

# Front Page News Story Archive

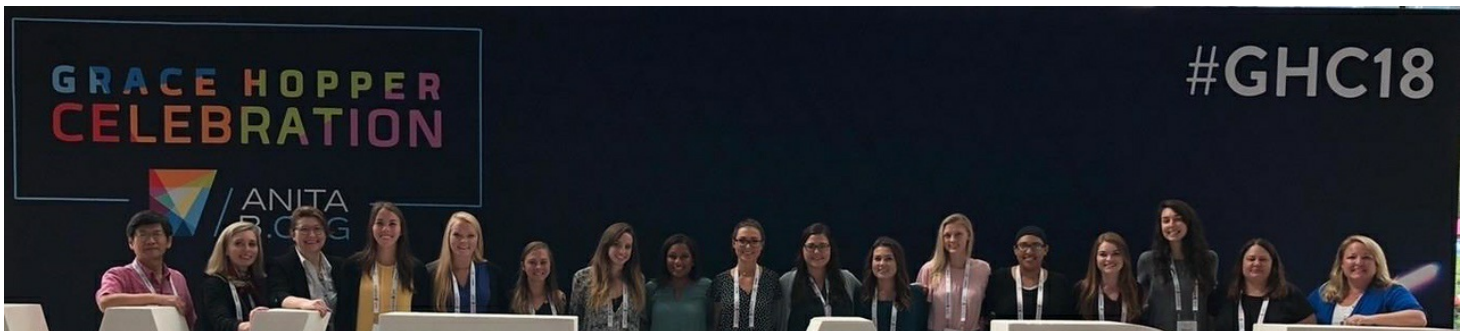
February 2021



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# News Stories Posted Tuesday February 2, 2021



## Help students land lifetime careers through the Grace Hopper Celebration

[Alumni](#) : Tuesday February 2, 2021

The Grace Hopper Celebration (GHC) of Women in Computing holds the key to success for many Georgia College students. Often, students who attend this annual conference find themselves interviewing and then working for nationwide companies, such as Accenture, Allstate and Bank of America.

Anna Arnall, '20, is a business and technology delivery analyst with Accenture Federal Services and knows what it's like.

"I got a job thanks to this conference," she said. "I interviewed with five companies as a result of Grace Hopper and started working for Accenture Federal Services in July 2020."

Arnall works with a database used daily by her clients, where she does everything from teaching technology to visualizing different data to answering help desk tickets. She draws on what she learned at the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing conference



Anna Arnall (left) and Madeline Niersbach at the 2018 Grace Hopper Celebration.

and applies it to her profession every day.

"A concept that was displayed at the conference was kindness," Arnall said. "It leaves a large impact on people. I interacted with hundreds of people there, and I remember those people and companies who displayed kindness to me. Now, I have the opportunity to interact with clients and colleagues using kindness. People notice."

Arnall also feels that the Grace Hopper champions women in computing.

"You leave knowing nothing can hold you back from what you want to accomplish," she said. "First hand, you see the women who made the world better for you. They were the start of representation."

"We are blessed to come from a school where women leadership is not a minority. Women in technology can be the minority," said Arnall. "The conference gives you a glimpse of the support you can find after leaving Georgia College."



Georgia College students and faculty at the 2018 Grace Hopper Celebration.

For those who attend, the take-a-ways are endless.

"For some, the most important is clearly the Career Expo," said Dr. Tanya Goette, chair, information systems and computer science. "Students are going with the intent to land a job at a really large company, and they're going to make the most of that. And that's what they do. For many others, it's simply seeing how many females exist in technology, and not feeling like an imposter. Imposter syndrome is very real, and this conference helps students to reduce that feeling."

According to Goette, the atmosphere at Grace Hopper is unlike any other conference.

"Everyone who's there wants to help the students who are starting out in their

careers,” she said. “The companies are actually competing with each other to hire the students.”

There are at least 16 simultaneous tracks going on at once. The tracks can range from artificial intelligence, to the internet, to cybersecurity, to leadership and to professional development.

“So just about any type of technology you want to name, you can find a session on it, if not a whole track on it,” said Goette. “There are literally thousands of networking opportunities at the conference. It’s just an incredible experience.”

Conference participants expand on what they’ve learned in the classroom depending upon which track they attend.

“The important thing is they’re learning to network. They are practicing their elevator speech,” she said. “Many of these women are very shy, so if they can connect through networking at GHC they will be better off.”

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**“We are blessed to come from a school where women leadership is not a minority. Women in technology can be the minority. The conference gives you a glimpse of the support you can find after leaving Georgia College.”**

**- Anna Arnall**

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Since 2015, 24 Georgia College students received a job as a direct result of the Grace Hopper Celebration Career Expo. According to Goette, Georgia College takes more students based on the percentage of majors than any other university.

Although Goette has several Grace Hopper Celebration student-success stories, she recalls having an extremely shy female student attend the conference. Faculty attending the conference encouraged her to talk with company representatives, resulting in an internship and job offer with Allstate.

“She was absolutely so excited over that,” said Goette. “I think without the conference, obtaining a job would’ve been very difficult for her. The Grace Hopper Celebration enabled her to get more comfortable and talk to more companies than she would have on her own.”

Her favorite part of the Grace Hopper Celebration is the confidence it provides students.

"I really enjoy looking into the students' eyes, when they score an interview with their dream company, or when they realize that they are truly good enough to be in technology and to compete with everybody else," said Goette. "I also like to see these students get to know each other when they really hadn't even met before."

However, these experiences would not be possible without scholarships. Goette knows first-hand the importance of providing funds to students, so they can attend the Grace Hopper Celebration.

"Georgia College is all about transformational experiences, and this conference is one of the most transformational experiences an individual can have," she said. "It's an opportunity for our students to show the large employers how great Georgia College is. Companies like Accenture Federal Services, ADP, Allstate, Bank of America and PricewaterhouseCoopers have hired at least one other GC student after hiring one the year before."

To Arnall, the conference offers limitless career opportunities.

"I made connections with jobs, companies and people," she said. "I now work for one of my dream companies. The conference gave me an opportunity to know my worth in the job market and compare job opportunities across the industry. I networked with people from some of my dream companies. These women are encouraging and take action to impact future generations."

Arnall thanks donors for the priceless career she gained as a result of the Grace Hopper Celebration.

"I hold some of the highest regards to Georgia College for giving me the opportunity to attend this conference," she said. "You allowed for me to dream big and interview with jobs across America."

[Learn how you can help students land their dream career through the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing Conference.](#)



## Georgia College gives alumna tools to energize students

**Alumni** : Tuesday February 2, 2021

Dr. Allison Hawkins Crume, '99, '00, associate vice president and dean of Undergraduate Studies at the University of South Florida, knows the importance of bringing energy into the classroom to reach students. She learned it from Drs. Bob Wilson and Derek Alderman while studying history at Georgia College.

"Dr. Alderman had an energy he brought into the classroom, and we were all engaged," she said. "He could tell a story and make us feel connected immediately. We didn't even realize we were learning and years later those lessons still resonate."

Crume especially remembers her independent study in Alderman's class while pursuing her master's degree. From courthouse to courthouse, she delved into the research, exploring the geographic locations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevards across the south.



**Dr. Allison Crume,**  
dean of  
Undergraduate

"It was my first experience seeing history come alive through the intersections of politics and geography," she said. "Conducting research was exciting and empowering."

Studies and  
associate vice  
president, Student  
Success at USF

Alderman made sure his students knew he cared about them by connecting with them about their interests and sharing his own.

"Care and compassion are values I carry forward into my work with students," Crume said. "Yes, I'm the dean of undergraduate studies, but I am also a mom, volunteer at my church and football fan. When people realize you care, you are able to positively impact each other's lives beyond the classroom environment."

In addition to making those connections with students, Alderman demonstrated his passion for education through teaching. He made sure students knew their decisions should rest upon their interests and passions.

"I try to model that, as well," said Crume. "Serving students and being a higher education professional is more than just a job for me. It is my vocation. I strive to help students achieve their academic goals and become active members of their community."

She learned leadership skills by serving as president of Phi Mu her senior year where she was accountable to over 100 women. Pledging as a first-year student and serving for four years helped build her confidence and interpersonal skills.

"I learned the importance of building a community around a shared purpose. I gained skills in financial and risk management



Dean Crume meets with the United States Army and the University of South Florida ROTC leadership. Dean Crume supervises the USF ROTC programs from the nation's armed services.



Dr. Crume and her family pictured left to

as well as important communication strategies including how to have difficult conversations with administration,” said Crume. “My Phi Mu experience continues to benefit me today.”

right: Davis (15), Donald, '99, Allison, Dylan (13) and Donovan (12).

Serving in the Student Government Association (SGA) as a senator proved challenging for her, as well. While she was serving in SGA, Georgia College changed its mascot from the Colonials to Bobcats.

“We had to vote on ideas for the new mascot and what the colors were going to be. I feel lucky for the opportunity to be part of those debates and discussions. We wrestled with the weight of the decisions, but it was fun too,” Crume said. “Even now as I engage in strategic planning processes, I ensure students are involved and have voice.”

One of her favorite memories are the ones she made on front campus with friends between classes and meals.

“We would play hacky-sack in front of Bell Hall for hours,” said Crume. “We spent a lot of time at the clock tower and the GIVE Center. I remember campus rec set up a zip line, it was so much fun.”

She also enjoyed her time as a member of the history club with Wilson as the advisor. Collectively, she gained transformative experiences from each student organization she participated in over the years.

“Belonging to student organizations was such a positive experience for me,” Crume said. “Whether learning how to run a meeting, public speaking or building a workshop, my involvement at Georgia College provided me spaces to grow and learn.”

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**“Belonging to student organizations was such a positive experience for me. Whether learning how to run a meeting, public speaking or building a workshop, my involvement at Georgia College provided me spaces to grow and learn.”**

**- Dr. Allison Crume**

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Today, she’s accountable for so much more, and communication is a large part of her position. Crume checks in with her team daily. She addresses student issues, academic planning, policies and brainstorms new ways to streamline processes to

remove barriers. Crume also connects with students on social media every day to check-in, share congratulatory messages, as well as share resources.

“It is special when I get to meet with students during orientation before they have started classes,” Crume said. “Some students have clear ideas of their path while others are still deciding. I enjoy supporting them in their discovery and staying in touch throughout their academic experience. Helping and supporting students to achieve their potential is rewarding work.”

USF recently consolidated across three campuses of which Crume is dean of undergraduate studies. Entering into her sixth month in this new role, one of her goals is to meet and build relationships with the students, faculty and staff of all of them. She wants to listen and learn while making herself available as a resource.

Her second goal is to identify opportunities resulting from conversations with her team and the university’s external constituents to continually provide a better experience for the students.

Ultimately, Crume is committed to student success.

“The students inspire me every day. They are so smart,” she said. “These students have the visions and ideas to make the world a better place, and that energy and excitement is something that’s contagious. So that motivates me to bring my ‘A Game’ every day to make sure I bring that energy and I’m prepared to help them with their goals.”



## First-generation alumnus claims "firsts" for Georgia College

**Alumni** : Tuesday February 2, 2021

First-generation Georgia College alumnus Russell Bentley, '79, '80, takes on each task with determination and grace. A 36-year police veteran, 31-year campus police agency executive, chief of police and now director of Campus Police for Bibb County Schools and chief finance officer of Safe Havens International—a nonprofit campus safety organization—Bentley pushes his abilities to the limits every day. He initiated this powerful drive as a student studying family consumer science at Georgia College. He was also a cheerleader, cheerleading coach, chairman of the Honor Council and chapter president of his fraternity.

"Being in the field that I've been in for over 30 years, my leadership experience at Georgia College just spring boarded me to take on responsibility and motivate others to collaborate," Bentley said. "All of that was the start of a foundation that has carried me throughout my professional career."

Dr. Catherine Dupree, associate professor of home economics and Dr. Therry Deal, chair of the department, were instrumental in helping him stay in the program.

“They encouraged me to attend graduate school and assisted me in getting into and staying in the program,” said Bentley. “Both professors provided me the opportunity to work as a graduate student on several grants, which helped me find my way through graduate school. They also provided references for several years, as I sought various professional opportunities.”

Both Dupree and Deal taught him how to be professional and better understand interactions with students and educators.

“My classes helped me understand student development and family interaction and dynamics,” he said. “This has helped me tremendously in the role of leading a public safety agency, because we work with students and their families. The education classes also allowed me to better understand educators, both at the K-12 and the post-secondary level.”



Russell Bentley, director of Campus Police for Bibb County Schools

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**“I hope we gave these students a solid foundation to take on those roles. It’s my job daily to exemplify this. It doesn’t cost you anything to inspire people.”**

**- Russell Bentley**

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While Bentley immersed himself in his studies at Georgia College, he also strived for more. He served as a resident assistant and hall director.

“The residence-life experience at GC allowed me to prepare for my role as an area coordinator in Residence Life at Middle Tennessee State and Emory University,” said Bentley. “I’ve got my background in Residence Life from Georgia College, which provided me with the nexus to become a professional at the next level at these universities.”

Bentley also sought to grow his leadership skills by serving as the Honor Council chair, where the council litigated potential violations of the Honor Code.

In addition, he served as president of the newly chartered chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc.—one of the first African-American Greek organizations at Georgia College. The experience shaped him, plus he gained lifetime friendships.

“It was a great honor to serve my fraternity brothers at that particular time,” he said. “They had trust in me and allowed me to lead that outstanding group of young men.”

Bentley was also a male cheerleader on campus—another first for Georgia College. He enjoyed making new friends and meeting new students from across the nation at Cheerleading Camp. Later, Bentley was surprised to see those cheerleaders he met at camp on TV during the Saturday afternoon college football games.

“Cheerleading provided me an opportunity to be a part of a special group of students,” he said. “We were among the first few males who were able to be a part of that group.”

From his involvement in his fraternity to helping cheer fans on during sports, Bentley thrives around people. He makes it his mission to protect and serve the Bibb County School system’s students and staff. Although no day is alike for Bentley, serving as director of Campus Police, one thing remains the same.

“Typically, my job is to reach out to everyone district wide,” he said. “I keep my finger on the pulse of what’s going on with the assistance of my leadership team—a great group of police professionals.”



Russell Bentley (pictured right) presents a new officer his police badge after taking the Georgia Peace Officer's Oath of Office.



Russell Bentley poses with GC's cheerleading team.

Bentley enjoys his profession in keeping the schools safe. However, the part of his job he especially treasures is watching the students learn and grow in a safe and secure learning environment.

"I've known these young people from the time they enter the school system as early as Pre-K, and I've seen them walk across the stage at high school graduation," he said. "One graduate constantly reminds me that she still has her fingerprint card I helped make when I was working in the Macon Police Department Crime Prevention unit in 1985. Now, she's an elementary school principal."

Bentley's hope for Bibb County students is that when they leave the district, he's helped shape and prepared them for the 21st century to be productive young people.

"Each day my goal is to assist each student to demonstrate strength of character and be college or career ready," he said. "This is the Bibb County Public Schools vision for every student."

"I hope we gave these students a solid foundation to take on those roles," he said. "It's my job daily to exemplify this. It doesn't cost you anything to inspire people."



## Georgia College celebrates African American History Month and leadership strides of alumnus

[Inclusive Excellence, Office of](#) : Tuesday February 2, 2021

In February, Georgia College celebrates the accomplishments of many African Americans, including Juawn Jackson, '16—an exemplary leader. He's a project advisor for Alpha Phi Alpha Educational Talent Search and also serves as the youngest member ever on the Bibb County Board of Education.

As project advisor for Alpha Phi Alpha Educational Talent Search, Jackson is responsible for assisting middle and high school students with navigating college readiness, financial aid and career development. He helps facilitate free services for scholars such as workshops, test waivers, assistance with identifying scholarships and planning college visits and cultural trips.

In his role, Jackson strives to knock down barriers that stand in the way of his scholars, most of which come from limited-incomes households and will be first-generation college students.



Juawn Jackson

"I seek to motivate and inspire my scholars to reach their God-given purpose," he said. "However, often we have to balance invisible barriers such as imposter

syndrome, self-doubt, etc., that has found residence inside of these bright, young men and women. My job is to tackle those barriers head-on. And, I love a good fight.”

Jackson got his start in leadership as Georgia College’s first African American Student Government Association (SGA) president to serve two terms.

“During my tenure, I understood the weight of responsibility that came with the position and my commitment to be the voice for all students,” he said. “Georgia College understands the importance of student governance and provides student leaders with opportunities to think independently and lead creatively.”

Jackson applies what he learned while serving in SGA in both of his current roles. One such skill, heightened during those years, was providing ethical, servant and transformative leadership.



Students gather at the Georgia General Assembly to learn more about state government alongside their Advisor Juawn Jackson (first row, far right) and other chaperones from the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Epsilon Beta Lambda chapter.

“You’ll never satisfy everyone,” he said. “However, when you make decisions based on facts and data while looking for ways to advance the interests of those you represent—always telling them the truth—you’ll be regarded well in history. It’s that philosophy I seek to instill in my students whom I advise and in the job that I’ll do for the next four years as a Board of Education member.”

As a product of Macon-Bibb County, Jackson wants to give back to a community

that has given so much to him. He spends over 24 hours a week in local schools observing how hard the students work, the creativity of the educators and the dedication of support professionals.

“I want to be a cheerleader for our school system and ensure that resources are available for every child to be successful,” he said. “I plan to use my youthfulness to connect with students and become better advocates for them.”

During his four-year term, he will also focus on creating a robust economy and stronger community.

“We must focus on retaining current businesses and industries and creating opportunities for new economic development, while addressing poverty by continuing to provide a high-quality public education that ensures our students are college and career ready,” said Jackson. “We can do this by expanding industry partnerships, championing entrepreneurship and recruiting and retaining quality educators.”

During African American History Month, we salute individuals who, like Jackson, have made a lasting impact on our communities.

“A true knowledge of African American history will help all of us understand the nature of the struggle that African Americans have been engaged in since they arrived in this country, and how they have endured, and in many ways, triumphed,” said Dr. Carolyn Denard, associate vice president, chief diversity officer, Office of Inclusive Excellence at Georgia College. “Once people have that knowledge, hopefully, they will respect the contributions of African Americans, understand the injustices that have been historically leveled against them and be inspired to change our world for the better.”



Dr. Carolyn Denard

Denard, along with her team in the Office of Inclusive Excellence strive to achieve diversity excellence in the composition of the community, educational programs, university policies, research and scholarship, campus life, employment practices, extracurricular activities and community-outreach.

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**“A true knowledge of African American history will help all of us understand the nature of the struggle that African Americans have been engaged in since**

they arrived in this country, and how they have endured, and in many ways, triumphed. Once people have that knowledge, hopefully, they will respect the contributions of African Americans, understand the injustices that have been historically leveled against them and be inspired to change our world for the better.”

- Dr. Carolyn Denard

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Her goals include completing a new Diversity Action Plan, establishing a Diversity and Inclusion Policy Committee on the University Senate, launching an on-going educational series (Diversity 360) that will provide practical ways to help the community address issues that are often obstacles to creating a welcoming climate on campus. In addition, she will provide training sessions led by staff, faculty and student diversity peer educators to better understand challenges and work together to learn effective ways to address them and establish advisory councils of members of the college, alumni and Milledgeville communities to get their advice and provide ongoing accountability for the Office of Inclusive Excellence.

“Establishing the structural components for the university is my main goal,” said Denard. “If we can do this, then we will not have to depend on one individual to move diversity forward, but we will have a web of institutional structures that help us embed our values of diversity and inclusion in everything that we do.”

Everyone is invited to participate in GC’s African American History Month events listed below. To learn more about these events, contact Nadirah Mayweather, director of the Cultural Center, at: [nadirah.mayweather.gcsu.edu](mailto:nadirah.mayweather.gcsu.edu) or register [here](#).

THE GEORGIA COLLEGE CULTURAL CENTER PRESENTS

# Literary Legacies

A Collaborative Black History Month Celebration



## Book Club Tuesdays

**Feb. 2, 9, 16 & 23, 2021 @ 12:00 PM & 6:00 PM**

Collaboration with the COE Social Justice Dialogue Series

Read and discuss *Between the World and Me*

by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Register [HERE](#) for your copy of the book!

12:00 Zoom Link: <https://gcsu.zoom.us/j/95422636468>

6:00 PM Zoom Link: <https://gcsu.zoom.us/j/93547723255>

## Wise Words

**Feb. 11, 2021 @ 6:00 PM**

Co-sponsored by Alumni Relations

An evening of conversation with members of the African American Alumni Council.

Zoom Link: <https://gcsu.zoom.us/j/98359826016>

## African American Read-In

**Feb. 12, 2021 10:00 AM-4:00 PM Russell Library Room 241**

Co-sponsored by the Russell Library and the Black Student Alliance

Bring creative poems/works of literature to share or read the works of other great African American authors that move and inspire you.

## Literary Legacy of Toni Morrison: Reflections

**Feb. 18, 2021 6:00 PM**

Co-sponsored by the Office of Inclusive Excellence

Zoom Link: <https://gcsu.zoom.us/j/91317873326>

A lecture by Dr. Carolyn Denard, Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and founder of The Toni Morrison Society, in honor of Morrison's 90th birthday.

## Black History Jeopardy & Gamenight

**Feb. 24, 2021 6:00-8:00 PM-Magnolia Ballroom (tentative location)**

Co-sponsored by the Russell Library and the Black Student Alliance

Test your Black History trivia knowledge in a socially distanced setting.

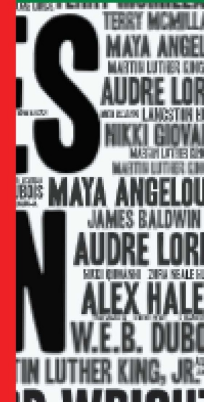
## Movie Nights: Between the World & Me

**Feb. 25 & 26, 2021 6:00 PM. Blackbridge Hall**

Co-sponsored by the Black Student Alliance and the Black Studies Program

Watch the newly released film *Between the World and Me* in a socially-distanced setting. RSVP by Feb. 24, 2021 on GC Connect or Corq

For more info contact [culturalcenter@gcsu.edu](mailto:culturalcenter@gcsu.edu) or 478-445-8155



African American History Month activities



# News Stories Posted Wednesday February 3, 2021



## Carolyn Forché selected as Inaugural Darugar Scholar

[English, Department of](#) : Wednesday February 3, 2021

Carolyn Forché celebrated the release of her latest collection of poems, “In the Lateness of the World,” on March 10 of last year. The country went into lockdown three days later, throwing her planned readings and book signings out the window along with events planned around the paperback release of her debut memoir, “What You Have Heard is True.” What should have been a year of touring after the launch was instead a year of isolation and virtual readings met with political and social upheaval that is somewhat ironically well-suited to the subject matter of both books.

This not only makes her memoir and poetry “of witness and resistance” all the more prescient for the year 2021, but makes her the perfect inaugural writer for Georgia College’s Dr. and Mrs. Barry Darugar Distinguished Visiting Scholar program. During her time at the university, she’ll embark on an eight-week virtual residency, teaching workshops and meeting with scholars in the English Department’s MFA program.

Kelly Piggott, a second-year MFA student, is one of many students who are excited to have Forché on board, “Carolyn Forché sees the politics in the art, and the art in politics and in the history of the world, in all its complexities, beauties, and ugliness,” Piggott said.



Carolyn Forché

“So the books are all published at some point of the various crises,” Forché said, “The poetry was written over a period of 17 years so it wasn't written with that in mind. But interestingly, when you read the poetry book, it eerily seems to have been addressing the times that we're in, and I can't explain that. I think it's just something that sometimes happens.”

In 2019, Forché's memoir was released to great critical acclaim and was a finalist for the National Book Award. The book recounts her visits to El Salvador between 1978 and 1980, during a time just before the country broke out into civil war.

“The events of the memoir took place 40 years ago and it's really a young person's book in that the main character, myself at the age of 27, took a journey. And what I wanted to do was replicate that journey, for others, take them on the same path I took at that age,” she said. “It was a journey to a certain kind of opening of consciousness, having to do with the world and our position in it, and having to do with its injustice and political awakening.”

Dr. Barry Darugar, whose journey into writing began after immigrating from Iran to practice surgery in Middle Georgia for nearly 40 years before entering into GC's MFA program, created the program to give students similar interactions with contemporary writers as he did with the poet and essayist Robert Bly. On that score, the English Department could not have picked a more immanent poet than Forché.

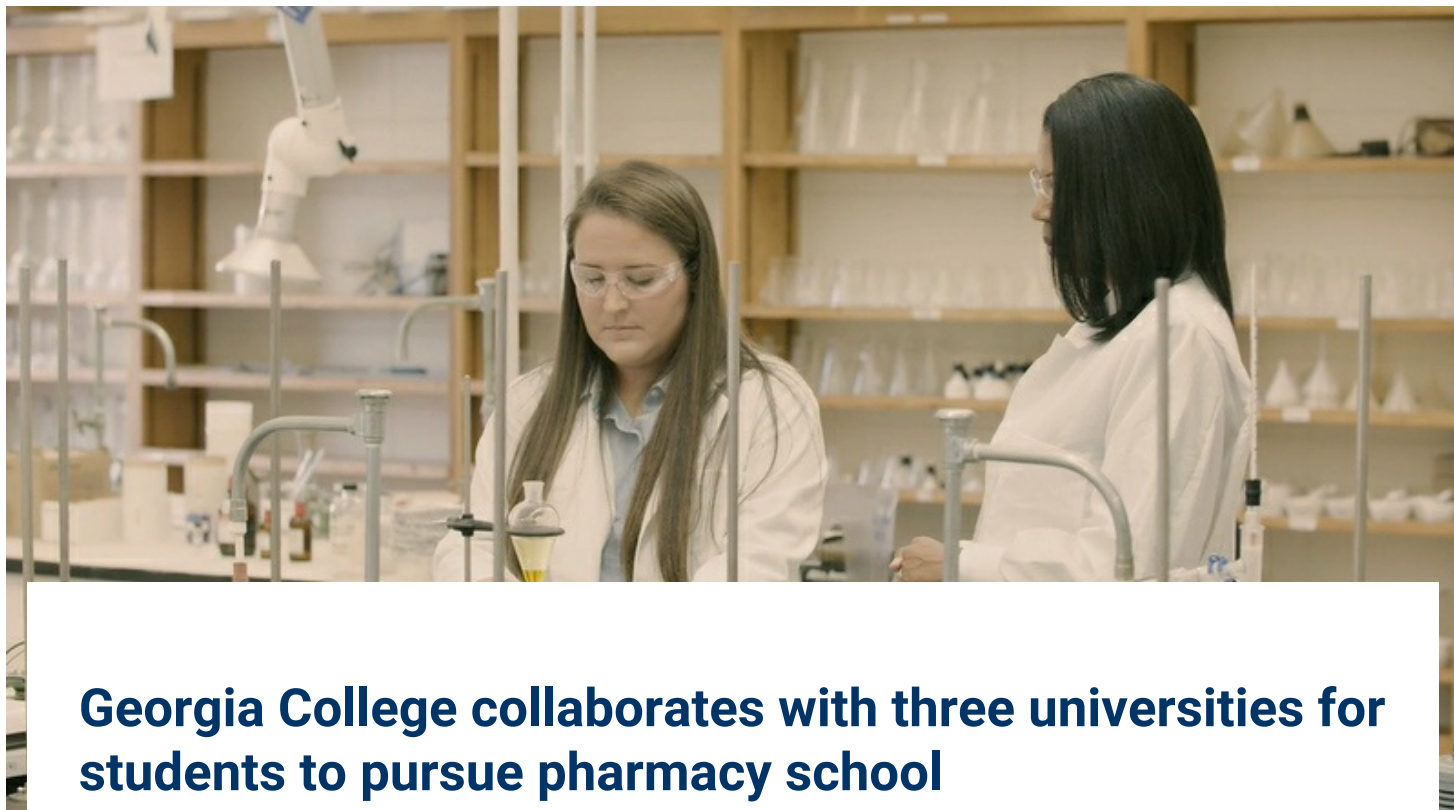
Piggott, who had the opportunity to meet with Forché virtually during a poetry workshop last semester, said, “she was articulate, well-spoken, good-humored and had wonderful, valuable things to say about the process of writing poetry and its significance as a form of playing witness to the world around us.” Forché's work has been described by the New Yorker as “chilling and unique.”

So far, public readings and craft talks have been scheduled, as well as a poetry workshop and a collaborative event with the Andalusia Institute throughout March and April.

"I'm very excited to be working with graduate students in poetry again, which I haven't done in a while," Forché said.

She teaches a seminar on the convergence of human rights and literature for the Lannan Center for Poetics and Social Practice at the Department of English at Georgetown University, which has gone entirely virtual during the pandemic.

"I've been very impressed the more I've learned about the Georgia College program. It's set up the right way. It's fully funded for all of the students who enroll, for one thing. So they're able to attract the best students, they're able to support them well and that's really the way to do it!"



## Georgia College collaborates with three universities for students to pursue pharmacy school

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Wednesday February 3, 2021



Chemistry lab

With demand expected to increase for pharmacists in Southern healthcare settings like hospitals and clinics —Georgia College is pleased to announce a new accelerated Pathways Program for chemistry majors to transfer to one of three Doctor of Pharmacy schools in the United States.

Agreements were recently signed with the University of Georgia (UGA), Auburn University and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM). Students who meet criteria can utilize these pathways—giving them an early start, streamlined admission and guided route into the field of pharmacy.

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**Georgia College is committed to providing our students with an outstanding education as well as opportunities to expand their careers. Our new Pharm.D. partnerships are just some of the ways we can provide more opportunities for our students to be successful.**

**- Dr. Costas Spirou**

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“Georgia College is committed to providing our students with an outstanding education as well as opportunities to expand their careers,” said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “Our new Pharm.D. partnerships are just some of the ways we can provide more opportunities for our students to be successful.”

These new Pathways give chemistry students a chance to earn their Bachelor of Science (B.S.) from Georgia College and a Doctorate of Pharmacy degree from UGA, Auburn or PCOM. Students admitted into pharmacy school under a “3+4” agreement complete three years of chemistry at Georgia College, then four years at pharmacy school. In their first or second year of pharmacy, students receive their B.S. from Georgia College with transferred credits earned in the Pharm. D. program.

This helps students save on tuition, while beginning their careers early—completing both degrees in seven years, instead of eight.

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**This means our chemistry majors will have even greater options ahead of them, including the ability to earn a Doctorate of Pharmacy degree in less time in what is a high-demand field.**

**- Dr. Eric Tenbus**

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“I’m very pleased that the chemistry program has taken the initiative to develop these innovative Pharm.D. Pathways,” said Dr. Eric Tenbus, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Georgia College.

“This means our chemistry majors will have even greater options ahead of them,” he said, “including the ability to earn a Doctorate of Pharmacy degree in less time in what is a high-demand field. In addition, this is a positive recruitment, retention and graduation initiative for our university.”

Planning for these Pathways began more than a year ago. Administrators hope this effort attracts a diverse group of aspiring pharmacists to respond to market demand. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook handbook, employment of pharmacists is projected to decline 3 percent from 2019 to 2029. However, demand for pharmacists in hospitals and clinics is projected to increase, particularly in rural areas such as those found in Georgia, Alabama and other neighboring states.

About 21 percent of Georgia College chemistry majors declare a concentration in

pre-pharmacy. This year, Georgia College is experiencing a three-year peak at 24 percent, said Dr. Chavonda Mills, chair of Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy.

“We’re excited to introduce these accelerated Pathways for our students,” she said. “By reducing the total time required for the B.S. and Pharm.D. degrees, our students will be able to save both time and tuition dollars and begin their careers earlier.”



Dr. Chavonda Mills in lab with a chemistry student.

UGA, Auburn and PCOM were “strategically” identified to help attract a broad audience of prospective students to Georgia College, Mills said, while ensuring chemistry students multiple pathways to pharmacy school. The three programs represent a varied choice for students, giving them a wide selection of curriculum, reputation of school, location and cost.

Freshman year, chemistry majors declaring a pre-pharmacy concentration will receive structured guidance from their pre-pharmacy coordinator at Georgia College and a representative from their Pharm.D. program of interest. They’ll discuss the admission process and requirements for pre-requisite courses, grade point average and the PCAT (Pharmacy College Admissions Test).

Junior year, students apply for admissions to their chosen Pharm.D. program. Following completion of their first or second year pharmacy school, their credits transfer back to Georgia College for a B.S. in Chemistry. Students then complete

their Pharm.D. degree.

“

**Georgia College’s liberal arts curriculum teaches students to think critically, become skilled communicators and mature into service-orientated professionals dedicated to excellence. It is my hope that the partnering of a liberal arts education with professional pharmacy schools will produce 21st-century pharmacists dedicated to serving all members of the community and that some of these students will return to rural Georgia to practice pharmacy.**

**- Dr. Chavonda Mills**

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# News Stories Posted Thursday February 4, 2021



## Intramural Sports rises to challenge during pandemic

[Wellness & Recreation](#) : Thursday February 4, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to student life dynamics on college campuses around the world. Events morphed from in-person to online, social interactions were all distanced and the smiles of welcoming faces from student organizations were covered by masks.

Through the challenges, Georgia College's Department of Wellness and Recreation remained a positive outlet for safe student interaction—a way for them to connect and compete.

Many changes were made during the fall 2020 semester to keep students safe including mask requirements, social distancing rules and a full slate of new sports including badminton, soccer tennis, pickleball, ping pong and golf.

"We wanted to make sure to give students an outlet to participate safely in activities. Intramurals are a big part of the students' experience at Georgia College and although it has been different this year, we wanted them to have some



Students play badminton.

normalcy,” said Drew Bruton, Associate Director of Wellness and Recreation.

By the end of the fall semester, nearly 2,000 intramural games were played, with more than 800 student participants. E-Sports leagues also saw significant participation on campus.

The importance of recreational sports goes far beyond physical

activity and exercise. Participation in recreational sports can help students build social connections and relieve stress, positively impacting mental health. Student workers learn important communication and leadership skills by working as supervisors, referees and scorekeepers.

“Intramurals provided me with an opportunity to meet new people and do new things,” said Erin Braxton, a GC senior who has participated in intramural leagues since her freshman year. “As an employee of GC Wellness and Recreation, intramurals provided me an opportunity to grow as a leader and a person. I was able to develop some of the greatest friendships through this program and I will always be thankful for that.”

The Department of Wellness and Recreation has developed an exciting plan for the spring semester including cornhole, basketball pong, ping pong, soccer pong, badminton and pool relay. E-Sports spring leagues include COD: Modern Warfare, Madden 20, NBA 2k20, FIFA 20 and Rocket League.

They’ll continue work to provide students with recreational opportunities they want and enjoy.

“We strive to provide new offerings and use our creative staff to formulate those ideas,” said Bruton. “Our staff has been great, the biggest thing we are proud of is their flexibility. These students signed up to work other aspects of our department and have come together to help make our programs and offerings successful.”

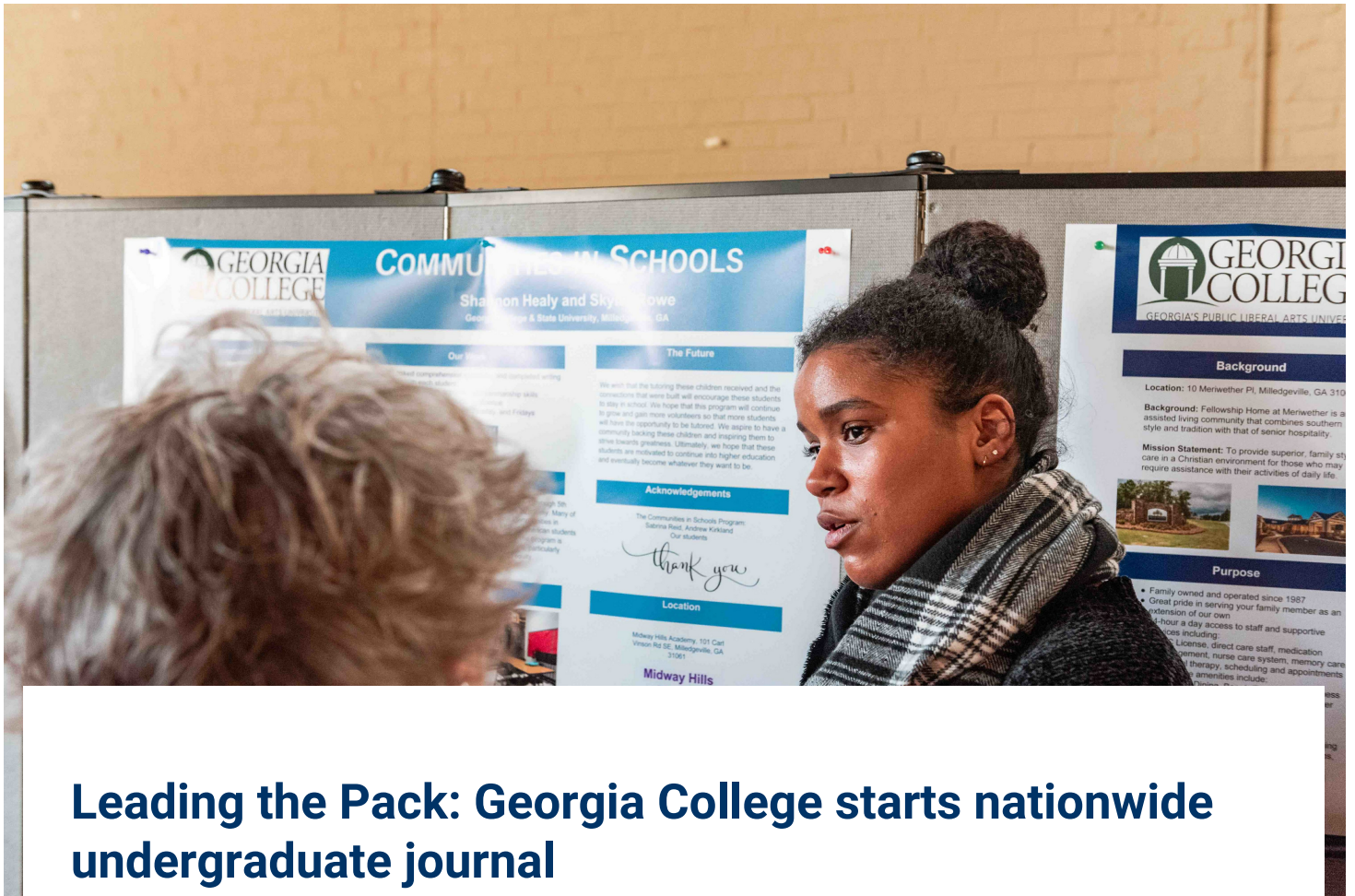
Students looking to get in on the fun should visit [gcsu.edu/recreational-sports](https://gcsu.edu/recreational-sports) to register.



Student play badminton.



# News Stories Posted Friday February 5, 2021



## Leading the Pack: Georgia College starts nationwide undergraduate journal

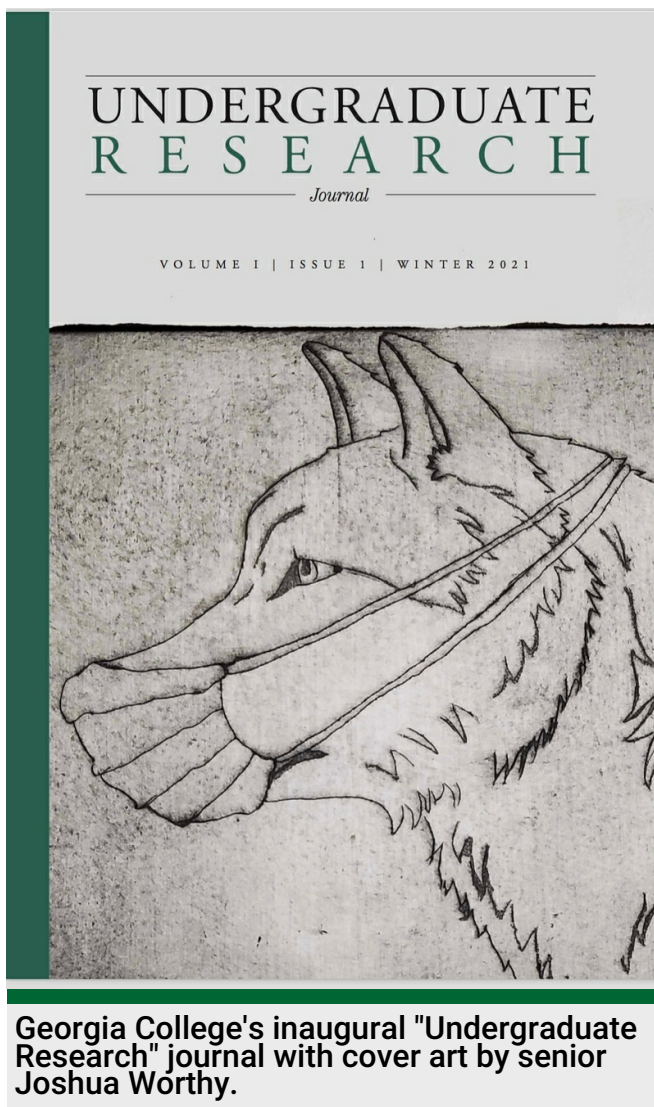
[Transformative Learning Experiences](#) : Friday February 5, 2021

Scholars with impressive projects from prominent schools all over the country vied recently for a spot in a new academic journal based on undergraduate research.

Kind of neat, then, that this new research journal came from Georgia College—a small public liberal arts school with about 6,000 undergraduates. In fact, Google “undergraduate research,” and you’ll likely to find Georgia College in the top pickings.

“More and more, colleges are going to start integrating and trying to grow their undergraduate research programs and start seeing the value of undergraduate research, and we’ve just got such a great head start,” said Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost for Transformative Learning Experiences.

“What we’re seeing is we’re a leader in this area,” he said. “We’ve got a national reputation for doing great work both internally and externally.”



Joshua Worthy, is an "intaglio print" of a wolf wearing a mask. The back, by junior Mary Douberly, is a "multi plate color intaglio etching" of intertwining snakes.

Fifteen Georgia College faculty signed up to review research projects. Each submission was given a "blind review" by two academic scholars before decisions were made on what to include. This means reviewers saw content only—not which student or school it came from. Reviewers worldwide came from schools like the New York Institute of Technology; University of California, Berkley; University of South Africa; Notre Dame of Maryland University; and the University of Wisconsin.

The editorial board had members from distinguished schools, as well, and representatives from CUR (Council on Undergraduate Research) and the AACU (American Association of Colleges & Universities).

This month marked publication of the first edition of "Undergraduate Research," founded at Georgia College and put together by two Georgia College assistant professors: Dr. Kelly Massey in Exercise Science and Dr. Alesa Liles in Criminal Justice. Three other faculty served as associate editors: Cofer; Dr. Doreen Sams, professor of Marketing; and Dr. Kasey Karen, assistant professor of Biology.

The 174-page magazine showcases research by students in their freshman, sophomore, junior or senior years of college. The journal is free and one of few in the nation to highlight undergraduate work in all disciplines.

The cover and back artwork are by two Georgia College art majors. The front, by senior



Back cover art by junior Mary Douberly.

Out of 45 submissions, only six—about 13 percent—were accepted. To compare, 60 to 70 percent of all applicants are accepted to undergraduate research conferences and just less than half are admitted to the annual “Posters on the Capital” exhibit.

“Our publication rate was harder than most journals,” Cofer said. “It was pretty selective. I think that makes the journal more prestigious. It just means you’re getting a better quality of work.”

“

**There are some disciplinary journals for one university or on one topic. But we wanted to be an undergraduate research journal for all disciplines, so any student can submit. Our hope is it will continue to grow; it’ll start to gain some prestige and draw attention to the work we’re doing here,**

**- Dr. Jordan Cofer**

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The six submissions came from a variety of schools like the University of Virginia College at Wise, University of North Carolina, Columbus State University and Middlebury College. Topics ranged from the effects of parental relationships on academic success and music education to reflections from 1st-Century Christianity and Chicano identity.

Diversity of topics from multiple disciplines is what makes Georgia College’s publication special.

“There are some disciplinary journals for one university or on one topic. But we wanted to be an undergraduate research journal for all disciplines, so any student can submit,” Cofer said. “Our hope is it will continue to grow; it’ll start to gain some prestige and draw attention to the work we’re doing here.”



Undergraduate research at Georgia College.

In the front of the journal, there's a section called "About Georgia College," which describes the university as a place "where practical education meets life-altering, real-world experiences." There's a letter from Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, who called undergraduate research "transformative" and a "central focus" at Georgia College.

“

**Georgia College has made yet another mark in undergraduate research and has become a force to reckon with.**

**- Dr. Kelly Massey**

”

At back, there's an ad for earning graduate degrees at Georgia College. There's also the website link: [www.undergraduateresearch.org](http://www.undergraduateresearch.org), where a digital copy of the journal will soon be housed.

Massey called the first issue a "great success" and especially thanked the university's administrators, faculty and Brooks Hinton, Print Shop manager and lead graphic designer, "for making sure the journal is a shining example of the greatest that is Georgia College. In just six months, Georgia College has made yet

another mark in undergraduate research and has become a force to reckon with.”

Plans are ambitious to publish Georgia College’s “Undergraduate Research” journal twice a year. Editions were mailed to schools throughout the United States—with an introductory letter from President Steve Dorman—and copies given to each reviewer and student submitter.



Posters at the Capitol, 2019.

This is just one of many efforts to highlight undergraduate research on campus. There’s already an internal undergraduate conference and internal undergraduate journal. Georgia College helps host the statewide undergraduate research conference, as well, and founded “Posters at the Capitol,” a research exhibit by undergraduates from around the

state before legislators.

“There aren’t a lot of schools that are expanding in the area of undergraduate research. Especially right now, everyone’s tightening the belt,” Cofer said, “But we’re putting in the resources here, and we’ve invested, so I really think it’ll continue to pay off.”

“

**Long-term, this’ll be a nice boost, and I think it’ll draw attention to the work we do. It shows we’re really committed to undergraduate research at Georgia College.**

**- Dr. Jordan Cofer**

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# News Stories Posted Monday February 8, 2021



## Georgia College students called to active duty for inauguration

[Health & Human Performance, School of](#): Monday February 8, 2021

For most students, the first week of the semester involves locating your new classes, meeting with your professors and planning your schedule for the next few months.

Mickensey Carter and Micheal Lawson had different duties though. They were in Washington D.C. serving with the Georgia Army National Guard—called to active duty in the days leading up to President Joe Biden’s inauguration.

The Bleckley County natives have been friends since the sixth grade. Both always had a strong desire to serve in the military and joined the National Guard as soon as they could.

"I was planning pretty much since my junior year of high school to join the military," said Carter. "Then he (Lawson) just went ahead with it, so I did too."

Lawson signed up when he was 17. The pair have served in National Guard for about five years. During that time, they've been called to active duty multiple times on top of their regularly scheduled trainings — all while also attending college.



Carter and Lawson's Unit at the Inauguration.

"It is difficult a lot of the time trying to balance both school and my National Guard duties," said Lawson.

In early January, the friends were preparing to start their spring semester classes at Georgia College, until Carter—an accounting major—and Lawson—an exercise science major—received orders they would be called to active duty for the inauguration.

"I emailed my professors on my way to DC on the bus," said Carter.

"They worked with me, and they were emailing me parts of the syllabus and reading materials to help me stay ahead," said Carter. "We didn't really have a lot of time to get on the Internet, but the professors were very considerate considering the situation was just thrown at us last minute."

While in Washington D.C., they primarily focused on guarding check-points set up around the Capitol.

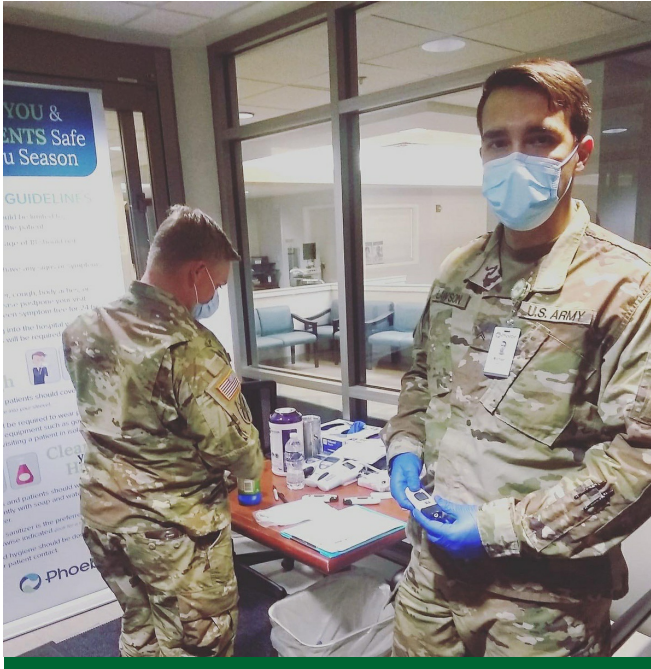
"They had fences up, and we guarded those to make sure people didn't try to get through," said Carter. "They had so many checkpoints. We were mainly just there, I guess, as a show of force so people didn't try anything."

They worked alongside servicemen from across the country, while also witnessing history firsthand. "

That's a once in a lifetime opportunity to be that close to the Inauguration of the President of the United States," said Carter.

"It wasn't a big deal to get called up, besides the timing of missing the first few days of school, but it was worth it because we got to be right there for the

inauguration while everything happened,” he said.



Lawson works at an Albany hospital.

This marks the second time in the last year the pair has been called to active duty. In spring 2020, they responded during the initial surge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I had 12-hour night shifts at Phoebe Putney Hospital in Albany, Georgia, helping out the nurses in the ER wherever they needed extra hands,” said Lawson. “We would do temperature checks at the doors so that would free up some people and help in any other way we could. After I was there for about three months, I was on a decon team going into nursing

homes and decontaminating them.”

“I was in Cordele running the supply chain for our battalion from our headquarters unit to all the southern part of Georgia,” Carter said. “I would decide how the COVID-19 tests were dropped off and received and all the equipment.”



Carter (left) and Lawson (right) in Afghanistan

They also served in Kabul, Afghanistan for seven months in 2019.

“I was in charge of all communications and tracking for the FOB (Forward Operating Base),” said Carter. “I also taught other countries (Georgia, Nepal, Denmark) how to use the radio equipment to effectively communicate with the American forces.”

“I was a team leader in an infantry platoon, and it was my

first time actually being a leader in charge of a few guys,” said Lawson. “We had various missions as an infantry platoon out there, but there was mainly a focus in

keeping the Air Force safe while they conducted their responsibilities working with the Afghan population.”

Both have about one more year of active duty, then two years of inactive duty—where they’ll be called up as needed. They’re proud of their time in the service but ready to get settled in their lives and careers.

As an exercise science major Lawson plans to go into physical therapy—specifically to work with athletes or retired military. Carter hopes to use his accounting major to help him work for the FBI as a forensic accountant.



Carter (right) and Lawson (left) in Afghanistan.

# News Stories Posted Thursday February 11, 2021



## Music in the air: Students serenade isolated memory care residents

[Music, Department of](#) : Thursday February 11, 2021

Ludwig van Beethoven believed “music can change the world.”

Two Georgia College students are taking that to heart, lifting the spirits of elderly residents in Milledgeville one song at a time.

“I believe music has the power to open real connection between humans, and I want to use music as a tool to heal,” said graduate student Matthew Seymour of Augusta, who’s getting his master’s in music therapy.

“I feel a sense of gratitude to be able to bring some enjoyment to the residents. I always leave with a full heart,” he said, “and I’m humbled the residents are enjoying themselves.”

Seymour and senior music therapy major Reed Tanner Jr. of Carrollton have been



Senior Reed Tanner sings to elderly residents from inside a protective bubble, while graduate student Matthew Seymour backs him up with shaker sound.

serenading the elderly twice a week at Fellowship Home at Meriwether. Memory care residents there have been isolated and in lockdown for almost a year due to COVID.

Music puts smiles on their faces, stirring up long-forgotten memories.

Jared Norrod, director of resident care at Fellowship, said it's "a wonderful opportunity for our residents to interact with someone who is educated on how to connect through music and this often breaks through some of the common barriers seniors face, such as memory impairment and physical limitations."

About a half dozen residents sat in the sunshine this week to listen and remember. Others listened from windows inside the assisted-living facility, while

students performed from inside a protective plastic bubble.

It was hot inside the bubble—but you wouldn't have known it by listening. Like a stand-up comedy team, the lively duo joked with their audience, teased and even did a little harmless flirting.

One woman danced a two-step shuffle, as Seymour and Tanner crooned oldies from her past like Frank Sinatra's "LOVE," Elvis' "Hound Dog," "Folsom Prison Blues" by Johnny Cash and "Hey Good Lookin'" by Hank Williams.

When Tanner sang out "kiss me," a woman whooped happily, waving her arms. She clapped heartily to each song, kicking up her legs.



Residents at Fellowship Home.

A gentleman in a wheelchair nearby nodded his head, mouthing the words to each song.



A resident of Fellowship Home at Meriwether in Milledgeville enjoys the oldies, performed by Georgia College Music Therapy students.

“

**I believe music has the power to open real connection between humans, and I want to use music as a tool to heal.**

**- Matthew Seymour**

”

Memories become elusive. But foot-tapping lyrics can resurface them, like: “raindrops keep falling on my head,” “ain’t no sunshine when she’s gone,” “just sitting on the dock of the bay,” “my bags are packed and I’m ready to go” and “what can make me feel this way? My girl.”

“We play songs from their adolescent years, and there’s not a feeling like it,” Tanner said. “I’ve seen residents, who can’t remember their names, but they can remember the words to songs we’re playing from the ‘40s and ‘50s.”

“It’s memory recall,” he said. “The music you grew up listening to you don’t forget.

It's ingrained."

The serenade is part of 180 practicum hours students need with different age groups, before getting internships in music therapy.

There are 55 undergraduate and 14 graduate students taking music therapy at Georgia College, according to assistant professor Dr. Laurie Peebles. They work with children and adults with developmental disabilities and autism, the medically fragile, senior citizens and people with neurological ailments like Parkinson's Disease. Coursework includes guitar studies, piano, percussion, voice lessons and clinical training.

“

**COVID has caused the music therapy faculty and students to think outside-of-the-box. We have managed to adapt to the circumstances, in order to continue to provide clinical experiences and training for our students.**

**- Dr. Laurie Peebles, assistant professor of music therapy**

”



Graduate student Matthew Seymour and senior Reed Tanner.

In the future, Seymour hopes to work with older adults or teens at a veteran's hospital, alternative school or in prison reform. Once Tanner's board certified, he'll work as a music therapist before getting his master's degree.

To engage more personally with the elderly, the two have gotten their vaccination shots against COVID. Soon, they'll be able to leave the bubble and window serenades behind and interact

inside with residents.

"It's been great," Seymour said. "We've truly been honored and blessed to come out here and play music and bring a little light to their lives. Combining music with helping people is what I was meant to do."



# News Stories Posted Monday February 15, 2021



## New CTL director used 'tutor's intuition' to ease Georgia College through pandemic change

[Center for Teaching & Learning](#) : Monday February 15, 2021

When the university and universities all over the world were grappling with closures and the rapid switch to online teaching—when everyone was reeling from constant change, fear and the threat of chaos—Jim Berger's phone rang.

People needed answers. They looked to him and his team at Georgia College's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) for decisions that would ultimately impact every faculty member and student on campus.

“

A lot of it for me was trial and error—a lot of sleepless nights, a lot of pressure. I am grateful for the respect that the institution afforded us and the patience they had with us as we worked to figure these things out. It was very much a

**team effort.**

**- CTL Director, Dr. Jim Berger**

”

It had to be done right. And it had to be done fast.

“A lot of it for me was trial and error—a lot of sleepless nights, a lot of pressure,” Berger said. “I am grateful for the respect that the institution afforded us and the patience they had with us as we worked to figure these things out. It was very much a team effort. Everybody showed a level of patience and a willingness to try things out.”

Berger had only been director of CTL since summer 2019. His staff was busy launching their spring programming when pandemic struck. Those programs had to be laid aside to make room for new plans—unprecedented plans without blueprints for what needed to be done.

The short of it is Berger didn’t know what needed to be done. And herein lies the real beginning of his story—and how he effectively guided the university to online success.

It all started in high school algebra. The girl who sat in front of Berger paid him two bucks an hour to explain the complex equations of letters, numbers and symbols.

Oddly enough, Berger later dropped out of college. When facing unemployment and financial need, he accepted a position tutoring a student at the University of Georgia (UGA). Realizing he had a knack for this sort of thing—he went back to school, launched a tutoring business and continued coaching students throughout his undergraduate and graduate years, all the way to getting his doctorate in adult education in 2001.

He started by charging the going rate: \$10 an hour. But demand was crazy. Berger tutored 50 to 70 hours a week, from morning to midnight. To lessen the load, he charged more: \$15 an hour, then \$20.

“

**One of the things I realized was that faculty weren’t always aware of how best to teach their students.**

**- Berger**

”

But he “couldn’t beat them off with a stick.”

Students just kept coming. Word of mouth had spread.

If you need help, see Jim Berger.

“I hung a flier saying I can tutor in these 22 different courses—arrogance beyond all bounds—but it blossomed for me,” Berger said. “One of the things I realized was that faculty weren’t always aware of how best to teach their students. Students would come in and say the instructor’s been working on this for three days, and I still don’t get it.”

“Yet, in 20 minutes,” he said, “I could understand what the problem was and get them through it and take them to the point where they could solve the problems by themselves.”



Faculty workshops at the Center for Teaching and Learning.

When asked the secret to this achievement, Berger shrugged and called it “tutor’s intuition.” This is the quality that also proved useful during the pandemic. Part of it is recognizing that people learn in different ways—some need drawings and graphic images, others benefit more by verbal or written instruction.

Tutoring, like training faculty to teach online, ultimately focuses on the student. It’s

a process of listening to questions, watching the steps taken to solve a problem, seeing where the student hesitates and trying to figure out where the blockage is—but “always with a great deal of respect for the learner and what they’re going through,” Berger said.

“

**I learned early on to pay attention to people, the way they sit, the way they act, their facial expressions, the words they use, the words they don’t use and why they use those words and the emotional content behind that.**

**- Dr. Jim Berger**

”

These qualities benefit Berger at CTL, as well. The Center’s purpose is to help instructors identify new and exciting ways to teach, including the use of technology and digital content. This is why the administration relied so heavily on Berger’s office when COVID hit. CTL oversees the learning management system for faculty.

Berger had previously taught online in the adult education program at Western Kentucky University. At UGA, he did his dissertation on using the Internet for coursework. Even so—just as the entire university looked to him for answers—he was unsure of all the steps to take.

Technology had changed.

“Part of the difficulty was, before COVID, we were such a face-to-face environment at the center,” he said. “We didn’t really understand the technology for changing to online content. We were like: ‘How do we do that?’”

Berger and his team were asking themselves the same questions faculty would be soon be asking and, ultimately, students too.

The CTL staff of four scrambled to hold “fake sessions” online and practice with each other. What if they made a mistake by pressing this key? Oops. Don’t do that. How do we set up online gradebooks or create assignments and discussion boards? How will faculty connect with their students remotely, handle office hours, create WebEx and Zoom invites?

“

**Faculty have really stepped up and adapted to this new environment and to the needs of the students. So, as much as it would be nice for me or our office to**

**take credit, you have to leave credit at the faculty's feet. They really are the ones who are on the front lines, facing these issues and coming up with creative and engaging ways to reach their students in a totally unprecedented time.**

**- Berger**

”

By asking these big questions first, CTL laid a solid foundation. Then, they set up webinar workshops and one-on-one sessions with faculty. About 117 participated in mock classroom demonstrations and 168 viewed 'how-to' videos CTL created. Videos give step-by-step instructions on holding discussions in Zoom breakout rooms, connecting iPads to computer screens, polling students and other topics. There are tips on creating active online classrooms and teambuilding activities, as well.

“Faculty have really stepped up and adapted to this new environment and to the needs of the students,” Berger said. “So, as much as it would be nice for me or our office to take credit, you have to leave credit at the faculty's feet. They really are the ones who are on the front lines, facing these issues and coming up with creative and engaging ways to reach their students in a totally unprecedented time.”

When classes moved to a hybrid mode this fall, CTL experimented by training faculty members in a classroom setting with other faculty joining in online. CTL staff emphasized the need to look directly into cameras and speak into mics, so students at home understand what's going on. The use of Power Points and lists are important for keeping the class up-to-speed. Faculty communicate frequently with students by phone, texts and emails, providing a weekly rundown of what's expected.

Berger feels the CTL team reacted to issues as they happened, providing “just in time” information. Now, one-page instructions sheets and videos are centrally located on Georgia View, where faculty and students can go for quick reference.

By December, the number of requests for help “decreased dramatically.” In addition, few students have called in for help—which shows Berger the lessons CTL provided faculty were effective. He's modest about this success, however, and is quick to say all departments on campus pulled together to get the job done.

“It was very much a multi-team effort,” Berger said. “I don't want it to sound like the university approached me at my door, and I shepherded this great massive ship. I didn't. I worked with others, and we came up with solutions, and we addressed those issues that were coming up. This was a lot of communication amongst us all.”

“

**The institution really came forward and did it. The success really does lie at the institution's feet.**

**- Dr. Berger**

”

# News Stories Posted Tuesday February 16, 2021



## Georgia College receives national award for focus on undergraduate research

[General Institution](#) : Tuesday February 16, 2021

Georgia College has been named a recipient of the [2020 Campus-wide Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments \(AURA\)](#) by the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR). This annual award recognizes institutions with exemplary programs that provide high-quality research experiences for undergraduates.

"We have seen the value undergraduate research can bring to a student's education and have chosen to provide as many opportunities as we can for our students to participate in research," said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "This national recognition is a reflection of the exceptional work of our dedicated faculty who are strong supporters of students in their research efforts, and that is key to their success."

Georgia College makes undergraduate research opportunities for students a



Student assistants in Special Collections at the Russell Library examine a botanical illustration.

priority. Over the years, undergraduate research has grown from a small, faculty-driven initiative into a “transformative experience” in which the university purposefully encourages all students to take advantage of during their time here.

Now in its sixth year, the AURA award draws on CUR’s [\*Characteristics of Excellence in\*](#)

[\*Undergraduate Research\*](#)(COEUR), which outlines criteria for exceptional undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity programs. For AURA recognition, campuses must demonstrate depth and breadth in their undergraduate research initiatives and evidence of continual innovation. Institutions of different Carnegie classifications are considered for the award.



Student conducts lab research.

“The 2020 AURA recipients reflect a dedication to wide participation of students and disciplines, curriculum-based experiences, opportunities for student-faculty recognition and publication and improvements based on data,” said CUR’s Executive Officer Lindsay Currie. “Amid the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is inspiring to see the steadfast commitment of these higher education institutions to excellence in undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry on their campuses.”

“

**During the 2019-2020 academic year, at least 2,325 of our students participated in an undergraduate research experience."**

**- Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost for transformative learning experiences**

”

According to CUR, Georgia College showed impressive growth of its undergraduate research program over a 10-year period. The university integrates undergraduate research with other proven high-impact practices, participates in dialogue on undergraduate research at a national level, applies survey data to improve the program, infuses undergraduate research into curricula (including a capstone experience), and emphasizes interdisciplinary collaborations that involve many student populations providing a model for other campuses.

“During the 2019-2020 academic year, at least 2,325 of our students participated in an undergraduate research experience,” said Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost for transformative learning experiences. “That’s about 40 percent of our student body.”

Georgia College provides opportunities for students across every major and department ensuring all students can take part in undergraduate research. But it all started from humble beginnings.

“Our story is really compelling because in 2011 we had a group of faculty get together to create learning communities, and they really investigated what it would be like to centralize undergraduate research,” Cofer said. “Those initial faculty members really helped build our undergraduate research program from the ground up.”

Undergraduate research continues to grow and expand at the university with the latest endeavor being the launch of a new [national journal](#) in early 2021.

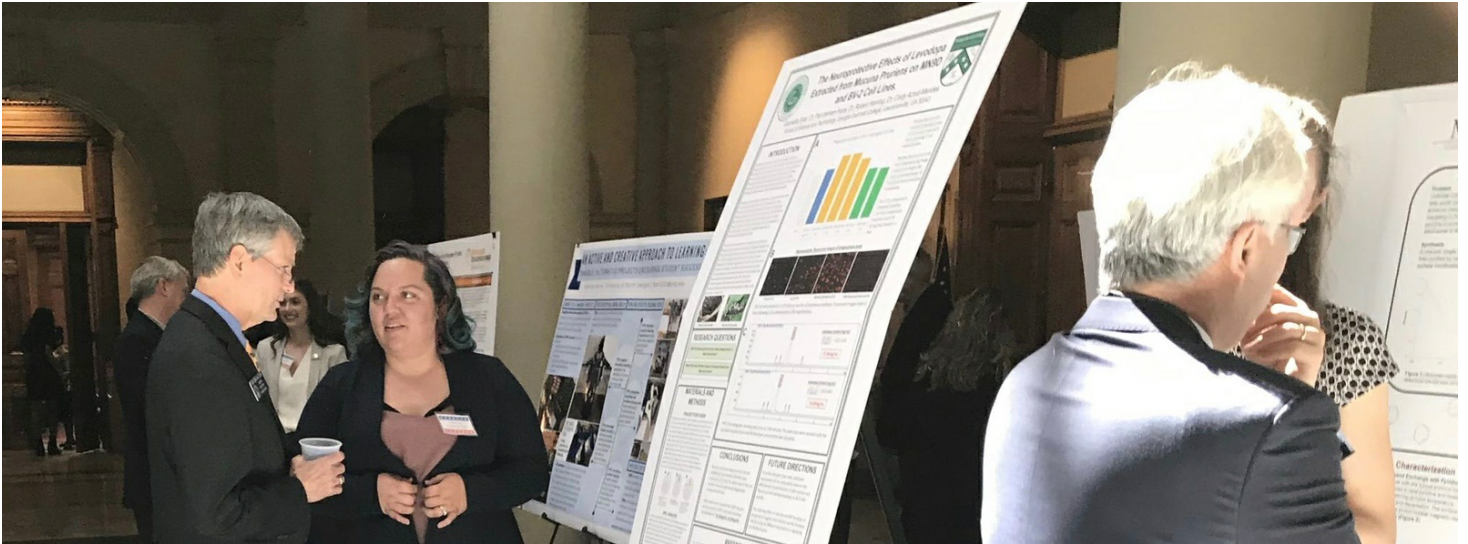
“It fits our mission,” Cofer said. “It’s an important practice to do and getting national recognition for something we do really well. I think that’s really important—especially for the faculty to be recognized for something they’ve done and have been doing.”

The AURA award will be given out during a virtual ceremony Thursday, April 22. More information is available [here](#)



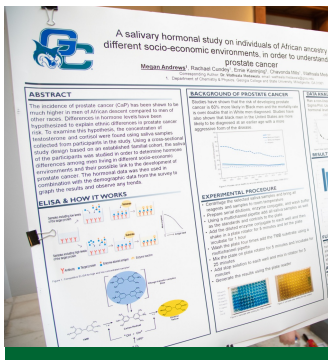
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# News Stories Posted Monday February 22, 2021



## Georgia College sends six student researchers to 'Posters at the Capitol' exhibit

[Transformative Learning Experiences](#) : Monday February 22, 2021



A GC research poster from 2020.

Six Georgia College undergraduate students will present research at the 3rd Annual "Posters at the Capitol" this week. That's the highest participation in the University State System and second highest of any participating school.

Normally held at the Statehouse in Atlanta, this year's event will be online with Georgia legislators and lobbyists in attendance. All university presidents and provosts in Georgia have been invited, as well.

Posters at the Capitol was founded by Georgia College in 2018 as a way to share emerging research with state legislators. Now run by the Georgia Undergraduate Research Collective (GURC), the exhibition is modeled after "Posters on the Hill" in Washington D.C., which is hosted by the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR).

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**- Dr. Jordan Cofer**

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Posters at the Capitol is highly competitive with only 25 applications accepted from Abraham-Baldwin Agricultural College, Georgia College, Georgia Gwinnett College, Georgia Southern University, Kennesaw State University, Mercer University, Savannah State University and Valdosta State University.

Each proposal goes through a strict, double-blind review process prior to final review involving a state representative.

“The fact that we had so many students accepted to a conference with such limited capacity is a sign of the quality of undergraduate research at Georgia College,” said Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost for Transformative Learning Experiences.



Senior physics major Catherine Boyd explains her research at last year's exhibit.

Forty percent of students participate in undergraduate research at Georgia College.

Recently, the university launched a national journal on undergraduate research and was recognized nationally by CUR for its accomplishments in this area.

Georgia College students will present work this year in physics, chemistry and music therapy. Participants are physics major Catherine Boyd of Columbus, chemistry major Allison Spent of Johns Creek and music therapy majors Avery Garrett of Martinez, Abby Hearn of Loganville, Sidney Johnson of Douglasville and Renata Kuswanto of Indonesia.

Kuswanto, a junior, used observation, assessment and music interventions to improve a client's verbal articulation.

Spent, a senior, studied the interaction of metals and molecules with an enzyme called "Topoisomerase IIa." She's excited about chemical education and showing others how all areas of chemistry can be represented in one project.

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**I am really excited about presenting before legislators, because I think that I can help represent other STEM students in broadcasting the idea of how important undergraduate research is in developing essential skills for the future.**

**- Allison Spent**

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