

# Front Page News Story Archive

December 2020



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# News Stories Posted Wednesday December 2, 2020



## Class of 2020: Using music therapy to connect others

[Music, Department of](#) : Wednesday December 2, 2020

Amanda Brennen

Hometown: Roswell, GA.

**What made you choose Georgia College?** There are only two music therapy programs in Georgia, and I felt most excited after visiting Georgia College. I loved the campus, the faculty I met was so inviting and I was excited about the possible leadership opportunities I would have.

**What made you want to study music therapy?** My sophomore year at Roswell High, my literature teacher asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. At the time, I told her I wanted to be a physical therapist but that I would always keep music in

my life and that I had a passion for working with individuals with disabilities. She told me her sister was a music therapist and that I should look into it. That day at lunch, I called my mom and we called a local music therapy private practice to see if I could observe. I went to volunteer and ended up working there for three years! I also did two music therapy internships during my senior year of high school.

**What instruments do you play?** My primary instruments are voice and piano. I also enjoy playing the guitar, ukulele, accordion, recorder, and the keytar.

**What role does community play in your study of music therapy?** Without community, there wouldn't be music therapy. Music therapy can include many cultural and social differences. Music is known as a universal language that brings people together and builds communities. When it comes to being a music therapy student at Georgia College, we are with the same people all four years. The music therapy department has such a strong community full of encouragement, positivity, helpful resources and support. Every student is passionate about providing the best music therapy services to the community and becoming prepared to be a professional.



Amanda Brennen

**How important is the role of music therapy in today's world during a pandemic—what about post pandemic?** Music therapy has always been an important part of today's world as the field continuously grows. Music therapy can work on communication, emotional expression, socialization, academics, motor skills and so much more. The pandemic has stemmed a lot of uncertainty in patients. During the pandemic

and post pandemic, music therapy gives patients a sense of normalcy in their everyday, ever-changing schedules.

**What music therapy projects/research/experiences were you able to partake in during your time at GC?** Every semester, Georgia College music therapy students have to participate in practicum hours. I have done my practicum hours at the Veterans Home, Chaplinwood, The Early Learning Center and the Life Enrichment Center. Creative Expressions is a fantastic music therapy program through the Life

Enrichment Center that I was a part of for three years. After you finish your course work, you have to do a 1,020 hour internship. I am about to complete my amazing internship at Therabeat, Inc. in Woodstock, GA. I also worked my way up from Secretary to Vice President to President of The Music Therapy Society at Georgia College.

**What are your plans after graduation?** At this time, I'm not sure what my plans are. The only thing I know for sure is that I am going to spend time studying for the music therapy board certification exam. I am thinking of possibly getting my masters in special education, music therapy, or occupational therapy – but I am keeping my options open!



# News Stories Posted Friday December 4, 2020



## Educator works for a cleaner environment

[Alumni](#) : Friday December 4, 2020

When it comes to educating her students about sustainability, Adrienne Cloud, '20, has done exponentially well through teaching, research and development. Over the next decade, she predicts significant improvement in emissions reductions, as countries like Japan are already phasing out internal combustion engines.

"My mission is to inspire the next generation to reach zero emissions," Cloud said. "Energy is everything. From the food we eat, to the fuel we use to power our cars and homes—it's all changing. We have already seen tightened regulations and policy changes."

Over the past decade she has taught physics, chemistry, environmental science, earth systems, biology, flight operations, energy systems and engineering and technology.





Adrienne Cloud tests the solar panel voltage output with a multimeter.

"I had the pleasure of teaching my Georgia College Ecology Professor Dr. Alfred Mead's son about energy systems and drones at Putnam County High School," said Cloud. "He's an exceptional example of a loving father, who brought his field experiences into the classroom with lots of memorable examples. Dr. Mead was straightforward, honest and always tried to make sure we understood the content."

Mead was understanding and knows life can be complicated. He realized, to his students, coursework wasn't always a top priority. However, he related to his students and did his best to make a positive mark on their lives.

Much like Mead, Cloud also tries to make the lesson content interesting for her students by bringing real-world applications into the classroom.

"I understand my passions may not be the same as my students," she said. "I've always spent my summers doing research on cutting-edge technology—flying, diving and any activity I could use—to teach science principles or problem solving and strategy to students."

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**“In about 10 years, you’re going to see hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles and passenger drones as viable sources of transportation. When I look at a skyline, I see green roofs. I see drone ports. I see the future, and hydrogen infrastructure is going to enable it to happen.”**

**- Adrienne Cloud**

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Cloud connected with her students by using the science of diving to teach chemistry. She brought her diving equipment into the classroom to help them understand the importance of gases. She started flying small planes when she taught physics and invited her pilot instructor and local Air Force pilots to visit her classes. When her environmental science students expressed interest in solar energy, she became certified to design and install solar arrays.

Cloud is also Founder of Sustainable Sun Systems, which she launched November 2016 to teach others about hydroponics, solar energy and hydrogen storage. Adrienne is a hands-on educator and one of her favorite projects was making biodiesel in the BioPro 380 to fuel a Humvee that took students back and forth to the greenhouse where they learned about different hydroponic systems. She now sits on an advisory board for Westminster High School in Colorado, where she has seven students working in a greenhouse. Cloud recently led a workshop there, teaching them about nutrients, lighting and growing mediums.

Cloud credits her mentors for putting her at the forefront of the MakerSpace Movement, a collaborative work space inside a school, library or separate public or private facility for making, learning, exploring and sharing that uses high tech to no tech tools. They provide hands on learning, help with critical thinking skills and even boost self-confidence. Working with Economic Development and SparkMacon, Central Georgia's first Makerspace, Cloud

completed a grant for the U.S. Department of Defense to create a curriculum to train transitioning military in additive and subtractive manufacturing, laser cutting,



Adrienne Cloud flies her drone.



coding in Python, robotics and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) Part 107 Certification. She then connected veterans to industry partners, so they could fly drones for disaster relief or grid infrastructure inspections and launched the company, Drones in Industry, to continue to train drone pilots and fly contracts. Working with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Unmanned Aircraft Systems Standardization Collaborative (UASSC), she worked with government entities and Fortune 500 companies to write the standardization roadmap for unmanned aircraft systems.

Cloud's involvement with the Environmental Club at Georgia College taught her networking, public speaking and mentoring skills. These qualities provide a good foundation for her work in certification preparation, internships, consulting and networking by linking individuals to places of employment or helping them start their own company.

Over the last four years, she's done research and development in hydroponic and energy systems starting with building her own systems and then at Comfort Farms with Jon Jackson and Ponix with container farms. Cloud's also worked with veterans at Comfort Farms and trained it's farmers on hydroponics for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition, she measures the efficiency and safety of systems, designing workflows and food safety plans for FarmBox Foods. She writes to public officials to keep them updated on how these systems can be integrated into society, increasing physical, mental and emotional well-being.

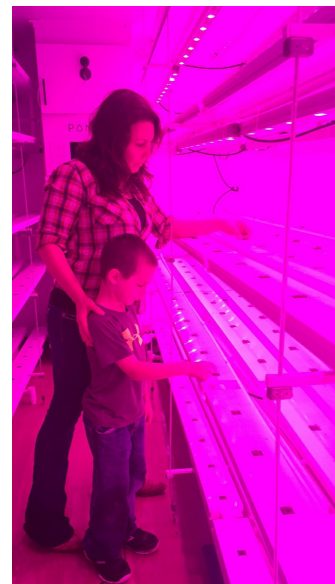
Georgia College's Curriculum and Instruction Master's program prepared Cloud to use learning management systems (LMS) and clearly communicate important standards to her students.

"Words are powerful," she said. "When starting a company, you must think about training, and LMS can embed content and assessments to better understand what the student does and does not understand."

Cloud wants to use her master's degree to design LMS that provide certifications for technologies such as sustainable farming, solar/wind generation and hydrogen storage.

"Training a workforce to embed these technologies into society will change the culture and decrease carbon emissions," she said.

Today, she's writing a book on disruptive technologies and working with her mentors to make it easy to understand.



Adrienne Cloud and her son, Daniel, examine plants in a container farm.

“This is a very high priority for me to get this out to educators and public officials,” she said. “The book is an outline to help policy makers transition our workforce to new technologies, such as hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles.”

For years, she’s been educating state representatives about hydrogen as a fuel source, to reach zero-emissions.

“In about 10 years, you’re going to see hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles and passenger drones as viable sources of transportation,” said Cloud. “When I look at a skyline, I see green roofs. I see drone ports. I see the future, and hydrogen infrastructure is going to enable it to happen.”





## Resourcefulness leads to fulfilling career working with children in health care

[Psychological Science, Department of](#) : Friday December 4, 2020

Mary Mason Beale's, '17, path to becoming a certified child life specialist (CCLS) was about taking initiative. She loved psychology and working with children. Although Georgia College didn't offer a child life track, she met a classmate who became her mentor and encouraged Beale to pursue her graduate degree in this field.

She recalls her class with Dr. John Lindsay Jr., professor emeritus of psychology, when a girl named Becca introduced herself and told the class she aspired to become a child life specialist.

"Child life was something I could definitely see myself doing," said Beale. "So, Becca served as a mentor for me throughout my application process and grad school at East Carolina University and my application process for clinical practicum and internship."

Beale also sought help from the Career Center at Georgia College.

"I had to be very intentional of how I set up my undergraduate experience," she said. "The Career Center would tear apart my resume, cover letter and statement of purpose for grad school with red pen all over the place. Then, I'd fix it, and we'd repeat the process until I had the perfect resume. As a result, I got into three out of

four of my grad schools of choice, which is huge.”

She enjoyed her GC professors, especially Dr. Dana Wood, who taught development psychology and Dr. Lee Gillis, chair, Department of Psychological Science.

“Dr. Wood was such a huge help in supporting me with this career that she reviewed my resume and paperwork for graduate school,” said Beale. “I did an independent study with her that tailored to what I needed for this profession. She was just an incredible professor.”

“Dr. Gillis helped me gain valuable insight into the world of research in his Adventure Therapy Research Lab,” she said.

Now, Beale provides psychosocial care for children from birth to 18 years, who come to visit the Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare’s Northeast Emergency Center. Her goal is to make sure the children understand what’s happening to them at all times. She wants them to realize the hospital does not have to be a traumatic experience.

“I prepare them for their procedures—what they’re going to see, touch, smell, taste or hear—the sensory aspects,” she said. “I break down what will occur, so a child can understand it. I’m going to describe stitches differently to a 3-year-old than I am to a 14-year-old. With 3-year-olds, they’re going to be ‘string Band-Aids.’ With 14-year-olds, the description will be more advanced.”

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**“I just love seeing children succeed when they didn’t think they would, especially, a fearful or anxious child. I also like seeing how preparation reduces their fears and anxiety. Because when you can understand something, it makes it a lot less scary. Seeing a child go from screaming, crying and not complying to being completely cool as a cucumber and able to refocus their attention on**



Mary Mason Beale brings in a llama for a coworker's birthday.



**my distraction methods is the most rewarding part of my job.”**

**- Mary Mason Beale**

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She provides support during procedures, and carries a little bag of surprises to refocus the patients’ attention on something else.

“I have virtual reality goggles I use to give their brain a job and focus on something other than the procedure,” she said. “I also carry bubbles, light spinners, I-spy books—all sorts of fun stuff.”

Because this was a newer position, Beale had to take initiative and do a lot of fundraising for toys for children to play with during treatment in the Emergency Center.

“I took the lead on planning a teddy bear clinic for children in the community,” she said. “I looked up different grants to get funding for a mobile playroom for our location that has different toys you can bring them for normalization to take home or as a prize after a hard procedure.”



Mary Mason Beale interacts with a child during the Teddy Bear Clinic.

Beale got her start in fundraising her sophomore year as a dancer in Georgia College Miracle's Dance Marathon. Then, her junior year, she became a morale leader, helping to raise over \$100,000—more than they did the previous year.

"Seeing all the leaders' passion for children made me want to do more," she said. "I helped get everybody pumped for dance marathon. Seeing that impact of how much good the money was going to do made me want to get involved even more."

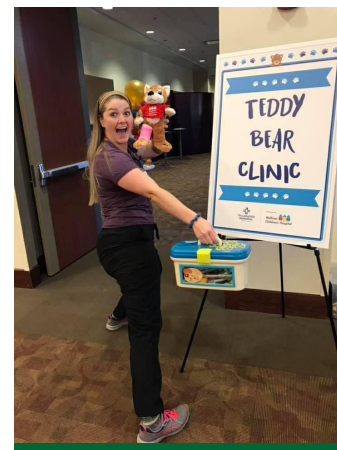
Beale joined the executive board her senior year and was in charge of outreach, where she contacted community members and Georgia College faculty to see if they wanted to be a miracle maker.

"I'd help the other students, so they could raise as much money as possible," Beale said. "We raised \$222,492.56 that year. It was one of the top five moments of my life when we had our total reveal at Dance Marathon in April 2017. I was crying on stage, because I did not expect to raise that much money. Our goal was \$175,000. I didn't even know if we'd reach that. And then we blew it out of the water. That's a moment I like to relive again and again."

Her biggest challenge is advocating for children for atraumatic care and using child-friendly methods with staff who aren't used to working with a certified child life specialist.

"It's been difficult to get staff to try my atraumatic care methods," she said. "There are several methods to use. It just takes patience and some coming around to. It's been really difficult to sway people to try methods they aren't used to that make the hospital a less overwhelming experience for children."

The secret to her successful career is being a flexible team member. Every morning, Beale looks at the census board to see how many children she'll be at the Emergency Room. When it's slow, she brings patients from the lobby to their rooms, cleans rooms and gets supplies for the nurses. When it's busy, she starts her protocol.



Beale prepares for the Teddy Bear Clinic.

"I bring in toys at the beginning to gain the children's trust and establish rapport," she said. "I ask them about themselves—just something to build that relationship really quickly. And from there I do preparation for procedures, procedural support and debriefing. I give prizes after to reward their effort when they've worked really hard."

Every day, she's amazed by her patients' resilience.

"I just love seeing children succeed when they didn't think they would, especially, a fearful or anxious child," said Beale. "I also like seeing how preparation reduces their fears and anxiety. Because when you can understand something, it makes it a lot less scary. Seeing a child go from screaming, crying and not complying to being completely cool as a cucumber and able to refocus their attention on my distraction methods is the most rewarding part of my job."





## **Alumna filmmaker and director wants works to be a positive change maker**

[Communication, Department of](#) : Friday December 4, 2020

Watching movies was something Shelly “Starr” Jarrard, ’12, grew up doing. Yet, she always wondered what it would be like to work behind the scenes. She had a passion for filmmaking.

This past spring, after working long hours before and after work, she finished directing her first documentary, “The Flaws of Copyright Infringement Laws,” which placed as a semi-finalist in the Festigious Los Angeles Film Festival. It’s also been featured on the Independent Film Channel (L.A.) and accepted into the Georgia

Documentary Film Festival, Montreal Independent Film Festival, Newmarket, International Film Festival and Venice Shorts Film Festival.

The documentary exposes how copyright laws allow corporations to bully independent filmmakers. It also highlights how the justice system can change this path.

Jarrard fell in love with film and radio broadcasting at Georgia College, where she was a mass communication major and Spanish minor. Jarrard was also an anchor, entertainment and field reporter with GCTV—the news station for students. She joined the station, because she had a strong passion for working behind-the-scenes in film.

“It taught me the processes of what on-screen talents go through while on camera,” she said. “It was so great, because I had already been behind the camera. So, it was cool to see what went on in front of the camera.”

Jarrard was also on the morning and afternoon shows at WGUR—Georgia College’s radio station.

“I joined WGUR, because I loved broadcasting and creating fresh new content for the morning show, as well as adding in humor,” she said. “It was such a cool feeling to see what I created and the types of responses that would come from the audience.”

Her favorite memory of working on the morning show was her first call from a listener. She enjoyed interacting with him.

“We received positive feedback from our listeners,” Jarrard said. “I think that’s such a great memory, because it was the first time I was able to see what we



Starr Jarrard (second from left) on the Star 94 Morning Show.



Shelly "Starr" Jarrard

created come to life.”

After graduating, Jarrard interned on the morning comedy show, Star 94 in Atlanta. After her internship, she later implemented those skills by helping develop podcasts and radio shows for legal professionals in the area.

“It was such a great and inspiring internship,” she said. “My role was to help the morning crew (Cindy and Ray) with the show, including sharing ideas, brainstorming, editing and other tasks. It ended up being pretty interactive, and I was able to implement many of my comedy ideas into the show, which was really neat.”

Jarrard credits her success with Star 94 to on-air experience at WGUR. It was there she learned the steps a morning broadcaster uses daily and what each hour of a show consists of. College shows were similar to reality, so Jarrard was well prepared for an internship.

Six months into the job, Jarrard needed a full-time position. However, there weren’t any available in the area, so she took a hiatus from broadcasting and film and began working a sales job during the day. She also pursued her love of film by screenwriting at night and on weekends. Her mass communication skills were instrumental, at this time.

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**“I just want to continue making films that create good change. I think that’s what I am really looking forward to. And, since I work in the legal field, I want to create films that stress justice, as well.”**

**- Starr Jarrard**

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Jarrard’s professors provided a solid foundation to draw from when writing screenplays, directing films and creating podcasts. Angela Criscoe pushed Jarrard to follow her dreams in radio broadcasting and directing films. Stephen Price taught her how to sharpen her writing skills with editorials for his class. And Pate McMichael helped Jarrard polish those writing skills, which she would later use in travel blogging and screen plays.

“My professors gave me that extra boost and inspiration where, if I was on the verge of pushing my project a little further or expanding on it, they always encouraged me to do so,” she said. “They challenged me in a way that pushed me to do better. They also welcomed my opinion, which led to innovative ideas and thoughts that pushed me away from normal projects and created new, diverse



ones.”



Starr Jarrard on a movie set.

While at Georgia College, Jarrard also studied abroad in Valencia, Spain. It enhanced her sense of travel and adventure while practicing Spanish for her minor.

“Traveling inspires me,” she said. “Seeing new cultures and different places and getting out of my comfort zone, allows me to come back with a sense of new inspiration and adventure.”

A few years ago, Jarrard embarked on her biggest adventure yet, moving to the West Coast. She’s now director of legal sales for Huseby in Los Angeles, where she sells deposition services, promotes legal services and does brandings for law firms across Southern California. This requires considerable networking.

“My professors taught me the power of connecting and having leadership skills,” Jarrard said. “I use these skills daily in my job, as well as with marketing and branding. This helps me in my profession and in all aspects of life.”

Her professors also instilled a strong sense of ambition in her, while pushing her to be her best. Now, she wants to inspire others through film or conversations to help them achieve their dreams.

“I just want to continue making films that create good change,” Jarrard said. “I think that’s what I am really looking forward to. And, since I work in the legal field, I want to create films that stress justice, as well.”





## A passion for education through the generations

**Alumni** : Friday December 4, 2020

Dr. Angela “AJ” Grube, ’91, ’94, gets her love of education from her mother, Mary Evelyn Farr Johnson, ’63, ’76. Besides teaching students in K-12, her mother taught Grube to never settle for anything short of her dreams. And Grube has done just that. Recently named dean of the College of Business at Western Carolina University, she begins her new role Jan. 1.

From a young age, Grube wasn’t sure what she would end up doing. She certainly didn’t envision a career in education. The management major absorbed all that her classes had to offer, plus kept the scorebook at Georgia College baseball games and practices for six years. Her Management Professor and Academic Advisor, Dr. Tom Krilowicz and his wife, Lucky, who also worked as an advisor in the Athletics Department at Georgia College, liked baseball. They attended games at Georgia College and also invited Grube to travel to the Florida State baseball games with them. Not long after she graduated, Krilowicz suggested Grube pursue a Ph.D. at Florida State University.



Dr. Angela "AJ" Grube

Grube took his advice and initially intended to be an athletic director, but she was awarded a teaching assistantship at FSU, and discovered she liked teaching. So,

she pursued academia instead.

Once Grube graduated from Florida State University, she became a faculty member, school director, interim associate dean, associate dean, acting dean and now, dean at Western Carolina University. She also held administrative appointments, serving as assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs and assistant to the chancellor for equal opportunity programs.

Grube's path to success started at Georgia College, where she learned the importance of marketing, not just paid advertisements, but marketing one's self and abilities.

"I have vivid memories of the marketing game—a simulation we played at GC. The lesson was whatever money you had left from your business, if you put it back into marketing, your business grew. So, then you had more money to invest into marketing. If you took that example, you could apply it to a business. But, if you take money out of the equation, you could also apply it to yourself and any organization."

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**"I didn't realize what a marvel my mother was until I got into my own career. I'm just so thankful for her. So many times I say, 'I would love to see what she would think about this.'"**

**- Dr. AJ Grube**

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She also found the human resources training she learned from her management courses at Georgia College useful in her role as school director, where she primarily worked with curriculum planning and evaluation of faculty.

In addition, Grube applied what she learned from her public administration courses as assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs.

"Learning about governmental funding and financing was so useful to me, because I worked primarily with staffing and funding," she said. "Understanding state funding can be particularly tricky, because it varies from state to state."

While Grube has applied many different skills she learned at Georgia College, she stresses the importance of bundling these with what she learned on the job.

"I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the experience I had at Georgia College," she said. "It not only prepared me for the world, but it also prepared me to keep learning from every post I've held and to be a lifelong learner."





Dr. AJ Grube at work.

As new dean of the College of Business at Western Carolina University, Grube plans to prepare students for success and to always be willing to learn new things.

“What I’m excited about in my new role is seeing how I can help facilitate student success from a different perspective,” she said. “That would mean working with faculty, students and administration to help them become lifelong learners.”

Grube is grateful her mother gave her the determination to achieve a successful and rewarding career. Her mother inspires her every day.

“She never once said to me, ‘Aren’t you tired of going to college, or do you think this could be the last degree you’ll get?’” said Grube. “Instead she said, ‘We’ll support you as long as you want to continue going to college.’”

“My mother was a first-generation college student. She came from a family where she was not particularly encouraged to pursue a higher education, but she did anyway,” Grube said.



Dr. AJ Grube on campus.

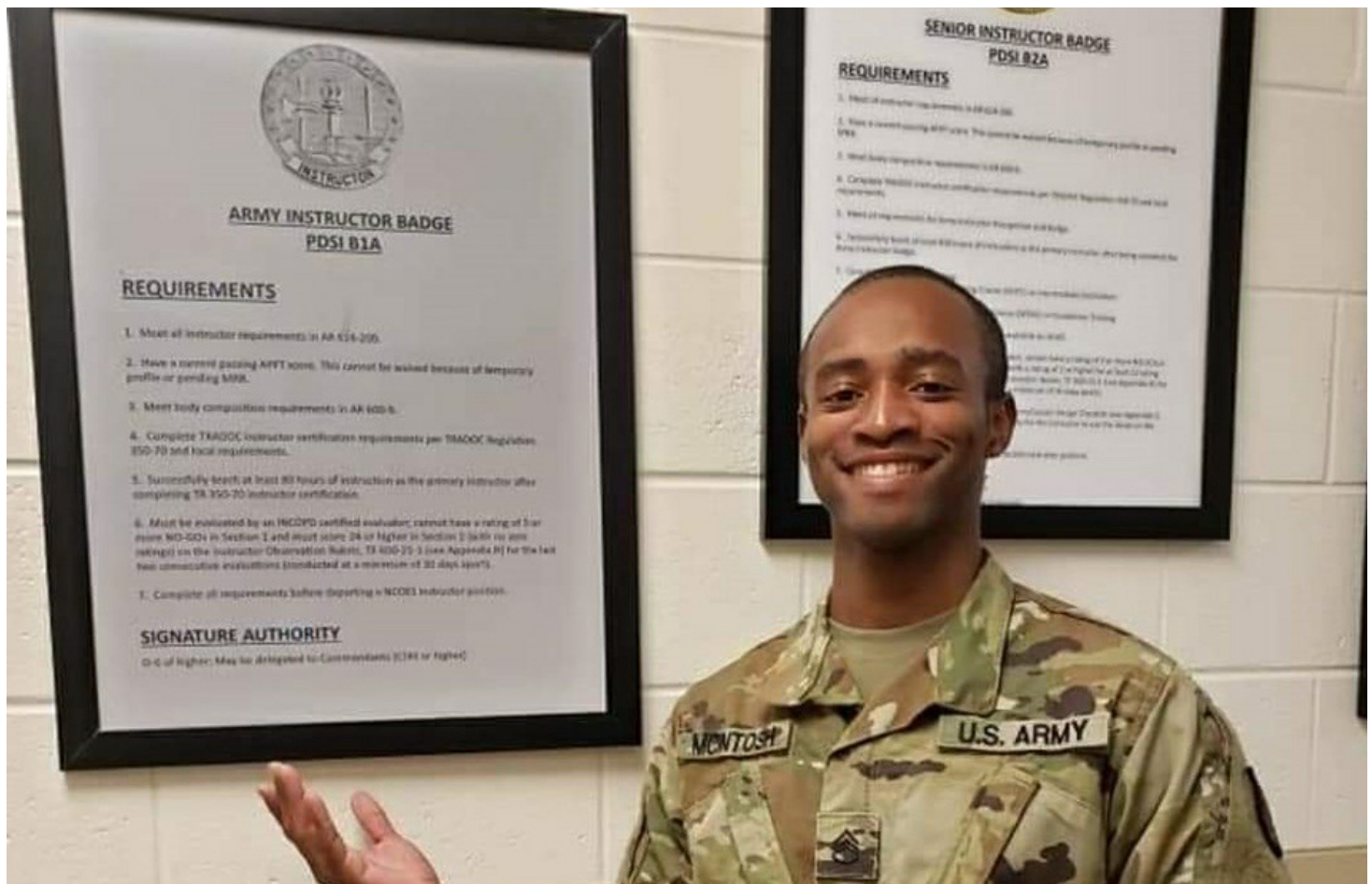
Her mother also went to Georgia College and majored in education. Although she passed away in 2002, Johnson's emphasis on the importance of getting an education and a career remains with her daughter. Johnson continues to be a role model for Grube, particularly when it comes to women's independence.

"She was an amazing educator," Grube said. "I look back at her and think, 'Oh my gosh, I am so thankful for her having the determination to say, 'I'm going to get an education, even though others tell me I shouldn't pursue one.'"

"I didn't realize what a marvel my mother was until I got into my own career," said Grube. "I'm just so thankful for her. So many times I say, 'I would love to see what she would think about this.'"



# News Stories Posted Wednesday December 9, 2020



## Class of 2020: Exercise science major aspires to teach

[College of Health Sciences](#) : Wednesday December 9, 2020

**Jerrick McIntosh**

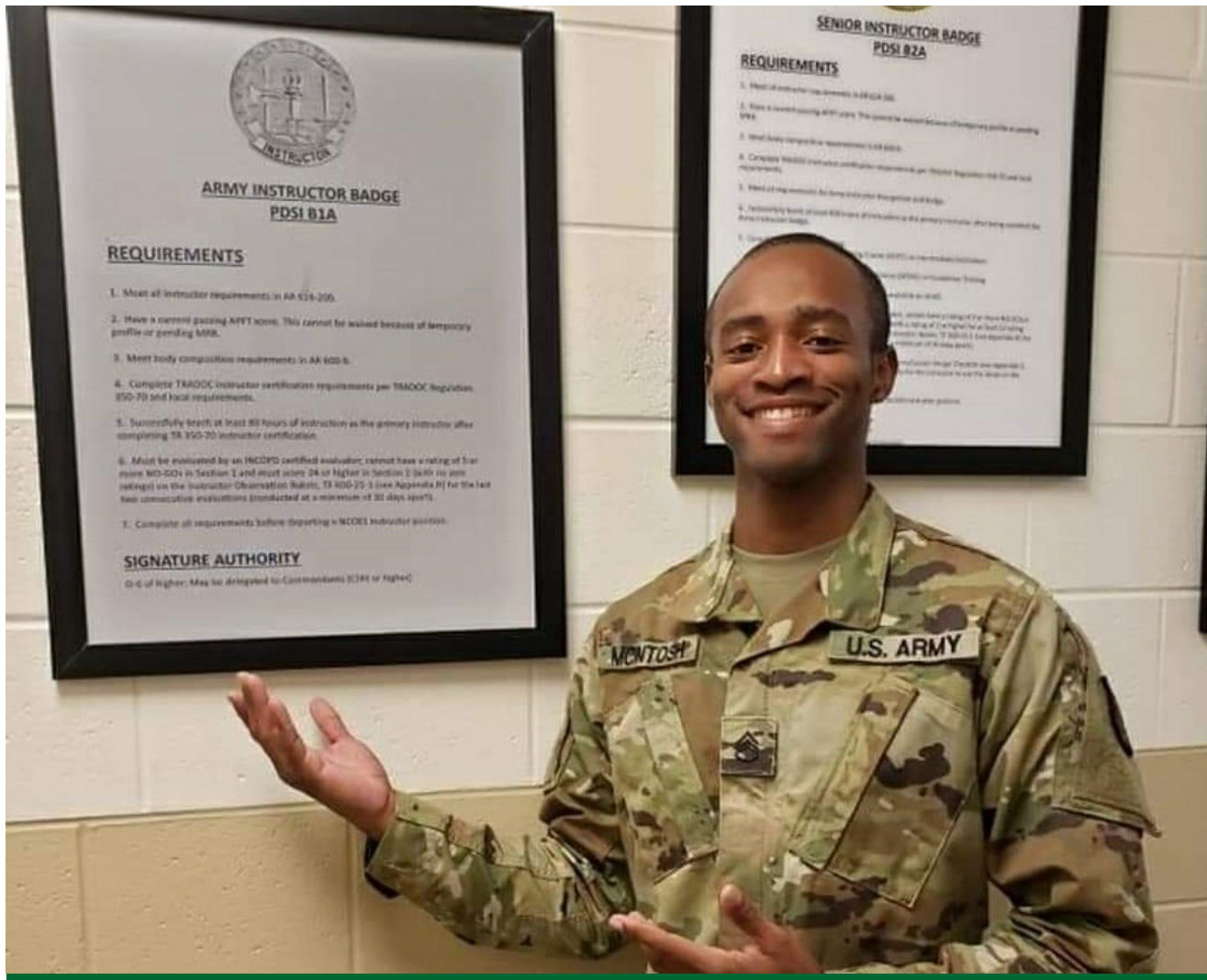
**Where are you from?** I am from Augusta, Georgia.

**What do you do in the U.S. Army National Guard?** I have been serving for 10 years. My job is an artillery mechanic in the army. I am currently an instructor at a school house at Fort Stewart. I teach the artillery mechanic military occupational specialty.

**What do you like most about serving in the U.S. Army National Guard?** I enjoy being able to spread the knowledge that I have gained, traveling and meeting

different people.

**Why do you serve in the Army National Guard?** I serve to be a part of something bigger than myself and to give back to my community.



Jerrick McIntosh displays his Army Instructor Badge.

**Which professors made the most impact on you and how?** Drs. Monroe and Saladin have had the biggest impact on me. They helped me restructure the way I think, study and explain information, which helped me become the instructor I am today.

**What was your favorite class and why?** I enjoyed anatomy and physiology I. The knowledge I gained from this class alone gave me options for different career paths if I desired to take them, such as becoming a physician's assistant, physical therapy or occupational therapy.

**What profession do you plan to pursue?** I plan on becoming either a science teacher or a physical education teacher at a school. I really love science. I have interests in anatomy, physiology, astronomy and biology.



**What organization were you a part of and what did you like most about it?**I really enjoyed being involved in the Latino Student Association at Georgia College. It really got me out of my bubble!

**What inspires you?** My family and my fiance inspire me to push my boundaries. They motivate me to be better than I was yesterday.

# News Stories Posted Monday December 14, 2020



## The Graduate School at Georgia College sees record enrollment

[The Graduate School](#) : Monday December 14, 2020

While colleges and universities across the nation struggle to meet enrollment goals, [Georgia College's Graduate School](#) has broken records across the board.

  
**1200+**  
Enrollment

  
**34**  
Graduate Degree Programs

  
**22**  
Online or Hybrid Degrees

For the fall 2020 semester, 1,268 students enrolled in graduate programs at the university—the largest number in history. That number has been steadily rising since fall 2016 when 868 students were enrolled.

The Graduate School data December 2020.

Interim Associate Provost and  
Director of the Graduate School

Dr. Holley Roberts attributes the growth to Georgia College's reputation as an

institution of higher education and the innovation to offer programs that meet the needs of professionals in our state.

[U.S. News & World Report](#) ranked several Georgia College master's degrees in the "Best Online Graduate Programs" for 2020. The graduate nursing programs were recognized as 28th in the country and first in Georgia. Online Master's in Business degrees (excluding the MBA) were listed as 17th in the nation and also first in Georgia, while the online MBA was also the highest-ranked in the state.

During this time of economic uncertainty, many people are looking to develop more in their current professions, increase their knowledge in a specific area or change careers, according to Roberts.

"Growth is happening in many of our graduate programs with the largest being in the College of Education—specifically in our Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program," said Roberts.

The MAT program provides initial educator preparation at the master's degree level for people who already have a bachelor's degree with a major in specific content fields. It's primarily for those people looking to change careers to become a teacher.

"Part of it is, as people are losing their jobs, they decide to go into teaching. If they already have a bachelor's degree, they can be in the classroom, start teaching and get certified with the MAT," said Dr. Joe Peters, dean of the College of Education.

Since 2015, graduate programs in the College of Education have "grown 412 percent," said Peters. He attributes that primarily to the move to offer programs online. MAT programs began to move online in 2016 and have seen steady growth since then.

"With the MAT program, students can focus in middle grades, secondary or special education," Peters said.

"In the College of Education, we also have a teacher leadership specialist degree and a curriculum and instruction master's degree. We just started both a few years ago, and they also have record enrollment," Peters said.



**MAT student teaches in the classroom.**

Most graduate programs at the university are online, making for easier access to students across the state. With many already in a working profession, online learning brings more flexibility and options as people look to pursue an advanced degree. That's why the College of Education plans to continue to offer more programs online to meet needs.

"Next summer we're going to do early childhood and middle grades master's degrees 100 percent online for the first time, as well as special education master's and specialist degrees," Peters said.

The university also offers certificates online in education and other fields. It's one more way to help professionals hone existing skills or develop new ones.

The Graduate School is looking to expand offerings across the university to address the needs of professional learners with increasing the offerings in graduate certificates.

"Certificates are non-degree seeking," Roberts said. "They are a series of classes that build on each other to enhance knowledge and skills in a specific area."



student at computer.

"We are planning to offer several new certificates coming out of health sciences and business," said Roberts. "Although they're in the early stages, options could include information systems, data analytics, IT auditing, web development, nutrition, nurse simulation educator and more."

Meeting the current workforce needs is key to the growth and development of The Graduate School.

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**“Our goals looking forward are to foster student success, cultivate an engaged graduate community and focus our recruitment efforts.”**

**- Dr. Holley Roberts**

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Whether in education, business, health sciences or humanities, Georgia College

will continue to provide an education for graduate learners that's both accessible and preeminent.

For more information on the Graduate School at Georgia College, visit <https://www.gcsu.edu/graduate>.



# News Stories Posted Tuesday December 15, 2020



## GC Journeys wins Regents' Momentum Year Award for excellence

[GC Journeys](#) : Tuesday December 15, 2020

The University System of Georgia (USG) awarded its “2021 Regents’ Momentum Year Award for Excellence in Teaching and Curricular Innovation” to GC Journeys—a program where every Georgia College student participates in at least five transformative experiences in their college years.

“We strongly value the success of our students and realize the impact of the intentional and supportive opportunities a program like GC Journeys offers to their college experience,” said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs.

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...they voted unanimously to recommend GC Journeys program as this year’s winner.

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“We are dedicated to providing all our students access to these high-impact practices,” he said, “and will continue to nurture and develop GC Journeys so our students are career or graduate school ready.”

In a congratulatory letter announcing the award, Dr. Tristan Denley, executive vice chancellor and chief academic officer for USG, wrote: “We received many outstanding nomination portfolios this year and each was thoroughly reviewed by a panel of faculty and administrators from across the University System. When the review committee met to discuss the nominations and finalize their recommendations, they voted unanimously to recommend GC Journeys program as this year’s winner.”



Student collects millipedes for research.

The path to this honor started last year when Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost of Transformative Learning Experiences, and Dr. Cynthia Alby, professor of Secondary Education, agreed GC Journeys would be “extremely competitive.” Last fall, Cofer worked with various departments to capture steps they were taking to provide students transformative experiences.

These included undergraduate research, internships, study abroad, leadership opportunities, community-based learning and career planning.

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**It’s not a department initiative, rather it’s a university-wide initiative. While it was conceived and driven by faculty, it’s taken the entire university working together to focus on student success, which is at the heart of a liberal arts education. Its this type of collaboration that really helped set us apart.**

**- Dr. Jordan Cofer**

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Cofer also worked with officials at Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness to collect assessments and documentation that proved the

effectiveness of GC Journeys. Then, he joined Dr. Dana Gorzelany-Mostak, the university's faculty success coordinator, to format an approach for application.

GC Journeys is "comprehensive" and "ambitious," Cofer said, and that's what helped propel it to award-winning success.

"It's not a department initiative, rather it's a university-wide initiative," he said. "While it was conceived and driven by faculty, it's taken the entire university working together to focus on student success, which is at the heart of a liberal arts education. It's this type of collaboration that really helped set us apart."



Students use film equipment.

GC Journeys puts high-impact practices at the center of student experience and at every level of undergraduate curriculum and this, according to Denley, was a distinguishing feature. The university integrates curricular and co-curricular experiences, which serves "as a springboard for students to explore career pathways, engage with local and global communities, develop leadership skills and cultivate an academic mindset," Denley

wrote. These are all elements of USG's Momentum Year award, as well.

The award will be formally presented at a future Board of Regents meeting.

"I'm so excited about the award," Cofer said, "because it's external recognition of the great work our faculty and staff are doing. It helps confirm that quality education that GC students receive."



# News Stories Posted Tuesday December 22, 2020



## Students get feet wet adopting streams during winter break

[Academic Outreach](#) : Tuesday December 22, 2020

Some Georgia College students will be doing a lot of streaming on winter break—but not the kind you do on Netflix.

Home for the holidays, they're not idle. Fifty students from all majors have turned 'citizen scientist' to monitor waterways in 26 counties across Georgia. They'll make visual assessments, analyze chemical markers and log information to the state's Adopt-A-Stream database.

"This is truly a unique, cooperative and co-curricular experience that only a place like Georgia College could provide," said Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost of Transformative Learning Experiences.





Regan Kitchens at  
Champion Creek in  
Milledgeville.

“Our students are extremely interested in service and sustainability,” he said, “so this project really appealed to them. They’re able to help give back to their communities, while learning more about their local environments.”

This new program allows students to be actively engaged outside during an unusually long winter break. It also satisfies one of five transformative experiences they need in the GC Journeys program, in order to graduate.



Students tested their knowledge of streams at Champion Creek at Lake Laurel.

**This is truly a unique, cooperative and co-curricular experience that only a place like Georgia College could provide.**

**- Dr. Jordan Cofer**

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Before leaving campus for the semester, students began learning and preparing. Some are environmental science and chemistry majors. But a majority are not. Majors from areas like business, psychology, nursing, computer science, health sciences and communications are learning to visually assess and chemically test streams.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to promote the efforts of Adopt-a-Stream and get our students excited about water quality. The best part is that their small efforts can have a big impact,” said Ruth Eilers, director of Academic Outreach and regional coordinator for Georgia Adopt-A-Stream.

So many students were interested in this alternative winter break activity that additional training sessions were offered. In November, students took workshops with Eilers, lasting anywhere from three hours to half a day. Some students learned to observe subtle changes in streams by examining the physical appearance and structure of streams and how they change over time. This tells a lot about the health of a stream and the quality of habitats for small organisms.

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**It's really valuable for these students to show they're engaged in these citizen-science efforts. They were willing to get substantial training and follow through with it. These are all skills that'll benefit them when they look for jobs after graduation.**

**- Dr. Allison VandeVoort**

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Half the students were trained in chemical monitoring. They learned to test dissolved oxygen, pH acidity, electrical conductivity and temperature.

“It's really valuable for these students to show they're engaged in these citizen-science efforts,” said Dr. Allison VandeVoort, associate professor of environmental science. “They were willing to get substantial training and follow through with it. These are all skills that'll benefit them when they look for jobs after graduation.”

“I'm encouraged so many of them care about their environment,” she said. “They care about sustainability, and they're excited to engage in this cool citizen-science effort.”



Students tested their newfound knowledge in Champion Creek at Lake Laurel in November and are now state certified in the Adopt-A-Stream program. They'll continue to participate in online discussion boards and web meetings to talk about what they've learned and the challenges they're facing. There'll also be online guest speakers to teach students more about water quality issues, community engagement and sustainability.

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**This will be a snapshot, if you will, of what water quality looks like across Georgia at this moment.**

**- Dr. Vandervoort**

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Junior psychology major Mara Lami volunteered to observe and chemically test a stream directly behind her house in Fortson, Georgia, called Standing Boy Creek. It's a fascinating area surrounded by overgrown forest and swampland. She also hopes to monitor Mulberry Creek, a popular spot in her community for fishing.

Lami is using a form for visual notes that includes weather observation and the color, clarity and odor of water. She'll calculate the stream's flow as a chemical tester, as well, filling out a form for air and water temperature, pH levels and amounts of dissolved oxygen.

“The most challenging part, so far, has been the weather,” Lami said. “Rain keeps popping up on days, when I can actually go to the streams.”

“Getting to test the streams on my own is going to be fun. Mixing chemicals to learn new information about streams is exciting. I really look forward to getting into the streams with my rain boots on and testing the water.”



Junior environmental science major Molly Hooks is minoring in geology and biology. She's glad to use her education to “contribute important findings and data” to the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream database.

Hooks already conducted tests at two coastal sites. While vacationing at Tybee Island, she tested waters only accessible by boat like Jack's Cut, Little Tybee



Junior Molly Hooks at Tybee Island.

Slough and Buck Hammock. She also plans to test waters in her

hometown of Augusta during break.

“Interpreting data, while in the field, is definitely challenging,” Hooks said. “But it’s also fun, because you get to spend time outside, while also conducting important research.”

Sydney Brown of Canton, Georgia, just graduated in December with degrees in biology and psychology. She enjoys freshwater conservation and is excited to make “an important contribution to a large body of science,” like Adopt-A-Stream.

Brown expects to do chemical testing at Fishing Creek near her home in Milledgeville. It runs into the Oconee River and is a popular fishing spot.

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**I think it'll be really fun to have a mini field-work experience and contribute to citizen science, which is a super-cool concept. I will always jump at an opportunity to work with water.**

**- Sydney Brown, recent graduate**

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Students report their findings online at the Adopt-A-Stream database. In January, they’ll provide Milledgeville representatives with a report on local waters. If any streams prove to be problematic, information from students could prompt action from politicians and environmental professionals.

“This will be a snapshot, if you will, of what water quality looks like across Georgia at this moment,” VandeVoort said. “I think it’s really important for students from all majors to be able to engage with their environment, and I’m encouraged so many of them care about sustainability.”



Students at Champion Creek.