

ACADEMIC ADVISOR SPOTLIGHT

JANIS LEAPHART



Janis Leaphart began her journey at the University of South Carolina back in the 1980’s as a student. She received both her bachelor’s and master’s degree from UofSC. Following her graduation with her M.Ed. in Student Personnel Services, she taught high school for four years in Lexington, SC. It wasn’t long before she returned to UofSC to work as an academic advisor in the College of Nursing.

In 1999 she became the Coordinator of Undergraduate Student Services in the Department of Political Science and has been in that position ever since. “I have been guided primarily by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and have used this theory to guide my practice of academic advising for over 30 years”, Janis says.



JANIS LEAPHART
Undergraduate Student
Services Coordinator,
Department of Political
Science

“My goal for students is growth toward self-actualization, and I delight in seeing students grow in all ways – academically, intellectually, socially, personally – and strive to contribute to this process in all that I do.”



In her current role, Janis advises over 500 undergraduate students and oversees academic services for over 800 undergraduates in the department’s two majors. Janis encompasses a wealth of university knowledge and an innate ability to build sustainable rapport with her students. Those who know and work with Janis would describe her as someone who was destined to be an advocate for students. “Janis is a wonderful partner to work with,” shared Mike Dial, the Associate Director of Academic Advising in the University Advising Center.



“She is an expert in her curriculum, has a deep knowledge of the university, and works tirelessly for students. Janis cares deeply about her students and the colleagues she works with and her care shows through her actions. It has truly been my pleasure to work with her during my time in the University Advising Center.”



Ben Weinstein, a senior Political Science major says,

“With Janis, it’s clear that her main objective is to ensure that every student she oversees achieves success. There have been times over my past four years at Carolina where I have felt overwhelmed or confused, and Janis has always been there to act as a helping hand and direct me towards my academic goals. Whether it be advice with graduation or aiding with general issues that have occurred in my life, I’ve always felt that there has been someone by my side to work me through these problems. This past year, I had a medical issue that deterred my progress towards graduating, but Janis was constantly on the phone with me and working with my professors, helping in any way she could. I can truly credit Janis for my expected graduation, and I could not have asked for a better advisor.”

Janis shares that her student’s accomplishments still give her “goose bumps” and make her very hopeful for the future. Adam Guinn, a graduate from the Department of Political Science and current student in a doctoral program for Nurse Anesthesia returns her sentiment. Adam says,

“My relationship with Mrs. Leaphart started in 2003 when I was a freshman at USC, and she was my academic advisor. At the time, I was not the best student, and I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. Mrs. Leaphart was very encouraging of me despite my lack of concern for my future. Even though I was always scheduling advisement late, getting marginal grades, and generally had a poor attitude towards school, Mrs. Leaphart was always so supportive and let me know that she believed in me.”

He goes onto share that very early on in his academic career at the university, Janis recognized him as a special person with unique talents and someone she knew would do great things with his life. He says,

“I owe a great deal of my success to Mrs. Leaphart, in part because I became the person she believed me to be. I never saw greatness in myself, but I tried to be the person she described in that letter, and I think that has made all the difference. I graduated top of my class in Nursing and when I gave a speech at graduation, looking into the crowd, there was Mrs. Leaphart; with tears in her eyes, and a smile on her face, she was there to support me the way she has for so many years.”

When talking about her students, she can be heard saying, “And it all started with an undergraduate degree in Political Science. Liberal Arts majors can do amazing things!”

We are proud and honored to have someone like Janis be a pillar for student success in the Carolina Community. She puts her all into ensuring students succeed which includes being a readily available advisor, mentor, and educator.

“Sometimes, when I look in the mirror, I don’t recognize the man I have become, but finally, I think I see what Mrs. Leaphart saw in me almost twenty years ago”, Adam shared. I don’t know what the future holds, but I do know that Mrs. Leaphart will always hold a special place in my heart. I am eternally grateful to her for helping me become the man I am today.



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