

Front Page News Story Archive

April 2021



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
News Stories Posted Thursday April 1, 2021	3
Class of 2021: Seeking to reduce infectious diseases globally	3
News Stories Posted Monday April 5, 2021	6
Class of 2021: Students make an impact with 1,000+ community service hours	6
Class of 2021: Mass comm major aspires to help others, raise childhood cancer awareness	12
News Stories Posted Tuesday April 6, 2021	16
Class of 2021: Nursing major inspired to help others	16
News Stories Posted Thursday April 8, 2021	18
Class of 2021: Soccer captain, chemistry major makes her mark	18
News Stories Posted Friday April 9, 2021	22
Anatomical models to provide honors students with strong learning opportunity	22
Nontraditional path leads alumnus towards passion for math and career success	26
News Stories Posted Monday April 12, 2021	31
Future writer and chemist awarded top honors for their creative works	31
News Stories Posted Tuesday April 13, 2021	35
New mental health resources available for students	35
News Stories Posted Wednesday April 14, 2021	37
Class of 2021: English major tours England during COVID restrictions	37
News Stories Posted Thursday April 15, 2021	42
Economics professor notes drop in maltreatment reports during school closings	42
Class of 2021: Marketing major aspires to have her own fashion firm	46
News Stories Posted Friday April 16, 2021	49
Class of 2021: Communication major applied class lessons at full-time job	49
News Stories Posted Monday April 19, 2021	53
Class of 2021: Management Information Systems major finds purpose through community outreach	53
News Stories Posted Tuesday April 20, 2021	57
Class of 2021: Volleyball standout to pursue medical school	57
News Stories Posted Thursday April 22, 2021	60
Class of 2021: International student earns dual degrees in physics and engineering from Georgia College and Georgia Tech	60
News Stories Posted Friday April 23, 2021	64
Class of 2021: History major gains appreciation for how much is yet to know	64
News Stories Posted Monday April 26, 2021	68
Graduate students recognized for outstanding work	68
News Stories Posted Tuesday April 27, 2021	72
Taking the spike out of COVID-19: Original coronavirus research being conducted at Georgia College	72
News Stories Posted Wednesday April 28, 2021	78
Georgia College celebrates milestone accomplishments from strategic plan	78

News Stories Posted Thursday April 1, 2021



Class of 2021: Seeking to reduce infectious diseases globally

[Health Promotion, Office of](#) : Thursday April 1, 2021

Kelsey Fudge

Where are you from?

I am from Canton, Georgia.

When did you get accepted to Emory University?

I was accepted into Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health Feb. 8, 2021.

Why did you choose to pursue your masters in global health at Emory?

I chose to pursue my MPH in Global Health with a concentration in infectious disease at Emory University for many reasons. First, I knew it would be an honor to be able to attend a university that received a top-four ranking among the 177 public health schools in the nation. I was also drawn to Rollins' Vision Statement, which is something that I, too, aspire to take part in. Every community, whether it be global or domestic, deserves to live a healthy, quality life, free from social injustices. I

believe that, at Emory, my peers and I can work together to make the Rollins Vision Statement a reality for communities across the globe. I am also particularly interested in Rollins' connections with outside organizations, specifically the CDC, which is where I would like to work post-graduation. Most of all, however, I chose to pursue my MPH at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health because I want to foster excellence wherever I go, both during my time as a student and afterward as well, and I know Emory University can aid me in this endeavor.

Which GC professor made a significant impact on you and why?

There are two GC professors that have made a significant impact on my time here at Georgia College. The first is Dr. Damian

Francis. Ever since I met Dr. Francis, I knew I could always count on him. He was always there for me when I needed him, and he showed me what an empathetic and caring heart looked like. He believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself, and I know I wouldn't be where I am today without him. The second professor is Dr. Ernest Kaninjing, or "Dr. K." Dr. K is someone who has pushed me beyond what I thought I could do and has shown me what I am truly capable of. The courses that I have taken from him have not been easy, but they have shown me that I can tackle anything, including getting accepted into Emory University. Without Dr. K's rigor, tenacity and guidance, I don't think I would have had the courage to even apply to Emory. So, I want to give a big thank you to both of these amazing professors for guiding me through this journey and helping me get to where I am today. I look up to both of them as role models—their passion for public health inspires me. One day, I hope to influence and change lives just as my professors have done for me. Their enthusiasm is now my passion; their precision is now my motivation. I could not have fallen in love with public health without them.

Which organizations were you a part of at Georgia College?

I am currently part of the sorority, Alpha Omicron Pi, and I am the secretary of the Public Health Student Organization. Although I do not currently hold a position in



Kelsey Fudge

Alpha Omicron Pi, I have previously held the positions of vice president of standards and marketing chair.

How did belonging to them change you as a person?

Belonging to these organizations has undoubtedly helped to shape me into the person I am today. The various positions that I have held in Alpha Omicron Pi definitely put me outside of my comfort zone at times, but this helped me find my voice and become more confident in who I am and what I stand for. Additionally, being a part of the executive board of the Public Health Student Organization has only deepened my passion for the field of public health. I am blessed with the opportunity to serve a group of like-minded individuals, all working towards the same common goal.

What do you hope to do once you get your master's in public health?

Post-graduation, if I do not have a job secured, I plan on applying to the PHI/CDC Global Health Fellowship Program. Should I be accepted as a fellow, I will use the skills and knowledge acquired during my college career and continue my passion for global health. Overall, with my public health degree, I hope to decrease morbidity and mortality rates associated with infectious diseases by reducing the prevalence of existing diseases and the incidence of new ones.

Why is this important to you?

My post-graduation global health plans are important to me because I am passionate about improving the health of all lives, not just those around me. I am eager to broaden the lens through which I view public health—not just nationally, but globally, as well. Simply put, I want to be a part of something bigger than myself.

News Stories Posted Monday April 5, 2021



Class of 2021: Students make an impact with 1,000+ community service hours

[The GIVE Center](#) : Monday April 5, 2021

For 24 years, The GIVE Center has helped connect students to volunteer opportunities and the Milledgeville community—creating a legacy of giving and philanthropy.

The class of 2021 has made its impact on Milledgeville, with several students exceeding 1000 volunteer service hours.

Here's what they said about the organizations they're involved with, why they value community service and how they encourage others to get involved.

Kelly Bousquette

- 4 Majors - Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice, Liberal Studies
- 1100+ Service Hours



Kelly Bousquette

I have supported GC Miracle, GC Habitat for Humanity, GC Shelter Buddies, Gamma Sigma Sigma, Gamma Beta Phi and Circle K. I have held leadership roles and supported GC Students for Change and GC Service Council. I have also have volunteered or supported: Habitat Milledgeville-Baldwin County, Harrisburg Community Garden, Cafe Central, Baldwin County Animal Shelter, Northridge Church- Food Pantry and the Bright House.

My involvement with service has impacted my entire experience in college. It has contributed to my personal and professional growth the last four years. I have had so many fulfilling service and leadership opportunities, close friendships and I have gotten the

chance to grow a stronger connection with the community. It has given me a new perspective on life and what path I want to take career-wise.

I would say that volunteering in a service organization is one of the most fulfilling things that you can do at Georgia College. It's so nice to be able to actively see the change that you can make on the community or on campus.



Katie Brashear (center)

Katie Brashear

- Music Therapy Major/Outdoor Education Minor
- 1100+ Service Hours

I have been involved with Greater Milledgeville Young Life for all four years of my time at Georgia College. Through my involvement as a Young Life Leader, I have learned the importance of community. Being a Young Life leader has provided

me with the opportunity to step outside of my college campus and see my Milledgeville community as a whole. Not only did this widen my perspective of Baldwin County, but it also shaped my worldview as I was made aware of systemic issues of poverty and race that affect my community.

I would say to others, think about how you want to spend your days over the next four years. The world around us has created this idea of what college is "supposed" to look like, but that is not what your time at Georgia College has to be shaped by. This is a season of your life that many people around you believe is meant to be a selfish time for you to satisfy your own wants and needs and invest only in yourself as you try to figure out what you want to do with the life ahead of you. I am telling you now that you have a different option! Use this time as an opportunity to give your life away, and I promise what you will reap in return will be far greater than what you would have found in serving only yourself. Being in college means you have the freedom to decide how you will spend your time. Consider investing it in something bigger than yourself!



Mary Katherine Mason

Mary Katherine Mason

- Psychology Major
- 1400+ Service Hours

I am a part of Georgia College Miracle and YoungLife. Volunteer service has completely changed my time in college. I have gotten the opportunity to be a part of something so much bigger than myself and give back to organizations and communities

that I'm passionate about. I feel really lucky to have been given the chance to immerse myself into the community around me, outside of just being involved on Georgia College's campus. I would say to get involved as early as you can! Even if you're on the fence, actually getting involved and seeing other people your age be passionate about something will spark your passion and interest. There's nothing like giving back to the community you live in and I couldn't recommend getting involved in service organizations enough!

Olivia VanKouwenberg

- Biology and Non-Profit CNP
- 1500+ Service Hours

I've been involved with GC Shelter Buddies.



Olivia VanKouwenberg

Volunteering has been the biggest part of my college experience. It has given me something to be responsible for and has helped me become a better version of myself. Because of volunteering, I can leave Georgia College happy with the change that I have made in this community and the legacy I hope I am leaving behind to continue to do amazing things even without me here. It has shaped what career path I want to pursue and how I want to help the world around me for the rest of my life. If you feel passionate about something, act on it. The only way that YOU can make a difference is if you take the first step to make an impact.

Emily Williams

- Biology Major
- 1600+ Service Hours

I have been very involved with GC Shelter Buddies - a wonderful organization that supports the local Baldwin County Animal Shelter. Volunteer service has entirely shaped my collegiate experience into a great one! I have been able to meet my best friends through volunteering at the shelter as well as follow my passion for working with animals. While volunteering with Shelter Buddies, I decided to get my nonprofit certification to hopefully work with an animal shelter or rescue in the future! I would say to others try a few different organizations and see which one works best for you. Once you find your passion, volunteer service will no longer be a chore, but rather a great hobby!

McKenna Yearick



Emily Williams

- Nursing Major
- 1100+ Service Hours

I have had the opportunity to serve in various non-profit organizations while at college. The one I have served with the most is YoungLife, by being a friend and Godly mentor to middle school students in the greater Milledgeville area. I also served with Communities in Schools by going into classrooms and tutoring specific kids who needed extra one-on-one attention and help with their school. I have served with the Disabilities Services department here at GC, by taking handwritten and typed notes in my various classes to help provide study tools to students who learn

differently than I do. Finally, I worked with Cafe Central which is a local soup kitchen that provides meals to hundreds of individuals and families on a weekly basis.

Volunteer service has been one of the absolute highlights of my college career. By finding ways to serve the community, you realize that you are a part of something much bigger than just you. I have gotten to watch my middle school students grow up over my four years at GC, and I intend to maintain our friendships long after I have left Milledgeville. Volunteering my time has connected me to others who are like-minded, and helped me meet my best friends.

I would say to DO IT! By getting involved in service opportunities, you start to realize the things that you actually care about are worth the time commitment. You discover that you can use your time and resources to truly make a difference in your community. People matter, and when you use your time to invest in others, you will always benefit so much more than you ever imagined!!



McKenna Yearick



Class of 2021: Mass comm major aspires to help others, raise childhood cancer awareness

Communication, Department of : Monday April 5, 2021

Catherine Barr fell in love with Georgia College the moment she took a campus tour.

The Henry County, GA native transferred to GC her sophomore year and has taken advantage of everything the university has to offer.

“I was looking for a school with community and opportunities,” she explained. “I had heard great things about GC and the mass comm program from friends.”

Originally a marketing major, Barr soon switched to mass comm after transferring.

“It is broad, which opens a lot of different job possibilities,” she said of the major. “I enjoy the mix of business, creative and digital elements.”

Barr seized the opportunity to experience a wide-range of courses during her time at Georgia College, a reflection of her enthusiasm for learning and her passion for all aspects of the mass comm major.

It was during her time in Angela Criscoe’s Writing for Digital Media course that Barr

created an award-winning screenplay entitled “Will You Be My Friend?”. Her script won second place in the short subject scriptwriting category at the Broadcast Education Association’s (BEA) Festival of Media Arts. According to their website, the event is an international digital media and broadcast competition for faculty and students.

Barr’s script drew from her own life experience. The script takes place in modern day Georgia and follows two grade-school girls who become best friends. During the course of their friendship, one becomes terminally ill.

Barr’s own sister, Sarah, battled Ewing’s Sarcoma, a type of bone cancer, from age 12 to 19. Sarah’s legacy inspired Barr to write her script. Through the script, she hopes that people will want to take action to find not only treatment but a cure.

“Being only 17 and a half months apart in age, we were extremely close,” said Barr.

“During her battle with cancer, Sarah received over 1,100 needle pokes, had 367 days of chemo, 189 scans, 20 radiation treatments, 36 blood transfusions, 17 ER visits, 133 oncology appointments, 12 biopsies and bone marrow aspirates, 119 nights in the hospital, and 14 surgeries,” Barr explained. “She passed away in 2016, two weeks before her 20th birthday. Despite the hardships she endured, she remained joyful and selfless. She is my hero and inspiration.”

“

She was so gentle and kind, all while being the biggest nerd. She excelled in school and wanted to pursue a career in the medical field. Her family and her faith were the most important things to her.



Barr and her sister, Sarah.

- Catherine Barr

”

Childhood cancer research is severely underfunded, but Barr suggests practical ways that you can use your time, money and voice to help organizations fund research to find more effective treatments. You can use your time to volunteer for organizations such as Blue Skies, make donations to organizations such as CURE Childhood Cancer, Rally Foundation for Childhood Cancer Research, and St. Baldrick's foundation.

Even a small act can raise awareness, she explained.

"You can use your voice, even social media platforms, to bring awareness to this horrific disease and how underfunded it is."

Sarah's memory shines on both through the script and through Barr's description of her.

"She was so gentle and kind, all while being the biggest nerd. She excelled in school and wanted to pursue a career in the medical field. Her family and her faith were the most important things to her."

Her sister's battle with Ewing's Sarcoma has been a defining element in Barr's path. Barr, with a heart for serving others, is pursuing internship opportunities post-graduation. Long-term, she'd "love to build my career with a company, possibly a nonprofit, whose mission is to help others."

Barr has also forged important relationships with faculty mentors. Through their support, her mentors have made a lasting impression on her, both personally and professionally.

"There are so many incredible professors at GC. Two professors that have really meant a lot to me are Amanda Respass and Angela Criscoe. They have both been so supportive. They are always willing to talk, both about classes and future career plans. They genuinely care for their students and it shows. "

Criscoe described Barr as a talented student with a strong work ethic, along with a willingness to learn anything. Writing for Digital Media class is not in the pathway for Strategic Comm, explained Criscoe. This willingness to approach the course showed Barr's desire to learn how to write differently than how she had learned to write for Strategic Communication.

"As we progressed through the semester, she always made time to ask questions and showed appreciation for the feedback that I gave her," said Criscoe. "When I read the synopsis and treatment for her short film screenplay, 'Will You Be My Friend?', I knew the final script was going to be fantastic."

When the winners of the BEA awards were announced, Barr was at work and found



Barr in Terrell Hall

out about her award through a friend. "It was such an honor to receive an award for something I put so much of my heart and effort into," she said.

The award is one of many experiences that Barr has enjoyed during her time at GC. She looks forward to career opportunities as she enters the workforce after graduating.

"GC has provided me with numerous opportunities to grow, both in the classroom and beyond," she said. "My classes have taught me practical skills that I will take with me into my career post-graduation."

News Stories Posted Tuesday April 6, 2021



Class of 2021: Nursing major inspired to help others

[Nursing, School of](#) : Tuesday April 6, 2021

Aly Griffin

What's your major?

My major is nursing.

Where are you from?

Atlanta, GA

Why did you want to pursue nursing?

Since I was young, I have had a passion for helping people who are in need. When my grandmother was diagnosed with cancer five years ago, I saw the impact the nurses had on her care. They made her feel comfortable and supported her throughout this difficult journey. This truly inspired me to want to be there for people during some of their most challenging times and to make their hospital experience a more positive one.



Aly Griffin

What was your favorite class/professor and why?

I really loved my first semester of nursing school! Every single professor was so encouraging and supportive. All of the classes were interesting, and it was the first time during my schooling that I was learning exactly what I would use in my everyday career. It was also really cool to be able to see almost everything that we were learning in the classroom being applied in the hospitals during our clinicals. This got me very excited to become a nurse, and it really validated that I had chosen the right major.

What are your plans after graduation?

I am moving to Colorado after graduation to pursue a residency program in a major hospital. The reason I chose to move to Colorado is that I love being outdoors, going on adventures, and hiking.

Why do you want to get into mission work?

Throughout my time in nursing school, I have seen that many people do not have access to healthcare; especially those in third world countries. Because of this, I was inspired to help those in need and use my nursing skills to serve in these communities.

Anything else you'd like to mention?

I want to thank my family, friends, and professors who have supported me throughout this journey. It has been very challenging, and I am so thankful to have had a wonderful support system during my time at Georgia College!

News Stories Posted Thursday April 8, 2021



Class of 2021: Soccer captain, chemistry major makes her mark

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Thursday April 8, 2021

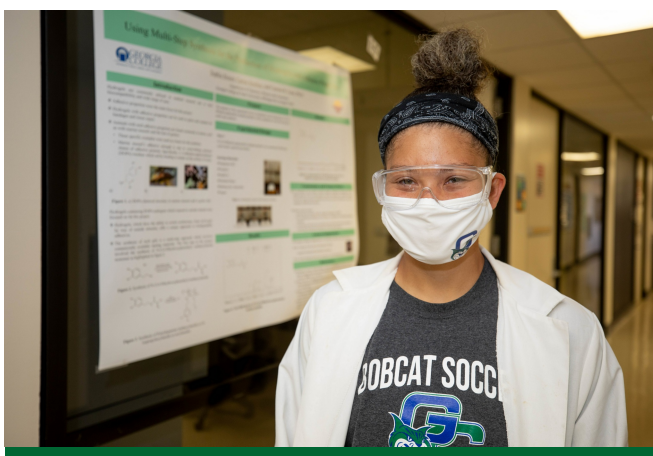
Sophia Bonser grew up exposed to the medical field through her mom who is an OBGYN. She always had an interest in healthcare. Initially, she wanted to be a nurse, then a physical therapist. But everything changed when she took her first chemistry class at Georgia College.

was bad,” she said.

attention of her professor.

“I was very nervous about it because my whole experience with chemistry in high school

Instead of a challenge, Bonser found she did well in the course. So well, she even caught the



Sophia Bonser

"I pulled her to the side one day after class and talked with her about what her ultimate career ambitions were. I told her I thought she would excel as a chemistry major," said Dr. Catrena Lisse, professor of chemistry. "Honestly, she is such a strong student I am sure she would have excelled at any major, but I selfishly wanted an opportunity to work with her."

That turned out to be just the vote of confidence she needed. She switched majors, joined Lisse's research and found majoring in chemistry could open the door to a dream she'd kept hiding the back of her mind most of her life—becoming a doctor.

Her well-rounded education in the Department of Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy offered her hands-on learning alongside seasoned professors. She conducted intense undergraduate research and took upper-level math courses setting a strong foundation for furthering her education. She's even had the opportunity to serve as a tutor in the Learning Center.

Much like falling into the perfect major, Bonser ended up at Georgia College by happenstance. She knew she wanted to play soccer in college, but knew little about Georgia College at the time.

"My dad actually told me about the ID camp for high schoolers. It was the day after my prom, and I was like, 'I'm not going to go,'" she said. "Instead my dad said 'Yes, you are,' so I went, and I did really well."

"Something that kind of stood out to me with the camp was the actual college players were there with us to answer questions," said Bonser "Talking with them about going to school here and playing for the team—they just made it sound amazing."

Bonser made the soccer team, was given a scholarship and became a leader early on.

"I'm currently captain of the soccer team, and I have been since the start of my sophomore year," she said. "I've just I've had a ton of incredible opportunities here that I did not expect to happen at all."

The one-on-one connections made with faculty and coaches made the difference for her. She calls her former coach Hope Clark and Lisse personal mentors. She also credits her current coach Tinna Gallagher with being supportive during a challenging time of racial injustice in the aftermath of George Floyd's tragic death. Bonser was an effective advocate for active conversations around race and inclusivity.



Bonser playing soccer

"Coach Gallagher was there for me, and she organized a seminar discussion about race with our Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity last summer," said Bonser. "We are currently also working to start a diversity and inclusion seminar for the whole athletic department to talk about what it means to be inclusive."

A leader on and off the field, Bonser sets an example in her personal life, as well as her academic studies of the importance of hard work.

"It has been a true pleasure getting to know Sophia over the past three and half years. Any problem or roadblock Sophia encountered with her research project; she never got frustrated or gave up," Lisse said. "It is rare to find a student of her age with such a level of professionalism, respect and maturity with an ability to systematically problem-solve. I wish I could clone her or keep her around for a few more years."

Bonser plans to take a gap year before starting medical school. During that year, she hopes to join an elite program for pre-med students to become medical

assistants in a hospital and be exposed to all things in the field. Her goal right now is to become a surgeon after completing medical school.

She offers this advice to other students.

“Be accepting of not knowing things until you know them. You’re supposed to learn in your classes not come in knowing everything,” she said. “Also take advantage of every opportunity that you can possibly take advantage of, within limits of mental health. Put yourself out there and form relationships.”



Bonser playing soccer

News Stories Posted Friday April 9, 2021



Anatomical models to provide honors students with strong learning opportunity

[Honors College](#) : Friday April 9, 2021

The John E. Sallstrom Honors College is using a [CrowdThunder campaign](#) to purchase a set of anatomical models to better serve students' needs for learning about the human body. The college hopes to purchase these high-demand models this summer, so students would be able to use them in the fall.

"I see the models as akin to the primary documents that I use in my own discipline of history," said Dr. Brian Newsome, dean of the Honors College. "They are essential tools, as students navigate courses like anatomy and physiology. Then, they use their education as a springboard for further learning, as well as research."

Newsome had discussions with current and prospective students about having anatomical models available for them at the Humber-White House. The need for these items became clear.

"The anatomical models that Georgia College has in the science building and library are in really high demand," said Newsome. "The honors students have told me this, especially during



Dr. Brian Newsome

crunch time, as they are studying for exams.”

Honors College students have 24/7 access to the Humber-White House. This would give them access to the anatomical models at all times, making the house a hub for student collaboration and learning.

“One can’t go into nursing or therapy knowing anatomy only from two-dimensional pictures on a page,” said Dr. Kenneth Saladin, professor emeritus and former honors faculty council member. “Anatomy has to be understood from a three-dimensional perspective and as both a visual and tactile experience.”



Anatomical models in the classroom.

Anatomy models, supplementing cadaver dissection, have been used in medical education for centuries.

Newsome’s main hope is for honors students in the life sciences to have easy access to these essential educational tools. However, a guest policy will also be developed, so that honors students can bring a limited number of non-honors study partners.

“I want to ensure that honors students have priority access,” said Newsome. “But, I am happy for them to bring study partners so they can all benefit.”

With anatomical models, students are better able to develop an understanding of the physical location of the organ or tissue relative to other structures, as well as the relationship between organs and organ systems.

“The ability to manipulate the pieces—kinetic learning—enhances the experience and deepens their understanding,” said Lori Beth Robinson, senior lecturer of biology. “This was very evident for students who took human anatomy and physiology during the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

Many of her students reported how imperative it was to have the physical presence of the models over videos of the models and images in PowerPoint or textbooks. Some also indicated that it was more difficult to grasp the directional terminology without models.

Another benefit of having anatomical models for students is they’re able to teach

each other when they team up in small groups.

“Students become creative in ways to remember the structures and their locations, developing their long-term memory,” said Robinson. “They are also building and strengthening their bonds as friends and classmates—skills that will serve them well in the health care fields.”

Sophomore and exercise science major Katherine “Kae” Gilliam of Woodstock, Georgia, knows first-hand that anatomical models are the best means of learning about the human body.

“They provide a visual and physical aid to students who are either just starting to understand human anatomy, or for those who wish to gain a deeper understanding about the body’s overarching connections,” Gilliam said.

“

“Contributing to the purchase of a set of anatomical models for the Humber-White House, Honors College students will find the tools more accessible. This will lead to better understanding about the human body and flourishing in their courses and beyond.”

- Kae Gilliam

”

Gilliam often finds it difficult to access anatomical models on campus, as they are shared by other students in exercise science, nursing and other majors.

“Contributing to the purchase of a set of anatomical models for the Humber-White House, Honors College students will find the tools more accessible,” Gilliam said. “This will lead to better understanding about the human body and flourishing in their courses and beyond.”

After graduating from Georgia College, Gilliam plans to head to graduate school for occupational therapy. She sees the long-range benefit of using anatomical models.

“Having more time with these models means not only gaining basic familiarity and knowledge for introductory anatomy classes, but it also helps to boost my success in my future classes at Georgia College and graduate programs,” Gilliam said.

“Many of us find if we spend more time with physical models as opposed to online or textbook pictures, we not only do better in our human anatomy courses, but feel more confident in our understanding of the body as a whole.”

Saladin taught biology at the university for 40 years and recognizes a high demand

for anatomy models in healthcare fields.

“The anatomy labs of Herty Hall and the smaller collection in the Russell Library struggle to provide as much access as students wish for,” he said. “The highly esteemed and disciplined students in the John E. Sallstrom Honors College have earned the additional access that this collection in the Honors House will provide. I trust they will recognize it as a privilege, reward and added incentive for their participation in honors, and that it will be publicly seen as another mark of distinction for high-caliber honors education at Georgia College.”

Honor students identified acquisition of a set of anatomical models as their top priority.

“Donors of the anatomical models will be investing in the present and future,” said Newsome. “So, alumni and friends can rest assured that they are meeting a need that that honors students feel acutely.”

They also can also can help turn the Humber-White house into a real home for the Honors College.



Honors students share ideas with Anna Whiteside, assistant director, John E. Sallstrom Honors College; National Scholarships coordinator (pictured right).

“This resource will pull in many students who interact with each other in so many ways,” said Newsome. “For example, an English major, who is coming in to grab a cup of coffee and read, will have an opportunity to chat with a nursing major, who's taking a break from working with models. They'll engage in the vibrant, interdisciplinary conversations that are at the heart of the Honors College, building community across boundaries of majors and cohort years that will translate into so many potential collaboration centers. The possibilities are endless.”

[Help](#) the John E. Sallstrom Honors College celebrate 50 years of providing top-notch transformative educational experiences by providing this learning opportunity for students.



Nontraditional path leads alumnus towards passion for math and career success

[Mathematics, Department of](#) : Friday April 9, 2021

First-generation college student and Milledgeville native, Harlan Archer, '89, '09, didn't know what it felt like to play frisbee on Front Campus or be a part of a fraternity during his time at Georgia College. He was too busy working and studying to put himself through school—something he later wouldn't want his kids to endure. And, they didn't.

From front-line worker to president, Archer worked his way up the industry ladder, managing to put all seven of his children through college, where they savored the full university experience.

Studying and working full-time, evening shifts at Northrup Grumman Corporation took all his time. After seven years of this rigorous schedule, he earned his undergraduate degree in math, then went on to earn his master's in business administration.

"When I started working at Grumman right out of high school, it was pretty obvious to me that I needed an education," said Archer. "And because I didn't have one, I was working evening shift, or 4 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Thank goodness Georgia

College was available for me.”

Despite his hectic work schedule, averaging 40-plus hours per week, he enrolled as a nontraditional student, taking two classes per quarter. He recalls studying in the library before work and watching students take part in leisure activities on Front Campus, wishing he could do that, as well.

“I always used to tell myself, ‘If I ever get out of college, and I get a decent job, my kids will not go to college the same way I did,’” he said. “So, I was able to make that happen.”

Today, there are two pharmacists, a doctorate in chemical engineering, a geology major, English major, geology major and a master's in math in his family. Their last child is in college.



Harlan Archer



Harlan Archer (first row-center) and his employees who received Georgia Mining Association awards.

When he started working at Grumman, he quickly saw that engineers had good jobs. So, he wanted to be an engineer or mechanical engineer. Since the fourth grade, Archer knew he was good at math and enjoyed solving problems, making A's throughout high school. At Georgia College, he took classes with Dr. David DeVries, who was a professor and chair of the math department at that time. Archer was one of seven out of 25 Calculus II students to advance to Calculus III.

"He really upped our game in the math department," he said. "I've never been so proud of a C in my entire life. I figured if I could get through that class, I can get through any of these math courses."

Archer learned if he worked hard enough, he could persevere. So, he did. He started off in an entry level job out of college in a local kaolin company, ultimately becoming president. Even though the kaolin company changed names three times, Archer never left. He attributes his math background for his success.

"Math, in general—at a kaolin plant, or any big plant—is much needed since a plant is just a huge optimization process," he said. "You've got all of these products and product lines that must be optimized for quality and cost. And, the first thing that I did when I got into the Kaolin industry was statistical process control."

In his position, he crunched data, analyzed processes, measured controls and

assisted in minimizing quality measurement errors.

Later in his career, he used math and statistics to solve a major problem at the company's ground calcium carbonate plant in Maryland. There he met with a scientist from England, who worked with processes, and Archer did the data analyzation. Together, they solved the problem.

"We figured it out using multiple linear regression and correlation analysis," he said. "I can give so many examples where I used math in my career. It's unbelievable. I had no idea when I got a math degree, that it was a great field. It gave me the background and the training to sit back and solve problems."

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"Math is a great degree. I had no idea that when I was getting my degree that it was really a good fit for an industry. Industry needs more people who have problem-solving abilities. I wish more people would understand that."

- Harlan Archer

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As Archer moved up in his career, he discovered he needed to learn about operations, management, marketing, business law and human resources.

As company president, Archer supervised 500 employees. He had more duties, one of which was analyzing the data and making decisions that would keep his world-wide customers from running out of product.

"When I was a production manager, I was always answering questions," he said. 'Can you make a certain amount of product by a certain time frame with a multitude of constraints?' A lot of different things factored in. So, I made a huge model in Excel with components that all work together, and this model greatly assisted in answering questions regarding capacity plus helped optimize the processes."

Although Archer's traveled all over the world for the company that ships to 60 countries, he also spent a lot of time in the plant, doing math and making friends.

"There are lots of different people in the industry," he said. "It's been a very rewarding career."

Archer retired in 2020, after working 30 years in the kaolin industry. Now, he serves on the College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Board and has pursued his other dream of living on their farm. Archer and his wife, Lori Wiggins Archer, who is a

Sandersville native, are thoroughly enjoying their new life on the farm.

He reflects on the tenets of his career, one of which is for individuals to stay humble and lead by example.

“What many students need to remember when they get out is just because they have a college degree doesn't mean that they're the smartest people in the room,” Archer said. “Each employee may not know the science behind their task, but they know what happens when they do their tasks.”

He also believes in treating people with dignity and respect.

“Just be honest and work hard and have some fun along the way,” said Archer. “Laugh. If you're going to have memories, you might as well have some good ones.”

Archer is grateful for his Georgia College education. He offers a scholarship to a rising junior math major with the highest grade-point average.

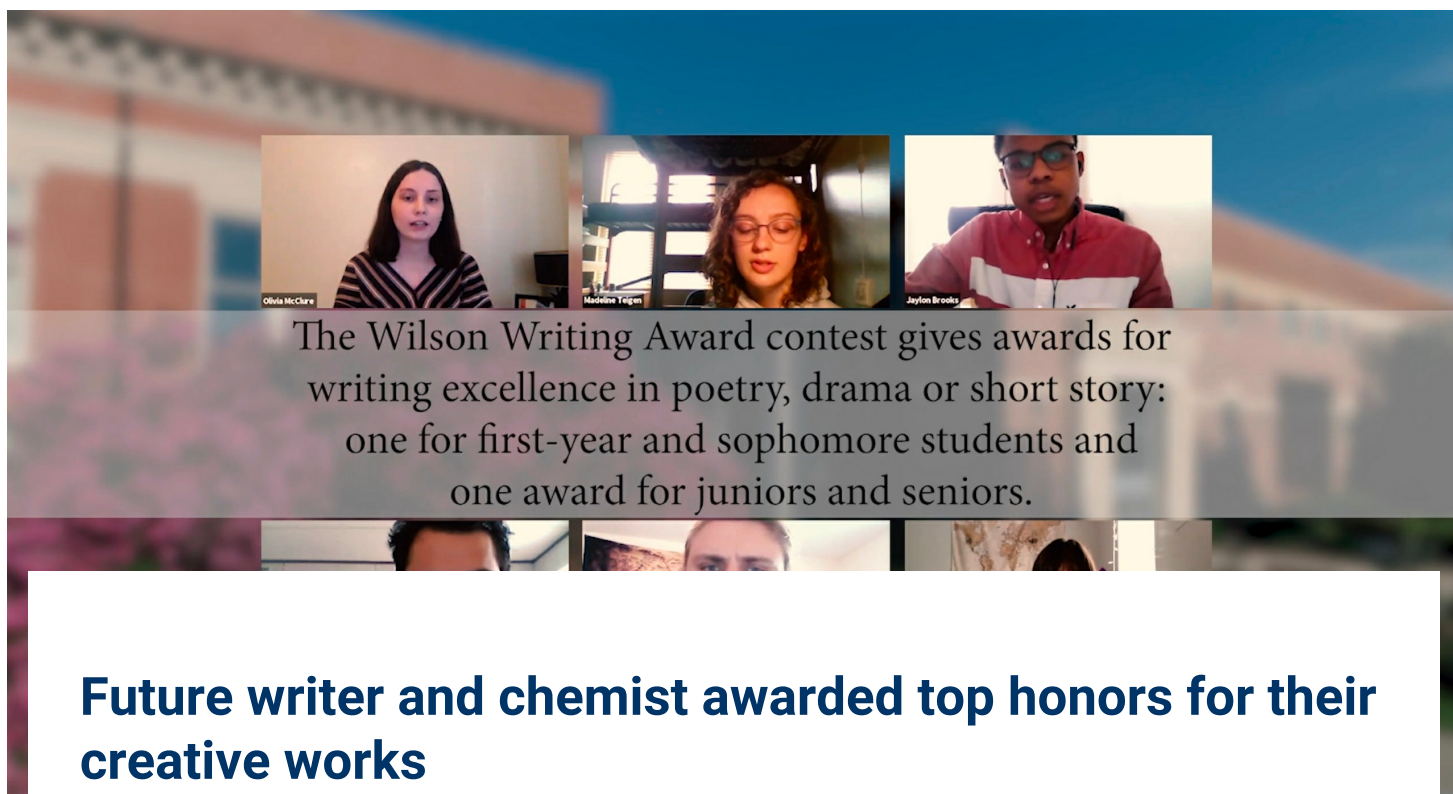
“Math is a great degree,” he said. “I had no idea that when I was getting my degree that it was really a good fit for an industry. Industry needs more people who have problem-solving abilities. I wish more people would understand that.”

To learn how you can help provide aid to Georgia College math students, like Archer did, contact Bob Preston at bob.preston@gcsu.edu.



In Brazil, Harlan Archer (center) discusses improvements to a mine impound.

News Stories Posted Monday April 12, 2021



[English, Department of](#) : Monday April 12, 2021

The 12th annual Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Awards virtual ceremony was held March 25. Out of 50 submissions, six finalists were selected from two different writing categories—poetry and short story.

First-year and sophomore finalists include: Madeline Teigen of Evans, Georgia (first place), Olivia McClure of Decatur, Georgia (second place) and Jaylan Brooks of Augusta, Georgia (third place). Junior and senior finalists include: William “Tanner” Howard of Toccoa, Georgia (first place), Jacob Dallas of Sharpsburg, Georgia (second place) and Chloe McDargh of Augusta, Georgia (third place).

During the ceremony, finalists read excerpts of their works and were awarded with certificates and prizes. First-place winners received \$1,000. Cash prizes were awarded to the remaining top finalists.

[12th annual Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award Ceremony](#)

First-year chemistry major Madeline Teigen won top honors with her short story titled “The Forest.” She spent approximately 36 hours on this project.

“Writing allows me to express myself creatively,” she said. “It serves as an outlet

and it also helps me with technical writing that I use for my major.”

Teigen feels it’s important for individuals to write. Writing allows people to explore their imagination and create something of their own. She feels Georgia College provides a place where she can express her ideas freely.

“Georgia College gives me a chance to explore different subjects and areas of interest so I don’t have to go down just one path,” Teigen said. “I can pursue multiple ones.”

She’s grateful to receive the Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award and feels it validates her writing skills.



Madeline Teigen

“Winning the award means a lot to me, because it shows that I’ve had the chance to perfect my writing skills,” she said. “I still had a chance to work on my writing while I worked on my schoolwork.”

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“Georgia College gives me a chance to explore different subjects and areas of interest so I don’t have to go down just one path. I can pursue multiple ones.”

- Madeline Teigen

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Teigen plans to save her prize funds for graduate school, after which she aspires to work in forensics.

Senior Tanner Howard discovered the inspiration for his poem “Maine,” when he traveled there a few years ago.

Howard feels writing helps him grow as a person, especially since he’s passionate

about it.

"I love when an idea inspires me, and I just go with it," he said. "When I'm in the zone and there's nothing but me and the paper—it's one of the best feelings there is."

Howard credits his writing professors for his writing success.

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"When you write, recognition is important. Writing's an ongoing process, and it's really good to have people acknowledge when your writing grows."

- Tanner Howard

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Tanner Howard

"Laura Newbern and Kerry Evans are really great professors, who taught me a lot of about my own writing and other people's writing," he said. "The Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award helped, as well."

Since his first year at Georgia College, Howard submitted seven pieces to the Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award. He won second and third place when he was a junior and feels that submitting his works to this opportunity is an important gauge in determining his writing ability.

"When you write, recognition is important," said Howard. "Writing's an ongoing process, and it's really good to have people acknowledge when your writing grows."

Howard is getting married soon, so he plans to spend his winnings on the wedding and the honeymoon. The couple plan to travel across the U.S. and write about more places. Howard's working on getting his first collection of poems published. "Maine" is part of his travel poem collection.

"My future goal is to be a writer," said Howard. "It's what I love to do and it makes me feel like the best version of me when I do it."

Winning the Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award is validating to Howard, as well.

"It really shows there are people who care about your work," he said. "People want to read it and connect with you. Having the funds to be able to keep writing really means a lot to me."

The award was established in memory of Margaret Harvin Wilson, '34. She was the first in her family to attend college, as her father provided her with a small trust. Wilson finished Georgia College in three years. While majoring in English and minoring in French, Wilson waited tables in the dining hall, so she could have discounted tuition while living in a free dormitory. As a senior, a teacher encouraged her to enter a short story contest. Winning first prize in 1933 for "Sympathy Speaks" gave her confidence to pursue a teaching career.

She married Leland Wilson in 1938. Their three daughters pursued careers in medicine, law and higher education.

This writing award exemplifies Wilson's drive for students to explore new worlds through creative writing.

To learn more, visit: <https://www.gcsu.edu/writingcontest>.

News Stories Posted Tuesday April 13, 2021

GC MENTAL HEALTH

— — — On Campus — — — Online — — — On Demand — — —



New mental health resources available for students

[Student Life, Office of](#) : Tuesday April 13, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic put strains on the mental, physical and emotional well-being of people across the globe. Recent polls from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) found four in 10 adults “reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder”— up from one in 10 in 2019.

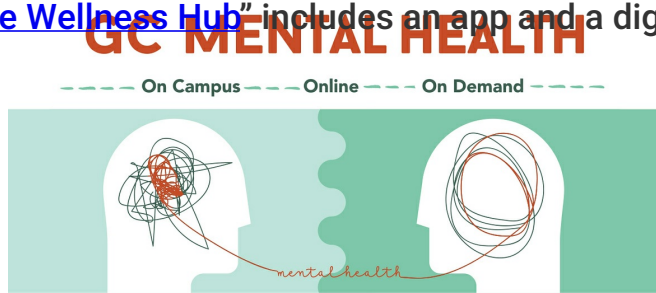
To combat the personal stresses brought on by the pandemic, the University System of Georgia expanded mental health resources for all colleges and universities.

“I am very excited to bring a new initiative called GC Mental Health to our campus as an innovative way to enhance our services and support our students’ success,” said Dr. Shawn Brooks, vice president of student life. “I look forward to working with the campus community to ensure the health and safety of our students.”

The GC Mental Health initiative launched earlier in the spring semester and is now available to all students at Georgia College. This new program is in addition to [Georgia College's Counseling Services](#), which remains a resource for students.

Through a partnership with Christie Campus Health, the GC Mental Health initiative includes a 24/7/365 mental health support line, no-cost telehealth or in-person treatment sessions and personal student navigators to assist with referrals and support. It also includes a self-directed program designed exclusively for students.

[“The Wellness Hub”](#) includes an app and a digital wellness magazine with educational content, self-help tools and resource links.



With so many changes in the world and factors that compromise your health and wellness, we wanted to make sure that you have the support you need, any time, any place. Whether you are on campus, studying from home, or studying abroad, GC Mental Health is here for you. We have reinforced the resources provided by Counseling Services with the online resources at the GC Wellness Hub, and access to 24/7 Telehealth counseling.

gcsu.edu/gcmentalhealth
24/7 On Demand Service at **833-855-0085**

Graphic with info on program

“Our students’ wellbeing is our top concern,” said Brooks. “Our goal is to make sure our students are happy and healthy as they study and prepare for the rest of their lives. I encourage our students to utilize these resources if they or a friend is experiencing any mental health concerns.”

To access any components of the program, contact the support line anytime at 833-855-0085.

GC Counseling Services can be reached at 478-445-5331.

More information on the USG plan is available [here](#).

News Stories Posted Wednesday April 14, 2021



Class of 2021: English major tours England during COVID restrictions

[English, Department of](#) : Wednesday April 14, 2021

Patrick Sheets

From: Lawrenceville, Georgia

Why Georgia College: I chose Georgia College, because I love the idea of going to a liberal arts college. It let me explore so many subjects, like art and biology.

Major: English with a concentration in Literature. It gave me the answers to life's questions.

Research: I worked with Dr. Julian Knox on a paper about the Romantic-era poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge that got accepted to the Friends of Coleridge conference in the U.K.



Patrick Sheets in the U.K.

Study Abroad during COVID: It was definitely a stressful time to go abroad, as no one knew what we could and could not do. I got confirmation I'd be going to the University of Winchester in the U.K. only a few weeks before the semester started. Every day more and more excursions were canceled, and I thought for sure this would be one of them. When I got there, I had every week planned out for the rest of the semester. I would be going to a new city each week, sometimes two. I knew it'd be difficult. But I planned my trips safely—mostly to outdoor events, never with large groups and always wearing a mask. As long as I kept my health and everyone else's health in mind, I felt there were still plenty of opportunities to travel. In my first month, I saw the Roman baths in the city of Bath, the British Museum, Stonehenge, Oxford College, Cambridge College, and I ate at more pubs than I could count. After that, however, the whole country went on lockdown for a month.



Sheets at Bath Abbey in the city of Bath, U.K.

In a way, Covid sort of made my abroad experience more authentic and interesting. Most of the extremely tourist-y places and events were closed, due to the

lockdown and large gatherings not being safe. Apart from some of the big ones like London Eye, I had to make my own adventures and use my imagination. I skipped the world-famous Harry Potter tour in Oxford and instead wandered around campus and got lost in streets of family-owned market vendors. I would pretend I was a student at Oxford and interact the people there, as if I was one of them. I met a group of students who took me to hidden gems around Oxford and gave me a taste of what it's like to actually live there, not simply be a tourist in a city.

Favorite class & professor: Any class with Dr. Knox has to be my favorite. He has a wonderful way of inviting every student to share their experiences and opinions in ways that make them actually want to participate and be heard. He challenges everyone to think differently, and I've learned so much from him that I can only hope to be as good of a teacher as him.

Most impactful moment: The most impactful moment in college for me was when I had my paper accepted to an international conference in the United Kingdom. It just evaporated all my worries of whether or not I was good enough to be in this field and to actually make a difference in the world of literature.

How changed in college: I think my priorities have changed the most since I got here. I came to college as a biology major, because I thought that was the field with the most security. I came to realize that's not what it's all about. College showed me it's more important to find what you're passionate about and pursue that because, in the end, that's all that matters.

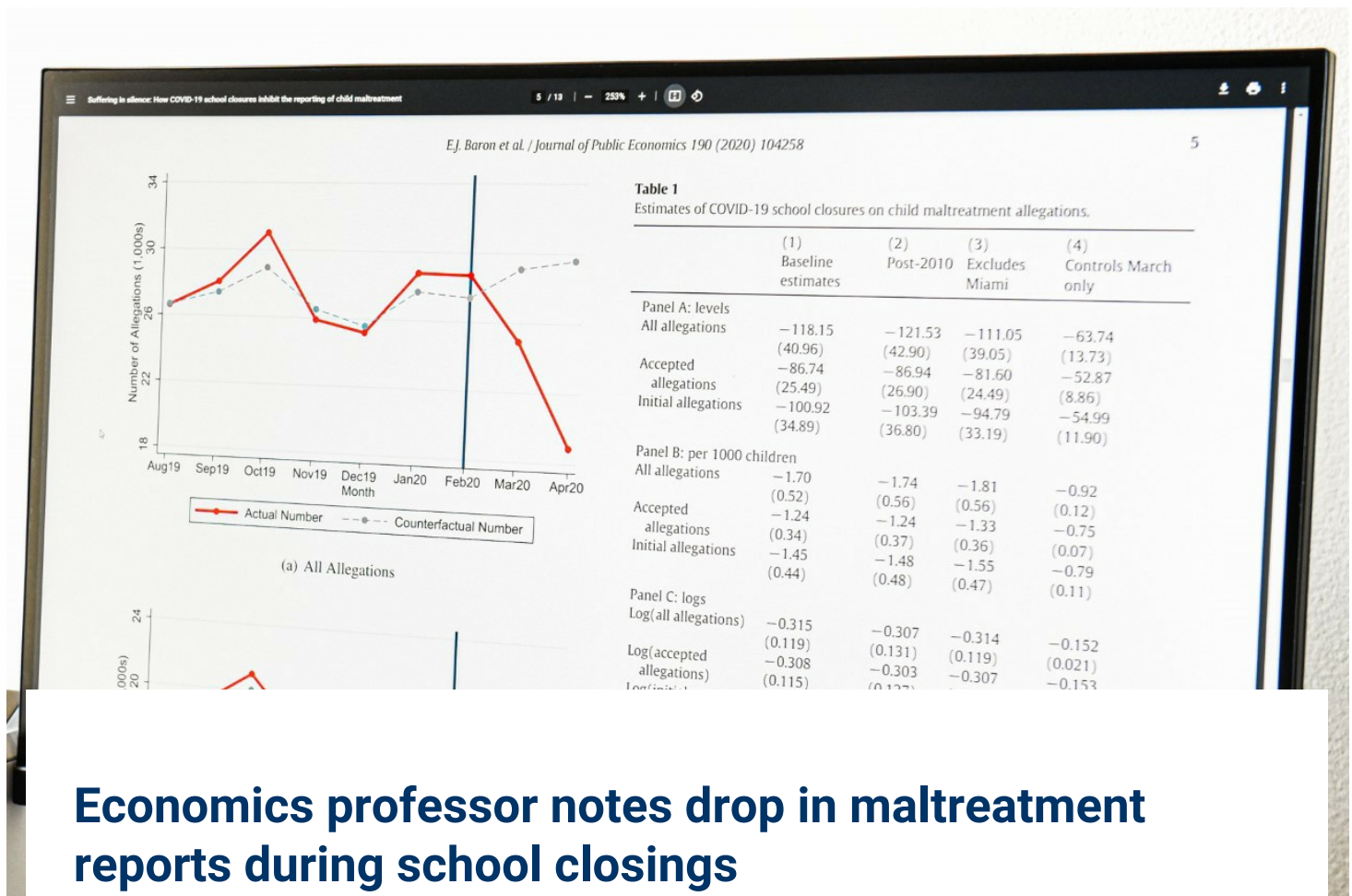
Will miss the most: I'll definitely miss the wonderful conversations that go on in all my English classes. With the small class sizes, I've gone through the program with pretty much the same people since the beginning, and we have formed a close-knit group. That fosters an environment where we can openly express our opinions and have them challenged, while still remaining close.

Advice for incoming students: My best advice is to remember why you're here at college. This is a wonderful opportunity, not a requirement. So, you will get out of it as much as you put into it.

Future goal: Right now, I am waiting to hear back from grad schools. But, further down the line, I'd like to be an English teacher. Passing on my knowledge and love for literature is the only thing I know for certain that I want to do with my future.

How Georgia College prepared you for this goal: Georgia College helped me change my priorities and gave me a place where I can explore so many different fields. I was lucky. I realized my true passion lies in literature very early in my college years, and I hope that everyone gets the chance to find this. It might not be where you first expected it; it certainly wasn't for me.

News Stories Posted Thursday April 15, 2021



Economics professor notes drop in maltreatment reports during school closings

[Economics & Finance, Department of](#): Thursday April 15, 2021

Reports of child maltreatment dramatically declined during the early days of COVID, when schools nationwide closed their doors and switched to online learning.

A new assistant professor of economics at Georgia College, Dr. Cullen Wallace, and his research partners were first to examine the impact of school closings on abuse. By focusing on Florida—which updates its data system monthly—researchers were able to study the issue in ‘real time.’

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The magnitude was surprising. I don’t think the cost of keeping schools closed was at the forefront of people’s minds, which is why we wanted to document it.

- Dr. Cullen Wallace

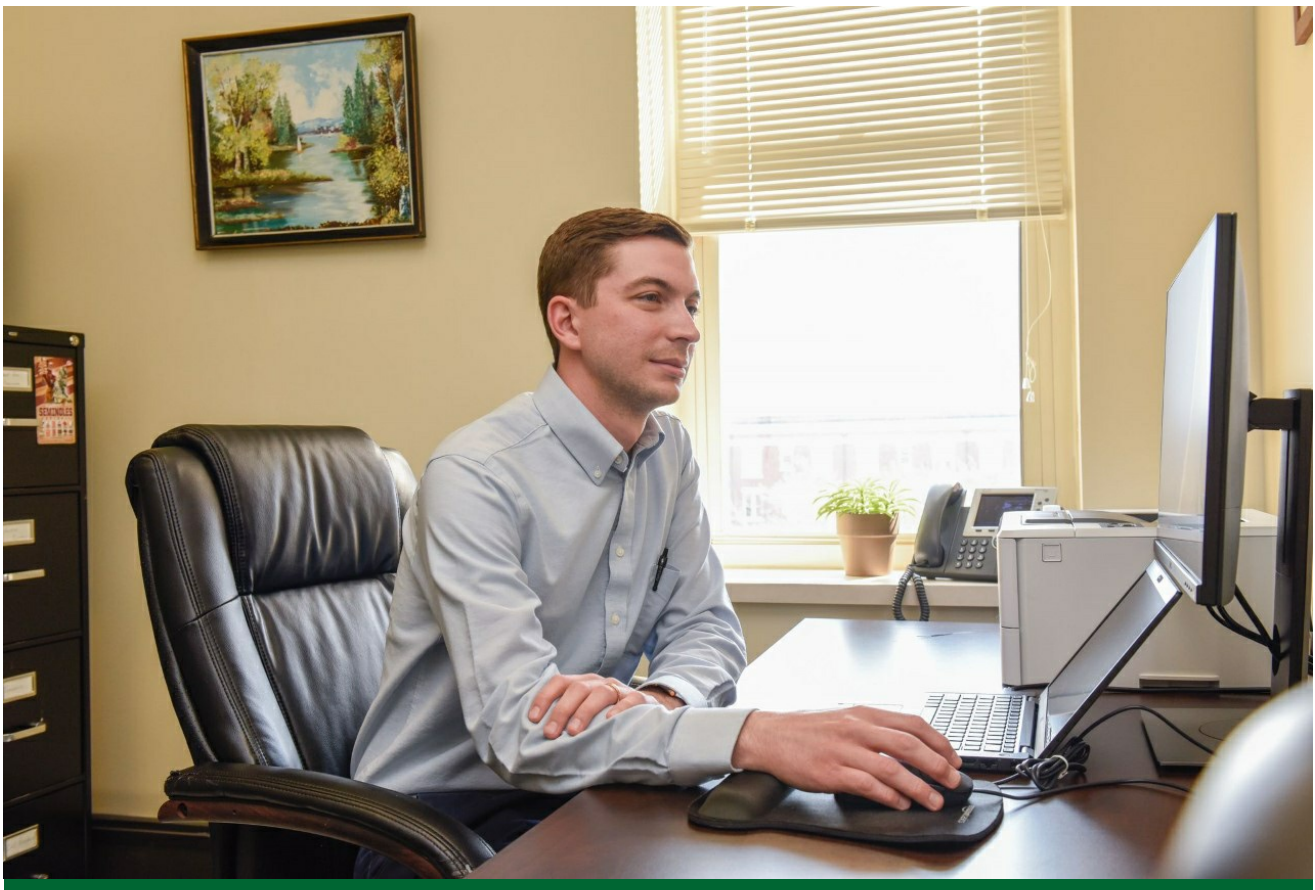
What they found was startling. While you might think the number of maltreatment cases would go up due to high parental stress, rapid lockdowns, job losses and unprecedented pandemic—the opposite occurred. Maltreatment went largely undetected.

About 27 percent or 15,000 fewer child maltreatment cases were reported in Florida during March and April 2020. This can be generalized to reflect what occurred nationwide, Wallace said. Roughly 213,000 fewer maltreatment cases were reported in the United States during those months.

The decline directly correlated to what’s normally seen in June and July during summer break and in December when schools are closed.

“The magnitude was surprising. I don’t think the cost of keeping schools closed was at the forefront of people’s minds, which is why we wanted to document it,” Wallace said.

“You can think of almost anything in economic terms,” he added. “At the heart of economics are costs and benefits. It doesn’t have to be a financial cost. But there’s still a cost or benefit to everything we do. A good decision, even one regarding school shutdowns, is one in which benefits exceed the costs.”



Wallace got his undergraduate degree in economics from Georgia College in 2015. When COVID struck, he was getting a doctorate at Florida State University and finalizing a paper on U.S. adoption tax credits. Quickly pivoting his focus to maltreatment reports, Wallace teamed up with E. Jason Baron and Ezra G. Goldstein to record the impact of school closings as they happened.

The study, submitted in May 2020, was noted last fall on Fox News by Scott Atlas, a White House adviser and Coronavirus Task Force member under former U.S. President Donald Trump. It was also cited in the New York Times.

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There’s undeniably a huge economic impact from lockdowns in general. First off, the economy shut down as a whole. People weren’t able to go to work. People weren’t able to earn. Businesses had a hard time staying open. And, with the virus, you’ve got the school shutdowns. That’s a lot of fodder for economic researchers to look at.

- Wallace

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Schools started closing in mid-March 2020 during the U.S. outbreak of COVID. Many school systems closed the same week. In the three most populous states—New York, California and Texas—schools closed within four days of each other. So, “you had a massive number of students home that one week in March,” Wallace noted.

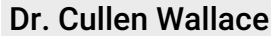
There are other negatives to consider before closing schools, like the potential loss of learning, children not getting adequate nutrition and parent stress levels as they juggle work and child care. But Wallace’s group wanted to know if educators—as the number one reporter of child abuse—would continue to discern signs of maltreatment online.

Reporting numbers faltered, and this made school closure too costly, Wallace said.

It seems reasonable to think fewer allegations mean less maltreatment. But with people quarantining at home and facing an uncertain future, Wallace and his partners believe lower numbers point to more children-at-risk.

His team recommended careful consideration before closing schools in the future. They also called for an easier reporting path for family members and neighbors. When teachers can’t closely monitor children, it’s this second line of defense that

"With policy recommendations, the big one we looked at was 'Hey, don't forget about this cost.' This is a real cost that needs to be considered when you're weighing the calculus of whether to keep schools open or to close them," Wallace said.





Class of 2021: Marketing major aspires to have her own fashion firm

[International Education Center](#) : Thursday April 15, 2021

Liliyan Ibrahim

Where are you from? I'm from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Why did you choose to attend Georgia College? The main reason is the culture. Georgia College has great interaction with the professors and students. It's not too big or too small. It's the perfect place to come and find yourself. You don't get so overwhelmed with so many people. It also allows you to grow at your own pace. As an international student, changing countries is a such a major shift. And having that small, close-knit community to connect with is a big factor. It also has a good business program.



Liliyan Ibrahim with her country's flag.

What's your major? Marketing

Why did you choose to major in marketing? When I first came to Georgia College, I was a management major. But during my sophomore year, I realized there's a lot of creativity and flexibility with marketing. And, I am a very creative person, so I think marketing really translates to my future career.

Which professor made a big impact on you and why? My Business Professor, Chuck Ryan, changed the way we learned. I think sometimes we lose focus on learning the material, because we're so fixated on getting good grades. He allowed us to focus on the material and then he brought back the drive to learn something new, because he challenged us in ways we've never been. He made the experience so much better and easier for me to learn. I'm one that learns by understanding, not memorizing. So, the way he went into detail with the material allowed me to use this information and apply it to so many things. Now, I can actually apply what I've learned to so many different purposes. That made a big impact on the way I view learning now.

What organizations were you a part of at Georgia College? I was part of the Seek Refuge Club, International Club, Project Movement Club, French Club, Women's Club and ADHD Club. I try to be as involved as possible to get new perspectives from different people. Belonging to a variety of clubs allowed me to see things in

different ways. So many diverse people contributed a lot to who I am now, because I've learned from people who are from different places.

What do you hope to do when you graduate? For the first one to two years, I would like to work in a fashion firm or do social media with a digital marketing firm. I'd like to learn a skill set I'm going to get from working in the fashion industry. Ultimately, I want to be self-employed and have my own fashion firm.

Why is this important to you? When I grew up, there weren't a lot of modest fashions available. I don't think many companies are inclusive and considerate about different fashion preferences. Having the ability to provide that option will give those who want modest looks the opportunity to express their creativity through fashion. Because I had to find creative ways to what is available to accommodate the fashion trends with my own preference. It's important for me to give that opportunity to others that I didn't have when I was growing up.

News Stories Posted Friday April 16, 2021



Class of 2021: Communication major applied class lessons at full-time job

[Communication, Department of](#) : Friday April 16, 2021



Garrett Scroggs

Garrett Lee Scroggs

From: Monticello, Georgia

Major: I love connecting to people through talking. Mass Communications allows you to have experience with public speaking and marketing. It allows me to create a relationship with customers and gives me a better understanding of how to advertise myself as an

asset.

Research/Internship: WGUR had me in advertisement sales, which really helped me in my personal job and allowed me to gain an understanding of how the public responds to certain ads. I've been able to work in advertisements through the Financial Aid office too, creating online images to promote the office and its activities.

Work: I've worked fulltime at Smith Farm Supply since Fall 2016. While working there, I've also been fortunate enough to work with Comfort Farms, a nonprofit that rehabilitates veterans. Comfort Farms and Smith Farm Supply work together to make our community a better place for veterans who are trying to return to everyday life. When I started at Smith Farm Supply, I was in charge of taking orders, counting inventory and helping customers. In 2019, I became manager, and I now work with vendors to get the best prices for my customers. I make schedules for my employees who are all enrolled at Georgia College. I also get to make our marketing budget and determine how it's used. I'm in charge of making sure that customers are pleased with their service at Smith Farm Supply.

Working a full-time job in college: I worked to not have great sums of student debt. Every semester, I apply for scholarships, then pay some of the tuition out-of-pocket and use student loans for what I couldn't cover. One of the advantages of working during college is applying my class experience to my work life, and that makes our business better.

Dealing with the pandemic: COVID was unprecedented territory for businesses to come up with a plan of action. It was important to keep our customers and ourselves safe, but also keep our business running. We were essential to people in the community, especially farmers. B2B sales were heavily affected because of the shipping times and availability. It taught us as a company to have an accurate count of inventory. In B2B sales, it's important to create a relationship with businesses, communicate with your customers and be as transparent as possible. If you're straight forward with customers and other businesses, they're more willing to understand if something falls through or a vendor is no longer able to accommodate us. Due to proper communication with vendors and customers, we were able to have very successful spring, summer and fall seasons. Our particular store broke previous records.

Senior capstone: Since I want to stay on with Smith Farm Supply after I graduate, I decided to do my senior capstone project on the company. I did a situational analysis to find out what improvements the company could make. The situational analysis showed the company needs a larger marketing budget, and this budget needs to be pre-determined for the correct tools. It's my plan to follow through with making these things happen, after I graduate. I am very blessed to be in the position to be able to ask my professors questions that'll help me as I transition into my career.

Favorite class & professor: My favorite class in college was Message Creation. It taught me the ins and outs of advertisements, which helped me at Smith's Farm Supply. My favorite teacher has been Amanda Respass, because of her diligence to her students. She is understanding of our time. She is also the most personable teacher I've had at Georgia College. She is willing to admit when she makes mistakes and doesn't make you feel inferior. I have truly never had another

professor that'll get to know their students like she has.

Most impactful moment: I had the most fun producing a film for class called, "No Man's Land." I helped create this film in Multimedia Storytelling class. It was a lot of work, but it was so much fun. We were able to write a script and see our vision come to life. I worked with awesome people who made it enjoyable. I was in charge of public relations for the film, and I was able to get the most views on the video in that particular class, because of all the advertisements and promotions on social media.



Scroggs

Miss the most: When I was younger, I wasn't really sure if college was in the cards for me. But I pursued it to benefit my future. I think college surprised me, because I had a lot of support from teachers and other classmates. It truly is a community in college. I think I will miss the conversations with like-minded students, as well as students from different backgrounds, because it's interesting to see their thought processes as well. College gives us the opportunity to get to know people and cross paths with people that we would have never had the opportunity to meet.

How changed during college: The thing that has changed the most in my time at college is my confidence in school and with people. I struggled with dyslexia, and I've always been a little self-conscious when it comes to school because of this disability. I've grown to be more confident, because I've been able to overcome my disability. I've grown to love talking in front of people without fear of messing up or being judged based on my shortcomings.

Advice to incoming students: When I was a freshman, I was blindsided by college, because it's a lot more work than you're expecting. It's important to make sure you're able to effectively manage your time, because classes are more advanced than high school. It's important to be easy on yourself. It's okay to change your major, and it's okay to make a bad grade. It's important not to put so much pressure on yourself because, when you do that, you may not be truly enjoying your classes.

Key to success in college: In order to be successful, you need to have a clear line of communication with your professors. They're here to help you and sometimes you may need a little extra push. If you're able to speak up about an issue, they can make things clear or provide extra materials to help you gain a better understanding of the topic.

How GC prepared him: I plan to work in marketing for my current company Smith

Farm Supply. GC prepared me for this goal by allowing me to access many classes that helped me understand marketing, advertisement and crisis situations. I loved taking these classes while actively working for this company, because it allowed me to have hands-on experience with the material and allowed me to test out the theories we discussed in class. I'll be living in Milledgeville after college, so I can't wait to see how I can help benefit this community and future bobcats throughout my time here.

News Stories Posted Monday April 19, 2021



Class of 2021: Management Information Systems major finds purpose through community outreach

[Information Systems & Computer Science, Department of](#): Monday April 19, 2021

When Dean Crawford was about to graduate high school, he knew what he wanted to major in. Crawford recalls that he wanted to go into finance after graduating from college.

"That's what my older brother did at UGA, and it worked out for him so I figured I would do it as well, " he said.

There was one problem, Georgia College doesn't offer a major in finance. Crawford quickly had to figure out an alternative.

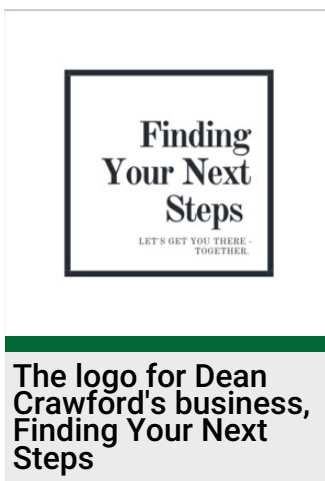
"Somebody at the college told me about MIS (Management Information Systems) being a field of study that integrated both business and technology, giving you a comprehensive view of how organizations and corporations work from a variety of different angles. I had an interest in both business and tech, so I figured that MIS was going to my best option for what I was going to study throughout college," said Crawford.

Since then, Crawford hasn't looked back.

"One of the cool things about MIS is that it makes you the perfect medium between the business- focused side of an organization and the information technology and information systems side. It really puts you in a position to have the unique acumen to effectively communicate with different areas of a business in their own style, language, and terminology – no other course of study prepares you to really do that. MIS is the only major that integrates business management, economics, corporate finance, accounting, marketing, supply chain, and logistics into the curriculum for a single major. It really is a great field to give you a competitive and comprehensive range of knowledge and skillsets," he said.



Dean Crawford



And Crawford took those skills and ran with them. Throughout his time at Georgia College, the graduating senior was able to participate in four different internships with companies such as KPMG and UPS Capital by working with many different areas that ranged from refugee students to developing a real time peer-to-peer mobile delivery application in under 48 hours. One of the things Crawford noticed throughout the years though was the difficulty students from smaller institutions had when it came to the job market. This led the MIS major to create Finding Your Next Steps.

"I've learned a lot throughout all of my internships and experiences. I've worked alongside students at bigger 'target' schools, and I've even been in the same spaces as students at Ivy Leagues," said Crawford. "If anything, I've learned that Georgia College does have students of similar caliber and potential, we just have to do certain things a little differently. That actually led me to start my own business, Finding Your Next Steps, this past school year. I provide career prep, interview, and LinkedIn coaching for college students."

Crawford's faith plays an important part in his life which has led him to find ways to give back to the local community such as Horse Dreams Youth Ranch and Young Life.

"My freshman year I went to a volunteer fair that was held by the GC Give Center because I was looking for ways to get involved in the greater Milledgeville community. I made sure to go to every booth, included the booth for "Horse

Dreams Youth Ranch", which was something that seemed completely foreign to me at the time. I picked up a brochure, and I did not end up looking at the brochure again until the first semester of my sophomore year. I had never been around horses or any ranches, but one day I decided to go, and the rest was history. I kept going back because of the atmosphere of the ranch. It's only 5 or so minutes away from campus, and you can't see it from the road. But once you drive down the dirt road you get to sort of a magical place – 47 acres of stunning land on a ranch that is marked by horses, ponies, ponds, and green pastures," he said.

What Crawford didn't know is how important the ranch would become. In September 2019, he shattered his femur after hitting a concrete block sticking up out of the ground during a fundraising game. Crawford went into emergency surgery and had a titanium rod inserted through the right femur bone from the hip to the knee. Since he couldn't go back to his home in Atlanta or his residence in Milledgeville, Horse Dreams Youth Ranch took him in.

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I love people and being able to acknowledge the unique strengths that each individual has.

- Dean Crawford

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"Because of the relationship I had with Paula and Max, the owners of the ranch, I knew that I would be able to stay with them. They both came down to Macon to pick me up from the hospital, and for the next seven days they took care of me as if I was part of their family. They made me every meal, and they got me every supply I needed, he said."

Crawford's motivation for overcoming the accident was the GC community and the overwhelming amount of love and support from friends, family, and people across the university. Thanks to community support, Crawford was able to finish the trying semester with straight A's. Now the graduating senior is looking forward to his next challenge. In the summer, Crawford will be working in Yellowstone National Park through an organization called, A Christian Ministry in the National Parks before starting as an associate consultant for Slalom Consulting in September. Yet, Crawford dreams of owning his own ranch one day.

"I love people and being able to acknowledge the unique strengths that each individual has," he said. "I think it'd be my dream to own a ranch one day, where I would host retreats for both team coaching, marriage counseling, and also provide a space for Christian ministry and outreach organizations to use as well."

News Stories Posted Tuesday April 20, 2021



Class of 2021: Volleyball standout to pursue medical school

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Tuesday April 20, 2021

Senior Libby Bochniak knew she wanted to play volleyball at the collegiate level. When it came time to start visiting colleges, she decided to take a closer look at Georgia College.

"My family had a house on Lake Sinclair, so I'd been here a lot over the years," she said. "I'd just never seen campus or gone into the heart of Milledgeville."

After talking with the coach, meeting the players and visiting campus, she knew she'd found her home.

"The team and atmosphere that our coach created allowed us to be very supportive of each other," she said.

Off the volleyball court, Bochniak chose to major in biology since she'd always had a love of science.



Libby Bochniak

"I feel like academics is in athletics have the same atmosphere—that same community-based kind of closeness," she said.

"One of the big reasons I picked here was the smaller class sizes and the one-on-one time you get with your faculty—not the teaching assistant or a supplemental instructor— but the actual professor," she said.

In the biology department, she took classes with the department chair, collaborated with fellow students and made personal connections with each faculty member.

"I really feel like I know all my professors and wouldn't hesitate to reach out to any of them," said Bochniak.

In fact, she did reach out to several of them for letters of recommendation as she made her decision to pursue medical school after graduation, but one professor really stood out as she journeyed through her undergraduate degree.

"Dr. Christopher Burt has been instrumental in helping me decide that I wanted to go to med school," she said. "He helped me reach a standard that I didn't know that I could reach, and he also wrote me my letter of recommendation for medical school."



Libby Bochniak

The biology lecturer worked closely with Bochniak as she weighed her career options and guided her through the next steps for her career.

"Libby is an exceptional student that excels in athletics and academics. Her competitive nature and incredible work ethic serves as a model for student success on Georgia College's campus," Burt said. "As an alumnus of Georgia College, I am proud to call Libby a Bobcat."

Bochniak will attend Lincoln Memorial in Tennessee to pursue a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO).

"Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine is basically the same thing as an MD. You go

through the same tests and the same licensing, but it's the way of medicine that's different," she said. "It's more focused on healing instead of treating, and it's the philosophy behind the treatment that drew me towards it."



Bochniak works in the Learning Center.

She has a big heart to help others, as shown through her work as a tutor in the Learning Center, and the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic only solidified that she made the right choice to go into medicine.

"I've realized that there is a need for doctors, so this would be a very good time to go into medicine," she said. "We need

good medical professionals to help people believe in science, believe in medicine and trust their doctors."

As she wraps up her time at Georgia College as one of the valedictorians for this graduating class with a perfect 4.0, she gives some great advice to other students.

"Learn how to balance your time," she said. "I think that's the biggest advice I can offer is learning how to do that and taking responsibility for your own work."

News Stories Posted Thursday April 22, 2021



Class of 2021: International student earns dual degrees in physics and engineering from Georgia College and Georgia Tech

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Thursday April 22, 2021

As a youth from Lahore, Pakistan, senior Nash Sultan originally looked at universities in the Atlanta area where his uncle lived. Then, he saw photos of Georgia College's "beautiful" campus and learned of its "great scholarships" for international students.

“

... when I started the physics program at GC, I learned it was just what I was looking for.

- Nash Sultan

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Sultan applied for the dual-degree program that provides a 3-year physics degree

from Georgia College, which he'll receive in May, and an engineering degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology that he's on track to also get in Spring 2021.

"Initially, I wanted to study engineering, because I wanted to understand the phenomena behind different everyday objects and processes. However, when I started the physics program at GC," he said, "I learned it was just what I was looking for."

Sophomore year, Sultan got involved with Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge's "sputtering system" research to create thin film depositions of nano meters thickness. Once there, Sultan became further interested in solid state physics and Mahabaduge's renewable energy projects.



Nash Sultan, 2nd from left, with Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge and fellow students at one of Georgia College's solar powered golf carts.

One project was outfitting various campus golf carts with solar panels. Fascinating ventures like this is why Sultan lists Mahabaduge as his favorite professor—even though he never had a class with him.

"I just really appreciate how he wants to enable his students to follow their passion, even outside class, and succeed," he said.

Sultan was one of two students who wrote the proposal to

continue solar-powered golf cart research, and he helped add two more to the fleet. After getting money from MURACE's summer program fund, he helped Mahabaduge's research group purchase necessary parts and install them on golf carts. An honors student at Georgia College, Sultan was also part of a faculty/student REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) in 2017 with Mahabaduge at the Materials Research Science and Engineering Center at the University of Nebraska. This opportunity was fully funded by the National Science Foundation. Soon after this unique experience conducting research side-by-side with his research mentor, Nash obtained \$15,400 from Georgia College's Student Technology Fee Grant for instruments to set up a Magneto Optical Kerr Effect measurement system on campus.



Sultan, right, looks over the shoulder of a classmate, as they install a solar panel.

Sultan misses the Georgia College campus and small-town experience. He always enjoyed events like Midnight Breakfast, getting free Chick-Fil-As and the annual International Dinner. It was great meeting students and making new friends from all over the world.

His advice to incoming first-year students is to “explore all the opportunities at your disposal” at Georgia College. There are various research groups and other campus organizations that help students make friends, gain experience and broaden perspectives. It’s important “to have a good balance of academics and social life in college,” he said.

In his spare time, Sultan does photography. He ran a professional photography business in Pakistan. It’s more of a hobby now, but he still does weddings or graduation photos for friends. It was difficult to adjust, when COVID-19 first occurred. Although Sultan missed interacting with faculty and students last spring, he said safety measures like online classes, masks and social distancing have become the “new norm.”

Like it did in so many areas of life, coronavirus disrupted the job market for physics and engineering majors, Sultan said. He spoke with one recruiter who said he wasn’t sure how many new hires they’d need in the coming year due to the pandemic. But Sultan hopes things will soon return to normal.

Currently, he's working part time with a solar energy company in Atlanta. He hopes to go full time there after graduating from Ga Tech and stay in the renewable energy industry long term.

“

For any STEM-degree industry, hands-on experience is very important when finding a job. I feel that different hands-on research labs in Georgia College's Physics Department helped me gain a lot of experience and made me a competitive candidate in any applicant pool.

- Sultan

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News Stories Posted Friday April 23, 2021



Class of 2021: History major gains appreciation for how much is yet to know

[History & Geography, Department of](#) : Friday April 23, 2021



Juniper Guthrie

Many people think history's boring, something found in dusty old books.

But Juniper Guthrie can tell you that's not true.

History is alive and a part of everyday life. After four years of study and being on the cusp of earning dual degrees in history and liberal studies with minors in women and gender studies, French and museum studies—the only thing Guthrie knows for sure is there is so much more to learn.

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Academically, I've learned things are not as simple as I thought they were.

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“Academically, I’ve learned things are not as simple as I thought they were,” Guthrie said. “In my first history class, I thought I already knew world history. Then, I realized I didn’t know as much about this as I thought.”

When Guthrie crosses the commencement stage next month and celebrates at Lavender Graduation—where students of the LGBTQ+ community are affirmed and recognized by chosen names and pronouns—they’ll reflect on how lucky they were to come to Georgia College and how much they’ll miss being here.

“We just have such an incredibly amazing history department,” Guthrie said. “I’m just really lucky I ended up here, because the faculty support I’ve received there and in the museum studies department is amazing.”

“There are so many hyper-specific fields that I had no idea were there, and there’s so much more history to learn,” they said. “There’s so much out there, and it’s all absolutely fascinating.”

When touring Georgia College as a prospective student and seeing the Old Governor’s Mansion decked out for Christmas, Guthrie thought, “This is a place where history is clearly valued.”

They dived right in as a student, taking advantage of every opportunity to research, write and share history. Guthrie wrote a paper on the 50th anniversary of an honors program at Georgia College. They worked a summer internship at the Southeastern Museum Conference in Atlanta, helping with organization and promotional efforts. And, they became a docent at Andalusia, the home of famed alumna and author Flannery O’Connor.

“

Being able to share with people what history actually is and why it’s important and relevant to us today—that’s what really gets me excited.

- Guthrie

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It’s in this position—giving public tours the past three years, selling items in the gift shop and cataloging historical items into the archival collection—that Guthrie found their true love. They now want to work at a small museum and eventually get their master’s degree in history.

“I just fell in love with it. This is what I want to do,” Guthrie said. “It’s just really amazing being able to literally hold a part of history.”

“Museums are about public history, about taking what you know and sharing it with people,” they said. “I think a lot of people have a misconception of history as something that’s boring and dusty and doesn’t change. Being able to share with people what history actually is and why it’s important and relevant to us today—that’s what really gets me excited.”



Guthrie on the front porch at Andalusia.

History can help people understand why things are the way they are in society. Seeing patterns in history can help solve today’s problems and give people a greater understanding of the world, Guthrie said. Studying history has also helped them see things in context and “not just take ideas for granted.”

These skills have come in handy while writing their senior thesis paper. Guthrie’s topic focuses on Russian women and the practice of telling folklore to transmit cultural ideals. Although the theme has been studied before, Guthrie believes they’re the first to show “how male academics have taken women’s stories and used them to facilitate a patriarchal narrative that diminishes the female role in society.”

It’s a culmination of everything Guthrie’s learned at Georgia College. They point to

Dr. Stephanie Opperman and Dr. Mark Huddle as their favorite educators. Guthrie said Opperman gives a “mind-blowing” oral history class, and Huddle “destroys the conventional narrative of the civil rights movement.”

Their advice to incoming students is simple: Communication is key to success. As an honors student and secretary of Pride Alliance, Guthrie keeps busy. Communicating with professors has been paramount in accomplishing their goals.

“I would say definitely do everything that interests you,” they said. “This is the time for exploration and figuring out what you want to do.”

“

The best things can happen when you are not expecting them to. So, if it's interesting to you, go for it. Maybe it'll turn out amazing.

- Guthrie

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News Stories Posted Monday April 26, 2021



Graduate students recognized for outstanding work

[The Graduate School](#) : Monday April 26, 2021

The Graduate School at Georgia College recognizes students in programs across the university each spring semester in several ways. They are celebrated for their contribution both in the classroom through their research as well as their work as graduate assistants.

Six students recently received the Outstanding Graduate Assistant Award. In its third year, the award is designed to recognize the contributions graduate assistants provide in supportive roles to students, faculty, staff and the university as a whole while pursuing graduate studies.

"Graduate Assistants are vital in supporting and promoting the institution, whether they are teaching assistants, tutors or supporting faculty and staff in their work and/or research," said Dr. Holley Roberts, interim associate provost of academic affairs and director of the Graduate School. "Graduate assistants bring knowledge, skills and experience with them but are able to further develop through their roles as graduate assistants."

This year's winners are:

- Taylor Chapman is pursuing a Master of Science in Biology and worked in the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. She collaborated with Dr. Al Mead on a manuscript accepted by the Journal of Environmental Quality. She's also worked on a competitive grant to US Egg and Poultry, which made it to the last round of review, and serves as a science tutor at Georgia Military College.



Taylor Chapman



Madisyn Coty

- Madisyn Coty is working toward a Master of Accountancy and served as an assistant in the Department of Accounting. She helped coordinate Constitution Week events this year, which included professors from across the country. Coty also provided support in organizing a regional conference and worked as a moderator in key sections of the conference.

- Cheng Lam Ku worked in the Department of English and is pursuing a Master of Arts in English. During the COVID-19 spring 2020 shutdown, she went back to her home of Macau, China. Ku went to great lengths to get back to Milledgeville and finish what she had started: Introducing a group of Georgia College students to the fundamentals of Chinese language and culture. She taught courses synchronously online from Macau, which meant teaching in the middle of the night, due to the time difference.



Cheng Lam Ku

- Samuel Mullis has worked for the Department of Management, Marketing and Logistics. He's pursuing a Master of Accountancy. Working with several faculty members, he became a coauthor for a conference paper that involved in-depth research into the history of Artisan Vendors and Brand Communities. This research won best paper in the "Branding, Research and Strategy" track at the Marketing Management Association Conference. His research has also contributed to professors having four journal articles under review this semester and five conference presentations.



Samuel Mullis

- Denechia Powell worked in the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects and is pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. Her work has been essential in helping the Andalusia Institute to grow as a public arts and humanities institute for central Georgia. She partnered with a dean, a department chair, the Deal Center executive director, an associate provost, a

major donor and a gifts officer to produce a powerful statement of strategy and effectiveness in the crafting of the Institute mission, vision, values and goals statement.



Denechia Powell

- Catherine Woodall has worked in the Center for Health and Social Issues and is pursuing a Master of Science in Health & Human Performance-Health Promotion. She was integral in the promotion and implementation of community stakeholder needs assessments, chronic disease



Catherine Woodall

health education programs and a flu vaccination and diabetes screening clinic. As part of her work, she became certified as a CDC Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) Lifestyle Coach.

These graduate assistants were nominated by faculty, staff and administrators. The award winners received \$200 cash from the Georgia College Foundation, a framed certificate and a Georgia College lapel pin.

“Graduate assistants are vital to the success of many of our academic programs and support areas and their efforts should be celebrated,” said Roberts.

“Celebrating graduate students also gives us the opportunity to shine a light on the quality of our graduate students and the impact they make at Georgia College. ”

The Graduate School also held the fourth Annual Graduate Research Poster Exhibit & Competition—an opportunity for graduate students to showcase their research endeavors to the campus community. This year’s event was a virtual display of posters showcased through the Ina Dillard Russell Library, Knowledge Box.

Twenty-three students submitted research for the competition.

The winners are:

- **First Place:** Taylor Chapman (Master of Science in Biology) for research titled “The Effect of an Acidified-Gypsum Mixture on Broiler Litter Urease-Producing Bacteria and Nitrogen Mineralization.”
- **Second Place:** Margaret Josiah (Doctor of Nursing Practice) for her poster “The Effect of Lifestyle Modification Educational Intervention on Increasing Knowledge of Hypertension Management among African American Adults.”
- **Third Place:** Madeline Olliff (Master of Science in Biology) for her research on “Soil Macroinvertebrate Responses to Wildfires in the Blue Ridge Mountains, USA.”
- **Honorable Mention:** Tara Mosher (Doctor of Nursing Practice) for her work titled “Improving Self-Confidence of Nursing Students Through Implementation of a Workplace Violence Virtual Simulation.”



Margaret Josiah



Tara Mosher

Taking the spike out of COVID-19: Original coronavirus research being conducted at Georgia College

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Tuesday April 27, 2021

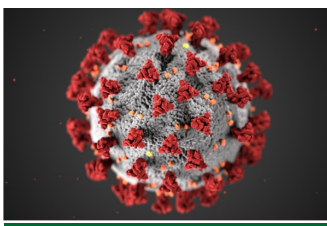


Image courtesy of
CDC

Its triangular spikes are what make coronavirus such a formidable foe.

But they could also be its Achilles' heel.

Georgia College Assistant Professor of Chemistry Dr. David Zoetewey and three students are working to expose this weakness and prevent the virus' spear-like mechanism from harpooning into human cells.

This research could someday result in a medicine that prevents coronavirus from attaching.

If we can do something that disrupts how the spike protein works, then we can prevent the virus from becoming infectious.

- Dr. David Zoetewey

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“Spike proteins are very important for the virus and its ability to cause infection,” Zoetewey said. “Without the spike protein, there is no viral infection. If we can do something that disrupts how the spike protein works, then we can prevent the virus from becoming infectious.”

Scientists all over the world are working on COVID-19—and the spike protein is just one small piece. Every little bit contributes to our understanding of how the virus works, however, and every step is a step in the right direction.

It’s important to not only eradicate coronavirus—but also be ready for the next pandemic.

“What made COVID-19 so bad was how fast it spreads, and that’s really made it the perfect storm,” Zoetewey said.

“It may not be a coronavirus next time. It may be a strain of the flu. It may be something else that we don’t even know of yet,” he said, “The fact we had SARS and then MERS and now COVID-19—and they’re all coronaviruses from the same family—that tells us coronaviruses have high potential to do this again.”

All viruses hijack cells. But the coronavirus known as COVID-19 is particularly cunning, because its pegs act as spears connecting it to other cells. These spikes are proteins, and proteins are built with a sequence of amino acids that dictate their particular shape and movement.

The coronavirus spikes remain folded, until a “a target is recognized,” Zoetewey said. Then, one pops out “like a jackknife” to harpoon into a victim cell—effectively taking command. The harpoon is what enables the two cell membranes to fuse together.

“Obviously, this is a really big complicated protein,” Zoetewey said. “The function of the spike protein is to attach to the cell it’s going to be infecting. The contents of the virus get dumped inside. And, so now you have this RNA that goes inside the cell, and the RNA contains the instructions to make new viruses and cause infection. That’s its only purpose.”

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I’d say all viruses that use this mechanism are devious,” he said. “We kind of

assign them Machiavellian traits, but it's just a protein that doesn't know any better. It's doing its job. But its job has a bad effect on us.

- Zoetewey

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Dr. David Zoetewey works to isolate fragments of the spike protein with freshman Gabe Allred.

Scientists know what the spike protein looks like before and after the harpoon effect. But they can only speculate on what occurs in between.

Proteins are so small that even the wavelength of invisible light is much bigger, Zoetewey said. A researcher in China was able to determine the structure of a small piece of the spike protein—called a “coiled-coil”—in 2020 by using X-ray crystallography. From that, Zoetewey noticed he’d seen this kind of coiled-coil before as a doctorate student at the University of Colorado in the early 2000s.

At that time, another outbreak had occurred: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). It had a higher fatality rate than COVID-19 but was quickly contained and died out. Zoetewey’s lab collaborated with an expert in coronaviruses, who identified the coils as a “critical piece” of the spike protein.

When COVID-19 spread globally in early 2020, Zoetewey recalled the coiled-coil as

“the linchpin to the coronavirus’ infectious mechanism.” He realized his students could work on this small piece of the puzzle and discover how spikes unfold and thrust into cells.

“

I always knew it was a dangerous virus, but it wasn’t until I joined Dr. Zoetewey’s group that I learned what makes it dangerous, and how exactly it spreads from cell to cell and replicates. This was a very fascinating insight to learn about a very prominent problem.

- Gabe Allred

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Freshman chemistry major Gabe Allred of Eatonton said he was amazed to be doing undergraduate research his first year in college. Even more remarkable, he's doing research on a virus that’s currently challenging the entire world population.

“I always knew it was a dangerous virus,” Allred said, “but it wasn’t until I joined Dr. Zoetewey’s group that I learned what makes it dangerous, and how exactly it spreads from cell to cell and replicates. This was a very fascinating insight to learn about a very prominent problem.”

As a first-year student, it’s Allred’s job to learn the fundamentals of research and procedures of the coronavirus project. In future years, he’ll be stepping into a leading role. But, for now, he shadows two upperclassmen in the lab to learn all he can.

One is sophomore chemistry major Caylee Durden of Statesboro. She chose Georgia College for its research opportunities. Her role is to grow and separate the spike protein.

“Although I knew research was available to undergraduates,” Durden said, “I didn’t know it’d be something this exciting and relevant to today’s world, which I think makes it even more interesting and meaningful to me.”

Students are not working with the actual coronavirus—just little pieces of the spike protein created from a sequence of amino acids. Spike proteins are made from a chain of 1,300 amino acids. Zoetewey’s team is looking at about 100 of these, which make up two separate coiled-coil regions from the spike’s stem.

These amino acids are an instructional code given to bacterium, where the proteins can be grown in the lab.

Once Zoetewey’s team is able to grow these spike protein fragments in large

batches, students will separate them from the bacterium. This is Durden's job. She mixes a "nickel solution" inside test tubes that look aqua in color. Their specific protein attaches to nickel. When another chemical is added, everything washes away except the protein.

The group has worked all semester to set up this isolation protocol and catalogue the steps. The next phase would involve a Nuclear Magnetic Resonance machine (NMR), which Zoetewey hopes to purchase with a collaborative grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The machine will take pictures of the spike protein in its native state and provide "a living picture" of its movement and function.



Dr. Zoetewey

Each NMR picture looks like a "spectrum of dots"—basically individual atoms that tell researchers how proteins interact with one another and create movement.

It's "a long game of connect-the-dots," Zoetewey said. With help from a colleague at the University of Oklahoma, who has a stronger NMR, he hopes to learn how the spike unfolds and harpoons.

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The ultimate outcome is way down the line.

- Zoetewey

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"The ultimate outcome is way down the line," Zoetewey said. "By looking at the way all these atoms interact with each other, we can potentially design a molecule that would prevent the harpoon interaction from taking place."

"If we keep it from attaching, the coronavirus would just sit there and eventually come back off," he said. "It wouldn't be able to do anything. The RNA would never get inside the human cell. It'd probably circulate for a while until it's recognized by your defenses as a foreign invader and your body would just clear it out."

News Stories Posted Wednesday April 28, 2021



Georgia College celebrates milestone accomplishments from strategic plan

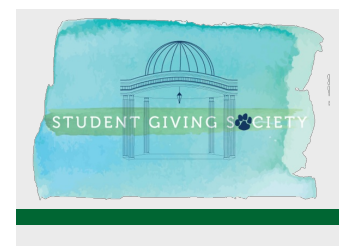
[General Institution](#) : Wednesday April 28, 2021

In 2016, Georgia College enacted a new, bold strategic plan. The goals guide the university on its continued path to preeminence.

From 2019-20, the university was able to make major strides in a number of key areas. All that despite the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Noteworthy accomplishments include, but aren't limited to:

- Hiring an admissions recruiter specifically for African American students
- A 15 percent increase in student participation in high-impact practices as part of GC Journeys



- An increase in student giving from 1 percent in 2015 to 32 percent in 2019
- More than 400 faculty and staff participating in 26 workshops offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning.

The [university also achieved its highest 4-year graduation rate \(51.2 percent\)](#), and [The Graduate School noted record enrollment](#).

“One of the main strengths of our plan is knowing that units do not work independently or in silos on particular goals,” said Dr. Chavonda Mills, chair of the Department of Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy. “We recognize that there are multiple units across campus working collaboratively toward meeting the goals. That’s a strength of not only our plan but a strength of the culture of Georgia College— that we’re able to share information or knowledge across departments and do it well.”



Drs. Holley Roberts (left) and Chavonda Mills (right).

Mills and Dr. Holley Roberts, interim associate provost and director of The Graduate School, currently serve as co-chairs of the steering committee. They work to guide committees and continue to monitor the completion of goals, as well as help set new ones.

“Something that’s really important is that our strategic plan is a living, breathing document,” said Roberts. “We’re

accomplishing things on the plan, and then we’re also adding new action items to the plan.”

“It doesn’t just sit on a shelf, and we check back in at the end of five years,” she added. “We check continuously on everything in the plan and move on to new goals, once others are accomplished.”

The continued forward motion of the plan is important. Many things have changed since 2015 when the planning process first began.

“Our university has evolved. Higher education has evolved over that time,” said Mills. “If we did not view the plan as a fluid, living document, we would be behind in the trends instead of responding to them in real-time.”

“There were some initiatives that weren’t under consideration in 2015,” Mills

added. "The example most relevant to my area is the Integrated Science Complex. There's no mention of this capital project in the plan. However, construction of the state-of-the-art science complex contributes in some capacity to all six strategic plan goals."

As much as changing trends and campus needs impacted the goals and direction of the university, the COVID-19 pandemic brought even more unprecedented challenges and led to an extension of the current strategic plan.

"This whole academic year, we were supposed to be gearing up and seeking guidance to move into a new strategic plan in the fall," said Roberts, "But, because of COVID-19, we postponed it for a year. Now that President Dorman has announced he is stepping away, we're extending it for another year, so we will be in our current strategic plan for one more year."

The extension of the current plan hasn't stopped the momentum. New goals continue to be added and now we can go back and assess some of the previous goals we've put in place to see if any changes are needed Roberts said.

Before Mills and Roberts led the committee, Dr. Mark Pelton, associate vice president for strategic initiatives, was at the helm.

He worked with colleagues across the university to identify the 14 subcommittees, which represent most areas of the university. From 2015-2017, Pelton worked with Chris Ferland, associate vice president of institutional research and effectiveness, as co-facilitators of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. They worked alongside co-chairs Dale Young and Andy Lewter. In 2017, Pelton became the chair and served as chair or co-chair until mid-2020.

"While I'm very proud of the progress that strategic plan champions have made in accomplishing dozens of important action items—and especially the development of the GC Journeys program—I'm most



Integrated Science Complex ground breaking in Feb. 2020.



Dr. Mark Pelton

proud that the Steering Committee created a strategic plan that is a living document which evolves from year to year,” said Pelton. “Progress toward action item accomplishments is measured on an annual basis, and changes and additions to action items are annually recommended to Executive Cabinet.”

“

University strategic plans should keep students as the primary focus. We’ve been very intentional about that, and it’s reflected in the successes that we’ve reported on.

- Dr. Chavonda Mills

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“As a result of the hard work of the Steering Committee and numerous faculty, staff and students, for the first time in its 132-year history, Georgia College has a strategic plan that is fully implemented, regularly assessed and modified as needed,” Pelton added.

And although there’s much to celebrate, administrators say the work isn’t over. With a “what’s next” attitude, leaders will continue to work to ensure Georgia College provides students an exceptional education.

“Our plan is student-centered, and the goals ultimately are to the benefit of our students,” said Mills. “That is how it should be. University strategic plans should keep students as the primary focus. We’ve been very intentional about that, and it’s reflected in the successes that we’ve reported on.”