

NOMINATION SIGNATURE PAGE

2022 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

Please include this as the cover page of the nomination package PDF submission*

Name of Applicant:	Leah M. Adams
Institution:	George Mason University
Category (choose only one): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baccalaureate Institution• Masters/Comprehensive Institution• Research/Doctoral Institution• Two-Year Institution• Rising Star	Rising Star
Signature of President or Chief Academic Officer:	
Printed Name of President or Chief Academic Officer:	Mark R. Ginsberg
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Excerpts from Mission Statement

A public, comprehensive research university established by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the National Capital Region, we are an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world.

The Mason IDEA: our core institutional characteristics

- **Innovative** = We do not cling to old ways just because they have worked in the past. We honor time-tested academic principles, while we strive to create new forms of education that serve our students better and new paths of research that can help us discover solutions to the world's greatest challenges.
- **Diverse** = We bring together a multitude of people and ideas in everything that we do. Our culture of inclusion, our multidisciplinary approach, and our global perspective make us more effective educators and scholars.
- **Entrepreneurial** = We take ideas into action. We educate students to become agents of positive change; to do or create jobs; to create value through government or business, public or private organizations, academia or the arts. We pursue discoveries that can make a difference in the world. We help our community thrive culturally, socially, and economically.
- **Accessible** = We are an open and welcoming community. We partner with public and private organizations in our region and around the world. We proactively engage with our community. We define our success by how many talented students with potential we serve, not how many we leave out.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Professor Leah Adams is a clinical psychologist and Assistant Professor in Psychology and the Women & Gender Studies Program at George Mason University. Professor Adams is a recognized leader in health disparities research, with emphases on mental health and HIV. Her work has appeared in leading journals in psychology and public health. In her short time at Mason, Professor Adams has built multidisciplinary curricula and exposed numerous students to multidisciplinary research that addresses health disparities, playing a critical role in Mason's mission to develop engaged, well-rounded scholars who are prepared to act. While serving as an exceptional instructor and mentor to all students, Professor Adams is particularly dedicated to supporting students of color at Mason and throughout the Commonwealth. Professor Adams is a true product of Virginia, having attended elementary through graduate school in-state, and is dedicated to shaping and serving the next generations of Virginia scholars.

TEACHING

Professor Adams is a dedicated teacher who offers highly sought-after courses that are cross-listed in multiple departments, including psychology, women & gender studies, sociology, global & community health, African & African-American studies, and interdisciplinary studies. Professor Adams teaches courses that span a variety of topics ranging from advanced statistics to neuroanatomy for graduate students to undergraduate courses on mental illness and seminars on social and structural influences on health. Since beginning at Mason in 2016, Professor Adams has taught over 350 students in seven different courses, four of which she developed. Professor Adams' strong teaching evaluations reflect her unique ability to meet the needs of this diverse set of students, with an average *Overall Evaluation of Teaching* score of 4.98 out of 5 across all semesters.

Professor Adams' teaching centers hands-on and practical applications of the course content. In her undergraduate courses, Professor Adams invites students to grapple with the real-life implications of course material by partnering with local organizations that address them. For example, in her *Gender, Culture, and Health in the U.S.* course, students evaluate a local organization's ability to meet the needs of a marginalized social group (e.g., does this advocacy organization address the unique needs of LGBTQIA+ people?) and offer recommendations. Through this assignment, several of Professor Adams' former students have created internships opportunities with these organizations, including with "Doorways for Women and Families," an Arlington-based nonprofit that supports survivors of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness. Professor Adams' graduate courses are similarly structured to propel students forward in their professional careers. Several graduate students have published and/or presented at national conferences (e.g., APA; Association for Psychological Science) on research ideas developed in her courses.

As a Black scholar, Professor Adams is particularly committed to mentoring students of color throughout the university. Across the 31 student committees (e.g., thesis, dissertation, undergraduate honors) she has served on at Mason, 14 have been for students of color. The impact of Professor Adams' teaching on students' professional development is captured by a former doctoral student who shared: *"I had the opportunity to take her Black Psychology course... one of the most impactful and educational courses I took at Mason. The course... created a haven for me and other students to learn about the black experience within the U.S. through the lens of black scholars and culturally representative theoretical frameworks. Dr. Adams' skillful lecture style and facilitation of thought-provoking and reflective discussions created an environment that exposed students to research-based content while simultaneously strengthening the STEM pipeline [for students of color]. Dr. Adams revolutionized the way I see and do research and the way I teach my courses."*

Outside of the classroom, Professor Adams is an active mentor to students at all levels. While most of her mentees are still enrolled at Mason, her former master's student is completing her doctoral degree in sociology at Virginia Tech and a former undergraduate research mentee was recently admitted directly from Mason into Vermont's highly selective (4% acceptance rate) clinical psychology doctoral program. Professor Adams' well-rounded graduate trainees have published their research in high-impact journals (e.g., *American Journal of Public Health*), won awards for their scholarship (e.g., American Psychological Association [APA] Division 22 Outstanding Trainee Research) and teaching (e.g., Mason Psychology Department Outstanding TA Award), provided excellent, free psychological care for Virginia first-responders and veterans (e.g., Mason Essential Workers Emotional Support Line practitioners), and have secured prestigious internships in mental health advocacy (e.g., APA Health Equity Ambassadors Program). Professor Adams has been instrumental in introducing undergraduates to the research process, as three of her five undergraduate research assistants joined her lab after being enrolled in one of her courses.

DISCOVERY

Professor Adams is a national leader and innovator in the field of clinical psychology with her work on the psychosocial impacts of chronic health conditions. Professor Adams' research covers several health problems (e.g., mental health, HIV, chronic pain) and emphasizes marginalized communities within each. In just 10 years, she has published 34 articles in top psychology and public health journals, including *Clinical Psychological Science*, *American Journal of Public Health*, and *AIDS & Behavior*, and 3 book chapters. Her work has been cited over 1400 times and she has received nearly \$200,000 in competitive grant funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse in addition to serving as a content expert and consultant on projects totaling over \$3 million in grant funding. Her collaborators cross multiple fields, including epidemiology, medicine, and social work, allowing Professor Adams to conduct high impact work that spans basic research, treatment intervention, and broad implementation and dissemination. An abbreviated selection of two of her areas of research are included below.

Reducing Mental Health Disparities Among Marginalized/Minoritized People

Members of minority groups (e.g., racial/ethnic, sexual orientation) are often at increased risk for poor mental health in the United States due to historical and systemic factors, such as discrimination. In Virginia, systematic differences in access to mental health care and treatment outcomes persist between members of minority and majority groups. This long-standing problem has been further reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic and brought to the surface following the public "racial reckoning" that took place in Virginia and nationally in 2020. Professor Adams has a long history of publishing empirical work on mental health disparities. Recently, she has leveraged this work by:

- Publishing a comprehensive literature review and providing recommendations in *Clinical Psychological Science*, a leading journal in the field, on how to improve research and clinical care for members of minoritized groups with mental illness; this article was downloaded over 200 times in its first month available
- Using Virginia Medicaid enrollee data to analyze how COVID-19-driven authorization of telehealth services may improve equity in mental health care (forthcoming)
- Developing and implementing recommendations to improve reporting on race-based psychiatric health disparities in research for *Psychiatric Services* of the American Psychiatric Association

Reducing the Impact of HIV/AIDS in the 21st Century

Despite significant advances in treatment and prevention, over 30,000 people are still diagnosed with HIV annually in the U.S. HIV diagnoses disproportionately affect people at the margins (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities, people in poverty, sexual minorities), and this pattern of

diagnoses is also true in Virginia. Further, HIV remains an expensive condition to treat, and marginalized people often face barriers to treatment once diagnosed, leading to disparities in HIV outcomes. Professor Adams' research in this domain has had the following impact:

- Research on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention, published in *AIDS Care*, was translated to a community outreach campaign still in use at the University of San Francisco Division of Prevention Science
- Scholarship on untangling overlapping symptoms of depression and HIV infection (e.g., appetite problems) led to the validation of a screening tool used in HIV clinics to better identify depression symptoms among women living with HIV
- Partnership (2015, 2017) established with the American Academy of HIV Medicine (AAHIVM) to examine PrEP prescribing behaviors of front-line medical providers led to recommendations published in the AAHIVM magazine for specialists to support increased, equitable uptake of PrEP, in addition to standard peer-reviewed journal article
- Developed a mathematics-based algorithm to translate the frequency and relative HIV transmission risk of specific sexual- and drug-acts from standard screening tools into a percentage that represents HIV infection cumulative risk; this algorithm has been published in top journals (*AIDS & Behavior*) and used in several NIDA-funded longitudinal studies of former/current incarcerated people's HIV risk

KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

Professor Adams' work is guided by the belief that the fundamental goal of both scientific inquiry and education should be to improve the lives of the public. She works toward this goal by engaging in collaborations with researchers and practitioners across fields to produce work that has tangible positive impact. As an example, Professor Adams is an active member of a national, multisite, multidisciplinary research collaborative, the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Model Systems, which emphasizes the production of translational research that will improve the lives of people living with TBI. Professor Adams' research and clinical experiences are integrated; her line of research on positive adaptation after TBI and other chronic illnesses emerged from her clinical experiences working on multidisciplinary treatment teams. Renee Madathil, a clinical neuropsychologist at the University of Rochester Medical Center, notes that ***"she makes it a point to expand the boundaries of traditional, siloed approaches to research and care, elevating vital health psychology perspectives to those who need them most and ultimately maximizing public good."***

At Mason, Professor Adams capitalizes on her joint appointment in psychology and women & gender studies by creating opportunities for students to engage in study that transcends disciplinary boundaries. Professor Adams co-developed the undergraduate concentration in gender-based violence (GBV) studies, which requires students to take courses across multiple fields and to engage in an applied capstone project by conducting research or volunteering with organizations that serve survivors of GBV. Elements of this curriculum have been applied to other universities' programs, including at the University of Delaware. Initial work to develop this concentration led to the creation of a lasting collaboration between Mason faculty who teach and conduct research on GBV and community partners who work in organizations that serve survivors of GBV. The GBV studies concentration is one of the first of its kind among east coast universities and had its inaugural class declare the concentration this fall. Professor Adams was also integral in developing and staffing the undergraduate minor in LGBTQ studies at Mason, one of the first in the Commonwealth.

The real-world relevance and impact of Professor Adams' scholarship is evidenced by her frequent invitations to share her work outside of the traditional confines of academia. She has appeared on television (e.g., PBS Affiliate), on podcasts (e.g., Black 'N Brown Crowns) and in

print (e.g., Group Health Cooperative Health Equity Blog) to discuss her research with the public, and was recently invited to begin a monthly *Psychology Today* column for psychologists and the general public on drivers of mental health disparities.

SERVICE

Professor Adams goes above and beyond in volunteering her time and expertise professionally, nationally, within the Commonwealth, and at Mason. Her high-impact work has led to an invitation to serve on the editorial board of *Behavioral Medicine*, a well-regarded multidisciplinary journal focused on the translation of knowledge to enhance health policy and health equity. Professor Adams also serves as one of two psychologists invited to join the editor's advisory group on structural racism for the American Psychiatric Association's flagship journal on the provision of psychiatric care, *Psychiatric Services*. In this role, Professor Adams is leading structural improvements in the review and publication of research on race-based psychiatric health disparities, which will serve as a blueprint for other journals within the association.

At the disciplinary level, Professor Adams takes an active role in shaping the scholarship of her field's professional organization, Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology) of APA, which focuses on maximizing health, independence, and social participation among people living with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Professor Adams routinely organizes proposals for the convention, mentors students, and is in her second term as the division's Science Chair. As an early career professional, Professor Adams advocates for the needs of fellow early career psychologists. Following her two-term appointment as chair of the Division 22 Early Career Psychologists Special Interest Group, she was elected and currently serves as Early Career Representative on the division's Executive Committee.

In the Commonwealth, Professor Adams' service centers the needs of Virginians facing substantial hardship. She volunteers as an on-call clinical supervisor for Mason's Essential Workers Emotional Support Line, a live hotline staffed by trained clinical psychology graduate students that provides free, tiered support for Virginia's essential workers in the COVID-19 pandemic. The hotline has been in operation since October 2020 and has provided psychological care to over 125 Virginia teachers, grocery store employees, medical professionals, and other front-line employees struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, and grief during the pandemic. Beyond Mason, Professor Adams also provides formal and informal mentorship for students at several other Virginia institutions (e.g., Virginia Tech, VCU).

At Mason, Professor Adams' service is integral to the university's goal of inclusive excellence. Professor Adams co-developed and co-leads an annual training for clinical psychology doctoral students on diversity-related issues in teaching, research, and clinical work. She also serves on the psychology department's diversity, equity, and inclusion committee where she led the development of the climate survey to inform actionable departmental steps to support the university's inclusive mission. Noting that Black graduate students are often marginalized within their academic programs, Professor Adams is the charter faculty sponsor for the Black Graduate Student Association, a group of 76 students. Professor Adams has been a vocal advocate for increasing the representation of underrepresented faculty on each of the four faculty search committees she has served on, including a cluster hire across three academic units; these four searches have yielded three new faculty members who identify as racial minorities and/or first-generation scholars. Given her expertise and strong history of collaboration with physicians and other medical personnel, Professor Adams was appointed by the Provost to the university's Liaison Committee on Medical Education to help develop a plan for a potential Mason medical school that would be responsive to the unique psychosocial needs of underrepresented medical students.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

“So when are you leaving Washington state and coming home?,” my Granny asks. “Can’t you do your research here?” I stifle a chuckle at her understanding of my work. As the first person in my family to enter the academy, no less get a college degree, I’m used to my family being puzzled about what I do. “I just think,” she continues, “that you should come back to Virginia and *water the garden that you grew from*.” This wasn’t the first time I heard this phrase. Granny said this to me throughout my life. But this time it stopped me in my tracks. She was right and, as always, she knew it. I knew it too. But I didn’t tell her in that moment. And I’ll never get to see the pride in her face when I did return to my water my garden as a professor at my alma mater, George Mason University.

The next time I saw Granny was at her funeral.

“Watering the garden that you grew from” is not just a pithy saying from my loving grandmother. It is a testament to my values and family history. My grandparents, who lived in North Brentwood, Maryland, were actively involved in the community throughout their lives; community was in their blood. Although I never got to meet him, my Pappy was the town treasurer, the church deacon, a member of the civic association and NAACP, and a Boy Scout leader. Granny was a community activist and city council member who lobbied for educational resources for the neighborhood youth, and she joined Pappy at First Baptist Church as church deaconess. They instilled these values in their children too. Fighting for equitable education, my father and my uncle “Carlty” were among the first Black students to integrate North Brentwood junior high school, and my aunt “Sonny” broke the race barrier on her high school pom-pom cheer squad.

I always knew that I would be expected to give back to my community, but no one imagined that it would be through my work as a clinical psychologist or a professor. My family expected me to be an investigative journalist because I was curious and asked so many questions. Truthfully, I didn’t envision this path for myself either. Mental health was not a topic of conversation in my family, though my loved ones’ challenges with it were palpable. Granny never overcame the grief of suddenly and unexpectedly losing Pappy in his forties. Carlty, who volunteered in support of veterans struggling to reintegrate into their communities after the Vietnam war, was never able to talk about his own deployments. And it was my parents’ mental health challenges that led to me being raised by my aunt in Virginia instead of Maryland.

My family may not have a complete picture of my profession, but the values they instilled in me run through every aspect of my work. I still get to ask a lot of questions, but now my questions serve more than curiosity. My questions seek to improve others’ lives. My research focuses on how psychological factors interact to affect people’s health experiences and health behaviors. My work encompasses many different health experiences (e.g., mental health, chronic pain, HIV/AIDS, traumatic brain injury), but always aims to place people in context. I examine how a person’s available resources, experiences, attitudes, relationships, and environments can work together to support or inhibit health. I search for modifiable factors to improve health, and in this work, I often focus on people who face extreme hardships and marginalization, using my voice to highlight community resilience and spotlight inequities.

My research is not abstract; it flows from real-world challenges I have seen and experienced at home, among other Virginians, and elsewhere. As a psychologist, I work with people who make tough decisions about how to juggle their own mental and physical health needs with the needs of their families. During my three years in Seattle, I worked in a trauma hospital where I witnessed the differences in quality of life and health outcomes between my patients who had access to financial resources and social support and those who did not. In my life, I have seen

the difference in my father's motivation to adhere to his doctor's recommendations when he had a good relationship with his providers versus when he felt ignored and demeaned. And I know the positive impact that having a supportive environment had on my own health and wellbeing when my father unexpectedly died in March 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further laid bare the real-world implications of my research. The country is still grappling with the long-term health impacts of ongoing racial and ethnic disparities, health-related misinformation, and the challenge of balancing our emotional and social needs while protecting our physical health. Echoing my Granny's reminder to "water the garden that you grew from," the pandemic has also encouraged us to move beyond ourselves to support our families and broader communities in this time. I feel this reminder daily as my husband and I juggle our full-time jobs along with our roles as caregivers for my mother-in-law who has Alzheimer's disease and lives with us. I know that we are not alone in this experience.

In this moment, we are all living through a challenging reality. Instead of running away from that reality in my classroom, I run toward it. In my teaching and mentorship, I do not shy away from the complexities of the world. Whether I'm teaching a statistics course or a health disparities course, I do not gloss over nuance. I can't because my teaching philosophy demands that I prepare my students for the world that they will face when they leave our university. My personal values demand that I document and confront the messy aspects of the most pressing societal issues facing us, and I work to create an environment in which my students can sit with the weight of these problems without being crushed by it. Regardless of their major or planned career path, my goal is to help my students identify where they can insert their time, their skills, and their passion to reduce the weight of these societal problems.

I am lucky to have had excellent models for doing this work. Moving to Virginia with my aunt, away from my parents and my Granny who still lived in Maryland, was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. But moving to Virginia changed the course of my life for the better, particularly in my education. At every step in my education, I have had Virginia instructors advocate for and motivate me to achieve and find my passion. Mrs. Lincoln, my first Virginia educator and my fourth-grade teacher, noticed my passion for learning and lobbied to have me placed in the accelerated program, even though I did not have the supporting documentation to do so. My high school psychology teacher, Mr. Grove, sparked my interest in the field through his dynamic teaching. In college at the University of Richmond, Dr. Leviness introduced me to the clinical specialty within psychology and Dr. Churchill, the first Black psychologist I ever met, encouraged me to enter the field. I stayed in Virginia for my doctoral training in clinical psychology and attended George Mason University where I further developed and defined my research and clinical interests through close, supportive mentorship and training from the entire program's faculty.

I am so grateful for the time and dedication that so many Virginia educators have poured into me. These teachers have helped shape the person that I am today by teaching me how to use my talents and skills to create a professional space for myself and for positive change. And now I get to do the same for others. I am proud to be "watering the garden" in Virginia, generally, and at George Mason University, specifically, in the place I learned so much and alongside the people who have freely shared their gifts with me. I am thankful for the chance to honor my family's legacy by doing work that supports the betterment of my community, and I look forward to continuing to make an impact directly and indirectly through my influence on future generations.

ABBREVIATED CURRICULUM VITAE

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor (joint appointment) 2016 – Present
 George Mason University, Department of Psychology (clinical program)
 George Mason University, Women & Gender Studies Program

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

Licensed clinical psychologist 2016 – Present

SELECTED RESEARCH FUNDING

- **GMU/CHSS Faculty Research & Development Award; 2021 – present; \$9,761; PI (GMU)**
 Title: Chronic pain self-management among women living with HIV: The missing role of stigma
- **Virginia Tech CALS Strategic Plan Advancement Grant; 2021 – present; Collaborator with S. Misyak (PI) (Virginia Tech)**
 Title: Food security and mental health among low-income mothers
- **NIH/NIDA (DA038128-03S1); 2017 – 2018; \$85,091; Faculty-level investigator (GMU)**
 Title: Borderline personality and inmates' post-release substance abuse and HIV risk behavior
- **NIH/NIDA (F31-DA029393); 2010 – 2013; \$84,828; PI (GMU)**
 Title: HIV risk behavior in recently released jail inmates: The roles of perceived risk, community connectedness, and community disorder

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (total publications = 34)

*denotes student-author; ^denotes equal contribution

- *Hunt, A.D., & **Adams, L.M.** (in press). Health care access alone falling short of health care equity. *Psychiatric Services*.
- ^**Adams, L.M.**, & ^Miller, A.B. (in press). Mechanisms of mental-health disparities among minoritized groups: How well are the top journals in clinical psychology representing this work? *Clinical Psychological Science*.
- *Hunt, A.D., & **Adams, L.M.** (in press). Perception of unmet need after seeking treatment for a past year major depressive episode: Results from the 2018 National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). *Psychiatric Quarterly*.
- Cuellar, A.E., **Adams, L.M.**, de Jonge, L.,...Cheskin, L.J. (2021). Protocol for *Mason: Health Starts Here* prospective cohort study of young adult college students. *BMC Public Health*, 21, 897.
- **Adams, L.M.**, Gell, N.M., *Hoffman, E.V., Gibbons, L.E., Phelan, E.A., Sturgeon, J.A., & Turk, D.C. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 'Stay Home, Stay Health' orders on function among older adults participating in a community-based, behavioral intervention study. *Journal of Aging & Health*, 33(7-8), 458 – 468.
- *Defayette, A.B., **Adams, L.M.**, *Whitmyre, E.D., *Williams, C.A., & Esposito-Smythers, C. (2020). Characteristics of a first suicide attempt that distinguish between adolescents who make single versus multiple attempts. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 24(3), 327 – 341.
- **Adams, L.M.**, Wilson, T.E., Merenstein, D., Milam, J., Cohen, J., Golub, E.T.,...& Cook, J.A. (2018). Using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale to assess depression in women with HIV and women at risk for HIV: Are somatic items invariant? *Psychological Assessment*, 30(1), 97-105.
- **Adams, L.M.**, & Balderson, B. (2016). HIV providers' likelihood to prescribe Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention differs by patient type: A short report. *AIDS Care*, 28(9), 1154-1158.

- **Adams, L.M.**, Kendall, S.J., Smith, A.C., Quigley, E.M., Stuewig, J., & Tangney, J.P. (2013). Changes in HIV risk behaviors prior to incarceration and post-release in a sample of male and female jail inmates. *AIDS and Behavior*, 17, 2685-2694.

SELECTED INVITED TALKS, TRAINING, & MEDIA

- *Effects of COVID isolation on older Americans*. KBTC-TV (PBS) television interview; Tacoma, WA, 2021.
- *Adverse childhood experiences and their impact on nutrition*. Invited training given for Virginia Family Nutrition Program Professional Development series; Blacksburg, VA, 2021.
- *Stigma, HIV, and the Southern United States*. Invited talk for GMU Social Action and Integrative Learning (SAIL) Alternative Break; Fairfax, VA, 2021.
- *Before COVID-19: HIV/AIDS*. Invited talk for GMU World AIDS Day; Fairfax, VA, 2021.
- *Conducting research in the medical setting*. Training for physical medicine & rehabilitation department resident physicians; Rochester, NY, 2020.
- *Key considerations in psychoeducational assessment for minority groups*. Invited talk given to professional staff (attorneys, social workers, advocates) at the Children's Law Center; Washington, DC, 2019.

SELECTED TEACHING AT GMU

1. *Advanced statistics & research methods* (Graduate; F2016, F2018, F2020); 2. *Gender, culture & health in the US* (Undergraduate & Graduate – S2017, F2018; Undergraduate only – S2020; F2021); 3. *Neurobiological bases of behavior & fundamentals of clinical neuropsychology* (Graduate; F2017); 4. *Black psychology* (Undergraduate & Graduate; S2018, F2020); 5. *Abnormal psychology* (Undergraduate; S2018, S2019); 6. *Feminist research practice* (Undergraduate & Graduate; S2019); 7. *Feminist research methods* (Undergraduate & Graduate; S2021)

SELECTED SERVICE

Department/Program/University Service at GMU

Term Faculty Hiring Committee, 2021; Tenure-Track Faculty Hiring Committees, 2018, 2019, 2020; Medical Students Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), 2020 – 2021; Black Graduate Students Association Faculty Sponsor, 2019 – Present; Psychology Department Quantitative Methods Committee, 2018 – Present; Psychology Department Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee, 2018 – Present; Clinical Program Diversity Resource Committee, 2016 – Present; Women & Gender Studies Program Executive Committee, 2016 – Present; Women & Gender Studies Program Membership Committee, 2016 – 2021

Professional Service

Editorial board, *Behavioral Medicine*, 2020 – Present; Editor's advisory group on structural racism, *Psychiatric Services*, 2020 - Present; Early career representative to the Executive Committee (elected), Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology), American Psychological Association, 2020 – Present; Chair (appointed), Early Career Psychologists Special Interest Group, Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology), American Psychological Association, 2018 – 2020; APA 2020 & 2021 Convention Science Chair, Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology), 2019 - Present; Diversity Advancement Committee, University of Washington, 2013 – 2015

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NIH T32 Postdoctoral research fellow, Group Health Research Institute, Seattle, WA	2016
Ph.D. Psychology (Clinical), George Mason University, VA	2014
Clinical psychology resident, Behavioral Medicine Track, University of Washington, Seattle, WA	2014
M.A. Psychology, George Mason University, VA	2010
B.S. Psychology (summa cum laude), University of Richmond, VA	2008

George Mason University Leadership

Leah Adams is a gifted teacher and early career researcher. Her extraordinary devotion to her students; her passion for investigating psychosocial aspects of health promotion and health risk, especially among racial and ethnic minority populations, women, and incarcerated adults; and her devotion to supporting the betterment of her community: **all of these aspects of Dr. Adams' career successes to date make her an outstanding candidate for a 2022 SCHEV "Rising Star" Outstanding Faculty Award.**

- *Ann L. Ardis, PhD; Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, GMU.*

Dr. Adams' research productivity and impact are at the level of an advanced Associate Professor...she has already drawn on her expertise...to create and develop more new courses than many Full Professors in our department. **Students rave about her not just as a fantastic teacher, but as a transformative figure in their educational experience.** Her level of individualized student mentorship is almost unheard of for someone so early in her career. To put it bluntly, her level of achievement across each domain is staggering – the fact that she has achieved at this level in all of these domains *simultaneously* is almost inconceivable. **She is the quintessential example of a Rising Star across all four areas of this award.**

- *Keith Renshaw, PhD; Department of Psychology Chair and Professor, GMU.*

Leah's approach to teaching and mentoring students reflects the same focus on individuals and structures that animates her research, bringing individual care and methodological rigor together in ways that help students develop necessary skills and frameworks for bringing about meaningful, long-lasting social change. Last year we asked Leah to deliver our annual Scholar's Lecture because **her work is complicated in the best ways, making the world at large and our small part of it better.**

- *Tamara Harvey, PhD; Women & Gender Studies Program Interim Director; Department of English Chair and Associate Professor, GMU.*

Colleagues and Scientific Collaborators

Dr. Adams is a rising star whose impact on the field, on her students, on George Mason University and the Commonwealth of Virginia is immeasurable and undeniable. She understands that to bridge gaps in the delivery of mental health services to marginalized populations, more people who identify in those communities need to be trained and certified. She actively recruits and retains students of color so that the department can build a pipeline of future practitioners poised to address the most pressing problems of the 21st Century.

- *Angela Hattery, PhD; Women and Gender Studies Professor, Co-Director, Center for the Study and Prevention of Gender Based Violence, University of Delaware.*

Dr. Adams' contributions are multifaceted, and far exceed the impact one would expect of a much more senior faculty member... **In every committee where I have had the pleasure of serving with Dr. Adams, she simply raises the quality of the work.** As one of very few Black faculty in our department (and institution), Dr. Adams has shown deep commitment to the support of the many students of color who reach out to her for formal and informal mentorship. Dr. Adams is a gem; she is a terrific scholar and teacher, an extraordinary contributor to our institution and state, and a wonderful colleague.

- *Lauren B. Cattaneo, PhD; Department of Psychology Associate Professor, GMU.*

Dr. Adams' ability to quickly assimilate knowledge from multiple fields and integrate into a multi-level population health perspective is rare among young academic investigators. I have been fortunate to work with Dr. Adams on several projects in which her generosity and expertise...were critical to our success. She not only co-developed a psychological treatment program tailored to older adults with chronic pain, but she also masterfully implemented the program at a community center. This program...led to clinically meaningful improvements in pain and physical functioning among older adults... and a subsequent large NIH grant. In short, Dr. Adams is a talented and productive faculty member who is undoubtedly a rising star.

- *Kushang V. Patel, PhD, MPH; Research Core Director at Harborview Injury Research and Prevention Center; University of Washington.*

Dr. Adams is an absolute powerhouse – a "triple threat" of researcher, educator, and clinician. Her program of research reflects the time she has spent working closely with survivors of highly complex medical traumas and chronic health conditions, as well as the health care teams serving them.

- *Renee Madathil, PhD; Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Neuropsychologist, University of Rochester Medical Center.*

Dr. Leah Adams is a leading scholar in the area of psychological and physical health and well-being among minoritized groups. The impact of her work is easily seen from her impressive track record of publications, her mentorship of the next-generation of scholars in this area, and her commitment to teaching from a justice framework. In a field that frequently sidelines work on minoritized individuals, Dr. Adams has managed to continue pushing her work to the top outlets in peer-reviewed journals, just one marker of the importance of her professional work. Incredibly, Dr. Adams manages to do all of the above while also serving as a community leader and a beacon of hope for many emerging Black scholars in the field of psychology broadly.

- *Adam B. Miller, PhD; Mental Health, Risk, and Resilience Research Program Research Clinical Psychologist, RTI International; Research Triangle Park, NC.*

Community Members

Dr. Adams' dedication to improving people's lives through practical research and her outreach across disciplines has had a profound impact on me, my colleagues, and my clients. I am an attorney and have relied on Dr. Adams' expertise and volunteered time in my special education and criminal law cases. Dr. Adams spoke to my organization about test bias in the use of cognitive and academic tests for minority populations – a presentation that had a direct impact on changing how we represent our clients and their needs.

- *Caroline Wick, JD; Practitioner-in-residence, Disability Rights Law Clinic, American University; Former Senior Attorney with Children's Law Center, Washington, DC.*

"Your session was the most popular of all of our sessions at all-state! Your work will help our volunteers and employees better serve and respond to our Virginia families in need. THANK YOU!"

- *Unsolicited feedback from invited Virginia Family Nutrition Program May 2021 talk*
George Mason University and Virginia Students

Dr. Adams' statistical and theoretical expertise shone through in her dedication to mentoring me... Most importantly, although my interactions with her were impactful and precious to me, they were not uncommon. Dr. Adams has and continues to have similar impacts on all of her students and mentees. **She works meticulously to meet her students and mentees where they are, introduce them to the power of research, and the great responsibility and respect with which their work and its impact must be handled.**

- *Angelique B. Williams, GMU Applied Developmental Psychology PhD '20; Technical Assistance & Data Management Specialist, AnLar, Alexandria, VA.*

I just saw this email of your latest paper...I am over the moon excited about your work! Thank you for continuing to set an example for Black and Brown girls/women like me who are in STEM!

- *Unsolicited message from Jasmine Rose, GMU Psychology BS '21.*

I wanted to let you know that I matched to [internship]!!! I'm really excited and just wanted to express my gratitude for your talks and guidance throughout this process, recognizing that I am not even one of your [GMU] students! Your time is appreciated and helped me land on the path I was hoping to be on!

- *Unsolicited message from Mickael Pugh, Counseling Psychology PhD Candidate, Virginia Commonwealth University.*