

## Writing Sample: Human Interest Feature Article

### **Mary Esslinger celebrates 30 years of academic advising at Pensacola State College**

Mary Esslinger, a Pensacola State College academic advisor, celebrated 30 years of advising and inspiring students with a warm Krispy Kreme donut and a growing virtual queue of people needing assistance.

On June 14, 1993, Esslinger began her career of supporting PSC students on their voyages toward success.

“I have a great history here. Every bit of it has been student-centered, and that is what has made me love my job,” she said.

Esslinger applied for the coordinator of Student Activities and Leadership role during one of her many trips to Pensacola to visit with her sister.

“I was looking one day in The Chronicle of Higher Education, something that many of us in the field frequently read and use, and I saw a job announcement for Pensacola Junior College,” she said.

At the time, Esslinger was the director of Student Life at Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama, and had no intentions of leaving her role there. However, after being offered the opportunity to work for the then-named Pensacola Junior College, the city with sugar-white sand beaches became her home.

When asked about the difficulty of being an academic advisor, Mary mentioned that it is vital for an advisor to take care of their mental health due to some of the topics discussed with students during a typical meeting.

“We cater to an underserved population in many different aspects, [and those students] are excited to be able to have a chance to get an education, get out, and do something that people they’ve been around never got a chance to do,” she said.

According to her current Humanities and Social Sciences colleagues, Esslinger embodies Pensacola State College’s mission and vision statements completely, with love and grace.

“Witnessing this amazing woman work with students should be labeled a master course. She’s their advisor, life coach, mentor, cheerleader, therapist and surrogate parent at times,” said Mr. Scott Schackmann, the Humanities and Social Sciences Department Head.

Congratulations to Mary Esslinger on 30 years of intentional and warmhearted support of the Pensacola State College community.