

# ACADEMIC ADVISOR SPOTLIGHT

## JILLIAN BIGONY



Jillian Bigony was born into the world of musical theatre. As early as she can remember, her mother cocooned her and her brother's world in music. Jillian would later go on to pursue two degrees in musical theatre. Specifically, a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre for the Musical Stage from Carthage College and a Master of Arts in Drama/Theatre for Young in Education from Eastern Michigan University.

After realizing early on in her college career that a career on Broadway was likely not in her future, she chose the next best route. A career devoted to helping impressionable and talented young people find and pursue their own dreams in music and theatre.



**JILLIAN BIGONY**  
Undergraduate  
Academic Advisor II  
School of Music

The moment you meet Jillian, it is made clear she is in a career field that was perfectly suited for her. The passion, enthusiasm and joy that exudes from her whenever she talks about her students is infectious and inspirational.

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The School of Music is truly fortunate to have Jillian Carey as our academic advisor. With a background in theater, Jillian empathizes with the unique challenges students in the arts encounter, which helps her establish good relationships with her advisees. Jillian is well-versed in our complex degree plans and navigates our students through their programs with ease. She is truly student centered in all she does and shows a genuine concern for the overall wellbeing of her advisees. Jillian has a passion for academic advising, and finds ways to contribute to the profession, including a recent presentation at the recent NACADA national conference.”

**-TINA STALLARD**

Associate Dean and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the School of Music

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Jillian has been the one full-time Academic Advisor in the School of Music since May of 2016. “Jillian was one of the initial First-Year Advisors hired by the University Advising Center and I still remember how her pure excitement lit up the room,” says Sara McConville, Coordinator for Training and Outreach in the University Advising Center.

**“That’s the thing about Jillian. There is just something about her. Something that resides within her...that has been so clearly instilled in her from a young age...that you notice right away.”**

In the School of Music, Jillian provides individual advising to a caseload of approximately 300 students. In addition to this and many other duties, she singlehandedly creates and implements the school’s 60+ orientation sessions each year.

Gabriel McWethy, a freshman majoring in music with a concentration in Music Education says of Jillian, “Ms. Bigony has been incredibly kind and helpful to me as an incoming freshman, and she is 100% one of the reasons my transition from high school to college has been so smooth. We had a great advising appointment during my Orientation, and since then she has been very responsive to all of the many questions I have thrown her way. She has also followed up throughout the semester to see how things are going. My next advising appointment with her is in a few weeks, and I genuinely look forward to the opportunity to talk with her about my academics and receive some of her guidance and feedback. Ms. Bigony is a great advisor for the School of Music.”

During her time at UofSC, Jillian has been nominated for both the Ada B. Thomas Outstanding Advisor award and for the NACADA Outstanding Advising in a Primary Role award. She also recently presented at the National NACADA conference to a standing-room only audience on understanding how social and cultural capital impact student success.

Howard Thurman says, “Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go to that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” Jillian found it. And now she’s helping her students do the same.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO NOMINATE AN ACADEMIC ADVISOR FOR A SPOTLIGHT?

SUBMIT YOUR  
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**Academic Advising**  
University of South Carolina

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