

ACADEMIC ADVISOR SPOTLIGHT

JESSICA MCCARTHA



Jessica McCarthy has served as the Student Services Coordinator in the Department of English since 2019 and in just under three years has made quite the impact. Ed Gieskes, the Undergraduate Director in the department was eager to nominate her for this month's spotlight. He spoke very highly of her when he shared that, "Jessica has consistently excelled as an advisor and in planning for and improving our advising process. Early in the pandemic, she digitized our advising records, set up systems for online advising that served faculty and students exceedingly well, and has continually worked to improve this system. This has made advising simpler and more accessible for students and faculty advisors alike while maintaining the English Department's emphasis on personal advising in the virtual environment."



JESSICA MCCARTHA,
Student Services
Coordinator,
Department of English

Jessica's Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature and Masters of Teaching in Secondary Education partnered with her years of experience as a high school teacher blend seamlessly with her role as both program coordinator and advisor.



Sophie Brown, a junior majoring in English and Art History said,



"I transferred here after my freshman year and navigating my course requirements and transfer credits was daunting, but Mrs. McCarthy has been there for me every step of the way! It has been difficult navigating a double-major and a minor, but Mrs. McCarthy has helped me throughout the entire process, even helping me to connect with an advisor for my second major. She is incredibly knowledgeable about the

specific details of the English major programs and is able to helpfully walk me through the intricacies of the courses and answer any specific questions I may have about the program never taken more than 15 minutes to get back to us on any of our crazy questions!"

Jessica said the most satisfying aspect of her role at the university is connecting her students to a wider network.



"Because my advisees are mostly on the secondary education BA to MT track, they tend to be excited and nervous about preparing to teach," she says. "I love to help them find professors and mentors who not only align with their interests, but who can also provide meaningful insights and support for teaching English."

Her role currently consists of maintaining student records for degree progression, graduation, internships, and financial aid while also creating and staffing the master schedule for English courses. She is charged with collecting and presenting department awards and scholarships while also maintaining a caseload of advisees. Ed Gieskes says if anyone merits being spotlighted and recognized, it is Jessica.

"She is an excellent advisor and deeply knowledgeable about the curriculum and creative in finding ways to help students sort out their major programs. She cares deeply about student success and works to foster the success of all of our majors."

Sophie echoed Ed's statement and said, "Mrs. McCarthy is an advisor who genuinely cares about and connects with her advisees. She has always been there to answer my many questions, and I know I can email her if I need anything. Having someone that I know I can reach out to has made my college experience so much easier, and I am so grateful for her assistance."

If Jessica could offer one piece of advice to a fellow advisor, it would be to be honest with their students.

"This helps gain their trust," she says, "and saves both of you hassle in the long run. This can mean suggesting certain professors or classes to take, suggesting ones to avoid based on the student's learning style and interests, or being blunt about their degree progression and grades. At this point in their lives, students need to know what they're facing and what they can do"

According to Olivia Gore, a freshman majoring in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures with a concentration in French, it seems Jessica does just that with her students.

"This year I chose to study on exchange in the Caribbean and Jessica was not only supportive, but SO helpful in getting me prepared for this trip," she says. "I actually emailed her about a week ago because I was struggling in a class, and she gave me really good advice and took all my stress away. She's always so quick to respond to my emails – even when I'm just rambling or having a mid-college crisis. She has truly impacted my college experience and of all my friends, I don't know anyone else who gets as excited as I do over advisement meetings."

Aliza Burton who is a transfer student pursuing a degree in English admitted the last time she was in college, computers didn't even exist yet so it was quite the transition. However, Jessica was there to ensure she acclimated.

"She not only answered all of the questions I had as an older transfer student- she then went on to answer questions I hadn't even asked! She cleared up a lot of confusion I had with the Carolina Core requirements specifically and my major's requirements as well. She also gave me a great recommendation for a class last semester that I totally enjoyed."

Jessica's commitment to student success and investment in accurate and holistic advising continues to make a positive impact on students here at Carolina.



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