“Her strengths as an advisor root from her advising philosophy to help create autonomous adults. Setting the expectation from the onset of advising helps to ensure that after two years students can function on their own. At times this does mean more effort and more communications to get students information, but it is important that they understand how to navigate these things on their own. This is tough balance, but Sam does this with ease.” This is how Sarah Jusciewicz, the Director of Advising in the College of Engineering, describes Sam Sawyer.

Originally from Wilkes, North Carolina Sam received her BS in Psychology from Appalachian State University in May of 2016. She says, “When I was earning my bachelor’s in psychology, I planned to pursue a career in marriage and family therapy. My interest in advising came from my relationship with my undergraduate advisor, who was also the director of the scholarship program I was in. The program was for low-income first-generation North Carolina students. We kept the same advisor for 4 years, so she became somewhat of a mentor to me as well. During my senior year when I was applying to graduate programs, I had a little epiphany that her job was something I could actually get a degree for and something that I really wanted to do. That’s how I ended up in UofSC’s HESA program and then eventually in advising.”

During her last year at App. State, she worked as a Career Exploration Guide where she counseled undergraduate students across all class years and disciplines on majors and career options. This experience led her to job at Midlands Technical College where she became a New Student Advisor in the Office of New Student Advisement and Orientation Services. Her next steppingstone to her career in advising was her role as a GA for LGBT programs at UofSC and she says that role really solidified her desire to become an academic advisor.

“I spent two years working with a group of undergraduate peer leaders, building individual relationships with them, and helping them grow into better students and leaders”, shares Sam. “Advising gives me a similar opportunity.”

“Beyond the academic expectations, Sam is passionate about a holistic approach to her advisement”, says Sarah Jusciewicz. She checks in with her students to help be an early identifier of stress or mental health concerns. Students leave her office knowing that someone cares about them! If you mention a name from Sam’s caseload she will tell you their story, not their data points.”