



**WILLIAM & MARY**  
**OFFICE OF ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Annual Report  
2020-21 Academic Year

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June 2021

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## Office Overview

The Office of Academic Advising (OAA) is a six-person team under the leadership of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Janice Zeman. The office supports and supplements the faculty advisors to undergraduate students in Arts & Sciences. The staff consists of a faculty director, associate director, three academic advisors, and an administrative coordinator. The faculty director is the liaison for all faculty advisors and leads faculty training and development. The associate director manages the day-to-day operations of the office, supervises the advisors and administrative coordinator, and maintains respectful and mutually beneficial relationships with administrative units across campus. The associate director supports the faculty director to provide leadership for academic advising across campus.

## Mission

The Office of Academic Advising empowers William & Mary students and faculty by providing academic information, advice, and support.

## Inclusion

The Office of Academic Advising upholds the principle of equal opportunity for all through intentionally considering, in advising and programming, how students' identities intersect with their educational experiences.

## Team Members

Faculty Director – Thomas Linneman  
Associate Director – Shelly N. Laurenzo  
Academic Advisor – Gail Williams  
Academic Advisor – Carmen Crosswell  
Academic Advisor – Dane Pascoe  
Administrative Coordinator – Beth Rothenberger

## Highlights of the 2020-21 Year

**COVID-19** – The office maintained full advising support to students remotely during the 2020-21 academic year. The advisors held appointments via Zoom and phone. Beth maintained a virtual front desk through phone and email availability. Janice, Shelly, and Beth moved all petition work online.

**Online petition process** – In response to pandemic operation procedures, petitions were processed completely online. Student submitted petitions via email. Committee on Degree meetings were held via Zoom. A DocuSign version of the course substitution form was launched in Spring 2021.

**Personnel changes** – The OAA was able to have a graduate student intern, Jessica Nelms, for summer 2021.

## Incoming Students

From the time an incoming undergraduate freshman or transfer student is admitted to William & Mary and on through to their graduation, the OAA supports students' academic success.

Before incoming students arrive on campus, the OAA works collaboratively with the Office of Student Transition Engagement Programs (STEP) to gather data about students. We use that information to:

- Match incoming students to a pre-major advisor (pre-major advisors are instructional faculty).
- Provide supplementary information to pre-major advisors about their assigned advisees (initial faculty advising meetings are scheduled in August and January)

In 2020-21 we matched approximately 1,640 incoming first-year students and 200 incoming transfer students (combining fall and spring semesters) and facilitated their first meetings with their pre-major advisors.

## College Studies

By the end of June we have assigned incoming students to small groups of Peer Advisors, who assist and advise them in completing Part 1 of College Studies, an online short course designed to introduce incoming students to academic life. Every incoming student is required to complete Parts 1 and 2 of this course as a condition of registering for fall courses.

*About College Studies.* This collaborative effort is funded through the Center for the Liberal Arts, managed by Lori Jacobson, director for the Writing Resources Center, supported by Paul Showalter in Swem Library, and delivered by the OAA, with strong support from the OAA's Peer Advisors. There are three versions of the course, one for first-year students, one for transfer students, and one for Joint Degree Programme students.

*About the Peer Advising Program.* Student volunteers in this group serve as instructors for College Studies for incoming students and academic advising mentors for all undergraduate students. Gail serves as the program's coordinator. This is a year-round role, which includes training and student development, working collaboratively with the executive board, and recruiting. In 2020-21, Gail recruited 85 student Peer Advisors (PAs). The Peer Advising Program went through multiple shifts as the focus transitioned away from in-person support during Orientation, to increased online support during College Studies. Gail provides virtual trainings through Zoom and Blackboard.

## Faculty Advisor Training

During the late summer, the faculty director and associate director planned and developed a training session hosted for the pre-major advisors. In 2020-21 Tom led one webinar training session, with approximately 275 advisors and advising colleagues in attendance. In addition to the training right before the start of the fall semester, Tom led a training in January before the start of the spring semester for approximately 10 of our incoming transfer pre-major advisors.

Throughout the year, the OAA notifies pre-major faculty advisors of timely information related to their advising roles.

## Orientation Activities

During the fall (and spring) student orientation, the entire OAA team is involved, leading presentations, advising in small groups, and sharing information with families. Our advisors are on standby to serve students who may need additional support. We also help to smooth and adjust any difficulties that arise with the required initial meetings between students and their pre-major faculty advisor.

## Current Students

### Student Appointments

Throughout the year, OAA advisors are available to assist new and continuing students in their academic planning.

During this past academic year, the office held all appointments virtually, either through Zoom or phone. OAA advisors held approximately 1,400 appointments from July 2020 to June 2021. This is a significant increase from the previous year, when we had approximately 850 student appointments. The office is currently transitioning from collecting student appointment data in Qualtrics to the Bookings platform, so detailed appointment information is not available for this year.

### Workshops and Presentations

As our office operated under pandemic conditions during the 2020-21 academic year, advisors devoted more of their time and energy to individual appointments as opposed to group workshops. Serving students who were placed throughout the world required advisors to be more flexible in appointment availability to ensure equitable service to all. Students were also facing a variety of personal factors that made individual appointments more effective than group workshops.

### Transfer Student Support

The OAA provides additional support to transfer students.

Shelly serves as the academic advising representative on Team Transfer, a university-wide committee focused on coordinating efforts for transfer student services.

For direct student services, Carmen serves as the main point person for transfer and co-enrolled students. From prospective to continuing students, Carmen collaborates with Admissions, the Office of the University Registrar, and STEP. We enrolled 182 transfer students in the fall and 26 in the spring. The OAA also supports co-enrolled students, students who are simultaneously enrolled at either Thomas Nelson Community College or Richard Bland College and William & Mary. Carmen coordinated the orientation for co-enrolled students in the fall and spring, working closely with STEP. She has implemented mandatory meetings with each co-enrolled student. She hosted a virtual information session with the Admissions Office for Thomas Nelson Community College, where students and colleagues were invited to learn more about the curriculum at W&M.

## Other Projects

In addition to our student service and faculty service, the OAA is responsible for a variety of administrative projects.

### Faculty Advisor of the Year

Janice and Tom oversaw the faculty advisor of the year survey. Dane and Beth provided the administrative support for this project. The award was renamed in August 2018 to the Monica Potkay Advisor of the Year Award, and in 2020 was awarded to Ashleigh Everhardt Queen, a Senior Lecturer of Kinesiology & Health Sciences.

### Processing Petitions and Forms

The OAA serves the administrative function of processing Committee on Degree petitions as well as Dean of Undergraduate Studies forms. Beth leads this process for the OAA. This year the OAA processed more than 400 forms. During the Spring 2020 semester, Beth and Shelly transitioned to processing all forms electronically. In Spring 2021, Shelly launched a pilot version of the course substitution form in DocuSign.

### Professional Advisor Training and Development

The OAA regularly seeks training and development opportunities to maintain current advising and academic information. However, to adapt to temporary budget reductions, the OAA did not pursue paid professional development opportunities in this academic year.

### Conclusion

While 2020-21 brought a variety of challenges, the OAA team was able to remain flexible and focused on student success. We handled more student appointments and petitions than in previous years, and the team adapted and continued to provide a high level of advising services. The 2021-22 academic year will bring about changes in leadership: Janice will be ending her tenure as dean of undergraduate studies, and Shelly will transition to a newly created role, assistant dean of undergraduate education.