way

To say that 2020 has been an extraordinarily challenging year is an understatement.

In March, as COVID-19's global impact began to emerge locally, regionally, and nationally, we took quick action to continue the work of the university under the strictures of social distancing.

In late May and early June, the shockingly violent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery sparked tremors of grief and rage throughout the United States and globally, and fostered a new sense of urgency in many communities regarding the need to take action against systemic racism and injustice. Vartan Gregorian, the president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, describes the humanities and the social sciences as “a way for this country to learn from the past, understand the present, and devise paths to progress and peace.” In this moment of national turmoil, I have to ask myself as well as you: How will we contribute to devising “paths to progress and peace” for this country? Education is one of our greatest tools in the fight for equity and justice. We must all be open to learning, to changing, to acknowledging our missteps and mistakes, and to becoming better advocates and allies.

As we grapple with a global pandemic, an economic crisis, and a social crisis in the United States, all of which affect Mason's students, the CHSS community nonetheless finds

reason for pride. Pride in our students, who adapted to remote learning while keeping their families safe from COVID-19. Pride in our 2020 graduates, who launched into an uncertain world, carrying with them our hopes for their success and confidence in their resilience and ingenuity. Pride in our faculty, staff, and alumni, who supported Mason students through the Patriots Helping Patriots campaign, helped each other transition successfully to remote instruction and telework, and are collaborating now with colleagues across the university to provide our students and community with opportunities for learning about social and racial justice and how both might be achieved.

This summer, we entered a new season of change at Mason as we welcomed the university's eighth president, Gregory Washington. A scholar known for his research as well as his leadership, he comes to us from the University of California's Henry Samueli School of Engineering, where he served as dean. We look forward to working with him to help the university continue to grow in its mission to serve all of our students and all of the members of our larger community. As we commit to our continued growth in knowledge and discovery, CHSS remains dedicated to leading the way.

Ann Ardis
Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
[@GeorgeMasonCHSS](#)

Overview of the College

Creating a Safe, Inclusive Learning Environment in Turbulent Times

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) is the educational heart of George Mason University. Our faculty support the tradition of broad and integrative learning that prepares students exceptionally well for economically successful and civically engaged lives. We serve all the university's students through award-winning Mason Core courses, as well as through the tutoring services in writing and public speaking provided by the CHSS faculty and graduate students who staff the university's Writing Center and Communication Center.

This past year has been extraordinarily challenging, as we sought to create a safe and inclusive learning environment in the face of the twin (and complexly interrelated) pandemics of COVID-19 and institutionalized racism in America. We are proud of both how quickly our faculty, staff, and students were able to pivot to teleworking and remote learning environments in spring 2020, as well as the success of our hybrid approach to online and in-person instruction in fall 2020.

We are proud, too, of the dozens of undergraduate and graduate courses our faculty offer that engage topics of

racial and social justice and equity from varied disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. These courses provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of the contemporary movement and give students a knowledge of justice, equity, history, and current events that can be built upon and applied to their personal and professional lives.

Degrees in the humanities and social sciences enable students to develop and refine their competencies in oral, written, and digital communication; ethics and critical thinking; research, teamwork, and project management; and intercultural communication and global understanding. These are life and workplace skills that set students up for success in a broad array of first jobs, for career advancement across a lifetime of opportunities, and for extraordinary contributions to their communities as engaged citizens creating a more just, free, and prosperous world.

Teach, Connect, Transform

DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS

- ▶ African and African American Studies
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Criminology, Law and Society
- ▶ Cultural Studies
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ English
- ▶ Global Affairs
- ▶ Higher Education
- ▶ History and Art History
- ▶ Interdisciplinary Studies
- ▶ Latin American Studies
- ▶ Middle East and Islamic Studies
- ▶ Modern and Classical Languages
- ▶ Philosophy
- ▶ Psychology
- ▶ Religious Studies
- ▶ Russian and Eurasian Studies
- ▶ School of Integrative Studies
- ▶ Sociology and Anthropology
- ▶ Women and Gender Studies

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.

In fall 2020 CHSS offered the following degrees



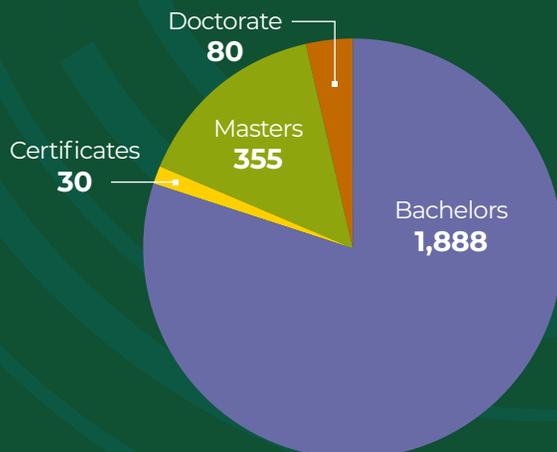
to nearly **8,000** enrolled students

Fall 2020 Enrollment by Doctoral Program

	STUDENTS
COMMUNICATION	39
CRIMINOLOGY, LAW AND SOCIETY	46
CULTURAL STUDIES	47
ECONOMICS	150
HISTORY	59
LINGUISTICS	17
PSYCHOLOGY (ALL CONCENTRATIONS)	113
▪ Applied Developmental	15
▪ Clinical Psychology	33
▪ Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience	19
▪ Human Factors/Applied Cognitive	24
▪ Industrial/Organizational Psychology	22
SOCIOLOGY	50
WRITING AND RHETORIC	52

Source: OEIP Fall 2020 BOT Student Enrollment by Program as of September 14, 2020

In 2019-20 CHSS Conferred More Than 2,300 Degrees



Source: OEIP data pulled September 14, 2020, for Degrees Conferred by College Year, 2019-20, All Terms

2020 Top 10 CHSS Undergraduate Majors

COMMUNICATION	531
CRIMINOLOGY, LAW AND SOCIETY	1,272
ECONOMICS	293
ENGLISH	315
ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES	148
GLOBAL AFFAIRS	489
HISTORY	288
INDIVIDUALIZED STUDIES	209
INTEGRATIVE STUDIES	662
PSYCHOLOGY	1,342

Source: OEIP Fall 2020 BOT Student Enrollment by Program as of September 14, 2020



The Enslaved People of George Mason project video won a Silver Telly award in May 2020. View the powerful video here: to.gmu.edu/EPGMvideo.

Criminology, Law and Society was ranked **#1** nationally by College Factual among undergraduate programs in Criminal Justice and Corrections.

The Communication Department was ranked **#35** internationally by ShanghaiRanking.

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

#1 Psychology Department is **top-ranked** among psychology programs for veterans for the fifth consecutive year.

Source: collegefactual.com/rankings/veterans/

RESEARCH

Shaping Our Future through CHSS Research Ecologies

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) research, scholarship, and creative works ecosystem is an interconnected web of both large and small projects that comprise a healthy and dynamic system, one that nurtures the CHSS intellectual environment and feeds the creativity of our faculty, staff, and students.

Through a wide range of traditional and interdisciplinary approaches, the college addresses fundamental questions about human life and value in order to understand our history and world view and to provide cutting-edge solutions to pressing social problems. Individually and collaboratively, the college community engages in research, scholarship, and creative works that address essential questions about our lives and our world.

Research Tests Correlation between the Catholic Church and Intensive Kinship

Two economics professors have examined how the Catholic Church transformed European kinship structures in the Middle Ages.

Their paper, “The Church, Intensive Kinship, and Global Psychological Variation,” was published in November 2019 in the journal *Science*.

“Human psychology varies widely around the globe on dimensions such as individualism and conformity,” says **Jonathan Schulz**, the paper’s lead author and an assistant professor of economics at Mason. “In this paper, we link this psychological variation to the medieval Catholic Church’s systematic dismantling of strong kin networks such as extended families, clans, and lineages.”

The paper’s other authors are **Jonathan Beauchamp**, an assistant economics professor at Mason, and two Harvard researchers, Duman Bahrami-Rad and Joseph Henrich.

The researchers tested the theory that historical exposure to the medieval Catholic Church dissolved strong intensive kinship systems, which consequently led to greater individualism, less conformity, and more fairness and trust toward strangers.

“Kin-based institutions are among humans’ most fundamental institutions,” says Schulz. “They organize social life around the world and include norms related to cousin marriage, polygamy, the tracing of descent, and

co-residence of the extended family. Several thinkers have theorized that the church marriage prohibitions dismantled strong extended kin networks.”

There has been no systematic empirical testing of this, however, which Beauchamp and Schulz hope to change.

“It’s striking how robust the empirical results are,” Beauchamp says. “They hold across various levels of analysis, in different datasets using different measures of the key variables, and when statistically controlling for a suite of possible confounding variables ranging from biogeographic factors to education and income.”

Duomo of Milan



Benjamin Gatling



Maria Dakake

Faculty Receive Competitive NEH Summer Stipends Awards

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is proud to announce that two of its faculty members, **Benjamin Gatling** and **Maria Dakake**, were awarded Summer Stipends grants from the National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH).

The Summer Stipends program supports full-time work on humanities projects for a period of two consecutive months and offers awards to individual scholars pursuing advanced research that is of value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both. The program is extremely selective; the NEH reports that in this round of funding, only 11 percent of proposals received an award.

Dakake, associate professor and director of graduate programs in the Department of Religious Studies, received a stipend for her project “The Qur’an Commentary of Muslim Scholar Nusrat Amin (1886–1983).” She conducted research on and translated the Qur’anic commentary of Iranian scholar Nusrat Amin (1886–1983), a religiously conservative, pioneering researcher who has been the only female scholar to produce a comprehensive Qur’anic exegesis. The research will lead to a book-length study of Amin’s writing.

Gatling, director of Mason’s Folklore Program, interim director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program, and associate professor in the Department of English, received an award for his project “Afghan Stories of War, Migration, and Home.” Drawing from his more than 15 years of experience working with Persian-speaking groups in the United States and in Central Asia, Gatling researched the experiences of representatives of the Afghan population living in the Washington, D.C., area. The grant will allow him to prepare and write portions of a book that recounts stories of displacement and migration.

Funding for Summer Stipends projects is based upon a rigorous three-step process that involves knowledgeable reviewers inside and outside the NEH, input from the National Committee on the Humanities, and a final decision from NEH chair Jon Parrish Peede.

Michele Schwietz, CHSS associate dean for research, is pleased with the faculty recognition from the NEH. “The university can nominate only two faculty members each year, and to have both of our nominees selected in the same year is a testament to the strength of our faculty’s scholarship,” she says.



[To] have both of our nominees selected in the same year is a testament to the strength of our faculty’s scholarship.

—**Michele Schwietz**, CHSS
Associate Dean for Research

RESEARCH

Sponsored Research Powerhouse

CHSS faculty research, scholarship, and creative works in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, continued in an impressive fashion. Sponsored research awards in FY20 totaled \$17,698,119, while proposal activity was robust, with 151 proposals seeking \$32,662,857 submitted to external sponsors. Diversity, one of the college's signature strengths, was also evident in the variety of funding sources, with 64 different sponsors (federal and non-federal) making new awards to support CHSS research, scholarship, and creative works.

Research and development (R&D) expenditures in CHSS—one of the deciding factors in obtaining and maintaining Mason's R1 status—remained strong at more than \$17.2 million.

Three Minute Thesis: Clear, Concise Research Communication

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition is an international competition open to PhD students in all disciplines that emphasizes the importance of clearly communicating research to a wide audience. Each participant presents his or her research in a manner easily understood by a general audience that may not have any background in the participant's discipline. The presenter is allowed one visual aid and three minutes.

Sponsored by Mason's Office of Graduate Education, this year's competition was open to 50 students, with 10 finalists scheduled to give their presentations as part of Mason's Graduate Interdisciplinary Conference in late March. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the students instead

showcased their research remotely for the university community and a panel of judges in May.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences was well represented in the finals of the competition. Two of the 10 finalists were CHSS students, and each ended up taking top spots: **Brittany Thompson**, PhD Psychology '20, won first place—and a prize of \$1,000—with her presentation “Pretend Play across the Preschool Years.” **Kate Doyle Feingold**, PhD Criminology, Law and Society '20, tied for third place—and a \$500 prize—for her research “Teaching Youth Their Rights: A Randomized Controlled Trial.”



First-place winner
Brittany Thompson, PhD
Psychology '20, delivers
her virtual presentation.

Research Fellowships Received by CHSS Faculty

Woodrow Wilson Fellowship 2019–20 Fellowship Class

John Dale, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Project: “Outsmarting Ourselves? The Digital Transformation of Human Rights”

American Council of Learned Societies Fellowships, 2019–20

Sun-Young Park, Department of History and Art History

Project: “The Architecture of Disability in Modern France”

Rashmi Sadana, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Project: “Gender, Urban Space, and Everyday Life in the Age of the Delhi Metro, 2002–2018”

The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Research Fellowships in Buddhist Studies, 2019

Robert DeCaroli, Department of History and Art History

Project: “The Gods of Buddhism: Regional Deities and Spirits in Early South Asia”

American Council of Learned Societies Digital Extension Grant

Kelly Schrum, Higher Education Program

Jessica Otis, Department of History and Art History

Nate Sleeter, Department of History and Art History

Project: “Expanding the Commons: Supporting Emerging World History Scholars and Community Colleges through the World History Commons Open Educational Resource”

School for Advanced Research Fellowship, Weatherhead Fellow 2019–20

Rashmi Sadana, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Project: “Gender, Urban Space, and Everyday Life in the Age of the Delhi Metro, 2002–2018”

National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship

Michele Greet, Department of History and Art History

Project: “Abstraction in the Andes: 1950–1970”

“

We as a country are besieged by challenges that require humanities understanding.

—**Bro Adams**, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities, 2014–17

RESEARCH

Sponsored Research

SPONSORED PROGRAMS SUMMARY DATA	FISCAL YEAR 2020
Total Direct Expenditures	\$15,471,084
Total Facilities and Administrative Expenditures	\$1,728,211
Total Research and Development Expenditures	\$17,199,295
Number of Proposals	151
Value of Proposals	\$32,662,857
Number of Awards	127
Value of Awards	\$17,698,119

Art History's Michele Greet Receives NEH Funding to Examine the Origins of Andean Abstract Art

In January, **Michele Greet**, professor and director of the Art History Program, received a National Endowment for the Humanities award of \$60,000 to research and write a book about 20th-century abstract art from the Andean countries of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru.

Her project, "Abstraction in the Andes, 1950–1970," began with research in Quito and Guayaquil, Ecuador. She will use the NEH funding to conduct similar trips to Peru and Bolivia. Greet's work challenges the idea that the post-World War II popularity of informalist abstraction art in the Andean region reflected the art form's dominance in Europe and the United States. Andean artists point to a long history of abstract design in textiles and ceramics in the ancient Andean world as evidence that abstraction is a longstanding part of their culture.

Her investigation examines the emergence of Andean abstraction in the post-World War II period as a rejection of the region's colonial history, and posits that it was instead "assuming and transforming an aesthetic that was already theirs."



A selection from Michele Greet's research: Estuardo Maldonado (Ecuador), *Memory of Forms*, 1963. Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, D.C.

CHSS Students and Alumni Recognized with Prestigious Fellowships

In spring 2020, Mason's Interim Provost and Executive Vice President Mark Ginsberg announced that numerous CHSS students and recent alumni had received prestigious fellowships.

Oumama Kabli, BA Global Affairs '17, received a Thomas R. Pickering Award. This competitive award, funded by the U.S. Department of State, prepares young people for careers in foreign service.

Abigail Hawkins, a global affairs student, received a Critical Language Scholarship for study in Arabic. The scholarship, also sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, funds summer study abroad for American college and university students to support learning languages that are deemed essential to America's engagement with the world.

Gabrielle Jackson, BS Community Health '20 (from the College of Health and Human Services) with a minor in Spanish (from the Department of Modern and Classical Languages), received a Fulbright English Teaching Award to Colombia. The award is part of the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program, which sends grantees to schools overseas to supplement English language instruction and provide a native speaker in the classroom.

Lucía Bautista, BA Global Affairs '20, received a Fulbright Research Award, known as a "traditional" Fulbright grant, to study in Brazil.

Hanna Poeschl, BA Global Affairs '20, received a Boren Scholarship. Sponsored by the National Security Education Program, these scholarships fund study abroad by U.S. undergraduate students in world regions critical to America's interests. Awardees agree to use the skills learned from their experiences to work with the federal government for at least one year. Poeschl will be studying in South Korea.



ILLUSTRATION BY MARCIA STAIMER

Hearing the Americas: NEH Supports Development of Website to Track American Musical Heritage

History professors **Michael O'Malley** and **Matthew Karush**, in collaboration with the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, were awarded a \$175,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a website that will interpret the early history of recorded popular American music from the 1890s to 1925.

Using digitalized recordings from the Library of Congress's National Jukebox and the University of California at Santa Barbara's Cylinder Audio Archive, the research team will include sheet

music, photographs, advertisements, artists' biographical information, explanation of genres, and musical annotations to allow website users to interpret the recordings.

The site will focus on three humanities themes: the history of technology and capitalism; the transnational origins of American music; and the musical construction of race. By offering historical and musicological context, the website will allow users to understand a frame of reference for how these factors affected the development of American music during this period.

RESEARCH

CHSS Faculty Engage in COVID-19 Research

As our communities faced the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences have responded quickly with research projects to help us understand the pandemic and its effect on individuals and the communities in which we live and serve, both in Fairfax, Virginia, and around the globe.

What Day Is It?

One surprising side effect of the pandemic is how many of us are losing track of time. **Martin Wiener**, assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, is working with an international group of scientists to conduct a study—“Time and Social Distance”—to uncover how and why social distancing and other isolation measures are having an impact on our awareness of time. Sixteen countries are involved in this large-scale project.

Learn more at brainthemind.com/time-social-distance.

Pandemic Religion: A Digital Archive

The Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media has taken steps to trace the impact of restrictions on in-person gatherings on religious communities in the United States. The center launched “Pandemic Religion:

A Digital Archive” to document the responses of American religious communities as they grappled with the changes brought by society’s response to the worldwide pandemic.

John Turner, a professor in the Department of Religious Studies, and **Lincoln Mullen**, an associate professor in the Department of History and Art History, worked with center staff to create a digital archive for religious communities of all kinds to report changes to their practices.

Learn more at pandemicreligion.org.

A New Study on “Coping during COVID-19” Is Underway

The Anxiety, Stress, and Relationships Lab, headed by **Keith Renshaw**, professor and chair of the Psychology Department, has kicked off a study about coping during COVID-19. The study is gathering information through an online survey about the virus’s impact on people, how they are coping, and how they are connecting with others. This information helps the research team better understand what advice and approaches are most beneficial for developing and maintaining coping strategies—helping us learn and prepare in case of a similar experience in the future.

Learn more at copingduringcovid19.com.



Economics Professor's Fast Grants Fund Critical COVID-19 Research

Tyler Cowen, professor of economics, raised \$40 million dollars for COVID-19 research through Emergent Ventures' new Fast

Grant program, a fellowship and grant program from the Mercatus Center.

As reported in the *Washington Post* in April 2020, Cowen first raised concerns in 2005 that America was ill-equipped to handle a pandemic, in part due to structural roadblocks in funding distribution that impede scientific research. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cowen saw a need for quick grant turnaround for COVID-19 research projects, in the hopes of inspiring immediate breakthroughs.

"Science funding mechanisms are too slow in normal times and may be much too slow during the COVID-19 pandemic," Cowen explains.

Fast Grants range from \$10,000 to \$500,000 for COVID-19-specific research, with applicants receiving a decision in 48 hours and the funds as quickly as their university can process the award.

Several anonymous donors gifted the initial prize money, with Emergent Ventures announcing its first four winners in late March. As of mid-May, Fast Grants had received \$21 million in donations from innovation leaders around the globe, such as Shopify founder and CEO Tobias Lütke, Irish billionaire entrepreneur John Collison, and Elon Musk of SpaceX and Tesla.

"We do not know who the most likely candidates are to come up with the best tests, the best remedies and cures, the best innovations in social distancing, and the best policy proposals," Cowen said in the Fast Grant announcement, published through the blog *Marginal Revolution*. "Anyone in the world could make a contribution to the antivirus effort and it won't work to just give a chunk of money to, say, Harvard or MIT."

As of May 9, 2020, 127 Fast Grant awards had been distributed, with even greater numbers of applications under review and more funding on the way.

Says Cowen, "We can all be proud that—to get something done quickly—Silicon Valley came to us."



Solidarity and Ethics during COVID-19

In this time of public health crisis, ethical questions are often pushed to the side in order to make decisions quickly. Mason's Philosophy Department, however, believes in

the importance of answering the difficult questions of equity and ethics when helping those most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Philosophy professor **Lisa Eckenwiler** is researching solidarity between humans during the crisis, considering questions of what solidarity means in this context and how the concept can be expanded to create structural changes within the public health system.

"Not only does the virus force us to recognize that we are all bound to each other, it also highlights that the only way through is to stand together to support each other, identify vulnerabilities, and eliminate them where possible, even if it seems that this comes at some cost to ourselves," she explains. "COVID-19 should be the point where we pivot toward a future where all people are insured."



Andrew Peterson, assistant professor of philosophy, is also concerned with COVID-19's effect on public health and the ethical implications of resource allocation. He is a co-author on the paper "Is It Ethical to Forcibly Withdraw Ventilators from Nursing

Home Patients for Reallocation to COVID-19 Patients?," which considers the ethics of prioritizing younger patients over older ones in ventilator allocation. He has also helped develop a survey on public engagement in the decisions surrounding vaccine allocation.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is laying bare the vulnerabilities and inequities in our communities," Peterson says. "How we choose to respond to this public health crisis will reveal our moral character and values. Medical science will end this pandemic, but staying true to our values will get us through it."

TEACHING

25th Anniversary of Mason's Cultural Studies Program

Cultural studies, the academic investigation of cultural practices with the goal of understanding, critiquing, and transforming them, has had a home at Mason for 25 years.

The program, described by English professor and cultural studies program director **Denise Albanese** as “*the* interdisciplinary doctoral program in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences,” draws students with master’s degrees in traditional disciplines such as anthropology, English, philosophy, and sociology, as well as women and gender studies, film and media, and African American studies. Many students arrive with an established interest in radical scholarship and interdisciplinary work.

The degree fosters the study of cultural processes under the conditions imposed by the global capitalist system, and it provides a space for scholarly dialogues that draw

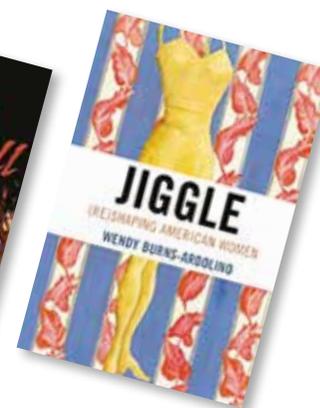
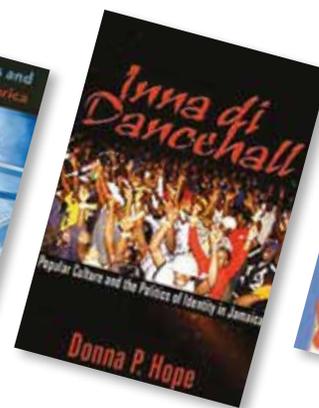
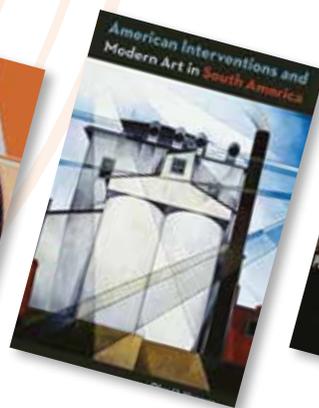
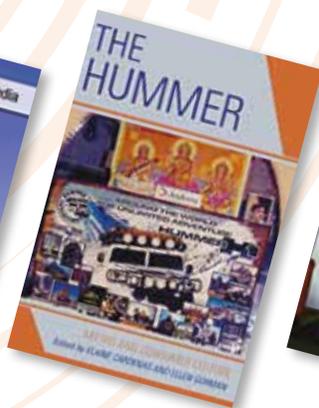
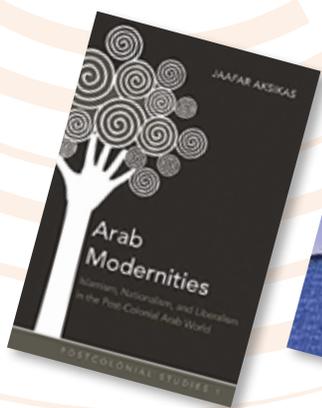
upon myriad theories and methods—critical race theory, ethnography, textual analysis, and political economy—while also working to develop a specific cultural studies approach oriented to topicality.

Mason’s Cultural Studies Program is the United States’ oldest stand-alone doctoral program in the discipline and enjoys an international reputation for excellence in teaching and research. For many years, the program has produced annual colloquia on a variety of topics, welcoming Mason and the local community to explore in-depth considerations of modern cultural questions. Recent themes have included “The University” and “Politics.” In conjunction with its 2018–19 colloquium series, “Capitalism, Climate, and Culture,” the program developed a nine-episode podcast aimed at reaching a still wider audience.

In celebration of its 25th year, the program planned a major symposium examining the cultural, political, and economic impact of Amazon’s new headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, along with a reception specifically honoring its many productive and highly regarded alumni. Unfortunately, the event was cancelled because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Cultural studies, as a discipline, works with the instability of objects, events, and processes under changing capitalist relations as well as the way in which unexpected events press for complex analysis. The long success of Mason’s program suggests that it will remain responsive to cultural exigencies for years to come.

25 YEARS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
CULTURAL STUDIES PHD





Books shown are representative of the many publications by Cultural Studies Program alumni.

Literature as a Reflection of History

This summer, the Department of Modern and Classical Languages offered an online course well suited to a season touched by a worldwide pandemic: ITAL 325 Major Italian Writers: Literature of the Black Death.

The Black Death refers to an outbreak of the bubonic plague in the 14th century, so named because of a telltale symptom in which victims' lymph nodes became blackened and swollen. During one of the waves of the disease, which recurred over a 500-year period, Italian author Giovanni Boccaccio wrote his epic work of prose, *The Decameron* (ca. 1349–51).

The course explores this work, which is structured as a series of stories told by a group of young Florentines who had retreated to the countryside to isolate themselves from the perils of the plague. They entertain themselves over the course of 10 days by recounting 100 stories: tales of love and chivalry, church and state corruption, the rise and fall of fortune, and the ability of the human intellect to overcome adversity.

While *The Decameron* has been read in many contexts as many things, the class read it as a work that addresses the rebuilding of society after an apocalyptic event. Students read and analyzed these tales with this historical perspective, enjoying the consolation of literature during the current difficult times, and considering what it teaches about the necessary components of a harmonious society.

Mason's Creative Writing Program Celebrates Its 40th Anniversary

Today, college-based creative writing programs—of which there are hundreds—offer varying structures, from fully residential to totally online. Mason's model of study—a community of talented apprentices working closely with masters of their craft, in which being part of the writerly community is a cornerstone of the experience—has made their program one of the most highly regarded in the country.

Begun in 1980, the master of fine arts degree was the English Department's first terminal program. It was built on a studio-academic model that blended workshops with the close study of published writing, as well as defining, studying, and practicing the fine elements of craft. The focus was—and is—primarily on the work of the students. Students are not told how to write in a prescribed way but rather are encouraged in ways that will improve the work they want to write. The program also offers a rich array of parallel experiences in pedagogy, tutoring, editing, publishing, arts management, and more, preparing students for careers as working writers in a broad range of fields.

Faculty are key to the program's success. Such was the case when the program was started, when the architects were poet **Peter Klappert** and novelist **Susan Richards Shreve**. Today, there are a dozen working writer faculty members, publishing their own novels and stories, poems, and essays

while offering students not only feedback on the work they are writing, but also insights into the workaday world they will enter.

All these factors have created a unique and nationally renowned program that stands out with the breadth of publications from faculty, alumni, and students. Collectively, 500 individual volumes of work have been published, plus separate works in publications ranging from highly respected commercial magazines like *The New Yorker* to more academic and selective specialized small presses.

“This year marks a significant juncture for the MFA program and for the country,” says **Gregg Wilhelm**, who became the Creative Writing Program's director in 2018. “During these unprecedented times, when storytellers and poets are needed more than ever in our lifetime, the program continues to be a place for writers to study literature, process events, and create art. Artists can't go through political turmoil, pandemics, and cries for social justice without reflecting on these moments and having something to say about them. We're here to help them say it, today and another 40 years from now. MFA students will truly be able to write at the center of it all.”

Thank you to William Miller, MFA '87, former director of the Creative Writing Program, for contributing this piece.

TEACHING

Adapting Hands-on Learning to COVID-19 Realities

Folklife professor **Lisa Gilman** and two colleagues from the Arts Management Program in Mason's College of Visual and Performing Arts spent summer 2019 developing two courses designed to teach undergraduate and graduate students about the work behind producing and executing a folklife festival. The team worked in partnership with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (SCFCH), with support from a 2019 curriculum impact grant from the Office of the Provost, to offer project-based experiential learning opportunities in festival management, grounded in the history and scholarship behind these festivals as well as the planning, logistics, and policy work necessary to produce a successful event. The 2020 Smithsonian Folklife Festival was to have served as an immersive case study for students.

Because of the impacts of COVID-19, the course became an example of flexibility and resourcefulness.

In spring 2020, the team offered the first course, Folklore Festival Management. The first two-thirds of the semester were to be focused on classroom instruction, with the final third dedicated to working hands-on with SCFCH, planning for the summer 2020 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. With the spread of COVID-19 and Mason's university-wide move to online instruction in March, students were unable to work in the physical space of the SCFCH offices.

The Holi Moli celebration on Mason's campus is an example of successful folklife festival management.

The second course in the sequence would have taken place during summer 2020. Applying skills learned in the spring semester, students were to have worked with Folklife Festival committees to help produce the festival. However, because of the pandemic, the 2020 Folklife Festival has been postponed.

Even with significant obstacles, the team counted a number of successes in its report on the curriculum impact grant. The class welcomed guest lecturers from SCFCH, the Maryland State Arts Council, and the National Council for the Traditional Arts, who joined the class remotely. Though students could not experience hands-on work with the Folklife Festival, four of them did virtual internships at SCFCH during summer 2020.

In a broader sense, the team reports that the course serves the interests of current students and has the potential to attract new students to Mason. The hands-on training and networking offer valuable skills. It is particularly suited to Mason's diverse student body to work together across cultures and to build a more diversified pool of arts and cultural professionals.

The team looks forward to offering the courses again beginning in spring 2021.



Wendi Manuel-Scott, a professor in the School of Integrative Studies, moderates a discussion as part of the 2020 Freedom and Learning Forum.

PHOTO BY RON AIRA

Coming to Terms with Memories of Racial Terror

In fall 2020, Professor **Wendi Manuel-Scott** will be teaching HIST 389 Black Bodies, Policing, and Historical Memory: From Slave Ship to Lynching Rope.

This course considers how the policing of Black bodies has shaped America. From the nation's inception to the present, Black bodies have been racialized, criminalized, lynched, and policed. Through interdisciplinary approaches, students will explore the roots of racial terror and how Americans remember racial trauma and anti-Black violence. How does race shape memory? Who is mourned, and who is forgotten? Whose lives matter, and how have Americans negotiated issues of racial memory? These questions and others continue to affect Black lives today.

The course addresses historical and contemporary issues of racial violence and policing by listening to the voices and perspectives of African Americans who experienced, survived, and resisted racial violence. This learning opportunity encourages students to examine how the histories we remember, the lives we mourn, and the stories we tell shape our understanding of the past, our perception of the present, and the future we hope to create.

CHSS Faculty Recognized for Teaching Excellence

Each spring, the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning presents the Teaching Excellence Awards, an institutional recognition of the significant work that faculty members devote to course planning and preparation, curriculum development, and innovative teaching, advising, and undergraduate and graduate mentoring. In addition, Teachers of Distinction are faculty members who have been finalists for the Teaching Excellence Award and who are recognized across campus for their exceptional teaching and commitment to teaching-related activities.

The Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award recognizes the contributions of outstanding adjunct faculty members.

“Our faculty takes great pride in being highly effective teacher-scholars,” says Dean **Ann Ardis**. “The college is enormously proud of how many of our colleagues receive these Teaching Excellence and Teacher of Distinction Awards year after year.”

The college is proud to announce that six of its faculty members have received these awards this year:

- **Anna Habib**, Department of English, *Winner, Teaching Excellence Award*
- **Keith Clark**, Department of English, *Teaching Excellence Award Teacher of Distinction*
- **Catherine Wright**, Department of Communication, *Teaching Excellence Award Teacher of Distinction*
- **Jason Cantone**, Department of Criminology, Law and Society, *Winner, Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award*
- **Jack Curry**, Department of Communication, *Winner, Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award*
- **Gwen Udell**, Department of Criminology, Law and Society, *Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award Teacher of Distinction*
- **Graziella McCarron**, School of Integrative Studies, *Online Teaching Excellence Award Teacher of Distinction*

TEACHING



PHOTO BY ALEXIS GLENN

Mills Kelly Receives Gutenberg Teaching Award

Mills Kelly, history professor and interim executive director of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, has been a leader in the scholarship of teaching and learning since the late 1990s. For his body of work, he has been selected to receive the 2020 Gutenberg Teaching Award.

The award, conferred annually since 2014 by the Gutenberg Teaching Council of the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, recognizes significant contributions to the development and growth of academic teaching and the improvement of teaching quality.

Kelly describes the field of academic teaching this way:

“It’s a research field that studies how students learn in the disciplines of higher education. It’s heavily research-based scholarship, but it’s in the disciplines: Historians study the way that history students learn, chemists study the way the chemistry students learn. Then we share across those disciplines.”

The Gutenberg awardees are notable in the diversity of their respective disciplines. Kelly’s field is history and digital humanities. Previous winners have included a scholar in the field of philosophy, political science, and economics; a researcher who studies AIDS/HIV and African Bible study; a Nobel Prize laureate in physics;

the founder and musical director of the Bach Collegium Japan; and a professor of German studies and literature who helped advance the internationalization of university teaching.

Representing universities from Europe, Africa, the United States, and Asia, the winners of the Gutenberg Prize “are diverse in every way that you can think of,” says Kelly.

Kelly was nominated for the award by the Department of History at the University of Mainz to recognize his 20-plus years of work in the scholarship of teaching and learning. This included a three-year commitment as president of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, as well as his pioneering work in digital history and his extensive advocacy for transforming history education in North America and Europe.

“Those of us who are doing this work are pushing the conversation so that people are, in fact, being more thoughtful about how we know that it’s working. How do we know that our students are actually learning something?” says Kelly. “And that’s the question that every scholar asks: how do you know?”

COMMUNITY

CHSS Supports Learning and Action on Racial Justice

“Education is one of our greatest tools in the fight for equity and justice. We must all be open to learning, to changing, to acknowledging our missteps and mistakes and becoming better advocates and allies as a result.”

This is the heart of the message that Dean **Ann Ardis** delivered to CHSS students, faculty, and staff in early June, following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many other members of Black and Brown communities. Accompanying the dean’s pledge of support, the college compiled a listing of community support resources and courses touching on relevant issues.

From across the college, departments highlighted undergraduate and graduate courses in African American studies, race and ethnicity, religious traditions, Spanish-speaking communities, environmental ethics, intercultural communication, philosophy, human rights, bioethics, hate crime, poverty and wealth inequality, human rights, policing in America, and race and ethnicity in a changing world. Almost every department in CHSS is represented, and the list continues to grow.

In addition, the college listed fall 2020 special topics courses with relevant themes: the lasting effects of European colonialism, legacies of the Civil War, histories of the American South since 1865, the history of foreign

intervention in Africa, culture change, Black feminist thought, the varied forms of policing Black bodies, Black social movements, civil rights and citizenship, youth advocacy, global justice, and the historical antecedents to underlying issues in the 2020 presidential election.

“Each of us has a civic duty to educate ourselves, make informed choices, and demand justice and equity in every facet of our society and government,” said Dean Ardis in her message. CHSS stands firmly in its commitment to giving the Mason community the tools to do so.



The Mason community marches on the Fairfax Campus in peaceful protest to voice support for the Black Lives Matter movement.

PHOTO BY EVAN CANTWELL

COMMUNITY



Keith Wallace, Angela Hattery, and Sarai Rodriguez, who accepted the award on behalf of Martha Rodriguez

Leaving a Legacy of Leadership and Caring

This spring, **Angela Hattery**, professor and director of the Women and Gender Studies (WGST) Program, announced that she would be leaving Mason to take a position as a senior scholar launching and co-leading the Center for the Study of Prevention of Gender-Based Violence at the University of Delaware. She leaves behind a strong legacy of leadership in WGST and a legacy of caring and support for all members of Mason's community.

This support was illustrated this spring, as she established the Goldie Hattery and Diane Hattery Awards for Excellence.

The awards stem from a project, "A Seat at the Table," that Hattery worked on with colleagues **Wendi Manuel-Scott**, a faculty member in the School of Integrative Studies, Department of History and Art History, African and African American Studies Program, and WGST; and Lisa Snyder, associate director of Mason's Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) office. "A Seat at the Table" involved hearing the concerns and checking on the well-being of classified staff who hold positions in Housekeeping and Mason Facilities.

"Until now, there has not been a good way to recognize their hard work," says Hattery. "At Mason's annual Outstanding Achievement Awards, there are now several awards for faculty and staff, and I saw an opportunity for these kinds of jobs to receive more of the recognition they deserve."

The Outstanding Achievement Awards celebrate the hard work and dedication of Mason's faculty and staff. The Goldie Hattery and Diane Hattery Awards for Excellence, dedicated to and named after Hattery's grandmother and mother, specifically highlight classified staff in Mason Facilities and Housekeeping. It is given through WGST.

The inaugural award was given to Keith Wallace from Facilities Management and Martha Rodriguez from Housing and Residence Life Housekeeping during the university's faculty and staff holiday party in December.

"[Goldie and Diane Hattery] had a lot of attentiveness to people who do the work that really matters but always goes unrecognized," says Hattery. "I felt like this was a nice way to honor them."

Center for Psychological Services Cares for Community during COVID-19

Accessible mental health services are critical, especially now. And the George Mason University Center for Psychological Services (GMU CPS) is working hard, and creatively, to make sure accessible, affordable psychological services are available for all in Northern Virginia.

GMU CPS offers numerous different mental health services to the community, all while providing on-site training and clinical experience to graduate students in Mason's clinical, counseling, and school psychology programs. Most of their clientele is from the external community and includes veteran and low-income populations. They offer services at less than half the standard rate and reduce those costs further for those who qualify. While this is a typical

practice for training clinics, GMU CPS is one of the only clinics on the East Coast with that sliding-scale cost option.

When the COVID-19 crisis struck, increased unemployment, financial uncertainty, and mental health concerns demonstrated an even greater need for GMU CPS's services. Between transitioning to online services in the period of March 8 to May 31, the center saw 104 individual clients via telehealth appointments and conducted a total of 583 telehealth sessions.

"We're only seeing the tip of the iceberg regarding the mental health needs of our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for frontline and essential employees," says **Robyn Mehlenbeck**, director of GMU CPS. The center hopes to create targeted services for essential workers, frontline health care workers, and families directly affected by COVID-19, all groups that are at a higher risk for post-traumatic stress disorder and mental illness during this crisis. Staff at the center are considering offering preemptive intervention, a support hotline, and distributing a set number of free services to those high-risk groups.

Mehlenbeck and her team are also reaching out to the community in creative ways. Advanced doctoral student trainees organized and hosted a six-part community workshop series. These workshops, which cover topics such as managing anxiety and staying healthy during quarantine, are free to the public, and recordings are available online.

As for GMU CPS's future, Mehlenbeck hopes to continue the center's important mission. "My hope is that we are seen within the entire Northern Virginia community as the place for accessible, affordable, and state-of-the-art mental health care. And that we have the ability to meet the needs we know are there."

Town Gown Relations Awards Recognize Cynthia Lum, Katherine Russell

Since 2014, the Jack Wood Award for Town Gown Relations has recognized individuals, groups, and entities who have worked to foster strong relationships between George Mason University and the Fairfax, Virginia, community. This spring, Mason's Office of Government and Community Relations recognized a College of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty member and student with Jack Wood Awards.



Cynthia Lum, a professor of criminology, law and society and the director of Mason's Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, received a Jack Wood Award in the Faculty/Staff category. She was nominated by Jennifer Disano, executive director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), for her contributions to the institute. OLLI serves retirees ages 50 and over in the Northern Virginia community with educational and cultural experiences, and Disano noted that Lum not only freely volunteers her time to teach OLLI classes, but she also helps OLLI staff identify other criminology experts to fill the program's curriculum needs.



Katherine Russell, BA Environmental and Sustainability Studies '20, received a Jack Wood Award in the Student category. Russell worked with City of Fairfax councilwoman Jennifer Passey—who was also Russell's nominator—to encourage the city council to adopt a new composting program. In October 2019, the city celebrated the one-year anniversary of the program, and the councilwoman touted Russell's role in making it a great success.

COMMUNITY



Photo by Evan Cantwell



The humanities and the social sciences are a way for this country to learn from the past, understand the present, and devise paths to progress and peace.

—Vartan Gregorian, President,
Carnegie Corporation of New York

Learning from the Past, Understanding the Present, and Devising Paths to Peace and Progress

Black Lives Matter

The violent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and too many other members of Black and Brown communities due to police brutality, racism, and systemic violence continue to weigh heavily on our hearts and minds. It has been difficult for us all to process this hate and disregard for human life. Silence, however, is harmful. And words unmatched by action, to paraphrase James Baldwin, are not to be believed.

Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, has said: “The humanities and the social sciences are a way for this country to learn from the past, understand the present, and devise paths to progress and peace.” In this year of national turmoil, we must all ask ourselves: How will we contribute to devising “paths to progress and peace” for this country? How will we collaborate with colleagues throughout the university in this work?

Education is one of our greatest tools in the fight for equity and justice. We must all be open to learning, to changing,

to acknowledging our missteps and mistakes, and to becoming better advocates and allies as a result. To this end, CHSS has compiled a list of educational resources and CHSS courses for students of all majors, minors, backgrounds, and levels that explore issues of racial injustice, systemic oppression, and works of radical change. Visit to.gmu.edu/CHSSRacialJustice to see the available resources and courses.

Each of us has a civic duty to educate ourselves, make informed choices, and demand justice and equity in every facet of our society and government. We will continue to provide the space for students to do exactly that, as a community dedicated to becoming antiracist and inclusive for all our students. We will stand by our Black and Brown students, faculty, and staff and uplift their voices. And we will proclaim that **Black Lives Matter** until all lives are treated with equity and dignity.



CELEBRATION

Celebrating 2020 Graduates Virtually

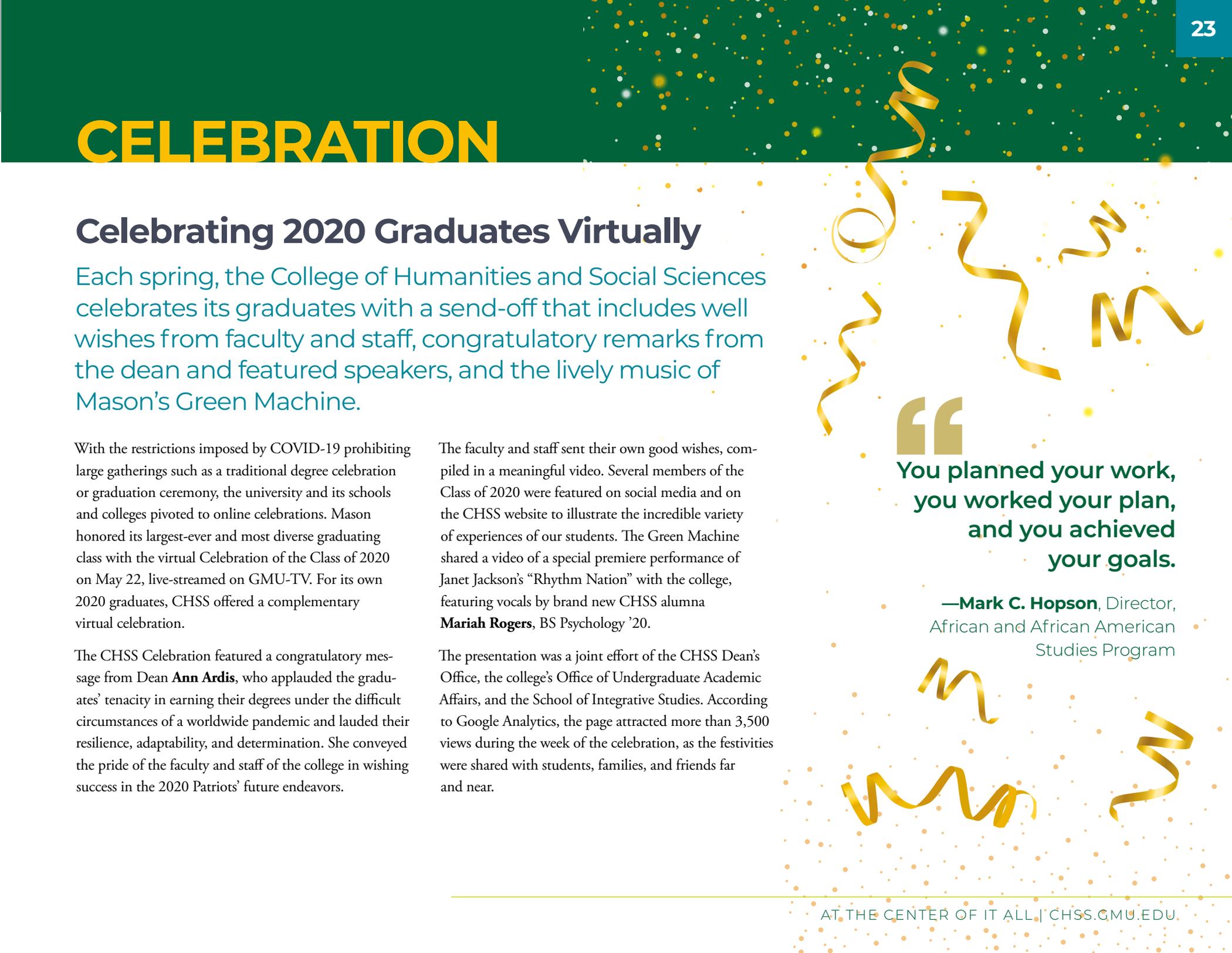
Each spring, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences celebrates its graduates with a send-off that includes well wishes from faculty and staff, congratulatory remarks from the dean and featured speakers, and the lively music of Mason's Green Machine.

With the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 prohibiting large gatherings such as a traditional degree celebration or graduation ceremony, the university and its schools and colleges pivoted to online celebrations. Mason honored its largest-ever and most diverse graduating class with the virtual Celebration of the Class of 2020 on May 22, live-streamed on GMU-TV. For its own 2020 graduates, CHSS offered a complementary virtual celebration.

The CHSS Celebration featured a congratulatory message from Dean **Ann Ardis**, who applauded the graduates' tenacity in earning their degrees under the difficult circumstances of a worldwide pandemic and lauded their resilience, adaptability, and determination. She conveyed the pride of the faculty and staff of the college in wishing success in the 2020 Patriots' future endeavors.

The faculty and staff sent their own good wishes, compiled in a meaningful video. Several members of the Class of 2020 were featured on social media and on the CHSS website to illustrate the incredible variety of experiences of our students. The Green Machine shared a video of a special premiere performance of Janet Jackson's "Rhythm Nation" with the college, featuring vocals by brand new CHSS alumna **Mariah Rogers**, BS Psychology '20.

The presentation was a joint effort of the CHSS Dean's Office, the college's Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, and the School of Integrative Studies. According to Google Analytics, the page attracted more than 3,500 views during the week of the celebration, as the festivities were shared with students, families, and friends far and near.

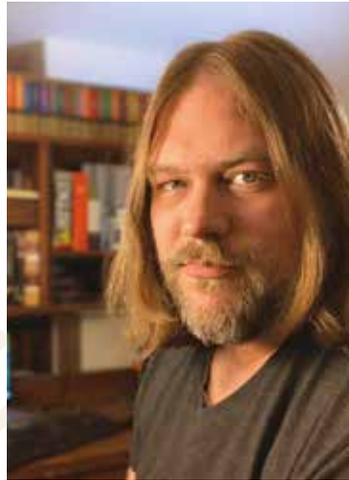
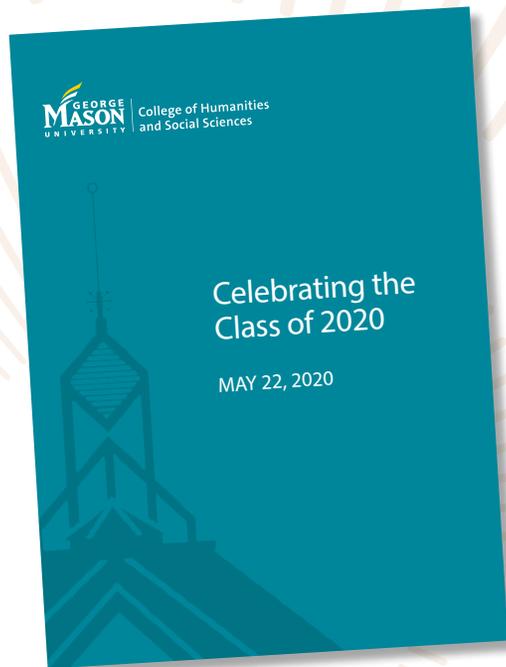


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**You planned your work,
you worked your plan,
and you achieved
your goals.**

—**Mark C. Hopson**, Director,
African and African American
Studies Program

CELEBRATION



A Call from Plato Leads to an Accelerated Master's

Paul Ickert, BA Philosophy '20, with minors in European history and English, was working as an administrator in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages when he decided to take a course on Plato. That course changed his life, encouraging him to pursue his bachelor's degree. He credits the Philosophy Department with teaching him analytical skills and nuanced thinking that will stick with him throughout his career.

Ickert was the recipient of the Philosophy Department's Outstanding Graduating Senior Award 2019–20 and was inducted into the founding chapter of Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society in the Social Sciences. He is continuing his studies at Mason through the accelerated master's program, and he will transition into course work for a master's degree in philosophy in the fall.



Tenacity in the Face of Adversity

When **Mary Osei**, BIS Early Childhood Special Education '20, immigrated to the United States from Ghana, she was told her two degrees meant nothing. Osei's response? "Yes, you can take my papers, but you cannot take my brain."

She became a teacher's assistant in Fairfax County Public Schools, where she found a passion for education that led her back to school to become an educator. Osei plans to begin course work for a master's degree in education at Mason this fall and hopes to find a teaching position for the 2020–21 school year.

"No matter the circumstances you face, education is for everyone and education has no end," she says. "Through everything, I have gained what I love to do."



Leading by Example and by Nature

Kariana Blaszak, BS Criminology, Law and Society '20, with a minor in intelligence analysis, said she plans to use what she has learned at George Mason University to protect and to serve. Blaszak attended Mason on a full four-year ROTC scholarship and played on Mason's women's soccer team as the backup goalkeeper. She is a three-time Provost Scholar Athlete—the highest academic award available to student-athletes at Mason—and has made the Atlantic-10 Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll every semester. During her final semester, she also had an internship with the Arlington County Police Department.

In May 2020 she was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Military Intelligence Corps. After her time in the U.S. Army, she plans to take the next step into law enforcement.



An Award-Winning Thesis with Personal Connections

My Nguyen, MA Applied Developmental Psychology '20, received the Applied Developmental Psychology Outstanding Thesis Award for 2020 for her thesis "Early Bilingualism and Foreign Language Learning in Secondary School." As a bilingual international student from Vietnam who has been studying in the United States for six years, she shares a personal connection with this topic.

Nguyen's academic journey will continue in Texas, where she will begin her PhD in cognitive neuroscience at the University of Houston in the fall. Ultimately, she hopes to continue exploring the neural mechanism underlying bilingualism in order to understand how bilingualism can impact human behavior, cognition, and affect.

“

Congratulations class of 2020! I hope you enjoyed your time at Mason as much as I did and find that your degree will take you far in life and help you accomplish your goals. Enjoy this time of celebration. You have a lot of people out here proud and rooting for you!

—**Kimberly Johnson**,
Communication '04

“

These are strange and very challenging times, and who better than the Mason Class of 2020 to embrace these daunting challenges that today's world presents?

Your talents and commitment are what we desperately need today and tomorrow! Congratulations, and God Bless!

—**Bill Homer**, History '75

CELEBRATION

Dear 2020 Graduates

CHSS Alumni Cheer On Newest Alumni



Your accomplishments matter so much to our Mason community, and we are all so proud of you. I hope your time at Mason always brings a smile to your face, even during this time of adversity for our country. You are simply incredible, and you are destined for greatness. Godspeed!

—**Crystal Adame**, English '15



Congratulations, 2020 graduates! The world needs your excellent critical-thinking and problem-solving skills more than ever. You have the power to make a positive impact on your community! Your fellow Mason alumni are here to assist you on your journey. Best wishes for a bright future!

—**Proud Patriot**, Psychology '16



Congratulations to you all!
Welcome to the Mason Alumni family!

—**Jacquelyn Bullock**, Integrative Studies '05



Dear Patriot—what a proud moment, to finish something you started! May you all continue on your paths and have the opportunity to experience all that life has to offer—health and happiness always.

—**Jayne Beamer**, Communication '02



Hey 2020 graduates, congratulations, you did it! ... Conquer the world and show 'em what millennials are made of!

—**Ruth Boggs**, English '94



You made it! Congrats on this next step in your journey! We are all proud of your accomplishments and the legacy you leave with Mason! Go Patriots!

—**Meagan Huntington**, Psychology '16

CAREERS

Preparing Students for Diverse Careers

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences boasts more than 64,000 incredible alumni whose work and service stretch to all 50 states and around the world. Meet five CHSS alumni whose careers show the broad opportunities available to graduates with humanities and social science backgrounds.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA

Mason alumnus Mounir Alafrangy spent 45 days inside the Human Exploration Research Analog (HERA) habitat as part of a simulated mission to Phobos, Mars's largest moon.

Mounir Alafrangy, BA History '10

In October 2019, **Mounir Alafrangy**, BA History '10, successfully completed a 45-day confined space mission at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. Alafrangy was one of four crew members, known as analog astronauts, who were selected from a large pool of applicants to be part of Human Exploration Research Analog (HERA) Mission XX, a space mission simulation to the Martian moon Phobos. While they simulated a landing on Phobos, the crew stayed inside the HERA habitat in Houston for the duration of the mission.

HERA is a ground-based analog used by NASA's Human Research Program to study the effects of isolation and confinement on humans. This research will help NASA better understand the hazards of human spaceflight as it prepares to send astronauts to the Moon and on to Mars, and bring them safely home again.

Portions of this piece originally appeared in an article by Colleen Kearney Rich, MFA '95, for The George.



My time with HERA gave me a unique perspective on the needs and opportunities within that environment. I'm looking to take what I've learned and create solutions for the space sector that will enable the human species to explore further into space and survive there for longer periods of time.

—Mounir Alafrangy

CAREERS



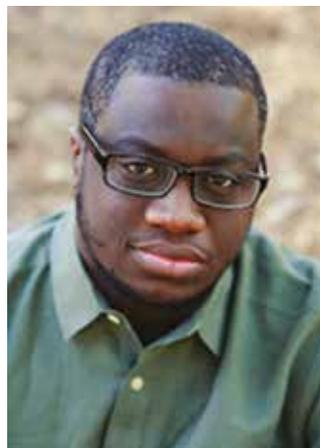
Nicole Tong, MFA '07
ARTSFAIRFAX, Fairfax County's designated local arts agency, has named **Nicole Tong**, MFA '07, Fairfax's first poet laureate, the county's highest honor awarded to a local poet.

Tong is a professor of English at Northern Virginia Community College, where she serves as NOVA's college coordinator for the Center for Excellence in

Teaching and Learning. She has received fellowships from the Vermont Studio Center, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Mason. In 2016, she served as the inaugural writer-in-residence at the Pope-Leighey House, a Frank Lloyd Wright house in Alexandria, Virginia. She has been widely published in poetry journals and reviews, and the *Washington Post's* publishing house selected her first collection of poems, *How to Prove a Theory*, for its 2017 Jean Feldman Poetry Prize winner. Her Twitter project, @poetryliveshere, aims to raise awareness of the work of living poets.

While at Mason, Tong received the Creative Writing Program's Thesis Fellowship and the Outstanding Poetry Student Award for her graduating year. Following her graduation, she directed the Reading and Writing Center at NOVA for several years before becoming a full-time faculty member in English.

According to Linda Sullivan, ARTSFAIRFAX president and CEO, the poet laureate program is designed to highlight talented poets in the Fairfax community as well as to bring poetry into the daily lives of county residents. Tong's selection as poet laureate was based upon a competitive process where she was selected by a distinguished panel of judges. Her work may be seen at her website, nicoletong.com.



Rion Amilcar Scott, MFA '08

Those who have been to Cross River know that you can't get there by traditional means of transportation like plane, train, or automobile. To visit that

historic town in Maryland, you'll have to peer between the pages of the short story collections of Mason alumnus **Rion Amilcar Scott**, author of the prizewinning *Insurrections* and the recently released *The World Doesn't Require You*—the latter of which has already received much praise from such outlets as the *New York Times*, *Southern Living*, and *Kirkus Reviews*.

Scott, who received his MFA from Mason in 2008, says he can trace the fictional town's inception to his time as a student in the Creative Writing Program. "I definitely didn't come in with that idea.... Mason somehow brought that out in me."

He says the community of writers he found, and the out-of-classroom conversations he had with close friends from the program, helped solidify a concept he had long been thinking about. "You're in this community, and you're ensconced, and you feel safe and you feel uplifted.... It was a very good experience."

From some angles, Scott's arc of success since his graduation from Mason may seem like a straightforward line. But he stresses that before winning the PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize for his debut collection and widespread praise for his second book, the moments of self-doubt were many.

"There were a lot of ups and downs; there were some moments where I didn't feel any passion for writing. And it felt like it was going nowhere, getting me nowhere. I was sacrificing a lot of time and effort. But I knew that I would be excited again, so I kept going until I got to that point where I was excited."

Scott currently teaches creative writing at the University of Maryland.

A version of this article, written by Priyanka Champaneri, BA '05, MFA '10, originally appeared online in The George on September 11, 2019.



Marisa Krafsig, BA Psychology '00

Marisa Krafsig, BA Psychology '00, is the vice president and chief human resource officer for IntelliDyne LLC, an information technology consulting firm. Krafsig's expertise in diversity, reward and recognition, talent acquisition management, and organizational and professional development has helped develop the company into a recognized employer of choice. She is also the executive sponsor for their Military Resource Group. This employee-led group helps the organization increase hiring and retention of veterans and military spouses. As a result of this committee's activities, IntelliDyne was featured on the top 10 list for Monster.com and Military.com's Best Companies for Veterans in 2019. Krafsig received the *Washington Business Journal's* 2020 HR Impact Award, which is given to human resource professionals who have made a tangible impact on their workplace and have a track record of building productive, creative, and safe environments for all employees.



Hodei Sultan, BA Global Affairs '07

Hodei Sultan, BA Global Affairs '07 and MS Conflict Analysis and Resolution '11, has more than 10 years of experience working on issues related to gender, civil society, youth, peace education, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution, through her work with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). Sultan has served as a senior program specialist with USIP's Afghanistan and Pakistan programs, as a program officer with its South and Central Asia program, and now as a senior program manager in USIP's Asia Center. Her experience includes program design, monitoring and evaluation in conflict countries, and developing policies and procedures for field programming and operations in highly fluid security and political environments. She is also an adjunct faculty member at Northern Virginia Community College teaching undergraduate courses on peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and peace and stability operations.

LEADERSHIP



Amaka Okechukwu Receives Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and Is Named an AADHum Scholar

Assistant professor of sociology **Amaka Okechukwu** has received notable honors this year from the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation and from the African American History, Culture, and Digital Humanities (AADHum) initiative at the University of Maryland.

Okechukwu is one of 32 faculty members from across the United States to be selected as a 2020 Career Enhancement Fellow by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation. The fellowship provides career development opportunities for underrepresented faculty with promising research projects in the arts and humanities.

“It is an incredible honor that the reviewers found intellectual promise in my next book project,” says Okechukwu. “I hope that my work can contribute to better understandings of both urban decline and gentrification.”

Okechukwu has also been named a 2020 AADHum Scholar. This program, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, as well as by the College of Arts and Humanities and the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at the University of Maryland, is designed to offer AADHum Scholars opportunities to incubate their own Black digital humanities projects.

Okechukwu’s Wilson fellowship and AADHum project will center on her work around Black community organizing and transformation in Brooklyn, New York, during the 1970s and 1980s. Her research will result in a book, *Saving Our City: Grassroots Resistance to the Urban Crisis in Brooklyn, New York*, and in an interactive map that visualizes community movement in response to gentrification.

IN MEMORIAM

Darius Swann

Darius Swann made contributions to his community in powerful ways. He was a lifelong Presbyterian minister, a popular and respected member of Mason's faculty from 1971 to 1984, and a strong advocate for civil rights, probably best known as the plaintiff in the 1965 federal court case *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education*. The case, which centered on school integration in Charlotte, North Carolina, made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1971, with the court ruling in Swann's favor.

Swann arrived at Mason in 1971, a year before it became independent from the University of Virginia. He began teaching in what was then the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department and in 1973, when the university gained a drama department, Swann taught drama courses as well.

In July 1973, Vergil Dykstra became George Mason University's second president. Dykstra, a strong advocate of integration and affirmative action, immediately set a priority to increase the number of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students applying to, accepted by, and enrolling at the university. Among other reforms, he appointed Swann to the role of special assistant to the president for minority affairs, and Swann became the first Mason faculty member whose sole job revolved around assisting BIPOC students.

Swann concentrated on helping Black students at Mason build enthusiasm about being part of the university. He encouraged them to start student clubs and to ask the university for more courses and programs on Black culture, supporting those student suggestions in discussions with the university administration.



BROADSIDE PHOTO COLLECTION

Darius Swann at his desk,
October 28, 1977.

When Swann advised the creation of a center to better assist BIPOC students, the university created the Office of Minority Student Affairs and granted Swann the authority to staff it. The office drew upon enthusiastic Mason staff and faculty members who helped mentor BIPOC students during their university experience, advocated for them, and fostered academic and cultural programming. This office is a direct precursor to today's Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education.

In 1984, Swann left Mason to continue his career in ministry, but he left the university a more vibrant, welcoming, and diverse place for all students.

LEADERSHIP



Cynthia Lum Named Outstanding Faculty by SCHEV

Cynthia Lum, a professor of criminology, law and society and the director of Mason's Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, was formally recognized in early March by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) as one of 12 recipients of the 2020 Outstanding Faculty Award. Lum is the university's 23rd recipient since the award's inception in 1987.

"What was amazing was learning about the accomplishments of all the other winners," she says. "Being a part of such an active, interesting, and dynamic group made me feel humble and proud at the same time. To be able to celebrate the day with friends and family from Mason made the day especially fun."

The SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award is the highest honor the state can bestow upon a faculty member. The award recognizes faculty at Virginia's institutions of higher learning who exemplify the highest standards of teaching, scholarship, and service. Nominees are selected by the institutions, reviewed by a panel of peers, and chosen by a committee of leaders from the public and private sectors. Lum was among those selected from 27 finalists and 85 original nominations.

She plans to donate the \$7,500 prize money that Dominion Energy awarded to each recipient to three causes: the George Mason University Foundation to support the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy and the Department of Criminology, Law and Society; a scholarship at her high school for a senior in need who will be studying social sciences or humanities in college; and the Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation.

A former Baltimore City police officer, Lum is a global expert on evidence-based policing and has collaborated with local, state, federal, and international policing organizations and agencies to improve law enforcement operations through science and research translation. Her work has been recognized around the world.

CHSS Faculty Recognized with Presidential Awards

Prior to Mason's Celebration of the Class of 2020, Interim President Anne Holton named four members of Mason's faculty as recipients of the 2020 Presidential Awards for Faculty Excellence, including two College of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty members.

Edward Maibach, University Professor for Communication and director of Mason's Center for Climate Change Communication, received the Beck Family Medal for Faculty Excellence in Research and Scholarship. **Cynthia Fuchs**, faculty member in the Department of English, associate director of the Film and Video Studies Program in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and longtime director of Mason's Visiting Filmmakers Series, received the United Bank Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion.

"Since the day I arrived 12 years ago, Mason has consistently supported my research in every way possible," says Maibach. "I am so grateful for that, and for the recognition that comes with the Beck Family Presidential Medal."

Maibach's research explores public opinion, understanding, and concern about climate change. In Mason's announcement of the Beck Family Presidential Medal, the university said that his work "addresses the communication and behavior change challenges associated with climate change, such as where and how citizens learn about the issue, and has impacted public policy discussions nationally and globally."

"Public scholarship connects individuals, institutions, and ideas; fosters bonds beyond academia; and makes important problems and ideas more visible," says Maibach. "That connected deeply with me."



Fuchs has served as the director of the Visiting Filmmakers Series since its inception in 1995. The university recognized Fuchs's work to ensure that the mission of the program creates "opportunities for students, community members, and filmmakers to meet and discuss diverse and necessary films and themes."

During the unusual spring 2020 semester when COVID-19 forced university programs online, the series adapted. "We put on an incredible online version of the series featuring 25 sessions and 34 guests," says Fuchs.

She adds, "The series is in part a function of my own interests, of course, and my commitment to bringing together students, faculty, staff, and artists, as well as to supporting innovative, creative, and politically engaged artists."

Excellence at the Mason Core

The Mason Core is the university's general education program that builds the foundation for the Mason graduate: an engaged citizen and well-rounded scholar who is prepared to act.

All undergraduates seeking a baccalaureate degree must complete Mason Core requirements, an array of liberal arts education courses that prepare students for work in their majors and minors, for their careers, and for lifelong learning.

Mason Core Awards recognize faculty members who were evaluated by their students with a ranking of more than 4.75 points on a 5-point scale for the category "My Overall Rating of Teaching" from the Student Ratings of Instruction. This evaluation highlights the value that the university places on students' perceptions of Mason Core teaching.

For fall 2019, 187 CHSS faculty members were recognized with Core Awards, many for more than one section or class.

These faculty members spanned the college's course offerings, including African and African American studies; communication; criminology, law and society; economics; English; global affairs; art history; history; modern and classical languages; philosophy; psychology; religious studies; integrative studies; individualized study; anthropology; sociology; and women and gender studies.

CHSS dean **Ann Ardis** noted the importance of these faculty members' work in presenting exemplary core course work. "CHSS is highly—and rightly—proud of our faculty's contributions to the delivery of Mason Core classes that engage students and help create Mason graduates who are well-rounded citizens and engaged scholars who are prepared to act."

College of Humanities and
Social Sciences classroom



Photo by Evan Cantwell



Giving Day Results

On Giving Day 2020, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences raised \$32,685 for our college's emergency scholarship fund and other college initiatives. All contributions to the CHSS Emergency Scholarship Fund this year are being used in coordination with the University Life Student Emergency Assistance Fund to help provide relief to as many Mason students as possible.

OUR SUPPORTERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Patriots Helping Patriots

Our university is proud to be home to more than 38,000 students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Even in ordinary circumstances, many of our students face significant financial obstacles, and the COVID-19 crisis created additional vulnerabilities. Some of our students lost their jobs and some lacked the financial resources to return home to continue their Mason course work online. Those who always relied heavily on campus resources (computer labs, internet access, quiet places to study, health services) faced hardships as the university pivoted to all-virtual instruction.

On March 19, 2020, Mason made an online application available for students to request assistance. Within a week, 600 students had applied, identifying more than \$1 million of immediate need. In response, the Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations collaborated with University Life to redesign Mason's annual Giving Day on April 2 to instead encourage donations specifically for the University Life Student Emergency Assistance Fund. The effort was dubbed Patriots Helping Patriots.

Patriots Helping Patriots is more than just a tagline. It reflects our Mason community joining together to help our students during this unprecedented time.

Due to the generosity of Mason supporters, we were able to allocate more than \$2.53 million to 2,377 students¹. These gifts enabled us to offer our students critical resources during a time of uncertainty and loss and strengthen our response for those who needed it most.

¹As of May 29, 2020. Includes charitable gifts and university funds distributed.

Your Gift Makes a Difference for Students

“

A long-time Patriot helping a new generation of Patriots.

—**John Hawley**,
BA Psychology '75, MA '77

“

We are going to get through this together. We are a proud Mason community. Do not lose sight of hope, as we are here to help each other out.

—**Mark Ecleo**,
BS Criminology, Law and Society '15

“

After having my normal 40-hour week cut down to 16 hours due to the COVID-19 outbreak, my life changed before my eyes in seconds. When I had heard that Mason was offering emergency funding, I truly could not believe it...within a couple of days, it was decided that I had been approved for emergency funding. This opportunity has given me a sense of security and has put my mind at ease. I am so grateful that I can continue to pay my bills during this trying time and that my academic success at Mason will not be affected due to the virus. I truly could not thank the committee and donors enough for this wonderful chance to remain happy and healthy during this time!

—**Mason Student**,
University Life Emergency Scholarship Recipient, March 2020

“

I am so happy that Mason is helping out their students. This is so important.

—**Linda Garfinkel**, parent of Jane Garfinkel, BA Sociology '15



This scholarship proved to me that the efforts I am putting into my academic life at Mason are not only being acknowledged, but also rewarded. This inspires me to continue doing my best and to progress even further in my academic and social endeavors.

—**John Lucibello**, English Major and Class of 2024
Freshman Achievement Award Recipient



Being a graduate student at Mason came with many trial-and-error scenarios, many tears, stressors, and even feelings of denial and defeat. Although I faced these struggles, they have strengthened me to who I am today. It is an honor for my research to be recognized with an award dedicated to a graduate student who is focused on a project at the intersection of social justice and the arts. My work helped me gain a true definition of intersectionality by researching Black women and their complex, versatile, and innovative relationship with beauty.

—**Taylor Graham**, MA Interdisciplinary Studies '19
Suzanne Scott Constantine Award for Excellence Recipient

MAKING AN IMPACT

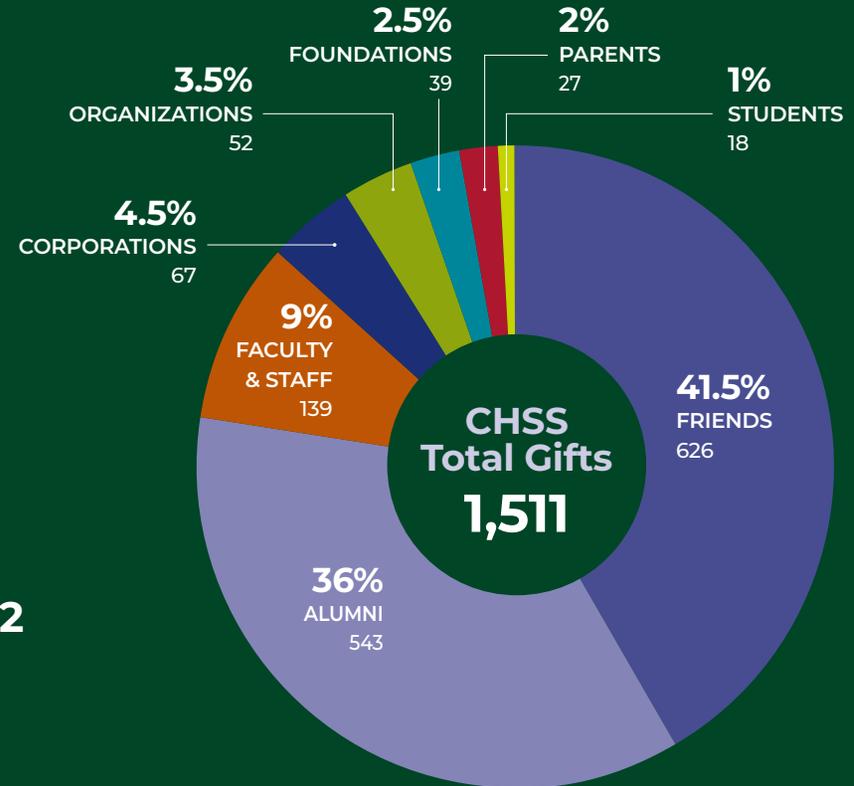
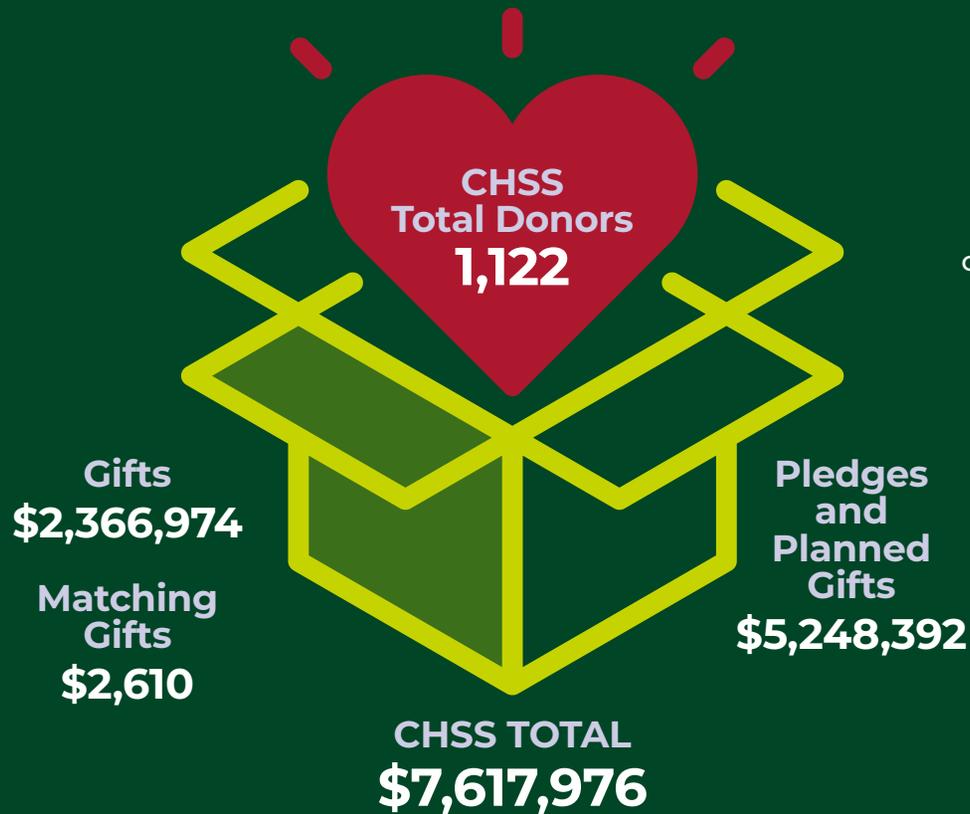
Our success would not be possible without generous support from alumni, parents, faculty, staff, students, and friends of the college. Gifts to college programs and scholarships enable us to sustain and further enhance Mason's inclusive-excellence agenda in serving our students.

In fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020), the college received \$7.6 million to support our faculty, research, and students through the generosity of 1,122 donors.

Faculty and Staff Impact

Mason faculty and staff took extraordinary efforts during the COVID-19 crisis to sustain university business functions as well as instruction. Our faculty and staff showed professionalism, collaboration, flexibility, and good humor as they adjusted their lives to help provide stability and direction to others. They also doubled down on meeting the needs of our students—38 percent of donors to **Patriots Helping Patriots** were Mason faculty and staff, and their gifts accounted for more than \$135,000.

Fiscal Year 2020 Gifts and Pledges



Ways to Donate

ONLINE: Make a gift or begin a recurring pledge online via credit card at 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.

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. To have a confidential conversation about planned giving options, please contact Eleanor Weis, director of development, at eweis2@gmu.edu.

Connect with us at chssalum@gmu.edu to learn more about how to get involved in supporting our college.



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