

Meet the Nicholas School of the Environment's  
Career and Professional Development Center  
and Executive Education Team

Office of Student Services

*We are Here for You!*



## Allison Besch

### Director, Career and Professional Development and Executive Education

**Responsibilities:** Allison provides strategic direction for a comprehensive and integrated professional development center including Career Services for NSOE professional students and Executive Education (non-degree short courses) for environmental professionals. Primary duties include supporting client/employer relations and new program development for both programs, and coaching professional students in career exploration.

**Bio:** Allison has over 20 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.

# Deanna Knighton

## Assistant Director, Career and Professional Development

Responsibilities: Provide career coaching to MEM/MF students. Manage career readiness curriculum. Lead process for internship, enrichment, and student groups' career treks funding.

Bio: Deanna Knighton joined the Career and Professional Development Center in December 2019. Deanna has a Master's degree in Agricultural and Natural Resource Economics from the University of Florida (Go Gators!) and a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration from North Carolina State University. She is a certified Global Career Development Facilitator. She grew up on a farm and has experience in government, a non-profit, and abroad. Deanna enjoys coming alongside and working with students as they seek to determine and achieve their professional goals. When not at work, she likes being outside (hiking, camping, exploring, gardening, etc.), reading, traveling, spending time with people, attending performing arts events, and all things Durham.



## Moriah Carleton

### Program Specialist, Career and Professional Development



**Responsibilities:** Moriah assists with administrative tasks for staff, faculty, and students. Assists in managing and supporting Nicholas School Executive Education courses and trainings. Supports CPDC staff by assisting with projects and events.

**Bio:** Moriah Carleton is a recent graduate from North Carolina State University with a B.A. in International Studies with a concentration in Global Relations, as well as a minor in Linguistics. Moriah has interned with DCID for the past two summers as a staff assistant, working with foreign diplomats. She has been with the Nicholas School since August 2018. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling to different places, and spending time with her family. She has spent time in China, Jordan, and Israel. She hopes to continue her involvement in the field of education and international development.

# Melissa Hunter

## Assistant Director, Career and Professional Development

Responsibilities: Provide career coaching to MEM/MF students. Research and engage with employers. Serve as Program Coordinator for the Stanback Fellowship program. Compile and analyze data for student internships/employment.

Bio: Melissa Hunter joined the Career and Professional Development Center in April 2018. Melissa holds a BA in Social Work from Salisbury University and a MA in Student Affairs in Higher Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She comes from D.C. where she worked at a non-profit aimed at helping students transition from college to career through teaching a career-readiness curriculum based on the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies. She is passionate about utilizing her background to help students identify, develop, and accomplish their professional goals. In her spare time, Melissa enjoys being active outdoors, eating gluten-free foods, spending time with husband Kyle and baby girl Delaney, and cheering on the Pittsburgh Steelers!





## **Laura Lipps**

### **Assistant Director, 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.

# 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.



*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>**