



# COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



College of Humanities  
and Social Sciences



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ON THE COVER: The College recognizes distinguished alumni at the annual **Community and Catalysts** event to celebrate their outstanding contributions to our local and global communities. Pictured from left to right: **Maria Carabelli**, BA Communication '09; **Max Milien Jr.**, BS Law Enforcement '90; **Jian DeLeon**, BA English '08; **Jacelyn Tyson**, MA Higher Education and Student Development '21; **Afra Ahmad**, BA Psychology '08, MA '12, PhD '16.

Roger Wilkins Plaza on the Fairfax Campus. Water cascades over the words of African American civil rights leader, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and Mason Robinson Professor **Roger Wilkins** into the memorial's reflecting pool: "We have no hope of solving our problems without harnessing the diversity, the energy, and the creativity of all our people."

PHOTO PROVIDED

# COLLEGE TO COMMUNITY

Every great university has, at its core, strong humanities and social sciences programming that sets a foundation upon which other disciplines can build, teaches students to think for themselves, and prepares them for a lifetime of career and civic engagement opportunities.

A truly great university also lifts up the communities and region in which it is located.

**College of Humanities and Social Sciences** faculty view teaching and research as deeply interconnected elements of George Mason University's mission as ***the*** public research university of Northern Virginia. We provide rich educational experiences for undergraduate and graduate students as we conduct innovative research of consequence.

Partnerships in our region and across the globe augment our ability to engage students in addressing some of the most pressing challenges of our time, safeguarding our future for generations, and ensuring that our students are prepared to thrive in a vast spectrum of career pathways while giving back and caring about our communities.

This **Community Impact Report** showcases the breadth, depth, and importance of community partnerships in realizing these commitments. The stories included here offer examples of how our College advances—epitomizes, even—Mason's mission as an *All Together Different* public research university.

We lead the way: one student, one graduate, and one partner at a time.

PHOTO BY JOHN BOAL PHOTOGRAPHY

We have no hope of solving our problems without harnessing the diversity, the energy, and the creativity of all our people.  
ROGER WILKINS



# RESPONDING TO CRITICAL MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

The demand for mental health care services continues to increase regionally and nationally—often surpassing the capacity of mental health professionals.

Our College provides community access to critical mental health services while training the next generation of behavioral health providers.



The grand opening of the **Center for Community Mental Health (CCMH)** and **Center for Evidence-Based Behavioral Health** facility in its new location in the heart of Fairfax is celebrated by associate provost for undergraduate education **Keith Renshaw**, City of Fairfax mayor **Catherine Read**, CCMH director and clinical professor of psychology **Robyn Mehlenbeck**, and College of Humanities and Social Sciences dean **Ann Ardis**.

PHOTO BY RON AIRA

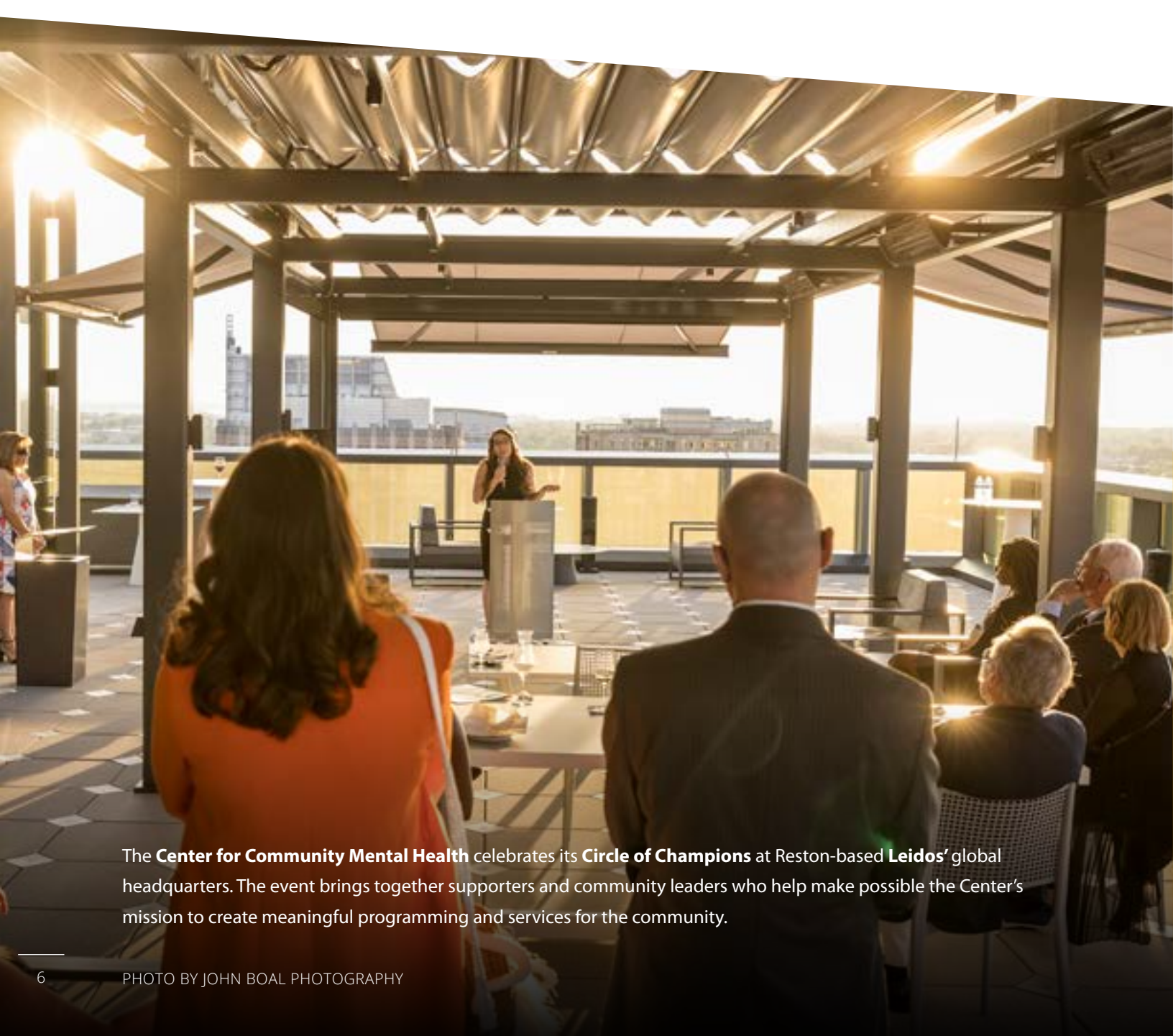


# ENABLING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

With community partners, the **Center for Community Mental Health** (CCMH) aims to bring mental health services to those who need them most. This includes having behavioral health trainees working with our community partners, including **Inova Children’s**, general pediatric practices in the community, several veterans’ organizations, and many others.

CCMH is one of the only centers in the mid-Atlantic to offer therapies on a sliding scale, enabling access to care for as low as **\$5 per therapy session**.

CCMH’s **Emotional Support Line** provides free, anonymous, confidential support in both English (703-215-1898) and Spanish (703-914-3878). The line is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.



The **Center for Community Mental Health** celebrates its **Circle of Champions** at Reston-based **Leidos’** global headquarters. The event brings together supporters and community leaders who help make possible the Center’s mission to create meaningful programming and services for the community.

# RESEARCH-BASED TRAINING FOR LOCAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Through grant support and community-based partnerships, the **Center for Evidence-Based Behavioral Health** (CEBBH) offers free training and consultation to local behavioral health professionals in culturally responsive, evidence-based treatments.

Over the last year alone, the CEBBH trained **430** clinicians and clinical supervisors who represent **8** local county-based organizations and **38** private behavioral health organizations. These trainings are sponsored by **Healthy Minds Fairfax** and the **Northern Virginia Regional Projects Office**.



PHOTO PROVIDED

# LEVERAGING EVIDENCE-BASED DATA TO SUPPORT OUR MILITARY

Through a connection facilitated by Mason’s **Military, Veterans, and Families Initiative**, psychology graduate students developed a survey to assist **Willing Warriors**, a charitable organization that offers cost-free retreats and programs for wounded, ill, and injured service members, disabled veterans, and their families. Willing Warriors uses the survey to provide valuable evidence-based quantitative data to improve their programs.



# LEADING THE CHARGE TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

We are actively involved in protecting our planet for future generations, taking a hands-on approach to researching and addressing environmental concerns.

Our work utilizes analysis and leadership to broadly improve environmental understanding and sustainability through our efforts.

The College's **Environmental and Sustainability Studies** program is a joint program with the **College of Science**. Students participate in experiential learning opportunities with the **Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation's Wildlife Ecology and Conservation** program. Environmental and sustainability studies undergraduate **Nadia Gray** conducts fieldwork tagging monarch butterflies.

PHOTO BY CRISTIAN TORRES



# EMPOWERING TRUSTED VOICES FOR CLIMATE ACTION

The **Center for Climate Change Communication** (Mason 4C) aims to help people make better decisions about how to rise to the challenge of climate change. To do this, they focus on building public communication campaigns. Research shows effective communication campaigns have simple, clear messages, repeated often, by a variety of trusted and caring voices. Mason 4C identifies these trusted and caring voices to become the conveyors of climate change messages to our communities.

Mason 4C is among the most influential climate change science centers in the nation. For more than a decade, Mason 4C has been tracking Americans' perception of climate change in partnership with the **Yale Program on Climate Change Communication**. Mason-Yale climate change survey results have become the focus of articles in major publications such as *Forbes*, *National Geographic*, and the *New York Times*.

Mason 4C founded the **Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health** to address the concern doctors have in seeing harmful effects of climate change in their patients. The Consortium gives doctors, nurses, and other health professionals tools to communicate with their patients, policymakers, and the public.

The **50** medical societies in the Consortium, and their more than **700,000** physician members, carry the message that climate change is real, is harming our health now, and climate solutions will benefit the health of people in all communities.

95%

The Mason **4C Climate Matters in the Newsroom** project supports local news weathercasters and journalists in more than **95%** of America's media markets.



**Dr. Lisa Patel** (center), executive director of Mason 4C's **Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health**, leads a gathering with health professionals and policymakers on Capitol Hill in March 2023.

PHOTO BY RICHARD AMOAKO



# IMPROVING HUMAN-MACHINE COLLABORATIONS

We are at the forefront of emerging technologies research through our work on human interaction with robots, ethics in artificial intelligence (AI), and our interdisciplinary collaborations with engineering and computer science.

We contribute ethical, cultural, and philosophical insights that guide the development of responsible, human-centered systems and tools.

**Lydia Melles** is a graduate student in the human factors and applied cognition program and works in the **Applied Psychology and Autonomous Systems Lab**.

PHOTO BY HILARY SCHWAB





Mason's AI Strategies team gathers at Mason Square for the AI & Tech Policy Summer Institute.  
PHOTO BY MELANIE O'BRIEN

## SHAPING ETHICS IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Faculty in the humanities play a key role in Mason's **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategies** team, which received a \$1.3 million grant from the **U.S. Department of Defense** to study how cultural values and institutional policies shape AI infrastructures in national and global contexts.

Our engagement brings critical ethical perspectives to bear on issues of technical expertise as Mason builds its reputation as an AI hub, ensuring research and teaching innovations in this arena reflect our commitment to diverse perspectives, ethics, and social impact.

## BUILDING BETTER ROBOTS

Researchers in the **Applied Psychology and Autonomous Systems Lab** are making robots, computer agents, and artificial intelligence systems into better teammates, partners, and companions. Lab members are interdisciplinary scientists with diverse backgrounds, and they maintain active collaborations with researchers across departments, universities, government agencies, and commercial product companies.

One of the Lab's projects, **Improving Human-Machine Collaborations with Heterogeneous Multiagent Systems**, was a recipient of the 2022 Seed Funding Initiative out of Mason's **Office of Research Innovation and Economic Impact** and in support of the **Institute for Digital InnovAtion**. This project, which is a collaboration with **U.S. Air Force Academy** cadets slated to commission as officers into the **U.S. Space Force**, aims to find solutions to the challenge of trust in machines.

“You have to know a lot about humans in order to create successful robotics. How humans interact, how they work together, how they build trust in each other: these are the same building blocks in understanding how humans might interact with machines and can help us better establish how people might build trust in a variety of autonomous machines.”

—**Elizabeth “Beth” Phillips**, assistant professor of psychology in human factors and applied cognition



PHOTO BY HILARY SCHWAB



# EXPANDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Through collaboration with industries across our region, we empower students to apply classroom knowledge, research insights, and fieldwork experiences to develop creative solutions that address the pressing challenges facing our communities.

Our faculty members facilitate the journey from study to application, ensuring our graduates are prepared to bridge the gaps that can exist between academic expertise and real-world problem solving.

**Ed Maibach**, distinguished university professor and director of Mason's **Center for Climate Change Communication**, presents **Marian Van Pelt**, vice president of climate change and sustainability for ICF, Inc., with the **WashingtonExec's 2023 Pinnacle Award for Public Company Climate Change Executive of the Year**. During the ceremony Maibach announced a partnership with **Fors Marsh** to launch a climate opinion poll designed to help federal and state government agencies advance their climate change, clean energy, and community resilience goals.

PHOTO BY PAMELA LEPOLD PHOTOGRAPHY





Fairfax County police chief **Kevin Davis**, **Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy** director and distinguished university professor **Cynthia Lum**, **National Policing Institute** president **Jim Burch** and Fairfax County Police **Maj. Greg Fried**.

PHOTO BY FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

#10

The College’s criminology graduate program national ranking by *U.S. News & World Report*.

The program is ranked the best in Virginia.

CENTER FOR EVIDENCE-BASED CRIME POLICY

The **Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy** (CEBCP) has partnered with the **Fairfax County Police Department** and the **National Policing Institute** to conduct a first-of-its-kind 20-year study to understand how officers progress through their law enforcement careers. Researchers will examine recruitment, retention, and other agency challenges. Police departments continue to report they cannot hire officers fast enough to replace those retiring or resigning.

CEBCP also partners with the **Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas** (HIDTA) program to foster innovative approaches to drug enforcement, treatment, and prevention work that combine evidence-based research with state-of-the-art technology. HIDTA’s intelligence-driven initiatives are currently working in **18 sites** across Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

“

What we learn here in Fairfax County will inform and improve policing across the United States.

— **Jim Burch**, President, National Policing Institute

”

IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

CENTER FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION

The **Center for Economic Education** provides Northern Virginia K-12 teachers with economic and personal finance professional development and classroom resources to ensure that every student graduates with the economic knowledge and financial skills to thrive in our dynamic economy. The Center works in partnership with the wider **Virginia Council on Economic Education** to support **1,900 teachers** and ultimately reaches more than **190,000 students** across the commonwealth each year.

WATERSHED LIT: CENTER FOR LITERARY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLISHING PRACTICE

**Watershed Lit** comprises the **Alan Cheuse International Writers Center**, **Fall for the Book**, **Poetry Daily**, **Stillhouse Press**, and the **Northern Virginia Writing Project**, bringing transformative literary experiences into the community each year and providing students with hands-on, professional experience as writers, teachers, and publishers.

Fall for the Book hosts Northern Virginia’s oldest and premier annual literary festival. The event has connected readers and writers in the community for **25 years**.

Poetry Daily partners with **ArtsFairfax** to bring their **Poetry Alive!** program to the **Juvenile Detention Center in Fairfax County**.

104

Mason students received professional experience outside of the classroom in the fields of publishing and literary nonprofits

200+

Community members taught in writing workshops via the Northern Virginia Writing Project

464

Poets, fiction authors, and nonfiction writers published via Stillhouse Press and Poetry Daily

10,000+

Individuals engaged in conversation and events with authors



# PROVIDING ACCESS TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

We strive to ensure that our students—many of whom are first-generation, Federal Pell Grant recipients, transfer students, and adult learners—can pursue high-impact experiential learning opportunities such as internships, study abroad, and research with faculty.

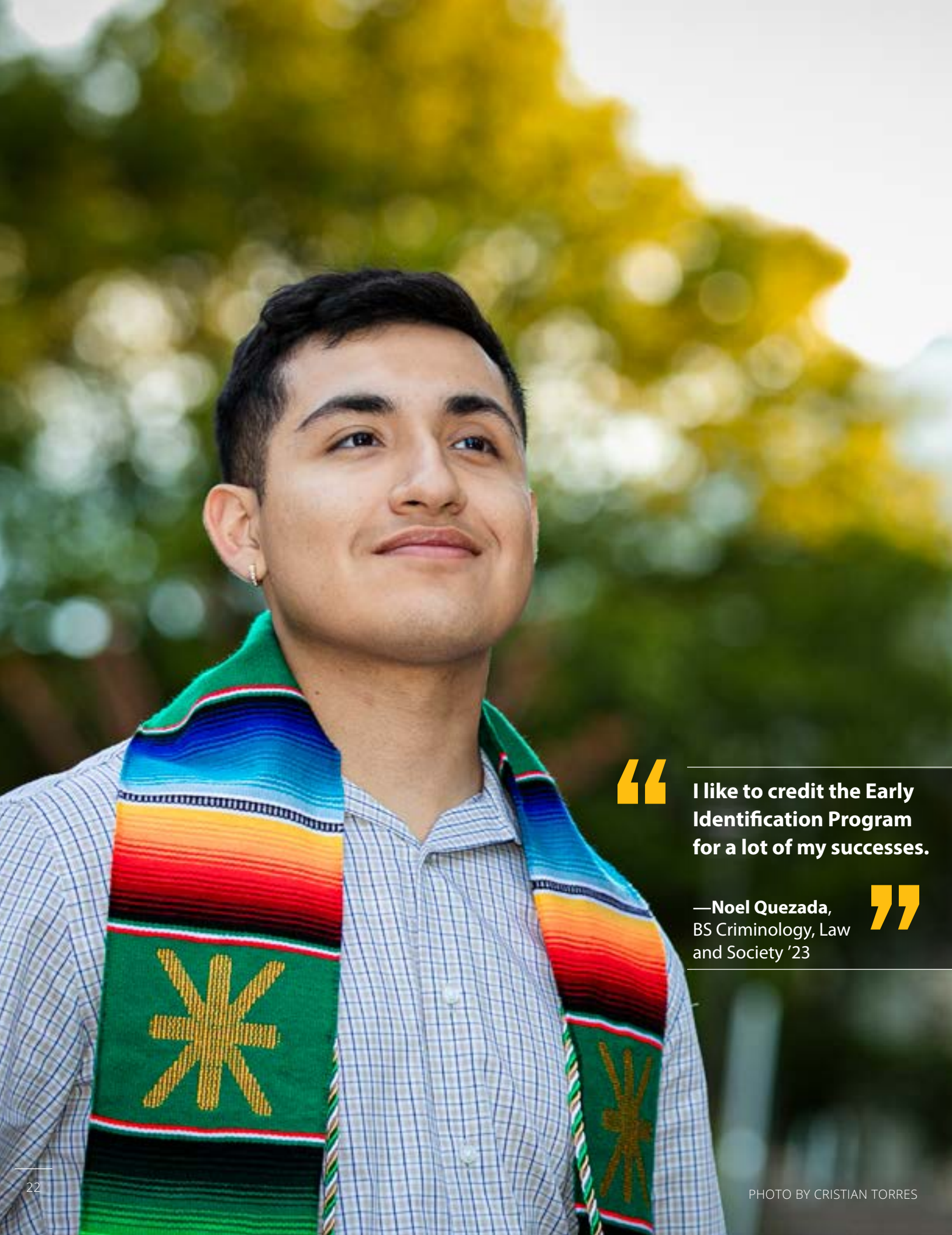
We help students thrive by giving them tools to pursue their college dreams, and we meet the needs of students looking to re-skill or move forward in a career.



Students walk on Roger Wilkins Plaza, the heart of Mason's Fairfax Campus.

PHOTO BY EVAN CANTWELL





“

I like to credit the Early Identification Program for a lot of my successes.

—Noel Quezada,  
BS Criminology, Law  
and Society '23

”

PHOTO BY CRISTIAN TORRES

## EDUCATION WHERE EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Designed to provide nontraditional students with easy access to higher education, the **Bachelor of Individualized Study** (BIS) program allows students to meet their own educational needs for professional advancement, career change, preparation for graduate school, and personal satisfaction. Many BIS students are returning to college after previous careers and life or military experiences.

**41**

Average age of BIS students

**71**

Average number of transfer credits accepted toward graduation

**76%**

BIS graduates who report their degrees have advanced their careers

**100%**

BIS students who learn research skills as part of their degrees

### COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS

Mason's **Early Identification Program** (EIP) serves first-generation, college-bound students in grades 7-12 in seven Northern Virginia school systems, establishing a long-term relationship with these students and giving them tools to pursue their college dreams.

**Noel Quezada** is a first-generation student who graduated in May 2023 with a bachelor of science in criminology, law and society, and a double minor in forensic psychology and psychology. Two weeks after walking across the graduation stage in EagleBank Arena, Quezada was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and will serve full-time on active duty.

**2,000+**

Students in Northern Virginia have participated in EIP since 1987



# PRESERVING THE PAST TO POWER THE FUTURE

Our students work side-by-side with faculty and community members through hands-on learning opportunities that encompass archival research and fieldwork as well as digital exhibition development.

Our work uncovers hidden connections tying past to present and preserving human history for future generations.

**Gabrielle Tayac**, associate professor of history and a member of the Piscataway Indian Nation, and **Wendi Manuel-Scott**, professor of integrative studies and history, collected water at Mason's Point of View in Fairfax County. The water was poured into the Roger Wilkins fountain during the Indigenous Water Ceremony at the Enslaved People of George Mason Memorial dedication honoring the enslaved and Indigenous people who came before us.

PHOTO BY EVAN CANTWELL



# UNCOVERING HIDDEN HISTORIES

The **Center for Mason Legacies** focuses on preserving and examining the complicated legacies of George Mason IV, our institution's namesake, his ancestors and heirs, and the people he enslaved. Our faculty and students gather sources that have been ignored and lost to bring hidden histories to life in digital exhibitions.

The Center's **Black Lives Next Door** project examines the role African American communities played in Fairfax during the formative years of George Mason College and its transition to George Mason University.

**LaNitra Berger**, associate professor of art history and director of the African and African American Studies program, teaches students in Mason's Early Identification Program about the significance and history behind the Enslaved People of George Mason Memorial on Roger Wilkins Plaza. Berger is also affiliate faculty in the Center for Mason Legacies.



PHOTO PROVIDED



125,000

**Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media's Green Tunnel** podcast series about the history of the Appalachian Trail has been downloaded **125,000** times, a milestone that places it in the top **3%** of podcasts nationwide. Mason students, faculty, and staff contribute to the podcast.

# BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

The **Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media** (RRCHNM) provides access and tools to encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past.

The Center's award-winning work includes: educational materials for teachers, especially materials to teach difficult and contested histories; **R2 Studios**, the premier studio for narrative history podcasts; online collections; exhibits and collecting sites; and forums to develop knowledge and build community among those working with digital technology.

RRCHNM partners with the **Center for Humanities Research** to empower student leaders through the **IndigenoUs Northern Virginia** project. Partners include the **Piscataway people, Barrios Unidos, Indigenous Andean Worlds in Northern Virginia, Intertribal Cultures and Community**, and the **International Mayan League**.

This partnership brings students to sacred Indigenous sites and creates opportunities for round table dialogues, which enrich our campus community with native wisdom, fostering cultural respect (photo below).



PHOTO PROVIDED



MURAL OF ROY ROSENZWEIG, RRCHNM FOUNDER, DESIGNED AND CREATED BY MASON ART STUDENT KHOI LE AND FRIENDS

2.1 M

Unique visitors in one year to RRCHNM projects.


The Center provides free digital history and software to the public.



## EDUCATING GLOBAL CITIZENS

Through collaboration and exploration, we bring knowledge and inquiry together to address the challenges societies face from a diverse array of perspectives.

We prepare students to be leaders in today's global and knowledge-based economy by providing opportunities for impactful global experiences.

A young man with glasses, wearing a dark suit and a green sash with a university emblem, stands at a white podium. He is speaking into a microphone. Behind him is a large green screen displaying 'Fall 2022 New Student Convocation' and 'GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY Korea'. To his left is a yellow banner with 'GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY' and a South Korean flag. The background wall is covered in a collage of 'WELCOME' and 'BIENVENUE' in various languages.

More than **130** global affairs students are enrolled in Mason Korea, making global affairs the second largest degree program at Mason Korea on the Incheon Global Campus. Here, Mason Korea global affairs student **Hyunwoo Jo** speaks to students during fall convocation. Jo represented both Mason Korea, and the entire nation of Korea, at the **2023 Global Youth Summit**, which is hosted by the **Ministry of Gender Equality and Family** and organized by the **National Council of Youth Organizations in Korea**.

PHOTO PROVIDED



# EMPOWERING ROTC STUDENTS WITH CRITICAL LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURAL SKILLS

Mason partners with the **Defense Language and National Security Education Office**, the **U.S. Department of Defense**, and the **Institute of International Education** to educate **Reserve Officers' Training Corps** (ROTC) from across the country in critical languages and intercultural communication skills. ROTC students participate in **Project Global Officer**, also known as **Project GO**—a seven-week, full-immersion language program in Chinese and Korean hosted by our Department of Modern and Classical Languages.



Mason's **Project GO** team visits Chinatown in Washington, D.C.

PHOTO PROVIDED



Photo by Cheuse Fellow **Emilie Knudsen** during her fellowship to the Shetland Islands—at the Ring of Brodgar, Orkney.

## BUILDING UNDERSTANDING THROUGH LITERATURE AND TRAVEL

The **Alan Cheuse International Writers Center** provides travel fellowships to students pursuing a MFA in Mason's creative writing program. Designed to broaden a young writer's interests and perspective, the fellowships enable students to live abroad and absorb another culture for three weeks to two months. These opportunities place the Cheuse Center at the cutting-edge of creative writing programs across the country.

Students are supported in travel to a country of their choosing and are encouraged to participate in varied cultures, an effort to help build and strengthen their shared connections and broaden their understanding of the world.

Scan the QR code to learn about **Emilie Knudsen's** writing and travel.







## College of Humanities and Social Sciences

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**MASON**  
**NOW**  
POWER THE POSSIBLE

The **College of Humanities and Social Sciences** makes an impact beyond the classroom. This impact is reflected in our alumni, whose leadership, research, and service make outstanding contributions to their industries and communities. On the cover and shown above are distinguished alumni who exemplify our commitment to addressing the pressing challenges of our national and global communities.

Learn more about our alumni: [to.gmu.edu/chssawards](https://to.gmu.edu/chssawards)

[chss.gmu.edu](https://chss.gmu.edu)



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