

Meridith A. Balas, PhD

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EDUCATION

Cornell University

Certificate in Business Law
Cornell Law School

March 2021

West Virginia University

Doctorate of Philosophy in Higher Education
Focus in Administration, Policy, and Law

Dissertation Title: Examining the Career Pathways of Women Administrators at a Land-Grant University

College of Applied Human Sciences

December 2020

The University of Georgia

Masters of Education in College Student Affairs Administration
Mary Frances Early College of Education

May 2015

The Pennsylvania State University

Bachelor of Arts in Advertising and Public Relations
Minor in Recreation, Park and Tourism Management

Bellisario College of Communications; College of Health and Human Development

December 2012

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Service Assistant Professor

August 2024 – present

Director of Nemaocolin Lab for Hospitality Innovation & Technology

John Chambers College of Business and Economics, West Virginia University

- Lead experiential learning projects and mentor students in hospitality and tourism through hands-on industry collaborations; teach courses in hospitality and tourism management, focusing on real-world applications and industry trends; support the development of new hospitality curriculum, including a badge system for leadership and business operations; manage relationships with industry partners to drive innovation in tourism education; spearhead career preparation initiatives, coordinate grant writing, and publish research in collaboration with students, while deepening retention and placement efforts within the hospitality sector.

Executive Director of Alumni Engagement

April 2022 – August 2024

WVU Alumni Association, West Virginia University

- Spearheaded strategic initiatives to enhance alumni relationships, fostering engagement through innovative programming, multi-channel communications, and large-scale events; collaborated with university leadership to drive fundraising efforts, strengthened alumni networks, and increased participation rates; led cross-functional teams, managed budgets, and ensured alignment with institutional goals to elevate alumni engagement and brand visibility.

Director of Alumni Engagement

December 2017 – April 2022

WVU Alumni Association, West Virginia University

- Led and managed a nationwide network of alumni volunteer clubs, empowering club leaders to drive regional engagement and strengthen connections with the university; developed comprehensive strategies to support volunteer leadership, enhance alumni participation, and increase event attendance; served as Interim Director of Marketing and Communications for one year, overseeing brand visibility and strategic communications initiatives; spearheaded multi-channel communications, large-scale events, and innovative programming to deepen alumni relationships; led the unit's DEI efforts, ensuring inclusive practices in all engagement strategies; collaborated with

university leadership on fundraising initiatives and oversaw budget management, ensuring alignment with institutional goals to elevate engagement and brand visibility.

Mentorship Programs Coordinator

August 2017 – December 2017

WVU Alumni Association, West Virginia University

- Developed and launched a successful pilot mentorship program, fostering relationships between alumni and students; planned and executed programs and events to support mentorship initiatives; benchmarked peer programs to implement best practices; utilized data and metrics to assess program impact and improve future offerings, driving long-term engagement and growth.

Assistant Director of New Student Orientation

January 2016 – August 2017

Office of Undergraduate Admissions, The University of Georgia

- Designed and implemented comprehensive orientation programs for over 20,000 new and transfer students, focusing on transition and retention efforts; developed and led staff training programs with measurable learning objectives, assessing outcomes to continually improve the program; collaborated with campus partners to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion sessions for incoming students; supervised a team of full-time staff, graduate assistants, and student orientation leaders, creating an engaging and supportive environment; represented the university at national conferences and contributed to advancing the field of student orientation and retention.

Account Coordinator

June 2015 – January 2016

Disney Institute, The Walt Disney Company

- Designed and executed mission-driven transition programs for over 4,000 college students within Walt Disney World Parks and Resorts; promoted and coordinated one-day workshops in the Disney Institute Sponsorship Series; led professional development education for university populations, enhancing client experiences through customer service and training; managed logistics as a production assistant for teambuilding programs, private tours, and special events; facilitated educational tours and programs, and provided training for leisure tour facilitators in partnership with Adventures by Disney.

Seasonal Tour Leader

June 2015 – January 2016

Disney Institute, The Walt Disney Company

- Led guest tours and immersive experiences through backstage areas at all four parks, providing exclusive insights into operations and storytelling; guided Holiday D-Lights Tours during the holiday season, showcasing the magic behind Disney's holiday transformations; conducted Business Behind the Magic tours with Disney Institute, offering guests a behind-the-scenes look at Disney's renowned business practices and customer service strategies; ensured a seamless and memorable experience for guests, adhering to Disney's high standards of excellence and hospitality.

Graduate Resident Hall Director

July 2013 – May 2015

University Housing, The University of Georgia

- Supervised a team of six residential staff members in fostering a safe, inclusive community for first-year students; participated in an on-call rotation, responding to crisis situations in a residential area of 1,000 students; advised student committees responsible for planning programs that promoted human awareness and leadership; launched sustainability initiatives and collaborated on innovative programming; conducted educational and judicial conferences with students, and provided leadership and mentorship to hall council executive board members to enhance student engagement and leadership development.

Graduate Intern

December 2013 – December 2014

New Student Orientation, The University of Georgia

- Assisted in recruiting, hiring, and supervising undergraduate orientation leaders; developed and facilitated a cohesive training program for student and professional staff, incorporating theory-based learning and service opportunities; conducted an external review of new student and transfer orientation programs, utilizing CAS Standards for Orientation, Transition, and Retention; designed and implemented programs and activities for orientation sessions, and led social media strategy initiatives to enhance online engagement with new students and families.

Counselor Development Supervisor

May 2013 – July 2013

Senior Leadership Team, Harry E. Sheldon Calvary Camp

- Led the training and development of the senior leadership team and incoming staff members, focusing on conflict resolution, crisis management, and inclusion; provided ongoing counseling and support to campers and staff, mediating conflicts and upholding community standards; managed residential logistics for campers and staff, ensuring a safe and supportive environment; participated in strategic planning for the camp's largest capital campaign and conducted performance assessments to align staff development with the camp's mission and values.

Residence Life Coordinator

January 2013 – May 2013

Office of Residence Life, The Pennsylvania State University

- Supervised and evaluated a team of 14 resident assistants in two residence halls housing approximately 500 first-year students, fostering a supportive and inclusive living-learning community; coordinated programs with faculty to enhance student experiences in a diversity-focused living environment; conducted weekly staff meetings to promote individual and team development; served as the primary conduct officer for student policy violations, and managed funds for resident assistants to implement specialized programming efforts aimed at building community and engagement.

Camper and Counselor Development Coordinator

May 2011 – August 2011; May 2012 – August 2012

Senior Leadership Team, Harry E. Sheldon Calvary Camp

- Supervised pre-college counselors in the Staff-In-Training program, providing education in crisis management, conflict resolution, and inclusion; designed and facilitated training modules for new and returning staff members, focusing on professional development and leadership skills; planned and implemented intentional growth opportunities for counselors, ensuring alignment with the camp's mission; served on the crisis-response team, addressing issues of safety and well-being for both campers and staff, while managing the operation of recreational and residential facilities to ensure a safe and positive experience.

COURSE INSTRUCTION

HTOR 470: Tourism Management (3 credits) Spring 2025

John Chambers College of Business and Economics, West Virginia University

HTOR 376: Hospitality and Tourism Leadership (3 credits) Spring 2025

John Chambers College of Business and Economics, West Virginia University

HIED 649: Contemporary Issues in Higher Education (3 credits) Spring 2023

College of Applied Human Sciences, West Virginia University

HIED 649: Contemporary Issues in Higher Education (half semester; 3 credits) Spring 2022

College of Education and Human Services, West Virginia University

HIED 750: Diversity Issues in Higher Education (co-instructor; 3 credits) Spring 2019

College of Education and Human Services, West Virginia University

CSA 397: College Student Affairs: The Role of the Resident Assistant (co-instructor; 3 credits) Spring 2012

College of Education, The Pennsylvania State University

CSA 397: College Student Affairs: The Role of the Resident Assistant (co-instructor; 3 credits) Spring 2011

College of Education, The Pennsylvania State University

FEATURED WORK

Balas, M.A. (2025). In progress. Rethinking gender inequalities in organizations by Penny Dick, a review. [Review of the book *Rethinking gender inequalities in organizations*, by P. Dick]. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*.

Balas, M.A. (2024). Book Review: The forgotten girls: A memoir of friendship and lost promise in rural America by Potts, M. *Affilia Journal of Women and Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08861099241242130>

Balas, M.A. (2023). Book Review: To live here, you have to fight: How women led Appalachian movements for social justice. *Affilia Journal of Women and Social Work*, 38(1), 149-150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109921999380>

Balas, M.A. (2023). Nurturing the mind (and academic soul) in summer. *Norton Learning Blog: Dispatches from Norton's Teacher & Learning Community*. <https://nortonlearningblog.com/>

Balas, M.A. (2021). Book Review: To live here, you have to fight: How women led Appalachian movements by Jessica Wilkerson, a review. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109921999380>

Balas, M.A. (2020). Examining the career pathways of women administrators at a land-grant university. [Doctoral dissertation, West Virginia University]. West Virginia University Research Repository.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATES

Certificate: Promotion of Active Learning

Association of College and University Educators (ACUE)

November 2022

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

West Virginia University

John Chambers College of Business and Economics DICE Committee	2024-present
CASE District II Cabinet, Member	2024-present
CASE Circle of Excellence Awards Judge	2024
Southeast Travel Planners	2024
Welcome Week Steering Committee, Member	2018-2019; 2021-2024
Business Development Network, Alumni Relations	2022-2024
Homecoming Steering Committee, Member	2022-2024
Council for Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals, Board Member	2022-2024
West Virginia University GradFest Steering Committee, Co-Chair	2022-2023
Key Alumni Relations Taskforce, Co-Lead	2022-2023
WVU Week of Purpose Committee, Member	2022-2023
WVU Alumni Purpose Committee, Member	2022-2023
WVU Purpose Council	2022-2023
WVU Alumni Association Transition Steering Committee, Member	2021-2023
WVU Alumni Association Transition - Programming and Events Committee, Chair	2021-2023
Strengths-Based Leadership Program Women's Leadership Initiative, Co-Lead	2021-2023
Council for Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals, NC Committee Chair	2021-2022
WVU Council for Gender Equity, Co-Chair Awards & Membership	2019-2022
WVUAA Board of Directors Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Staff Lead	2020-2023
Buswell Award Selection Committee, Chair	2020-2022
WVUAA Workplace Culture Committee, Chair	2020-2021
Women's Leadership Initiative, Member	2020-present
WVUAA Board of Directors Programs and Outreach Committee, Staff Lead	2018-2020
Alumni Coordination Group, Lead	2017-2020
Academy of Distinguished Alumni Selection Committee, Chair	2019-2024
Council for Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals, NC Committee Co-Chair	2019-2021
WVU Council for Women's Concerns, Vice Chair	2019-2020
Homecoming and Alumni Service Award Selection Committee, Chair	2018-2024

The University of Georgia

National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL), Scholarship Reviewer	2017
SROW 2017 Conference Planning Committee, Member	2016-2017
SROW 2016 Conference Presentation, Reviewer and Presenter	2016
Academic Enhancement Auxiliary Committee, Advisor	2014-2015
NODA Scholarship and Awards Review Committee, Volunteer	Fall 2014

ACPA Program Review Committee, Volunteer	Fall 2014
UGA Sustainability Auxiliary Committee, Founder and Advisor	2013-2014
UGA Social Justice Auxiliary Committee, Advisor	Spring 2014
UGA Community Service Auxiliary Committee, Advisor	2013-2014

The Pennsylvania State University

PSOM Alumni Interest Group (PSOMAIG), Assistant Treasurer	2023-present
PSOMAIG Fundraising Committee, Chair	2023-present
PSOMAIG Fundraising Committee, Member	2018-2019; 2021-2023
PSOM Alumni Interest Group (PSOMAIG) Board	2018-2019; 2021-present
Greater Morgantown Area Alumni Chapter, Founding Board Member	2019
Greater Morgantown Area Alumni Chapter, President	2020-2021
NACURH Award Selection Committee, Member	2014-2015
Resident Assistant Staff Recognition Committee, Member	2013-2014
CAACURH Regional Conference Planning Committee, Member	2011-2013
LeaderShape Institute	Spring 2012
MACUHO-SSLI Conference Planning Committee, Public Relations Chair	2011-2012

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

United Way Emerging Leaders Steering Committee, Member	2024-present
Sheldon Calvary Camp Board of Directors, Board Member	2024-present
Monongalia County Health and Wellness Commission, Member	2024-present
Monongalia County Board of Parks and Recreation, Commissioner	2023-present
South Park Association of Neighbors, Vice President	2023-2024
Mon County Nonprofit Collaborative, Member	2023-2024
Leadership Monongalia County, Participant	2022-2023

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Insight Into Diversity Award – WVUAA	2024
CASE District II Conference Scholarship	2024
WV Forward Women in the Boardroom Scholarship	2021
“Stop. Act. Respect. Protect.” Research Grant, Funded by the Big XII	2019
West Virginia University Core Values Coin	2019
Knutti Scholarship for Women’s and Gender Studies at West Virginia University	2019
West Virginia University CEHS Scholarship	2017
NODA Outstanding Mentor of the Year Awardee	2017
NODA Region VI, Regional Showcase for Best Presentation Awardee	2017
NODA Region VI, New Professional of the Year Awardee	2017
Fred Fotis Scholarship Award	2011

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE INVOLVEMENT

Conference Planning

Council of Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals (CAMMP)
 University of Maryland at College Park, July 2024
 Board Member
 Member of Conference Planning Committee

Alumni Leaders Institute
 West Virginia University, April 2024
 Event Co-Chair; Presenter

Council of Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals (CAMMP)
 University of Colorado at Boulder, July 2023

Board Member; Ad-Hoc Committee Chair
Member of Conference Planning Committee

Alumni Leaders Institute
West Virginia University, May 2023
Event Co-Chair; Presenter

Council of Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals (CAMMP)
Clemson University, July 2022
Chair of Newcomer Committee
Member of Conference Planning Committee

Council of Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals (CAMMP)
Clemson University, July 2021 (virtual)
Co-Chair of Newcomer Committee
Member of Conference Planning Committee

Alumni Leaders Institute
West Virginia University, June 2021 (virtual)
Event Coordinator; Presenter

Council of Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals (CAMMP)
Clemson University, July 2020 (virtual)
Co-Chair of Newcomer Committee
Member of Conference Planning Committee

Alumni Leaders Institute
West Virginia University, May 2020 (virtual)
Event Co-Coordinator; Presenter

Council of Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals (CAMMP)
University of Texas at Austin, July 2019
Conference Committee

Alumni Leaders Institute
West Virginia University, May 2019
Event Coordinator; Presenter

Alumni Leaders Institute
West Virginia University, May 2018
Event Coordinator; Presenter

Central Atlantic Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls (CAACURH)
CAACURH Regional Conference, hosted by the Pennsylvania State University, November 2013
Conference Planning Committee: Hospitality and Logistics

Central Atlantic Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls (CAACURH)
CAACURH Regional Conference, hosted by Rutgers University, November 2012
Bid Execution and Planning Committee, Hospitality and Education

Mid-Atlantic Association of College and University Housing Officers (MACUHO)
Student Staff Live-In (SSLI) Conference, hosted by the Pennsylvania State University, November 2011
Conference Planning Committee: Public Relations, Hospitality, and Campus Tours

Conference Presentation

Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA)
2017 Annual Conference in Louisville, KY

Conference Presenter

Southern Regional Orientation Workshop (SROW)
2017 Region VI Regional Conference
Hosted by Georgia Southern University
Conference Presenter; Regional Showcase Awardee

Southern Regional Orientation Workshop (SROW)
2016 Region VI Regional Conference
Hosted by Eastern Carolina University
Conference Presenter

Central Atlantic Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls (CAACURH)
CAACURH Regional No Frills Conference, 2012
Conference Presenter; Top Presentation Awardee

Central Atlantic Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls (CAACURH)
CAACURH Regional Conference, 2011
Conference Presenter

Conference Attendance

2024 CASE District II Conference | Baltimore, MD
2021 Social Justice Summit II: Connecting Lived Experience to Action | WVU Faculty Senate
2021 Black Alumni Collective Leadership Retreat | American University
2020 Summit on Race Matters in West Virginia | Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
2018 Council of Alumni Marketing and Membership Professionals (CAMMP) | Oklahoma State University
2017 NODA Annual Conference | Louisville, KY
2016 NODA Annual Conference | Indianapolis, IN
2014 NODA Annual Conference | Orlando, FL

COMMUNITY SERVICE

United Way	2024-present
Sheldon Calvary Camp	2017-present
South Park Neighborhood Assoc. and City of Morgantown	2022-2023
Mon River Trail Conservancy	2023
Morgantown Area Partnership	2022
Houston Food Bank	2019
Girls on the Run	2019
Central Ohio MetroParks	2018
Athens PB&J	2016
Give Kids the World Orlando	2015