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

We are Here for You!
Sherri Nevius  
Assistant Dean 

Responsibilities: Strategic lead and staff supervisor for executive education, recruiting and admissions, and new program development and innovation strategy.

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!
Karen Kirchof  
Assistant Dean Career & Professional Development  

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.
Cynthia (Cindy) Peters
Assistant Dean

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 16 years ago after having worked in a variety of other schools and offices at Duke in the prior 20+ years. She comes from Miami, Florida originally though she lived her teenage years outside the US; she went to college in Georgia. Outside of work, Cindy likes to read, do crossword puzzles, play cards and visit with friends and family.
Allison Besch
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.
Suzanne (Sue) Smith
Admissions Officer

Responsibilities:  Sue meets and recruits prospective students for the MEM/MF/DEL MEM programs at the Nicholas School.  Creates the communications/marketing plan with the purpose of promoting NSOE’s visibility and general recruitment efforts; and assists in Admissions processes, evaluating candidates and making recommendations for admissions.  Also responsible for spearheading the Admitted Students Visitation Weekend for admitted students.

Bio:  Sue joined the Nicholas School in 2003, and hails originally from the northeast.  Prior to her Duke role, she juggled single-parenting and earning an MA in English.   She’s had stints teaching at JMU in VA, and has done grant writing and technical recruiting in corporate settings, consulting firms, academia, and social services.   Outside of work, she has a passion for traveling, painting, gardening, cooking or relaxing with friends and family.
Katie Wood
Senior Program Coordinator

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.
Amy Kirkland
Staff Assistant

Responsibilities: 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: Amy has worked at Duke for more than 9 years, and joined the Nicholas School in December 2014. She is from Durham, and moved to the Beaufort area to work at the Duke Marine Lab. She attended Piedmont Community College with a major in Accounting. Amy loves spending time on the beach, traveling, and being with friends and family. Amy has a Pomeranian named Maddie that she spoils.
Jill Molee  
Admissions Officer

Responsibilities: Jill manages the admissions and application process for the professional degrees in environmental management, forestry and environmental leadership at the Nicholas School of the Environment. Jill also travels extensively throughout the fall to recruit prospective students for the MEM/MF/DEL MEM programs. Also, Jill co-leads the School’s admissions and recruitment planning committee and evaluates applications and makes recommendations for admissions.

Bio: Jill has worked at the Nicholas School of the Environment for almost 5 years, and she holds a master’s degree in higher education administration. Jill is the proud mother of one very talented son and two beautiful and exceptional daughters (one at Boston College and the other studying at The Ohio State University). Jill is a native of New Jersey, and she enjoys spending time with her family, running and the company of her lovable dog.
Julie Moushon  
Staff Assistant, Student Services

Responsibilities: Handles incoming phone and email communication; supports special events (such as Orientation!); helps with CareerLink accounts and financial processing.

Bio: Julie started with the Nicholas School in February 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 while Chad and Kellen are in high school.

Season ticket holder to DPAC Broadway series, Burlington Royals baseball, Duke football and Jordan High School soccer. Joined Duke Run/Walk Club last Fall but still doesn’t really enjoy running. Loves to read on her screened-in porch, no matter the season or the weather.
Deb Wojcik
Director, Career and Professional Programming and Counseling

Responsibilities: Strategic planning, career and professional development program implementation, and career counseling for the Career & Professional Development Center

Bio: Deb bleeds a deep Duke Blue, having earned undergraduate, master of arts in teaching, and MEM degrees from Duke. Since her time as a Duke student, Deb has worked in the environmental field in various capacities, including four years with the Duke Environmental Leadership (DEL) Program at the Nicholas School. From there, she went back to school and conducted research in southern Africa, earning PhD in natural resource management from the University of Florida. After her PhD, Deb worked at Stanford University, first as a postdoctoral scholar and then as associate director of the Emmett Interdisciplinary Program on Environment and Resources. She returned to the Nicholas School in fall 2015. She loves spending time with her adorable family (bias acknowledged), gardening and doing yard work, dancing like only her preschooler is watching, and exploring all of the fantastic things that have popped up since she last lived in Durham!
Emily Blanchard
Undergraduate Programs Coordinator

Responsibilities: Emily coordinates the Environmental Sciences & Policy and Earth & Ocean Sciences major/minor programs as well as the Certificate in Sustainability Engagement. She also serves as the undergraduate liaison for the Stanback Internship Program.

Bio: Emily joined the Nicholas School as a staff member in September 2015. Prior to that, she graduated with her Master of Environmental Management in May 2015. Emily loves traveling, art, dance, learning languages, and helping animals. Her life’s passion is wildlife conservation. Also, Emily is a native Clevelander and is incredibly excited that the Cavs won the NBA championships!
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: Mel is our most recent addition to the Nicholas School Student Services team, joining us in July 2016. 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.
Sarah Phillips
Program Coordinator

Responsibilities: Manage Durham- and Beaufort-based CEM students and all CEM-focused programming; support and participate in recruiting effort travels for MEM/DEL programs; actively recruit undergraduate students to attend the Duke University Marine Laboratory; consult with Marine Lab faculty in regards to course offerings.

Bio: Sarah joined the Nicholas School team in 2014 and lives in Beaufort. Though she’s new to NSOE, she has lived on the NC coast for 15 years. After graduating from Longwood College in 2001, she joined Peace Corps – Slovakia, then came back to the U.S. and worked for an environmental non-profit for ten years. Sarah loves the outdoors, especially the mountains, and loves to travel. She often takes advantage of music, food and outdoor options when she comes to Durham!
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.
Laura Lipps  
Staff Specialist, 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.
Thelma Jernigan
Staff Assistant, Career & Professional Development Center

Responsibilities: Administrative lead for Student Services leadership and staff. Financial management for Student Services, including Executive Education, Stanback Internship Program, and Nicholas School internships. Event coordination for Student Services and Executive Education courses and Events.

Bio: Thelma has worked in various departments at Duke Hospital and Duke University for 35 years. She has been at the Nicholas School for 20 years. In her “off” time Thelma enjoys spending time working in her church, time with her family (which includes 2 spoiled Pomeranians and 5 spoiled grandchildren). Thelma’s passion is her “adopted” South African kids that live in an orphanage in Mabopane, South Africa where she visits and spends time at least once a year. Working alongside with Mama Mary Lwate she works to not only improve their everyday lives but to provide opportunities for them to have a better future.
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!