

# Amanda G. Sawyers, Ed.D.

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## Professional Summary

Higher education leader with expertise in advising systems, student persistence, and institutional navigation. Demonstrated ability to support retention and degree progression through policy interpretation, cross-functional collaboration, and student-centered program development. Doctor of Education with research expertise in rural student persistence and institutional barriers to completion.

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## Education

### Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Educational Leadership

East Tennessee State University, 2026

Dissertation: *Leaving College in Rural Central Appalachia: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Lived Experience and Meaning-Making*

M.A., English, 2018

B.A., English, 2016

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## Professional Experience

### International Student Advisor

East Tennessee State University | 2022–Present

- Advise students navigating academic, immigration, and institutional systems, supporting persistence and timely degree progression
- Interpret and operationalize federal immigration regulations (F-1/J-1) within institutional contexts
- Collaborate with faculty, graduate coordinators, and campus partners to coordinate holistic student support
- Design and implement orientation and onboarding initiatives that strengthen transition and retention
- Monitor student enrollment and compliance, proactively addressing risks to persistence

### Strategic Impact:

- Strengthen institutional support structures by identifying systemic barriers and connecting students to appropriate resources
- Contribute to process improvements in advising workflows and student communication

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### **Testing Technician III**

East Tennessee State University | 2019–2022

- Supervised testing operations, staff training, and service delivery for high-stakes exams
- Coordinated scheduling, budgeting, and reporting functions

#### **Leadership & Operations:**

- Improved operational efficiency through workflow coordination and staff supervision
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### **Adjunct Faculty**

East Tennessee State University | 2019–2022

- Designed and delivered instruction emphasizing writing, critical thinking, and academic success
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### **Writing Tutor**

East Tennessee State University | 2017–2019

- Provided individualized academic support to improve student performance and persistence
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### **Institutional Leadership & Service**

- Staff Senate Senator (2021–2024)
- Staff Awards Committee, Chair (2023–2024)
- Employee Retention Committee (2024–Present)
- OEI Student Success & Innovation Committee, Co-Chair (2024)
- Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (2022–Present)
- Tennessee Association of International Educators, Secretary/Treasurer (2022–2025)

#### **Institutional Contributions:**

- Participated in campus-wide initiatives focused on employee engagement, student success, and organizational improvement
  - Collaborated across divisions to support institutional effectiveness
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## **Core Competencies**

### **Advising & Student Success**

- Academic advising systems
- Student persistence and retention strategies
- Student lifecycle support

### **Leadership & Administration**

- Cross-functional collaboration
- Program coordination and implementation
- Staff supervision and training

### **Systems & Compliance**

- Policy interpretation and implementation
  - Banner, SEVIS, and institutional systems
  - Data-informed decision-making
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### **Research & Expertise**

- Rural student persistence and college departure
  - Institutional barriers and navigation
  - First-generation and underrepresented student experiences
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