

# AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL

THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21





PHOTO BY EVAN CANTWELL

## College of Humanities and Social Sciences

2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

For more information,  
contact Felicia Carr, assistant dean,  
strategic communications and marketing  
[chss@gmu.edu](mailto:chss@gmu.edu), 703-993-8720

Contributors: Mariam Aburdeineh, Alecia  
Bryan, Felicia Carr, Karol Escalante, Brooke  
Gowl, Sarah Holland, John Hollis, Traci Kendall,  
Anne Reynolds, and Michele Schwietz

Produced in conjunction with the Office of  
Communications and Marketing at George  
Mason University

Copy Editors: Priyanka Champaneri, Rebecca  
Kobayashi, and Corey Jenkins Schaut

Graphic Designer: Marcia Staimer

Photographers: Ron Aira, Evan Cantwell,  
and Lathan Goumas

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**On the cover:** The CHSS mini-celebrations  
in spring 2021 were an opportunity to safely  
celebrate with graduates' families.

Photo by Evan Cantwell

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## Dean's Message

### A(nother) Year of Extraordinary Challenges— and Accomplishments

Even as we continue to grapple with a global pandemic and its extraordinary challenges and disruptions, we have occasion to celebrate the equally extraordinary accomplishments of this college's faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

2021 opened with a stunningly violent disruption of the peaceful transfer of power at the U.S. Capitol on a day of great symbolic importance for American democracy.

Yet 2021 has also been a year in which:

- **A faculty member in the Department of Communication was recognized as the most influential scientist working on climate change among America's public universities;**
- **A faculty member in the Department of Economics raised and distributed \$60 million to expedite and fund COVID-19 research;**
- **An alumna was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (a first for the Cultural Studies PhD Program, and, according to the information that the academy has available, a first for Mason as well);**
- **The Department of Criminology, Law and Society's graduate programs achieved a No. 1 ranking in Virginia and a No. 10 ranking nationally;**
- **Seven of the college's adjunct and full-time faculty members were recognized by the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning for excellence in online and in-person instruction;**

- **179 CHSS full-time faculty, graduate students, and adjuncts were recognized by the university for their stellar contributions to Mason's general education curriculum; and**
- **32 of our faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduates were invited to serve on Mason's Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence Task Force and on Mason's Military, Veterans, and Families Initiative.**

In the stories assembled here, you will find ample evidence of this college's (proudly) outsized contributions to Mason's vision, mission, and values as a comprehensive public research university that serves a majority minority and high first-generation-college student population, prioritizes access to excellence over seeking to become increasingly selective, and values excellence in both teaching and research.

I take this opportunity to thank our faculty, staff, students, alumni, partners, donors, and advisory boards for everything you do to support this college's mission. And I invite you to join me in offering a shout-out of appreciation for the stunning accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni this year.

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



PHOTO BY EVAN CANTWELL

“

**You will find ample evidence of this college's (proudly) outsized contribution to Mason's vision, mission, and values.**

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

# Overview of the College

Serving All of Mason's Students and Our Community

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is at the very center of the university's mission to serve as a hub of intellectual dynamism and diversity, a locus of local and global civic engagement, and an access point to excellence for individuals of all backgrounds. As one of the largest colleges at Mason, CHSS employs more than 700 faculty and staff, delivers critical courses for the university community (from Mason Core and 100-level classes to advanced seminars), and offers an expansive range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary degree programs (18 undergraduate majors, 69 minors, 13 graduate certificates, 8 master's degrees, 10 doctoral degrees, and 22 accelerated master's degree pathways).

At CHSS, the liberal arts tradition of studying human minds, beliefs, languages, cultures, histories, societal structures, and forms of creative expression drives our community forward in advancing cutting-edge research, impactful service, and critical competencies for today's global and knowledge-based economy.

In 2021, the college moved a dozen of its departments, programs, and research centers into the newest academic building on the Fairfax Campus, Horizon Hall. Described by University Life's Taj Kokayi as "peak Mason," and featuring 27 classrooms designed with technology and furniture to support active-learning environments, the opening of Horizon, in tandem with the renovation of Wilkins Plaza and completion of the Memorial to the Enslaved People of George Mason, both grounds us in our past and fuels the hope and excitement of a once-again vibrant campus. The college stands ready to move forward to help our students create the changes that will make our community a better place.

## 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

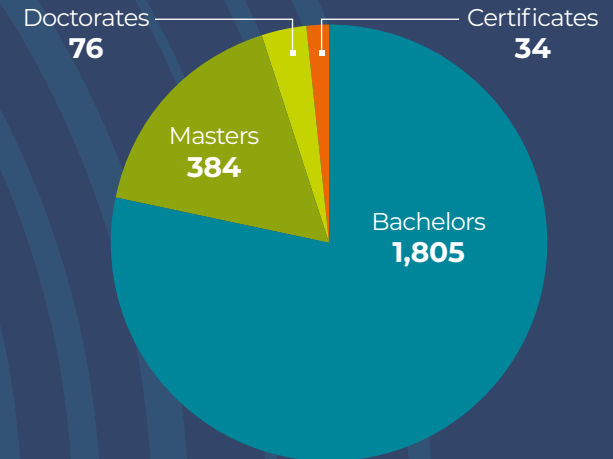
The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is at the very center of the university's mission to serve as a hub of intellectual dynamism and diversity, a locus of local and global civic engagement, and an access point to excellence for individuals of all backgrounds. Through the university's education requirements, known as the Mason Core, CHSS is proud to be part of every undergraduate student's experience.

CHSS offered



to the more than **7,500** students enrolled in fall 2021.

## Degrees Conferred by College Year 2020–21, All Terms



Source: IRR Data pulled October 5, 2021, for Degrees Conferred by College Year 2020–21, All Terms

## 2021 Top 10 CHSS Undergraduate Majors

COMMUNICATION	461
CRIMINOLOGY	1,239
ECONOMICS	298
ENGLISH	299
ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES	132
GLOBAL AFFAIRS	558
HISTORY	271
INDIVIDUALIZED STUDIES	216
INTEGRATIVE STUDIES	548
PSYCHOLOGY	1,410

Source: IRR Fall 2021 Official Census Student Enrollment by Demographic by College  
Pulled September 23, 2021



## Fall for the Book,

CHSS's signature literary arts festival, sponsored in partnership with local libraries, achieved a global reach in its yearlong series of online events, including one virtual event that topped **5,000 participants**.

### Fall 2021 Enrollment by Doctoral Program

	HEAD COUNT
COMMUNICATION	36
CRIMINOLOGY, LAW AND SOCIETY	50
CULTURAL STUDIES	46
ECONOMICS	130
HISTORY	52
LINGUISTICS	20
PSYCHOLOGY: ALL CONCENTRATIONS COMBINED	113
▪ Applied Developmental	15
▪ Clinical	33
▪ Industrial/Organizational	21
▪ Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience	21
▪ Human Factors/ Applied Cognition	23
SOCIOLOGY	51
WRITING AND RHETORIC	51

Source: Fall Beginning of Term Student Enrollment by Program, oiep.gmu.edu  
Pulled September 23, 2021

**TOTAL 549**

## #10 The Criminology, Law and Society Graduate Program Ranks in the **Top 10 Nationally**

The CLS graduate program is also ranked No. 1 in Virginia.

[www2.gmu.edu/news/2021-03/mason-has-eight-graduate-programs-listed-among-top-25-nationally-led-part-time-law](http://www2.gmu.edu/news/2021-03/mason-has-eight-graduate-programs-listed-among-top-25-nationally-led-part-time-law)

## #1 Ranked No. 1 for Veterans in Psychology

For the sixth year running, the Department of Psychology is ranked No. 1 for veterans studying general psychology.

## #35 Communication is No. 35 on the PRNews' 2021 Education **A-List**

## \$60 Million Raised to beat **COVID-19**

Economics professor Tyler Cowen, faculty director of the Mercatus Center, raised and distributed \$60 million for the Fast Grants program to expedite and fund COVID research.

# LEADERSHIP

## Inclusive Excellence at Home in CHSS

Since his arrival at Mason in July 2020, President Gregory Washington has led a comprehensive effort to examine Mason's culture of diversity and inclusivity and take action to address and eradicate ingrained racial bias while building intentional systems and standards of anti-racism.

Mason's Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force has charged forward for the past year, even in the face of COVID-19. Via engaged conversations throughout the university, town hall meetings, and soliciting feedback from the Mason community, the task force and its committees—Student Voice, Campus and Community Engagement, University Policies and Practices, Curriculum and Pedagogy, Training and Development, and Research—have developed recommendations for establishing a lasting culture of inclusive excellence.

At each step of this process, members of the CHSS community have played a significant role, serving on and leading these committees. Professor **Wendi Manuel-Scott**, School of Integrative Studies and Department of History and Art History, is the co-chair of the task force. **Christy Pichichero**, associate professor in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and the Department of History and Art History, and the college's director of faculty diversity, serves as the co-chair of the task force's University Policies and Practices Committee. **Lauren Cattaneo**, associate professor in the Department of Psychology, is the co-chair of the Curriculum and

Psychology Committee, and CHSS faculty and students are well represented on each of the individual committees.

This makes sense, says **Jaime Lester**, CHSS associate dean for faculty affairs and strategic initiatives. "We are a kind of natural fit for these conversations just because of where we all are situated in terms of our knowledge, and what our values and commitments are."

Pichichero agrees. "Our college is critical to the rest of the university for the advancement of inclusive excellence. We deliver so much course content that sets up frameworks of knowledge in diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice that allow people to go on and apply this—in CHSS fields and outside of CHSS fields."

Indeed, even before the ARIE Task Force, the college saw the importance of cataloging its courses, research, and resources that addressed racial justice, highlighting them prominently online ([chss.gmu.edu/racial-justice-resources](http://chss.gmu.edu/racial-justice-resources)). "I think that's something to celebrate," says Pichichero.

"Before the commencement of the task force, before the arrival of President Washington, there was a lot of work



More than  
Mason faculty,  
staff, and students,  
including 40 CHSS  
affiliates, are involved  
in the task force.







Wendi Manuel-Scott



Christy Pichichero



Lauren Cattaneo



Jaime Lester

that was taking place across campus,” says Manuel-Scott. Initiatives such as the Center for Mason Legacies and the theme of “Dissent” as the inaugural yearly theme for the Center for Humanities Research point to the humanities and social sciences as natural spaces for grappling with the difficult issues that lie at the heart of racial injustice.

Within the college, leadership has undertaken a comprehensive review of its own practices and how they champion inclusion. “The inclusive excellence plan in the college is a large-scale, multiyear, maybe never-

ending project focused on really creating a vision and ultimately a set of goals and practices with metrics and accountability for situating everything we do as a college in the context of diversity, inclusive excellence, anti-racism, and civility,” says Lester.

The college’s inclusive excellence plan incorporates data collection, metrics, and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goals to use as steps toward creating a greater, research-based intentionality in engaging CHSS students, faculty, and staff. The plan’s SMART goals relate to areas across the college’s operations: curriculum, recruitment, and stu-

dent success; staff and faculty training and development; research; faculty and staff recruitment and hiring; and campus and community engagement. They reflect a commitment to infusing inclusive excellence through all the college’s relationships with incoming students, diverse alumni, and with faculty and staff within the college and elsewhere in the university.

At the heart of the college’s plan is a goal that parallels the university’s—to make Mason an exemplar of inclusive excellence where everyone can thrive. It’s a big goal, and an important one.



**All along...CHSS has truly been ahead of the game. We know that we have lots of work to do, but CHSS leadership in this space is significant.**

—**Christy Pichichero**, Associate Professor,  
Department of Modern and Classical Languages



## Presidential Recognition for Diversity and Inclusion Commitment

**Wendi Manuel-Scott** was the 2018 recipient of the Alcalde Family Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion, and **Christy Pichichero** is the 2021 recipient of the United Bank Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion.

# LEADERSHIP



Dean Ann Ardis speaks with President Gregory Washington at the November 16, 2020, Freedom and Learning Forum.



In September 2020, President Gregory Washington named the faculty, staff, and student members of the Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force, a vital university-wide initiative that is examining the practices and culture of George Mason University for racial bias and building intentional systems and standards of anti-racism. The college is proud of its community members who have played important roles in this effort.

#### **Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence Task Force Members**

Wendy Manuel-Scott,  
*task force co-chair*  
Shelby Adams

Lauren Cattaneo  
Shannon Davis  
Cynthia Fuchs

Holly Mason  
Ayondela McDole  
Christy Pichichero

#### **Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence Committees**

##### **Campus and Community Engagement Committee**

Hansel Aguilar  
Deion Maith  
Taylor Mallory  
George Oberle

##### **Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee**

Lauren Cattaneo,  
*co-chair*  
LaNitra Berger  
Melissa Broeckelman-Post  
Al Fuertes  
Mark Hopson  
Shauna Rigaud  
Derek Sweetman

##### **Executive Steering Committee**

Ann Ardis  
Wendi Manuel-Scott

##### **Research Committee**

Benedict Carton  
Cher Wexia Chen  
James Condo  
Ayondela McDole  
Joshua Miller  
Michele Schwietz

##### **Student Voice Committee**

Shelby Adams,  
*co-chair*  
Sharrell Hassell-Goodman,  
*co-chair*  
James Condo

Austin A. Deray  
Dominique Dowling  
Deion Maith  
Joshua Miller  
Nautia Smalls  
Justine Suegay

##### **Training and Development Committee**

Ayondela McDole  
Julie Owen  
Virgil Storr

##### **University Policies and Practices Committee**

Christy Pichichero,  
*co-chair*  
Xiaomei Cai

# LEADERSHIP



Cynthia Lum



David B. Wilson

## Lum and Wilson Honored as Fellows by the American Society of Criminology

Criminology professors **Cynthia Lum** and **David B. Wilson** have been named fellows by the American Society of Criminology (ASC).

ASC Fellows are recognized for their scholarly contributions to criminology and distinction in the discipline, according to the organization's website. These contributions may include innovations in public policy as well as enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the ASC and the field of criminology. In addition, a fellow must have made a significant contribution to the field through the career development of other criminologists and/or through organizational activities within the ASC.

"I'm incredibly humbled and honored to be named a fellow of the American Society of Criminology, and especially to receive this recognition alongside my wonderful colleague Dave Wilson," says Lum.

Lum and Wilson join **David Weisburd** and **Stephen D. Mastrofski** from the Department of Criminology, Law and Society as fellows in the organization.

"Congratulations to Cynthia and Dave on this major accomplishment," says **James Willis**, the department chair. "They make us proud. Our department now has four fellows in the American Society of Criminology, which is remarkable and a testament to its rise as a top-ranked department producing cutting-edge research and first-class undergraduate and graduate students."

A former Baltimore police officer, Lum is a leading authority on evidence-based policing, which advocates research, evaluation, and scientific processes in law enforcement policymaking and practice. She has written extensively about patrol operations and crime prevention activities, as well as police use of technology such as body cameras. In 2020, Lum received the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Outstanding Faculty Award. At their July 30, 2021, meeting, Mason's Board of Visitors approved Lum's selection as a George Mason University Professor.

Wilson's work focuses on advancing scientific knowledge to change offender

behavior and prevent individuals from committing crimes. Examples of programs that he has examined include juvenile curfews, restorative-justice and trauma-informed programs for delinquent youth, juvenile and adult drug courts, and body cameras. Much of his work applies statistical methods of meta-analysis to synthesize evidence from rigorous social science research. Wilson is a recognized expert on these methods and has contributed to their advancement.



## Curriculum Impact: 2020–21 Projects Bring Critical Thinking to Contemporary Concerns

Each year, the Office of the Provost promotes an innovative multidisciplinary curriculum through the awarding of Curriculum Impact Grants. Teams of faculty work to create collaborative, high-impact learning experiences for students, deepening their engagement and preparing them to make a substantive impact on the world. For 2020–21, 20 applications were submitted; two of the seven funded grants were awarded to teams that involved CHSS faculty.

The **Ethics and AI Minor** introduces undergraduate students to the moral complexity of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and to encourage them to think critically about the impact of AI on society and humanity, including issues of data privacy, data and algorithmic bias, machine learning, autonomous systems, surveillance technologies, human-machine teaming, genetic engineering, biotechnology, entrepreneurial decision-making, and more. The faculty team represents the Department of Philosophy and the Department of English, along with colleagues from the College of Engineering and Computing.

### Race and Ethnicity in Cultural Studies

is a project by which faculty from the Cultural Studies Program will enrich the program's intellectual engagement with race and ethnic studies. The team will review its current curriculum, starting with feedback and recommendations from external reviewers with expertise in critical studies of race. They will examine the curricula and policies at peer institutions and seek input from current cultural studies students about Mason's cultural studies curriculum and how it might be improved. The program plans two new courses: a required core course on critical theories of race and ethnicity, and an elective course on race, ethnicity, and cultural studies. The program hopes to enhance its recruitment, retention, and support of BIPOC students, and create two archives for graduate students: a list of CHSS faculty with expertise in race and ethnicity, and a list of CHSS graduate courses focusing on race and ethnicity.

## Jill Bowen Recognized with Outstanding Achievement Award

Mason's Human Resources and Payroll Office's Outstanding Achievement Award recognizes specific employees for their long-term accomplishments that have meaningful benefits to the university, a school, or a department.

**Jill Bowen**, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum and space manager, is a 2021 recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award.

"This was quite a surprise," she says. "I am very appreciative of this recognition and am fortunate to work with such supportive colleagues within CHSS and the Mason community."

The announcement, however, was not a surprise to Bowen's colleagues. Her nomination spoke of her expertise in managing the curriculum throughout the college's departments and interdisciplinary programs, her knowledge of CHSS equipment and space requirements, and her calm and diplomatic manner in carrying out the work of the dean's office.

In her nomination letter, Dean **Ann Ardis** emphasized, in particular, "Jill's outstanding efforts this past year to support the faculty and staff of this college through our short-notice pivot to 100 percent



Jill Bowen

telework and remote instruction last spring, our safe return to campus planning, *and* the move of more than a dozen CHSS units into Horizon Hall this spring."

Bowen was an integral part of the planning behind the construction and the move to Horizon Hall from the project's inception, says **Jenna McGwin**, the college's associate director of operations and initiatives. "Jill has attended well over 100 meetings—yes, I counted!—with various constituencies, including Mason Facilities, central administration, and the college's faculty and staff," she says.

"Jill is a pleasure to work with and an incredible asset to both the college and the university," adds **Kimberly Dight**, CHSS executive director for HR and finance.

Faculty and staff celebrated Bowen's achievement through the virtual Outstanding Achievement Award ceremony held on April 13 and covered live on GMU-TV.

## IN MEMORIAM

## Walter Williams

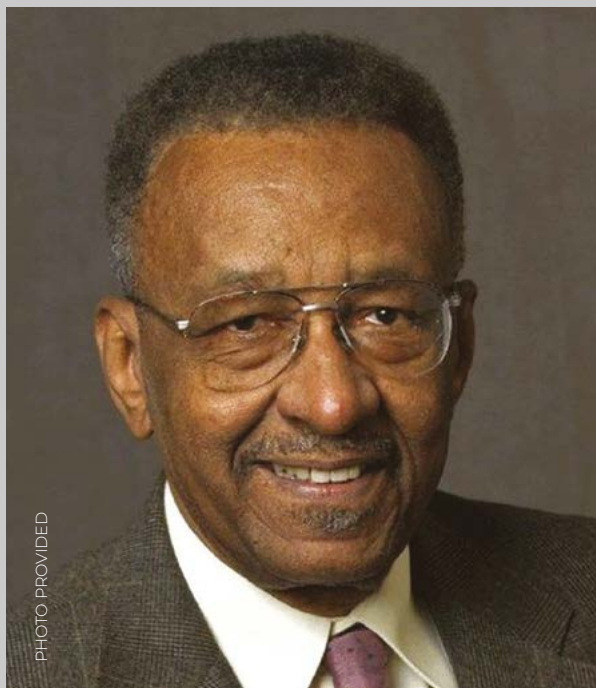
Professor **Walter Williams**, distinguished faculty member in the Department of Economics, died in December 2020. At the time of Williams's passing, Dean Ardis offered the following appreciation:

Walter Williams was 84 and still active on campus up until the time of his death, serving as the John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics. He has been a prominent member of the faculty at George Mason University for four decades, serving our academic community admirably and with distinction as an economist, a scholar, the chairman of our Economics Department from 1995 to 2001, a noted author, a well-known radio host, and a nationally syndicated columnist.

Williams's body of work was remarkable, prolific, and without question controversial. His principal scholarly research was devoted to studying the effects on minority

groups of markets as well as of government policies, an important and complicated area of study. Williams examined it thoroughly and never shied away from tough conversations. Throughout his career, he routinely questioned conventional wisdom, eschewing emotion and politics and instead applying economic theory to make his case. It is also important to note that he was a terrific writer, one who had a gift for explaining complicated ideas to the broadest audiences.

It's also fair to say that many people disagreed with him, yet his work and his writings prompted many of us to think critically, even if the end result was an agreement to disagree. That is the foundation of higher education, and Williams left his mark, using his time, scholarship, and wisdom to chart a unique and successful path. We will miss him, and we send our condolences to his family at this hour.



Walter Williams

In addition to his writing and research, Williams was active in the classroom throughout his 40-year career.





## Mike Dickerson

In spring 2021 the Mason community mourned the passing of Colonel **Michael (Mike) A. Dickerson** (U.S. Army, Ret.), who taught in Mason's Department of Communication for 18 years.

Dickerson came to Mason in 1998 after two successful careers, the first as a servicemember in the U.S. Army, and the second as a public relations professional in Washington, D.C.

At Mason, Dickerson brought those vast life experiences to students in the classroom and in so doing discovered two of his greatest passions: teaching students skills that would serve them in their careers, and introducing students to professional opportunities through his extensive network. His impact on the Mason community was extraordinary. With two colleagues, **Tom Hoog** and **Don Boileau**, he founded the Insight Committee, which still

serves the department by connecting students with mentorship opportunities from public relations and communication professionals across many industries. "Mike demonstrated to students the power of networking in helping them succeed," says Boileau, now an emeritus professor of communication.

He also developed a study-abroad program that focused on international public relations in London, and for 13 years he led the program to the United Kingdom every winter break, bringing more than 100 students to share a global experience. Dickerson also helped place



Mike Dickerson

500 students in their first internships, writing countless letters of recommendation over the years, and serving as their advocate as they navigated bureaucratic systems that were still developing.

Per his family's wishes, the Colonel Michael A. Dickerson Scholarship in Public Relations will, once endowed, provide substantial support for juniors and seniors pursuing a communication degree with a concentration in public relations. Having taught more than 3,000 Mason students in the classroom over the years, Dickerson

understood that too often, finances prevented a student from obtaining their degree and beginning their career in public relations. The Colonel Michael A. Dickerson Scholarship in Public Relations will change that.

## Edwin Fleishman

**Edwin A. Fleishman** was a psychologist who served in the profession in the military, business, and academia. A Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Mason from 1986 through 1996, he founded the Center for Behavioral and Cognitive Studies and worked to develop the PhD program from its earlier designation as a PsyD program. He died in February 2021.

Fleishman was best known internationally for his work in the field of industrial and organizational psychology. He launched his career by completing his bachelor's degree at Loyola College in just two years because of his service in World War II. After a year in the United States Navy, he

received his master's degree in psychology at the University of Maryland and his doctorate in 1951 from Ohio State University. He worked with the United States Air Force in San Antonio, Texas, where he participated in the design of the cockpit in the first capsule of the Project Mercury program. He also developed a program to increase the efficiency of motor skills for Air Force pilots.

Fleishman founded the Human Skills Research Laboratory at Yale University and his book, *Psychology and Human Performance* (Henry Holt and Co., 1959), helped delineate exercises that were most effective in achieving physical fitness. He received a Guggenheim

Fellowship, which allowed him to spend a year in Israel as a visiting professor at the Technion University, and was also a guest lecturer in England, China, and many other countries. In 1960, he was one of the psychologists invited by the American Psychological Association to visit the Soviet Union to learn about psychological developments in that country.

In addition to several textbooks, Fleishman was the author of more than 250 journal articles and research reports. He served as the editor of the *Journal of Applied Psychology* and was on the editorial board for numerous other journals.



Amaka Okechukwu

Assistant professor of sociology **Amaka Okechukwu** was named a 2020 Career Enhancement Fellow by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, one of 32 faculty members from across the nation to receive the award. During her six-month fellowship, Okechukwu wrote and analyzed data for her current book in progress, *Saving Our City: Grassroots Resistance to the Urban Crisis in Brooklyn*, which concerns Black community organizing and transformation during the 1970s and 1980s.

"This book will tell an important story about the community vitality of Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant, two of the most rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods in New York City, at a time when people dismissed them as crime-ridden and hopeless," she says, adding that she used to live and work in these neighborhoods.

### Sponsored Research, Fiscal Year 2021 Summary Data

Total Research and Development Expenditures	<b>\$14,086,646</b>
Direct Expenditures	<b>\$12,782,789</b>
Indirect Expenditures	<b>\$1,303,857</b>
Number of Proposals	<b>131</b>
Value of Proposals	<b>\$38,707,408</b>
Number of Awards	<b>98</b>
Value of Awards	<b>\$15,552,519</b>

SOURCE: OSP Proposals, Awards, and Expenditures by Unit for FY 2021

## RESEARCH

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences contributes to the vital research going on at George Mason University, with scholarship that reflects the breadth of CHSS disciplines.

### Two CHSS Researchers Received 2020–21 4-VA Collaborative Research Grants

Relying on the strengths of eight participating institutions in the commonwealth, 4-VA promotes collaborative research, course redesign, course sharing, and degree completion.



Sabine Doebel

**Sabine Doebel**, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, received a grant for her project, "Does Social Understanding Support the Development of Executive Function in Early Childhood?" She is working with faculty from the University of Virginia to explore how young children's emerging self-awareness might influence how they use and develop executive control in various situations. The team plans to identify promising ways to support executive function in preschoolers.



Kelly Schrum

**Kelly Schrum**, an associate professor in the Higher Education Program, is working with faculty at Virginia Tech on the project, "Reimagining the History of Higher Education in the Digital Age," which will redesign a core course on the history of higher education in the United States to include a focus on historical thinking, digital literacy, and research skills. The team will also create an open educational resource on the history of higher education.



## Stephen Robertson Awarded NEH Mellon Fellowship for Digital Publication



History professor **Stephen Robertson** received an NEH Mellon Fellowship for Digital Publication in support of “Harlem in Disorder: A Spatial

History of How Racial Violence Changed in 1935.” The fellowship will allow him to spend the 2021–22 academic year completing a digital publication detailing the outbreak of social disorder in Harlem during the evening and early morning hours of March 1–20, 1935.

To more fully capture and highlight “the complexity and heterogeneity of the form of racial disorder that characterized the second half of the twentieth century,” the project invites readers to actively explore “the tensions between linear narrative and the way that a disorder occurs in various places, involves patterns as well as individual events, and requires interpretation of fragmentary and contradictory sources.”

Using the digital publishing platform Scalar, Robertson will design and present a multilayered, hyperlinked argument showcasing varying scales of analysis including overarching narra-

tives, aggregated patterns, and individual incidents. At the heart of this approach is the use of digital maps and tagging, which will not only provide “multiple pathways in addition to the narrative of events,” but also “help readers see the context of events and patterns and make visible the sources and interpretations on which those analyses are based.”

With this award, Robertson joins a distinguished list of colleagues in the Department of History and Art History whose research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Stephen Robertson

## Edward Maibach Ranks among the Most Influential Climate Change Scientists in the World

University Professor in communication **Edward Maibach** is the most influential scientist working on climate change among America’s public universities, according to a recent Reuters ranking of the researchers.

Maibach, the director of the Center for Climate Change Communication, ranked No. 7 overall on the Reuters Hot List identifying and ranking the world’s top 1,000 climate scientists.

“This is nice for me professionally and personally,” he says. “But the real importance of these rankings is the prominence of social science—two of the top 10 are social scientists. Climate science is indispensable, but if

society is to put this knowledge to use, so too is social science. That our work is being taken seriously is a good thing.”

The three criteria Reuters used in determining the rankings were number of research papers published on topics related to climate change, how often those papers were cited by other scientists in similar fields of study, and how often those papers are referenced in the press, on social media, and in policy papers.

“In his longstanding advocacy for climate science, [Maibach] has not only made significant contributions to the field, but, just as important, he has translated his expertise and his commitment to sharing the impacts of

climate change in a way that is understandable to members of the public and to policymakers alike,” says Dean **Ann Ardis**. “His work perfectly illustrates the human side of science.”

Maibach is an expert in the use of strategic communication and social marketing to address climate change and related public health challenges. His research has primarily focused on public understanding of climate change and clean energy, the psychology key to public engagement and the cultivation of trusted voices—such as television weathercasters and health professionals—as effective climate educators.



Edward Maibach

PHOTO BY AARON MAIBACH

# RESEARCH



## 2021 National Science Foundation Awards

This year, the National Science Foundation (NSF) made two new substantial awards to CHSS faculty for studies that cover two distinct societal problems.



Reeshad Dalal

### Emotional Regulation at Work

Psychology professors **Reeshad Dalal** and **Seth Kaplan** received \$400,000 for the project, “Just-in-Time Adaptive Interventions for Emotion Regulation.” Their study seeks to prevent the adverse consequences of employees’ negative emotional reactions. These negative emotions in a work setting can impair task performance and bring about counterproductive workplace behavior, with serious potential consequences for an organization.

“One form of counterproductive or deviant behavior is what is called ‘insider threat behavior,’ which is particularly relevant in cases of cybersecurity, but also physical security,” says Dalal, the study’s principal investigator.

By surveying employees at various points during the workday, the study measures individuals’ changes in mood and emotions over a period of time. However, the project goes beyond observation of employee mood by introducing and testing just-in-time adaptive interventions tailored to help individuals regulate negative emotions.

“This is the next step, where we’re trying to influence or improve things,” says Dalal. “We’re trying to improve people’s mood, repair a bad mood, maintain a good mood. And through that mechanism, improve their performance, decrease instances of deviant behavior.”

The team will pilot different types of interventions to determine those most helpful to employees. “The hope is that we’ll find the ones that work better, or maybe some work better in some circumstances, others work better in other circumstances,” he says.



Seth Kaplan



Allison Redlich

### Impact of Wrongful Convictions

Criminology professor **Allison Redlich**, along with a colleague at Central Michigan University, received a collaborative NSF grant of \$385,000 to study wrongful convictions within the U.S. criminal justice system, the factors that initially lead to them, and the many delays from various states in doing right by the wrongfully incarcerated after their release. The project, which began in June 2021,

is called “Collaborative Research: Exoneration and Compensation: The Role of False Confessions.”

According to the National Registry of Exonerations, since 1989 more than 2,700 people have been wrongfully convicted only to be later found innocent of the crimes that they were accused of committing. Doing right by them has been a painfully slow process for these victims, the majority of whom are poor and persons of color.

More than 35 states and the District of Columbia each have their own specific guidelines for financially compensating those erroneously sent to prison, but these policies vary widely from state to state. Moreover, states have proven considerably less inclined to compensate someone wrongfully imprisoned because of false guilty pleas or false confessions, in which



people—unaware of their rights or other legal options—are pressured into admitting guilt.

“About 20 percent of known exonerations are false guilty pleas; they are a big problem similar to false confessions and are similarly misunderstood,” says Redlich. Some states’ compensation statutes effectively bar persons who falsely admitted guilt by including so-called “contributory clauses”—claiming that the person contributed to their own wrongful conviction.

A second focus of the research will take a close look at possible employment discrimination of exonerated persons following their release from prison. Like the rightly convicted, exonerated individuals experience the stigma of having served prison time and face many obstacles to reintegrating into society, Redlich says.

“The criminal justice system is never going to be perfect,” she says. “I think that’s not an ideal we can strive for, but we can try to right wrongs when we find them through compensation, usually financial. Some do get compensated, but there are a lot of challenges and obstacles for many others.”

These two new grant awards are in addition to the three NSF-funded projects already ongoing within the college, which total to more than \$1 million combined.

## Clear, Concise, Competitive

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition brings together doctoral students to showcase their research. The catch: They must do so in three minutes, to an audience of non-specialists, using only a single visual aid.

An annual international competition that originated in 2008 at the University of Queensland, Australia, 3MT has spread to more than 200 universities around the world. At Mason, 3MT has been part of the research landscape since 2016, sponsored by the Graduate and Professional Student Association and the Office of the Provost.

In early April, 13 finalists made their presentations via Zoom to a panel of judges. Five were CHSS students:

- **Laura Crossley**, history, “Asserting Native Sovereignty and Contesting Western Statehood at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition”
- **Sean Doody**, sociology, “Mapping the Intellectual Dark Web: A Critical Computational Sociology”
- **Sarah Johnson**, writing and rhetoric, “*Mortuus et Vivus, Absent et Present*: Identifying and Dismantling the Standard English Paradox”
- **Sara Montiel**, higher education, “Exploring the Assets of First-Generation College Students Who Are Children of Immigrants”
- **Paige Trojanowski**, psychology, “Preventing Eating Disorders in Teen Girls with Type 1 Diabetes”

After the presentations were evaluated, Trojanowski was named one of the first-place winners and Johnson and Montiel were named among the second-place winners.

“Helping judge the first round of 3MT was a highlight of my year,” says **Marguerite Rippy**, CHSS associate dean for graduate affairs. “The competition sharpens and refines student research presentation skills while building a sense of intellectual community across graduate programs. Personally, I was deeply impressed by the potential impact for community good that shaped CHSS student projects, ranging from better understanding of historical complexity to improved public health. 3MT is a fantastic opportunity for CHSS students to showcase their innovative research!”



GETTY IMAGES



# GRADUATION

## Celebrating 2021 Graduates

On a sunny May 11, a warm welcome from Dean Ann Ardis echoed across parking lot L near EagleBank Arena. “Today is a great day,” she said. “It is a day when the past and the future meet. And we are thrilled to be here today celebrating you and your achievements with your families and friends.”

During the week of May 10, graduates of the classes of 2021 and 2020 were invited to participate in in-person graduation ceremonies and events, the first held since winter 2019. Graduates chose between college mini ceremonies—limited to 200 graduates with up to three guests each—or the university’s Patriot Procession—which allowed eight guests and offered photo opportunities for the graduate and their guests.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences had two mini ceremonies, both on May 11, and took part in the university’s virtual Commencement on May 14. Three CHSS students were chosen as speakers: **Devin Stewart**, BS Geography, BA Foreign Languages ’21, for the humanities and interdisciplinary programs ceremony; **Olivia O’Brien**, BA Communication ’21, for social sciences; and **Anna Bertino**, BA Communication ’21, for the university’s virtual Commencement.

Top: Dean Ann Ardis addresses students and their families during two CHSS ceremonies.  
Bottom photos: 2020–21 graduates celebrate their accomplishments.







The 2021 CHSS Distinguished Alumni of the Year, the Honorable **Roderick C. Young**, BA Speech Communication '89, MA English '94, delivered a virtual speech for all ceremonies, to high praise and compliments from attendees. Following the speeches, students crossed the stage in the traditional presentation of the graduates. All events and participants were expected to follow COVID-19 safety protocols. Events were ticketed, families were seated in pods and asked to maintain a safe social distance, attendees were required to take the Mason COVID Health Check, and all were asked to wear face masks except when taking photos. The mini ceremonies were scheduled to allow thorough cleaning between events.

Overall, George Mason University honored its largest and most diverse graduating class in history with its 54th Spring Commencement. Mason's Class of 2021 includes 9,904 degree earners and 821 certificate earners from 90 countries, 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and foreign military installations. The 6,364

students earning bachelor's degrees were 51.4 percent from underrepresented groups, an all-time Mason high, and about one-third of bachelor's degree earners were in the first generation of their families to earn a four-year degree.

Regardless of the difficult circumstances of the past 18 months—or perhaps because of—the ceremonies were a joyous, celebratory event. Families and friends were able to cheer, cry, and celebrate together with their graduates.

“Remain steadfast in hope,” Stewart said in the closing of his speech. “Our immediate future may be tinted with a shade of uncertainty as we collectively navigate out of this pandemic in the coming months. But we have already made it this far. Let's keep moving forward and let's try to appreciate the moments of good fortune that we encounter along the way.”

*All videos from the CHSS graduation can be viewed on CHSS's YouTube channel in the playlist “CHSS Class of 2021” at [bit.ly/CHSSplaylist](https://bit.ly/CHSSplaylist).*





Olivia O'Brien, BA  
Communication '21, spoke  
to graduates about lessons  
learned from her years as  
a student-athlete.



“

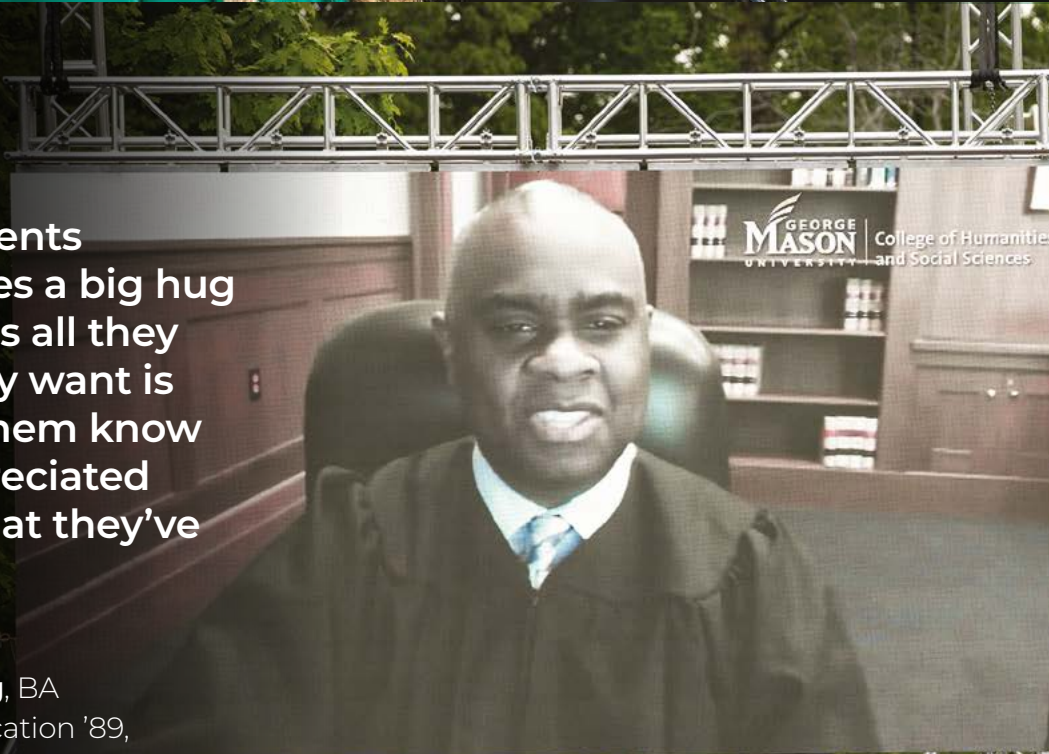
Completing our degrees  
amidst a pandemic while  
balancing families, friends,  
jobs, sports, and other  
obligations is no easy  
feat and deserves to  
be applauded and  
recognized today.

—Olivia O'Brien,  
BA Communication '21

“

Give your parents  
and loved ones a big hug  
because that's all they  
want... all they want is  
a hug to let them know  
that you appreciated  
everything that they've  
done for you.

—The Honorable  
**Roderick C. Young**, BA  
Speech Communication '89,  
MA English '94



Judge Roderick C. Young, BA Speech  
Communication '89, MA English '94,  
joined the ceremonies virtually.





The format of the mini ceremonies allowed students to sit with their families as well as receive a traditional congratulations from Dean Ardis.

“

We have already made it this far. Let's keep moving forward, and let's try to appreciate the moments of good fortune that we encounter along the way.

—Devin Stewart, BS  
Geography, BA Foreign  
Languages '21



“

Change, at its core, is a good thing. We succeed when we adapt.

—Anna Bertino, BA  
Communication '21





# COMMUNITY

## SAIL Navigates Pandemic to Continue Its Mission of Service

Through its programs, Social Action and Integrative Learning (SAIL) helps Mason students realize the ways in which they impact the world and gives them the skills and experiences to create positive change.

### Alternate Breaks Continue Virtually

SAIL's Alternative Break (AB) experiences offer programs that address social issues through education and community service. Students work with host organization partners on community-driven goals focused on a specific social justice topic and gain new ideas, perspectives, and experiences that inspire active and engaged citizenship.

COVID-19 restrictions presented new challenges in supporting existing partnerships and creating engaging experiences for students. As a solution, eight student trip leaders and four faculty learning partners designed and implemented four virtually reimaged AB experiences:

- **The Changing Landscape: An Exploration on Gentrification and Immigration Policy**
- **It's Not Them but Us: Turning the Tide on HIV and AIDS**
- **The Color of Justice: Racial Equity and Community Action**

- **Art for Social Change: Indigenous Culture in Guatemala**

Twenty-two speakers from various nonprofits, as well as faculty and experts from around the world, shared their insights with participants.

The 42 AB participants say they enjoyed and learned a lot from their virtual experiences. In the words of one participant, "I learned that there is so much I don't know.... Embracing the unknown may allow us to come up with more creative solutions."

### The Bonner Leadership Program

Two years ago, a group of Mason faculty including **Patty Mathison, Samuel Frye, Nick Lennon, Graziella McCarron, Julie Owen, Laura Poms, and Shauna Rigaud** received a Curriculum Impact Grant to create a Bonner Leadership Program, which supports students dedicated to social change through access to education and opportunities to serve.



Students in the program serve 8 to 10 hours per week with a specific community partner over their four years in the program, gaining experience and contributing to the organization's infrastructure. They develop the skills and knowledge necessary to become socially responsible leaders who create positive change for local, national, and international communities, in tandem with their educational experiences at Mason.

The first Bonner cohort was introduced to campus in fall 2020. Despite the challenges of navigating a new program virtually, these first-year students demonstrated their resiliency, care, and drive to make the world a more just and equitable place.

Community partner sites this year included Children's Science Center, Britepaths, Adams Compassionate Healthcare Network, Office of Community and Civic Engagement, and Student Care and Outreach, where students served as fundraising interns; taught science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workshops to youth in the community; translated for a local health clinic; and created programming on campus around voter engagement and healthy habits.

### Recognizing Community Engagement through Seeds of Change

SAIL's annual Seeds of Change event celebrates and recognizes impactful contributions made through the university and local community. During the 2021 Seeds of Change

Recognition Week, April 19–23, 2021, more than 50 changemakers were recognized for their meaningful contributions, including 15 CHSS students, faculty, and staff.

#### Students

- **Jae-lynn Tavarez Brown**, Anthropology
- **Monica Davids**, Integrative Studies
- **Rebecca Durant**, Global Affairs
- **Taye Folk**, Criminology, Law and Society
- **Dasha Maslyukova**, Environmental and Sustainability Studies, Integrative Studies
- **Natalie Paulsen**, Integrative Studies

#### Faculty and Staff

- **Tawnya Azar**, English
- **Patricia Mathison**, Social Action and Integrative Learning (SAIL), Integrative Studies
- **Ayondela McDole**, Cultural Studies
- **Donielle Nolan**, Office of Sustainability, Integrative Studies
- **Esperanza Román-Mendoza**, Modern and Classical Languages
- **Aoi Yamanaka**, Integrative Studies

# COMMUNITY



Robyn Mehlenbeck

## Guarding the Fairfax and Mason Communities' Mental Health

The Jack Wood Award for Town-Gown Relations is a university and community-wide annual award program to recognize individuals and groups within Mason and the larger community, as well as government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that demonstrate leadership in fostering mutually beneficial relationships between the university and the community during the year.

The award is named for John C. "Jack" Wood, Mayor of the Town of Fairfax from 1953 to 1964, who was the driving force for locating Mason's early campus on land adjacent to the town and deeding it to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the university.

For 2021, **Robyn Mehlenbeck**, director of the George Mason University Center for Psychological Services, was recognized for her numerous partnerships with community organizations to facilitate mental health.

The Center for Psychological Services has helped organizations and community members receive top-notch, evi-

dence-based mental health care, and has allowed Mason students to receive training in delivering mental health care under the supervision of licensed providers who are also faculty. This includes undergraduate students (in a limited capacity as legally permitted) and graduate students in the College of Education and Human Development's Counseling Program, CHSS's Clinical Psychology Program, and the College of Health and Human Services' Social Work Program.

In 2020, the center launched a COVID-19 support line for essential workers, allowing any frontline or essential worker in Virginia access to free, anonymous emotional support care and, if needed, more in-depth mental health care, including free therapy sessions.

"We are so proud to be a part of the Mason and Fairfax communities," says Mehlenbeck. "The pandemic has caused so many more mental health needs than providers can accommodate. Having a way to provide immediate support to the essential workers who have helped take care of us across this crisis has been necessary, rewarding, and drives home to our students the vital contribution of our own work."

## Community-Centered Research

CHSS faculty partners with Fairfax County on numerous projects that benefit local and regional communities. These are examples of those partnerships in fiscal year 2021.

**Cynthia Lum**, professor of criminology, law and society and director of CHSS's Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, received a \$236,663 award from the Fairfax County Police Department for her project "Preventing, Preparing, and Responding to COVID-19: An In-depth Case Study of the Impacts of COVID-19 on the Fairfax County Police Department."

She and colleague **Christopher Koper**, associate professor of criminology, law and society and principal fellow of the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, will perform an in-depth and holistic case study using multimethod analyses to provide a data-driven, evidence-based approach to understanding how an agency is impacted by a major shock and how it can prevent, prepare, and respond to future ones.

**Robyn Mehlenbeck**, clinical professor and director of Mason's Center for Psychological Services, received \$20,000 from Fairfax County for her project, "Improving Behavioral Health Outcomes for Fairfax County: Providing Accessible, Affordable, Evidence-based Therapy." She has a strong commitment to the community, serving on committees across Fairfax County and Northern Virginia, and is currently participating on a statewide committee to increase access to mental health services for children throughout the state through pediatric practices.





### Clinical Psychology Program Supports Evidence-Based Behavioral Health

In support of the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Mason's Clinical Psychology Program is working with the Northern Virginia Regional Projects Office to serve Virginia residents impacted by trauma. They are developing, delivering, and tracking the results of training for community-based clinicians in "therapy approaches and assessment approaches for people who have experienced trauma and are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, or other types of disorders that are related to the trauma experience," says **Keith Renshaw**, professor and chair of the Department of Psychology, who is the principal investigator on the project.

Renshaw's team includes investigators **Sarah Fischer** and **Christy Esposito-Smythers**, both psychology faculty members. They identify evidence-based therapies and deliver the training to the commonwealth's community mental health centers throughout Northern Virginia, serving the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church, and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William.

The project launched in October 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 shutdown, with a goal of training more than

400 clinicians over three years. During the pandemic, the team has been able to remotely train nearly 80 clinicians in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (used for children and adolescents) and 40 clinicians in Cognitive Processing Therapy (used for adults).

"These trainings involve some preparatory work and then a two-day workshop," says Renshaw, "but they also involve regular consultation calls within the next several months as clinicians start to use it, so they can receive some feedback on how it's going, they can ask questions, and learn from other people's experiences."

The immediate goal of the program is to help clinicians serve Virginia residents with evidence-based services, but the team's larger goal looks even further. With proper guidelines on research in place, says Renshaw, they hope to learn enough from the program to "try to advance psychology's understanding of how to disseminate and implement treatments that have been found to work in research in the real world."

### Mason's New Military, Veterans, and Families Initiative

Over the past year, an interdisciplinary team has launched Mason's Military, Veterans, and Families Initiative (MVFI; [mvfi.gmu.edu](http://mvfi.gmu.edu)), which seeks to help servicemembers, veterans, and their families both at Mason and in the broader National Capital Region through education, direct services, workforce development, and research. Directed by **Keith Renshaw**, professor and chair of the Department of Psychology, MVFI's ultimate goal is to connect and enhance the numerous efforts to serve this population across the university, raise their visibility, and ensure that servicemembers, veterans, and their family members can find the resources they need.

MVFI teamed with Mason's Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program and the Office of Military Services to offer a variety of free virtual events, pre-recorded messages of appreciation, and discounts for Mason veterans throughout Veterans Week, November 9–15, 2020, including webinars, workshops, a virtual career expo with Dominion Energy, a social hour, and a concert celebrating the Veterans and the Arts Initiative.



# TEACHING

## Educating with Innovation and Insight

Through innovation, mentorship, hard work, and dedication to students, CHSS faculty step up to the challenge of bringing a first-class education to Mason students.

### Teaching Excellence Rewarded

Each spring, the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning announces its Teaching Excellence Awards, the university's salute to the significant work that faculty members devote to course planning and preparation, curriculum development, and innovative teaching, advising, and undergraduate and graduate mentoring. 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.

Adjunct Teaching Excellence Awards recognize the contributions of outstanding adjunct faculty members and are open to all adjunct faculty members who are currently teaching a course or who taught at least one course during the past academic year, who also have at least six semesters of teaching experience at Mason.

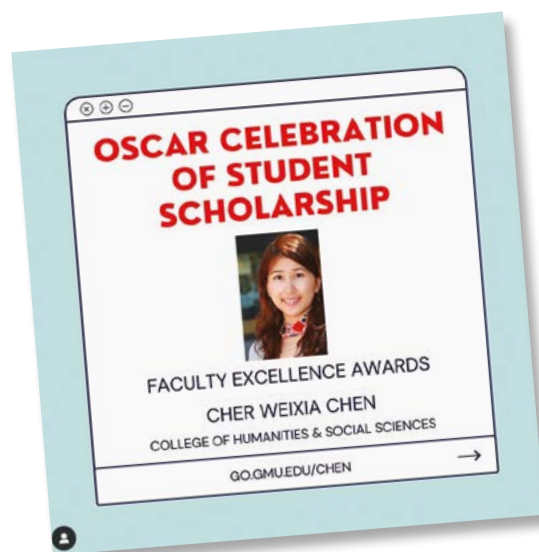
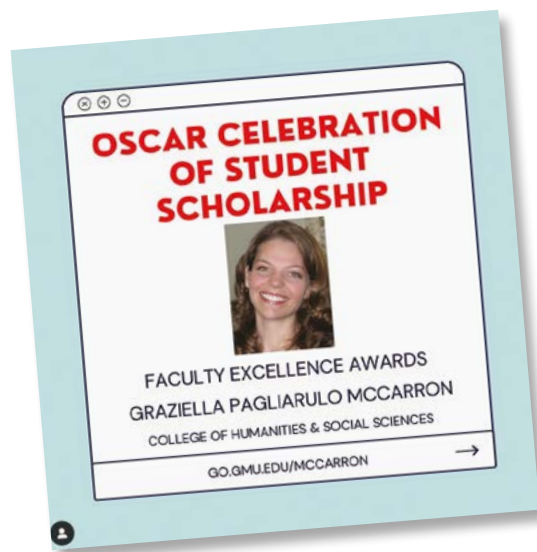
"These awards celebrate the care, preparation, and innovation that faculty members bring to the teaching space, whether that space be traditional or virtual," says Dean **Ann Ardis**. "We are proud to share in honoring the work of our colleagues on behalf of Mason's students."

Mason's "Freedom and Learning" motto is featured in Horizon Hall's atrium in more than 60 of the languages spoken by students, staff, and faculty.

The college congratulates its 2021 Teaching Excellence Award honorees:

- **Anthony Hoefler**, Department of English, *High Impact Teaching Excellence Award*
- **Lauren Kuykendall**, Department of Psychology, *High Impact Teaching Excellence Award*
- **Carrie Klein**, Higher Education Program, *Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award*
- **Basak Durgun**, Cultural Studies Program, *Adjunct Teacher of Distinction*
- **Stephen Gillespie**, Department of Economics, *Adjunct Teacher of Distinction*
- **Graziella McCarron**, School of Integrative Studies, *Online Teacher of Distinction*
- **Erin Murdoch**, Department of Psychology, *Online Teacher of Distinction*

In addition, the Stearns Center noted that **Andrew Peterson**, Department of Philosophy, earlier received the Rising Star Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.



## CHSS Faculty Honored with Mentoring Excellence Awards

During the annual Celebration of Student Scholarship, the Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR) selects faculty members to receive Mentoring Excellence Awards in honor of their outstanding contributions to supporting undergraduate research.

This spring, **Graziella Pagliarulo McCarron** and **Cher Wexia Chen**, both faculty in the School of Integrative Studies, were recognized for their mentoring excellence.

Chen, an associate professor, is a social justice and human rights scholar who supports her students' growth by incorporating them into her interdisciplinary scholarship. She is the founder of the Human Rights and Global Justice Initiative, a senior scholar in the Center for the Advancement of Well-Being, and a faculty fellow of the Institute for a Sustainable Earth. Students she's mentored have been participants of several OSCAR-supported programs and have presented their work at various conferences, won writing awards, been included as co-authors on publications, and gone on to graduate school, law school,

and to work in their communities. She is inspired by her students. "They've got this drive, and they've got this passion and compassion. This younger generation, truly, I feel hopeful every time I talk to them."

McCarron, an assistant professor of leadership studies and a senior scholar at the Center for the Advancement of Well-Being, is a dedicated mentor who fosters a true collaborative partnership with her students. Her students have been part of numerous Mason programs, including Summer Team Impact Projects, Bachelor of Integrative Studies Capstones, and OSCAR Research Assistants, and have gone on to submit their work for publication and present at events and conferences, including the Honors College Colloquium, the OSCAR Celebration of Student Scholarship, and the National Conference of Undergraduate Research. McCarron engages students in the whole research process, guiding students to fully flourish in research. "Our job as teachers," she says, "is to co-create with our students and to just marvel at how they grow over the course of their time with us, and more importantly, with each other."

## CHSS Faculty Recognized with 2021 Presidential Medals

In May, Mason President Gregory Washington selected two CHSS faculty members, **Melissa Broeckelman-Post** and **Christy Pichichero**, to receive 2021 Presidential Faculty Excellence Awards.

Broeckelman-Post is an associate professor and basic course director in the Department of Communication, a senior scholar in Mason's Center for the Advancement of Well-Being, and chair of the Faculty Senate. She received the John Touns Presidential Medal for Faculty Excellence in Teaching for teaching that inspires and stimulates students in the finest traditions of higher education.



Pichichero, the college's director of faculty diversity, is an associate professor of French and history, affiliated with the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and the Department of History and Art History, as well as the Women and Gender Studies Program and the War and the Military in Society Program. Pichichero received the United Bank Award for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion, presented to a faculty member who has made extraordinary contributions in research, scholarship, and creative works, with teaching and service that directly advances diversity and inclusion within and outside the Mason community.



Each of the university's Presidential Medal recipients will be formally recognized in fall 2021 as part of the Mason Vision Series, a program of the Office of the Provost.



# TEACHING

## Global Affairs Course Connects Students across Oceans

Two George Mason University faculty members successfully taught Mason Korea's cross-continental synchronous course with students on both the Mason Korea and Fairfax campuses. Global affairs (GLOA) faculty members **Ji Hye Lim**, located in Korea, and **Jennifer Ashley**, located in Fairfax, taught the first half of GLOA 101, an introductory course on the interdisciplinary field of global studies for freshmen. The course explores the cultural, economic, political, and ecological dimensions of globalization.

"[Attending] synchronous online classes with students at Fairfax was a great opportunity for me to interact with students from different backgrounds," says **Hyun Jean Cho**, a freshman GLOA major in Korea. "It seems like the Fairfax Campus is far more culturally diverse than the Korea campus, and this drove me to be more active during group discussions."

Likewise, faculty noticed the benefits of a collaborative course. "Co-teaching Introduction to Global Affairs this semester with my wonderful colleague at Mason Korea,

Dr. Ji Hye Lim, has been the highlight of my semester," says Ashley, associate professor of global affairs at the Fairfax Campus. "In our program, it's important to be able to consider how the same global issue might be viewed differently from another part of the world. Our students had the chance to practice that skill every week."

Mason Korea's campus dean, **Robert Matz**, recognizes the benefits of providing a cross-campus synchronous course. "What a great opportunity for students in Korea and in Fairfax to get to know and learn from one another. The kinds of conversations this course generated are just what we encourage on our international campus, and we hope to have many more cross-campus synchronous course experiences such as this one."

He adds, "Global affairs studies the key modern phenomenon of globalization, the ever-accelerating interconnection of peoples and nations across the world. This course not only studied globalization but also enacted it, by bringing together students from around the world."



Ji Hye Lim



Jennifer Ashley



Robert Matz

## New Programs for 2021–22

### Graduate Certificate

- Spanish Heritage Language Education (Modern and Classical Languages)

### Minors

- Ancient History and Mediterranean Archaeology (History and Art History)
- Health, Disease, and Culture (History and Art History)
- STEM in Society (History and Art History)
- Photojournalism (Communication)

# COLLEGE TO CAREER



PHOTO PROVIDED

“For those like me, you figure out what’s next after entering the workforce, but college gave me the foundation to understand business.”

—Rhonda Vetere, BA Communication '92

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences’s 67,000 incredible alumni work and serve their communities in all 50 states and around the world. Meet six alumni whose diverse career paths illustrate the remarkable opportunities for CHSS graduates.

## Rhonda Vetere, BA Communication '92

**Rhonda Vetere**, BA Communication '92, is chief information officer for Herbalife Nutrition and leads the information and technology strategy and technology operations.

For more than 25 years, Vetere has lived and worked internationally and has managed teams of more than 20,000 technology and operations professionals in more than 160 countries. She has served in a multitude of executive information technology positions in companies such as JPMorgan, Hewlett Packard, Compuserve, Barclays, Lehman Brothers, and Estée Lauder. Recognized as one of the most powerful women in technology, Vetere did not set out to have a career in the field.

“I didn’t intend on following a career in IT until a supervisor saw the skills I had in change management and my appetite for technology,” she says. “That supervisor eventually became a close mentor and

was the catalyst that steered my career to a more technical role.”

Vetere’s journey is marked with grit, a sentiment that is also conveyed in the title of her latest book, *Grit & Grind: 10 Principles for Living an Extraordinary Life*. Early in her career, she was one of the youngest female managing directors in the finance sector. This experience prepared her with the determination needed to be a player in historically male-dominated industries. Vetere’s mother modeled these qualities when Vetere was growing up by working two jobs to support their family. When Vetere was a student at Mason, she worked full time to put herself through school.

Now a seasoned leader across industries, Vetere gained her foundation at Mason. “For those like me, you figure out what’s next after entering the workforce, but college gave me the foundation to understand business. Mason offered hands-on training

for the skills needed going into any profession; skills such as writing, communication, the ability to debate an argument and negotiate the outcomes.”

The ultimate corporate athlete, Vetere has raced in more than 70 events (and counting), including triathlons, half-marathons, marathons, and IRONMAN 70.3-mile triathlons. She is also an IRONMAN Bronze All World Athlete, as a result of her performance in the top 10 percent of her age group in the 2019 race season.

In 2018, Vetere became involved with the inaugural Serengeti Girls Run, the first-ever women-only run that spans 55-miles in the western corridor of the Serengeti and serves as a fundraiser for girls’ empowerment programs. She returned to Tanzania in 2019 and 2021 to participate and lend awareness to the challenges facing girls and women in nearby communities.



# COLLEGE TO CAREER



PHOTO BY NIGEL KINRADE

“  
I’m a great example to  
show that your life will  
still turn out okay... what  
matters is to make the  
most of every opportunity.  
If there’s a crack in a  
door, go in.

—Dave Alpern, BA Communication ’91

## Dave Alpern, BA Communication ’91

**Dave Alpern**, BA Communication ’91, is one of the longest tenured sports executives in NASCAR. Alpern is currently the president of Joe Gibbs Racing (JGR), an American professional stock car racing organization in North Carolina.

When Alpern started at Mason he expected to become an engineer but quickly realized that path did not match his skillset. He then switched his major to communication and planned to become a sportscaster. However, plans would change yet again, and his career ultimately took another path. Alpern now volunteers his time speaking with college students about changing course.

“Students often get stressed out because they don’t have everything figured out or have the perfect plan,” he says. “I’m a great example to show that your life will still turn out okay... what matters is to make the most of every opportunity. If there’s a crack in a door, go in.”

This unscripted path is exactly where Alpern found himself after graduation. He joined JGR in 1992 as an unpaid intern and his office was a modified broom closet. Whenever he was asked to help, he helped, and soon became an indispensable part of the team.

JGR has since grown from 15 employees to more than 500, and Alpern offers a peek behind the scenes to reveal the complexity of running a racing company. They make 95 percent of the parts that go into the cars they construct, they have 40 full-time engineers, two airplanes—which each require dedicated pilot mechanics and flight attendants—and they do their own marketing and corporate communications on behalf of their sponsors. They also employ journalists, social media experts, and human resources professionals. Alpern’s role is to keep all these areas moving together for JGR, and he attributes communication as being the key to their success.

Alpern is the author of *Taking the Lead: Winning Business Principles That Fuel Joe Gibbs Racing*, published in June 2021. The book shares his path with JGR, including a difficult personal loss he experienced in connection to his career. All proceeds from the book support the JD Gibbs Legacy Fund.

Alpern met his wife, alumna **Stacey Alpern**, BA Psychology ’92, during a class in Harris Theatre, and together they have three sons. He enjoys traveling with his family, skiing, surfing, and is an avid sports fan.



PHOTO PROVIDED



**I encourage the working community willing to pursue a higher education degree to do it, take the risk. It takes a lot of effort, but your sacrifice and hard work will pay off.**

—**Kiren Bansal**, MA Global Affairs '12

### **Kiren Bansal, MA Global Affairs '12**

**Kiren Bansal**, MA Global Affairs '12, is an expert in international relations with a special focus in evaluating issues and initiatives through the study of foreign policies. She is currently a freelance social impact consultant in Santa Monica, California. Previously, she was the associate vice president of development at Population Media Center, an international nongovernmental organization. Bansal has more than 19 years of nonprofit management experience in areas such as business and development operations, program management, marketing, and fundraising for local, regional, and international organizations.

A first-generation college student, Bansal was part of the inaugural cohort of master's students in Mason's Global Affairs Program, and she completed study-abroad experiences in Argentina and England, where she studied at Oxford University. "This experience helped me see the world and its issues from an international perspective and prepared me to be able to overcome the intercultural challenges that we encounter frequently in the global affairs industry."

Bansal is passionate about creating a more equitable and just society where BIPOC communities are fully embraced and can thrive safely. She credits Mason with giving her the confidence and affirmation she needed to continue thinking critically about how to approach this work and to learn from the rich experiences of those in her program.

She encourages others who may be on the fence about pursuing a graduate degree while working full-time to make the commitment. "I encourage the working community willing to pursue a higher education degree to do it, take the risk. It takes a lot of effort, but your sacrifice and hard work will pay off."

Bansal helped launch the Mason alumni chapter in the greater Los Angeles area, is a member of the CHSS Alumni Chapter Board, and serves on the Trojan Entertainment Network alumni board. She enjoys reading, outdoor activities, and trying food from countries around the world.



# COLLEGE TO CAREER



## Kevone Bennett, BS Psychology '14

**Kevone Bennett**, BS Psychology '14, is a user experience researcher at YouTube Music, and his role is to learn and understand how consumers interact with the platform. Bennett talks with people around the world, in places like Japan, India, and Brazil, gathers their feedback, and then offers recommendations for improvements.

Bennett was first drawn to this field when researching universities that offered programs in human factors, the grounding discipline for his work. At an orientation for transfer students, he learned Mason has a concentration in this area at the undergraduate level, which was not common at the time.

Meeting the psychology faculty solidified his decision to come to Mason. Bennett went on to spend much of his college career working in the Creative Design and User Experience (CDUX) laboratory with Professor Robert Youmans and other undergraduate and graduate students. Bennett credits meeting Professor Youmans as the catalyst that launched his career.

Youmans encouraged Bennett to apply for a grant to do his own research and to learn differently from all the great professors in the department. When Bennett was first getting started, he recalls saying yes to everything. “I think it’s good to say ‘yes’ early in your career,” he says. “If there is an opportunity, take advantage of it.”

In addition to launching his work in the university’s psychology labs, Bennett believes Mason helped him learn transferable skills such as problem solving, communication, and—most importantly—storytelling. Much of his work is breaking down information and knowing how to write and say the right thing. As a researcher, telling the story is critical to the role.

When Bennett isn’t working behind the scenes at YouTube, he can be found behind the camera. He is an avid street photographer, has recently co-founded a streetwear brand, and is learning the art of tailoring. He also characterizes himself as a foodie with an uncompromising bias toward Jamaican food.



## Rima Nasser, BA Integrative Studies '08

**Rima Nasser**, BA Integrative Studies '08, is founder and lead designer of TEW Design Studio, a boutique and full-service interior design firm in Raleigh, North Carolina. Nasser wears many hats to help her business run smoothly and takes the lead in her studio’s marketing strategy, client relations, accounting, and in directing her team.

Nasser’s family moved from Palestine to Richmond, Virginia, when she was 15 years old. Adapting to a new country and culture was challenging, and she was later drawn to Mason because of its diversity. It was important for her to be around people like her, as well as people from all over the world.

Nasser was originally a biology major and had plans to be take the premedical route, but she did not feel that path matched her passions. She chose to change her major after researching other options and instead pursued an integrative studies degree with a focus on arts and culture. After graduation she moved to Italy to study at the Florence Design Academy, where she received her master's degree.

As a business owner, Nasser uses her expertise to work through challenging situations, and her advice to Mason students is to stay calm and push through. "Go into college and be patient and absorb everything you can. Success is not instant; it takes time, and you celebrate your wins and learn from your losses. Success will come with perseverance, even if it takes years."

Nasser was a 2020 recipient of a 40 Under 40 Leadership Award given by the *Triangle Business Journal* in North Carolina in recognition of her invaluable support to the local community during challenging times. During the pandemic, Nasser and her team created an online boutique shop and donated the proceeds to local organizations such as the North Carolina Restaurant Workers Relief Fund, the Women's Center in Raleigh, and the Loveland Foundation.



**Success will come with perseverance, even if it takes years.**

—**Rima Nasser**, BA Integrative Studies '08



### Deborah Willis, PhD Cultural Studies '03

In June 2021, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences announced the newest members resulting from its 2021 election, and they welcomed **Deborah Willis**, PhD Cultural Studies '03.

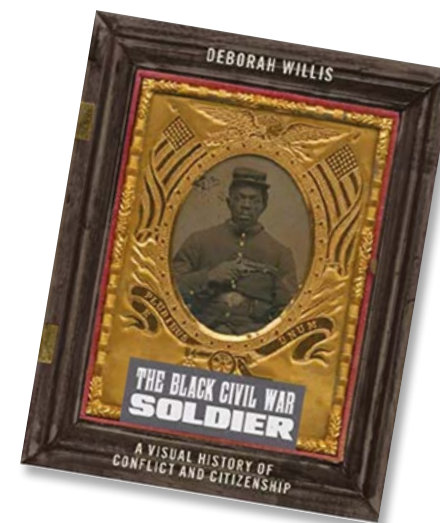
Willis is a university professor and chair of the Department of Photography and Imaging at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts, where she also serves as director of the NYU Institute for African American Affairs and the Center for Black Visual Culture. She was honored by the academy in the category of visual arts, within the larger class of humanities and arts.

The American Academy for the Arts and Sciences dates to 1780, when it was founded by John Adams, John Hancock, and 60 other figures in the early American republic for the

purpose of collecting knowledge to serve the public good. It is an honorary society that recognizes the excellence of its members and an independent research center that seeks interdisciplinary solutions to societal challenges.

Guided by its enumerated values of advancing the common good, upholding democratic ideals, elevating the use of evidence and knowledge, fostering deliberative discourse, preserving independence, embracing diversity and inclusivity, and celebrating excellence, the 13,500 members who have been elected since the academy's inception work to inform public policy and advance the public good.

Willis's latest book, *The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship*, was published in January 2021 by NYU Press.





# OUR SUPPORTERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

“

I'm so happy my college has these events! I got the chance to meet with many amazing people. They listened to my doubts about the future and offered me encouragement and perspective. They could relate to a lot of my experiences, which made their career advice and insight even more impactful.

—Alexis Massenburg, Global Affairs  
Class of '23, Honors College Student



The college flourishes when supported by its alumni and community partners. One of the greatest ways you can give back is through your time, knowledge, and investment. Your choice to support the college helps deliver our mission to educate all Mason students.

## LinkUp: An Alumni and Student Mentoring Event

Each semester the college organizes events for undergraduates to speak with alumni about their professional experiences. These sessions are an opportunity for students to learn from our knowledgeable alumni and community partners. Students are encouraged to talk with alumni from all departments and programs to help discover there are many paths to success.

Our LinkUp events are offered both on campus and virtually, enabling alumni from all corners of the United States and around the world to engage and connect with current students. To join the conversation, email [chssalum@gmu.edu](mailto:chssalum@gmu.edu).

## CHSS Dean's Inclusive Excellence Fund

The CHSS Dean's Inclusive Excellence Fund helps to recruit, retain, and promote faculty who are global leaders in multidisciplinary

fields, especially across diverse areas of expertise; and host educational programming centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## CHSS Scholarships

The CHSS Scholarships Fund provides need- and merit-based awards to humanities and social sciences students. These funds help improve access and affordability for a community of learners who are eager to participate in our nationally and globally ranked programs.

## CHSS Dean's Fund

The CHSS Dean's Fund enables the dean to respond to immediate challenges and opportunities within the daily life of the college. This fund helps to build programming, research, and service, which drive our community forward.

## The Alumni Chapter

The CHSS Alumni Chapter supports the goals and objectives of the university, the college, and Mason's Alumni Association. The chapter mission is to enhance the interests and reputation of the college and to achieve a closer fellowship among alumni, students, faculty, staff, and the community. The chapter also encourages support for scholarship, promotes professional development of students and alumni, and fosters a sense of pride and commitment to the university and college.

## Meet the CHSS Alumni Chapter Board

The alumni who volunteer their time with our CHSS Alumni Chapter Board hail from nine states and include military veterans, first-generation students, and those who identify with the LGBTQ+ community. They also represent five decades of graduates from 10 different college departments and programs.

The board is committed to serving the college through their work on several action committees, such as: diversity, equity, and inclusion; young alumni; veterans initiatives; and events.

The chapter is always looking for alumni who are willing to devote time and imagination in helping the college. To get connected, email [chssalum@gmu.edu](mailto:chssalum@gmu.edu).



From upper left: Kelly Lucero, Edward Chalkley, Kiren Bansal, David Dorsey, Kerri Chapman, Kevin McLaughlin, Amber Scott, Mike Moore, Cheryl Rice, Josh Young, Tiffany Taylor, Doug McIvor, Whitney Ward, Ryan Arnold, Shawn Brann, Dan Lash, Erica Simonitis, Jason Reis, Brandi Fannell, Randy Revercomb. Not pictured: Rahul Bajaj and Chris DeMarco. Learn more about our alumni board, including their degree information, at [go.gmu.edu/chsschapter](http://go.gmu.edu/chsschapter).



# MAKING AN IMPACT

## Patriots Helping Patriots

During the 2020 calendar year, CHSS provided more than \$20,000 in emergency assistance to students who faced significant financial obstacles due to the COVID-19 crisis. These funds were available because of generous contributions from our college community. All aid was administered in coordination with the University Life Student Emergency Assistance Fund.



## Giving Day Results

On Giving Day 2021, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences raised \$41,078 for our college's scholarship fund and other college initiatives.

## Your Gift Makes a Difference for Students

We rely on our incredible network of alumni who generously give their time, talents, and financial resources to help us transform our programs. Your support is far-reaching: It helps us both recruit top students and offer aid to students in need. Your investment enables students to participate in study-abroad opportunities, student-led community engagement initiatives, internships, and other high-impact and essential skill-building experiences.

This is one of the most transformative periods in our history, and the education we offer must

continue to keep pace with an ever-changing landscape. Your choice to support CHSS research, scholarships, and programs enables access for individuals of all backgrounds and helps deliver our mission to serve as a hub of intellectual dynamism and diversity, and a locus of local and global civic engagement.

Our college is proud of our 67,000 alumni. And every year, this network grows stronger and more diverse.

## Ways to Donate



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



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



**MATCHING GIFTS:** Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match a charitable contribution. To find out if your company has a matching gift policy, visit [matchinggifts.com/gmu](https://matchinggifts.com/gmu).

## Where in the world can you find CHSS alumni?

### ABROAD

- Canada
- China
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Saudi Arabia
- United Kingdom
- Military APOs

### STATESIDE

- California
- District of Columbia
- Florida
- Maryland
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Pennsylvania
- Texas
- Virginia

**60%** of CHSS alumni live within a 50-mile radius of Mason's Fairfax Campus, and we have alumni living in every state!



## Gifts to the College

In fiscal year 2021 (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021), the college received **\$2,909,433** to support our students, faculty, and research through the generosity of **1,116 donors**.

**\$2,909,433**  
Money Donated  
Fiscal Year 2021

**1,116**  
CHSS Total  
Donors

## OUR COMMUNITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE



Alumni



Faculty



Friends



Parents



Students



Corporations  
and  
Foundations



**CREATE A PLANNED GIFT:** Legacy gifts provide benefits to future generations of Mason students—and to you and your heirs. To have a confidential conversation about planned giving options, contact Eleanor Weis, director of development, at [eweis2@gmu.edu](mailto:eweis2@gmu.edu).



Connect with us at [chssalum@gmu.edu](mailto:chssalum@gmu.edu) to learn how to make your desired impact in supporting our college.





College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
4400 University Drive, MS 3A3  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

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