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October 2021



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News Stories Posted Wednesday October 6, 2021



Biochemistry Ph.D. student wants to help educate public and gain knowledge to find treatments and cures for illness

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Wednesday October 6, 2021

From an early age, Martin Alcantar, '18, has always been fascinated by the sciences. As he grew, he realized that one of the most interesting branches of science was studying biological processes and the chemistry that drives them. Later, he would find that his work could help alleviate food insecurity.

"My specific career path was not chosen with a job in mind, but rather from a want

to further my education and gain a higher level of understanding of what drives life,” Alcantar said. “I wanted to learn the intricacies of how biological processes work.”

Today, he’s a third-year student in the Biochemistry Ph.D. program at the University of Missouri. Once he graduates, Alcantar hopes to make an impact in helping individuals who suffer from severe illness.

He works in the lab where he focuses on plant-pathogen interactions.

“We work towards explaining the pathways that plants use to fight off pathogenic bacteria upon infection,” Alcantar said.

More specifically, he works with a family of signaling molecules thought to be the missing link in an important signaling pathway responsible for initiating plant defense responses when sensing bacterial pathogens.

“This is important, because gaining an understanding of the strategies employed by plants will allow us to engineer crops to be more resistant to pathogenic attack,” Alcantar said. “In turn, it will help decrease the loss of crops and increase food security.”

He nurtured his love of biochemistry at Georgia College.

“I enjoyed the challenge that the chemistry courses at Georgia College gave me,” Alcantar said. “The professors went above and beyond to not only teach the course material, but to ensure I could think critically rather than regurgitate information.”

Alcantar’s favorite professor for coursework was Dr. Chavonda Mills.



Martin Alcantar selects viable, 12-day-old healthy plants to be used in pathogen infection assays where he observes the plant's ability to restrict bacterial growth.

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“By learning and understanding the basic concepts of immunology and

pathology, the general public can then make much more educated decisions without a fear of what they don't understand."

- Martin Alcantar

"It was through taking her biochemistry class that I discovered a real interest for the field," he said. "Dr. Mills' class was quite challenging yet very intriguing, and these aspects drew me in."

Another professor who made a large impact on his life was Dr. Catrena Lisse, who served as his research advisor. Lisse taught Alcantar that understanding concepts and applying them in real-world scenarios is critical for success.

"Through her mentorship, I developed critical thinking and research skills that I've carried into my Ph.D.," he said. "In my Ph.D., I apply this on a daily basis, as many experiment outcomes are unknown. So, it's up to me to predict outcomes based on previous work of other researchers and draw my own conclusions."

Alcantar also learned many crucial, soft skills including communication, time management and organizational skills that he applies daily. He predicts he'll apply these skills for years to come.

Being a member of the Georgia College Chemistry Club also helped Alcantar grow professionally.

"The magic shows hosted by the Chem Club allowed me to practice communicating scientific topics to members of the nonscientific community," he said.

Ultimately, Alcantar aspires to work as a biochemist studying infectious disease. The COVID-19 pandemic has motivated Alcantar even more to work as a



Martin Alcantar stands by an abstract DNA model located in the Christopher S. Bond Life Sciences Center atrium. The building hosts a variety of research ranging from HIV to plant research that employ any number of interdisciplinary techniques.

biochemist.

“The disconnect between the scientific community and the general public is one of the greatest motivations for continuing on my career path,” he said. “This pandemic is not the first nor the last health crisis we will face in our lifetime. However, the lack of trust in science has never been more prevalent. This comes from a lack of understanding of the science by the general public.”

One of his career goals is to communicate to and educate the general public, so that when situations like this arise, the professionals can be trusted without a high level of skepticism.



Martin Alcantar (left) teaches an undergraduate student the proposed model for the interaction between the two model organisms: plant and bacterial pathogen, which are worked on in his lab.

“By learning and understanding the basic concepts of immunology/pathology, the general public can then make much more educated decisions without a fear of what they don't understand,” he said.

Alcantar has two-to-three years left of school depending on his research progress. Once he graduates, Alcantar would like to move back to Georgia and work at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"The CDC studies a number of pathogens responsible for human illnesses throughout history," he said. "I believe working at the CDC will expose me to a variety of different pathogens that I learn about and use in my pursuit of knowledge about biological processes."

Through working with these pathogens at the CDC, Alcantar hopes to one day shed some light on the mechanisms by which they work and find ways to fight off many illnesses, therefore ensuring healthier lives.

"I hope that my work makes an impact, no matter how small, in moving towards curing illnesses," Alcantar said. "I'm inspired by the ability to help those around me and offer some relief to those suffering from severe illnesses."



New student-led sports studio an enthusiastic success

[Athletics](#) : Wednesday October 6, 2021

From the COVID-19 shutdown and since restarting production, GC Studios, a student-led production crew, saw an expansion of over 20,000 views a week.

Luke Winstel, Bailey Clark and Joel White make up the current version of GC Studios. The team of junior and senior mass communication majors began as Georgia College Athletics student workers, and now work together to manage athletics' social pages, boost excitement for student-athletes and produce original content.

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“Everything we do at GC Studios is for the athletes to get the clout they deserve, it’s not for us.”

- Bailey Clark

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“Everything we do at GC Studios is for the athletes to get the clout they deserve, it’s not for us,” Clark said. “I felt that they were underappreciated, so this is to make

athletes feel wanted.”

Their enterprise started with Senior Sundays, where the team would introduce senior star student-athletes to the Georgia College community. Since then, administration in athletics has given them room to grow with a converted office space and major equipment upgrades.

“Once they invested in us, I knew they wanted us to execute,” Winstel said. “And we’re going to prove them right.”

Each student assists with idea creation, footage and production, but they all have a niche. Winstel is often the voice of GC Athletics but helps with editing. Clark conducts interviews, and White is their producer.

“You don’t really think about it when you’re watching TV, but there’s a lot of background stuff going on in making sure every camera angle cuts correctly, all graphics look good and everything runs smoothly,” White said.

Many changes have led to the success GC Studios now enjoys. The team created an all-new graphics package, like broadcast overlays, and implemented a direct-to-consumer approach to social media.

“Now we’re about bringing it to you, more than it being on our YouTube page, and you check it out if you want,” Winstel said. “We’re embracing a more modern social media strategy, and I would say, more creative.”

They started with the goal of 6,000 views per month over nine months. But on any given week, the team can now expect 6,000 views in a few days. Recently, they hit their biggest viewership mark when a single Instagram video surpassed 10,000 views.

[youtube embedcode="haQIU4yHznw" style="right"]Compilation of GC Studios Instagram reels.[/youtube]

“Every time we get more than 2,000 views on a video, we’re like ‘this is awesome,’” Clark said. “We watch the engagement and it’s gratifying because we put so much work into the videos. I don’t think we could have ever imagined that we’d have this much of a blow-up on social media.”

Through the students’ work, GC Studios has brought student-athletes and the wider GC community closer together.

“This kind of work spreading to the student body as a whole and giving them a sense of pride in the athletics department is the ultimate goal,” said Alan Weston, assistant athletic director for communications. “These students care so much, and I appreciate their hard work. It’s going to pay off for them professionally, and it’s exciting to work with them and see what they come up with on a day-to-day basis.”

GC Studios is looking to add more staff, especially in videography and broadcast production. Interested students can contact GC Studios at alan.weston@gcsu.edu.



Students are at the heart of giving for GC's number one donor

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Wednesday October 6, 2021

Dr. Kenneth Saladin, distinguished professor emeritus, has made a tremendous mark on Georgia College through his teaching and generosity. Not only is he the university's largest donor, but the impression he's made on biology alumni, and continues to make on current students, is immeasurable.

Since he began working at Georgia College in 1977, Saladin has mentored hundreds of students in the premed/ biology program. He remains friends with many successful alumni, whom he taught over the course of 40 years.

Saladin was just starting to write his dissertation for his Ph.D. when the biology professorship position "just fell unexpectedly into [his] lap." During his one-year appointment, he decided Georgia College was a great fit for him.

"As it turned out, I couldn't have been happier," Saladin said. "In grad school, I discovered teaching was my real passion. And Georgia College was always more focused on students than hustling grants, managing labs and things like that. So, it was a real good fit for me."

For Saladin, the best part of teaching students is what he learns.

“Students provide me with a motivation to stay intellectually engaged with the world, and I always learn something new,” he said. “This provides a platform to share what I’ve learned with people who are interested.”

Overall, what he liked best was lecturing. He considers it “scientific storytelling.”

Through the years, Saladin took numerous students to the Galápagos Islands for study abroad, conferring travel grants on many of them to make the experience more affordable.

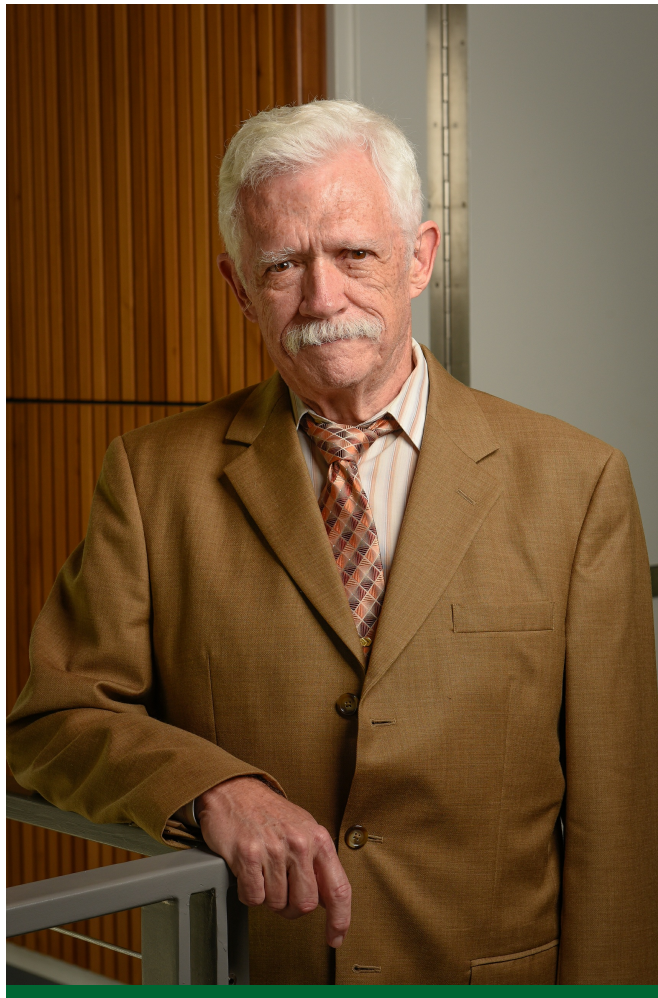
“Some of them had never been out of Georgia or flown on a plane before, much less been out of the country,” Saladin said.

“The biology students were just awed by the intrinsic beauty and the mystique of the place,

because biology students and everybody who’s ever heard of Darwin has heard of the iconic Galápagos Islands.”

The study abroad was much more than an aesthetic experience, however. To qualify for the trip, students first had to take his on-campus course, “Cultural and Natural History of the Galápagos Islands.”

“As biologists, when students set foot on the islands, it’s a transcendent experience for them,” he said. “The mystery of the scenery on these volcanic islands and sitting among these animals that come right up to you—it was just a rapturous experience for many of those students.”



Dr. Kenneth Saladin



Dr. Saladin works with biology students in the lab.

Saladin was good at recognizing potential in students. Some of them had modest ambitions for their life. He made them realize they had the potential to do much more.

"I recall one of my student's ambitions was not a high-paying job," Saladin said. "But I just saw some spark of intellect in her that commended her for much more than that. So, I asked her, 'Have you ever thought about medical school?'"

Despite her doubts, Saladin helped her understand she was capable of mastering medical school. Today she's a physician.

"I had other students like her who weren't recognizing their potential," he said. "And now they're also physicians and professionals who are so happy with their lives in medical school and beyond."

Saladin has traveled as far as Miami and Birmingham to see former students receive their medical degrees. Success is measured by how much you improve the world around you, he said.

"When I've mentored them for so long, it's nice to see the culmination of that effort for them to get their terminal degrees and be on the road to success" Saladin said. "For graduations at Georgia College, it's a matter of seeing students' pride of

achievement and meeting their parents. I see it as the culmination of all their efforts. It's celebratory and heartwarming."

Saladin's philanthropy to the university began early in his teaching career by donating small monthly payroll deductions to the biology department.

"We had some needs in biology that couldn't be covered by the state budget," he said. "I just kicked in a little money to help fund the department that we could draw from things that mainly were laboratory oriented and funding for student travel to research conferences."

Later, his first six-figure gift was an endowment to the William Wall Museum of Natural History, to recognize the colleague and former department chair who created the museum and brought scholarship and research in paleontology to the biology department.

Prior to retiring, the first million dollars Saladin gifted was to create the William Harvey Endowed Professor for Biomedical Science and keep the Premedical Mentorship program going.

"I had created this program, and I didn't want it to fade away after my retirement," he said. "It was very successful. We had a 100 percent admission rate to medical school for students who went through with applying. I thought it deserved to carry on."

Today, the position is held by Dr. Ashok Hegde, professor of biology. The premed mentoring program is unique to Georgia College and unmatched by anything like it in the country.

Saladin also created the William Harvey Lecture Series in medicine and biology—an annual lecture by speakers from outside the university.

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"We need more of them [scientists] in today's world. We need a larger citizenry who can think like scientists, who understand and respect scientists and don't reject science. And I think Georgia College epitomizes what institutions of higher education should be doing to produce this kind of scientifically literate citizenry."

- Dr. Kenneth Saladin

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In addition, Saladin created several scholarships—one for his first science teacher

and mentor Donald Sly; one for retired colleague Doris Moody; and one for the famous sociobiologist, E.O. Wilson, who personally contributed money to Saladin's endowment.

Saladin also provides for the Saladin Scholars program through the John E. Sallstrom Honors College. Three students are awarded the scholarship each year to support off-campus enrichment experiences in their field. He also supported the John E. Sallstrom Honors College in honor of Sallstrom's tireless efforts in keeping the Honors Program going in the early years despite a lack of funding.

Saladin gives to the biology department—and to Georgia College as a whole—to give back. The university provided a supportive environment for his textbook writing.

"Not every college or university does this," he said. "Georgia College, and my department, always generously and enthusiastically supported me in that endeavor, and that's a big part of why I feel it's appropriate to pay that back and share the success of my books with GC.

In his last few years of teaching, Saladin was inspired by the quality of incoming faculty for their dedication to the idea that research is for the purpose of teaching students how to work as scientists.

Saladin calls it "special" that the university places a high emphasis on student research, where students can start working in research labs as early as their freshman year. Some students get published in peer-reviewed scientific and medical journals before they graduate. One student Saladin mentored is now a fourth-year med student. She published three articles in a medical ophthalmology journal even before graduating from GC.

Saladin's next endowment will fund student research. Its purpose will be to teach students to think and work like scientists.

"We need more of them in today's world," he said. "We need a larger citizenry who can think like scientists, who understand and respect scientists and don't reject science. And I think Georgia College epitomizes what institutions of higher education should be doing to produce this kind of scientifically literate citizenry."

In tandem with the September ribbon-cutting ceremony for the university's new Integrated Science Complex—Saladin donated \$1 million to further support faculty-mentored student research in biology and environmental sciences.

Despite all his donations, he has mixed feelings about being the largest donor in Georgia College history.

“I want somebody to come along and take that title away from me, eventually,” Saladin said. “But for now, I’m very happy to hold that rank. I just hope it’s going to grow into bigger philanthropy in the future.”



Six award-winning alumni to be honored during Alumni Weekend

Alumni : Wednesday October 6, 2021

Georgia College salutes four alumni, whose perseverance exemplifies the goals and missions of the university. Their acts of kindness, dedication to their professions and tireless commitment to volunteerism sets the bar for alumni achievement. The university also showcases two alumni who are inducted into the GC athletics Hall of Fame, representing the top competitors in the history of Georgia College Athletics. The awards will be presented to all six recipients during Alumni Weekend.



Alumni Award winners pictured from left to right are: Dr. Susan Stewart, Pamela Trawick, Dr. Sean B. Dolan and Dr. Vincent Carey.

Dr. Susan Stewart, '70, is the recipient of the Alumni Heritage Award. This honor is bestowed to an alumna who, in four or more decades of service, has demonstrated in her life those ideals that best exemplify the traditions and heritage of the university.

Georgia College means a lot to Stewart. She served on the Alumni Board, as well as the Foundation Board of Trustees for 10 years, two of which she served as chair.

"This was a wonderful experience," she said. "It was such a great opportunity to not only meet the people who are on the board, but also the faculty and students. This experience also allowed me to keep apprised on what Georgia College was doing. And each year it gets better."

Her calling in life is to help youth and families maximize their resources and live their best lives. Her home economics degree from Georgia College prepared her for a rewarding career in public schools and with the University of Georgia Extension Service following her calling.

"At Georgia College I had the opportunity of being a junior advisor," Stewart said. "Junior advisors were in the dorm with students, including those who'd transferred. I got to work with a French student who had studied abroad. It was very rewarding."

What she enjoys most are the relationships she's formed while being involved with Georgia College. Her class has since started holding periodic mini reunions.

Stewart is president of S. Stewart and Associates, Inc., where she's a conference planner. Stewart feels her Georgia College experience gave her the confidence to contact the heads of organizations.

"I've had to deal with business executives, United States presidents, vice presidents and community leaders," she said. "Whether you're having a conversation with former Presidents Jimmy Carter or Bill Clinton, how you relate to them is important."

"I just am so appreciative to Georgia College for allowing me to be involved," she said. "It has been one of the joys of my life. I could never give back what it has given to me, but I've loved trying."

Pamela Trawick, '91, is the recipient of the Alumni Service Award, which recognizes graduates who've rendered the greatest service in recent years to both the university and the Alumni Association.

While attending Georgia College, Trawick considered herself an introvert, but that all changed once she graduated. Trawick served a two-year term as the first event coordinator for the African American Alumni Council (AAAC) and was instrumental as being one of its six founders.

"During my tenure, my position allowed me to be creative, serve in purpose and create platforms to recognize several alumni, allies and friends who have made a significant and positive impact in and for the lives of African American students at GC," she said. "The AAAC's role and importance gives hope to so many students."

Being on the AAAC Executive Committee was the springboard for her involvement

with Georgia College. This experience enabled her the opportunity to serve on the Foundation Board of Trustees, which she serves on today.

“I am grateful for everything at Georgia College, but most of all I love the students—all of them,” she said. “You never know the struggles students encounter in college. I never came to GC to only stand for African American students, I came to stand for all students.”

Trawick happens to be an African American alumna with a biological family consisting of people of different races, religion, age, disabilities, sexuality and gender.

“GC students have a sense of community. When they see a wrong, they have no problem addressing it with civility and poise, and I love each of them for this,” she said. “We need more of this in the world and on college campuses.”

Trawick thinks it’s important to serve others. She learned this from her mother and grandmother.

“This is what drives me to serve,” she said. “I want to make sure the values and morals of my upbringing were always on display and in action for others to see.”

Trawick learned so many lessons at Georgia College that she uses in her profession as president, owner and operator of ICD Monitoring Services, LLC and in her everyday life encounters.

“I learned to reach back and pull forward,” Trawick said. “Be a fisherman of men. When you cast your rod, pole or net, you want to catch as many as you can and bring them with you to the next level of the journey and then you can release them back into the water, the world so they can go forth and do more.”

Dr. Sean B. Dolan, '12, is the recipient of the Outstanding Recent Alumni Award. This honor recognizes Georgia College alumni who graduated within the past 10 years and have achieved notable achievement in their profession with promise for continued success. He’s worked as a pharmacologist at the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) over a year-and-a-half. Before that, he was a postdoctoral research fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where his focus was behavioral pharmacology and behavioral economics research related to substance use and addiction.

“At all stages of my career, I’ve found the most joy in discovery,” he said. “Whether it’s making my own discoveries through my experiments or learning of others’ discoveries by staying on top of the scientific literature in my field, it’s truly a privilege to have learning new things as a core feature of my job.”

Dolan chose this career so he could make a direct impact on public health.

“Although academic research provides more freedom and diversity in research topics, it can take a long time for your findings to have any impact outside of a particular field of academic research,” he said. “At FDA, the research can be used directly to influence policy and make a large positive public and individual health impact.”

Dolan knows perseverance is the key to success. Day-after-day, he is driven by a passion for what he does.

“Any rewarding career is likely to require hard work, both at the job itself and in the prerequisite steps necessary to achieve it,” he said. “Continuing to work hard through the challenges one may face is essential for success in any career.”

Vincent Carey, '87, DMD, is the recipient of the Ethel Rae Mozo-Stewart Community Service Award. This distinction is in memory of an alumna from the class of '46, to honor the spirit of volunteerism among graduates. Recipients are characterized by a history of exemplary service that result in visible improvements within his/her community.

At Georgia College, Carey helped charter the first chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. He was also a resident assistant (RA) for two years, which provided him great real-world experience in working with people.

“As an RA, I got a chance to interact with every personality type you can think of,” he said.

Carey and his friends also started a small social interest group called “Rated PG.” They networked with local elementary schools to do good things in the community, especially during the holidays. Samples of his good deeds catered to local youth. They hosted a Halloween carnival at a nearby church with games and treats. They also hosted Spring Fling filled with fun activities for children, like bobbing for apples.

“We wanted to provide some sort of outdoor activities for the kids,” he said. “In doing so, we gave them some idea of mentorship. That was very important to me.”

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, his dental office hosted “Dentist for a Day.” Carey rented a charter bus for elementary school students. They came to the office where he and his staff taught the kids how to do dental exams and other activities associated with dentistry. After that, the team treated the children to lunch at the Galleria Mall in Centerville.

Carey also hosts Fort Valley State University students at his office once a year to

advise them about dental school and help prepare them for college.

"We all have a responsibility to share our education with someone younger than us," he said. "Because in my mind, it's the only way you're going to build a community, maintain that community and keep the bloodline of the community flowing."

Carey's also sponsored two scholarships at the Medical College of Georgia—one for students in dental school and one for students in medical school.

He continues to help young individuals by sharing his experiences with them, so they can better navigate through life.

"What it all boils down to, is taking your life experiences, and making every last one of them positive," Carey said. "Young people don't understand this concept and think that everything that happened to them is for a purpose. They look at a situation as if, 'Oh no. This will defeat me.' But really, it won't. It's just preparing them for the future."

He feels mentorship is important, because he learned so much from the people before him.

"Mentoring is not our responsibility; it's an obligation," he said. "The students that we're mentoring are the ones that'll keep the fire lit for generations."

Mary Rob Plunkett '10 (Soccer) is the first All-American in Georgia College Women's Soccer history after making the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Third Team in 2009. The most decorated goalkeeper in Bobcat Soccer history, Plunkett was an All-Region and All-Peach Belt Conference (PBC) First Team selection that season, as well. She owns two of the four NSCAA All-Nation Scholar awards in school history, picking those up in 2009 and 2010. Plunkett is the school's career record-holder in goals against average [0.74], saves percentage [.854] and shutouts [19]. She also ranks second in career saves with 275 and wins with 33.

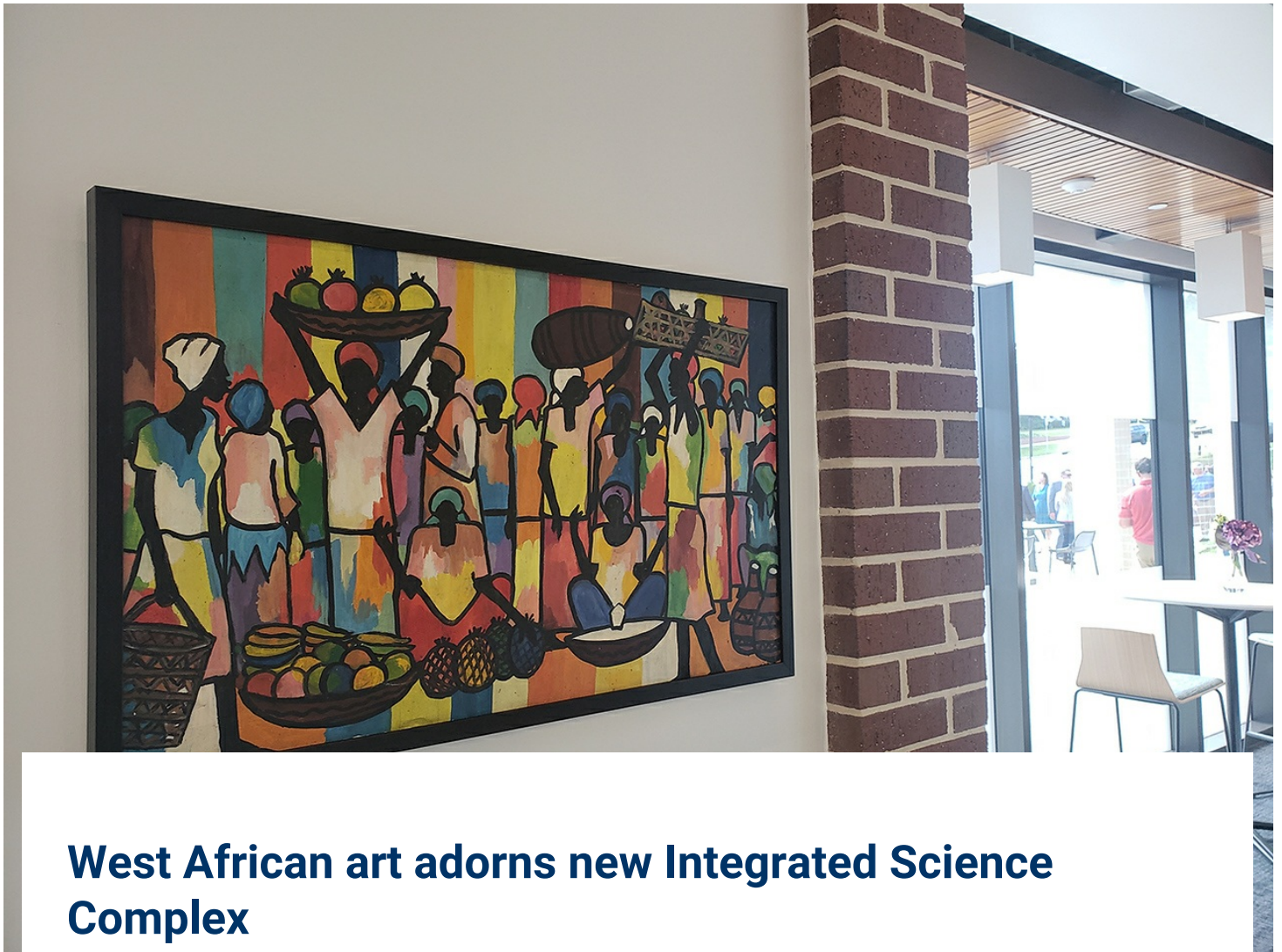


GC Athletics Hall of Fame Award winners
Mary Rob Plunkett and Martin Dewald

Martin Dewald '10 (Baseball) played two seasons with the Bobcats as a junior-college transfer. He was an Honorable Mention All-American his first season as a

relief pitcher and a consensus All-American as a starting pitcher in 2010. Dewald helped lead the Bobcats to an appearance in the NCAA Division II World Series in 2010, taking spots on the 2010 NCAA World Series and NCAA Southeast Regional All-Tournaments teams. In the 2010 Southeast Regional title game, he threw a six-hit, eight-strikeout shutout, not walking a single batter against Francis Marion. The win was his second at that region tournament. At the World Series, he threw two complete games, including a 3-0 win over Southern Indiana on five hits and eight more strikeouts.

News Stories Posted Thursday October 7, 2021



West African art adorns new Integrated Science Complex

[College of Arts & Sciences](#) : Thursday October 7, 2021

The walls of Georgia College's new Integrated Science Complex has original Congo paintings available for study thanks to Jim and Karen Fleece of Greensboro, Georgia.

"The artwork seems simple, but it's full of symbolism," Jim said. "Now this meaningful artwork will be studied year-after-year."

As the couple downsized their residence, they thought about donating their art to Georgia College.

"We didn't want to split up the collection, because it's so unique," Jim said. "It's

unlike any other collection in the country. And a museum connection with a university just seemed like a natural place for it—where it can be studied forever.”

The couple has always had a strong, positive feeling about liberal arts schools, which is why they were interested in Georgia College.

The couple met in 1956 at DePauw University—a liberal arts college in Indiana, where they graduated in 1960.

When Jim retired in 1999, they moved to Reynolds Plantation in Greensboro, Georgia. It was the Georgia Jazz Band that piqued their interest in Georgia College.



Karen and Jim Fleece

The Band performed at Reynolds Plantation, and inspired the couple to learn more about the school. They met Georgia College's former President Rosemary DePaolo and were impressed.

“We spent a lot of time at Georgia College and just always had good experiences,” Karen said.

Jim served on the Foundation Board for eight years, where he was chairman of the Investment Committee.

Jim and Karen started their collection when Jim worked in the Congo from 1989 until 1999. He was a geologist with Exxon where he was trying to find new oil and gas fields in West Africa. Jim traveled back and forth from West Africa once a month for 10 years. This included nearby countries that got bombed including Guinea and Angola. It was high-risk work, so Jim had bodyguards.



Art from the Congo, donated by Jim and Karen Fleece, serves to decorate and be studied at the Integrated Science Complex.

In his free time, Jim searched for art from the surrounding villages.

"This place in Brazzaville, Congo, was unlike any other country that I visited," Jim said. "It was an art colony, similar to what was going on in the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when Impressionism was being brought over from Europe. And there were small groups of artists who lived and painted together."

"Looking for the gems of art paintings was something that I really enjoyed," he said. "And in many of these paintings, I realized they weren't fine art, but they brought joy to me and others. I didn't know you can look at 1,000 pieces of art before something will talk to you."

The art represents a 10-year period of time in what was known as the Congo. The West African side of the African continent was undergoing major change during the Cold War. The sides were drawn between West Africa and Russia.

"We were observing an entire culture from the Congo, that dated back to the time of Christ," Karen said. "And they were an extraordinary group of folks who loved creativity and art. And then as Jim began to meet them, the question became,

‘What can we do to help them?’ So, it all started from there.”

There was a very large and tall Quonset hut with a wrap-around patio. The painters sat on the porch, painted and hung paintings on the wall in the hut. They were hung vertically, 10 paintings high with over 300 paintings. Every now and then a tourist would come along and buy one, but there wasn’t much commerce.

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“Looking for the gems of art paintings was something I really enjoyed. And in many of these paintings, I realized they weren't fine art, but they brought joy to me and others. I didn't know you can look at 1,000 pieces of art before something will talk to you.”

- Jim Fleece

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The painters never had lessons or real paint supplies. Instead, they painted on parachutes, grain sacks or burlap. They used very little paint, which they made from berries and different colored mud.

The art is very primitive, because the painters didn't understand dimension.

Some of the faces are painted solid black. As the years went by, Jim noticed painters adding faces to their work.

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“We were observing an entire culture from the Congo that dated back to the time of Christ. And they were an extraordinary group of folks who loved creativity and art. And then as Jim began to meet them, the question became, ‘What can we do to help them?’ So, it all started from there.”

- Karen Fleece

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Even though poverty was widespread, Jim learned the painters were cheerful, family-oriented people. You can see it in the paintings of their villages.

“It was a matriarchal society, because they were always showing the women doing housework or going to market,” he said.

"The surprising thing to me was I could see that each artist had their own style," Jim said. "So, I could tell who painted what by looking at what they painted. Each had their own color schemes and styles and just developed their painting skills on their own."

Eventually, Jim bought over 300 paintings but lost 31 in a major hotel in Angola, where there was fighting in the streets. The hotel was sacked, and the paintings were stolen.

The people practiced several religions, but the main one was Catholicism. There are a couple of paintings involving the Catholic Church, and others reflect more native agrarian religions.

During the height of the Cold War with Russia, people painted behind the scenes. Tons of propaganda was being painted, authorized by the Communist Party.



Art from the Congo will be used as a teaching tool.

One painting remains on Jim's mind, reminding him of a religious parable. It's called "The Greedy Man and his Diamond." It illustrates the greed on the face of a man kneeling and clutching a diamond.

"You get what they're trying to teach their children," Jim said. "I hope that's one that people will notice how well they captured the man's face."

Karen has her favorites, as well.

"In one painting, all the women are gathered at a fish market," Karen said. "And the center figure is standing and leaning over, and her skirt takes the shape of a fish. And you see little shapes of fish along the way. It's wonderful to study a different culture this way."

The Fleeces want their paintings to be used as teaching tools.

"I hope a professor will take an interest in these paintings and dive deep into that culture, and students get to experience what kind of art can really be done by people with no education," Jim said. "From an academic viewpoint, this collection can mean a lot for the university. When I look into the future, students will see history—what life was really like during those 10 years. And, although the Bantu Tribe was very poor, you see joy in their faces."

News Stories Posted Monday October 11, 2021



Maker Space gives future educators the tools to get creative

[Teacher Education, Department of](#) : Monday October 11, 2021

Virtual reality sets. 3D printers. Drones, robotics and an engraving machine. This isn't your typical technology classroom. It's for future educators.

Georgia College's John H. Lounsbury College of Education recently opened a new Maker Space. It brings multiple new technologies into the hands of teacher candidates to help them educate their students.

[New Maker Space opens in the College of Education.](#)

"A Maker Space is a place where people can come together and create things and learn different technologies," said Dr. Joseph Peters, dean of the College of Education.

"The idea for the Maker Space really came from me visiting some of the schools in Georgia that had a similar space set up," he said.

Knowing schools across the state were already bringing technology into the hands of students in such a way, Peters proposed creating a Maker Space in Kilpatrick Hall. The space allows students to create, innovate and find new ways to engage students in their lessons.

“We had some things to help our teacher candidates like bulletin board papers, tools to cut and a laminating machine,” said Diedra Monroe, administrative assistant in the Department of Professional Learning and Innovation. “But Dr. Peters wanted to go to the next level.”

At the same time, faculty members Dr. Joanne Previts and Dr. Nancy Mizelle were writing a GREAT (Georgia Residency for Educating Amazing Teachers) Grant proposal. In the end, Georgia College and the Southern Regional Education Board were awarded the funds by the Department of Education.

“We're very fortunate to get a Department of Education Teacher Partnership Grant,” said Peters. “There was a \$5.2 million grant that we were awarded to prepare middle grades teachers, and because of that we were able to buy everything you see in the space.”

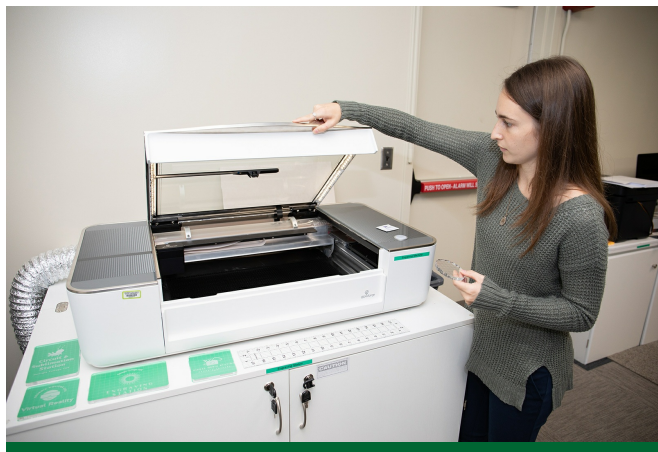
From there, Monroe worked to purchase the equipment, get it set up and train graduate assistants on how to use the technology.

“The Glowforge will engrave things. For example, we have been engraving on wood, and we made a sign for the Maker Space with this,” said Micaela Davis, middle grades master of education student.

Davis is one of three graduate students who helped Monroe with the set up the space. Together, they worked to learn how to use the tools.



Diedra Monroe, Bryce Bowen, Micaela Davis, and Savannah Rawdin.



Davis with the Glowforge.

The key is tying what's created back to the Georgia Standards for Excellence—the framework used to prepare elementary, middle and high school students for success. Graduate students worked to link each piece of equipment to state standards and developed lesson plans student teachers can use.

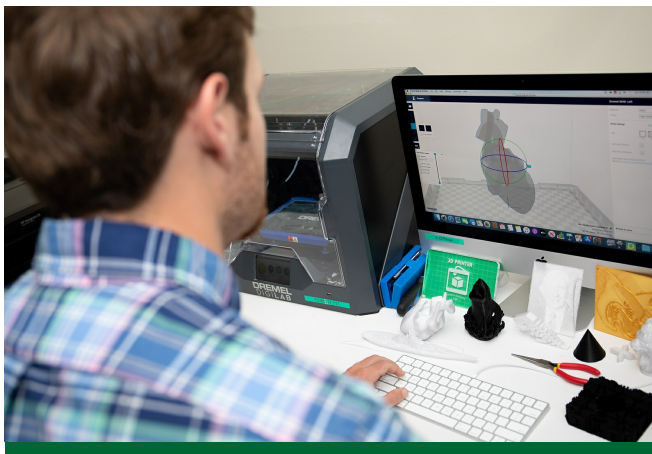
"We can use the Glowforge to create different lessons and visuals that go along with it," said Davis. "For example, you could print out an engraving of different planets. That's a project we're going to hopefully work on soon, and it's one of the sixth-grade science standards."

Another tool available in the Maker Space is the Cricut machine, which cuts anything from paper to vinyl or fabric.

"The thing about the Cricut is that it really can play into any standard. Any kind of presentation we're doing from posters to anything that we're trying to make a visual of—the Cricut can be a part of that," said Savannah Rawdin, early childhood education master of education student.

For some, it's about being able to physically hold things. That can help younger students better understand concepts like counting, addition and subtraction.

"I have used the Cricut for creating manipulatives, so sometimes we just need counters really quickly for our kindergarten students or other things when we talk about cardinality," said Rawdin.



Bowen works with the 3D printer.

Even as students grow and the concepts they learn get more intensive, the act of holding and touching can help with comprehension.

"With these 3D printers, we can make different tools to use in the classroom," said Bryce Bowen, master of health human performance student. "I've made things like a heart that can be used to teach anatomy. You

could give students a handheld version of something that they normally would not be able to put their hands-on, and it can help them understand it better."

Hands-on learning for future teachers is important as well. Peters said he hopes students take their experience in the new Maker Space to the schools where they teach.

“Our Maker Space is a little more on the high-end side, because our students are graduating to a 30 to 40-year career,” said Peters. “Schools will start to use more technology in the future, and we want our students to be ahead of the curve on what's going to be next.

Join the College of Education as they celebrate the grand opening of their new Maker Space Monday, Oct. 11 at 3 p.m. in Room 134 in Kilpatrick Hall.

News Stories Posted Monday October 18, 2021



Georgia College students make silkscreen prints with Jones County youth

[Art, Department of](#) : Monday October 18, 2021

Students in Matt Forrest's print making class enjoyed the autumn sunshine recently, making screen prints of ravens and blackout poetry with youth at Jones County Public Library.

The community outreach was part of a national celebration, TeenTober, through the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). Activities are hosted at libraries in October to promote services like WiFi availability and tutoring. The event encourages youth to read, while giving them an opportunity to adopt new skills.

"The idea was to highlight the library in a rural community and the notion that teens should be in the library," said Forrest, associate professor of art. "For many, carving out a time to read is becoming less of a priority due to competing technologies. We wanted to create something to show teenagers there are



Matt Forrest,
associate professor
of art.

resources available for them.”

New Jones County Public Library branch manager Julie King said she was thrilled with the project.

“It takes a lot to intrigue teens and get them excited about things,” she said, “and this is such a completely different activity from anything I’ve ever seen.”

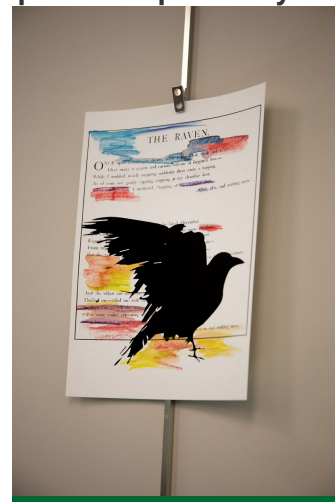
[Video](#)

Participants created one- and two-colored screen prints. One project involved blackout poetry--where the bulk of text on a page is blacked out with ink, revealing only a few select words. Remaining words comprise an original poem or prose. A poem by Edgar

Allen Poe was used, along with a page from the teen fiction novel, *Robot Visions*, by Isaac Asmiov.

Prior to TeenTober, Georgia College students created computer images of a raven and leafy border. These were printed on acetate film, then coated in a photographic emulsion and exposed to produce stencils.

Students demonstrated silkscreen pulling at the library. The method involves scraping a wooden paddle across a stenciled, ink-filled screen. Thermographic toner interacted with the warmth of artists’ hands, turning black to pink or black to blue.



**Raven blackout
poem.**



Senior Art Studio Major Mary Douberly makes a screen print with a young participant at Jones County Public Library.

“Print making is all art in one process. It involves drawing, mark making, photography and digital art. This process, for example, uses both a photographic process as well as a digital process,” said Mary Douberly, a senior studio art major from Savannah.

“

I was really excited for this, because anything connected with art is fun. Spreading art is always a good thing in my opinion.

- Mary Douberly

”

Douberly wants to work with children after graduation. She said the Jones County community event was “an amazing opportunity” for her to practice her teaching skills.

This is why Forrest connects students with community events. It allows them to take knowledge from the classroom and share it with others. Students pick up valuable communication and leadership skills, while experiencing what it’s like to

organize a public, nonprofit event.

Junior art studio major Kim Cunningham of Augusta looked forward to working with youth. Blackout poetry is trending on social media, she said. Because screen printing has multiple steps, she thought it was the perfect challenge for teens.

"I really do like working with children," Cunningham said. "Art's always been a very good method of expression, especially for young people. It can teach them skills that carry over into other fields. I think exposure to that at a young age is a good thing."

Kimberly Tran, a junior art major from Milledgeville, felt the community outreach activity was a good way for her to learn, as well.

"It might be a little challenging for teens, because there are a lot of steps you have to keep in mind," Tran said. "By reviewing the steps over and over again with them, though, it helps me cement the process in my mind too."



Senior practicum student Kelsey Thomas pulling a screen.

News Stories Posted Friday October 22, 2021



Celebrating 25 years of the liberal arts: Symposium highlights high-impact experiences

[GC Journeys](#) : Friday October 22, 2021

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 come to life on campus today.

A liberal arts education teaches skills like critical thinking, learning to work in diverse groups, how to navigate ambiguity and how to communicate well both orally and in writing.

These and other skills developed through a liberal arts education are learned from experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

Georgia College created the GC Journeys Program to connect the dots on how these skills not only help prepare students for their career, but help them understand that they will also use them rest of their lives.



Logo celebrating 25 years of liberal arts.

“GC Journeys, with its focus on experiential learning and student engagement, really embodies Georgia College’s liberal arts mission,” said Associate Provost for Transformative Learning Experiences Jordan Cofer.

The GC Journeys Program encourages students to take advantage of five inside- and outside-the-classroom transformative experiences during their time at Georgia College. The program includes the first-year experience, career planning milestones and the

senior capstone course, which are all required. Each student can then personalize their experience by choosing to take part in at least two other options: study abroad, community-based engaged learning, undergraduate research, an internship or leadership programs.

All these are designated as High-Impact Practices (HIPs) by the Association of American Colleges & Universities. A special event next week in honor of the 25th anniversary of the liberal arts designation will showcase how participation in HIPs makes a difference in students’ lives.

The GC Journeys Symposium will take place Friday, Oct. 29 from noon to 3 p.m. It is open to the entire campus community.

“We wanted to do this as part of a series to have more engagement about celebrating our 25th anniversary,” said Cofer.

Typically, in the fall, the Undergraduate Research Symposium is held—only highlighting one piece of GC Journeys. But the committee who organized it decided to expand it for this year.

“We changed it to the GC Journey’s Symposium because we are all part of it,” said Dr. Doreen Sams, professor of marketing and faculty coordinator of MURACE (Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors).

“During the 25th year of the liberal arts, I felt that we should celebrate all of the High-Impact Practices and not just MURACE,” Sams said. “I suggested it, and everyone on the team loved the idea.”

Sessions include a panel discussion from undergraduate summer research fund recipients, breakouts on how to develop High-Impact Practices and information on the new Vertical Integration Project (VIP) that will begin next spring.

“Participants will also hear from a prestigious panel: Cole Woodcox, director of COPLAC; Debra Humphreys, author and vice president of Lumina Foundation; and faculty representatives from across campus who are connecting the past and looking to the future as a liberal arts institution,” said Sams.



Where will your journey take you?

information on the event

The GC Journeys Symposium will be held on the virtual platform [GatherTown](#) and will be more interactive than a typical Webex or Zoom meeting.

“As we approach our 25th anniversary, I think it’s more important now more than ever to keep exploring ways to foreground the importance of the liberal arts and it’s contributions to the public good,” Cofer said.

This is the first in a series of events celebrating the 25th anniversary of the liberal arts designation. You can register at this [link](#).

The first 25 to register will receive a complimentary copy of the book “Learning That Matters,” which provides research-informed approaches for creating learning experiences and developing innovative, intellectually engaging courses.

Other events include:

John H. Lounsbury College of Education-November 9, 2021

The Value of Liberal Arts in Preparing Teachers & Leaders as Architects of Change

College of Health Sciences - January 27, 2022

25 Years of Liberal Arts in the Health Sciences

John E. Sallstrom Honors College – February 16, 2022

Honors and the Liberal Arts

J. Whitney Bunting College of Business- March 10, 2022
Business Education and the Public Liberal Arts: COPLAC Faculty Perspective

J. Whitney Bunting College of Business- March 22, 2022
Georgia College Executives Forum: Business Education for the Public Good

J. Whitney Bunting College of Business- March 23, 2022
Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce Eggs & Issues: The Liberal Arts Means Business.

University Library – April 4-May 4, 2022
An Exhibit Honoring the 25th Anniversary of GC's Liberal Arts Mission

College of Arts and Sciences- April 6, 2022
Celebrating the College of Arts and Sciences: The Heart of the Liberal Arts at Georgia College

Office of the Provost – April 6, 2022
Provost Summer 2021 Research Fellows Panel

More details will be announced as the dates get closer.

News Stories Posted Monday October 25, 2021



Soundtrack of Life: Georgia College Music Therapy enriches lives of adults with disabilities

[Music, Department of](#) : Monday October 25, 2021

[Video](#)

As executive director of the Life Enrichment Center (LEC) in Milledgeville, Barbara Coleman has a simple--yet far-reaching--goal.

To change the world one student at a time.

To do this, she created a partnership with Georgia College called Creative Expressions. Every week, this program brings adults with disabilities together with music therapy students.

“

We saw the opportunity to make a global impact, because every one of these students will go back to their own community with a different mindset. Hopefully, one day, we'll change a generation of mindsets.

- Barbara Coleman

”

Bringing adults with disabilities together with students accentuates the center's motto that “we are more alike than different.” It gives LEC participants a chance to engage musically with the community, share their unique talents and enhance skills.

On campus they become artists, guitarists, singers, dancers. They get to be like college students.



LEC participants enjoy drumming recently at Georgia College.

In return, students learn to work with others, accept differences and lead groups in therapy. It's a relationship like few others, according to LEC Activity Director and Music Therapist Jay Warren, who earned a master's in music therapy at Georgia College in 2020.

“

I’ve lived in a lot of places, and I’ve never seen this anywhere. It’s astounding. As a student, it changed my life. I wasn’t planning on working here. I wasn’t planning on staying in this town. It completely changed the direction of where I was going.

- Jay Warren

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“It’s rare to find a community that’s willing to engage with adults who have disabilities. We all know, having grown up in the United States in the last 60 years,” Warren said, “There’s stigma attached to people based on their looks, speech patterns, things like that.”

“I’ve lived in a lot of places, and I’ve never seen this anywhere,” he added. “It’s astounding. As a student, it changed my life. I wasn’t planning on working here. I wasn’t planning on staying in this town. It completely changed the direction of where I was going.”

Georgia College is one of two state universities with a music therapy major. It’s the only Georgia school offering a master’s in music therapy. The program started in 1977 and services Baldwin County Schools, in addition to LEC. About 78 students with disabilities are served K-12th grade at the music therapy clinic on campus. Music helps with social skills, sharing, impulse control and attention span.



LEC Activity Director Jay Warren helps guide students, as well as adults with disabilities.

Georgia College’s Creative Expressions program with LEC began more than 20 years ago. About 55 undergraduates majoring in music therapy get their clinical hours through eight Creative Expressions groups that meet each week on campus. These include Men’s Vocal Percussion, Jungle Royales, Bell Tones, Harmonettes Vocal Choir, Good Vibrations and Music in Motion.

“

People respond to music at pretty much any point in their lives, so we’re able to

tap into that and help them have a better quality of life.

- Katie Whipple

”

On any given day, vans of adults with disabilities are coming and going—and the bottom floor of the Health and Sciences building is engulfed with the sound of music. Visitors see happy faces, moving bodies. They hear singing, clapping, drumbeating, bellringing, guitar strumming.

“People respond to music at pretty much any point in their lives, so we’re able to tap into that and help them have a better quality of life,” said Katie Whipple, lecturer of music therapy, undergraduate coordinator and clinic coordinator for the music therapy program.

LEC clients have a range of disabilities like Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, Williams syndrome and autism. Music therapy is also used with stroke survivors and elderly patients with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia. Some clients have trouble remembering and expressing their thoughts. They might have an awkward gait or trouble managing muscle movement.

But in Creative Expressions these characteristics fade. Other traits appear. There’s a willingness to try new things. Bonds are formed. Confidence grows.



Senior music therapy major Abigail Hearn leads the Harmonettes recently in a Creative

Senior music therapy major Abigail Hearn of Loganville has been part of the women's vocal choir, Harmonettes, for seven semesters and now leads the group. She proudly notes how several clients--too shy to participate in earlier years--are clamoring for solo roles in the Creative Expressions concert scheduled for Nov. 22.

“

... it's just an experience like no other.

- Abigail Hearn

”

Hearn helps clients memorize song lyrics, learn proper pronunciation and choreograph dance steps. She never tires of watching them interact with students. They radiate so much excitement and delight.

“The concert--seeing the atmosphere of acceptance and joy of them being on stage and getting that spotlight on them, having the solos and audience there cheering them on--it's just an experience like no other,” Hearn said.

“I get out of it the learning experience, and then the joy of seeing them grow over time and knowing I've had an impact on their life. I did that,” she said. “I've changed them in some way.”

Some participants are so affected by Creative Expressions, it's the highlight of their life. After moving away, one couple drives two hours to Georgia College every week, so their daughter can continue attending music therapy groups “like a university student.”

Shawn Greene, a 40-year-old man with cerebral palsy and limited motion, is recording his own album--thanks to innovative assistance from Whipple and Warren. Whipple discovered a circuit board used for STEM education that could be adjusted to help Greene play musical notes on an electronical circuit. Warren recently reprogrammed its chip--creating custom touch control that connects to Greene's computer via Bluetooth. This allows him to play all kinds of musical sounds.

“

When you bring people together around music, magic happens. It lifts your spirits when you work in a helping field and see the people you serve succeed. When I see them meet their goals in life and reach what I call peak experiences,

that's the most fulfilling thing.

- Warren

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Impacts like this on his clients “have been astounding,” Warren said. The partnership between the university and LEC broadens their experiences and widens their world, giving them a place where they play music among students as equals.

“When you bring people together around music, magic happens. It lifts your spirits when you work in a helping field and see the people you serve succeed,” Warren said. “When I see them meet their goals in life and reach what I call peak experiences, that’s the most fulfilling thing.”

Although it looks like a bunch of people having fun with music—Assistant Professor of Music Therapy and Graduate Coordinator Dr. Laurie Peebles said important non-musical work is being accomplished. Clients are practicing fine- and gross-motor abilities, cultivating academic skills and improving communication.

“

Sometimes our clients don't even know they're doing the work. They're really just enjoying the musical experience.

- Dr. Laurie Peebles

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“What we train our music therapy students to do is create these engaging interventions,” Peebles said, “so these students and clients are practicing skills through the guise of music--sometimes not even realizing they're doing that.”

“Doing exercises over-and-over again in other therapies seems like work. In music therapy, it's fun,” she said. “Sometimes our clients don't even know they're doing the work. They're really just enjoying the musical experience.”

Students learn through this process of helping. They assess individual needs of actual clients, track their progress and witness transformation. After graduation, they get jobs in private practices, schools, hospitals and elder care settings.

Hearn's not sure where she'll work after graduation. But she's confident Georgia College has prepared her for the role of therapist. She's already emotional about leaving campus and saying goodbye to her friends at Creative Expressions.

Senior public health major Donovan Fraser of Jonesboro is grateful for the chance to work with people from LEC. He got involved with Creative Expressions this year



A LEC participant and student learn dance steps together.

to earn clinical service hours. He's enjoying it so much, he joined four group sessions.

This involvement will help when he gets a job in public health working with children. Making music with LEC participants gives him real-world experience with a vulnerable population.

“

They shouldn't think, 'I can't do this' or we're better than them. We're all doing the same thing. We're all on the same level. Their disabilities don't deter them from seeing themselves as not equipped for this or being good enough. They are good enough. They're learning they can do anything we can do.

- Donovan Fraser

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