Meet Dr. Sarah Hercula: New ETC Assistant Chair for Undergraduate Studies

In August 2025, Dr. Sarah Hercula, associate professor of linguistics, stepped into a new leadership role as the department's Assistant Chair for Undergraduate Studies. She is only the third faculty member to hold the position since its creation, following Dr. Kathryn Northcut (2022–2024) and Dr. Carleigh Davis (2024–2025). While she brings nearly a decade of experience teaching in the ETC program, the administrative responsibilities of this role introduce a new dimension to her work with students.

As the department's undergraduate chair, Hercula supports students from the moment they express interest in the program through graduation. Her duties range from answering inquiries to assisting with curriculum management to advising the department's BS majors. As advisor, she oversees key processes such as degree audits, scheduling and permissions, substitutions and waivers, and experiential learning approvals, while collaborating with the graduate assistant chair to ensure GTP students move smoothly into their advanced coursework.

The transition into this multi-layered role has been both challenging and energizing. "This was a brand new role for me when I started over the summer, and I had to hit the ground running very quickly," Hercula explained. Much of her early work has focused on mastering the systems behind student progress, including the tools used to track enrollment, degree requirements, and advising milestones. She has also spent significant time meeting with campus partners to better understand how undergraduate policies align with ETC's programs and advising practices.

Dr. Sarah Hercula (pictured above in her office) advises all undergraduate majors in the Department of English and Technical Communication. She began her new role as Assistant Department Chair for Undergraduate Studies in August 2025.

Despite the rapid learning curve, she says the heart of the job has already become clear. "The best part has been meeting with the students, speaking to them individually, and finding out what their goals are." For her, advising is not simply a procedural obligation but an extension of the student-centered teaching philosophy that drives her work in linguistic justice and writing instruction. Each meeting gives her the opportunity to better understand the needs, ambitions, and challenges of ETC's undergraduates.

Hercula believes "you never arrive as a teacher." In her new role, she hopes to bring that same spirit of continual growth to advising, noting that "there are always new things we can learn and improve upon."