

KERIN A. HILKER-BALKISSOON

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Pronouns: She/Ela/Ella

[LinkedIn Profile](#)

SUMMARY

College access champion with 20+ years of experience engaging PK-12, post-secondary, non-profit, global, and workforce partners in systemic change efforts that enhance enrollment, college success, and career attainment. Exceptional outcomes in the design and delivery of innovative curricular and programmatic solutions grounded in innovation. Extensive expertise in integrating high impact practices that enhance STEM career readiness by integrating novel pedagogical approaches, asset-based design; and data-driven interventions.

EDUCATION

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, Indianapolis, IN
Educational Specialist in Leadership, *Expected September 2025*
Doctor of Education in Leadership: STEM Education, *Expected December 2027*

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, Fairfax, VA
C-Suite Executive Certificate: Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Program

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, Washington, DC
Post-Master's Core for Counseling Licensure

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, Baltimore, MD
Master of Science in Counseling, Clinical & School Counseling Specializations

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, Amherst, MA
Bachelor of Science in Psychology

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, Fairfax, VA
Director of Educational and Career Pathways, 2018 – Present

Lead the strategy, development and execution of the following for Mason's College of Science:

- Create and lead innovative K-20 STEM access, enrollment, and student success initiatives with emphasis on equity, inclusion, and post-baccalaureate career attainment.
- Develop and maintain strategic partnerships with K-12, community colleges, and non-profit and educational organizations to support STEM access and inclusive excellence, to include [VALHEN Hispanic STEM Academy](#).
- Design and lead [Mason Science Programs for Transfer Equity and Success](#).
- Represent College of Science across multiple university-wide efforts to engage and support underserved and minoritized populations, including the First Generation Task Force (2020-23 tri-chair), Student-Parent Task Force (2022-23 co-chair), NASPA First Scholars Team, Undocumented Student Task Force, and Transfer Advisory Council.
- Lead Mason's STEM transfer pathways efforts, to include NOVA/Mason ADVANCE and Transfer VA statewide curricular cross-institutional articulation efforts.
- Oversee international enrollment pathways efforts, to include study abroad, College of Science-Mason International Collaborative, and international development partnerships.
- Design and implement PK-20 college access, outreach, and career pathways events, webinars, and high impact experiences.
- Coordinate first-year and upper-level College of Science residential learning communities and embedded student affinity groups: Pre-Health Scholars, Sustainable Futures, Rural and Diverse STEM Scholars, and Research and Interdisciplinary STEM Experiences programs.
- Lead Mason Science Career STEMinar series.
- Serve as PI/co-PI on multiple federal grant and foundation initiatives, including engagement of community-based and community college stakeholders as grant partners.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (NOVA), Annandale, VA

Director of College and Career Pathways/Assistant Professor, 2013 – 2018

- Expansion of prior role, leading College Pathway Initiatives unit of six award-winning initiatives supporting equity in college readiness, access, success, and completion for underserved populations.
- Developed and maintained strategic and collective impact partnerships across over 100 PK-16, non-profit, university, community, and workforce partners.
- Senior administrator of stand-alone student services unit of 60+ employees - faculty, counselors, academic advisors, recruitment and outreach specialists, and support staff, serving 10,000 students per year across six campuses and over 60 off-campus sites.
- Managed Pathway K-12 dual enrollment and co-enrollment with non-profit partners.
- Designed innovative “cradle to career” student success framework incorporating developmental and appreciative advising, early-alerts, mentoring, and intrusive supports.
- Developed and managed program and grant budgets, and monitored compliance with SACS, FERPA, Clery, Title IX, and other fiscal and administrative policy.
- Developed and implemented MOUs, grant proposals and reports, and monitored use and compliance of grant, institutional, and scholarship funding from external organizations
- Leveraged over \$2 million in external grants and special project funding.
- Programs received multiple awards and national recognition including the [Excelencia in Education Foundation](#), [Institute for Higher Education Policy](#), and the [Aspen Institute](#).

Director, Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program/Instructor, 2005 – 2018

- Co-developed and implemented operational model, pilot, and regional expansion of award-winning transfer initiative targeting underserved and minoritized students.
- Led the design of Pathway’s innovative collective impact service model that grew to 55 comprehensive and alternative K-12 sites, NOVA, and George Mason University.
- Facilitated MOUs and Executive Steering Committee sessions with regional K-12 superintendents, school board members, and executive leadership from NOVA and George Mason University.
- Expanded program from four to ten partners, and 300 to 8000+ students in seven years.
- Program showcased as national model by multiple organizations including [New America Foundation](#), [Washington Post](#), [The Advisory Board Community College Leadership Forum](#), [Opportunity Nation](#), and [White House Forum on Community Colleges](#).
- Provided extensive technical assistance to 20+ institutions across the US replicating Pathway model, including award-winning ACES program in Montgomery County, MD.

Disability Services & International Student Counselor/Instructor, 2001 – 2005

- Provided academic, career, and personal counseling to general community college student population and taught multiple sections of SDV 100: College Success Skills.
- Managed and served caseloads of disability services-affiliated and F, G, J visa students.
- Chaired Disability Services Working Group, standardizing required documentation policy, accommodations determination, and accommodation language to increase equity.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, Washington, DC

Undergraduate Academic Advisor, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, 1999 – 2001

- Provided academic advising, degree audits, and career support to CCAS undergraduates.
- Managed CCAS Summer Orientation Advising for first-time matriculating freshmen.
- Developed and facilitated Faculty Advisor Trainings and led Peer Mentoring Initiative.
- Coordinated CCAS Service-Learning and Internship for Credit Program.
- Led Freshman Advising Workshop curriculum redesign.

AFFILIATIONS & COMMITTEES

- **Board Member:** Virginia Latino Higher Education Network: Friends in Need Virginia
- **Member:** American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); Society for the Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS); SCHEV Project HOPE, NISTS-National Association for the Study of Transfer Students, NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), National STEM Community of Practice for Students with Disabilities, Transfer Nation.
- **Faculty Advisor:** Volunteers Around the World – Medical Chapter, RISE Scholars.
- **Mason Committees:** SCHEV Pell Self Study Task Force, Transfer Advisory Council; Recruitment Advisory Council; Student-Parent Task Force (co-chair); University First Generation Student Success Task Force (tri-chair); Undocumented Student Task Force; OSCAR Ambassador; College of Science Inclusive Excellence Working Group.
- **Prior Relevant Affiliations/Committees:**
George Mason University: Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) - College and Community Engagement Committee and K-12 and Community College Engagement Working Group (2020-21 co-chair). Mason/FamilyU Leadership Team
Northern VA Community College: ADVANCE Admissions and Recruitment Task Force, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Deans of Students Working Group; Achieving the Dream WSSN Steering Committee, Ad Hoc Student Mental Health Advisory Committee (chair), Credit for Prior Learning Committee, NVCC/Jobs for the Future STEM Career Pathways Task Force. Regional/National Committees: Virginia Community College System College Readiness Task Force, National College Access Network: Rapid Response Team, Raise DC Community Partnership for Post-Secondary Attainment Task Force, Northern VA Financial Empowerment Center Task Force (United Way).

CREDENTIALS & CERTIFICATIONS

- Certified Career Coach and MBTI Master Practitioner Certification
- Clifton Strengths Campus Champion Certification: Gallup, Inc.
- Online/Hybrid Course Design: Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning
- Course Redesign Academy: Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning
- Title IX Investigator Training: Northern Virginia Community College
- Principles of Project Management: Northern Virginia Community College
- Building Strong and Ready Families (PREP) Program Facilitator
- Virginia Board of Counseling, QMHP and School Counselor license-eligible

COURSE DESIGN & INSTRUCTION

George Mason University

- College of Science 100, Introduction to Science as a Profession (Designer)
- College of Science 300, Professional Preparation for STEM Disciplines (Designer)
- College of Science 302, College of Science Transfer Transition (Designer)
- College of Science 401, Discipline-Based Research in STEM (Designer)

Northern Virginia Community College

- Student Development (SDV) 100, College Success Skills
- Student Development (SDV) 107, Career Education
- Student Development (SDV) 299, Supervised Study (Experiential Learning)

**SELECTED
GRANT AWARDS**

George Mason University

- **National Science Foundation INCLUDES National Network**
UL-ASSIST co-Principal Investigator, 2023-2026
- **National Science Foundation Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program**
RARE in STEM co-Principal Investigator: 2021-2025
- **National Science Foundation S-STEM**
Rural and Diverse Student Scholars Program: co-Principal Investigator 2019-2023
- **International Development Institute**
Global STEM Scholars Program: Principal Investigator: 2018-2025

Northern Virginia Community College

- **Jack Kent Cooke Foundation College Access & Excellence Program**
Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program: Principal Investigator: 2008-2018
- **Washington Area Women's Foundation Stepping Stones Initiative**
Elevating Parents in College Project: Principal Investigator: 2015-2018
- **Fairfax County Community Services Block Grant**
Adult Career Pathways Project: Principal Investigator: 2012-2017
- **US Department of Labor TAACCCT**
Credentials to Careers Project: Senior Personnel 2012-2016

**SELECTED
PRESENTATIONS**

- **A Case for Life Design: STEM Career Pathways:** 2024 National Conference on Students in Transition
- **Conexiones: Elevating the Latino Voice on Campus,** 2024 VALHEN Encuentro, 2024 University Life Symposium
- **Leveraging the First Year Learning Community to Enhance STEM-Sector Career Readiness and Student Success:** 2023 ICON-BITS Innovative Teaching Strategies
- **Transfer Career Capital: The Secret Sauce to Equitable Career Outcomes for Students Who Transfer:** 2023 NISTS National Conference, 2023 Ohio State Transfer Council, 2023 NACADA National Conference
- **Courageous Conversations: Exploring the Impact of Our Intersecting Identities** (Plenary Panel): NISTS 2023 National Conference
- **Supporting Well-Being Among Homeless and Housing-Insecure College Students:** 2022 State Higher Education Council of Virginia Project HOPE Symposium
- **Harnessing Social Capital and Family Engagement to Enhance Student Success,** 2022 VALHEN Encuentro
- **Engaging STEM Transfer Students in Undergraduate Research:** 2021 NISTS National Conference; 2021 University Life Symposium; 2020 Innovations in Teaching & Learning Conference
- **Integrating Career, Global and Experiential Learning: A STEAM Case Study:** 2020 Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference
- **Elevating Parents in College:** 2020 University Life Symposium, 2019 NACADA Drive-In; 2018 League for Innovation in the Community College Innovations Conference; 2018 Community College Futures Assembly (Finalist Program)
- **Supporting Rural and Diverse STEM Scholars:** NSF/AAAS S-STEM Symposia
- **Leveraging Social Capital to Enhance Post-Secondary Success:** 2019 Moving the Needle Conference, 2015 NASPA Student Success Conferences
- **A Pathway to the Baccalaureate:** 2016 Community College Futures Assembly, NACADA 2010 National Conference; 2008 National School Boards Association Conference
- **From Guided Pathways to Regional Talent Ecosystem - Keynote Panelist with Davis Jenkins** (CCRC, Columbia University): 2017 American Association of Community Colleges Pathways Institute; 2017 Moving the Needle Conference

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Hilker-Balkissoon, K., Nagalia, R., and Seshaiyer, P. (2024). Leveraging the first year learning community to enhance STEM-sector career readiness and student success. In *Perspective and strategies on new age education and creative learning: Proceedings of 2nd International Conference on Best Innovative Teaching Strategies*, BITS Pilani.
- Hilker-Balkissoon, K. and Seshaiyer, P. (2024). Career pathways by design: An innovative framework to enhance professional preparation for STEM transfer students. In Maietta, H. & Gardner, P. (Eds.) (2024). *Ensuring success for transfer students: The importance of career and professional development*. National Resource Center on the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.
- Hilker-Balkissoon, K. and Seshaiyer, P. (2021). George Mason University - The Scientific Community of Transfer Researchers: Holistic career readiness for STEM undergraduate students who transfer. In Fountain, C. and Portillo, I. (Eds.). (2021). *Career advising as a tool for student success and educational equity*. (pp. 15-22). University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition.
- Whitmire R., Esch C. Pathway to the Baccalaureate: How One Community College is Helping Underprepared Students Succeed. Washington, DC: New America Foundation; 2010 April. 1-17. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED544671> (Lead Collaborator)
- Hilker-Balkissoon, K. (2008) Pathway to the Baccalaureate. In *Transition Matters: Community College to Bachelor's Degree* (2007). Testimony to the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502595.pdf>

SELECTED AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 2024 Patriot Pathbreaker Award, Outstanding Achievement, George Mason University
- 2020 Dean's Award: Diversity and Inclusion, George Mason University
- 2020 Transfer Champion-Catalyst, National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students
- 2016 Associate Level ;Example of Excelencia!, Excelencia in Education Foundation
- 2016 & 2018 Bellwether Award Finalist: Community College Futures Assembly
- 2013 Best Student Advocate Award: Northern Virginia Community College
- 2010 Outstanding Service to the College Award: Northern Virginia Community College
- 2008 Virginia Excellence in Education Award, Virginia Tech School of Education

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Languages: Portuguese (fluent) and Spanish (intermediate conversational).
- Nationally-recognized subject-matter expert in supporting underserved student populations – first generation, transfer, Latinx, and student-parent populations.
- Data-driven initiative design supporting underserved student populations, including guided pathways, student lifecycle and holistic, developmental intervention models.
- Extensive experience developing and administering professional development programming to faculty/staff and external stakeholders.
- Successful leadership guiding large teams through reorganization and culture change.
- Effectively leverage pedagogy and student affairs interventions to identify, elevate and dismantle barriers to student access, equity, and inclusion.
- Strong expertise in project, grant, and fiscal management.
- Cross-cultural communication, presentation, facilitation, and rapport-building skills.
- Background in evaluation via mixed-methods and qualitative assessment models.

CLIFTON STRENGTHS

[Strategic](#), [Input](#), [Ideation](#), [Adaptability](#), [Connectedness](#)