

Front Page News Story Archive

July 2021



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News Stories Posted Thursday July 1, 2021



Class of 2025: Miss Georgia College Early College looks to help others stay mentally strong

[Psychological Science, Department of](#) : Thursday July 1, 2021

Tabitha Lemmonds

What's your number one accomplishment at Georgia College Early College? I was Miss Georgia College Early College for the 2020-2021 school year.

What did it feel like to have this honor? I didn't expect to receive this title, so I was very surprised.

What appearances did you make at events as Miss Georgia College Early College? I was in the Homecoming Parade and crowning ceremony.

How long have you been involved with the Rotary Club? I joined the Rotary Club in 2020.

Why are you a member of the Rotary Club? I believe in its motto in how you should think about what you say. I also believe in the way the motto—"Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships?"—could also be applied to more than just speeches.

What did you enjoy most about Georgia College Early College? It helped me

advance my education. I'd already completed more than required high school credit, so the Early College program helped me out with that.

Why did you decide to attend Georgia College? My mom actually went to Georgia College, so that helped. Georgia College is also fairly close to where I live. I also enjoy the challenges here, because I tried another college, and it was too easy compared to Georgia College.

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The thought that one day I can help people is motivating to me. I love the idea that someone will become mentally healthier with my help.

- Tabitha Lemmonds



Tabitha Lemmonds as Miss Georgia College Early College 2020-2021.

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What is your major and why did you choose this field? I want to major in clinical psychology. I've always been interested in the way the brain works. It relates to me, as I have some mental illnesses that make my brain work differently than others, so that has always appealed to me.

What do you most look forward to at Georgia College? I look forward to living on campus, the course work and all the people I get to meet.

Which clubs or organizations would you like to belong to at Georgia College? I like anything creative. I love writing and drawing, so it would be nice to join a club with people who like what I like, as well.

How do you think belonging to them will help you grow? Being with people who are creative like I am will help me be a little more outgoing.

What are your plans once you graduate from Georgia College? I plan to go to medical school to eventually get a Ph.D. in psychology.

What career do you see yourself in? Being a psychiatrist would be interesting, but I would prefer to be a psychologist, as the focus is more on counseling than medicating patients.

Why do you want to do this? I want to help people who are like me with mental illnesses.

What inspires you and why? The thought that one day I can help people is the most motivating aspect to me. I love the idea that someone will become mentally healthier with my help.

News Stories Posted Friday July 2, 2021



Class of 2025: Psychology major wants disabled to embrace their uniqueness

[Psychological Science, Department of](#) : Friday July 2, 2021



A'leah Monk, new psychology major.

In high school, A'leah Monk of Warner Robins stayed in the background. She made good grades but had a hard time finding ways to get involved. Her illness made each day a struggle.

At Georgia College, however, she's hitting the ground running. School hasn't even started. Yet, Monk's already taken the initiative to start a new student organization for the disabled.

"In high school as a teenager, you just have a lot of identity issues, trying to figure out where you fit in. There wasn't really any place that I felt called to me. I was trying to figure out what I wanted and figure out my illness. But, in college," she said, "I feel like I can carve out a real niche for myself. I don't have to look

for a role. I can just be myself."

Monk has Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, which is characterized by soft joints and fatigue. Because of a gene mutation, her body doesn't produce collagen properly and this affects her organs, causing problems with mobility. Just walking to class can be painful.

Sometimes Monk thinks she's "not disabled enough." It can be difficult having an illness no one sees. Her arm's not in a sling. She's not in a wheelchair. So, friends don't always understand when she misses activities or tires easily.

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... in college, I feel like I can carve out a real niche for myself. I don't have to look for a role. I can just be myself.

- A'leah Monk

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Monk was attracted to Georgia College, because "it's one of the more accessible campuses" she'd seen. But she was disappointed to learn there weren't any organizations for students with mental and physical impediments. Finding support is important for all new students but especially for the disabled, who can become lonely and isolated. So, Monk took it upon herself to create a welcoming club for the disabled and abled alike.

She talked to Kendyl Lewis, an alumna who started Swipe Out Hunger at Georgia College. Lewis helped Monk through the process of starting a new group on campus. The organization's called "The Disability Unity & Awareness Club" (DUAC). It's for students to come together, learn about one another, support each other and celebrate differences. Monk also wants the club to be a venue for advocacy and education in the Milledgeville area.

"It's an opportunity to address any inaccessible or unequal opportunities and to make disabled voices heard," she said. "I think I can bring strong-willed optimism and an insistence for change to campus. I hope my perspective on our collective ability to make changes together will inspire others."

Another aspect about Georgia College that stood out to Monk was its "emphasis on community and leadership." She wants to develop her skills and push herself to take risks.

"I'm not exactly a multitasker," Monk said, "but I think college will help me with leadership skills and, since I'm not used to that kind of thing, I think I just need to dive in to get hands-on experience and just learn it as I go. I think that'll really help me to get out of my shell. I'm a person who always stayed in the comfort zone. So, college is a good time to burst out a bit."



A'leah with her mother at a recent orientation day at Georgia College.

Monk is a recipient of the Dean's Merit Scholarship from the university's President's Scholarship Competition. Winning this honor has encouraged Monk "to keep trying for bigger and better." She's majoring in psychology with a minor in anthropology, because she wants to know what makes people act the way they do.

She wants to study how groups work together, and she'd like to take part in building better communities. Monk envisions a future where diverse groups live in mutual understanding and respect.

She plans to start by building DUAC into an organization where all students are celebrated for who they are—disabled or not—and recognized for their abilities.

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I've never considered myself much of a leader, until I looked into Georgia College. It has helped me see how much potential I have to really do some good in the world, or at least in whatever immediate community I'm in. And the community here feels so warm and friendly. It feels like I belong.

- Monk

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News Stories Posted Tuesday July 6, 2021



Alumnus gained self-confidence to mentor others

[Alumni](#) : Tuesday July 6, 2021

Matt Mize, '06, '08, was from a small town where many of his peers grew up to be farmers or took over their family's business. As an introvert, he lacked confidence to be successful in college until he met Dr. Michael Digby—professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Government and Sociology, as well as assistant dean and interim dean for the College of Arts and Sciences at Georgia College.



Matt and Kati Mize at GC's campus.

“He just had a way of making classes not intimidating for this 19-year-old kid who wasn’t even sure college was right for him,” Matt said.

He met Digby a few weeks before the semester started, when he was visiting Georgia College one day and wandering in the government wing of the College of Arts and Sciences building.

“Dr. Digby introduced himself to me,” said Matt. “I told him I was here just looking at campus. I suppose I appeared lost. He asked if he could help me.”

Then, Digby became his advisor in the global science department. He thought having his advisor also serving as the department chair was nothing short of awesome.

“Dr. Digby had a really practical way of presenting topics,” Matt said. “He didn’t talk over your head. It was the comfort level and confidence Dr. Digby gave those who came in contact with him. He saw something in me that led him to present me with opportunities, whether it was an internship or leadership roles.”



Dr. Michael Digby (far left) and other Georgia College Political Science professors.

Matt majored in political science, because he wanted to go to law school. However, as he went through the program, he experienced burn-out.

"I remember having a conversation with Dr. Digby about going to law school, and told him 'I wasn't sure it was what I wanted to do,'" Matt said. "He talked about the option for me to stay and do a Master of Public Administration (MPA) and said that if I do an MPA, and still want to do law school, it's a good supplement to have."

During his first semester of pursuing his MPA, Matt was given an opportunity to be a graduate assistant for Admissions. Six months later, Georgia College offered him a full-time job.

"When I was 25, working in Admissions and finishing the Master of Public Administration program, Dr. Digby gave me the opportunity to teach an introduction to political science course," he said. "He just had a way of finding opportunities and inviting me to do something that stretched my confidence level, ultimately giving me more confidence in myself than I thought I would ever have."

Although he was a kid from a community where most don't go to college, getting a degree was an expectation for Matt because his parents believed in him.

His professors showed their support by inviting him to join different groups and

organizations, which also boosted his confidence.

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“I remember when the Dr. Michael Digby Scholarship was created. I was a young professional at that time. It was a no brainer for me to have the opportunity to support a cause in honor of somebody who made a big difference for me in terms of confidence and believing in myself.”

- Matt Mize

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As an employee at Georgia College, Matt was able to serve on various committees across campus, which provided him with a holistic view of how the university operates. One such organization was the Program Prioritization Committee, which provided him with insight on campus programs.

“There was value serving on this committee that evaluated all the university’s programs and majors,” said Matt. “The University System of Georgia had just come through a very difficult few years financially, and we were charged with which programs at Georgia College were most beneficial and cost effective. That was enlightening. We reviewed budgets and perceived the academic impact of every organization. That just solidified that I like to be in an organization that’s small and cares enough about its people and students.”

“Why wouldn’t I pay that forward? I think the biggest impression Dr. Digby left on me is that I can help other people gain confidence and progress in their career,” said Matt.

As the regional director of development for the University of Georgia (UGA), Matt and his team spend much time in the community working with potential and current donors—his favorite part of his profession. They also explain UGA’s mission, what it has to offer and why people should invest in the university.

“I get to engage with people who care about making a difference for students,” Matt said. “We meet with really interesting individuals who have done well in their lives and are open to having a conversation about how they can use their resources to impact younger people. It’s also getting to see people decide to invest in something that’s larger than themselves.”

Now, Matt will help articulate a need for the Dr. Mike Digby Scholarship at Georgia College, deciding how it can impact student lives. This scholarship means a lot to Matt, since he modeled himself after Digby and tried to copy Digby’s knack for making people feel special.

"At work, I've had an opportunity to mentor younger staff. That's been rewarding. And that goes back to people, like Dr. Digby, who took an interest in me, and the confidence he gave me," Matt said.

"I remember when the Dr. Michael Digby Scholarship was created," he said. "I was a young professional at that time. It was a no brainer for me to have the opportunity to support a cause in honor of somebody who made a big difference for me in terms of confidence and believing in myself."

Matt's wife, Kati, '07, received her master's degree in teaching at Georgia College. She also supports the scholarship, because of the lasting impact the university made on her.

"The thing I'm most fond about at Georgia College is its sense of community," she said. "It's a welcoming place, and I made lasting relationships not only with the professors in my program, but with friends who are now colleagues."

Along with annual contributions, Matt and Kati have gifted a portion of their life insurance to the Dr. Mike Digby Endowed Scholarship in political science. The scholarship honors Digby's contribution to academic excellence and his extraordinary leadership. Undergraduates enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, majoring in political science with a minimum 3.0 grade point average, and who aspire to have a career in public service can apply.

"Our financial gifts make us proud we can support students who may have been in a similar situation that we were in at Georgia College," said Matt. "It's for those students who haven't fully determined a career path, but can focus on opportunities that may come their way without the added stress of financial pressure."

"Our hope for the students who receive this scholarship is that they'll leave Georgia College with the confidence they've received from a great education," said Kati,



Kati and Matt Mize attending the Annual Alumni Awards Gala for the Terry College of Business at UGA, where he worked from 2016-2019.

“and that they will use their gifts and talents to positively impact the lives of others.”

To learn how you can leave a gift through your life insurance policy, contact Bob Preston at bob.preston@gcsu.edu.



Public health major helps address food disparities in Baldwin County

[Health & Human Performance, School of](#): Tuesday July 6, 2021

The rural Coopers community of Baldwin County sits outside the city limits of Milledgeville. Although it's only about seven miles on the southside of town, it's in a desert of its own.

A food desert that is.

Through her internship, senior Christina Taylor spent her summer mapping the access to food in the county and found some areas face little access to food, especially healthy food.



"My research is around physical food environments in Baldwin County and rural, underserved communities," she said. "In Baldwin County, we went around and mapped every establishment that sells food, regardless of if it's healthy or not healthy."

Working with Dr. Damian Francis in Georgia College's Center for Health and Social Issues, Taylor mapped more than 200 establishments from restaurants to

Christina Taylor

grocery stores and convenience stores, gas stations, pharmacies and even coffee shops.

She found the Coopers community only had access to one gas station—which sells mostly unhealthy foods—leaving the folks living there in a food desert.

“We're covering disparities and the limitations to access,” said Taylor. “A food desert has limited options, especially to healthy foods.”

“We're also looking at limitations to access like transportation,” she said. “If people can't drive and the stores don't sell healthy foods, then these people who live on the other side of the county have to go all the way to Walmart or to Piggly Wiggly on the south side to have access.”



Taylor works with Dr. Damian Francis.

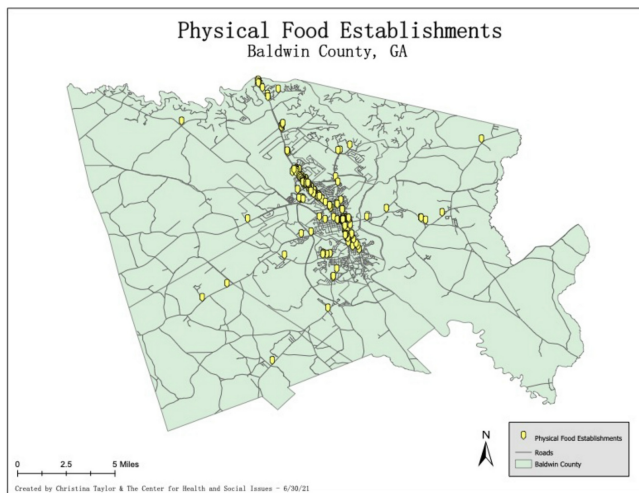
Her overall goal is to bring awareness by addressing food deserts and food swamps in rural communities, especially in central Georgia.

“A food swamp is an area that has an abundance of restaurants or fast food places,” she said. “It's mainly just an abundance of unhealthy food, so if it's unhealthy food, food deserts and food swamps present the same challenges with access to healthy food.”

Once she completes her work mapping the food locations, the findings will be shared with the county government to help create strategies to not only address issues in improving access but also to improve dietary health and the overall health of the community.

“Our research is also beneficial to gauge and attract larger corporations' investment in smaller, rural communities,” said Francis. “The resulting food environment maps are intended to identify sparse food access, which is valuable to companies like Walmart or Dollar General who have smaller ‘market’ stores that only carry the essentials and offer fresh produce and meats.”

“Access to these types of stores is vital for rural community members and policy changes at the county level can help to ensure that access to healthy foods is an option for all,” he added.



Map of locations

Originally a nursing major, Taylor stumbled into public health and fell in love with the fact that “you literally can do anything” with the major.

A random conversation about her interests led to this internship with Francis, which also opened the door for her to pursue a master’s degree.

“I’m attending Johns Hopkins in the fall for spatial analysis for public health,” she said, “so I’m

hoping that I can bring this research with me.” Using Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies— she will manage data and apply it geographically to see what’s happening with the data.

“Johns Hopkins is the only program that I found in the U.S. that specifically has a spatial analysis master’s degree from a public health perspective,” said Taylor.

This internship marks the last requirement for her undergraduate degree. She offers this advice to other students.

“This is cheesy, but take advantage of every opportunity you get,” said Taylor. “Dr. Francis offered me my internships because I expressed just a random interest in GIS. I wasn’t going to apply to Johns Hopkins until Dr. Francis offered me the internship, and now that’s where I’m going in the fall.”

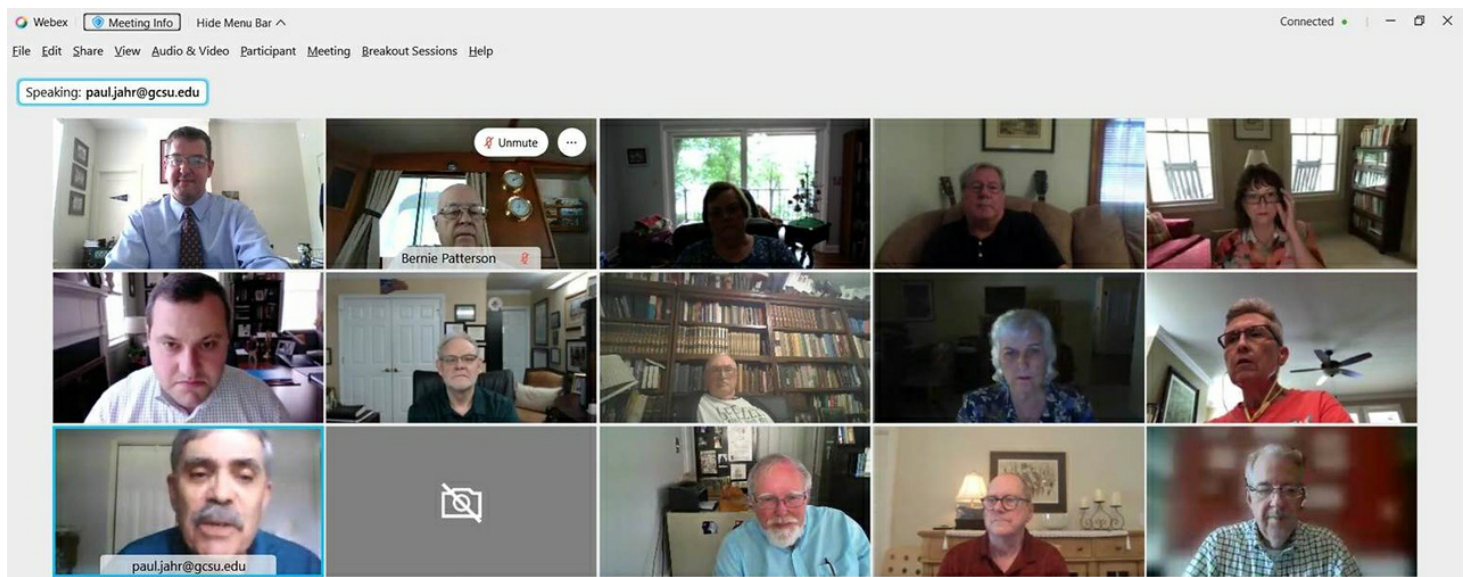
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“I do think the liberal arts focus of the college very much helps students figure out what they want to do because it is so broad and welcoming, you can do whatever you want.”

- Christina Taylor

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News Stories Posted Friday July 9, 2021



Georgia College Retiree Association's spring meeting broadens opportunities for retirees

General Institution : Friday July 9, 2021

Sixteen retired Georgia College faculty and staff members gathered virtually in June for the annual spring business meeting of the Georgia College Retiree Association (GCRA).

The association thanked Dr. Paul K. Jahr, outgoing chair as of July 1, 2021, and retired associate vice president for Student Affairs, for his leadership of the GCRA for the past three years.

GCRA was joined by Georgia College President, Dr. Steve Dorman, who provided an update on the past semester and some exciting future initiatives. He spoke on the planned Founders Park, and how it will link the history of Milledgeville with campus. Dorman was also awarded "honorary" status as a retiree after he steps away from his role as president of Georgia College later this year.



Dr. Paul K. Jahr, past chair, GCRA

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“I foresee the organization continuing to grow in numbers and ways that members engage with the university and students. Also, an increasing number of opportunities the organization provides for retirees to engage with one another, attendance at university-related events and developing comradery.”

- Dr. Paul K. Jahr

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Dr. Harold Mock, director of Leadership Programs, provided an overview of the Leadership Programs and their initiatives. He also detailed specific ways retirees can participate in upcoming programs.

New GCRA leadership was elected for the upcoming fiscal year. Dr. Howard C. Woodard, professor emeritus of management information systems, became the new chair. David Muschell, professor emeritus of the Department of English, serves as vice chair. Dr. Craig Turner, professor emeritus of mathematics, continued his role as secretary/treasurer.

Since being featured in the March 2018 issue of Georgia College's Alumni newsletter, eConnection, GCRA has established and developed its bylaws. It has also confirmed an emeriti faculty members list and conducted a membership interest inventory to identify potential programs and activities to offer. These include encouraging retirees to attend Georgia College events.

“Over the past two-plus years, we have gathered information for over 200 retirees,” said Jahr. “We have a process in place where Human Resources mentions our organization and shares information about us with individuals during their pre-retirement and final meetings. The retiree completes a brief questionnaire, then we seek to engage them to be a participant.”

Woodard recommends all Georgia College retirees respond to the association's request to receive announcements and communications.

There are many fun activities planned for GCRA retirees in the upcoming school year.

“The association provides opportunities to attend sporting events, plays, theater



Dr. Howard C.
Woodard, chair,
GCRA

events, musical events and tours of the campus,” Woodard said. “We plan to begin holding in-person events and activities starting in the fall, as possible.”

“As a former professor who loved the classroom experience, I can say belonging to the group gives us an opportunity to find out what GC students are doing,” said Muschell. “It also offers us a chance to engage with those students through attendance at events that display their intellect and talents.”

As he looks to the future, Muschell would also like to have a section of GCRA’s newsletter and Facebook presence devoted to “What have they been up to?” for retirees to share post-retirement accomplishments and experiences. He also envisions having a place to memorialize faculty and staff.

Jahr hopes the programs and services the association provides will expand to meet the needs and desires of the membership. Like Muschell, Jahr He sees good things happening with the association in coming years.

“I foresee the organization continuing to grow in numbers and ways that members engage with the university and students,” he said. “Also, an increasing number of opportunities the organization provides for retirees to engage with one another, attendance at university-related events and developing comradery.”

All Georgia College retirees are eligible to join the association. GCRA represents Georgia College retirees through the University System of Georgia Retiree Council (USGRC), the Georgia Association of Higher Education Retiree Organizations (GA-HERO) from public and private institutions and the Association of Retiree Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE), which is an international network of retiree organizations at colleges and universities.

If you would like more information about the [Georgia College Retiree Association](#), contact Dan Lavery at dan.lavery@gcsu.edu.



David Muschell, vice
chair, GCRA



Dr. Craig Turner,
secretary/treasurer,
GCRA



July's in-person alumni events promise long-awaited fellowship and fun

[Alumni](#) : Friday July 9, 2021

Georgia College is excited to announce three upcoming in-person events for July. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, these types of activities were put on hold. Now, the university encourages alumni, living in one of these regions, to participate.

- July 15: The Middle Georgia Alumni Chapter will host an Alumni Social at the Macon Bacon Game, beginning at 7 p.m. Tickets, located in the Bacon Box, are \$30 and include admission to the game, an all-you-can-eat buffet and a hat.
- July 18: The DMV (Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia) Alumni Chapter will host its first, in-person event—a Grill and Chill. Alumni who reside in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia are invited to attend this free event at Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., beginning at 11:30 a.m. Those who attend will also have a chance to meet University President Dr. Steve Dorman. Food and drinks will be

provided. Guests are encouraged to bring their own lawn chair and additional, non-alcoholic beverages. Alumni can take some swag home, as well.

[Register today.](#)

- July 22: The Communications Alumni Council will host Comedy Night at the Atlanta City Winery. The event begins at 6 p.m. Comedian Andrew George '12, will be the headliner for the evening. A plated dinner will be served, and alumni will enjoy an evening of laughter. The cost is \$30 for a single ticket and \$50 for a pair of tickets. [Register before July 16.](#)



Georgia College DMV alumni display stickers.

Another July event included the LGBTQ+ Alumni Council's virtual Drag Show Riot: Stonewall Commemoration held July 1. The event honored and highlighted the moment where the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement began. It was a fun-filled hour of music and dance, which also served as a fundraiser for the LGBTQ+ Alumni Council Scholarship. Guests were asked to donate \$25 or more towards the scholarship.

"All four events have the common goal of engaging alumni, and they each have a unique way of reaching it," said Tre' Johnson, assistant director of Awards, Collaborations and Reunions.

The LGBTQ+ Alumni Council honored those who launched the fight for their rights despite the abuse they received.

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“Engagement is an opportunity to be of service. Our alumni have a multitude of things that are important to them, and how they want to make the most of their time. Engaging with their alma mater gives them the opportunity to express those desires and allows the Alumni Association to inform them of ways to make those passions come to life.”

- Tre' Johnson

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"It is always a blessing to celebrate your heroes and have some fun doing it," said Johnson.

With sporting venues starting to open up more, the Middle Georgia Chapter is seizing the opportunity to connect with alumni over a game and team that Middle Georgians love.

The DMV Alumni Chapter plans to use outdoors and a relaxed setting to drive attendance. Also, with Dr. Dorman retiring in a few months, Georgia College DMV alumni will not want to miss the chance to say goodbye to him.

Comedy Night promises a fun time, as well.

"George and his colleagues will lend their talents to entertain us," said Johnson. "We all need a night of laughter, and with the beautiful setting of the Atlanta City Winery, I believe it is an evening we won't soon forget."

"Engagement is an opportunity to be of service," said Johnson. "Our alumni have a multitude of things that are important to them, and how they want to make the most of their time. Engaging with their alma mater gives them the opportunity to express those desires and allows the Alumni Association to inform them of ways to make those passions come to life."

Do you want to join or create an affinity group or chapter?[Inquire today.](#)



Adaptability is key when working with others

[Psychological Science, Department of](#) : Friday July 9, 2021

Taylor Wilder, '15, has always been fascinated with the human brain and how humans continue to evolve, which is why she majored in psychology. Her curiosity landed her [a feature](#) on the American Psychological Association's (APA) webpage and a career at ADP, LLC (Automatic Data Processing, Inc.). ADP is a global provider of cloud-based human capital management solutions, which unites human resources, payroll, talent, time, tax and benefits administration. It's also a leader in business outsourcing services, analytics and compliance expertise.

"I love learning about why we are the way we are, how our environment can affect us and how we respond to situations," said Wilder.

Dr. Lee Gillis, chair of the Department of Psychological Science, answered a call from APA to feature undergraduates on their webpage. The organization wanted to know about alumni who had gone directly into the workplace with their psychology degree.

"I gave them Taylor's name since she pursued a career at ADP to use the skillset she acquired as a



Taylor Wilder temporarily works from home.

psychology major at Georgia College,” he said. “They reached out, and she responded.”

According to Gillis, Taylor was an early adopter of using social media to seek out employment by marketing herself as possessing a wide variety of skills. These skills include understanding the use and interpretation of data, evaluating the legitimacy of claims about behavior, demonstrating the capacity to adapt to change, starting and executing projects with limited information or experience and exhibiting persistence in challenging circumstances.

“These attributes have been helpful to her in obtaining and maintaining her employment with ADP,” he said. “From my knowledge, Taylor embodies each of these skills.”

Wilder applies these concepts to her position as a resource coordinator II for ADP.

“Learning the basics of how the brain works helped me understand why each personality is different,” she said. “This also applies to knowing how to best interact with people in the workplace.”

Gillis, as well as other Georgia College psychology professors, taught Wilder how versatile psychology is and how she could apply it to work and everyday life.

“I admired Dr. Gillis’ adaptability for any situation, and how he has positive interactions with anyone he meets,” Wilder said. “I strive to strengthen my personal adaptability at work by challenging myself to get to know people I don’t always ‘jive’ with and learn from them.”

She believes that any personality can successfully relate to others.

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“Working in a corporate environment breeds different personalities that have to



Taylor Wilder visits the Seven Magic Mountains--an art installation of seven neon-colored rock towers outside of Las Vegas.

find a way to work together to achieve the same goals. I work with people of all personality types, and I've learned how to best approach and be successful with each one. I also learned how to be more adaptable in any situation—the most important trait to exercise in the work environment in my opinion.”

- Taylor Wilder

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“I've learned how to highlight the strengths of different types of people,” Wilder said. “This has helped me become a better, more adaptable employee in any situation.”

Gillis also taught her about different personalities and their strengths, weaknesses and how to best interact with one another.

“Working in a corporate environment breeds different personalities that have to find a way to work together to achieve the same goals,” she said. “I work with people of all personality types, and I've learned how to best approach and be successful with each one. I also learned how to be more adaptable in any situation—the most important trait to exercise in the work environment in my opinion.”

For Wilder, every workday is different and brings forth new learning opportunities. Her day begins with the sales department submitting prospective client accounts to her team. She reviews them for proper legal documentation, accuracy and compliance with federal and state governments. Then, Wilder submits these accounts to the next team for set up for Payroll and Human Resources' needs.

“I love the variety this position offers,” she said. “The challenging days impact me the most, because I always learn something I didn't know before to use in the future.”

Having a career with variety is the key to her success, as she always considered herself as “artsy.”

“Georgia College amplified that part of me through my major and minor—art/visual arts,” Wilder said. “Being able to dive deep with both subjects furthered my creativity.”

She also learned how to think critically and independently by effectively questioning concepts and then drawing her own conclusions based on personal experience and research.

At Georgia College, Wilder belonged to Art Tank and the Psychology Club. She especially enjoyed Art Tank, because it was a creative outlet for her to share with others who were also passionate about art and art history.

"I always left the meetings feeling inspired to create a new piece or expand on a piece in progress," she said. "At ADP I have been involved in some creative digital projects like flyers for team meetings and promotional campaigns, so I have visibility in my office and region that way."

She also applies the knowledge she gained from the Psychology Club at work.

"I've learned so much about how many different types of people there are in an office environment, and what I can learn from someone different from me," she said.

After working at ADP for six years, Wilder has learned to say "yes" to opportunities, allowing herself to grow.

"You never know what can happen in one or five years after graduation," she said. "Trust me, you'll learn a lot about yourself in your young adult years while you are trying to find your way."

Wilder is inspired by the sunrise, which represents a fresh start, reminding her to try again if she fails.

"Every morning I wake up is a reminder it's a new day, and I can choose how I want to spend it and how I can be a better person than I was yesterday," she said. "We all have the power to start fresh every day and it's never too late."



Outside of work, Taylor Wilder spends five to six days a week at Pure Barre®, where she recently reached the 250 classes tier.

News Stories Posted Monday July 12, 2021



Summer Internship: Geography student uses 'geospatial' skills to make transportation safe

[History & Geography, Department of](#): Monday July 12, 2021

It may sound like an intergalactic maneuver in space, but geospatial science is about collecting, incorporating and managing geographic data. It's used for a variety of purposes like mapping roads, improving transportation safety or evaluating population growth.

Geospatial scientists explore connections between the community and the environment, helping to predict patterns and trends.

With such a widespread span of uses, then, it's helpful for students to get experience in the field before delving into geospatial careers.

Regan Kitchens of Marietta is doing just that. The recent graduate earned a degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Geology. Her internship with Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC) in Macon is the final requirement for getting her Geographic Information Science certificate (GISc). Her internship has already helped improve local transportation and pedestrian safety, according to Dr. Doug

Oetter, professor of Geography and coordinator of Georgia College's GISc certificate program.



Regan Kitchens, right, helps examine a map at Middle Georgia Regional Commission in Macon.

“

... having an internship with a local agency, business or organization sets them apart from other students, because it allows them to learn more about how to apply their skills in actual work situations.

- Dr. Doug Oetter

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“We recognize that our students are well-prepared for careers in geospatial science,” Oetter said. “But having an internship with a local agency, business or organization sets them apart from other students, because it allows them to learn more about how to apply their skills in actual work situations.”

“I’m very excited for Regan,” he added. “Her work is very methodical and complicated, but she’ll learn how to be efficient in data collection, analysis and

presentation. These are the essential techniques of most geospatial projects, and Regan will accomplish a lot through her efforts. Just as important, she'll also be contributing a great service to the citizens of Middle Georgia."

Georgia College students often get important and meaningful internships, where they complete essential tasks that support public agencies like MGRC. Their liberal arts education bolsters their confidence and skills, readying them for such positions.

Last fall, Regan took Oetter's Geospatial Data Management class and mapped air quality in seven Southeastern states. Her work was "truly insightful," Oetter said, "as it revealed geographic patterns of carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and ozone pollution."

"Regan exemplifies the strengths of applying a mapping perspective to understanding complex environmental data," he said. "She is a delight to work with in every regard, but it has been a special pleasure to guide her through advanced spatial analysis investigations. She has combined her passion for helping protect the environment with some very powerful geospatial skills to perform detailed investigations across large areas."

Oetter helped Kitchens find the internship at MGRC, which covers 12 counties including Baldwin, Jones and Wilkinson. It's a paid full-time position. Kitchens was nervous about applying and competed against other candidates for the job. But she received the offer and now works on project REVAMP (Roadway Element Validation and Mapping Program) with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

“

Regan exemplifies the strengths of applying a mapping perspective to understanding complex environmental data. She is a delight to work with in every regard ...

- Oetter

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Her job is to improve existing data and identify changes in the roadway system. Kitchens analyzes data from each county, scrutinizing roads for crosswalks, pedestrian signals, street parking, turning lanes, sidewalks and school zones. She uses ArcGIS Pro and Google Street View to find these features. It's a time-consuming task. Each attribute is marked for location. Then, the information's added to the database.

Many local counties are small and don't have funding to do this kind of geographic mapping on their own. This makes the job even more fulfilling.

“

Before college, I had no idea what GIS was or how it worked. I am very proud of how far I've come and how much I have achieved.

- Regan Kitchens

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“Roads are constantly being updated and this new information strengthens our knowledge of Georgia's road network,” Kitchens said. “Having this comprehensive, road characteristic information will make it easier to create maps in the future, and it'll allow for local funding of roads to be correctly distributed.”

“Before college, I had no idea what GIS was or how it worked,” she said. “I am very proud of how far I've come and how much I have achieved. I see myself using GIS in my future jobs, because it has so many different aspects it can be used for.”



Class of 2025: First-generation college student pursues passion in STEM, art

[Information Systems & Computer Science, Department of](#): Monday July 12, 2021

Incoming freshman Jared Reese is no stranger to the college setting. In May 2021, the Hampton, Georgia, native completed his Associate of Science at Clayton State University where he began dual enrollment in the 10th grade.

“Through careful planning, I was able to complete all my high school credits, alongside the credits needed to complete my Associate of Science, after the first semester of 11th grade,” he explained.

For Reese, attending Georgia College has extraordinary meaning.

“I’m going to be the first person in my family to graduate from college,” he said. “It means so much to me for a multitude of reasons. Due to how I look and who I am, I always knew that I was going to face numerous struggles and obstacles throughout my journey.”

Reese recognizes that his past accomplishments and overcoming obstacles will lead to future success. He also credits his mother as an inspiration.

“My mother wasn’t able to attend college due to having to care for my grandmother,

so I'm absolutely doing this for her, too," said Reese.

"She's the one who has helped and inspired me the most, by far," he said. "She is the greatest person I know and will ever know. I wouldn't have gotten here without her."

As Reese begins his journey at Georgia College, he will be majoring in computer science with a math minor. His love of computer science began with the first computer game he played, and ever since then, he has been "obsessed" with computers and everything they can do. According to him, "the possibilities are endless."

In addition to his love of computer science, Reese is also an artist.

"Being an artist only increased my passion, allowing me to combine both technology and art through digital art," he said.

Every summer since 9th grade, Reese has attended Fort Valley State University's (FVSU) Mathematics, Science, and Engineering Academy (M-SEA) program. The program targets minority and female students who have just entered 9th grade, bringing together cohorts that remain together through the 12th grade. In Reese's 11th grade year, the cohort had the opportunity to visit the Walmart headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas.

"Cementing my major of choice was my visit to Walmart's headquarters. Seeing how lively the building was as well as all the technology and coding that goes into running Walmart just clicked with me immediately."

Reese recently qualified for a scholarship through the Hispanic Scholarship Fund program, which provides students and parents with the resources to navigate higher education.

"Alongside having access to career services, scholar conferences and



Reese is a recent graduate of the Elite Scholars Academy

mentorships, I have access to scholarships which range from \$500 to \$5,000," explained Reese.

This fall, Reese will be joining the Leadership Academy at Georgia College. He's also looking forward to joining the Black Student Alliance and the Latino Student Alliance, where he's excited to meet and connect with people through participation in activities and cultural events. According to Reese, that's not all, though: He's looking forward to being extremely involved through multiple clubs during his time at Georgia College.

The close-knit community and ability to be involved with his peers and mentors are part of the reason Reese chose Georgia College.

"The small size and liberal arts education are the factors that truly drew me in," Reese said. "I never wanted to go to a huge college, since I wanted to have an easier way to form connections with my professors," explained Reese. "In came Georgia College, which fulfills those requirements perfectly. To add to that, the liberal arts education is such a good fit for me; I want to learn a little bit of everything."

News Stories Posted Thursday July 22, 2021



Summer Internships: Music therapy students practice the sound of healing

[Music, Department of](#) : Thursday July 22, 2021

It is perfect harmony. The song of an experienced professional passing what he knows to undergraduate students who, in turn, pass their new skills on to others.

Together, they use music to calm, soothe and entertain the elderly at Carlyle Place in Macon, helping them recollect forgotten words and memories. Each student benefits from a mentor's experience but also from the knowledge passed down from other interns.

This provides invaluable opportunity to learn from someone else's perspective, insight and abilities—one Georgia College student to another.

"There aren't many internship programs around the country, especially in the southeastern region. I felt passionately about creating more opportunities for students," said Johnathan Moon, who got his degree in music therapy at Georgia College in 2015 with a minor in math, and who's now pursuing a master's in music therapy.

“I created both internship programs that I’ve run,” he said. “I’m constantly learning from my interns. It’s been such a wonderful experience of learning for everyone.”

“

I felt passionately about creating more opportunities for students.

- Johnathan Moon

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As an undergraduate, Moon completed his own internships at Carlyle. He worked there two years after graduation, then moved to a job at The Glen at Lake Oconee before returning to Carlyle Place in 2020 as music therapist and outreach coordinator.

This summer, Moon supervised three Georgia College music majors at the retirement community. Each joined the group at varying stages for a six-month long practicum. One senior, Starr Batchelor, just finished her internship. Senior Ashley Newkirk of Woodstock is in the midst of hers, and senior Taj-Juan Bivens of Tifton is beginning his.

As leading intern, Batchelor showed Newkirk the ropes, including her in activities as an equal participant. Likewise, Newkirk is now guiding Bivens.

While the first part of the internship is “mostly watching,” Moon encourages trainees to lead group sessions as soon as they can. He creates an individualized plan with each intern, setting goals to meet professional competencies before the board exam and entering the workforce.



Johnathan Moon leads a music session at Carlyle Place in Macon.



Georgia College music therapy seniors Ashley Newkirk and Taj-Juan Bivens perform for the elderly with Johnathan Moon at piano.

“

What I learn from my interns is very eye-opening. They may try something new and different that's really effective.

- Moon

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“Each person has different experiences that make them who they are as a musician, a clinician and a person,” Moon said. “What I learn from my interns is very eye-opening. They may try something new and different that's really effective. Or they might initiate a positive response that was unexpected from my personal experience with a resident.”

At Carlyle Place, the elderly live in independent cottages or memory care, assisted living and skilled-nursing communities. Each senior citizen has distinct needs. Moon teaches undergrads to document the needs of their clients, then create individual treatment.

Moon and his team sometimes pull from other practices like tai chi, yoga and movement to music. Musical workouts help clients regain rhythm, motor skills and longer attention spans. Music is a redirection tool too, Moon said, reducing agitation and anxiety.

Interns design and lead music games like Music Jeopardy, Musical Pictionary, Name That Tune and SINGO. They incorporate dancing, balloon volleyball and walking-in-place to work on a range of motion and strengthen muscles. They also lead winddown sessions that include meditation, stretching and deep breathing.

“

I've learned to think on my toes and adapt session plans on-the-spot.

- Ashley Newkirk

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Music therapy can also be specialized to help residents with relaxation, pain relief, meditation, tinnitus relief and more.

Music can be a remarkable therapy, especially with clients who have dementia. The disease takes away brain function but music reactivates. Newkirk notes one client, who struggles to communicate verbally but sings every word perfectly during music sessions.

“As music therapists, we utilize the power of music to retrain and rewire people’s brains to help them regain speech, relearn how to walk and more,” she said. “I’ve learned to think on my toes and adapt session plans on-the-spot. I never know what my residents are feeling that day. I go in with a general idea and my toolbox of interventions, so I can meet them where they are.”



Tai-Juan Bivens

Interns also have an individualized midterm and final project. Each one must develop and implement a weeklong plan of activities and events at Carlyle Place. This can include building ukuleles to play, painting or making birdhouses to music, games and drumming groups.

Moon is careful to find each student’s special interest and help them utilize that skill. Batchelor’s interested in aromatherapy. So, he encouraged her to give a lecture and implement it in sessions. Newkirk is passionate about dementia care. So, Moon’s helping her organize a presentation for classmates on campus.

“John is a wonderful supervisor,” Newkirk said. “I’ve learned so much from him already. He gives very constructive feedback, and he’s open to our feedback, as well. John puts in the extra time and effort to make sure each intern receives the education and experience they’re looking for.”

Supervising interns is a management lesson for Moon too. He’s learned to process information out loud and ask questions. This prompts interns to problem solve and confront issues head-on.

He has enjoyed this so much he’s considering education as a profession.

“Supervising interns is my favorite part of the job,” he said. “Honestly, watching the students grow in their skills, take feedback, apply it and make progress is the most rewarding.”

“

Georgia College prepared me to be the professional I am, and I’d like to continue to contribute to student education in whatever way I possibly can in the future.

- Moon

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News Stories Posted Friday July 23, 2021



International student works towards a supply chain management career

[International Education Center](#) : Friday July 23, 2021

Hung "Tommy" Nguyen

Where are you from
Vietnam

What year in school are you?
I am a senior at Georgia College.

How many years have you attended Georgia College?
This fall 2021 will be my second year at the institution.

Why did you choose to attend Georgia College?
The Georgia College campus is not too big. The number of students per class is relatively small, so students have the opportunity to interact with amazing professors.

What's your favorite food at Georgia College?

My favorite food is Chick-fil-A chicken. I try not to eat too much of it though.

Why did you choose to major in business management with a concentration in logistics?

I can work in a lot of different fields with a business degree. My goal is to get into supply chain management industry, so having a business degree with a concentration in logistics would be helpful.



Hung "Tommy" Nguyen holds the Vietnam flag.

Who was your favorite professor and why?

My favorite professor has been Dr. Evans, who teaches macroeconomics. I enjoyed his class, because I learned so much about the economy. More specifically, many students comprehended the materials in the class without relearning it again after class.

What did you learn from Georgia College that you can apply in your new career?

I've learned to be more professional on a daily basis. For instance, the way I communicate and associate with other people have been more formal to match the business world.

What will you enjoy most about working at Georgia College as a math tutor?

I will enjoy meeting new students and my coworkers. I will also like to help out new students who need help for math so they can accomplish their future goals.

What are your hobbies?

I love playing soccer, working out, kayaking, hiking, camping, etc.

Which clubs/organizations do you belong to?

I've been in the International Club since fall 2020. Also, I am looking forward to joining GC's Mens Soccer Club in fall 2021.

How do you think belonging to these clubs will help you grow?

Meeting new people from different backgrounds and nationalities plays a huge role in developing my characteristics. It definitely gives me more perspectives on many things in society.

What are your plans after you graduate from Georgia College?

My plan is to apply to a logistics firm in an international transportation company in

bigger cities to learn more about the field. At the same time, I will apply for a master's program in supply chain management. Eventually, I will go back home to contribute my knowledge and experience to corporations, and hopefully open my own business.

What profession do you see yourself in?

I see myself working in supply chain management, because during the pandemic, the role of logistics has been significant, therefore, having a career in this field would increase my career opportunities in the future.

What advice would you give to new students?

Be your true self and find the things/majors that you are interested in, so that you can figure out what you want to be in the future. Working in the job you love will most likely bring you the most happiness. However, if things do go wrong, it is okay; it's never too late to start over.

News Stories Posted Tuesday July 27, 2021



Marketing research students help elderly, disabled and veteran homeowners in Atlanta

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Tuesday July 27, 2021

It happens across America as cities grow. Developers swoop in to buy property held by families for generations, at times only offering the current residents a small portion of the value of their home and land. Some residents take the offer, not knowing the real value of what they have and their limited housing options after the sale.

Without resources to turn to many disadvantaged residents find themselves in this situation.



Seven marketing students and their professors partnered with an Atlanta non-profit to help highlight the problem and bring solutions for low-income residents.

"We have been working with [HouseProud Atlanta](#), a nonprofit organization that works with under-

resourced families in metro Atlanta,” said Dr. Mary Rickard, assistant professor of marketing. “They specifically work closely with seniors, veterans and disabled Atlantans.”

Marketing professors Rickard and Dr. Dee Sams, along with geography professor Dr. Doug Oetter led students as they worked with HouseProud this summer.

The team analyzed real estate details in under-resourced Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) using tax records, deed information, Geographic Information System Mapping (GIS) and ESRI business analyst software. The goal is to provide residents with the findings from the data to help them make informed decisions.

“A lot of homeowners are approached by developers, and they're offered a cash price, which is generally very low based on what the evaluation price or appraised price would be,” said Rickard.

“For a lot of these people, they may have bought their house two generations ago, or it may have been a gift from another family member,” she said. “Then all of a sudden somebody's saying, ‘here's \$30,000 cash for your place.’ That seems like a lot of money to them, however many of their properties have gone up exponentially in value since 2018.”

HouseProud Atlanta works with local community groups to identify seniors, veterans and disabled homeowners who need assistance. HouseProud provides services such as repairs enabling residents to keep their homes as long as possible.

Now with access to additional sources of valuable information provided by this Georgia College team, HouseProud will be able to provide additional resources to residents.

Rickard and Sams found out about HouseProud through a Georgia College alumni, Aruna Sadasivan, who volunteers with the organization. Once they heard of the organization’s work in the community and the need, they rallied students to help.



"With the price, housing and land information that we're providing HouseProud, we hope residents are better equipped to understand their resources and options," said Rickard.

The students were hand-selected by faculty to take part in this project. They showed an interest in marketing research and were willing to work hard over the summer for the undergraduate research course credit.

"I wanted to just get my toes in the water with marketing research," said Carlie Behan rising senior marketing major. "And it seemed like a really great opportunity for a good cause."



Carlie Behan



Paul Stegenga

The team conducted marketing research and worked to create tools for HouseProud to provide its clients.

"We developed this decision tree. So, if they want to sell their house, they know what steps they need to take based on their needs, or if they don't want to sell, they know what to do as well," said Behan.

Growing up in the Atlanta area, senior marketing major Paul Stegenga jumped at the opportunity to hone his research skills, work with real estate and help the city he loves.

"I really want to see the city of Atlanta flourish," he said. "I wanted to do research to show people what's happening in the area, and then show them how we can find ways to help people within the city so that they can flourish too."

He and other students hope the information they provide HouseProud can be used to benefit clients for years to come.

"It's a really great opportunity that I didn't really know what to expect going into it, but I'm really glad that Dr. Sams reached out because it gives me an opportunity to be creative while also helping people," said Behan.

News Stories Posted Friday July 30, 2021



Georgia College has landmark year for grants

[Provost & Academic Affairs, Office of the](#): Friday July 30, 2021



Dr. Costas Spirou

In 2020-21, Georgia College received a record-high amount in grants, exceeding \$4 million. It marked a 5.9 percent increase from the previous year and a whopping 73 percent since 2018.

“

...we've surpassed the 4-million-dollar mark.

- Spirou

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“This is very important for two reasons. The first is that we've surpassed the 4-million-dollar mark. The second reason is we can observe a progressive increase over time. That is significant,” said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

“Additionally, it is great to see the increased level of grant submissions by faculty,” he said. “Put all of that together, and it is wonderful news. Especially coming through the pandemic. It shows our faculty and staff are continuing to do exceptional work and are very committed.”

The university’s overall grant total nearly doubled in nine years. This windfall aligns with the first director hired for the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects (OGSP) in 2010. Interim director since February, Donna Douglas said she couldn’t take credit for this record achievement. Securing grants is a team effort.

“

While teleworking, we were actually busier than ever. Grant work did not stop during the pandemic.

- Donna Douglas

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The numbers of actual proposals fell during the pandemic year from 54 to 42—a 22 percent drop. Yet, the amount of funding requested rose 9 percent.

“While teleworking, we were actually busier than ever,” Douglas said. “Grant work did not stop during the pandemic. Several large proposals were prepared and submitted during that time away from campus.”

“Furthermore,” she said, “the pandemic impacted our active projects because additional regulations and protocols were issued from each federal sponsor.”

Some quick facts about grant awards:

- The biggest funding--about 40 percent--went to the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS). Last year, they received over \$1.6 million in grants impacting more than 1,800 children in Baldwin County.
- Almost half went to the College of Health Sciences (24.5 percent) and the College of Arts and Sciences (23.4 percent).
- The biggest growth was seen in the College of Health Sciences (COHS), which increased from just over \$20,000 in 2013 to more than a million in 2021. COHS’s numbers more than doubled in the past two years alone.
- The College of Arts and Sciences (COAS) also saw incredible growth--a 172 percent jump since 2016--going from \$352,996 to \$960,191. That bump was mainly due to a highly-competitive \$650,000 National Science Foundation grant to help low-income students get degrees in chemistry and physics.

Reorganizing the IDC rates (indirect costs) a few years ago contributed to the current success, Spirou said. The distribution model was altered so funds spread

to include principal investigators and their departments. This new model offers additional incentive for faculty to pursue grants.

A number of new faculty were awarded grants for the first time, which Spirou said shows creative initiative. Successful recipients are more likely to keep applying for grants. Many of these faculty involve students in their research and community outreach, as well, which aligns with the university's mission as a public liberal arts school, he said.

Mark Pelton, associate vice president for Strategic Initiatives, oversees the School of Continuing and Professional Studies. He has talented grant writers on his staff. With two departments "almost completely supported by grant funds," he said, "these grant writers are highly motivated and productive."

“

Georgia College has been on an upward trend since the mid-2000s.

- Dr. Mark Pelton

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In 2004, former University President Dorothy Leland asked Pelton to lead a project pinpointing services that needed increased external funding. He worked closely with Douglas to standardize and simplify internal forms and processes; develop a new intranet website devoted to grant efforts; create an online approval system; share information on available support services; and provide extensive grant-related assistance. This work resulted in the formation of the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects in 2006 and a director in 2010.

Since then, grant activity has increased significantly, Pelton said. Only five grant proposals were submitted in 2001 with \$56,883 received in funding. By 2015, the university had submitted 41 proposals, netting over \$2 million.

"Georgia College has been on an upward trend since the mid-2000s," Pelton said.

"I suspect the university's grant programs and the services our unit offers are fairly unique. It is my understanding," he said, "that our 'Communities In Schools' is the only partnership of its kind in the country between a university and local board where the CIS office is a university department. So, yes, what we do is fairly unique."



A Georgia College student tutors a child in the Baldwin County School System.

The School of Continuing and Professional Studies, formerly known as Extended University, has led the way in grant revenue since 2007, Pelton said. It operates six community programs, including “Afterschool Achievement.” The afterschool “YES” and “High Achiever” programs alone reap about \$1 million a year in funding.

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A rising tide lifts all boats, so the more grant success the university has the more positive impact we can have on campus and in the community.

- Pelton

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The “Wraparound Baldwin” grant for Communities In Schools is “pretty innovative and cutting edge,” Pelton said, “in that it provides school-based healthcare in the ‘Bee Well Clinic’ at the Early Learning Center.” This care is available for all Baldwin County public school children and their families. Pelton’s department purchased telehealth equipment with two “Reaching Rural Communities” grants. This will extend the clinic’s health services to every public school in Baldwin County.

“These are win-win programs that benefit the students, university and broader society,” Pelton said. “A rising tide lifts all boats, so the more grant success the

university has the more positive impact we can have on campus and in the community.”

In addition to the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, the College of Health Sciences also attracts a large percentage of grant money with its nursing programs in rural areas. Recently, the College of Arts and Sciences “has really been coming on strong in grant writing,” as well, Pelton said. Funding supports faculty research, which enriches the classroom experience.



A student in a science lab.

Dr. Carrie Cook, interim associate dean for Arts and Sciences (A&S) is charged with reviewing and approving grant proposals submitted by A&S faculty. Last year, “there was a tremendous increase in the amount of grant funding sought,” she said. In 2019-20, 11 proposals requested \$100,671 in funding. Last year, the same number of proposals asked for more than \$1 million--nearly a 1,000 percent increase.

As dean of A&S, Dr. Eric Tenbus considers his role in grant success to be one of encouragement. He makes sure faculty have what they need in terms of incentive and support. He pointed to several A&S grants that raised their tally this year: Dr. Chavonda Mills and the Department of Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy secured \$650,000 to diversify recruitment of students majoring in STEM fields, and two professors received grants to study water quality. Dr. Samuel Mutiti in geology and environmental sciences got \$165,987 for study abroad research in Zambia; and Dr. Dave Bachoon in biology secured \$45,600 for research in Gwinnett County and \$20,000 for water quality analysis in Puerto Rico.



Dr. Samuel Mutiti

This kind of funding is getting harder to obtain. Successful grant writers have to make a persuasive case their university is “a busy, gifted and academically focused

campus community,” Tenbus said.

“As state dollars become scarce,” he said, “it’s important that the university and College of Arts and Sciences pursue more federal grants. Doing undergraduate research is an important niche for Georgia College, as it fits into the GC Journeys initiative. It’s the pursuit of grants that ultimately contributed to winning the AURA (Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments) from the Council on Undergraduate Research, because the funding helps faculty provide even more exciting research opportunities for our students.”



Dr. Dave Bachoon in the lab with a student.

These components must come together for triumph, along with assistance from the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects--what Spirou called “a vital component to the university’s success this year.” Without support, ideas don’t always move to completion. The grant office gives faculty the tools and confidence to succeed.

Proposals are submitted to Douglas’ office, and her staff reviews guidelines with submitters. They identify all elements and required forms. This gives faculty and staff more time to devote to writing narrative- and discipline-specific sections. The team approach ensures everyone knows what they’re responsible for by the completion date.

“

...you get to see how invested they are in their project and all the effort they put in to making it the best proposal possible. When it's funded, not only is it seen as a victory but a validation of that individual's hard work.

- Douglas

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Applying for a grant is “a labor-intensive process with significant planning,” Douglas said. It involves the development of partnerships, writing drafts, budgeting and multiple revisions. Some federal proposals can exceed 100 pages.

“While working with a person preparing a grant application,” she said, “you get to see how invested they are in their project and all the effort they put in to making it the best proposal possible. When it's funded, not only is it seen as a victory but a validation of that individual's hard work.”

Even with support, however, federal funding remains elusive. It helps that Georgia College is a “well-known, respected university with excellent fiscal management,” Pelton said. Despite selectiveness by grant agencies, he said, Georgia College is “earning a reputation for successfully and faithfully implementing grant programs and also for strict adherence to agency funding rules and guidelines.”

All these elements are essential for grant success. But, in the end, it all boils down to people. Spirou points to “entrepreneurial” faculty and staff as the main architects of this year's achievement.

“

To be at an all-time high is really great news. It's a huge success. I'm hoping we will continue to move in a positive upward direction.

- Dr. Costas Spirou

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