Graduate Advisors

Graduate Advisors help undergraduate students at UNC in their pre-grad school journey. They are all current graduate students who have successfully been through the graduate school application process. Advisors are able to meet to discuss not only the application process timeline, but also how to research graduate programs, network, understand funding options, prepare for entrance exams, and discuss possible options during a gap year(s). Our advisors can also assist with mock admission interviews and personal statements. You can schedule either a 30-minute or 60-minute graduate school preparation appointment via [Handshake](https://careers.unc.edu)! 

Scroll the page to read each advisor’s bio!

Jillian Battista

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: PhD in Behavioral and Integrative Neuroscience
- **Other degrees earned**: B.S. in Biobehavioral Health from Penn State University
- **Hometown**: Philadelphia, PA
- **Career Goals**: I aspire to advance science translation, understanding, and communication of work surrounding how human behavior can affect the brain and vice versa.
- **Appointments**: Mondays 4pm-5pm
- **Favorite Carolina Moment**: Moving to town in the summer of 2020 and finally attending my first in-person class in the fall of 2021!

**Eric Brown Jr.**

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: PhD in Environmental Sciences and Engineering with a minor in Biostatistics
- **Other degrees earned**: BA, English and Comparative Literature, Creative Writing, UNC-CH and BA, Chemistry, UNC-CH
- **Hometown**: Winston Salem, NC
- **Career Goals**: One career goal is to increase the minority STEM admission and retention within undergraduate and graduate programs. Currently, my career goals are to be an adjunct professor and work within the private/government sector. To engage community stakeholders with research to diminish health disparities.
- **Appointments**: Wednesdays 2-3pm
- **Favorite Carolina Moment**: Writing a Poetry book as a part of the Creative Writing Thesis Program and performing a reading in front of friends and family.

**Lauren Caton**

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: PhD in Maternal & Child Health (Gillings SPH)
- **Other degrees earned**: MPH in Maternal & Child Health, BS in Nutritional Sciences & Toxicology
• **Hometown**: Houston, TX  
• **Career Goals**: Professor in academia at a tier-one research school (preferably public!)  
• **Appointments**: Thursdays 11am-12pm  
• **Favorite Carolina Moment**: Professor drove by and saw me on my patio, dropped off some strawberries from her garden!! (Overall, love the small-town community vibes)!

**Della Huanyu Cong**

• **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: Ed.D. of Curriculum and Instruction in School of Education  
• **Other degrees earned**: Master of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages; Bachelor of Arts & Bachelor of Laws  
• **Hometown**: Weihai, Shandong, China  
• **Career Goals**: Instructional Designer in Higher Education  
• **Appointments**: Mondays 10am-11am  
• **Favorite Carolina Moment**: Enjoying football games and pre-game activities.

**Mikayla Feldbauer**
- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: Bioinformatics & Computational Biology PhD with a Biophysics certificate
- **Other degrees earned**: BS in Interdisciplinary Science
- **Hometown**: St. Marys, PA
- **Career Goals**: academic administration or science communication
- **Appointments**: Tuesdays 3-4pm
- **Favorite Carolina Moment**: Participating in the in-person BBSP scavenger hunt last summer

Helena Garcia

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: PhD in Environment, Ecology and Energy (E3P)
- **Other degrees earned**: Bachelor of Civil Engineering, Master of Science in Environment and Sustainability
- **Hometown**: Ardsley, NY
- **Career Goals**: Collaborating with natural scientists, engineers, planners, and communities to promote and understand more equitable climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. I am particularly interested in research around the socio-economic impacts of flooding and other natural hazards.
- **Appointments**: Thursdays 5-6pm
- **Favorite Carolina Moment**: When the leaves began to change on campus in the
Hannah Hall

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: PhD in Pathobiology and Translational Science in the School of Medicine
- **Other degrees earned**: Bachelor of Science in Biology from Trinity University
- **Hometown**: Galveston, TX
- **Career Goals**: Work in the field of biotechnology and/or clinical research
- **Appointments**: Thursdays 4-5pm
- **Favorite Carolina Moment**: Election day 2020 when everyone flooded Franklin for an impromptu parade!

Kellen Kane

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: Ph.D. in Public Policy
- **Other degrees earned**: Master of Public Administration (MPA), B.S. in Cell & Molecular Biology
- **Hometown**: Sunbury, PA
• **Career Goals**: University Professor  
• **Appointments**: Mondays 11am-12pm  
• **Favorite Carolina Moment**: Cheering on women’s LAX as they reached the NCAA semi-finals

Liz Kwong

• **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: PhD, Health Informatics  
• **Other degrees earned**: BS, Biological Sciences (Cell, Molecular, Genetics, Biochemistry)  
• **Hometown**: Holmdel, NJ / Philadelphia, PA  
• **Career Goals**: improve quality of care and patient safety, become a thought leader in health informatics, conduct work and research that inspires me and others  
• **Appointments**: Tuesdays 12-1pm (flexible)  
• **Favorite Carolina Moment**: finding a research group and work I feel passionately about at UNC

Alexis Longmire

• **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: PhD in Ecology
• **Other degrees earned**: Bachelor of Science, double majored in marine science and biology
• **Hometown**: Knoxville, TN
• **Career Goals**: Enter academia as a professor and run my own research lab
• **Appointments**: Wednesdays 5-6 pm
• **Favorite Carolina Moment**: Finishing my semester of graduate school.

**Brennan Mange**

- Degree & Major Currently Pursuing: PhD in Public Policy
- Other degrees earned: BA in Economics and Political Science
- Hometown: Portage, MI
- Career Goals: Higher Education Policy Researcher
- Appointments: Tuesdays 2-3pm
- Favorite Carolina Moment: Seeing all the creative ways the campus community came together in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic

**Micah Nelson**
Mary Oppegaard

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing:** PhD Sociology
- **Other degrees earned:** MA Sociology
- **Hometown:** New York City
- **Career Goals:** To research and teach
- **Appointments:** Wednesdays 3pm-4pm
- **Favorite Carolina Moment:** Discovering Coker Arboretum for the first time, right nearby my office on campus

Sarah Parker

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing:** Master’s in Social Work (MSW)
- **Other degrees earned:** BA in Psychology
- **Hometown:** Greensboro, NC
- **Career Goals:** Obtain licensure and become a mental health counselor
- **Appointments:** Thursdays 7-8pm
- **Favorite Carolina Moment:** Getting a 100 on my very first graduate level assignment. This helped fight my imposter syndrome and made me realize I’m more than capable of succeeding in graduate school

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing:** PhD in Bioinformatics & Computational
Biology

- **Other degrees earned**: B.S. in Biology, minor in Computer Science
- **Hometown**: Edmond, Oklahoma, USA
- **Career Goals**: I am interested in pairing scientific research with education and outreach, either by becoming a professor, continuing work with a non-profit, developing my own program to engage students and the local community in the wonder of science, or a combination of these. My true passion lies in aiding others, both directly through volunteering in the community, mentoring, and teaching, and through my scientific work to increase the efficiency of biological data analysis and contribute novel computational tools to the field that can enable and facilitate the work of other scientists.
- **Appointments**: Mondays 5pm-6pm
- **Favorite Carolina Moment**: I recently joined the racquetball club on campus with some of my labmates!

**Audrey Pereira**

- **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing**: PhD in Public Policy
- **Other degrees earned**: MS in Public Health; BA in Economics & French
- **Hometown**: Redwood City, CA
- **Career Goals**: Academia/policy research
- **Appointments**: Wednesdays 12-1PM

**Thomas Persico**
• **Degree & Major Currently Pursuing:** MPA, Master of Public Administration
• **Other degrees earned:** BA, JD, LLM (In Progress)
• **Hometown:** Manalapan
• **Career Goals:** I want to become an instructor/professor in international/military policy one day.
• **Appointments:** Mondays and Thursdays 6-7pm
• **Favorite Carolina Moment:** My favorite Carolina moment centers on all the friends I have made in my classes and extracurricular activities I have participated in since beginning my degree.

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**Links**
[1] https://careers.unc.edu/students/resources/schedule-appointment