

Becky Childs

**Academic Unit Head and Professor
Department of English
James Madison University**

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Education and Leadership Development

- 2025 HERS Leadership Institute
- 2023 Strategic Leadership Program, Chronicle of Higher Education
- 2023 Academic Chairpersons Conference
- 2005 PhD (Linguistics), University of Georgia
- 2000 MA (English with a concentration in sociolinguistics), North Carolina State University
- 1999 Linguistics Society of America Summer Institute in Linguistics, University of Illinois
- 1997 BA (Major: English; Minor: TESL), University of Florida

Administrative Appointments

Academic Unit Head, Department of English, James Madison University, 2022-present

Responsibilities:

- Ensure academic excellence in the English major and English minor, the Creative Writing minor, and the English MA program.
- Lead a department of 39 full-time and adjunct faculty and 2 staff members.
- Manage enrollment planning and scheduling for the undergraduate degree program, the graduate program, affiliated minors, and departmental offerings in the general education program.
- Facilitate the development of robust and durable curriculum offerings.
- Develop long-term plans for the recruitment and retention of faculty.
- Budgetary oversight and compliance for English, Creative Writing, Women's and Gender Studies, and Queer Studies programs.
- Evaluate faculty and staff and set professional development funding allocations for faculty, staff, and graduate students.

Select Accomplishments:

- Marketing to grow major and minor programs through strategic hiring and realigning staff job duties to support student-facing programming.
- Facilitation of a professional development series for new faculty (at all ranks) to help understand institutional goals and culture (focusing on faculty retention).

- Collaborated with the College of Arts and Letters Dean's office to develop a best practices document on faculty retention.
- Completion of a revision to the English Department Policies and Procedures Document (bylaws) to ensure alignment of department practices with the university faculty manual.
- Facilitated curriculum development through the creation and adoption of a new core for English major to bring the curriculum into credit hour alignment with state requirements.
- Launched the English Student Ambassador Program to facilitate community among undergraduate students in the English major, English minor, and Creative Writing minor.
- Increased professional development funds for English faculty to allow for more robust scholarly and creative work (16% increase over two years).
- Led Academic Program Review for Graduate and Undergraduate Programs.
- Coordinated, mentored, and provided support and leadership training for the Creative Writing Coordinator, Director of Graduate Studies, Women's and Gender Studies Coordinator, and the Queer Studies Coordinator.
- Successfully advocated for salary increases for faculty facing salary inversion.
- Developed agreements with programs across campus to offer interdisciplinary courses and ensure course availability to all stakeholders.

Leadership Activities and Groups:

- Provost's Shared Governance Implementation Taskforce
- Provost's Committee on the Evaluations of Teaching
- Provost's Hiring Guidelines Review Committee
- Executive Committee, College of Arts and Letters
- Strategic Planning Committee, College of Arts and Letters
- Ad-hoc Committee on Faculty Retention, College of Arts and Letters
- Dean Search Committee (Academic Head representative), College of Arts and Letters
- Presenter, Topic: Data-Based Decision Making, AUH meeting

Chair, Department of English, Coastal Carolina University, 2021-2022

Responsibilities:

- Led three programs- BA in English, BA in Digital Culture and Design, and MA in Writing.
- Supervise and evaluate faculty and staff (50).
- Scheduled courses to meet departmental and affiliated program needs and coordinated course offerings with the university's core curriculum committee.
- Facilitated the department's executive committee, which included stakeholders from across the curriculum.
- Advocated for hires within the department ranging in rank from tenure-track to visiting to adjunct.

Select Accomplishments:

- Negotiated the adoption of an integrative program between English and Education to provide a clear path for students interested in English education.

- Led department when returning to in-person teaching and campus activities after Covid restrictions.
- Successfully negotiated for the first Artist in Residence position in the Department of English.
- Developed a new curriculum model for graduate student teaching to support graduate student success and professionalization while also contributing significantly to the university's core curriculum.

Leadership Groups:

- Leadership Council, College of Humanities and Fine Arts
- Representative on the University Budget Committee
- Representative on the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

Associate Chair, Department of English, Coastal Carolina University, 2011-2020

Responsibilities:

- Chaired the departmental curriculum committee.
- Led departmental assessment of the major, which included revising and honing assessment methods and techniques and then making suggestions for curricular change.
- Developed student success initiatives to help retain, prepare, and professionalize students.
- Redesigned and taught the capstone course for English majors.
- Evaluation of adjunct faculty.

Select Accomplishments:

- Facilitated the campus-wide adoption of a 4-credit model for Composition courses, discussing and presenting the model at the Faculty Senate, college curriculum committees, and departmental curriculum committees.
- Redesigned the English capstone course to focus more clearly on student success, professionalization, and experiential learning.
- Created the English Futures Speakers Series, a twice-a-semester series that brought in speakers with degrees in English to discuss their career paths.
- Represented the English Department in the discussion and development of a new Core Curriculum including the placement of English courses into the new Core Curriculum.

Leadership Groups

- Promotion and Tenure Committee, Coastal Carolina University
- College Committee on DEI, College of Humanities and Fine Arts
- Technology Committee, College of Humanities and Fine Arts
- Student Learning Committee, College of Humanities and Fine Arts
- Core Curriculum Ad Hoc Committee, College of Humanities and Fine Arts

Scholarship

Books

- 2017 Mallinson, Christine, Becky Childs, and Gerard Van Herk (eds.) *Data Collection in Sociolinguistics*. 2nd Edition. Routledge Press.
- 2013 Mallinson, Christine, Becky Childs, and Gerard Van Herk (eds.). *Data Collection in Sociolinguistics*. Routledge Press.

Book Chapters

- 2025 Childs, Becky and Paul E. Reed. "Southern English." New Cambridge History of English, Volume 5: English in North America and the Caribbean.
- 2021 Childs, Becky. "The Value of Interdisciplinarity in Linguistic Research." *Crossing Borders Making Connections: Interdisciplinarity in Linguistics*. Edited by Allison Burkette and Tamara Warhol. DeGruyter Mouton. 7-22.
- 2020 Childs, Becky. "Ethnicity in Appalachia". In *Appalachian Englishes in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Kirk Hazen. West Virginia University Press. 99-114.
- 2018 Childs, Becky and Gerard Van Herk. "Townie, Bayman, or Newfoundlander? Linguistic Constructions of Urban and Rural in Newfoundland." *Rural Voices*, edited by Elizabeth Seale and Christine Mallinson. Lexington Books. 45-58.
- 2018 Childs, Becky and Christine Mallinson. "Southern Landscape and Language". *Handbook of the American South*, edited by Maggi Morehouse. Routledge Press. 54-65.
- 2016 Childs, Becky. "Who I am and Who I Want to Be: Variation and Representation in a Messaging Platform". In *English in Computer-Mediated Communication: Variation, Representation, and Perception*, ed. Lauren Squires. Mouton de Gruyter: New York. 261-280.
- 2014 Van Herk, Gerard and Childs, Becky. "Active Retirees: The Persistence of Obsolescent Features" In *Linguistic Variation: Confronting Fact and Theory*, ed. Rena Torres Cacoullos, Nathalie Dion, André Lapierre. Routledge: New York. 193-208.
- 2010 Childs, Becky and Gerard Van Herk. "Breaking Old Habits: Syntactic Constraints Underlying Habitual Effects in Newfoundland English." Chapter in *Aspect in Grammatical Variation*. Edited by James Walker. John Benjamins: Netherlands. 81-94.
- 2010 Childs, Becky, Christine Mallinson, and Jeannine Carpenter. "Vowel Phonology and Ethnicity in North Carolina." In *African American English Speakers and Their Participation in Local Sound Changes: A Comparative Study*. Publication of the American Dialect Society, No. 94. Duke University Press. 23-47.
- 2005 Mallinson, Christine, Becky Childs, Bridget Anderson, and Neal Hutcheson. "If These Hills Could Talk." In *Voices of American English*, ed. Walt Wolfram and Ben Ward. Malden, MA: Blackwell. 22-28.

- 2005 Wolfram, Walt, Becky Childs, Jeffrey Reaser, and Benjamin Torbert. "Islands of Diversity." In *Voices of American English*, ed. Walt Wolfram and Ben Ward. Malden, MA: Blackwell. 183-188.
- 2004 Childs, Becky and Walt Wolfram. "Bahamian Phonology." In *A Handbook of Varieties of English*, ed. Bernd Kortman and Edgar Schneider. Mouton de Gruyter Publishers. 435-449.
- 2004 Childs, Becky, Jeffrey Reaser, and Walt Wolfram. "Defining Ethnic Varieties in the Bahamas: Phonological Accommodation in Black and White Enclave Communities." *Eastern Caribbean Creoles and Englishes*, ed. Michael Aceto and Jeffrey Williams. 1-28.

Articles in refereed journals

- 2024 Hasty, Daniel and Becky Childs. "You Ain't from Here, Are You? Subregional Variation and Identification in the New Appalachia." *American Speech*.
- 2021 Hasty, Daniel and Becky Childs. "Investigating Appalachian Englishes: Subregional Variation in the New Appalachia." *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 27:1, 69-88.
- 2020 Hasty, Daniel, Denise Paster, and Becky Childs. "Valuing a Variety of Voices: Using Digital Badges to Support Linguistic Diversity in First Year Composition." *American Speech*. Duke University Press. 95:2, 243-252.
- 2018 Childs, Becky. "Student Voice and Linguistic Identity: A Tool for Retention of First Year and First-Generation Undergraduates." *Journal of English Linguistics*. 46:3, 186-198.
- 2014 Childs, Becky and Gerard Van Herk. "Work that –s: Drag queens, gender, identity, and traditional Newfoundland English." *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 18:5, 634-657.
- 2011 Childs, Becky, Gerard Van Herk and Jennifer Thorburn. "Safe Harbour: Ethics and accessibility in sociolinguistic corpus building." *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory*. 7:1, 163-180.
- 2008 Mallinson, Christine and Becky Childs. "Communities of Practice in Sociolinguistic Description: Analyzing Language and Identity Practices among Black Women in Appalachia." *Gender and Language*. 1:1, 173-205.
- 2006 Childs, Becky and Christine Mallinson. "Speaker Construction of Ethnolinguistic Identity: The Use of Lexical Items to Create Difference." *American Speech*. 81:1, 3-30.
- 2004 Mallinson, Christine and Becky Childs. "The Intersection of Regional and Ethnic Identity: African American English in Appalachia." *Journal of Appalachian Studies*. 10:1, 129-142.
- 2004 Childs, Becky and Christine Mallinson. "African American English in Appalachia: Dialect Accommodation and Substrate Influence." *English World Wide*. 25.1, 27-50.

- 2003 Herman, David, and Becky Childs. "Narrative and Cognition in Beowulf." *Style*. 37.2, 177-202.
- 2000 Wolfram, Walt, Becky Childs, and Benjamin Torbert. "Tracing Language History Through Consonant Cluster Reduction: Evidence from Isolated Dialects." *Journal of Southern Linguistics*. 24.1, 17-40.
- 2000 Childs, Becky and Benjamin Torbert. "Tracing Language History Through Consonant Cluster Reduction: Comparative Evidence from Isolated Dialects." *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics*, 12, 67-82.

Articles in refereed conference proceedings

- 2018 Childs, Becky and Joel Schreir. "Language and the Internet in the New South". *Conference Proceedings from Language Variation in the South Conference*. University of North Carolina Press.
- 2015 Mallinson, Christine and Becky Childs. "African American Women's Language in the Smoky Mountains of Appalachia." *Proceedings from LAVIS III*. 475-491.
- 2013 Childs, Becky and Gerard Van Herk. "Linguistic Superstars and Bit Players." *Methods in Dialectology 14 Conference Proceedings*. 139-148.
- 2010 Childs, Becky, et. al. "Stop signs: The intersection of interdental fricatives and identity in Newfoundland." *Penn Working Papers in Linguistics*. 16:2, 26-35.
- 2009 Van Herk, Gerard, Becky Childs, and Jennifer Thorburn. "Identity marking and affiliation in an urbanizing Newfoundland Community." In W. Cichocki (ed.), *Papers from the 31st Annual Meeting of the Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association/Actes du 31e Colloque annuel de l'Association de linguistique des provinces atlantiques*, 85-94.
- 2007 Kretzschmar, William, Sonja Lanehart, Bridget Anderson, and Becky Childs. "The Relevance of Community Language Studies to HEL: The View from Roswell." *Proceedings of the History of the English Language Conference*, 173-186.
- 2005 Mallinson, Christine and Becky Childs. *Communities of Practice in Sociolinguistic Description: African American Women's Language in Appalachia*. *Penn Working Papers in Linguistics*. 10:2, 1-14.

Articles in non-refereed journals

- 2006 Childs, Becky. "First Year on the Rock: A Sociolinguist Reflects on Language and Life in Newfoundland." *Regional Language Studies* 19, 25-26.
- 2003 Wolfram, Walt, Becky Childs, Jeffrey Reaser, and Benjamin Torbert. February 2003. "Bahamian English." *Language Magazine*. 3pp.

- 2003 Mallinson, Christine, Becky Childs, Bridget Anderson, and Neal Hutcheson. September 2003. "If These Hills Could Talk: Speech in the Great Smoky Mountains." *Language Magazine*. 4pp.

Booklets and Multimedia Publications

- 2018 Childs, Becky. "Dialectology." Oxford Encyclopedia of Linguistics.
- 2006 Childs, Becky and Christine Mallinson. "Voices of Texana." An audio chronicle of Appalachian African American Language, Culture, and History. 44pp.
- 2004 Childs, Becky, et al. "*Roswell Voices*." An oral history project of Roswell, GA. The Roswell Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Roswell Chamber of Commerce, and the Georgia Community Language Project. 52pp.
- 1999 Childs, Becky, et al. "*Ocracoke Speaks*." An audio chronicle of the Ocracoke dialect. The North Carolina Language and Life Project, North Carolina State University and the Ocracoke Preservation Society. 48pp.

Book Reviews

- 2022 Childs, Becky. "The View from Here." *American Speech* 97 (2): 220–224.
- 2014 Childs, Becky. Review of Warren Maguire and April McMahon, *Analysing Variation in English*. English World-Wide. 35 (1), 104-108.
- 2008 Childs, Becky. Review of Joan Beal, *Language and Region*. Journal of Sociolinguistics 12:1, 129-132.
- 2007 Childs, Becky. "Words Hearn Round the Smokies." Review of M. Montgomery, *Dictionary of Smoky Mountain English*. American Speech 82:3, 300-303.

Grants

- 2016 Collaborator, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant (Canada) with Gerard Van Herk. \$98,000. *Sisters under the Skin: Input, Maintenance and post-insularity in Atlantic based Englishes*. 3-year grant.
- 2008 Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada Grant. With Gerard Van Herk. \$58,363. *Urbanization and Rapid Change in Newfoundland English*. 3-year grant.
- 2006 ISER Research Grant. Memorial University of Newfoundland, \$8,000. *Isolation, Contact, and Speaker Attitudes: Sociophonetic Differences in Three Avalon Peninsula Communities*.
- 2006 J.R. Smallwood Foundation Research Grant. Memorial University of Newfoundland, \$2,871. *Isolation, Contact, and Speaker Attitudes: Sociophonetic Differences in Three Avalon Peninsula Communities*.

- 2005 National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant, \$9,768. *Investigating the Local Construction of Identity: Sociophonetic Variation in Smoky Mountain African American Women's Speech.*
- 2004 North Carolina Humanities Council Large Grant, \$9,655. *Voices of Texana Oral History Project.*

Other Professional Service Activities

National Scholarly Outreach/Service

NPR media coverage. A region talks back: Linguists record diverse dialects of Appalachia. <https://www.wunc.org/post/region-talks-back-linguists-record-diverse-dialects-appalachia>.

Editorial Board Membership

Editorial Board Member, Language and Linguistics Compass, Blackwell Publishers. 2008-present

Editorial Board Member, American Speech, Duke University Press. 2012- 2020.

Advisory Board Membership

Linguistic Atlas Project. University of Kentucky.

Professional Service at Coastal Carolina University

Adviser, Southern Studies Minor, Fall 2021-2022
 Member, University Budget and Finance Committee, Fall 2020-2022
 Member, University Intercollegiate Athletics Committee, Fall 2017-2022
 Adviser, Linguistics Minor, 2015-2022
 Panelist, "The Unwritten Rules of Academia," Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Fall 2020
 Member, University Promotion and Tenure Committee, Fall 2017 – 2020
 Organizing Committee, International Gullah/Geechee Conference, Fall 2019-Spring 2020
 Chair, Administrator Evaluation Committee, Spring 2018-Spring 2019
 Discussant, Women and Success, Wall College of Business, Spring 2015
 Member of the CETL Advisory Board, Coastal Carolina University, 2009-2013
 Member, COHFA Promotion and Tenure Committee, 2020-2021
 Member, COHFA Immediate Action Subcommittee on DEI, Summer 2020
 Member, COHFA Technology Committee, 2011-2017
 Member, COHFA Student Learning Committee, 2011-2017
 Member, COHFA Core Curriculum Ad Hoc Committee, 2015-2016
 Faculty Mentor for International Scholar, Fall 2010
 Peer Technology Mentor, Coastal Carolina University, Fall 2008
 Member, Marketing Committee, Department of English, 2019-2021