Duke | NICHOLAS SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Meet the Nicholas School of the Environment's Student Services Team

We are Here for You!

Sherri Nevius
Associate Dean

Responsibilities: Director of the Student Services team – Durham and Duke Marine Lab. Strategic lead for Student Services and staff supervisor for executive education, recruiting and admissions, career and professional development , and student administration teams.

Bio: Sherri first came to the Nicholas School in 1998 to pursue a Master of Environmental Management (MEM) degree. Prior to coming back to Duke in 2008 in her current position, she worked for URS Corporation as a project manager focusing on projects related to environmental management systems, program development, and compliance. Sherri is a Midwesterner: grew up in Wisconsin and attended Cornell College in Iowa for her undergraduate degree. Though she has made North Carolina her home, she still wears a cheesehead. Sherri loves her crazy family – husband, 2 boys, and 3 dogs – and spends too much time racing bikes, running, gardening, and working on home improvement projects!

Cynthia (Cindy) Peters
Assistant Dean, Student Administration

Responsibilities: Strategic lead for Student Administration including student academic and personal advising, financial aid, registration, academic standards and policies; staff manager for undergraduate programs.

Bio: Cindy came to the Nicholas School almost 17 years ago after having worked in a variety of other schools and offices at Duke in the prior 30+ years. She is a true Floridian: born in Miami, she lived in Florida until the age of 12 when her family moved overseas. She returned to the US to attend college in Atlanta, Georgia and is a proud graduate of Agnes Scott College. Outside of work, Cindy likes to read, do crossword puzzles, play cards and visit with friends and family.

Karen Kirchof
Special Projects Coordinator

Responsibilities: Karen is one of the leading career experts for the environmental and natural resource profession and has been recognized as one of North America's most outstanding environmental and natural resources career counselors during the 20th Century. She has led career development at the Nicholas School since 1990.

Bio: Her areas of expertise are her knowledge of the environmental career field, employer engagement, alumni networks and student counseling. Outside of work Karen enjoys hiking, golf and eating at diners & dives.

Allison Besch
Interim Director of CPDC // Director of Executive Education Programs

Responsibilities: Program Management and new course development for the Executive Education programs. Supports new program development and innovation strategy across student services including K-12 outreach.

Bio: Allison has 18 years of experience in science communication and educational program design, including work at National Geographic magazine, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and the North Carolina Maritime Museums. Allison holds a BA in geology and environmental studies from Colgate University, and a Master of Environmental Management degree from Duke University. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, yoga, traveling, and cooking, but not necessarily in that order.

Laura Lipps
Program Coordinator, Executive Education

Responsibilities: Laura coordinates and supports Nicholas School Executive Education courses, trainings, and events. Coordinates event planning, on-campus and e-learning initiatives; implements the DEL Certificate in Environmental Communications.

Bio: Prior to joining the Nicholas School, Laura's prior professional positions included policy analyst at the Ecological Society of America and research assistantships at the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. She also served in the U.S. Peace Corps as an Environmental Education Extensionist in El Salvador. Originally from the Washington D.C. area, she holds a B.A. in Biology from Earlham College and a M.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. In her free time, she enjoys wildlife watching, Zen meditation, and shooting the breeze.

Ben Spain
Associate Director of Enrollment Services

Responsibilities: Ben co-manages the planning and implementation of the recruitment and admission process for the MEM, MF and DEL-MEM professional masters programs. He travels to graduate fairs and professional conferences to represent the Nicholas School and to attract talented, driven individuals who want to capitalize on their proven abilities and become environmental leaders of consequence. Ben also collaborates with faculty, staff, and students on a variety of issues and projects pertaining to admissions standards and procedures (including the review of applications), as well as effective recruiting strategies.

Bio: Ben recently joined the Nicholas School after serving as the Assistant Director of Admissions and Recruiting at the University of North Carolina School of Law. Prior to his role at UNC, he served as the Associate Executive Director of an eastern North Carolina assisted living facility. When not working, Ben enjoys golfing, grilling, boating, and watching the Clemson Tigers win football games.

Brandon Toney
Assistant Director of Admissions and Recruitment

Primary Role: I travel the nation meeting and recruiting students for the MEM/MF/DEL-MEM/ Masters programs at college fairs, professional conferences, and private college visits. I also aid in the execution of NS admissions events, including Open House and Admitted Students Visitation Weekend.

Bio: Prior to recently joining the NS I served as the Assistant Director of Admissions and Recruitment at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. I am a graduate of Savannah State University. When not working, I enjoy listening to music, going to the movies, and spending quality time with my family and friends.

Park Watson
Assistant Director of Admissions & CEM Lead

Primary Role: Park meets and recruits prospective students for Nicholas' professional masters programs. Based at the Marine Lab in Beaufort, Park also coordinates the Coastal Environmental Management concentration of the MEM degree.

Bio: Park enjoys hiking, watching old movies, and working on various unfinished woodworking projects (most recent: a side-table…two years under construction).

Katie Wood
Assistant Director, Undergraduate & Marine Lab Programs

Responsibilities: Overall coordination of the undergraduate program at the Marine Lab and academic programs, Marine Science and Conservation Leadership Certificate and the Marine Science and Conservation Concentration within the Environmental Science majors. Marine Lab website, social media, general communications for the Marine Lab. Advising, recruiting, coordination with undergraduate students and student groups.

Bio: Katie started with Duke University at the Marine Lab in 2007. Katie is originally from Batavia, IL and graduated from the University of Illinois in 1997 with a BS in Media Studies. Katie will complete a MA degree in Higher Education Administration from SUNY Stony Brook in December 2017.
When not at work you can find Katie out on the boat with her family or in the company of our three dogs (Scout, Luna, Rosco) or at the gym.

Gwendolyn Womble
Enrollment Services Program Coordinator

Responsibilities: Provide administrative support to key professional and undergraduate student and program functions as part of the Duke University Marine Lab and Student Services team. Support, plan, coordinate and administer activities and select programming. Serve as registrar for Duke University Marine Laboratory undergraduate and CEM students; schedule ML courses; manage application and admissions process for non-Duke students; administer course evaluations for ML; process visa paperwork for international scholars, students, and visitors.

Bio: Gwendy is originally from Henderson, NC but has lived in Carteret County for more than a decade. She acquired a BS in Horticulture Science from NC State University in 2003. For 12 years Gwendy was the Conservation Horticulturist at the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores where she worked designing and maintaining interior and exterior habitats, providing outreach to community groups and individuals and working alongside other agencies to promote native plants in coastal communities. She also spent time in a high school classroom teaching Agriscience and Horticulture. Gwendy has no free time as she is the mom of 2 boys who keep her running around outside, jumping on trampolines and swimming in the sound. She enjoys reading, gardening and eating ice cream.

Tom Brooks

Staff Assistant, Career and Professional Development

Responsibilities: Supports projects across the Nicholas School including budget and financial projects; Nicholas School Executive Education courses; the DEL Certificate in Environmental Communications; Career Services; technical support; and helps with special events.

Bio: Worked for Duke in various roles including software development and program administration. Recently returned after teaching public school. MS in Environmental Studies from Johns Hopkins University. BA from College of William and Mary.

Nikki Smith
Assistant Director/Senior Career Counselor

Responsibilities: Provide career counseling to MEM students, particularly first-year students seeking internships. Develop professional preparation workshops to engage students in career readiness. Serve as program administrator for the Stanback Internship Program.

Bio: Nikki Smith is committed to getting students involved in the discovery and exploration of both themselves and the world. She came to Duke in 2012 as a career counselor supporting undergraduates in the Duke University Career Center, and transitioned to the Nicholas School in December of 2016 to work with MEMs. She has taught career planning and study skills courses, and is energized by coaching Nicholas School students as they navigate the career development process. Nikki earned a B.A. in English from Roanoke College and a M.Ed. in Counseling Psychology with an emphasis in College Student Personnel Administration from James Madison University (Go Dukes!).

Nikki is always excited about North Carolina bbq, running on the American Tobacco Trail, and checking out events in downtown Durham. She also enjoys reading, volunteering, cats and dogs, NPR, and yelling about politics.

Beth Hwang
Career Specialist

Beth Hwang joined the Nicholas School's Career & Professional Development Center team in August 2017. Her undergraduate degree is in Economics, which was earned at Meredith College. Beth worked in recruiting at SAS and a few other companies before deciding to go back to school. She graduated from NCSU with a Master's of Education in Counseling, concentration in Career Counseling. Beth completed her graduate internship at Meredith College in the Office of Career Planning. She has experience providing career and professional development through individual coaching appointments, workshops, and presentations. Her desire is to help students find fulfilling and satisfying careers where they can use their strengths to give back the community.

She recently got married in May of 2017 to Michael, a cyclist; the son her parents never had. On the weekends, you will likely find Beth running on the American Tobacco Trail with her dog, Paisley, alongside Michael on his bicycle. Food is her best friend and you will often see her snacking throughout the day.

Alicia Rhodes
Career Specialist

Alicia Rhodes joined the Nicholas School's Career & Professional Development Center (CPDC) team in the beginning of October 2017 as a Career Specialist. She has a BA in English, MBA in Human Resource Management, and in May 2017 eared her MA in Career Counseling and Placement.

She completed her internship at Duke University's Career Center and worked there shortly fall 2017 before transitioning to the CPDC. She enjoys counseling and coaching individuals throughout the journey of achieving their career goals. She moved to Durham, NC in November and is excited about learning more about the growing city. She enjoys taking peaceful walks, spending time with her family and friends, and watching movies.

Julie Moushon
Staff Assistant, Student Services

Responsibilities: Handles incoming phone and email communication; supports special events; works with the Admissions process and the Masters Projects program; and helps with CareerLink accounts and financial processing.

Bio: Julie started with the Nicholas School in early 2016 but previously worked at Duke Law and with the Undergraduate Admissions team.

Prior to the world of academia, she worked in minor league baseball before spending 15 years planning corporate and community marketing events for a regional bank. Born in Houston and ever faithful to her Texas Longhorns, she lived in Illinois and New York before moving to North Carolina in 1992. She and her husband Dan have three sons: Blake is a Tar Heel, Chad starts at UNC Charlotte this week and Kellen is a high school junior.

Season ticket holder to DPAC Broadway series, Burlington Royals baseball, Duke football and Jordan High School soccer. Loves to read on her screened-in porch, no matter the season or the weather.

Julie's Boys

Amy Kirkland
Undergraduate Program Coordinator

Responsibilities: Responsible for undergraduate course scheduling and student records; recruit undergraduates to the Nicholas School; serve as initial point of contact for major, minor and certificate students; provide administrative support for the undergraduate Sustainability Engagement Certificate; Manage Graduation with Distinction program, and honors programs; plan and participate in special events including Graduation, Majors Fair, etc.; update websites.

Bio: Amy has worked at Duke for 11 years, and joined the Nicholas School in December 2014. She recently relocated back to Durham after spending 3 years in the Beaufort area, while working at the Duke Marine Lab. She attended Piedmont Community College with a major in Accounting. Amy enjoys traveling and spending time with friends and family.

Ericka Emiliani
Student Administration Program Assistant

Responsibilities: Course registration matters for MEM, MF and DEL-MEMs (such as pass/fail grading, independent study enrollment, overloads, & audit basis requests). Communicate registration requests to university partners/colleagues (as appropriate). Assist in course advising in-person and virtual information sessions. Co-manage/process I-20 requests (on-campus and DEL MEM place-based sessions). Manage language exam course requirements; notify students and advisors of deficiencies. Support social media communications and the general student services team.

Bio: Ericka comes to us from North Carolina State University where she earned a Master of Education with a focus in school counseling. She previously worked at Duke as a Graduate Assistant with the Housing and Residence Life team. While originally from Costa Rica, she spent most of her life in Miami, Florida before moving to North Carolina in 2014. In her spare time, Ericka enjoys reading, binge-watching TV, and exploring Durham with her husband and her two pups.

Melissa Adragna
Program Coordinator, Student Administration

Responsibilities: Mel supports the MEM, DEL-MEM and MF programs at the Nicholas school. Specifically, she oversees the Masters Project process and symposium, the assistantships process and provides administrative support for the certificate programs. She will also be working with our diversity and inclusion efforts.

Bio: Prior to starting at Duke, she worked at Shaw University in the Office of the President supporting process optimization efforts on campus. Mel has set down roots here in North Carolina and she loves exploring and spending time outdoors with her husband Joe and dog Skyler. Mel comes to Duke with several years of experience in program and student development and is excited to continue this work at the Nicholas School.

Erika Lovelace
Registrar and Associate Director

Responsibilities: Manage and coordinate course scheduling and registration processes, manage and coordinate activities involved in the establishment and maintenance of student records, audit degrees for graduation, student advising, manage the prerequisite status of all students, and leads the new student on-boarding process.

Bio: Erika has worked at Duke since 2002 and at the Nicholas School of the Environment since 2005. Erika's academic background includes a BA in theatre arts and a MS degree in management with a focus in project management. In her down time, Erika enjoys a competitive game of Scrabble and Words with Friends, reading, card games and she's a huge fan of professional football. Go Eagles! Erika hails from a big family – she has 4 sisters, 4 brother-in-laws, 5 nieces and nephews, 2 loving parents and her very sweet cat, Olive, whom she loves and adores.

The Student Services team looks forward to meeting you in the fall and interacting with you throughout the next two years and after you graduate.

WELCOME to the Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University and Durham, NC!

Contact us at https://nicholas.duke.edu/people/staff/student-services