

# Front Page News Story Archive

July 2020



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# News Stories Posted Thursday July 2, 2020



## Alumni Weekend takes on a new format

[University Advancement](#) : Thursday July 2, 2020

Georgia College is preparing for a virtual Alumni Weekend to be held Nov. 6 and 7. Events will be listed in upcoming months.

"We intend to hold the formal 50<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion for the Class of 1970 and 'A Night Under the Stars Gala' in spring, if it is safe to do so at that time," said Tre' Johnson, assistant director of alumni awards, collaborations and reunions. "We are working now to ensure we have several virtual events in November, which incorporate some of the most popular activities during Alumni Weekend."

Although virtual interactions won't have the same appeal for all alumni and friends, it is only a temporary solution, due to the COVID-19 pandemic social distancing guidelines.





## Mark your calendars to join us for Alumni Weekend 2020!

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and our desire to keep all of our alumni and friends safe and healthy, we have decided to make Alumni Weekend 2020 completely virtual. Since we are unable to celebrate your reunion in person, we look forward to providing you all with a unique virtual experience! A schedule of events and registration information will be announced in the upcoming months.

During Alumni Weekend, we will be hosting our Alumni Awards. Do you know of someone worthy of receiving an award that you would like to nominate? You can learn more about all of our award categories and submit your nominations online at [gcsu.edu/alumni/awards](https://gcsu.edu/alumni/awards). The deadline to nominate is Sept. 1, 2020.



Plan now for virtual Alumni Weekend.

"We understand that since around March, a lot of people's daily lives and

interactions have been virtual, and many people look forward to a resumption of more normal interactions,” Johnson said. “We pride ourselves on offering alumni and friends the events they want and will work with our alumni, friends and campus partners to create a unique set of events that will encourage them to spend a virtual weekend with us.”

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**“We have some great activities lined up, but alumni should have a stake in the decision making. As we begin to roll out events, getting your fellow alumni, friends and loved ones to register will also assist us in creating a unique experience for all involved.”**

**- Tre' Johnson**

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The Alumni Awards Ceremony promises to be festive and filled with more visuals this year.

“The plan is still in the works, but we have every intention of hosting the Alumni Awards Ceremony virtually,” said Johnson. “I am confident it will still be an event we can all enjoy and remember.”

Approximately 20 to 30 staff members are expected to help facilitate Alumni Weekend. It will be the typical mix of alumni affinity groups, alumni chapters and a few departments on campus.

Johnson believes future Alumni Weekends will return to normal in-person events beginning in 2021.

“I think this year’s Virtual Alumni Weekend will allow us to explore all-inclusive (not specific to classes or alumni groups/chapters, etc.) and life-long learning activities to utilize in the future,” he said.

“However, virtual reunions will become a big part of our future,” he said. “While we fully expect to have in-person alumni events and reunions in the future, virtual reunions will help us engage alumni who can’t make it out to public venues, because they have physical or travel limitations, kids, work obligations, etc.”

Feedback on Georgia College’s virtual reunions has been positive.

“Alumni have enjoyed being able to connect with their friends and fellow classmates in a time of isolation,” said Johnson. “The more we continue to involve alumni in the process of deciding which events are most appealing to them, the

more successful their virtual reunions will be.”

University Advancement invites alumni to participate now in virtual Alumni Weekend by offering their ideas.

“We have some great activities lined up, but alumni should have a stake in the decision making,” said Johnson. “As we begin to roll out events, getting your fellow alumni, friends and loved ones to register will also assist us in creating a unique experience for all involved.”

According to Johnson, participating in Alumni Weekend is important because it allows us to unite the Georgia College family once again.

“It does not matter if you are Peabody, a Jessie, a Royal Irish or Thunderphant, a Colonial or a Bobcat,” he said. “You are all still a part of the Georgia College family. It will be different than in year’s past, but our standard of excellence and preeminence still applies. We look forward to providing the experience of a lifetime to our alumni and friends Nov. 6 and 7.”

To learn more, refer to future issues of eConnection, find the [Alumni Association on Facebook](#) and [Alumni Association Instagram](#) or contact Tre’ Johnson at [trejuan.johnson@gcsu.edu](mailto:trejuan.johnson@gcsu.edu).





## Using automobiles to help students grasp physics

[University Communications](#) : Thursday July 2, 2020

At the age of five, Zachary Wolff, '20, developed a passion for automobiles. He recalls sitting in the backseat of his mother's car, where he would peer out the window and name the makes and models of the cars driving by. As he grew older, he perused automotive manufacturers' websites to read about specific models and what made them special. Now, he will use that knowledge and what he gained at Georgia College in a prestigious Fellowship at Clemson University.

At Georgia College, Wolff served as a lab assistant for introductory physics courses. He combined his love of automobiles with physics to help students understand the lessons.

"I tried to connect many of the concepts of the labs in PHYS 1111L to the real world," he said.

Wolff came up with the idea of referencing automobiles to physics and asked the professor if he could make this happen.

"Professor Dr. Sharon Careccia allowed me to be very independent in how I assisted with instructing the labs," Wolff said. "She encouraged me to make real-world connections to help solidify the students' understandings of the concepts. She also introduced the students to the concepts. Then, it was up to me to make

sure the students correctly proceeded through the labs with the correct understanding of the overall concepts.”

Wolff helped students in the lab better understand ‘rotational inertia’—an object’s resistance to change motion.

“The lab centered around the difference in rotational inertia between a disk and a ring,” Wolff said. A disk’s mass is evenly spread out over its diameter, whereas a ring’s mass is concentrated over the outside edge of the ring.”

“I proposed this real-world question: ‘Say you had the choice of two sets of wheels and tires for your car—one with a similar rotational inertia to the disk and one with a similar rotational inertia to the ring,’” he said. “Which would you choose for your car and why?”

Most of the students, he said, made the connection that you would want a wheel and tire set with a low rotational inertia, as a low rotational inertia means it would take less energy to get and keep those wheels and tires turning—resulting in lower fuel consumption and reduced emissions.”

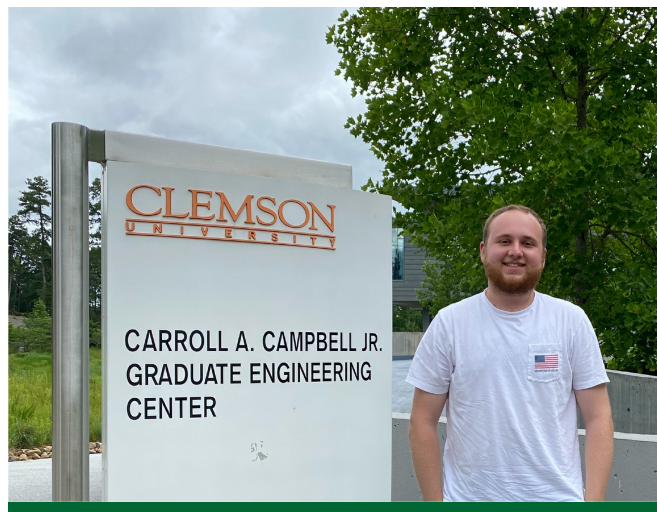
When Wolff wasn’t helping to teach other students, he was learning from the outstanding faculty in the physics department.

“Dr. Hastitha Mahabaduge was my research advisor,” he said. “He pushed me to research what I was passionate about—autonomous vehicles.”

Dr. Hauke Busch was his second academic advisor, who urged Wolff to graduate early and get a master’s at Clemson University.

“In our meetings, we would often discuss automotive trends toward electric vehicles and upcoming automotive technologies,” said Wolff.

Dr. Kenneth McGill’s Advanced Skills Labs were Wolff’s first experience with hands-on machining. There, he learned to gain valuable techniques necessary for him to know in the future, especially at Clemson, when fabricating parts for a concept vehicle.



Zachary Wolff at Clemson University for his Fellowship.

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**“My hope is that these students continue on with their interest in the sciences. I also hope that they can connect concepts from their classrooms to the real world and go on to help their fellow students to understand science.”**

**- Zachary Wolff**

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Wolff also enjoyed having discussions with Dr. Donovan Domingue. He would frequently ask him about his Tesla.

After assisting Careccia in the lab, Wolff felt prepared for his graduate assistantships at Clemson.

Dr. Michael Pangia’s physics classes centered on computer programming, which also helped prepare Wolff for the use of computer programs that aid in calculations and modeling—something that’s important in the world of autonomous vehicles.

Dr. Ralph France’s class was the most challenging class he ever took at Georgia College. Wolff plans to take the perseverance he gained through that class with him to Clemson.





Zachary Wolff, pictured in the back-center, assists in the lab.

“Dr. Arash Bodaghee was the most passionate professor I had while at Georgia College,” he said. “His lecturers were the most memorable, due to his enthusiasm.”

But, none of these accomplishments would’ve been possible without Dr. Chavonda Mills, who officially signed off on numerous documents, approving Wolff’s overloaded schedule and research proposals. This allowed him to graduate early and get into Clemson’s Automotive Engineering program.

After graduating from Clemson University, Wolff plans to be an automotive engineer for a major automotive company. He plans to give back to the global community in terms of automotive safety.

“I will continue my research with autonomous vehicles I started at Georgia College, at Clemson and hope to, one day, see my idea for a device that can be added to many vehicles that would enable a warning of an imminent collision and automatic braking to prevent a collision,” he said.

The liberal arts experience at Georgia College allowed him to gain important skills outside of his major.



“Communication and planning were a few of the major parts that allowed me to graduate early as I would have to communicate with several parties in regards to my schedule planning and research proposal,” Wolff said. “Without this communication and planning, I would not be where I am today and on the path I’m on.”

“Georgia College didn’t just help me land the Engineering Fellowship at Clemson University, they helped me land my acceptance into the Automotive Engineering Program as well,” he said.

Considering Clemson is a Research 1 university, Wolff is most looking forward to the plentiful research opportunities there.

Georgia College also helped instill a sense of community spirit in Wolff. As a member of the Physics Club, he enjoyed volunteering to set up and judge the university’s annual Science Fair. He was happy to give back and enjoyed seeing the enthusiasm of young children at the fair, as well as the look of understanding on the faces of fellow students he assisted in labs.

Eventually, Wolff would like to offer scholarships for students with a particular interest in the automotive field.

In the meantime, Wolff wants the Georgia College students he assisted in the lab to have a better understanding of physics.

“My hope is they continue on with their interest in the sciences,” he said. “I also hope that they can connect concepts from their classrooms to the real world and go on to help their fellow students to understand science.”



## Educator continues to make a difference in the lives of students

[University Advancement](#) : Thursday July 2, 2020

Anne Tuck Spillers, '70, has always been a leader. From her time at Georgia College in the late '60s until now, she's known the importance of being involved in school, work and community. And, it shows. She's earned the prestigious Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities in 1970 and Teacher of the Year in 1992. Anne traces her inspiration for leadership back to Georgia College.

"All of my curricular and extra-curricular activities at Georgia College helped me in life," she said. "If there was something I could contribute, I was certainly willing to do so. I know the value of working hard to achieve what you want."

While attending Georgia College, Anne represented her class as co-chair of the Honor Council—a challenge she recalls as hard work. She was also a member of the College Government Association, which taught her responsibility, and a member of the Literary Guild, which catered to her love of literature.



Anne Tuck Spillers as a freshman class officer, pictured lower left, at Georgia College in 1967.

She has fond memories of The Golden Slipper competition. First-year students worked with upperclassmen for two weeks to prepare for their performance.

“Getting ready for the Golden Slipper competition was a lot of work, but a lot of fun,” Anne said. “We constructed everything from the sets to the costumes. We also learned the music. We sang all the time and gave quite the performance.”

The competition fostered leadership and teambuilding skills. Juniors came up with the ideas and taught first-year students, so when they became upperclassmen, they could do the same for first-year students.

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**“Georgia College was a wonderful choice for me. As a young person, I didn’t realize what a gift it was. I think you have to mature a little bit and have a few life experiences to appreciate it. So many of my experiences there prepared me for my profession, adult life and involvement in the community. I am forever grateful for my years at Georgia College.”**



“We learned a lot from the juniors and passed it on,” she said. “It showed me how to be a follower and take directions from a leader. In turn, when I was in my leadership roles later in life, I could apply what I learned. The experience also taught me how to delegate—not thinking I have to do it all myself.”

Her involvement at Georgia College taught her professionalism and how to work with others. Educators like Mary Thomas Maxwell—who’s remembered in the naming of the Maxwell Student Union—made lasting impressions on Anne. Her Georgia College experience formed her as a teacher.

Anne taught English, language arts, literature, grammar and Georgia history to seventh and eighth grade students. She especially loved teaching grammar, thanks to Maxwell.

Anne dedicated her years as an educator to the success of her students.

“I wanted them to know that I cared about them,” she said. “I also wanted their parents to know, when the time came for conferences or other meetings, I cared for them and I was putting forth my best effort.”

Later in her teaching career, when she became a media specialist, Anne was named the Palmer-Stone Elementary 1992 Teacher of the Year. It was an affirming award, since she was chosen for the award from a pool of around 35 teachers.

“It was rare in those days that a media specialist would be considered as Teacher of the Year,” she said. “Many people thought of the media specialist position as being a ‘cushy’ job. That wasn’t the case.”

Outside of her job, being active in the community has always been important to Anne.

For 25 years, she’s volunteered at her church’s library, cataloguing books and reading stories to children. She’s also been a member of Alpha Delta Kappa sorority since 1983, serving as president for two years. In addition, she co-chaired the Palmer-Stone Elementary Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Review Committee for a year.

“I think you get a great feeling of accomplishment by serving your community,” said Anne. “We’re a community, so we need to pull together. I think it’s incumbent upon those who have been given much to contribute to making the area where we live a better place.”

Now, she and her husband, AJ, want to help undergraduate English majors, enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, by offering an endowed family scholarship. They want to help students in financial need, so they can attend college. The couple hopes the scholarship will help serious-minded students prepare for their careers.

“We have been very blessed,” said Anne’s husband, AJ. “We are fortunate to be able to offer this to students who have the smarts and just need the financial aid to get a better education. We hope they use that knowledge to help others.”

Anne is glad she chose to attend college—a decision she feels led her down the path to success.

“Georgia College was a wonderful choice for me,” Anne said. “As a young person, I didn’t realize what a gift it was. I think you have to mature a little bit and have a few life experiences to appreciate it. So many of my experiences there prepared me for my profession, adult life and involvement in the community. I am forever grateful for my years at Georgia College.”

To learn how you can contribute to student success in the College of Arts and Sciences, contact Bob Preston at [bob.preston@gcsu.edu](mailto:bob.preston@gcsu.edu) or visit our [giving website](#).



Anne and AJ Spillers



## Alumni couple offers local and fresh dining experience

[University Advancement](#) : Thursday July 2, 2020

When it comes to taking risks, Alex Windover, '10, and Sarah Luttrell Windover, '10, went against the grain. Their journey to owning their destination restaurant "Reina Mora Kitchen & Supper Club" in Puerto Rico began when they graduated from Georgia College. Since then, the couple's professions have taken them to Atlanta, Chicago and New York City, where Alex was a chef in many fine dining establishments, and Sarah was a corporate recruiter. Alex worked nights, while Sarah worked days, so they rarely spent time together.

"We were trapped in separate career paths," said Alex. "I cooked at traditional fine dining restaurants, and Sarah was in the corporate world. We had a vision to open our own place since we graduated from Georgia College. So, it was time to go ahead and do our own thing."

The couple moved to a small town in western Puerto Rico just before the deadly, Cat-five Hurricane Maria hit in September 2017. Three months later, they established pop-up eateries in various locations, then built Reina Mora in 2019—an intimate, open kitchen and restaurant at the home of Alex and Sarah, who live on the top floor.

Sarah drew on the knowledge she gained from Georgia College in opening and promoting Reina Mora. In addition, she reached out to [Bobcats for Business](#) to tell

her and Alex's story.

### [Bobcats for Business](#)

showcases videos of Georgia College alumni who are business owners. Here, alumni can share how they got started and their success stories, as well as promote their business.

"I used a lot of what I learned from my communications and marketing classes at Georgia College in building our website, promotions and any marketing piece that we did," she said. "They helped me a great deal."

The couple wanted to open a business that was different than any other type of restaurant. To help build their business model, Alex wanted it to be opposite of everything he had seen in the restaurant environment.

"We're really flexible, dynamic and small. It's just the two of us," Sarah said. "I run the front house, and Alex runs everything in back of the house. And, we offer seasonality and food that comes to us locally from farmers who we've partnered with over the last three years. Eighty-five to 90 percent of the food we serve is local."

Every week their menu is new and different, based on seasonal produce and meats available from farmers. There are just four courses on the tasting menu for restaurant guests.



Alex and Sarah Windover at Reina Mora Kitchen and Supper Club in Puerto Rico.





Alex and Sarah use fresh produce and proteins from local farmers.

“Our restaurant is about availability and abundance,” said Sarah. “We tell our guests what they’re going to eat as opposed to them ordering what they’re going to eat.”

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**“It’s really important to listen to our patrons. And, they want local food. The most enjoyable thing about what we do is serve pure food.”**

**- Sarah Windover**

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“When our guests come in, they tell us if they have any allergies, then we’ll adjust it based on that,” said Alex. “Otherwise, it’s just four dishes that’s based on the food we find that week. One of our farmers just killed a pig, so pork is going to be on the menu. And it’s also mango season, so that will be on the menu as well.”

“We just established our restaurant as being the place in town that keeps food local,” said Sarah. “And our patrons know where their food is coming from when they dine with us. And so, we always have a lot of return guests, who wonder what’s going to be different than the food we’ve served the week before.”

Sarah feels that her communications major and rhetoric minor proves helpful in her daily interactions.



“Dr. Dillard was my rhetoric professor. I use a lot of his teachings every day at our business at Reina Mora, because I am always speaking to all of our guests.”

Alex’s major was history. His History Professor Dr. Pharr taught him the value of gathering information from various reliable sources.

“We didn’t know how to grow food in a tropical environment,” said Alex. “I think it’s just ingrained in me from doing so much research in college to find proper information.”

“Everything that I wrote about had to come from good sources,” he said. “Getting accurate information is crucial. If you’re using the same source too much, you can create bias, so I had to figure out better ways to source information. And, that’s what we do down here. We try to find different purveyors, so we can cook with new ingredients.”

The couple’s restaurant is in the heart of the community.

“We don’t feed tourists,” said Sarah. “We get some people who come across the island from San Juan. But for the most part, we get repeat guests from the west coast of the island who want food that’s growing around them.”

“The town we live in is very rural. We didn’t know anyone when we moved here. So, a lot of what we did was build our own family here. And, a lot of that is being involved in the community.”

The couple purchases their produce from the weekly farmer’s market.

“We turn that food from this farmer’s market into our product that we sell at our restaurant,” said Sarah. “Many of our patrons are small business owners, as well. So, it’s an entire ecosystem that’s built upon and supporting one another.”

This was the case even during the COVID-19 pandemic. The couple had access to all of the produce and proteins, even when the local farmer’s market was shut down. They were able to use their connections with farmers and to get food for their patrons.

“It’s really important to listen to our patrons,” said Sarah. “And, they want local food. The most enjoyable thing about what we do is serve pure food.”

The secret to success for Alex and Sarah is they made their business extremely bullet-proof or anti-fragile.

“We’ve faced a hurricane, had an earthquake in early 2020 and now we’ve gone through COVID, and we’re really proud that our business has remained profitable,”

she said. “The reason is that we’re able to turn things around quickly and can pivot in any direction we need to.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, they kept their same business model of keeping costs low, using mostly local produce and being flexible by offering take-out dishes. Now, they’re back to serving dishes in the restaurant.

“When our patrons walk into the restaurant, they’re coming into our home,” said Sarah. “I hope they feel a sense of connectedness and community. I hope that they feel they are getting a taste of Puerto Rico—experiencing something new and original and that they think back on the night they dined here.”

Taking risks by deviating from the standard career track, was the greatest decision they feel they ever made.



The entrance to Reina Mora Restaurant and Supper Club.

“I think by choosing to take that leap, it just feels like this decision put us in the exact place where we should be,” said Sarah. “We’re really grateful for the island and how all the people here have just accepted us and treat us like family.”

Alex and Sarah feel lucky to have gotten their start at Georgia College.

“There’s something about the environment that connected us, and we’re grateful for that,” said Sarah. “That was our meeting place and it’s our story. When we think back, we think fondly of it, and know that all of this started at Georgia College. Without going there, we wouldn’t be here.”

The Georgia College Foundation presents the [Bobcats for Business](https://www.bobcatsforbusiness.com) Directory. This directory is intended as a service and resource for our alumni. At Georgia College, we celebrate "Leading Creatively," and we are proud of our Bobcat entrepreneurs and business leaders. If you are an alumni member and business owner, and you would like your business included in this directory, please visit our website: [bobcatsforbusiness.com](https://www.bobcatsforbusiness.com).



# News Stories Posted Monday July 6, 2020



## Special education major seeks to help students with undetected learning disabilities

[University Communications](#) : Monday July 6, 2020

Ileana Dejesus has a heart for helping others. An experience early in life that lead her to follow her passion in education by pursuing a major in special education.

In elementary school, Dejesus had a best friend who was impacted by a learning disability. The two did everything together, and were often compared to each other, but her friend sometimes struggled in school.

“People would always say that ‘school wasn’t for her’ and things like that,” said Dejesus. “In the tenth grade, she got tested, and it turns out that she has an undetected learning disability. That’s why she did not thrive in school, and that really made me sad that her whole academic career she had been told that ‘school wasn’t for her’ when she really could’ve thrived if she had the resources.”

It was her friend’s experience that lead her to her major.

“I had always wanted to be a teacher, but after that I decided on special education

so that I could help students that might have undetected learning disabilities in the classroom,” she said.

A rising junior, Dejesus is from Stockbridge, Georgia, where she attended a small, racially diverse Christian school. She was a high school football cheerleader and lead a small group of middle school girls at her church. Settling in at college was a struggle in the beginning, but Dejesus credits her time at Georgia College so far as having had an important and positive impact on her personal growth.



Dejesus participating in GC Gives, August 2018

“Being at Georgia College my freshman year encouraged me to think about who exactly I was, what I thought and what I stood for and then forced me to find friends and staff that stood for and believed the same things.”

As someone who is passionate about helping others, it is no surprise that Dejesus has discovered an interest in human rights, focusing on current social issues such as the Black Lives Matter movement, women’s rights, and access to healthcare.

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**I took my GC2Y named ‘Rebel Girls’ with Audrey Redmond. She really taught me to demand equality and justice. She also made me feel very empowered and ready to be an activist.**

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During her sophomore year, Dejesus met several professors who have mentored her along the way.

“I took my GC2Y named ‘Rebel Girls’ with Audrey Redmond. She really taught me to demand equality and justice. She also made me feel very empowered and ready to be an activist. Audrey really exposed me to a lot of issues around the world and how to handle those.”

Dejesus was also impacted Dr. Jim Winchester through his Survey of Philosophy course. “Dr. Winchester was honestly a delight to be in a class with. He was educated and devoted to hearing his students. The books he assigned helped expose his students to different authors and narratives that we might not have been exposed to before. He really helped me take a deeper look at what I believe and why. I really appreciate him, as well.”

While away from Georgia College over the summer, Dejesus says she has missed two things the most.

“My community of friends and the library. My friends are educated, loud, bold and strong, and I miss being around them. Also, I really love the library. The environment is inviting and it’s where I got most of my work done before COVID-19, so I really miss that, too. At the library, me and my friends could take a quick nap, study or laugh as loud as we wanted. I really loved that.”

After graduation, Dejesus hopes to work at a school in a low-income community.

“There tends to be a lot of undetected learning disabilities in this area, and I hope to work in a classroom to help some those students who do not have the resources to get tested or extra help,” she said. “I could also see myself working at a non-profit a little later in life.”

When asked what advice she would give to incoming freshmen, Dejesus emphasizes finding your people, your place and your passion.

“Find a good group of friends and staff members who support and encourage you. Find a place on campus where you can totally be and express yourself. Finally, find something here that fuels your passion and makes you excited for your future.



[illegible]

Japan. Turkey. Mali. Spain. Venezuela. Australia.

Since its inception in 2014, Georgia College scholars have deposited 2,398 works into the Knowledge Box. These works include theses and dissertations, undergraduate research, faculty scholarship and Library Special Collections.

- Dr. Shaundra Walker, associate professor of library science and interim

## director of Georgia College's Russell Library



Dr. Shaundra Walker

The most downloaded articles in the Knowledge Box are from “The Corinthian,” Georgia College’s annually published journal on graduate and undergraduate research. To put this in perspective, consider the numbers: *The Corinthian* accounts for just 8 percent of the total items deposited, but its articles have been downloaded 111,502 times.

“Graduate and undergraduate research from Georgia College is very impactful, as evidenced by the variety of scholarly and governmental institutions accessing this material,” said Jennifer Townes, assistant professor of library science and scholarly communication librarian. “Students can use these metrics in their resumes, CVs, and in graduate school applications to give them an edge.”

“Our students are producing research that is useful for both scholars and practitioners,” said Walker. “Our most popular paper, ‘Music Education for Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Teachers, Parents and Students,’ which has been downloaded almost 7,500 times, is a student publication.”

April 2020 was the busiest month to date for the Knowledge Box, due, in part, to the university transitioning to online learning as a result of COVID-19. In April 2020 alone, there were 11,725 downloads.



Jennifer Townes

“Open access is extraordinarily important, particularly in this time of the pandemic and all-virtual access to information,” explained Townes. “Interlibrary loan services are dealing with increased demand, and institutional budgets are increasingly dedicated to digital materials. When research is available with no restriction, it not only gets cited more often, but it is more available for classroom use as well.”

For Walker, access to information is crucial in advancing the library’s mission.

“Open Access is vitally important because the scholarly communication system as we know it is fundamentally broken and unsustainable. Georgia

College is very fortunate, particularly for an institution of its size, to have the



infrastructure to support open access, including the Knowledge Box and Jennifer's position as scholarly communication librarian," said Walker. "We have the capacity to make the research that is produced here more discoverable to the public, which to me, is very much in line with our mission as Georgia's designated public liberal arts university."

With open access becoming the standard in global research, Walker sees the opportunity for more contributions to the Knowledge Box.

"My hope is that we will collect even more research from the Georgia Community, especially the faculty, as well as the various institutes and centers on campus," she said. "I'm also interested in using the Knowledge Box to support research data management."

The following are just a few of the highlights from the Knowledge Box:

The top three most popular items from the Knowledge Box come from "The Corinthian."

#### [Music Education for Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Teachers, Parents, and Students](#)

7,384 downloads since 2017. Most of these downloads are from researchers at educational institutions such as the North Carolina Research and Education Network, the Georgia Department of Education, the US Department of Education and the New South Wales (Australia) Department of Education.

#### [Rhetoric in Comedy: How Comedians Use Persuasion and How Society Uses Comedians](#)

5,937 downloads. The researchers using this article are from many colleges and universities, such as the University of Missouri, University of Central Florida, Appalachian State and University of California Irvine. This article has also been mentioned on Twitter.

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# News Stories Posted Wednesday July 8, 2020



## Meet the Faculty: From art degree to education— Professor guides future educators

[Teacher Education, Department of](#) : Wednesday July 8, 2020

Growing up in a multicultural family in Tehran, Iran, Dr. Yeprem Mehranian always saw the importance of language and learning.

“I’m an Armenian that was born in Iran. I grew up bilingual, initially Armenian and Persian,” said Mehranian, associate professor of foundations of education at Georgia College. “In my own family, my mom spoke French Persian and Armenian. My dad spoke Persian, Armenian and Azeri Turkish. There was always Russian around and other languages, so the whole thing of being multilingual and multicultural was around me from the time I was young.”

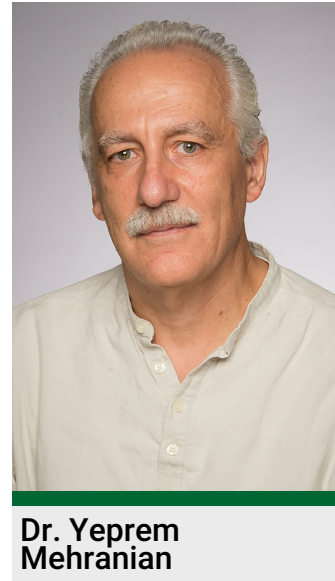
He also studied English early on. “Not the best curriculum,” he said, but he was also able to take private lessons. That knowledge helped open doors for him to attend college in the U.S.

“My dad wanted me to study medicine at the medical school in Iran, but the exams were extremely competitive,” he said.

Mehranian says he sort of “rebelled against the idea of acquiescing to one’s parents’ wishes, only because it would lead one to positions of prestige and power” after coming to the U.S. in the 1970s during the youth and antiwar movement. Or, he admits, that’s at least what he thought at the time.

“I went to college to study fine arts, much to the chagrin of my father because he didn’t know why I wanted to do that.”

Mehranian excelled in art school, receiving his undergraduate and master’s degrees painting. After graduation, he found himself in New York City working in an art store.



“Once you graduate with an art degree, the choices are limited. You either teach school or make a name for yourself within the art world, which it’s difficult,” he said. “I was both apprehensive about the difficulties involved in making a name in the art world and critical of the process of creative works being bought and sold.”

For a long time, there lingered in the back of his mind the thought of becoming a teacher. He was actually intrigued by the idea of being in a space—the classroom—where you could have discussions about the world with other people, students, teachers, administrators and parents.

That idea and philosophy allowed him to expand his educational portfolio with a teaching certificate where he then began teaching elementary students in New York City public schools. Over the years, he taught third through fifth grade in several locations and was a university instructor in his ethnic home of Armenia, which he had never visited before that time.

Mehranian completed his Ed.D. degree at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and went on to serve as an administrator at a private school in San Francisco. The Armenian day school had a dual curriculum, comprised of the California State Standards and Armenian Studies. But when the Great Recession happened, he started to rethink his role in education, which led him to higher education and, specifically, Georgia College.

“

**“My work as a teacher and university faculty member is that I want to see the highest number of students be exposed to and receive a quality education**

“I would love to see it where the values of the society are less on competing with one another and seeing who could get ahead,” he said, “but they’re more about collaborating with one another and appreciating the role each person plays.”



Mehranian (far left) at a discussion on religion.

Mehranian expands on that belief in his undergraduate and graduate courses in the College of Education, both on-campus and online. He also teaches several GC1Y and GC2Y courses, sharing his cultures and expanding students’ exposure to ideas outside of their norm.

The GC1Y is called “Cultures and Youth of the Middle East.” The two GC2Ys are titled, “Globalization, Culture and

Education” and “Reinterpreting Our Experiences of the World,” which is an art studio course that examines the intersection of visual arts and social issues.

“It’s been a great opportunity for me that Georgia College offered me the opportunity to explore some of my interdisciplinary work and share it with students in these courses,” he said.

Teaching the art studio course actually reignited his artistic instinct and got him back drawing. He also plans to start painting again soon.

Outside the classroom, Mehranian thinks of himself as a “defender of issues of social justice” and encourages his students and others to value, embrace and practice diversity. Over the last several years, he’s been highly involved in the Social Justice Dialogue Series, sponsored by the Diversity Committee of the College of Education. The committee organizes guest speakers, lectures, film discussions and more for the campus community.

Whether in the classroom, the art studio or in his own life, Mehranian always looks to continue to learn and engage with others. He hopes his work allows others to also grow, learn and discover new ideas.

“For all students, whatever it is that’s around them, whatever it is that they’re studying, I think they should be exposed to the idea of asking questions to become

more critical thinkers and become a person who challenges what he or she has been taught within his or her own family and community,” he said.



# News Stories Posted Thursday July 9, 2020



## Mind Travel: Pandemic turns study abroad course into lesson in adaptability

[English, Department of](#) : Thursday July 9, 2020

In May—with the coronavirus still raging throughout the world and people confined to home—one Georgia College class found a temporary reprieve through writing.

### [Travel writing from home replaces trip to Ireland.](#)

Unable to physically travel to Ireland, Dr. Kerry Neville's creative writing class learned they could explore in unexpected ways—traveling from memory or imagination, viewing their surroundings through fresh lenses. Students revisited past trips, created fantasy worlds and turned ordinary sites, like backyards and kitchens, into portholes of discovery.

Ultimately, the possibilities were as endless as their four walls were constricting.

"Initially, being stuck at home, what is there to write about for a travel piece? It seems like an oxymoron," said Neville, a creative writing professor and coordinator of the Masters of Fine Arts and Undergraduate Creative Writing Program.

“

**We had to find creative ways to engage in travel, whether it was being more mindful on a walk around the block or relying on powers of invention.**

**- Dr. Kerry Neville**

”

“We had to find creative ways to engage in travel,” she said, “whether it was being more mindful on a walk around the block or relying on powers of invention.”

When students, staff and faculty were sent home in March, because of COVID-19, Neville was faced with double disappointment. Her carefully-planned classes suddenly went virtual and a long-awaited, student trip to Ireland was canceled. That three-week trip was to be Georgia College’s first study abroad to emphasize creative writing.

Not only did Neville shift and quickly refocus coursework online—but she had to devise a way to turn her new travel writing course—by its very nature something that requires movement—into movement-restricted exercises.



Dingle Peninsula in Ireland.



Students would've hiked and biked over 100 miles along the western coastal paths of Ireland, staying at bed-and-breakfast inns and boating to the ancient, picturesque Aran Islands in Galway Bay—stopping along the way to write in their journals. In its place, the 12 who took Neville's reimagined "Travel Writing at Home" course were confined to their imaginations, relishing minute details in their own bedrooms. Instead of meeting Irish writers in person, they studied authors like Meghan Daum, who wrote "What Makes a House a Home?" and Xavier de Maistre who, under house arrest in the 18th century, wrote "A Journey Round my Room."

Noticing the little things, turns out, is what travel writers do.

"That's one of the valuable things outsiders can bring to a culture they're visiting," Neville said. "They're looking with fresh eyes. They're paying attention in ways that those who live there might take for granted. So, paying attention to where we live, there are things that can surprise us."



Neville teaching on campus, before COVID-19.

One of Neville's writing prompts became: "Journey Around Your Bedroom." Other prompts asked students to sit outside and simply listen for 15 minutes or look out a window and see something they never noticed before.

Neville did this herself, too. During the pandemic, she wrote a travel-at-home piece for Lonely Planet, called "How quarantine gave me a new appreciation for home." In it, she writes how she knew nothing of the trees and bushes in her yard and set about researching their names. Writing helped Neville let go. She learned to be at peace, while staying put,

and even discovered a new friend who thumped against her door. The giant gopher tortoise came unexpectedly into her life—also traveling while sheltering-in-place—at home, in his shell.

This kind of storytelling can be therapeutic. It helped both the professor and her students forget their troubles, at least for a time.

“

**Writing's a good outlet for stress. It was a way for us to keep telling stories, even though it felt like nothing was happening in the world or in our lives, because we were all staying at home. I looked forward to reading their stories every day. It got me out of my own house and into their worlds.**

**- Dr. Kerry Neville**

”

One world was that of senior creative writing major Jake Dallas of Sharpsburg, Georgia. At first, Dallas was “bummed out” about losing Ireland. Then, he was skeptical about travel writing from home. It seemed like a “paradox.” But he’d heard good things about Neville’s classes and decided to give it a try. The course gave structure and meaning to his days at home and helped him “grow as a person.” It was a “creative outlet through all the insanity in the world.”

For his final piece, Dallas wrote about a mission trip he took to Jamaica in high school. As he reflected, nagging contradictions about the journey surfaced. He examined expressions of American superiority and condescension toward less-developed countries.



Senior Jake Dallas reviewing assigned reading at home.

“I had not thought about travel writing as a thing to be done from confinement,” Dallas said. “Of course, that’s not ideal. But there’s a lot of insight that can be taken when you’re by yourself and you’re thinking ... It can be really enlightening.”

“

**I had a great time. It doesn't replace Ireland, and no one is saying it does. But I will say that this was an incredibly fulfilling experience. This is an experience that matters, and I think I'm the better writer for it.**

**- Jake Dallas**

”

“I had a great time,” he added. “It doesn't replace Ireland, and no one is saying it does. But I will say that this was an incredibly fulfilling experience. This is an experience that matters, and I think I'm the better writer for it.”

Junior English major and music minor Kendall Proffitt of Peachtree City, Georgia, also looked to the past for her writing topic. She recalled a trip to the beach with her Grandmother two years ago—the healing of it—during a time of emotional sadness. That period paralleled the frustration she felt with COVID-19, being penned up and kept from following in the footsteps of great Irish writers like W. B. Yeats and Seamus Heaney. Interpreting her memory of the pounding waves and pooling sands was “significant.” It calmed her during the stress of coronavirus too.

“I thought a travel-from-home course was a great idea,” Proffitt said. “It could never be what our trip would've been, but it was a great substitute ... It definitely eased the disappointment a bit and the class, for me, became a wonderful conduit for expression.”

“

**I assumed I would be very frustrated, writing about my limited travels and where I want to go, while stuck at home. But it ended up being very cathartic.**

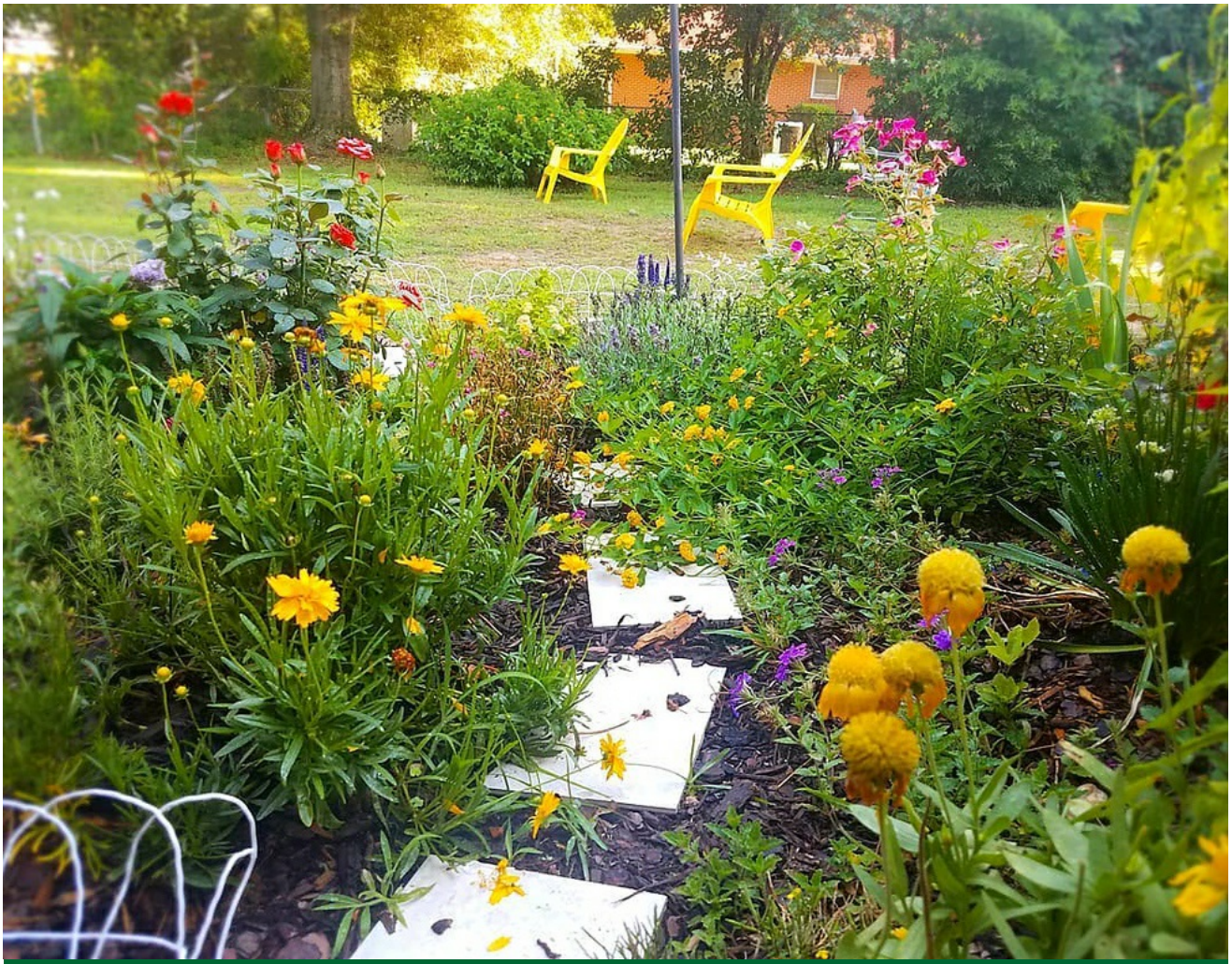
**- Junior Kendall Proffitt**

”

Neville plans to continue the travel writing course. It'll be especially helpful for students, who are too busy or lack finances to go abroad. Like this spring's forerunners—they'll learn it doesn't take thousands of miles to find excitement and adventure.

It only takes a peek out their back doors.





Neville's garden at home, during pandemic.

# News Stories Posted Friday July 10, 2020



## Life-long goal of improving health drives student to pursue physical therapy

[Health & Human Performance, School of](#): Friday July 10, 2020

Growing up, Georgia College senior Joshua Selby always strived to find different ways to improve his physical and mental health. Now, he is enjoying his studies as an exercise science major on a preprofessional track, and has his sight set on becoming a physical therapist.

"I found pursuing a degree in exercise science allows me to further explore more approaches to promote overall fitness and health, as well as examine why our body works in the way that it does," he said.

Selby, who started Georgia College as a mass communications major, switched to exercise science and has loved it ever since. He feels it's important for individuals to pursue a profession they're passionate about.

His favorite class, structural kinesiology, helped him better understand new concepts.

"This class allowed me to gain hands-on learning with my classmates, which allowed me to study the mechanisms of body movements in detail," he said. "I'm able to apply the material I learned during lectures from my previous courses."



“

**“I found pursuing a degree in exercise science allows me to further explore more approaches to promote overall fitness and health, as well as examine why our body works in the way that it does.”**

**- Joshua Selby**

”

He's had several great professors, but Selby credits Exercise Science Lecturer Michael Hobbs with instilling in him the need to continually learn and hone his skills.

“Michael Hobbs has demonstrated to me what it's like to devote yourself to learning new things, regardless of already being an expert in his field,” he said. “I admire that he truly enjoys what he teaches and is always finding new ways to perfect his craft.”

Last year, Selby volunteered with the Life Enrichment Center and shadowed physical therapists at Twin Lakes Physical Therapy Clinic. He learned skills that helped shape him as a person.

“Engaging in these experiences allowed me to work with people of different ages, abilities, goals, backgrounds, lifestyles and more,” said Selby. “This helped me to become a better listener and a more effective communicator, as well as improve my problem-solving skills to meet the needs of each individual.”

After graduating next spring, Selby plans to attend graduate school to earn a doctorate in physical therapy.

“I look forward to becoming a professional and learning all that I can before applying what I know into other people's lives,” he said.

Eventually, Selby would like to work with patients of all ages and abilities in a clinical setting.

“I want to provide treatment for others with injuries, conditions, and/or illnesses and educate them of practices that can help improve the overall quality of

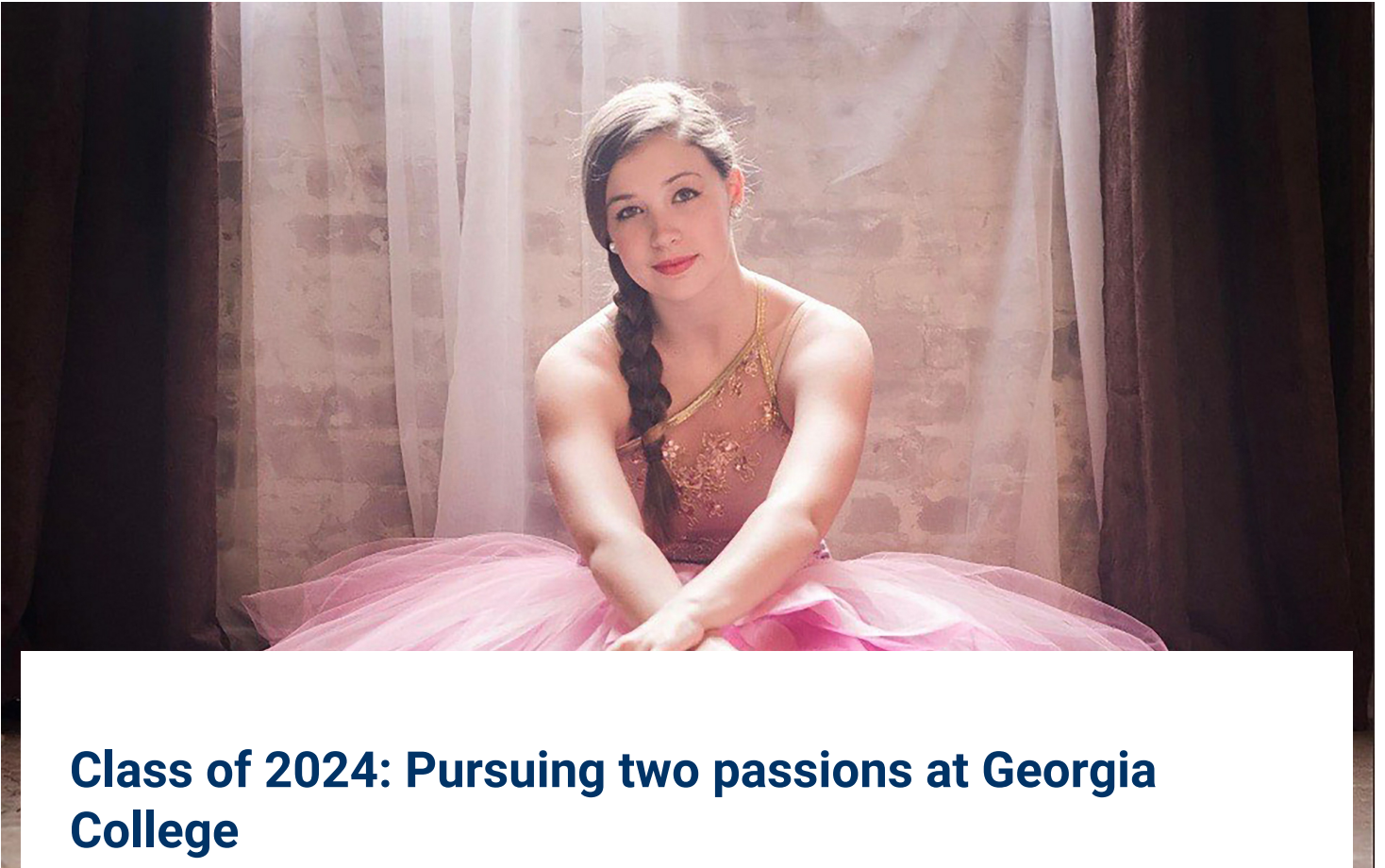


Joshua Selby, exercise science major



their lives," he said. "Everybody is different. The same injury does not mean you apply the same treatment. Each individual should be evaluated based on their needs, goals, lifestyle, etc. and have an individualized plan made specifically for them. Communicating with the patient is key."

"Find out what you want to do. It is never too late to explore and research other occupation options," Selby said. "College is the beginning of your career."



## **Class of 2024: Pursuing two passions at Georgia College**

**University Communications** : Friday July 10, 2020

Nicole Snyder has two passions—dance and chemistry. The Marietta-based incoming freshman started dancing at age four, and, through the years, she perfected her talent, performing as the Sugarplum Fairy in the Nutcracker and in competitive dance throughout Georgia. Snyder plans to major in chemistry and minor in dance at Georgia College.

“From my very first dance class, I knew I was right where I belonged,” she said. “When I’m on stage, it’s as if the world completely melts away, and it’s just the music, the lights and my troupe. There’s just the joy that comes with doing what I love, the emotion of the piece itself and the trust in myself and my training.”

Snyder competed in Fusion Regional competitions, Platinum Regionals and On-Point Regionals, as well as other competitions. Her team competed nationally every other year, and a few of her dances made it into the finals.

Once at Georgia College, she will be in the Honors College and would also like to join the Chemistry Club, Community Dance program, a Christian organization and the Animal Rescue Foundation to help with pet adoptions.

“

**“I believe these organizations will push me outside of my comfort zone and force me to put myself out there. I tend to be a little shy when it comes to public situations, but I’m hoping these clubs will give me opportunities and lessons to help break that habit and become comfortable in public settings.”**

**- Nicole Snyder**

”

“I believe these organizations will push me outside of my comfort zone and force me to put myself out there,” said Snyder. “I tend to be a little shy when it comes to public situations, but I’m hoping these clubs will give me opportunities and lessons to help break that habit and become comfortable in public settings.”

She decided on attending Georgia College, because of some experiences she had at the university.

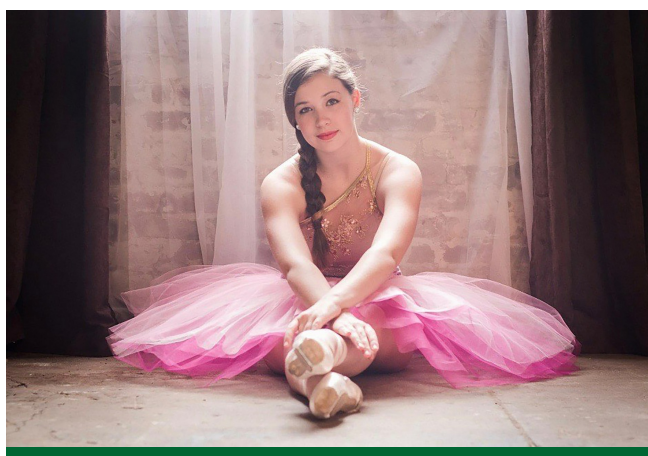
“The thing that first drew me to GC was how much they emphasized that students were names, not numbers,” Snyder said. “Some of my best classes in high school were the ones where the teacher was able to truly connect with the students individually, and I wanted to continue that as I moved into college.”

“Then, in the spring of my junior year, I attended dance classes under Amelia Pelton and Natalie King. Watching how they connected with their students and had personal relationships with each one of them sealed the deal for me,” she said.

After Snyder graduates from Georgia College, she plans to pursue her Ph.D.

“With the research I have done into chemistry-related jobs, it’s become very clear most jobs require at least a Ph.D. in order to climb up the ranks within the profession,” Snyder said.

She would like to work in a research facility for chemistry, and in her later years, teach at either an AP class in high school or at the college level.



Nicole Snyder

“I’m actually not 100 percent certain which chemistry field I’d like to dive deeper into. I hope to figure that out

while I'm at GC," she said.

"As for teaching, I tutored throughout high school and loved it," Snyder said. "Explaining subjects in a different way and watching the understanding in my students' eyes was incredibly satisfying. I truly cared for each student I worked with and found that tutoring came to me very easily, which made me think of teaching as an eventual career."



# News Stories Posted Tuesday July 14, 2020



## Leading by example: Art major encourages other students to find their niche

[Art, Department of](#) : Tuesday July 14, 2020

To see her now leading campus tours and serving as a leadership facilitator, you'd never guess rising junior Maya Whipple had a shy bone in her body.

With her bubbly personality and creative nature, she thrives working with others.

"Coming to college, I really wanted to explore a different side of myself. I wanted to become more outgoing, adventurous and open to trying new things," said Whipple. "So I just decided to get involved with a lot of things that could help me grow."

She jumped right in during her first year, joining the Council of Student Ambassadors—where students serve as admissions representatives, campus tour guides as well as role models and informal mentors to prospective and new students.

"Through this doing the Student Ambassador program, I applied for the summer orientation leader



Maya Whipple served as an orientation

position. I did that last summer, and I was hoping to do it this summer, but it didn't really work out with the pandemic," said Whipple.

leader.

“

**"Because she extensively applies herself in her field, to studying leadership and practicing her skills through community involvement, she can, and will, make a difference in the lives of others."**

**- Ashley Copeland, assistant director of Leadership Programs**

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She also joined the Emerging Leaders Program, now known as the Leadership Academy— a program for first-year students to begin and grow their leadership skills.

“That led into me doing the Leadership Certificate Program,” said Whipple. “And this coming fall, I will be doing what is called Leadership Facilitator. Basically, I’ll be helping the incoming freshmen as we advise them through Leadership Programs at Georgia College.”

The staff she works with through Leadership Programs recognizes her dedication and drive to make a positive impact on the world around her.

"Maya's achievements and accomplishments in her academic and civic life are her own," said Ashley Copeland, assistant director of Leadership Programs. "Maya carved her own pathway at Georgia College, utilizing knowledge gained from her courses, resources at the university and in the Leadership Programs office to support her passion."

"She seeks to bring communities together through art and an appreciation for creativity and innovation. Maya understands the unique link between a career and civic life and what it means to be a leader for the public good," Copeland said. "Because she extensively applies herself in her field, to studying leadership, and practicing her skills through community involvement, she can, and will, make a difference in the lives of others."



Whipple working on an art history game last year

When she's not serving and supporting others in her roles outside the classroom, the art major is usually found in Ennis Hall, pursuing what's been a passion of hers since childhood.

"I have a concentration in studio art, which is any type of hands-on physical art. I mainly do drawing, painting, photography and printmaking," she said.

"Honestly, I couldn't see myself doing anything else," said Whipple. "My mom really wanted me to do nursing or something like that, but I told her 'Mom, I do not want to be a nurse, I want to be an artist.'"

She hopes to couple her artistic skills with her leadership and entrepreneurial spirit for her future career.

"I want to go back to school to earn a master's degree in business administration because I'd like to, someday, open my own art studio," said Whipple.

She initially chose Georgia College to "be close to her family," who lives in her hometown of Gordon. After just a few short years here, she's been able to have both those familial ties and develop into a strong, independent person.

"I think I've grown, and I think a lot of that has to do with Georgia College and the





Maya Whipple

opportunities I've had here," said Whipple.

Whipple understands the transition to college can be tough, but she encourages all students to overcome their apprehensions and hesitations by simply trying new things.

"I would tell them to really to find their place—whatever is going to make them feel comfortable, welcomed and engaged," said Whipple. "Just go for it. Even if you're kind of nervous about having new experiences, you never know how you'll grow into a role or what difference you'll be able to bring to an organization."

“

**“You also never know what’s going to come from an opportunity or what kind of other opportunities will come because you did this one thing. So, don't always stick to what you know. Explore different avenues, and just have fun while you're doing it.”**

**- Maya Whipple**

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# News Stories Posted Wednesday July 15, 2020



## Music education major helps provide free testing for coronavirus

[Music, Department of](#) : Wednesday July 15, 2020



William Refuss (standing) working with CORE.

As students were staying home and juggling last-minute coursework online last spring, senior music education major William Refuss of Fayetteville, Georgia, went a little further. He signed up to help test others for COVID-19.

Refuss joined Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE), a nonprofit providing free coronavirus testing in the greater Atlanta area. Donned in full PPE

—personal protection equipment—he helped test thousands of people in Alpharetta —which has the highest volume of county-led testing in the country.

“

**Working with the organization and helping people get free coronavirus tests definitely gives me a sense of purpose in this unpredictable time, and I've gotten to interact with so many people from different backgrounds.**

**- Senior William Refuss**

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His experience in public health has opened new possibilities for the future. He enjoyed helping others and now has greater interest in community work.

“

**Music classes are where I'm happiest. They've served as a sanctuary from more pressing and rigorous academics, and I seek to give that same experience to students of the future.**

**- William Refuss**

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But the tug of music remains powerful too. Since high school, Refuss has learned from “exceptional” music teachers and that legacy has carried into college. He plays trombone and some euphonium, a brass instrument with a tenor sound.

Refuss has benefitted from the instruction of professors like Dr. David Johnson, who's “incredibly gifted” and “shows great care toward his students;” Dr. Clifford Towner, who's a wonderful band director with “great knowledge and experience;” and Dr. Dana Gorzelany-Mostak, who “encourages her students to think from multiple perspectives.”

“Music classes are where I'm happiest,” Refuss said. “They've served as a sanctuary from more pressing and rigorous academics, and I seek to give that same experience to students of the future.”

Refuss came to Georgia College, following in the footsteps of multiple relatives, most notably his mother and grandmother. The small campus and city appealed to him, because he felt he could find “a sense of greater authenticity” here.

In addition to studying different educational philosophies and musical pedagogy, Refuss also went with the Georgia College Jazz Band on a study abroad trip to the Czech Republic last year. They visited several Czech cities like Czesky Krumlov, Kuks, Prague and Hradec Kralove. Students performed in concerts and walked

miles in the countryside getting “an unfiltered view” of fields, rivers, statues and picturesque small towns.

“My time in that country is some of the best moments of my life,” Refuss said. “Going abroad gives you a sense of perspective outside of that in which you’re familiar. Being in a different culture definitely makes you think about how everyone is different in a good way, and I believe it makes you a more critical thinker and more emotionally intelligent.”

Refuss is a member of the Georgia College Wind Symphony, Jazz Band, Brass Ensemble and, occasionally, pep band. He’s also done improvisation jazz jams at Amici’s Italian Restaurant in Milledgeville.



Refuss playing his trombone.

His time in college has helped Refuss become more independent and confident.

The most important thing he’s learned is “everyone has a unique voice and perspective that must be heard.



# News Stories Posted Tuesday July 21, 2020



## Meet the faculty: Associate professor has a taste for history

[History & Geography, Department of](#): Tuesday July 21, 2020

Dr. Stephanie Opperman is working on a cookbook that envelops her love of history and its connection with food—while easing the pangs of isolation during COVID-19.

Called “Comfort Food,” the book is filled with 140 foods and beverages from Opperman’s family and friends. Recipes come from the halls of campus and streets of Milledgeville, as well as multiple states and one international site.



Opperman works on the cookbook at home with her daughter, Isabel.



The only criteria given was submitters had to have cooked the food before and liked it.

**I appreciate the significance of comfort food in this historical moment of isolation and social change.**



Scarcity and Sharing.” It showed how recipe swapping fosters a “sense of community in the midst of social isolation.” Opperman felt she could do this, too, and set about collecting recipes.

# COMFORT FOOD



A community cookbook of treasured recipes collected from friends and family during the 2020 global pandemic

Cover of Opperman's cookbook.

Half the cookbook consists of cuisine from Georgia College faculty and Milledgeville residents. Others come from Arizona, California, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. There's even several recipes from Thailand. One's called, "Pad Mama Gaprow's

Bacon.”

Many people submitted more than one recipe. The book's divided into sections: brunch, snacks, cocktails, salads, soups/stews, meat/seafood, vegetarian meals, side dishes, desserts and chocolate treats. Most categories offer eight to 25 recipes.

The youngest chef is a 3-year-old who, with his mom's help, submitted “Ivan's Lunch Sandwich”—a peanut butter and jelly concoction with tomatoes and lettuce. The most unusual recipe comes from Opperman's mother-in-law from the 1950s for “Lime Jell-O Cottage Cheese Cucumber Surprise.” Her most memorable is “Pop-Tarts for Stephanie”—filled with fig jam—created by good friend and Georgia College Art Professor Sandra Trujillo after Opperman's daughter, Isabel, was born.

“

**Comfort is definitely the key word, as we all try our best to deal with the pandemic.**

**- Opperman**

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The most submissions were for the ultimate comfort food: brownies. During isolation, many people crave chocolate, Opperman discovered. They're also returning to old-time cooking, using recipes from their grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Dishes like chicken pot pie, blackberry cobbler, banana bread and cheese straws.

“Comfort is definitely the key word, as we all try our best to deal with the pandemic,” she said.

The book will be completed by the end of July. It's being put together with images from historical cookbooks. Opperman particularly loves using photos of handwritten recipes—giving food that antique quality, making it more “meaningful and personal.”

She plans to use the cookbook in her Foodways courses this year, an example of how people collect and present recipes.

“

**I would love for the cookbook to serve as a small artifact of community in this unprecedented time. It's a fun way to preserve traditions, create new ones and build/sustain community.**

- Dr. Stephanie Opperman

”

The cookbook will be finished July 31st and available online. To obtain a free PDF copy, please email Opperman at [stephanie@opperman.net](mailto:stephanie@opperman.net).



# News Stories Posted Wednesday July 22, 2020



## Class of 2024: Self-published author looks forward to new challenges ahead

[Art, Department of](#) : Wednesday July 22, 2020

The old adage, bigger is always better, isn't true for incoming first-year student Erin Hilburn. The self-published author knew what she was looking for when she applied for colleges.

"Georgia College won my heart with its endearing personality and intimate setting. I was excited to live and learn in a tightly-knit community with small, intellectual classes instead of cavernous lecture halls and a sweet, compact campus instead of a sprawling mass of impassive buildings."

“

**I can hardly wait to be intellectually challenged again, to have to think long and hard and to have other people to build upon and refine my own ideas.**

**- Erin Hilburn**

”

Georgia College's unique recognition as the state's 'Public Liberal Arts University' was something that also appealed to Hilburn. She is looking forward to the many academic challenges that will come her way as well as meeting a new community of friends."

"I'm also really excited to live on my own and brave a particularly uncertain and trying semester with my roommates. We might have fewer extracurricular opportunities, but I think that gives us a chance to bond more strongly than we might have otherwise, since we'll be spending more time together in our dorms," she said.

Interestingly enough however, Hilburn plans to major in art with a focus in graphic design and minor in marketing.

"Most people are surprised to hear I am not actually majoring in English. I chose art with a focus in graphic design as my major, because it's closely related to my literary passion. While I love creative writing, I also love designing novel covers and character illustration based on that creative writing. After designing book covers for myself and a couple other indie authors; I decided that if at all possible, I want to maintain that as my main career and keep my creative writing as my hobby. In my experience, when I set a hobby up as a money-maker, the joy falls prey to the mundane."

In August 2019, Hilburn published her first novel under her sister's and her pen name



Erin Hilburn holds a copy of her novel, "My Name Is Phoenix"

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E.A. Hilburn called "My Name Is Phoenix" which is the first in a trilogy titled "Rise of Phoenix." Phoenix's story is a tale of tragedy, corruption, destruction and redemption, that ultimately shapes his character into one of the leading heroes in the restoration of the crumbling Pentarealm, an interlocking series of four worlds that function together.

"My writing is directly inspired by the greatest story, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "My Name Is Phoenix" is an analogy to humanity's fall, our slavery to evil and the saving sacrifice of our Savior Lord Jesus. I think we can become numb to the story of the Gospel, but by painting it in the story of a character we relate to, cry for, cheer for; I hope to show myself and others just how overwhelming is the weight of Jesus' love for us," Hilburn said.

Hilburn is excited to see the impact Georgia College will have on her writing and design work.

"Georgia College provides the personal environment I need both to learn the design skills I crave for cover art creation, as well as link arms with other writers, exchange work and possibly even team up to create a beautifully-designed, gloriously-written work of art."



# News Stories Posted Thursday July 23, 2020



## Meet the faculty: Water runs deep for microbiologist from Russia

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Thursday July 23, 2020

It was along the banks of the mighty Volga River—a waterway that flows through much of Russia to the Caspian Sea—where Dr. Andrei Barkovskii learned to swim as a toddler. His father, “with an attentive eye,” simply dropped his son off the boat to see if he would tread water.

[Dr. Andrei Barkovskii talks about biology and scuba diving.](#)

Since then, Barkovskii and water have been in a love affair that has followed him from his childhood, growing up in the southwestern city of Saratov, Russia, to the red-clay shores of Lake Sinclair and science halls of Georgia College—where he enthalls students with tales of scuba diving, strange sea creatures and waterborne pathogens.

“I believe the love for water runs in my veins, because the common land in Russia



is very full of different types of waters, streams, rivers, bogs, swamps,” Barkovskii said. “I started swimming, basically, at the age I learned to walk. Then, I was snorkeling.”

“The most impressive memory is the majesty and power of the ocean itself. I learn from the ocean, and I bring that knowledge back, and I share this knowledge with my students,” he said.

“

**The most impressive memory is the majesty and power of the ocean itself. I learn from the ocean, and I bring that knowledge back, and I share this knowledge with my students.**

**- Dr. Andrei Barkovskii**

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This is why many of Barkovskii’s students stay in touch after graduation. In fact, some even follow Barkovskii’s example and become scuba divers too.

It’s a pastime that makes them better scientists and Barkovskii a better professor of microbiology.

Barkovskii came to Georgia College after getting his degrees at Saratov State University and the Council of Ministry of USSR in Russia. After years of research in Russia, he received a grant from the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) to work in Lyon, France, before doing research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

He thought about returning to the cultural richness of Europe. But the South, with its warm waters and congenial ways, led him to Georgia College.

And he must like it. He’s been here 19 years.

“I have chosen America over Europe, because I felt the spirit of the country: Go, do and be happy,” Barkovskii said. “When I came to Georgia College for interview, I got charmed by the people, the place and the atmosphere. I happily refused other offers. I feel I am in the right place.”

Barkovskii teaches biology, general microbiology, environmental microbiology, environmental toxicology and his favorite, water pathogens, which he designed and taught for the first time last year.

Now, he’s redeveloping his general microbiology course from scratch, so students

can better understand the science and be prepared for changing trends in the future. It's filled with data from recent studies on emerging pathogens that, in some cases, are spreading out-of-control. Bubonic Plague has returned, and bacteria like E. coli and Vibrio—a foodborne infection from eating undercooked seafood—are becoming more problematic.

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**The pathogens we considered dead or not so important—they are coming back. Things that were never anything but a small nuisance now are getting really hot. Viruses, as well as bacteria. It's speeding up.**



Barkovskii at home and his wife, Marina.

- Barkovskii

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“The pathogens we considered dead or not so important—they are coming back,” Barkovskii said. “Things that were never anything but a small nuisance now are getting really hot. Viruses, as well as bacteria. It's speeding up.”

“Antibiotics cannot outrace that. To develop new medicine,” he said, “it takes a lot of time, and pathogens are changing quicker than that.”

Much of Barkovskii's research centers on aquatic environments, evaluating the influence of human activity and runoff from animal farm activity into creeks, rivers and estuaries. Coastal dredging also makes a huge impact on microbial communities and the rise of pathogens and antibiotic resistance in coastal waters.

In the lab, Barkovskii and his students work on a variety of projects. One area of research showed local kaolin could be used for water sanitation. Currently, his students are measuring environmental health by identifying pathogens in oysters.

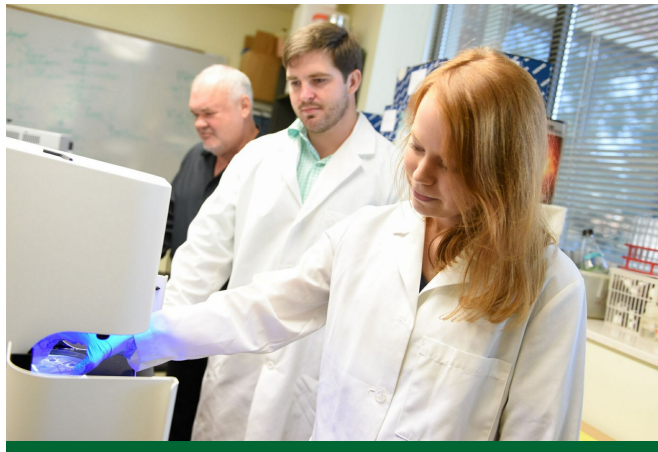
Environmental sustainability is important to Barkovskii. When scuba diving, he's attentive to the health of coral reefs. They are a prime indicator and predictor of



ecological vitality.

It's a different world beneath the sea—quiet and tranquil with a variety of fascinating sea organisms. He's seen beautiful and deadly creatures, while floating weightlessly in the waters of Australia, Thailand, the Philippines, Mexico, Caribbean, Canada, California and Florida.

He feels as though he's "flying through water," eavesdropping on a world of magnificence and mystery.



Barkovskii with former biology students Scott Johnson and Rachael Brinemann.



Barkovskii's undersea world.

"Wow. Gorgeous. That world exists," Barkovskii said. "Let's keep it. Let's preserve it. We can't afford to lose its beauty. It should be there for generations."

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**It's a feast of colors, shapes, behaviors. It's just fantastic. When I dive, I feel dislodged from daily stresses. After a few weeks of diving, I feel completely recharged and completely fresh, brand new.**

**- Barkovskii**

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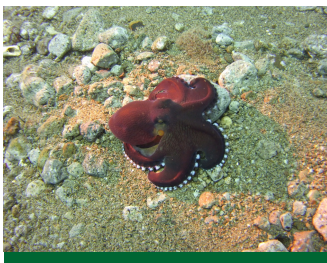
“It's a feast of colors, shapes, behaviors. It's just fantastic. When I dive,” he said, “I feel dislodged from daily stresses. After a few weeks of diving, I feel completely recharged and completely fresh, brand new.”

Diving comes up often in Barkovskii's lectures. In environmental microbiology class, he shows pictures of healthy and not-so-healthy reefs. In toxicology class, he talks about venomous creatures he's seen—like the yellow-lipped sea krait, a long black-and-white swimming snake, or the blue-ringed octopus with enough poison in one bite to kill 26 adults.

He shows students pictures and video of these and other amazing creatures like box jellyfish, barracudas and Portuguese man-of-war and details their mechanism for transferring toxins. He tells stories about surfacing to unexpected storms and waves that seemed as tall as skyscrapers. Barkovskii's been dwarfed by humongous whale sharks and seen thrasher sharks that kill prey with a whip of their tails.

Some events can be “unpleasant,” he said, but they're mostly wiped from memory.

All that remains is the splendor.



A coconut octopus in the Philippines.

“Scuba diving enriches my experience as an environmental microbiologist,” he said, “but diving isn't all about science, of course. It's about pleasure... With all the work I do, there should be a place where I'm not a professor but a human being with a lot to share—where I can be one-on-one with Mother Nature and all her beauty and simplicity.”

Still, it's a mystery to Barkovskii why some students learn to scuba dive after spending time with him.

When asked, he shrugs.

“I don't know if they took after me or this is a coincidence,” Barkovskii said. “But, likely, I made some impact on them and either sparked their interest in diving or



supported their desire to become a diver through my stories, through my pictures.”

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**Either way, this feels good. Now, I listen to their stories. We exchange stories. We became colleagues, not only professionally, but we become colleagues of diving.**

**- Barkovskii**

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# News Stories Posted Thursday July 30, 2020



## Virtual Chile study abroad program provides eye-opening experience

[World Languages & Cultures, Department of](#): Thursday July 30, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Brantley Nicholson's 2020 summer study abroad students explored Chile virtually this year. Although they didn't visit the country in person, participants immersed themselves in a thorough study of the Chilean culture and garnered significant insight from the experience.

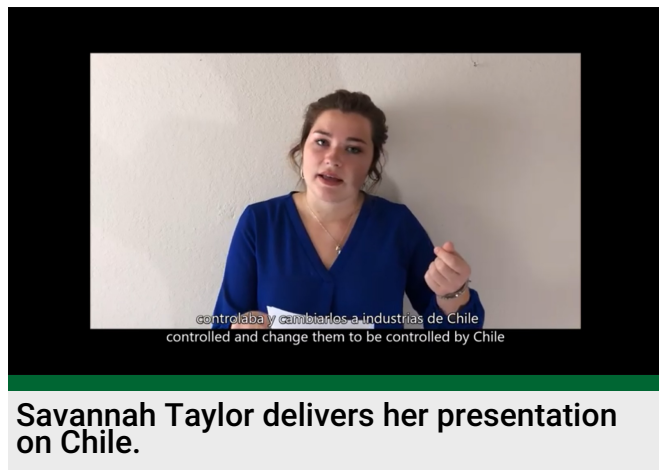
The impact of the program was so strong that two students of this year's online Chile study abroad program have already decided to register for the 2021 Chile study abroad offering.

Because of this year's online experience, junior Savannah Taylor, a Spanish and economics major, now aspires to work in Santiago, Chile, with its big business hub. For the first time, she was able to tie-in her studies of the Spanish language with economic concepts.

“It really made it feel like my pairing of majors was finally paying off,” said Taylor.

She learned much about Chilean culture and Latin American history, putting them into the context of the country’s recent turmoil.

Taylor liked the freedom she had while doing her research for the class.



“Dr. Nicholson was extremely supportive of our various interests in the nuances of Chilean culture and history,” Taylor said. “This allowed us to pick an angle we could relate to, which helped tailor the issues. We could dive into them a little more closely, than if general topics had been assigned.”

Considering a large part of the in-country program would’ve been based around face-to-face research and interactions, the class instead delved deep into the literature, media and resources to regain those details through an online format. The flip side, however, of having an open-ended, independent class was the challenge for students to put a lot of extra thought and effort into their projects.

“This was a unique way to really push students to the limits of creativity and effort, which resulted in some fantastic research and business proposals,” Taylor said.

Typically, the three-week Chile study abroad program begins early May when students fly in. They spend that arrival Sunday getting to know their host families and start classes at the University of the Andes campus on Monday. While there, students also engage with Santiago academic and business leaders and take excursions, like mountain hiking and vineyard tours.

The components of this study abroad program also include students completing an internship to learn about the professional world or studying the Chilean culture.

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**“There's something really cool that happens when you just tell students to ‘go learn’ instead of telling them how they should learn. I just let myself invest in what I was learning, and used other students’ experiences with their research to help guide what I was doing, and that worked out well.”**

**- Savannah Taylor**



“Students can complete their minor in Chile, or the study abroad can act like a springboard to their major,” said Dr. Brantley Nicholson, associate professor of Spanish and Latin American Culture and coordinator of the Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies program. “Their Spanish improves,” he said, “because they live with their host families and make many friends. But, I think the biggest losses for students not being able to travel to Chile is doing the internship, which looks really good on a resume, and forming long-lasting friendships they would’ve made otherwise. There’s no way to replicate that through the online format.”

Although there wasn’t much time to plan to switch to an online format, Nicholson quickly restructured, so he could conduct Zoom sessions with students. With the support and assistance of the International Education Center, Nicholson and several other study abroad program directors made successful, rapid transitions to the online format. The great work of the faculty not only permitted students to retain the benefit of an exceptional international experience, but also allowed students to maintain academic progress towards their degrees.

“We did two things—one is for the culture class,” he said. “Instead of talking to the people who would’ve been there, I set fundamental questions that I wanted them to work through. I sent them suggested reading and documentaries to watch. Then, we got together and talked it through after that. This culminated in creative projects and papers.”

Instead of doing the internship, students set up a hypothetical company in Chile.

“They had to do research and a market analysis in Spanish,” Nicholson said. “That’s something they can put on a resume or talk about in a future job interview. It’s not the same as doing an actual internship, but I wanted them to come away with something tangible—a line item on their resume at least.”

For senior nursing student Abigail Ralston, the Chile course exemplified the importance to the health care field of



Abigail Ralston is ready to apply what she's learned from the online Chile study abroad program to nursing.

possessing intercultural competence. Viewing patients holistically and taking culture into consideration helps nurses provide the best possible care. Ralston will apply what she's learned in her profession.

"Some may think that the Hispanic culture is largely one and the same, but from this course I gained an understanding of Chilean culture in greater depth and focus than I could have ever imagined," she said. "Therefore, in my future career as a nurse, I will strive to continually be culturally competent by being inquisitive and accepting of all cultural backgrounds."

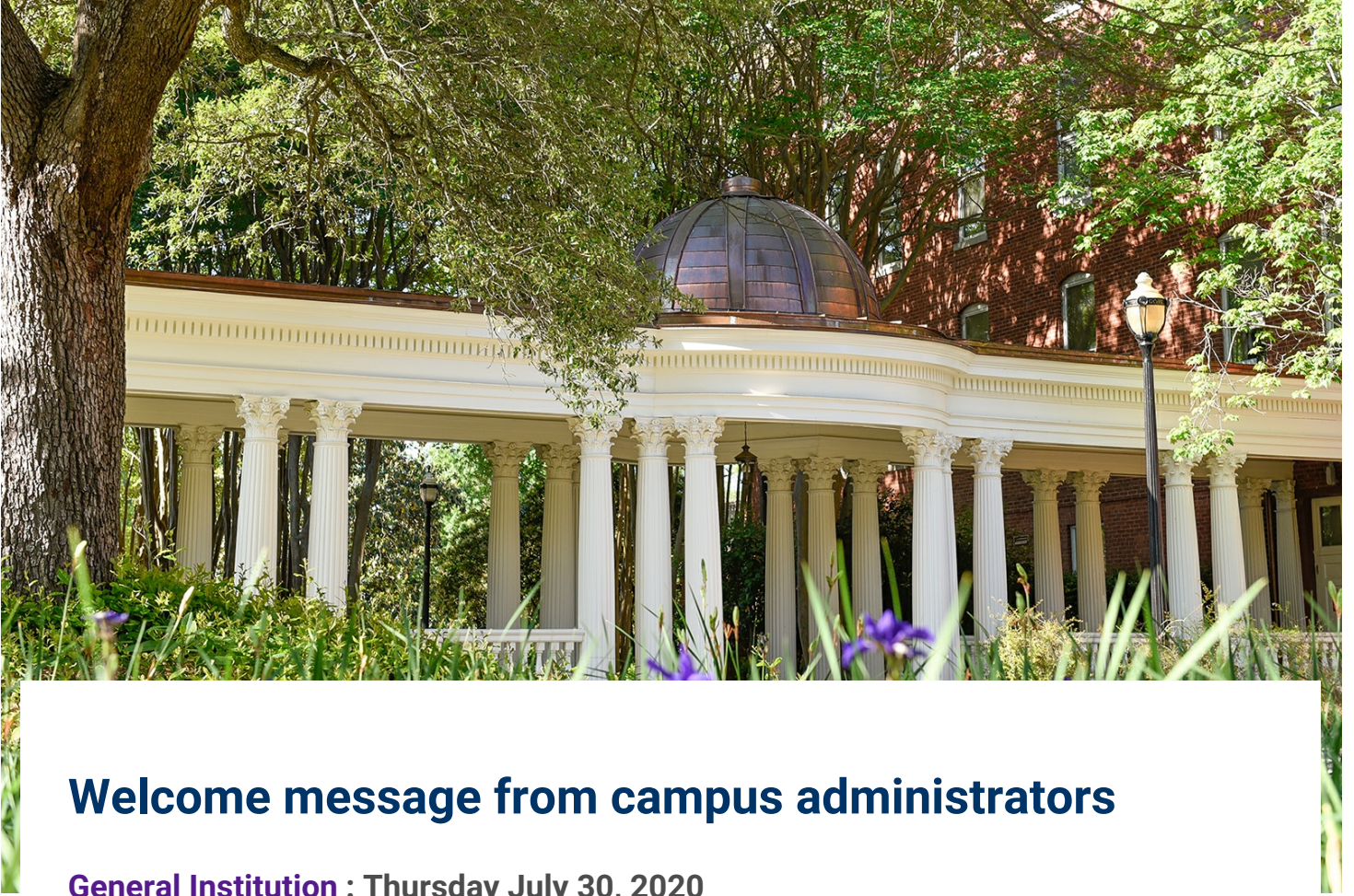
The online study gave students a view of Chilean culture, while giving them academic freedom to explore through research.

"I enjoyed researching Chilean culture as it pertained to politics, economics, literature and professional life," Ralston said. "Dr. Nicholson gave us creative freedom which allowed me to fully immerse myself into the culture as if I were actually in Chile."

"There's something really cool that happens when you just tell students to 'go learn' instead of telling them how they should learn," Taylor said. "I just let myself invest in what I was learning, and used other students' experiences with their research to help guide what I was doing, and that worked out well."

Although this year's online study abroad was not what it otherwise would've been, Nicholson hopes students still came away with a better understanding of their Spanish vocabulary. Meanwhile, he's planning the [summer 2021 Chile program](#).

"I hope my students can study abroad next year, so they can stay with host families, make friends and do internships in person," he said. "I also hope we can sponsor talks instead of reading academic articles, and do fun excursions, like hiking or eating at nice restaurants—really all of it."



## Welcome message from campus administrators

[General Institution](#) : Thursday July 30, 2020

[Fall 2020 Welcome Message](#)

We look forward to having everyone back on campus soon. In this welcome message, campus leaders discuss what to expect this fall.