

# First Year Kickoff

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Computer Science Department

16 Sep 2025

Please check in!



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JAMES MADISON  
UNIVERSITY®

# Welcome from Department Head

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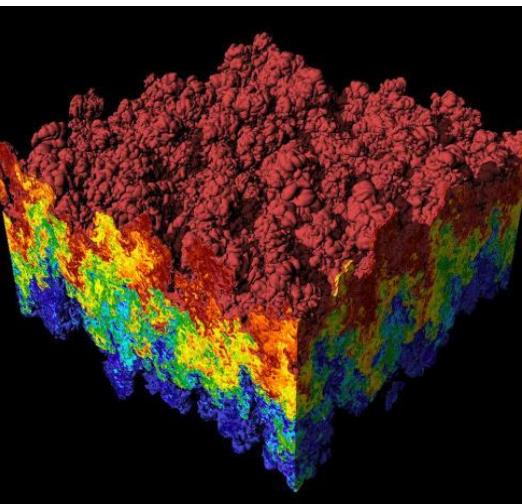
Dr. Vetria Byrd



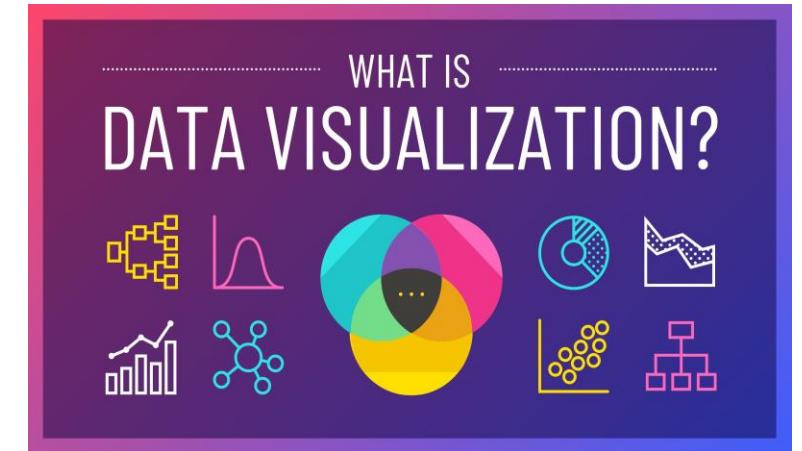
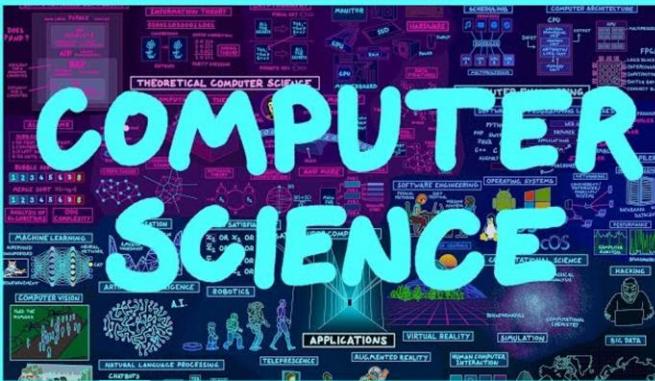
# Dr. Vetria Byrd

## About Me

- Computer Scientist by Training
- Data Visualization Scientist by Experience
- Like you . . .
- I am new to JMU!



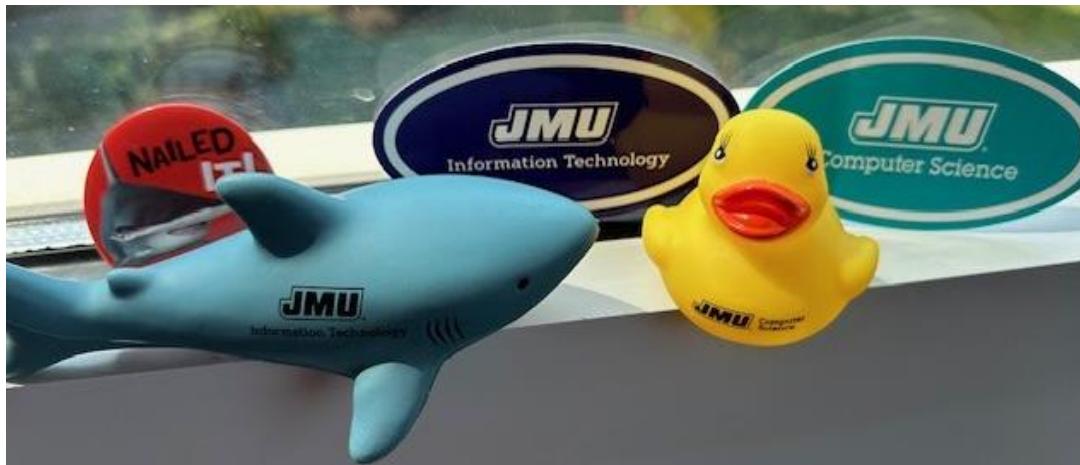
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific\\_visualization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_visualization)



<https://venngage.com/blog/data-visualization/>

# Aim for Students

- Ensure **EVERY** student has what is needed to be successful!



Welcome back message to students

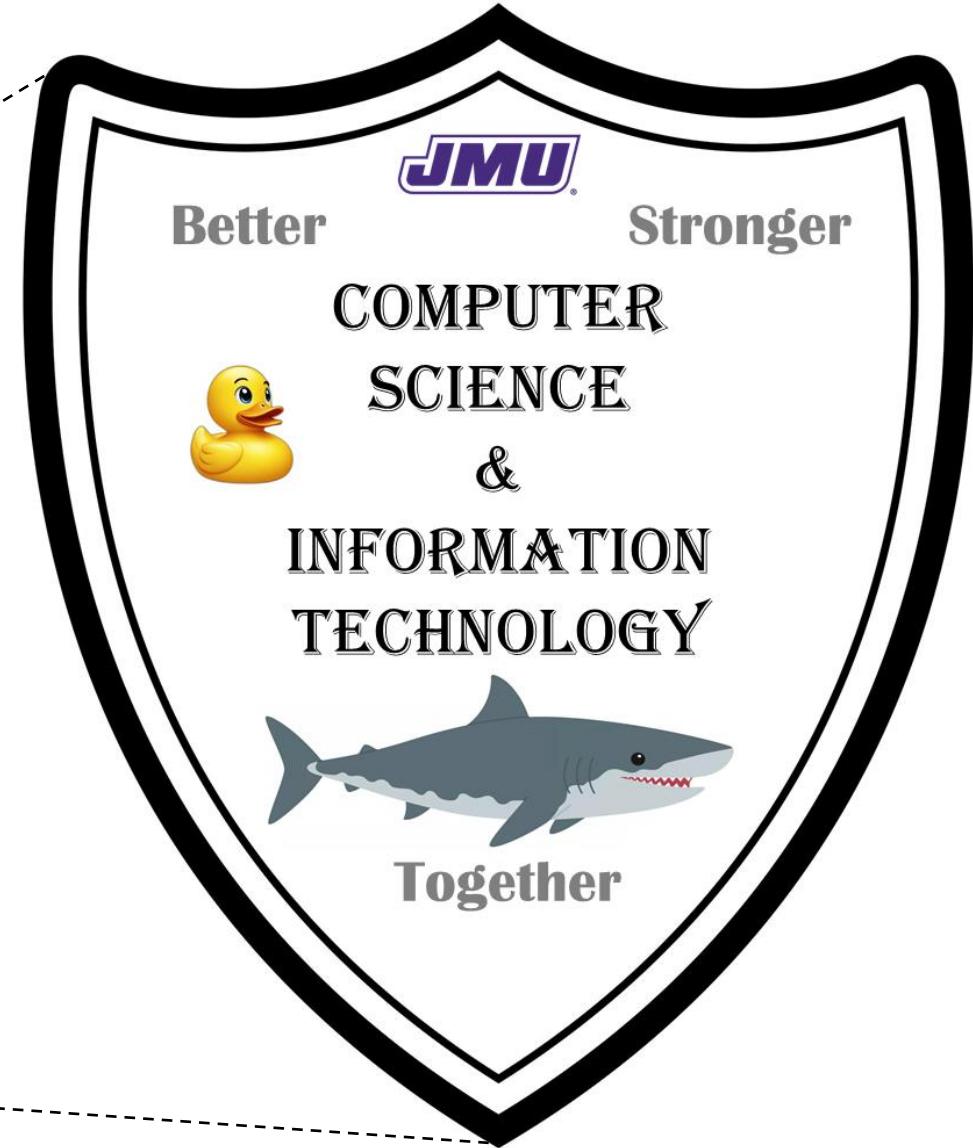


<https://www.jmu.edu/cise/cs/index.shtml>

# My Departmental Vision

- Better
- Stronger
- Together

Go  
**Dukies**



# 3 Keys to Success

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Dr. Chris Mayfield  
Computer Science





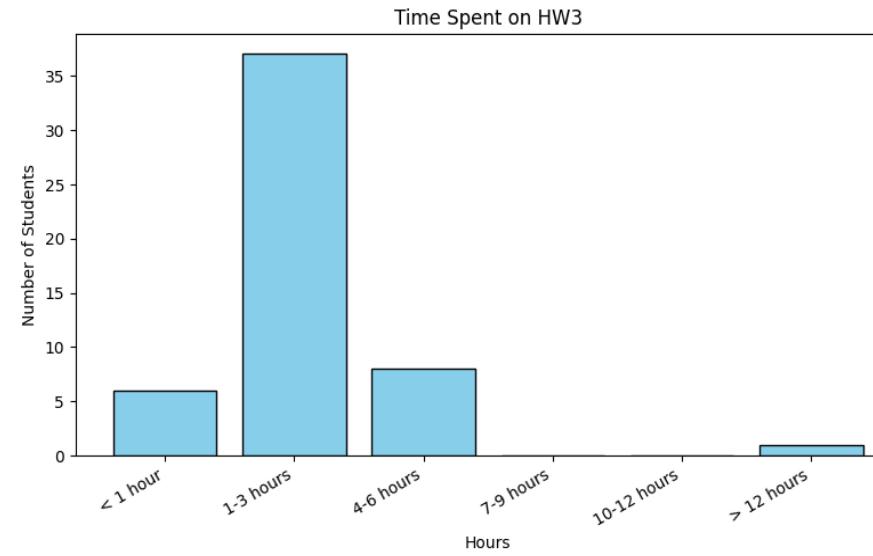
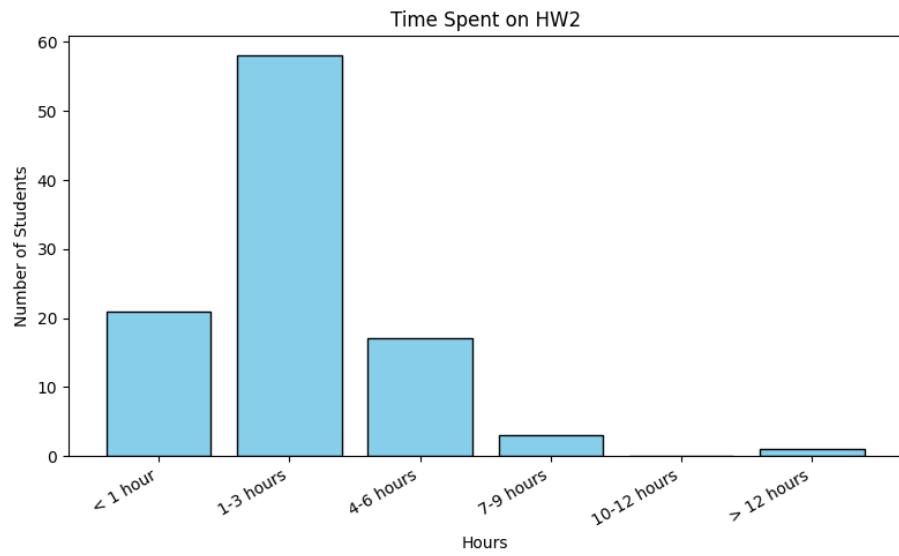
# #1: Know that YOU belong!



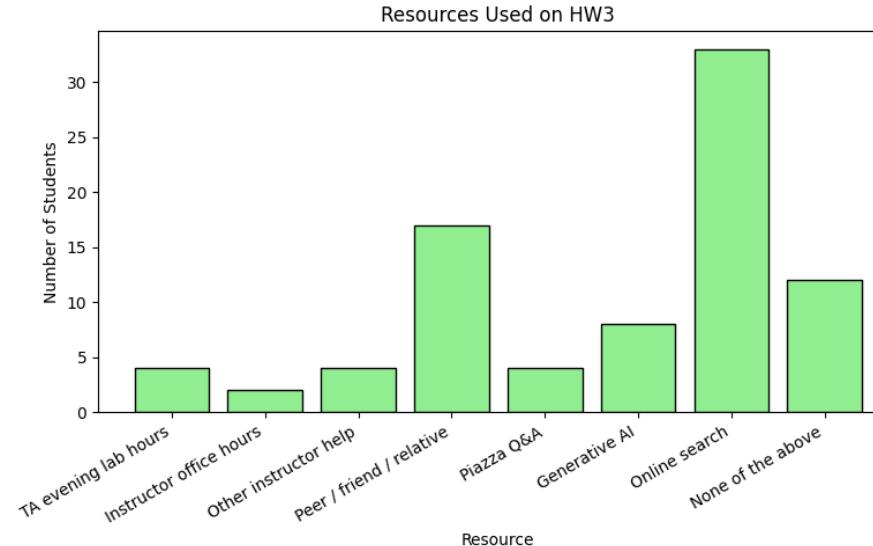
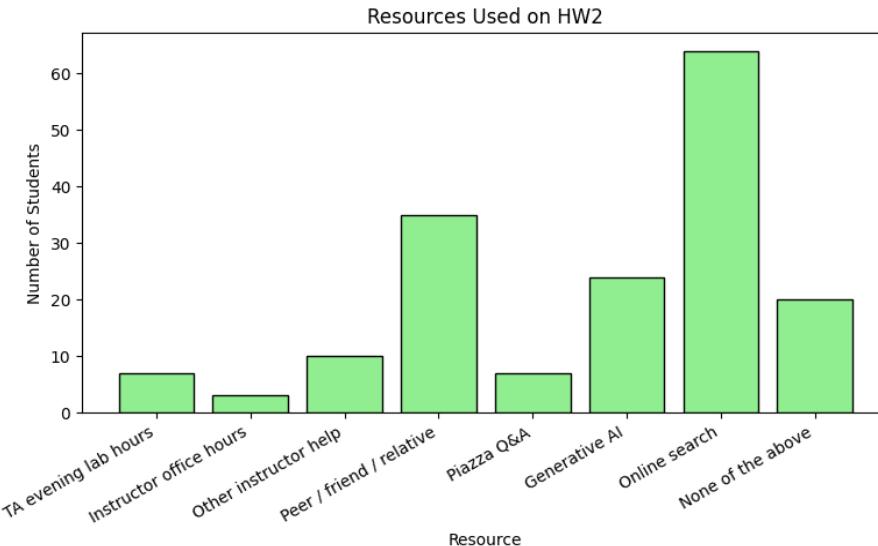


# #2: Ask (and answer) questions!

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# #3: Connect with people, not robots!



# One more tip...Lost and Found

Instructions here: [jmu.edu/lostandfound](http://jmu.edu/lostandfound)

- Go to Dean's Suite, King Hall, 3rd Floor
- Marion Jones is the Building Coordinator for King Hall and EnGeo



# Faculty Office Hours

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Prof. Livia Griffith  
Information Technology



# What are office hours?

Time **set aside** by faculty  
to meet 1:1 with students  
outside of class.

In the CS/IT dept: 5 hours  
per week.



In other words...



**Office  
Hours**



**Student  
Hours**

# Example uses of office hours

## Individualized Help

- Receive personalized explanations of course material—ask for help on specific problems or discuss broader concepts.

## Additional Feedback

- Go over previous assignments, projects, or exams—identify strengths and areas for improvement.

## Specific Needs

- Get caught up if you were sick or something happened (Ex: car accident)
- Prepare for known absences (Ex: traveling for school event, attending a conference, family wedding)

# On a practical note...

*CS/IT faculty teach on average:*

$$\begin{aligned}25 \text{ students} * 3 \text{ sections} \\= 75 \text{ students}\end{aligned}$$

*Therefore, on average we have:*

$$\begin{aligned}300 \text{ minutes} \div 75 \text{ students} \\= 4 \text{ minutes per student}\end{aligned}$$

However, not *every* student needs to attend office hours *every* week.

Just be mindful of each other; we're here to help *everyone*.

# Office Hours: Do's and Don'ts

- **Do** come early; be proactive about your learning.
- **Do** come prepared with a specific question.
- **Do** build a good working relationship with your professors.
- **Do** ask questions before, during, and after class.
- **Don't** ask, "Can I come to your office hours?"
- **Don't** ask, "Can I make an appointment during your office hours?"
- **Don't** expect regular lengthy tutoring; that's what TA lab hours are for.
- **Don't** replace attending class with office hours.

# What if I can't attend?

## Schedule an appointment

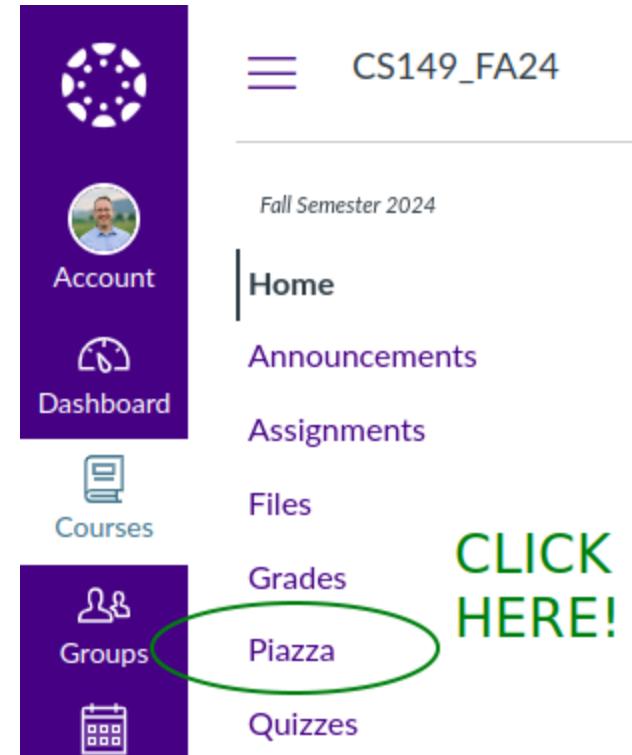
- We are happy to meet with you!

## Ask questions over email

- Or instructor's preferred method

## Use other resources

- [Piazza](#) – why are only 80% of you on this!?
- TA Lab Hours – the best kept secret in CS/IT
- Other students\* (be mindful of Honor Code)
- Other faculty\* (be respectful of their time)



# TA Hours (CS 149/159)

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John Ryder and Rafael Dietsch



# TA Hours

- "Open" TA Hours are available Sunday-Thursday in person and online.
- In person hours in King Hall 248  
Sun: 3-9 pm,  
Mon, Tues, Thurs: 5-9 pm  
Wed. 6:15-9 pm
- Online hours:  
Sun-Thurs: 9-11 pm

Focus Intro classes

[wiki.cs.jmu.edu/department/cs-success/](http://wiki.cs.jmu.edu/department/cs-success/)



In-person hours are in King Hall 248.



## Here to learn.

TAs will help you with your issue by teaching you how to solve the problem, not by giving you the answer.

## TAs are people too.

They will try to help you. TAs are students who share their knowledge, but don't always have the answer.



## Try to solve it.

TAs will do their best to help resolve your issue. After a few minutes, they may ask you to try and solve the issue by yourself.



## TAs are better than AI!

- 1) They know the program and JMU.
- 2) They will help you figure something out when you don't know what *exactly* to ask.
- 3) They know how to fix system issues with JMU setup.
- 4) They are more fun!

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Focus Intro classes

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In-person hours are in King Hall 248.

# CS & IT Ambassadors

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Emily Waters and Brian Stock



# The JMU CS/IT Ambassadors

Follow us @jmucs & @jmuit on Instagram!

## Who We Are:

We're a team of student leaders who work with CS/IT faculty and engage with the department's community.



Find Us At:

Campus events

Orientation sessions

Departmental programs

Or just in the hall! We're happy to help with anything!

## What we do:

### Support Students

- Have an open ear for any advice or question that students may have.

### Outreach

- Provide student perspective for current and prospective students in the department.

### Host Events

- We do all type of department events to engage with the student body.

### Give Tours

- Give tours across King Hall and Engeo when prospective students visit.

# Ambassadors Serve the Students!

We host a variety of events such as:

- Game Nights
- Movie Nights
- Internship Panels
- Professional Development Workshops

We want to hear from you!

- Are there any events you would like to see in the future?
- How has your experience with ambassadors been so far?

## CS Ambassadors

Email: [cs.ambassadors@dukes.jmu.edu](mailto:cs.ambassadors@dukes.jmu.edu)



## IT Ambassadors

Contact:



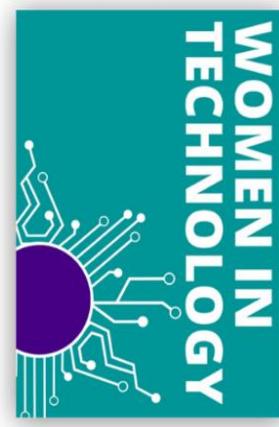
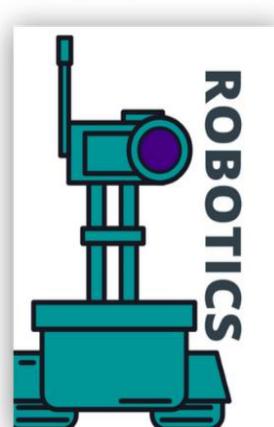
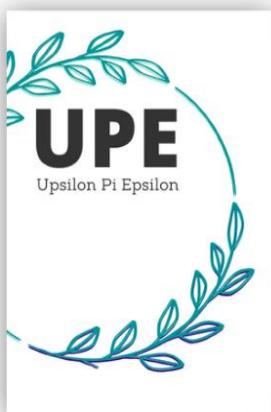
# CS & IT Clubs

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CS Advisor – Marijn de Waal



# CS Clubs open to all!



# CS Club Contacts and Details:

[wiki.cs.jmu.edu/student/clubs/](http://wiki.cs.jmu.edu/student/clubs/)

Be Involved!



# Department Communication

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IT Advisor/CS Minor Advisor – Ellen Hedrick



# CS Communication

## CS Wiki      Canvas      Listserv

- Technical guides
- Advice
- Clubs
- Office hours

- Advising
- Enrollment
- Calendar

- Opportunities
  - o Research
  - o Jobs/Internships
- All faculty use

Follow **@jmucs** on Instagram!

# IT Communication

## Listserv

Announcements  
and Events

Enrollment  
Reminders

Job and  
Internship  
Opportunities

## Faculty Announcements

Announcements & Events  
Job & Internship Opportunities

**Canvas is under  
construction**



## Instagram

@jmu\_it



# CS: Charting your Path

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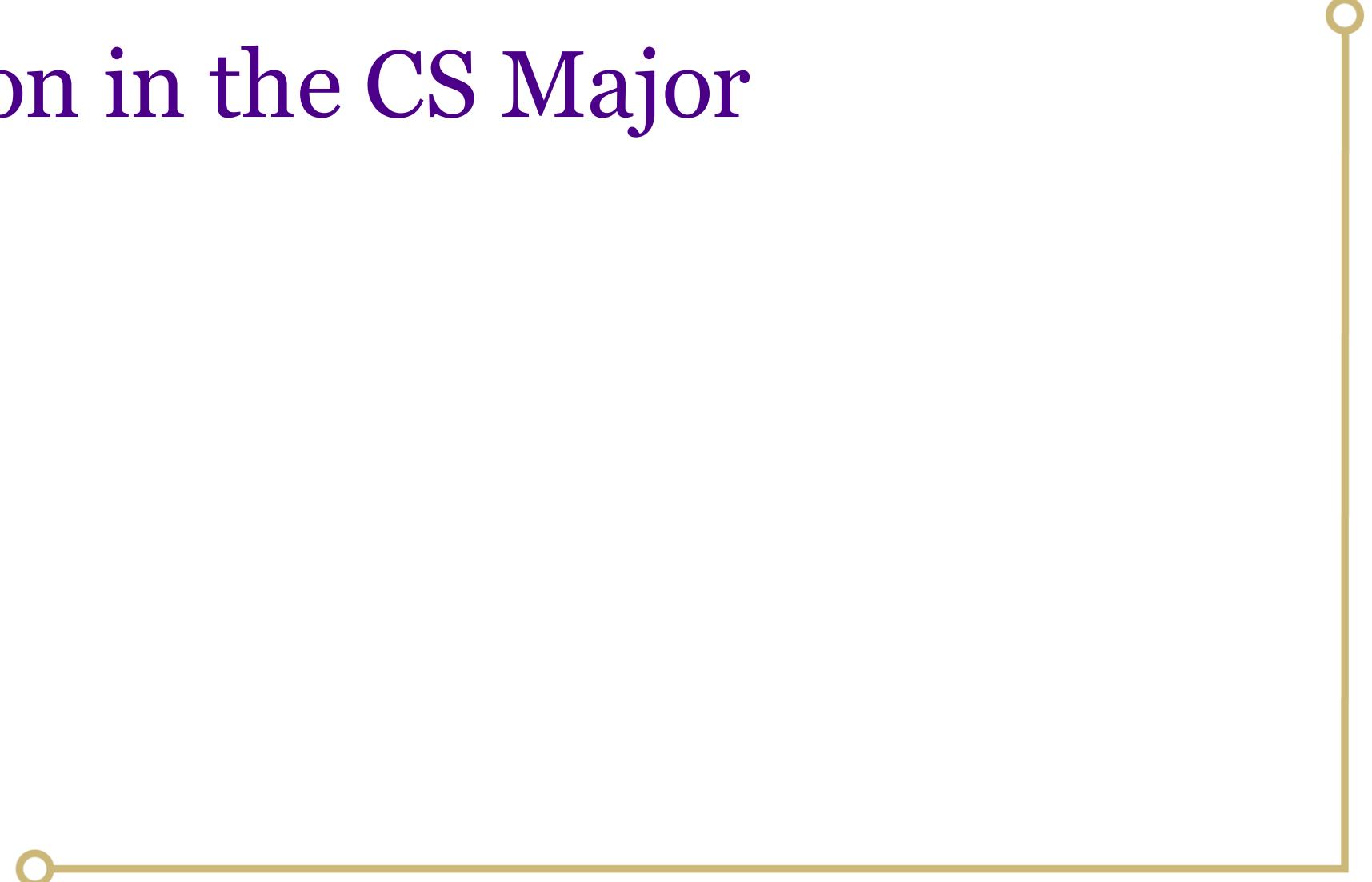
CS Advisor – Marijn de Waal



# Progression in the CS Major

CS 149

B- or better



# Progression in the CS Major

CS 149



B- or better

CS 159  
CS 227

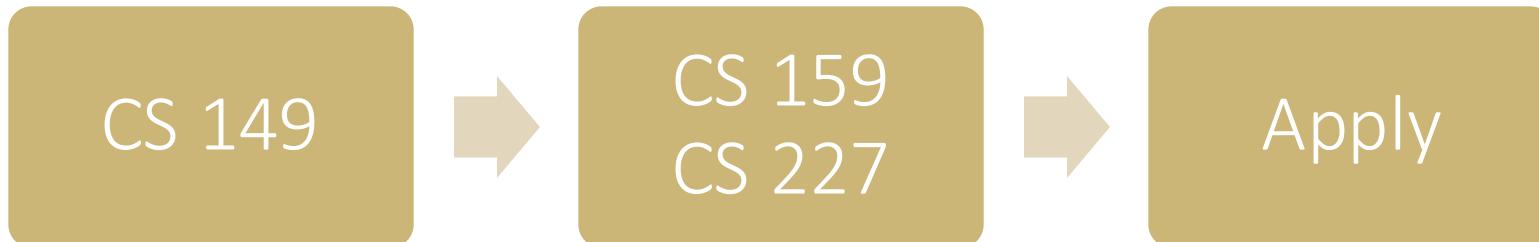
B- or better

This information is not meant to scare you; rather, we want you to **ask for help in time!**

For these three classes:

- You will get two attempts each
- Grade needed to be admitted in CS Major  $\geq$  B-
- Withdrawing from a class counts as an attempt

# Progression in the CS Major

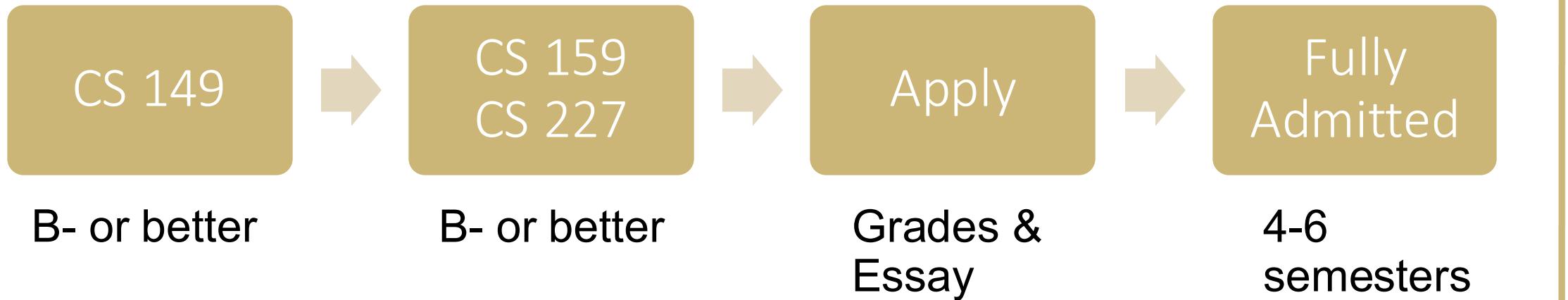


B- or better

B- or better

Grades &  
Essay

# Progression in the CS Major



# A brief note on grades

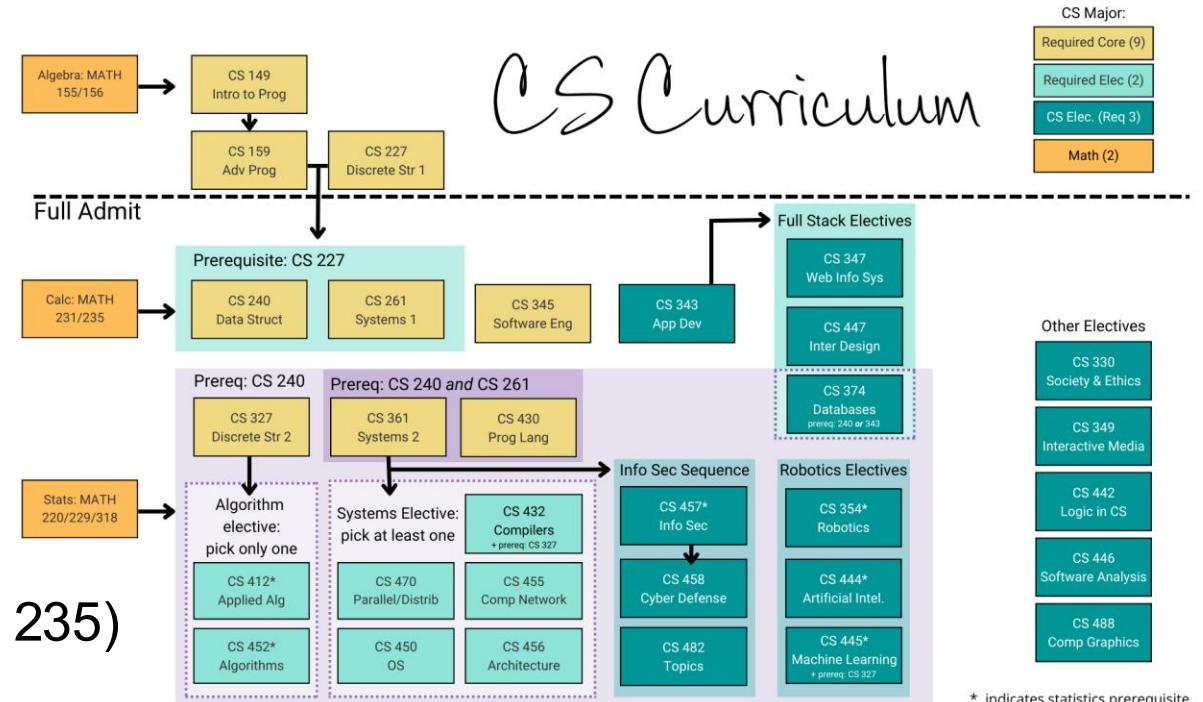
- Withdraw from class with W grade deadline: 10/21
- W grade means not counted in GPA but counted as attempt
- Withdrawing can impact full-time status, which can impact financial aid
- When you repeat a class, you get credit once—not twice

Talk to your professor(s) and advisor in time if a class is challenging

# CS Requirements *after* Full Admission

- 6 Core Courses
- 3 CS Electives
- 1 Algorithm Elective
- 1 Systems Elective

- Math Requirements
  - Calculus (MATH 231+232 or MATH 235)
  - Statistics (MATH 220, 229, or 318)



# Get to 120 Credits!

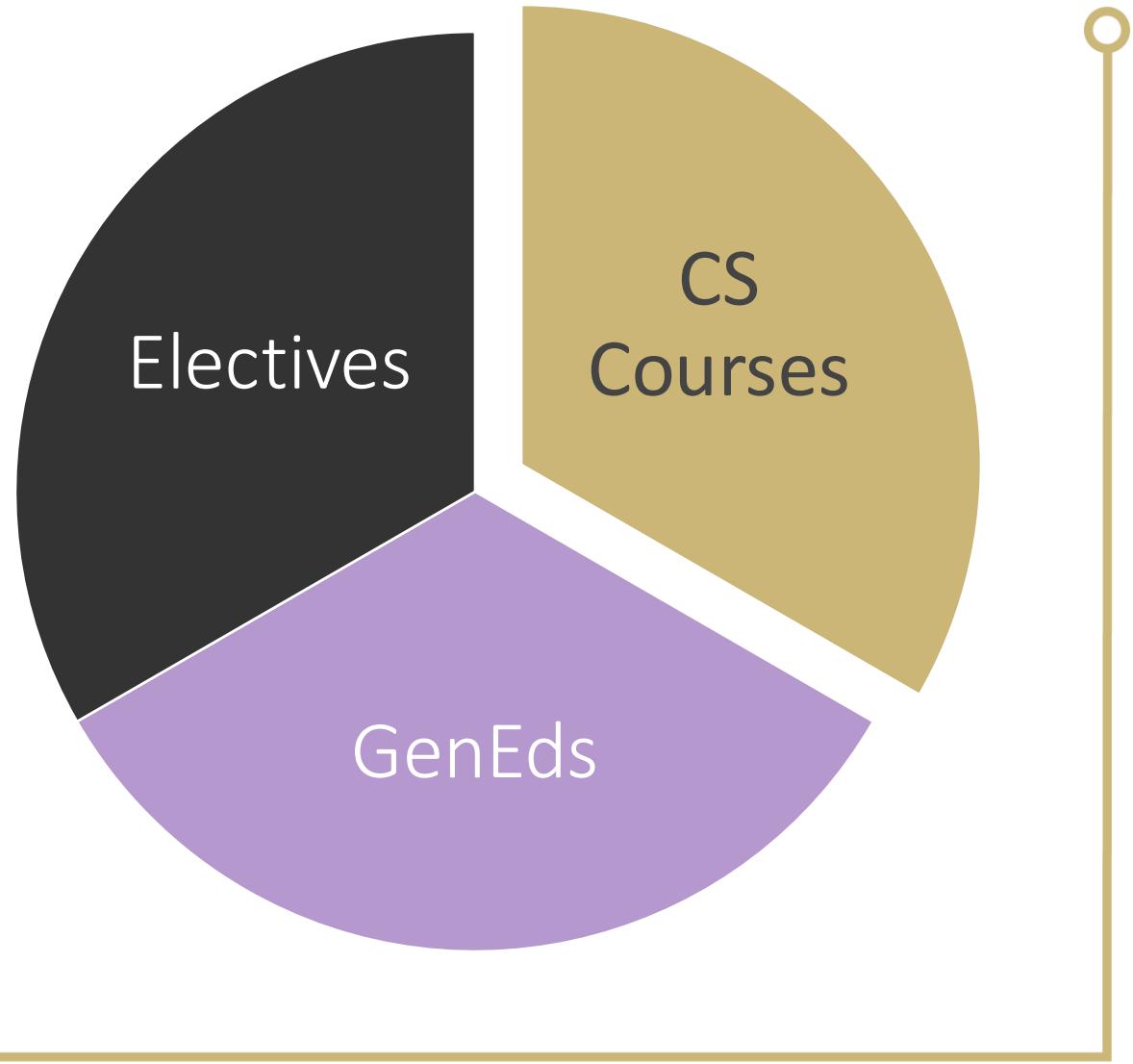
(assuming no DE or AP test credit)

GenEd courses: 41 credits

CS courses: 49-52 credits

Electives: 25-27 credits

Explore a minor! Or Two!



# Plan *your* path to graduation



One-on-one 20-minute meetings

- In person
- Zoom

Contact your First Year Advisor:

See MyMadison connect

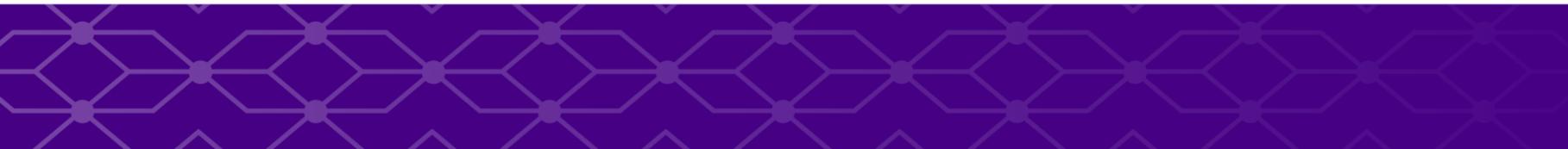


CS Advisor

Marijn (mah-RINE) de Waal

[dewaalmw@jmu.edu](mailto:dewaalmw@jmu.edu)

King Hall 246A



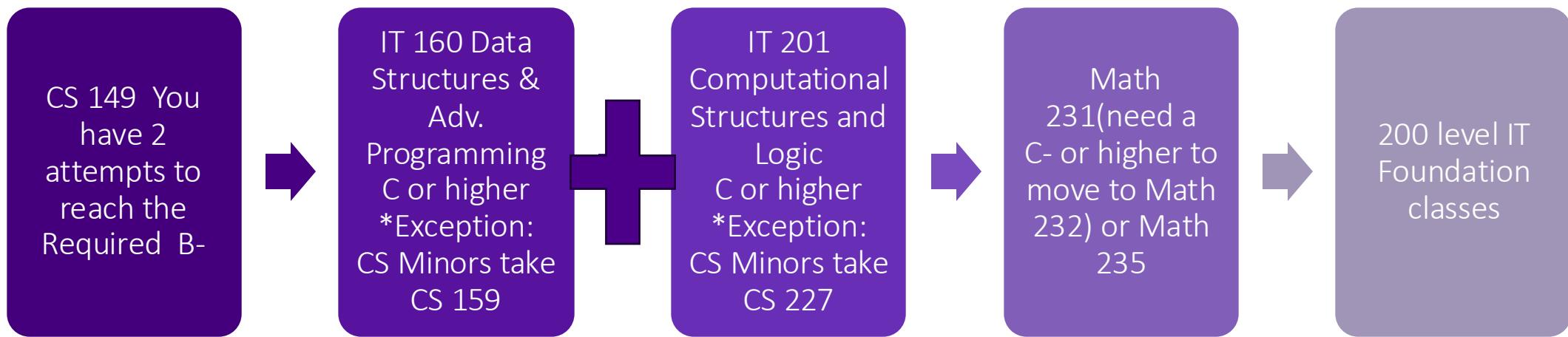
# IT: Charting your Path

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IT Advisor – Ellen Hedrick



# Progression in the IT Major



# IT Requirements

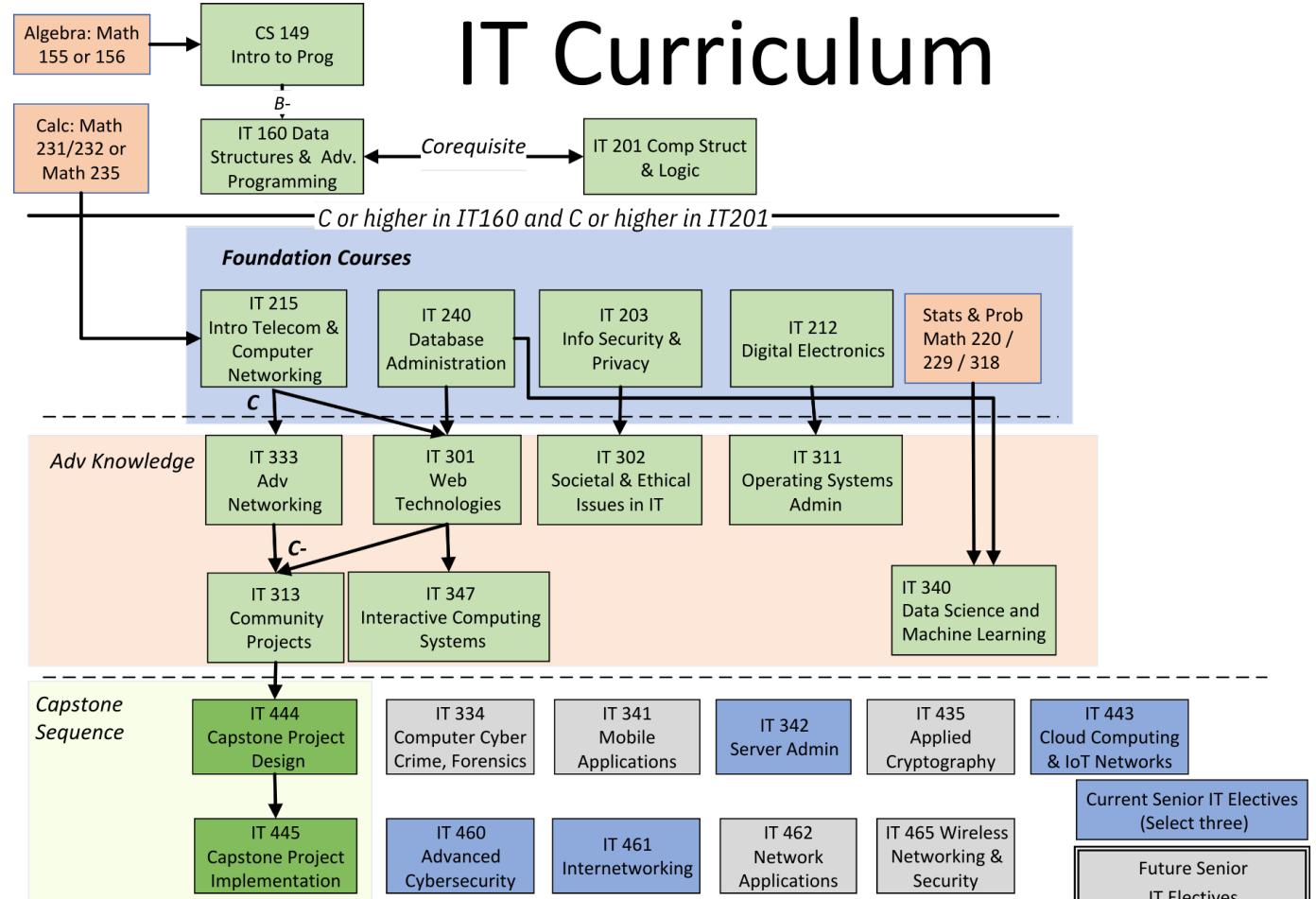
- Community Project
- 3 Sr. IT Electives
- Senior Capstone
  - Smart Parking
  - Drones/Sensing
  - Autonomous Vehicles
  - Cellular Networks(5G & Beyond)

## Math Requirements

Calculus  
(MATH 231+232 or MATH 235)

## Statistics

(MATH 220, 229, or 318)



# Get to 120 Credits!

GenEd courses: 41 credits

IT courses: 53-56 credits

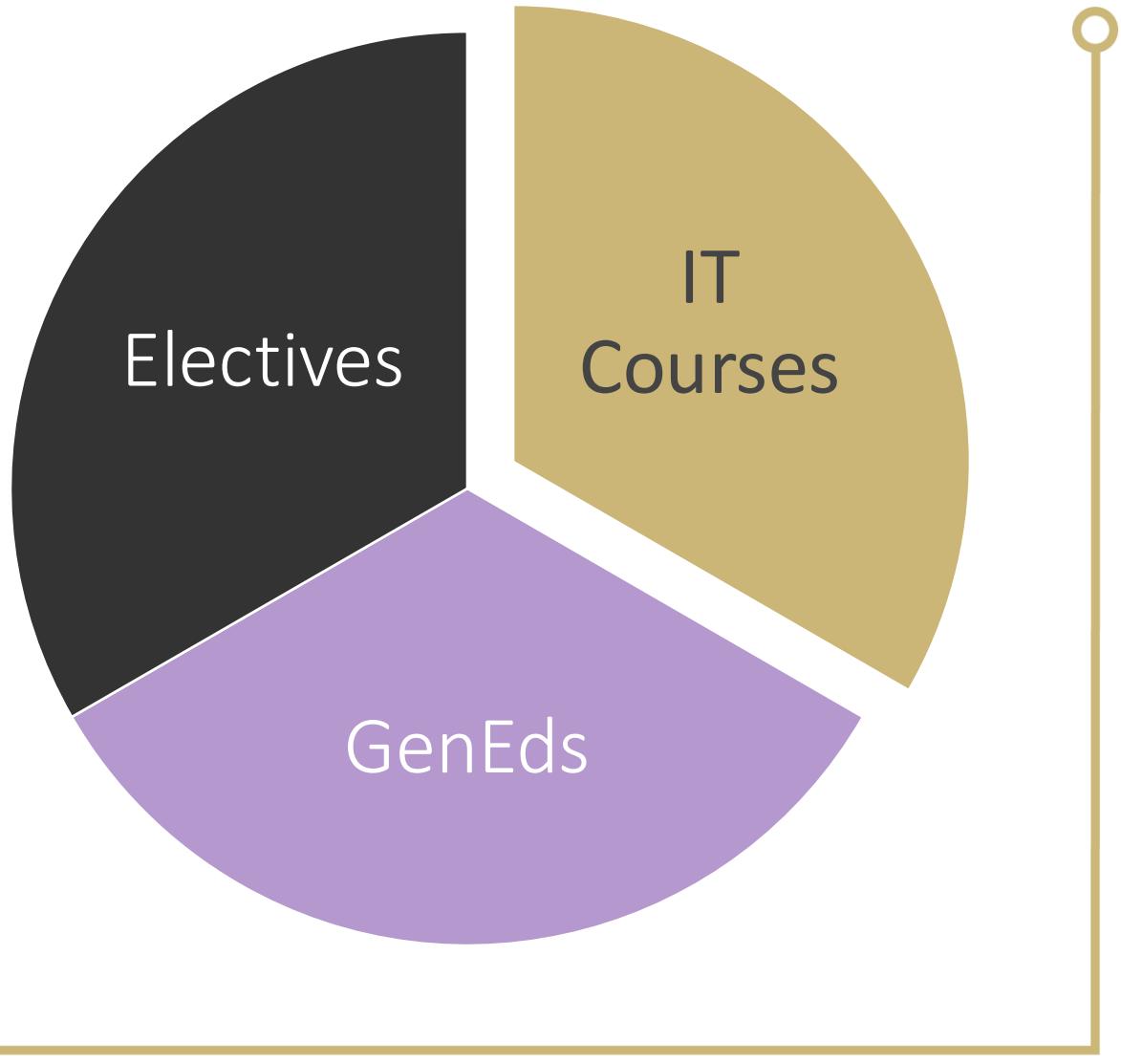
IT Major electives: 9 credits

Electives: 8-11 credits

Graduation: 120 credits

\*Assuming no DE or AP test credit

We encourage a minor!



# What advisors want you to know:

- Get to know your MyMadison Academic Requirements page
  - GenEds
  - Major requirements and minor requirements
  - Major and minor GPA
  - Graduation requirements- Credits to graduate? GPAs?
- Retaking a class
  - repeat credit(grades are averaged) or
  - repeat forgive(the first grade is dropped from your GPA).  
You get 2 repeat forgives while at JMU.
- Your first-year advisor will be reaching out to you via email to give you information about your spring classes and enrollment. Please respond to this email.
- Enrollment week for spring semester: 11/3-11/7

# Plan *your* path to graduation



One-on-one 20-minute meetings

- In person
- Zoom

King Hall 1st floor: King 121 and King 122

IT Webpage: <https://www.jmu.edu/it>

On Instagram: JMU\_IT



First Year Advisor

Dr. El Tawab

[eltawass@jmu.edu](mailto:eltawass@jmu.edu)

IT Transfers

Dr. Belsare

[belsarpp@jmu.edu](mailto:belsarpp@jmu.edu)



IT Advisor/CS Minor Advisor

Ellen Hedrick

[It.advising@jmu.edu](mailto:It.advising@jmu.edu)

Make appt:

MyMadison Connect

# What I Wish I Knew My First Year

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Panel of Ambassadors and TAs





# Thank you!

Come socialize with us and ask more questions!

## King Hall Atrium

- Meet TAs
- Meet Ambassadors
- Meet fellow students!