

Front Page News Story Archive

August 2021



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News Stories Posted Friday August 6, 2021



Alumni Week Nov. 1-6, 2021, offers convenience and fun for everyone

Alumni : Friday August 6, 2021

Alumni who are unable to physically make Alumni Week, can tune in virtually Nov. 1-3; those wishing to participate in person can do so Nov. 4-6.

A sample of virtual events include a Master Class on Heirs Property hosted by the Rural Studies Institute and an alumni panel hosted by the Georgia College African American Male Initiative program. In-person events will be the African American Alumni Council's "A Night Under the Stars," the Alumni Awards Dinner and Athletics Hall of Fame and the All-Classes Picnic.



Alumni Awards

Virtual Alumni Week 2020 had a large influence on Tre' Johnson, assistant director of Awards, Collaborations and Reunions. Its success weighed heavily on his decision to host a hybrid Alumni Week with both virtual and in-person events.

“Last year's virtual Alumni Week was a hit,” Johnson said, “Alumni enjoyed that extra dimension of engagement, and it allowed those who typically can't make the trip to Milledgeville to participate.”

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“It's important for alumni to participate in Alumni Week for a variety of reasons. Our goal is to remind you of the fond memories you had at Georgia College, while discovering how you can create more in the present and near future.”

- Tre' Johnson

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There will be some new concepts this year, including the inaugural College Alumni Awards Luncheon. GC's five colleges (College of Arts and Sciences, J. Whitney Bunting College of Business, Lounsbury College of Education, College of Health Sciences and the John E. Sallstrom Honors College) will give out awards for Alumnus of the Year, Young Alumnus of the Year and Humanitarian of the Year.

Johnson looks forward to honoring outstanding Georgia College alumni, as they also learn of the great things happening in the academic sector of Georgia College.

“It's important for alumni to participate in Alumni Week for a variety of reasons,” said Johnson. “Our goal is to remind you of the fond memories you had at Georgia College, while discovering how you can create more in the present and near

future.”

This year, there are two ways alumni can choose to enjoy Alumni Week.

- Georgia College offers the Alumni Week package where alumni will be granted access to all virtual and in-person events except those that have been specifically excluded for specific alumni group events. They will also receive alumni swag, including Bobcat and Colonial merchandise. This package has an early bird [registration](#) rate of \$75, ending Sept. 2. The [registration](#) rate will then increase to \$100 until [registration](#) closes at 11:59 p.m. Oct. 14.



Peabody alumni gather for lunch.

- Alumni can also [register](#) for events à la carte. [Registration](#) will close at 11:59 p.m., Oct. 14.

In respect for the health and safety of our alumni and staff, there will be no in-person registration available at the actual events. All registration must be completed online in advance of the events. Also, all materials will be mailed to alumni.

For additional information, contact Tre' Johnson at trejuan.johnson@gcsu.edu.



School success doesn't get much better than this

[Athletics](#) : Friday August 6, 2021

It's been 10 years since Libby Bochniak, '21, started playing volleyball. She's become quite a hit since then. The class of 2021 valedictorian was named the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year in June 2020-2021. In July, she earned a spot on the first nation-wide Academic All-America® Division II Volleyball team by the College Sports Information Directors Association (CoSIDA).

"When they told me the news, I was shocked, excited and honored," said Bochniak. "It was a very nice ending to a great four years at Georgia College. It almost seemed like everything was wrapped in a bow."

According to Bochniak, you don't have to be the biggest or tallest player to be successful in volleyball. There's a lot more team strategy in the sport than most people realize.

"It's not just about using brute force to score points," she said. "The team atmosphere creates a lot of



Libby Bochniak, '21

energy. We had each other's backs 100 percent of the time. And when I did something, even if it was the smallest thing, it felt like I was on top of the world when my teammates came up to give me a high five. And then I got to reciprocate that feeling. I just loved that part of it.”

Being a student-athlete tremendously helped with study habits. From a young age, Bochniak learned to stay ahead of school work, since competitive volleyball took up a lot of her time. She would meet with her teachers in advance to make sure she stayed on task with her lessons.

“These study habits transferred to when I was a student-athlete at Georgia College,” said Bochniak. “I knew right away I had to approach my professors and explain my situation to them. I became more proactive and purposeful with my time than a typical college student.”

Her study habits were so on point they helped her achieve valedictorian status. Bochniak was one of 15 students from the Class of May 2021 to receive the designation for keeping a perfect 4.0 throughout her college career.

“I always knew when I came to Georgia College I needed to perform well in my sport and the classroom,” she said. “I had to hold myself and the people around me to a higher standard. So, I just expected a lot from myself.”

Over the years, Bochniak trained with some of the best volleyball players and coaches in the country. This helped her achieve such high rankings. Forming a connection with Head Coach Gretchen Krumdieck also helped.

“She really shaped me into the person that I am today,” said Bochniak. “And, Gretchen is a lot more focused on forming the whole individual rather than just the person on the court.”

Krumdieck would often cook for the team at her house.

“She loved to cook and bake for us,” said Bochniak. “It just felt like a second home to us. She always put people first.”

When the team had a bad season during her junior year, it was hard for everybody.



Libby Bochniak spikes the volleyball.

“But we still loved each other,” she said. “Coach Krumdieck said we were going to get through this, and our teammates were still our best friends. This was her saying, ‘I’m here for you.’ A lot of my teammates went into her office to talk about volleyball and even personal things. And she was just there for them—a shoulder to lean on—like our mom away from our moms.”

This example of camaraderie and nurturing had an impact on Bochniak. She plans to put people first in everyday life too.

“Relationships and the things that you're doing matter,” she said. “They matter more than the awards you get or the money you make. Instead, invest your time in people.”

Although Bochniak liked all of her biology professors, one stands out—Dr. Christopher Burt.

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“I think that [teamwork] is definitely going to be useful in the medical field. There are different ways of doing things. You're going to have patients that come in who are completely different than the patient you just saw. Maybe they have the same illness, and they want to be fixed in completely different ways. Being flexible and understanding that aspect of life is really going to help me.”

- Libby Bochniak

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“I think all my professors exemplified what it means to be passionate about what you do,” she said. “Not only were they great professors, but they were also great scientists. You develop that passion with them. But Dr. Burt, in my microbiology class, helped me get to where I am today. I would not be going to medical school if it wasn't for him, because he saw potential in me that I didn't really see. He wouldn't let me stop before I had reached that potential.”

Bochniak plans to pursue her journey to medical school, beginning with Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee, where she's already started classes. Although Bochniak hasn't claimed a specialty yet, the team concepts she learned at Georgia College will help her go far in her career.

“I'm up for the challenge,” she said. “Being on a team sport, you have many individuals from different backgrounds and lifestyles, who have different personalities, and you bring them together for one common goal. And you've got to figure out how to work together to get there.”



Libby Bochniak (center) and her team members cheer after scoring.

Bochniak knows the value teamwork brings in working with others.

“I think it’s one reason that team sports and athletics are so important for kids,” Bochniak said. “I just love the teamwork aspect of sports. I know how to deal with people that maybe don’t see eye-to-eye with me. And that doesn’t mean that we have to yell and scream at each other. It just means we have to hear each other out before drawing a conclusion.”

Bochniak is confident the teamwork aspect she learned from playing volleyball will provide her with the ability to navigate through differences in people and to make hard medical decisions.

“I think that’s definitely going to be useful in the medical field,” she said. “There are different ways of doing things. You’re going to have patients that come in who are completely different than the patient you just saw. Maybe they have the same illness, and they want to be fixed in completely different ways. Being flexible and understanding that aspect of life is really going to help me.”



Together again: Three successful alumni events highlighted in pictures

[Alumni](#) : Friday August 6, 2021

There were three Georgia College alumni events held in July 2021. We take you through these moments in pictures.

Approximately 40 alumni and guests including Lee Fruitticher, vice president of Finance and Administration and interim vice president for University Advancement, Dr. Micheal Stratton, dean, J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Dr. Eric Tenbus, dean, College of Arts and Sciences came out to watch The Macon Bacon play baseball July 15, 2021. The event was hosted by the Middle Georgia Alumni Chapter. A portion of the proceeds will go towards scholarships.



Around 40 alumni and guests attended the Macon Bacon game and alumni social July 15.

Seventeen alumni attended the Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia (DMV) Alumni Chapter's Grill and Chill Event July 18, 2021. The event was held at Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C. It was a fun-filled afternoon.

Georgia College President Dr. Steve Dorman stressed the importance of alumni chapters like the DMV Chapter. He also provided brief updates on some recent accomplishments of the university such as having a relatively high four-year graduation rate.

The DMV Alumni Chapter looks forward to hosting a social at Orioles Park Aug. 21. Alumni will gather at the stadium and watch the Atlanta Braves and Baltimore Orioles face off. Admission is \$25 for adults and \$15 for children (17 and under). Those who [register](#) will receive



Pictured from left to right are: Caitlin McKeon, '18, event coordinator, DMV Chapter; Jonathan Mangram, '19 and Rachel Weber, '10, president, DMV Chapter.

admission to the game and all-you-can-eat at the general concession stands. Alumni must [register](#) by Monday, Aug. 16.

Forty alumni attended the Communications Alumni Council's Comedy Night at the Atlanta City Winery July 22. The headliner act was by Andrew George, '12. Alumni and friends who attended the event loved it.

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“I'm still receiving emails about how much fun our guests had at Comedy Night. The lineup was incredible, and they kept the energy high all night.”

- Tre' Johnson

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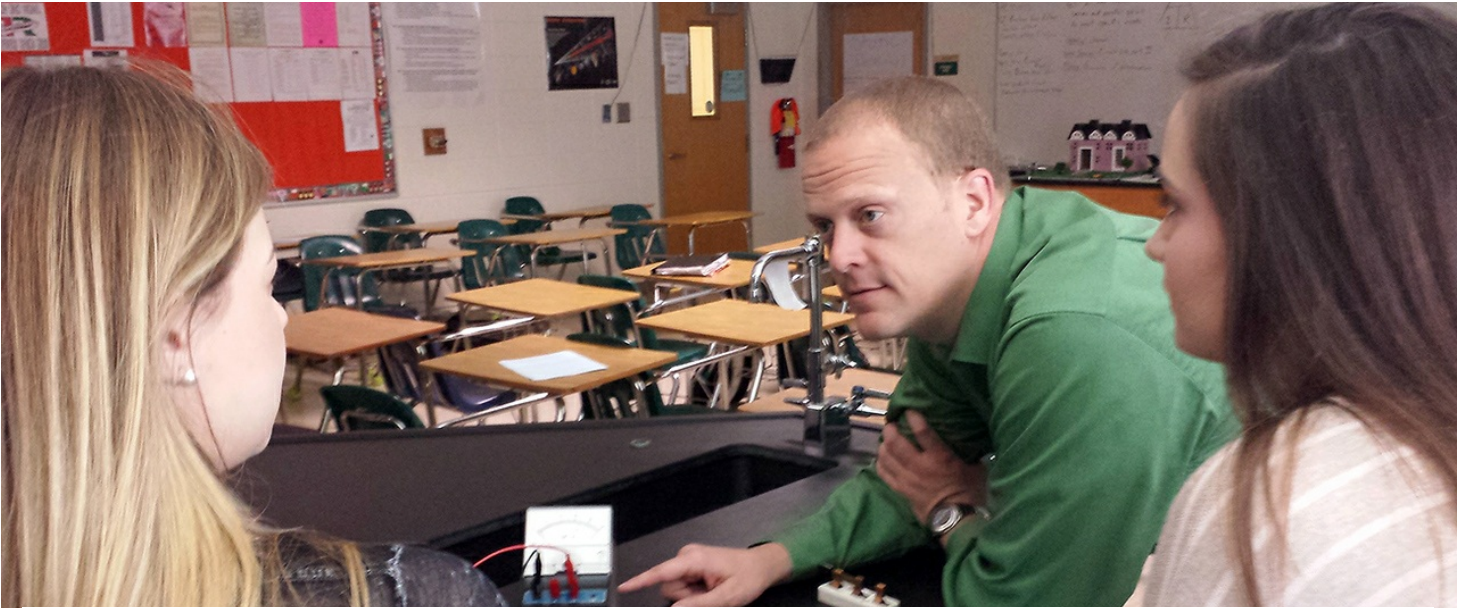


Georgia College Comedy Night planning crew includes (left to right): Benedict Esposito, '15, secretary, Communications Alumni Council; Tre' Johnson, assistant director, Awards, Collaborations and Reunions; Elizabeth Rawlins, '12, president, Communications Alumni Council and Abigail Jessee, '19, event coordinator, Communications Alumni Council.

“I'm still receiving emails about how much fun our guests had at Comedy Night,” said Tre' Johnson, assistant director, Awards, Collaborations and Reunions. “The lineup was incredible, and they kept the energy high all night.”

Other performers included: Katie Hughes, Plug Chapman, Andrew Stanley, Carlette Jennings and Vas Sanchez.

The Communications Alumni Council hopes to have a College Fair for GC students in the Communications Department this year.



Alumnus uses education to build a scientifically informed society

[College of Education](#) : Friday August 6, 2021

Brian Butler, '07, '13, always loved science and the weather. When he was young, Butler recalls looking out the window just waiting for the first snowflakes to fall. If there was a storm, he was glued to the window, watching the lightning strike. Later, as a meteorology student at the University of Oklahoma, he was a storm chaser.

“If you love weather, there's no other place on earth that displays the incredible power of nature like a thunderstorm in Oklahoma,” he said. “I think that solidified my passion in weather and science.”

Now, Butler's experienced the best of both worlds. He became a meteorologist with the United States Air Force then decided to pursue a career in teaching science. So, he researched the different ways to do that in Georgia. He visited Georgia College to discuss the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program with Dr. Cynthia Alby, director of GC Journeys.

“I was impressed with the discussion we had about Georgia College's approach to education,” Butler said. “And the MAT degree just seemed like a good fit for me.”



Brian Butler

That day, Butler came to Georgia College only intending to get questions answered, but left feeling the program was right for him. So, he began to pursue the MAT program with a science emphasis.

The late Dr. Martha Jones, assistant professor of Foundations and Secondary Education, also made quite an impression on Butler.

“She brought that practical piece of knowledge to the curriculum,” he said. “And it really helped me when I began teaching in 2007 to have had that experience of seeing how what I learned was actually applied. She brought all of it to life.”

Another one of his favorite professors was Dr. Melanie DeVore, professor in the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. Butler had her for two courses.

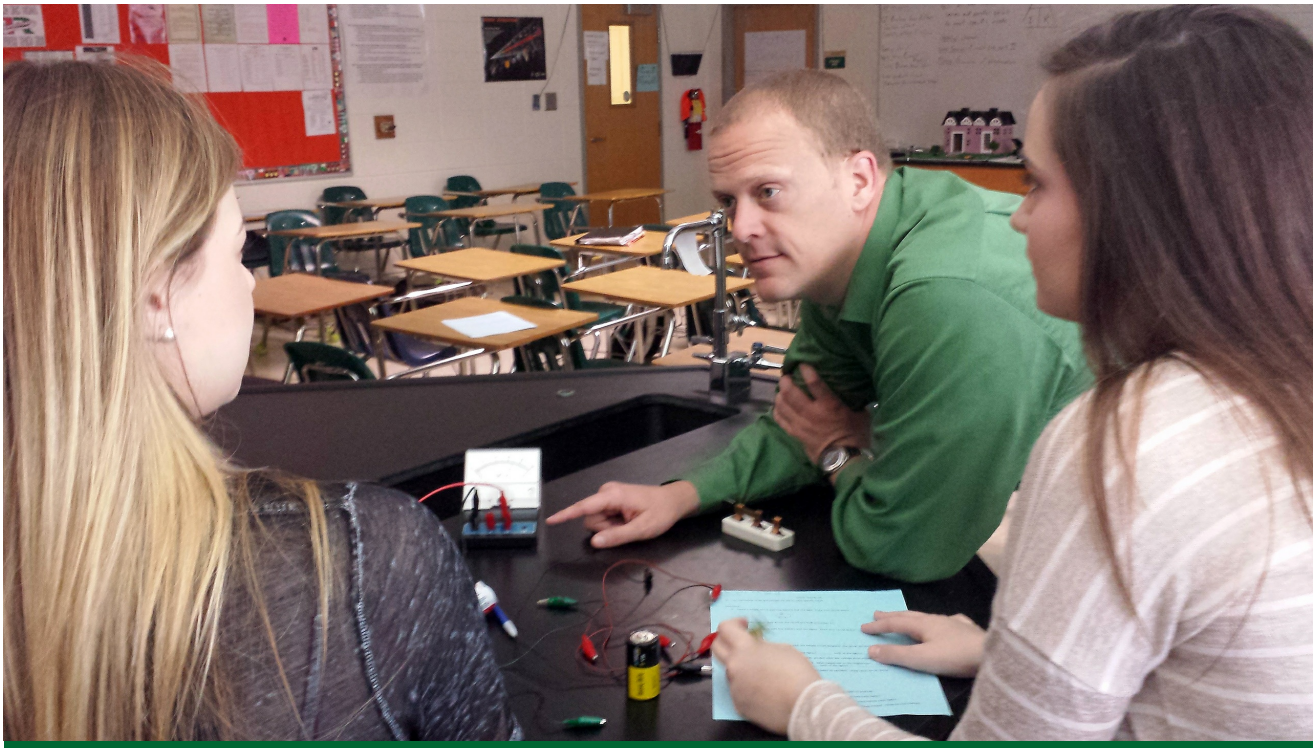


Brian Butler listens to community members at Weaver Middle School's STEM Education Kickoff event.

“She was excellent at making biology very interesting,” he said. “She’s a plant specialist. I found that rather fascinating, especially since I’m a gardener. And I kept thinking, ‘I just learned something new.’ She was fantastic.”

After teaching science for four years and becoming a finalist for the 2016 Georgia Teacher of the Year, he started thinking about pursuing an education specialist degree.

“At that point in my career, I was a little more accomplished as a classroom teacher,” Butler said.



Brian Butler discusses a lab activity with physics students.

Dr. Marcie Peck, program coordinator of Teacher Leadership at Georgia College became his guide through the education specialist program for his cohort.

“It really helped me see my role in education beyond the classroom, how it fits into the bigger picture and relating it to how this is my way to make an impact on society as a whole versus just the children in my classroom,” he said.

Butler found the cohort model worked well for him, since he excelled in collaboration.

“The concept that really stands out about my master’s and specialist degrees is the cohort model, where we worked together,” he said. “It was extremely useful for my development as an educator to see other people’s perspectives and work with those who had a different view on things. It really helped me see the world in a broader sense.”

Butler achieved a 4.0 in both his MAT and specialist in education degrees because he could relate to the topics.

“I viewed college as a job, where I only get out of this what I put into it,” he said. “I also think the way Georgia College was structured played a role in that most of the courses directly related to my job, so I could see how the coursework benefited me.”

When Butler taught, he had children from all different backgrounds with different experiences.

“I learned not to approach teaching with just my point of view,” Butler said. “Those experiences I had at Georgia College helped me to stop and think, ‘Okay, what is the point of view that this child has? Let me understand it from a different perspective to better relate to that child.’”

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“One of the biggest things of any professional organization is to help members see the power of collective organization. I think, regardless of your political affiliations, everyone would agree that science and good critical thought is something that the world could probably use a bit more of.”

- Brian Butler

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Today, as the school improvement specialist for science for Bibb County Schools, Butler works with school leaders and teachers to guide them and improve science instruction and learning across the district in kindergarten through 12th grade. He also visits classrooms, meets with content coordinators of other subjects and the Teaching and Learning Department to address overarching issues.

The highlight of his job is getting involved to help solve problems in the classroom.

“My absolute favorite thing to do is to go into the classroom and work directly with teachers on whatever they're having an issue with. I just love to help them figure out how to best address a specific topic or how to incorporate a lab activity,” he said. “I see the kids with their innate curiosity want to understand the world around them and learn science. This reframes why I do what I do.”

One of his biggest challenges was transitioning out of the classroom to work with adult learners in the district.

“In working with adults, understanding things from different perspectives has become even more important,” Butler said. “I remember in our education specialist program at Georgia College, we collaborated on assuming everyone is approaching a problem with good intentions. And the reason they have a different perspective is because they've had different experiences. That's really helped me in my profession.”

As a result, Butler reevaluates his own bias and considers that other people have had different experiences, which gives them a different point of view.

“This thought process has been instrumental in helping me work with adult learners,” he said.

“I really feel we can make progress in our society by ensuring we have scientifically literate citizenry and to have a collective voice of science educators who work with children every day, to improve their scientific knowledge and literacy.”

At Georgia College, Butler was encouraged by Jones to join state and national professional organizations to extend his instructional reach.

“That’s why I became involved with the National Science Teaching Association, where I serve as a district director representing science teachers of Alabama, Florida and Georgia,” he said. “This is my third year in this position.”

He also served for 10 years, as well as president, on the Georgia Science Teachers Association.

“One of the biggest things of any professional organization is to help members see the power of collective organization,” he said. “I think, regardless of your political affiliations, everyone would agree that science and good critical thought is something that the world could probably use a bit more of.”



Brian Butler at the State School Superintendent's Teacher Advisory meeting in Atlanta before visiting the Capitol.



Alumna uses dance to educate and empower her students

[Theatre & Dance, Department of](#): Friday August 6, 2021

Hannah Victoria Thomas, '16, started dancing when she was three and choreographing at 12 at her local church. She'd been in amazing dance opportunities as an adolescent, including performing with the Atlanta Ballet at the Fox, Big Boi, the Junior Atlanta Hawks Dance and Junior Atlanta Falcons Cheerleading teams, Usher's New Look and more. But it wasn't until she got to Georgia College that she considered dance as a potential academic career.



Co-captain Hannah Victoria Thomas (pictured bottom left) and the Georgia College Dance Team took home first place at the 2016 Annual Peach Belt Conference (PBC) Spirit Competition with her and Sarah Pollack's jazz/lyrical choreography.

Her journey to captain of the Georgia College Dance Team "Sassy Cats," confirmed choreography and dance were some concepts that came natural to Thomas. During a spring dance concert that she choreographed and performed in, Thomas captivated Dr. Karen Berman, former professor and chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance.

"Dr. Berman told me, 'I want you to choreograph our Streetcar Named Desire play. I want to work with you, because I loved what I just saw.'"

"That just showed me that dance is interdisciplinary and multifaceted," Thomas said. "That was a star-student moment for me as an undergrad."

Thomas did some research for the choreography and was able to contribute to the department's play. She even had an assistant.

"Working with those actors and actresses was phenomenal," she said. "They trusted my vision and guidance. It made me realize whoa—what I have is valuable."

She considered Georgia College a "safe space" to practice her craft before she got into more professional dance in the working world.

"I got to try this on for size," Thomas said. "I think that was probably my best moment at Georgia College. I think about that all the time, and it's propelled me to do choreography and dance on an even grander scale."

Although she began as an accounting major at Shorter University, Thomas didn't feel creatively satisfied until she transferred to Georgia College and changed majors.

"I even had an accounting internship, but I was miserable," she said. "There was something missing for me, and I wanted to feel way more fulfilled. It wasn't what I was passionate about."



Hannah Victoria Thomas defies gravity for a photo shoot in Phoenix, Arizona.

Once at Georgia College, Thomas consulted with Dwayne Peterson, assistant director of Career Development, who helped her get on track.

"He asked me some really tough questions to help me realize that accounting wasn't my chosen field and that I wanted something more creative," Thomas said. "I wanted to have stability, but I was okay with going a risky route. I ended up majoring in Liberal Studies with concentrations in dance, theater and business. I also pursued a dance minor."

At Georgia College, she received a scholarship at a dance audition.

"That was the spark of hope I needed to pursue dance," Thomas said. "Amelia Pelton and Natalie King said they saw something in me and awarded me the scholarship. It just took that spark for me to take the leap of leaving everything and going to uncharted territories."

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“Dance is a powerful medium to talk about powerful things. We're seeing it right now and when we were in lockdown with COVID. Dance kept the world spinning through Tik Tok. Movement is a versatile and universal language. For controversy or any topic, dance makes the situation a little sweeter and easier to digest.”

- Hannah Thomas

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King's improvisation and composition classes changed the way Thomas thought about choreography.

Thomas taught jazz, hip-hop and choreographed routines at Georgia College. But King's composition and improvisation classes inspired her in choreography and the way she presented herself in the dance field.

"Natalie really inspired me to think differently, not as just a dancer but as an artist," Thomas said.

There were many firsts and accomplishments Thomas experienced as a member of the Sassy Cats Dance team. She also belonged to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Chi Tau Epsilon—the dance honor society at Georgia College.

"Before Georgia College, I'd never been introduced to some of the structures, scores or exercises that Natalie had us doing," Thomas said. "After graduating, a lot of those inspirations came from her."

It was her encounters with King that really motivated Thomas to go into grad school at Arizona State University (ASU). She enrolled and began her three-year MFA in dance there. She taught hip-hop for six semesters, built a curriculum and tried new teaching techniques. When Thomas graduated from ASU, she also taught postmodern contemporary dance.

"I really carry my Georgia College experience with me, wanting to be eloquent, passionate and confident in my research and art," Thomas said. "I also aspire to be a great educator, like Natalie."

As a new tenure-track assistant professor at the University of Oregon, she will be a hip-hop specialist and teach first-year seminar, African aesthetics, choreography and repertoire classes.

"I'm so excited to take on the journey, because I know I'll grow from it," Thomas said.

She sees the value in educating others through dance.



Hannah Victoria Thomas teaches a Hip Hop masterclass at Ballet AZ Dance Studio for Arizona State University's high school initiative.

“Dance is a powerful medium to talk about powerful things,” she said. “We’re seeing it right now and when we were in lockdown with COVID. Dance kept the world spinning through Tik Tok. Movement is a versatile and universal language. For controversy or any topic, dance makes the situation a little sweeter and easier to digest.”

At 28 years old, Thomas is the youngest faculty member in the Dance Department at the University of Oregon. Since she’s so close in age, she wants to inspire her students and thinks they’ll be able to better relate to her message through dance.

“The biggest thing for me is that I want to help my students get through life with movement,” said Thomas. “It doesn’t matter what type of movement it is. But it always comes back to getting them to trust me, themselves and each other. And then we can make some really powerful stuff happen with that foundation.”

Thomas feels it’s important to support and promote the fine arts. She feels that every day, there are new ways of empowering individuals through art.

“Everybody has a different talent whether abstract or literal, theatrical or dance. Art is changing lives,” she said. “We’re able to do that, because of our passion. We’re fueling and empowering others through entertainment. But if you use it in such a way to educate and empower others, there’s nothing like it. When you are graced in something spectacular, use it because the world needs your gift.”

News Stories Posted Wednesday August 11, 2021



Class of 2025: Special education major enters GC with statewide playwriting award

[College of Education](#) : Wednesday August 11, 2021

Incoming freshman Nina Schwelm enters Georgia College as an award-winning playwright. Although she's pursuing special education, writing holds a special place in her heart.

"I've always loved writing," Nina said. "I just never considered writing for the stage. So now my eyes are completely open to this new possibility."

Nina and playwriting are an unlikely duo, she said, but that didn't stop her from becoming one of three student winners of the Georgia Film Academy's (GFA) Dramatic Writing 10-Minute Play Competition.

More of a short story and poetry writer, Nina didn't consider playwriting until her writing class midterm. In writing her play, "Across the Sea," she was inspired by Adam Driver, famous for his portrayal of Kylo Ren in Star Wars, and his love of theater and nonprofit organization. His nonprofit is called Arts in the Armed Forces and seeks to provide active duty military and veterans with performing arts experiences.

"He started a nonprofit where he does free performing arts for active duty and former military," Nina said. "I really, really admire that organization, so in writing my play, that was just at the back of my head the whole time."

But when she isn't winning state awards, Nina writes short stories, poetry, song lyrics and writes collaboratively with a friend in Sweden.

"We write through the eyes of underdeveloped characters in order to develop them further. It's a good exercise," she said.

The avid Star Wars fan is her own worst critic, but draws on both literature and personal experience when writing.

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"Sometimes I just can't write, but then I'll wake up at 2 a.m. with an idea and not go to sleep because I just have to get it all down."

- Nina Schwelm

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"Sometimes I just can't write, but then I'll wake up at 2 a.m. with an idea and not go to sleep because I just have to get it all down," Nina said.

Though she intends to nurture her passion for writing, Nina decided to major in GC's nationally recognized Special Education program. Her decision came after a hole appeared in her high school schedule; the need for special education interns made up the gap.

"I have never been in a place where I have felt so loved," Nina said. "Everybody just loved me. I made friends down there, and it just made me very, very happy."

As an intern, she fell in love with the children, teaching and using creativity to brighten their day.

"All the kids are so unique, and you have to take time to understand their individual needs," Nina said. "Most of them really like art, so I think that I can make an

awesome classroom for them where they can feel welcome and happy.”

Previously editor-in-chief of her high school magazine, she hopes to continue her rigorous schedule at GC, enrolling in both the Leadership Academy and Honors College.

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“My dad always tells me to take the hard teachers and not to take the easy way,” Nina said. “It gets hard sometimes, but challenging yourself is important. I thought it’d be a good way to put myself out there and thought I’d give it a go.”

- Nina Schwelm

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“My dad always tells me to take the hard teachers and not to take the easy way,” Nina said. “It gets hard sometimes, but challenging yourself is important. I thought it’d be a good way to put myself out there and thought I’d give it a go.”

To nurture her writing craft, Nina hopes to pursue writing for theater and GC’s literary journal, “The Peacock’s Feet.” But that’s not all she dreams of.

“It would be a miracle if I could write for a movie or a TV show,” Nina said. “Being married with a family is a huge dream of mine I’ve had forever, but also making the most of what I have and trying to be happy wherever I am.”

After pausing, she said, “And I’d also really, really like to meet Adam Driver one day.”



Virtual view of the past: New exhibit explores history of Central State Hospital

[Ina Dillard Russell Library](#) : Thursday August 12, 2021

Once the largest mental health hospital in the world, Milledgeville's Central State Hospital's (CHS) history runs deep. Since it was founded in 1842, the institution saw major changes over the years. From advances in medical technology to patient care, a new exhibit aims to shine a spotlight on the some of the healthcare workers and their impact on the field of nursing.

The Georgia College Library has partnered with the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) to create a digital exhibit exploring the history of nursing at Central State Hospital (CSH) in Milledgeville.

In 2019, the library initially partnered with the Twin Lakes Library (TLL) in Milledgeville to undertake a community memory project. The group included Holly Croft, digital archivist, manager of facilities operations and planning Evan Leavitt, community engagement archivist Jessamyn Swan and Stephen Houser, former director of the TLL. The four were awarded an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant to preserve the history of the institution by documenting CSH's oral history.

At the time, Houser brought the GPLS Digital Exhibits (DigEx) pilot project to Croft and Leavitt's attention. The project is designed to build capacity for public libraries through the use of digitized cultural materials available on the Digital Library of Georgia (DLG), placing the items in the context of their respective communities.

The team saw the perfect opportunity to share some of the history of CSH.

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"No matter how you view the history of mental health treatment in the United States, the institution located here in Milledgeville serves as a paradigm of the country's treatment of people living with mental illness."

- Evan Leavitt

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Over the hospital's near 180-year history, the group looked at many topics and issues that could be examined. Since the pilot program requires participants to

utilize materials available in the DLG, they investigated what related items could be used to build a narrative.

It turns out the most viewed item on the DLG in 2019 was the record book of the CSH School of Nursing, which was originally digitized and shared by the Twin Lakes Library.

“We felt building off of that public interest provided us with a good starting point,” Leavitt explained. “Once I began my research, I quickly learned that you could not talk about the school of nursing alone. There was a need to contextualize nursing at CSH within the evolution of nurse training in the United States.”



Evan Leavitt

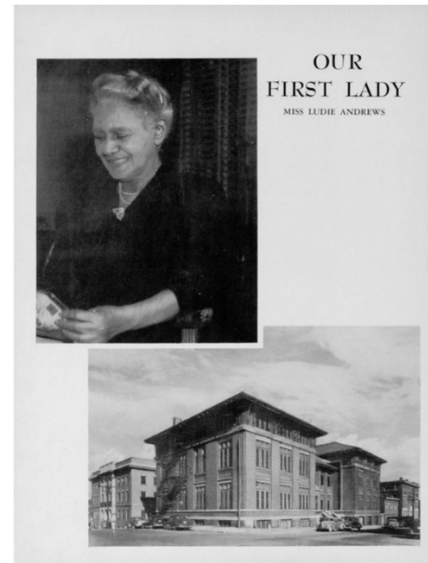
Dr. Shaundra Walker, director of the Georgia College Library, hopes to highlight materials in the library’s collection that will inspire researchers, but also help tell the story of CSH in a way that is inclusive of individuals and communities that perhaps haven’t been recognized.

The exhibit highlights the work of African American nurses like Ruth Hartley Mosley and Ludie Clay Andrews. Hartley Mosley was the first African American head nurse of a patient ward at CSH, and went on to become a civil rights activist and philanthropist. Clay Andrews, a Milledgeville native and Georgia’s first black registered nurse, organized the Municipal Training School for Colored Nurses.

African American Nurses

Mirroring the prevalent racial discrimination and segregation established in the United States during the Jim Crow era after the Civil War, the nursing profession did not provide equal opportunities to Blacks. The institutionalized social and economic disadvantages faced by Blacks necessitated the creation of separate nursing training schools and professional organizations to ensure participation in the nursing field. These disadvantages translated to the job market, with fewer employment opportunities available to Black nurses, creating unequal participation in the profession.

The first chartered nursing school in Georgia was the Grady Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, established in 1898 in Atlanta. The Municipal Training School for Colored Nurses, an accredited nursing school for Black nurses, was added to Grady Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in 1914 and was chartered in 1917. The Municipal Training School for Colored Nurses was organized by Ludie Clay Andrews, who was born in Milledgeville, Georgia in 1872. Andrews was a graduate of Eddy High School in Milledgeville, Georgia, and a 1906 graduate of the nursing training program at MacVicar Hospital at Spellman Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia. Andrews had been lobbying for the right of Black nurses to secure state nursing registration, and after ten years, her unwavering dedication paid off. The first Black nurses to graduate the Municipal Training School for Colored Nurses in 1920 were allowed to take the same examination as white graduates for certification by the Nurse Examining Board of the State of Georgia to become licensed nurses. Andrews became the first Black registered nurse in the State of Georgia.



Photograph of Ludie Clay Andrews, Nightingale, 1951.

A portion of the exhibit highlighting the work of African American nurses

Because it is digital, the exhibit has its own unique advantages.

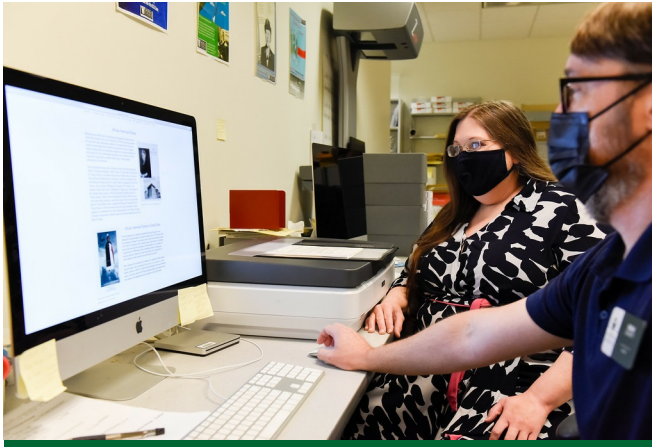
“Its reach is greatly expanded beyond those individuals who would only have the capacity to visit us in person,” Walker said. “Another advantage is that it can have a longer life. We plan to rotate the exhibits that are currently in our galleries, but by virtue of this one being digital, it can stay up much longer and will have a longer life than a traditional physical exhibit.”

Even with its wide reach, the creators of the exhibit have kept the local community in mind.

“

“We want to remember that those who care the most deeply about Central State Hospital are the ones who have a personal connection,” said Croft. “There are many people who have been a part of Central State, whether as patients, workers, or community members.”

- Holly Croft



Holly Croft, left

Croft added that while CSH is part of Milledgeville and the state of Georgia, other states had institutions that addressed mental health. Many of the processes and procedures at CSH were similar to those of other hospitals located across the country, making the exhibit useful to anyone looking for information on how mental health has been addressed in the United States.

In addition to the group of faculty and staff at Georgia College who curated and designed the exhibit, an editorial team consisting of librarians and museum professionals from public, private, and academic organizations were assembled by GPLS. The editorial team guided GC faculty and staff through the construction of the exhibit from start to finish, providing valuable feedback throughout the process.

Croft and Walker credit Leavitt with the design and curation of the exhibit. Leavitt, having no experience with HTML or CSS, the coding languages used for the exhibit’s software, collaborated with other departments on campus.

“I relied on Joshua Smith in University Communications and Ashley Waddell in Information Technology, who graciously provided their knowledge and assisted in designing and constructing the custom footer for our exhibit site,” he said.

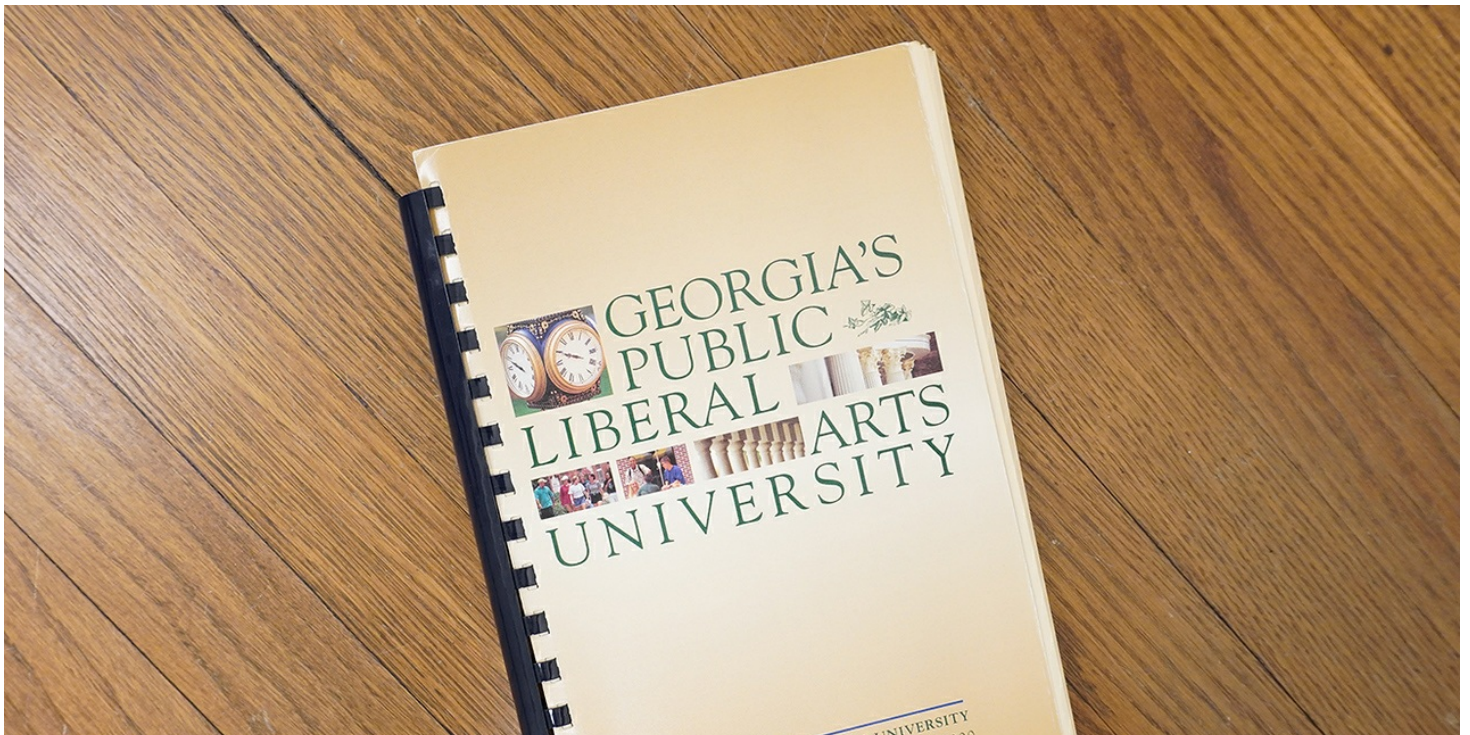
The exhibit runs in tandem with two other exhibits highlighting Georgia history. “Albany, Georgia’s Courthouses” from the Dougherty County Public Library, and “Ballard Normal School, Macon GA: African American Student Life in the 1930s,” from the Washington Memorial Library. Those exhibits, like the Central State exhibit, are the final product of the GPLS DigEx pilot program.

“If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a digital exhibit must be worth ten thousand words,” said Exhibit Curator Muriel Jackson of the Middle Georgia Regional Library Service. “These exhibits will represent our communities for years to come.”

The exhibit can be viewed online by following the link:

<https://georgialibraries.omeka.net/s/central-state-hospital/page/introduction>

News Stories Posted Tuesday August 17, 2021



Celebrating 25 years of liberal arts excellence

General Institution : Tuesday August 17, 2021

Georgia College's roots run deep in providing a top-quality education to students. Over the years, the university has changed in many ways, but that same dedication remains the same.

In 1996, the Georgia Board of Regents designated Georgia College as the state's public liberal arts university. We celebrate 25 years of this designation and showcase how the liberal arts comes to life on campus today.

A liberal arts education is defined as the academic course of instruction that develops broad intellectual capacities. Through liberal arts, students receive exposure to career-relevant skills that prepare them for a range of professions.

Students learn to think critically and broadly about issues. They learn to be effective communicators and work with diverse groups of people in teams. Ambiguity and challenges don't intimidate them. Instead, they're adaptable and resilient when problems arise—all skills taught and championed through the liberal

arts.

“Those skills are very relevant. In fact, I would argue that they’re probably even more relevant now than back in 1996 when we received the designation,” said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “The call from business and corporate leaders has also been stronger as survey after survey reveals they are seeking employees who possess those skills.”



Students interact at an event on campus

At Georgia College, the teaching and learning of so-called “soft skills” takes place in a gamut of ways.

Professors build their course to incorporate not just textbook definitions and PowerPoint lectures. They bring concepts to life through interactive learning, group projects and challenging students to think independently through their studies.

“Our university community is committed to thinking about the liberal arts and sciences in innovative ways, and one of those outcomes is GC Journeys,” said Spirou.

The co-curricular opportunities complement the classroom experience as all students are encouraged to participate in study abroad, undergraduate research, community-based engaged learning, leadership development and internships. Each is a component of the [GC Journeys Program](#).

The recently launched [Border-Free GC](#) aims to make international experiences more accessible.

“The liberal arts is really about the ability or the willingness to engage beyond defined structures,” said Spirou “I think that the Border-Free approach drops those boundaries, expands opportunities and allows students who otherwise would not have been able to view or engage, to now be able to do that.”

Over the past 25 years, Georgia College has consistently worked to make the educational and co-curricular experience more engaging and beneficial for students. Through a campuswide embracing of the liberal arts, the university has been able to hone in on the skills and experiences most beneficial for students.



Student trains in the nursing skills lab.

That continues to happen as technology develops and new opportunities arise.

For many years it's been assumed that the broad-based knowledge provided through liberal arts doesn't connect to professional-specific training.

"Many in our society promote the idea that one either pursues the liberal arts, or one studies business or technology fields, or some specific career-oriented training," said Spirou. "I think what's become more apparent over time is that both of those experiences can and should coexist. In fact, that they need to engage or interact with each other."

One such example recently launched is the Bachelor of Science degree in data science.

The new major was developed to meet a growing area of interest from our students as well as industry trends. The cross-college initiative between the departments of mathematics and computer science allows students to combine education and training from both departments for a degree that is relevant today.

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"Liberal arts contributes to your individual connection to your social world."

- Dr. Costas Spirou

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Spirou says plans are already in the works to develop more similar collaborations across the university. Georgia College continues to be innovative in the opportunities provided to students, and it's that same sense of continuous development "we hope students embrace and carry with them," he said.

Being a life-long learner and embracing social responsibility are hallmarks of a

liberal arts and science education and of Georgia College graduates.

“Liberal arts contributes to your individual connection to your social world,” Spirou said. “When you graduate and pursue a career, the sense of commitment to your social world, your community may lead you to volunteer. You may decide to run for office, maybe decide to be in some leadership position that will serve others.”

A liberal arts education helps propel students to whatever path they choose or whatever challenges come their way. On the heels of the trials our world faced over the last year and a half, the skills taught through liberal arts were affirmed even more.

“I think it’s important to celebrate how liberal arts values have helped higher education as a whole to get through the pandemic,” said Spirou. “Think about concepts like resiliency, collaboration, transparency, flexibility, attributes that we all had to take on, are key elements of a liberal arts education.”



Former Presidents Drs. Dorothy Leland and Rosemary DePalo pictured from the 20th anniversary celebration in 2016.

News Stories Posted Thursday August 19, 2021



Cathy Cox Named President of Georgia College & State University

[General Institution](#) : Thursday August 19, 2021

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) today named Cathy Cox president of Georgia College & State University, effective October 1, 2021.

“Georgia College & State University has long played a special role within USG as the state’s public liberal arts college, and it is gaining a new leader who inherently understands how important that mission is both for students and the state,” USG Acting Chancellor Teresa MacCartney said. “Cathy Cox has deep experience in liberal arts education, and a passion to help Georgia College succeed. I congratulate her on her new role.”

Cathy Cox became dean of Mercer University School of Law in 2017 after serving 10 years as president of Young Harris College.

“I am excited to welcome Cathy Cox into the USG family, and know Georgia College will only keep rising among the ranks of the nation’s best public liberal arts institutions,” Board of Regents Chairman Sachin Shailendra said. “On behalf of the Board of Regents, I look forward to working with her.”

As the 21st president of Young Harris, a private liberal arts college in the north Georgia mountains, Cox led its transition from a two-year college to a four-year institution and oversaw unprecedented growth. Prior to assuming the Young Harris presidency, Cox served two terms as Georgia’s secretary of state, and was the first woman in the state’s history to be elected

to the post, first in 1998 and again in 2002. In the spring of 2007, she held the Carl E. Sanders Political Leadership Chair at the University of Georgia School of Law.

“Thank you to the Board and Acting Chancellor MacCartney for this tremendous opportunity,” Cox said. “I am excited to work with an already amazing faculty and staff as we enhance Georgia College as a destination for students seeking a preeminent liberal arts education. I can’t wait to get started.”

Storbeck Search provided consulting services during the president search process.

About Cathy Cox

A native of Bainbridge, Cox worked as a newspaper reporter for three years before entering law school, working for The Times in Gainesville and The Post-Searchlight in Bainbridge. She earned a degree in journalism, summa cum laude, from the University of Georgia and is a 2013 inductee to the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication’s Grady Fellowship. Cox also holds an associate’s degree in agriculture from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton.

Cox was a magna cum laude graduate of Mercer Law School, where she was editor-in-chief of the Mercer Law Review. She practiced law full-time for 10 years in Atlanta and Bainbridge following her graduation. She has remained an active



Cathy Cox

member of the State Bar of Georgia.

Cox served two terms in the Georgia House of Representatives and two terms as Georgia's secretary of state. In the spring of 2007, she held the Carl E. Sanders Political Leadership Chair at the University of Georgia School of Law. Later that year she became the 21st president of Young Harris College where she served for 10 years. She was named dean of Mercer University School of Law in 2017.

Among her many awards and accolades are the 2011 Traditions of Excellence Award for General Practice by the State Bar's General Practice and Trial Section and the 2020 Outstanding Woman Lawyer by the Middle Georgia chapter of the Georgia Association of Women Lawyers.

Cox is a graduate of Leadership Georgia and the recipient of Leadership Georgia's prestigious J.W. Fanning Award for progressive leadership and service. She serves on a number of philanthropic and civic organizations and boards and is married to attorney Mark Dehler.

View the press release from the University System of Georgia [here](#).

News Stories Posted Monday August 23, 2021



Space Pioneers: Astronomy professor and students create stellar map

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Monday August 23, 2021

As intergalactic zombies--that eat their sister stars and wander galaxies like the walking dead--neutron stars and black holes have all the makings of a hit movie.

Now, there's a "first-of-its-kind" map showing exactly where these roaming corpses of stars were born and how far they've traveled, thanks to a Georgia College professor and a string of physics students over the past seven years.

“

No one else has done this--collected all this data into one map. We are the ones who've made the most updated list of neutron stars and black holes in the

world.

- Astrophysicist Dr. Arash Bodaghee

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“This type of research is typically done at Harvard or UC Berkeley. So,” Bodaghee said, “it’s kind of surprising to see Georgia College students taking the lead. That’s because I brought some of this data with me from my Ph.D. 20 years ago, and we’ve been updating it ever since.”

[Video](#)

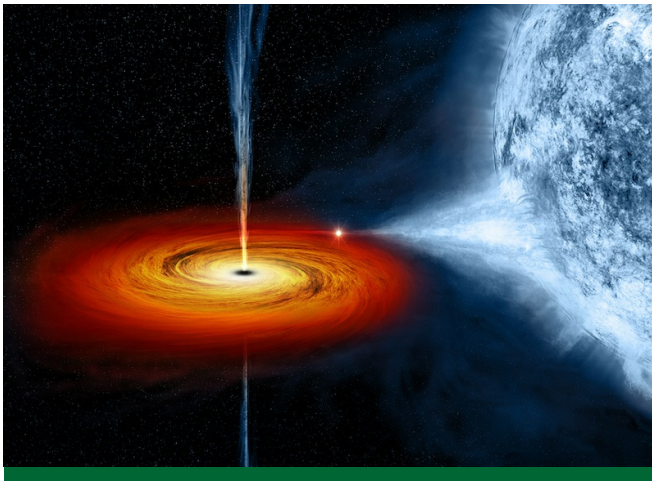


Illustration of a high mass X-ray binary or neutron star. (NASA credit)

The difference between a neutron star and black hole is the mass of its weight. Both are born from brilliant explosions of dying stars, much larger than our sun. But black holes are denser and less frequent.

Like many young boys, Bodaghee dreamed of becoming an astronaut. He ended up majoring in astronomy and--when looking for a research project for his Ph.D. at the University of Geneva in Switzerland--he ‘fell into’

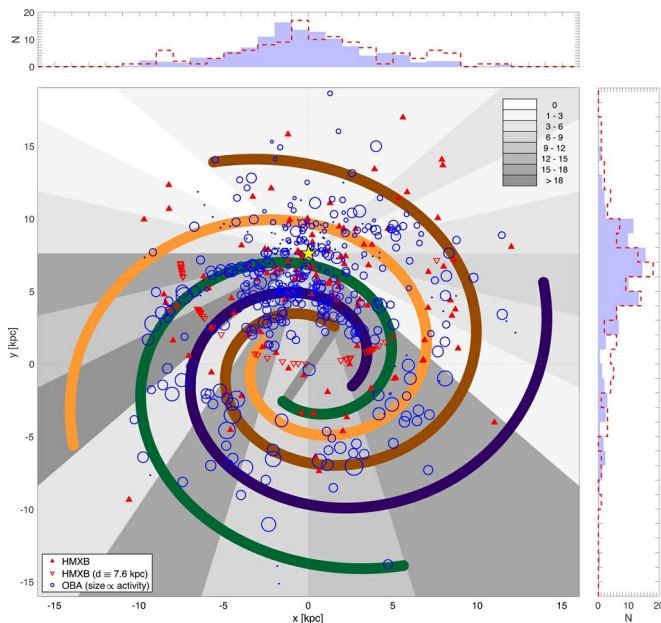
black holes. That subject was open, and he’s been studying the cosmic phenomena ever since.

Since 2014, four Georgia College students have helped Bodaghee chart neutron stars within the Small Magellanic Cloud. It’s a companion galaxy bound to the Milky Way by gravitational pull. The group just published their map and a research [paper](#) on the speed of neutron stars in that galaxy.

The next step is to update a map of the Milky Way that Bodaghee created in 2012. Scientists estimate there are tens of thousands of neutron stars and black holes in the Milky Way.

Eventually, the two maps will be put on Wikipedia so people and scientists all over the world can access them, update information and make edits. Bodaghee and Georgia College will maintain a controlling interest in the page.

“Neutron stars and black holes are extremely exotic,” Bodaghee said. “Extreme is



Map of neutron stars and black holes in the Milky Way, created using a computer program by Georgia College senior Cody Cox.

the best word to describe them.”

His face lights up when talking about these celestial vacuums, born in “nesting areas” throughout a galaxy.

When stars more massive than our sun die, there’s a supernova explosion. The enormous blast creates and ejects a core of gravity. These objects move through space, consuming their twin star and anything else in their path as fuel. Eventually, these “high mass X-ray binaries” get smaller and smaller and disappear, leaving what Bodaghee calls “ripples in the

fabric of spacetime.”

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Neutron stars and black holes are extremely exotic. Extreme is the best word to describe them.

- Bodaghee

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Detecting and tracking these stellar globetrotters is difficult. In the past, it was also slow-going. To create the Small Magellanic Cloud map, Bodaghee and his students had to locate one neutron star at a time. They did this by combing through publications and websites to find last-known distances from the sun.

Even that was only guesswork.

“I didn’t know when starting out,” Bodaghee said, “that computers would play such a big part. Today, the Hubble and X-ray telescopes are constantly observing the sky with tons of data coming in. People don’t have time to sift through all that. It can’t be done by hand, like in the old days.”



Cody Cox with Dr. Arash Bodaghee.

“

In a nutshell, you're looking at the most accurate map of high-mass X-ray binaries ever made. Crazy to think it was produced here at Georgia College, and that nobody else anywhere has anything close to it.

- Bodaghee

”

Then, Bodaghee met Cody Cox of Milledgeville. Cox started out as a computer science major at Georgia College but was looking for something more challenging. He switched to physics with a minor in mathematics--and his technological knowhow has proved invaluable.

An expert in C++ computer language, Cox quickly learned a more complicated program called MATLAB. He's written a few thousand lines of MATLAB code that extracts data on the distance of neutron stars and black holes from published catalogs, then computes the information onto a graph. He also wrote another few thousand lines of code that can update stellar maps--pinpointing where these heavenly bodies have moved.

The Milky Way chart shows a spiral of red triangles--indicating where neutron

stars and black holes are currently located--and blue circles for stellar nurseries where they were born. In the Milky Way, about 95 percent of triangles represent neutron stars and 5 percent black holes.

“In a nutshell,” Bodaghee said, “you’re looking at the most accurate map of high-mass X-ray binaries ever made. Crazy to think it was produced here at Georgia College, and that nobody else anywhere has anything close to it.”

Cox’s program saves a huge amount of time, while also being more precise. What used to take Bodaghee six months to a year to accomplish took Cox one week.

To do what Cox has done, Bodaghee said, would take a Ph.D. student years to achieve.

Cox did it last year as a junior in college, mostly in his free time.



Cody Cox

“Think of Cody as a more efficient version of me,” Bodaghee said, laughing. “He can go onto the Web archives, extract the information and put it onto a table. He’s the most motivated student I’ve ever encountered.”

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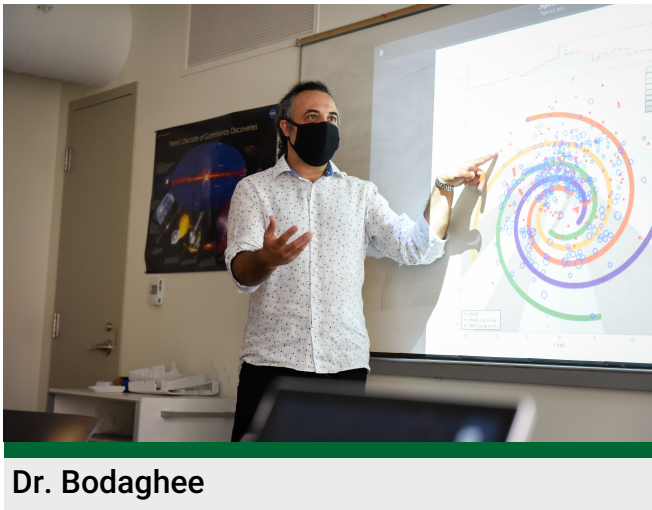
Cody’s programming and data science skills are exceptional. We’re lucky at this university to have such talented undergraduates. You ask, “Can you do this?” and by the following week, he’s done it and more. It’s just amazing.

- Dr. Bodaghee

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During his senior year, Cox will finish the Milky Way map. Once done, the two maps can be overlaid to show similarities and differences in neutron stars and black holes. The maps could determine if and why collapsed cores from separate galaxies move at different speeds. They might also indicate the life cycle of these entities and how far they migrate before fizzling out.

Cox transferred to Georgia College precisely for opportunities like this. He likes the statistical correlation of astronomy research and finding patterns in the data.



Dr. Bodaghee

“
This level of undergraduate research just isn't available elsewhere.

- Senior Cody Cox

”
In addition to working on neutron stars and black holes, Cox is also the proud discoverer of a previously unknown luminous

object, a quasar “a billion times the size of our sun” he named “IGR-12-346.”

“This level of undergraduate research just isn't available elsewhere,” Cox said. “There's such a close connection between the professors and the students here that allows a level of research you can't find anywhere else.”

“Before I got into college,” he said, “I didn't know I'd be doing this kind of work. It's given me an appreciation of all the work that goes into astronomy. People just think of it as looking into a telescope and seeing pretty pictures. But there's so much more that goes into it. I have a lot of respect for the people who do this full time. It's incredible.”

Cox hopes to get a master's in data science and work at Google or Microsoft.

His research with Bodaghee is great preparation toward that goal.

“

This is advancing our knowledge of how neutron stars and black holes interact with each other and other objects, and how they move through space. That's really what science is all about--acquiring new information and enhancing our understanding of the universe, and it always surprises us.

- Cox

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News Stories Posted Friday August 27, 2021



Georgia College welcomes Coverdell Scholar for Fall 2021

[Government & Sociology, Department of](#): Friday August 27, 2021

This year's Paul D. Coverdell Visiting Scholar brings his unique life and academic experience to Georgia College. His research focuses on refugee and migrant populations— a topic he knows about first-hand.

"I was born in Iran, and my family left when I was about five months old," said Dr. Amir Moheet, Coverdell Scholar. "My parents were politically active, and that didn't sit well with certain people over there. We were refugees and received asylum in the United States."

Although he admits he grew up "privileged" compared to many other refugees, his family's experience shaped his life in many ways.

It led him to study political science and research democratization, authoritarianism and global migration. While working on his Ph.D. he received a highly competitive David L. Boren Overseas Doctoral Fieldwork and Critical Language Fellowship in Ankara and Istanbul, Turkey.

“I was fortunate enough to receive this doctoral fellowship which allowed me to go overseas for a year to study advanced Persian and Turkish,” he said. “The fellowship also requires you to serve a minimum of one year with the federal government once it’s completed.”

“

It was a great experience to literally occupy the same positions in an agency that was responsible for granting my family access to come to the United States.

- Dr. Amir Moheet

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Moheet chose to work at the very agency that was responsible for helping his family into the U.S. years before.

“I worked for Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate,” said Moheet. “It was a great experience to literally occupy the same positions in an agency that was responsible for granting my family access to come to the United States.”

He left DHS to pursue his passion in academia and to use his skills to dive into areas like human rights and social justice in for refugees.

“I’m working on a book that looks at cultures of resistance globally, Borderlands, migrant justice and human mobility,” said Moheet.

“Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are among the most vulnerable populations in the world. In a lot of cases, they lack the legal protections. We’ve seen that from what’s happened in the last couple of years,” said he said. “I worked on some of those issues.”

This semester he’s teaching a course called Global Migration where students will be exposed to all aspects of international migration and human mobility.



Dr. Amir Moheet teaches his class.

“I've been living in the Middle East for the past three years, and in Turkey specifically, which has the largest refugee population in the world,” Moheet said. “I've worked with a good friend of mine, a lawyer who works with LGBTQ refugees and LGBTQ Turks who are attempting to obtain some measure of justice and express their human rights.”

“That's a lot of what I attempt to bring to my class examining and analyzing the ways in which all refugees pursue justice,” he said.

Moheet holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He has taught across the departments of political science and ethnic studies at the University of Hawai'i and was a visiting scholar at Bilkent University in Turkey.

The Paul D. Coverdell Chair in Policy Studies was established in 2008 and occupied by Dr. Roger Coate, professor of political science and public administration, for its first decade. In 2018, the endowed position was transitioned into a visiting scholar program. More information is available [here](#).