

Donna Starks



Donna Starks Donna received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Missouri. She began her career as a K–12 school social worker for the Albany School District in Missouri for three years. Donna was the first social worker ever employed by the district and laid the foundation for future school social service positions before moving to a career in higher education. After spending a summer as the assistant director for the Graceland University TRIO Upward Bound Summer Program, Donna took a position with TRIO Student Support Services, counseling and advising under-resourced, first-generation college students.

Donna was an advocate and a voice for under-resourced students for 17 years on the Graceland campus. She had numerous speaking engagements to educate staff, faculty, and student leaders about the needs of the university's under-resourced students and the strategies necessary to retain and graduate them. She was considered an expert on under-resourced college students on her campus and consulted with departments and divisions across campus to create a better experience for students.

In 2024, Donna moved to North Carolina and now works as director of the James Center for Student Success and Advising in the Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University in Boone. She creates strategic programming and encourages her colleagues to work intentionally with their students to help them realize their future stories and assist them with the resources they need to one day live those stories.

Selected workshops presented by Donna Starks

- ♦ Understanding and Engaging Under-Resourced College Students
- ♦ College Achievement Alliance Certified Training

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