

Front Page News Story Archive

December 2021



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News Stories Posted Wednesday December 1, 2021



Class of 2021: Management major pays goodness forward

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Wednesday December 1, 2021

By majoring in management with a pre-medicine concentration and minor in biology, it would seem senior Eve Gallo has her hands full. But her rigorous course load hasn't stopped her from improving the lives of others.

While attending Grovetown High School, Gallo was diagnosed with cancer. Now in remission and cancer-free, she's dedicated herself to Georgia College Miracle for the duration of her college career.

"By being a patient, and then being on the opposite side and sharing my story, I want to give them, especially parents, a sense of hope," Gallo said. "It's always been my passion, and it'll always be a part of me, or a part of my life, and I do anything I can to help them out in some way."

Georgia College Miracle is a 365-day, student-run fundraising organization. The largest fundraising organization on campus, the group raises money for the Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital in Macon, Georgia.

This past year, Gallo and her team completed a five-year contract with the hospital to raise over a million dollars. In response, the hospital dedicated a room to their altruism, dubbed the Georgia College Miracle activity room.

“

Coming into a hospital as a kid is different than being an adult. Miracle helps calm those kids and provides them with the joy and relief of knowing it's alright, that they're there to get better.

- Eve Gallo

”

“We helped put in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) beds, pediatric intensive care (PICU) beds, MRI scanners, CT scanners and helped make it more child-friendly,” she said. “Coming into a hospital as a kid is different than being an adult. Miracle helps calm those kids and provides them with the joy and relief of knowing it's alright, that they're there to get better.”

To reciprocate the care she received, Gallo hopes to work in medical pediatrics and open her own practice. That said, she majored in management to glean another perspective on practice ownership, and because she's good with numbers.

“I enjoyed business classes while I was sick in high school,” she said. “If you want to open your own practice, I believe you should know how your accounts work and how to manage a team. I feel that is important in addition to actual medicine.”

A member of the Delta Sigma Pi professional business fraternity, Gallo didn’t stop at helping sick children and their families. The chapter at Georgia College nominated her for collegiate of the year, and she’ll go on to compete at the regional level. This isn’t a surprise to her mentors.

“Eve has a big personality, she’s very outgoing and is definitely a go-getter,” said Jessie Folk, lecturer of economics at Georgia College. “She is a dedicated, driven individual. She loves to be involved and is not afraid to take charge.”

Those accomplishments could give anyone a reason to brag, but Gallo finds it difficult not to be humble.

“You never know how truly blessed you are until you have gone through all the experiences I have been through,” she said. “These miracle kids showed me happiness in every day. They’re sitting there getting chemotherapy, but they’re still laughing, they’re still smiling. I’ll always take that with me.”



Eve Gallo.

News Stories Posted Thursday December 2, 2021



Class of 2021: Videographer gains valuable skills and insight, in and out of the classroom

[Communication, Department of](#) : Thursday December 2, 2021

Name: Isabella Bruen

Milton, GA

Major: Mass Communication with a concentration in Digital Media Productions

What is lead you to pursue your major?

I love creating videos that elicit emotion. In videos and all things in life, sentimental moments are what stay with people – feelings are what people remember.

What was it about Georgia College that made you want to attend?

I chose Georgia College because I wanted to study abroad and connect with a diverse community.

What has been your favorite course that you've taken?

Professional Media Writing taught by Dr. Christina Smith. She gave us the chance to learn about the various fields in communications through Radio Broadcast Scripts, Press Releases, News Stories and a Strategic Campaign. This class allowed me to think about which concentration I wanted to study.

Are there any faculty or staff who have stood out or mentored you during your time here?

Angela Criscoe, Dr. James Schiffman and Michael Crews have been my mentors for the past three years. They've taught me how to write for film, TV and news, as well as production and post-production techniques that shaped me into the content producer I am today. I went from being a freshman who had not touched a single video camera to a senior who has mastery-level proficiency handling content production from idea to video and publication.

Organizations, clubs and activities:

- Currently the Associate Producer of GC360 (Milledgeville's only video broadcast news station)
- Former Vice President of Bobcat Media Productions Fall 2020- Spring 2021
- Member of Lambda Pi Eta the National Communication Honors Society
- Member of Alpha Lambda Delta
- Former Community Assistant for Wells Hall 2018- Spring 2021
- Former member of the Student Advisory Board for Georgia College's Women's Leadership Conference, Fall 2018-Spring 2020
- Former member of LSA, Fall 2019-Spring 2021
- Former member and first female member of the GC Power Lifting Club Fall 2019-Spring 2020
- Former member of the International Club Fall 2018-Spring 2020
- Former member of Emerging Leaders

What are some of your most memorable moments during your college experience?

Professionally: presenting three speeches in my Public Speaking class taught by Dr. Jan Hoffman. This memory is so special because it was the first time I gave a speech, and I could feel the power of my words hanging in the air after I ended my excerpt from Hillary Clinton's 4th World Conference on Women.

Recreationally: Noche Latina. LSA (Latino Student Association) put on this dance that they do every year, and it was the first time I danced Bachata and Cumbia with my Mexican boyfriend.

If I could have a third most memorable experience, it would be the backpacking trip I did with the Adventure Programs (formerly known as the Outdoor Center). We hiked a few miles and camped outdoors for 2-3 days, then we played the most intense game of hide-and-seek I've ever played in my life.



Bruen working the control room of the studios in Terrell Hall

Do you have a favorite spot on campus or in Milledgeville?

The trails on East Campus. Not many people know about East Campus, but it has a trail that goes around the entire lake, and it's beautiful. They also have ropes courses and rock walls that are 40 feet tall, and they're so fun to climb!

If you could give one piece of advice to an incoming student what would it be?

Go out of your way to do things you've never done before because it will take you out of your comfort zone. Getting used to forcing yourself out of your comfort zone puts you in a "growth" mindset. If you're constantly challenging yourself and getting out of your comfort zone, you will be able to see your weaknesses and may surprise yourself with your strengths.

What will be your biggest takeaway from attending college?

I've learned life skills like how to manage personal finance and budget, how to be

vulnerable with friends and how to live on my own. I've also learned professional skills like how to find a good work-life balance, how to tell a story all the way—from strongly engaging written script to filming a subject with interesting angles and proper framing, to editing the different takes together using Adobe Cloud software. My biggest takeaway from college in my personal and professional life is to keep pushing myself to be better - be a better friend, be a better videographer, be a better person to myself.

News Stories Posted Friday December 3, 2021



Class of 2021: Housing staffer and husband receive their master's degrees

[University Housing](#) : Friday December 3, 2021



Stacy Smith

Stacy Smith, Housing Assignment Coordinator

What's your degree in and from what university?
I graduate Dec. 11 with my Master of Education in Higher Education Administration from Georgia Southern University

Why did you pursue that?

It was a professional and a personal goal that I've wanted to accomplish for several years and the opportunity presented itself, so I simply took advantage of it.

What's your job and how long have you worked at

Georgia College?

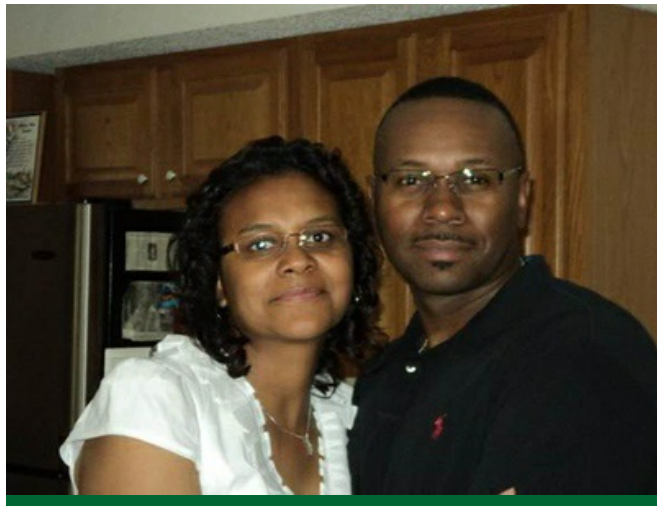
I work in Campus Housing as the Assignment Coordinator and in January of next year, I will have been employed at GC for 12 years. Also, I am a Georgia College Alumni graduating in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology

How have you been able to use the information you've learned in your daily work?

This degree has given me a better understanding of the overall philosophy of what Student Affairs is about as well as given me theory to practice research and perspectives applicable to any functional area within this division.

You're not the only one in your family receiving a degree this month, right? Tell us about your husband.

His name is Michael Smith, Sr., and he's graduating from Georgia Southwestern University on Dec. 17, 2021, with a master's degree in Business Administration. He's been employed at Georgia Power for 16 years and is a supervisor in the Distribution and Control Center in Macon. He wanted to continue to grow professionally on his job, and he knew that having an advanced degree would make him a more educated and viable candidate for future promotions.



Stacy and Michael

What advice would you offer other GC staff members to encourage them to further their education?

My advice is that if you have a desire to further your education you can do it. You have to be willing to put in the work and stay focused. It simply takes persistence and determination.



Stacy (second row, far right) with other members of the University Housing staff.

would not change a single moment.

Anything else you'd like to add?
I would like to add that our two adult children, Kenneshia and Michael, who are both teachers in the Putnam County School System. They encouraged us to not give up, and we're extremely grateful for their encouragement. Lastly, although, pursuing our degrees could be challenging at times, this was one of the best experiences of our lives, and we

News Stories Posted Monday December 6, 2021



Class of 2021: Business major with dual concentration chose Georgia College to grow

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Monday December 6, 2021

Khaliyq Thomas-Sousa

Why management?

I started out with marketing, and I really liked the sales part of it—the advertising and being able to talk with people to grow their business. But as I moved towards the management side of things, while working at Zaxby's as a general manager, I realized that I had a passion for management. Marketing is still one of my favorite things to do, so I can join that with my management experience to really help me propel my career. I really enjoy managing groups of people and watching them grow and develop. They either stay with that company or move on to whatever their next endeavor is, I love seeing them blossom.

What motivates you to be a manager?

I love the chaos that management brings. Every day is new, and you have to you have to be a critical thinker and able to prioritize at a split second sometimes. So, if something breaks, you need to realize that this may be breaking but maybe someone else needs help to facilitate sales and that problem can be fixed later. I really enjoy developing people and just watching them grow and blossom to the point where I can delegate tasks to them, which will free my time up to focus my duties elsewhere.



Khaliyq Sousa

Tell me about the Small Business of the Year competition.

In 2018, our local Zaxby's that I managed, was nominated for the Small Business of the Year award. There are over 200 businesses in the Milledgeville area, and we were nominated out of those 200 businesses. The community voted, and we made it to the final four. Unfortunately, we did not win. But it was a huge accomplishment for me, as far as my work career. We were able to say, out of all the small businesses in the area, they chose our company based on how we conducted ourselves, and how we presented ourselves to the community. To stand beside those three other amazing businesses was just awesome.

Tell me about your background, what informed your interest?

I would always talk to my grandmother. And no matter how bad things have gotten, she would always say he's got to keep moving forward, keep your head up, like you're meant for special things. I just wanted to not only make her proud, but also make myself proud. The fact that I'm graduating this year is amazing. Before COVID-19 when I came to Georgia College, I made a goal that I would graduate in 2021. It's just surreal. When you put a goal or a plan in action, and you're actually about to reach that goal in the time that you want it to attain it's, it's really powerful. There was a moment in class, I didn't cry, but I got teary-eyed when I realized I'd be graduating soon. It's been a long journey. I'm 27 now, so I've been through life at this point, but there's a lot more to go.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

I've enjoyed my experience at Georgia College. I'll never forget the friendships I've made with peers and professors. I'm definitely going to miss this college for sure.

News Stories Posted Tuesday December 7, 2021



Class of 2021: Environmental science major enjoyed hydrology field work and study abroad

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Tuesday December 7, 2021

Tytiana “Ty” Marie Bentley

From: Macon, Georgia.

Why Georgia College: I chose Georgia College for its environmental science department. Plus, the fact that a handful of people, who were very important figures in my life, all happened to attend here.

Major/minor: I’m an environmental science major, because I love nature and animals and I love our planet.

Activities/organizations: I worked for GC, catering for about 2 years. I was a part of University Chorus and the GCSU Women's Ensemble. I also participated in community council as treasurer for my freshman dorm, Wells Hall.

Study abroad: My study abroad experience cannot be put into words because it was that amazing. I studied abroad on San Salvador Island in the Bahamas for 2 weeks. It was a GC2Y ecosystems course studying plants and helping people. I learned so much about algae and corals that opened my eyes to a lot of what's happening in our oceans.

Biggest achievement: I received recognition for my performance in Spanish, which was very neat because I didn't imagine I would do well in foreign language.

Favorite professor: My favorite professor was Dr. Al Mead, and I have no idea how to explain why, because his classes were far from easy!

Most impactful or fun moment: Other than my study abroad experience, going to Sapelo Island with my hydrology class to collect field samples for a project was the most impactful or fun moment I had in college. It brought me closer to my lab group, and I gained a HUGE appreciation for field work. It was an amazing experience that sometimes I wish I could relive. There was something very rewarding about going to a different kind of field site.

What she'll miss most: I'll miss my friends and the professors that helped shape me throughout my college experience. I'll miss being able to sing in a choir with amazing people. I will miss the home and the life that I made here.

Advice for incoming freshmen: Don't overdo it! Your first year sets the tone for EVERYTHING going forward, and I wish someone had told me that as a freshman! Do what you can handle; don't stretch yourself too thin.



Tytiana Bentley on study abroad in the Bahamas.

Key to success: Holding onto your motivation. If there's nothing driving you, it is really hard to succeed in college.

How she's changed: I found who I am at Georgia College. I became a much more confident, adventurous and curious person in my time here. I finally found a place where I fit in well.

Plans for future: I plan to move to Colorado and put this environmental science degree to good use.

News Stories Posted Wednesday December 8, 2021



Class of 2021: Theatre major made the most of his Georgia College experience

[Theatre & Dance, Department of](#): Wednesday December 8, 2021

Cole Hanlin

What's your major? Do you have a minor?
Theatre Major / Political Science Minor.

Where are you from?
Originally from Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Why were you interested in your major?
Theatre is my life's passion project. I'm never not working on theatre in some way and I love it.

Why did you choose to attend Georgia College?
I chose to attend Georgia College after seeing Detroit '67 and Cabaret in 2018.



Cole Hanlin

Everything I wanted out of theatre I found here.

What was your favorite class/professor and why?

My favorite class was Directing II with Dr. Amy Pinney! She always has the best advice and leadership to propel art to the next level.

What are your plans after graduation?

After graduation, I plan to work for 6 straight months before moving, as of now, to New York.

What other activities, jobs or programs have you been involved with during your time at GC?

Besides my involvement with the theatre department,

I was a member of the Honors Program, and I worked at a ghost tour company in Savannah every weekend for the entirety of my college career.



Hanlin at Orientation in 2018.

News Stories Posted Thursday December 9, 2021



Class of 2021: Pediatric nurse looks forward to comforting young patients

[Nursing, School of](#) : Thursday December 9, 2021

Darby Pinkard is lucky to start her nursing career in the field she hoped to specialize in—hematology/oncology pediatrics with Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) at Scottish Rite. She begins her new position in early January.

Pinkard not only studied nursing at Georgia College, she played outfield in softball, as well. Participating in sports taught her time management, when she juggled that and maintaining good grades through the nursing program. Although this wasn’t an easy task, Pinkard feels this experience will prove useful in her career.

“As a nurse, understanding how to manage my time will be essential, as I will have multiple patients with many needs throughout the day,” she said. “Using time management will allow me to ensure that all tasks get completed in the most effective, safe manner for my patients.”

“I always felt like I was a part of something at Georgia College,” she said. “I was able to associate with the athletes and nursing students. Being at a smaller college allowed me to feel more involved in the school and gave me more opportunities to be a leader.”

Pinkard’s favorite professor was Dr. Talecia Warren. She had a way of clarifying the content, so students could understand it. Warren also made learning fun.

“I was lucky enough to be a student of hers for several semesters, and each time I grew to love her more,” Pinkard said. “I could talk to Dr. Warren about anything, and she would help me with whatever I needed.”

Pinkard took what she learned from Warren and plans to apply these concepts at CHOA. The main lesson that resonates with her is that mistakes are bound to happen on the job.

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“I know that my specific specialty of nursing is going to be hard. It will take a major toll on me mentally. However, the benefits will outweigh the costs. I want to be not only a nurse, but a friend to them, as well to help them through these scary times. I want to be someone who brings some light into their time at the hospital to make it less scary.”

- Darby Pinkard

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“It’s how we approach them and what we take away from the experience that really



Darby Pinkard



Darby Pinkard bats.

matters," she said. "Even if we make a mistake, she encouraged us to never be afraid to ask for help and to advocate for our patients to ensure their safety."

Pinkard feels the lessons learned from Warren will help her become a better, stronger nurse every day.

"Nursing is a hard career, and things are always changing forcing us constantly to learn and adapt to new skills," she said. "Understanding that mistakes will happen, but knowing to learn from them will help me become better. Overall, this will help all of my patients have the best outcome."

Pinkard hopes that she can help save as many patients as possible and help them make a full recovery.

"I also hope to help my patients get back to the best that they can be," she said. "This will vary for each patient as they will all come in with different problems with differing levels of severity, but I want to help them to feel good and make them as comfortable as possible."

More than anything, Pinkard wants to be a source of comfort to her young patients.

"I know that my specific specialty of nursing is going to be hard. It will take a major toll on me mentally," she said. "However, the benefits will outweigh the costs. I want to be not only a nurse, but a friend to them, as well to help them through these scary times. I want to be someone who brings some light into their time at the hospital to make it less scary."



Darby Pinkard checks a medication out to be administered to a patient.

News Stories Posted Friday December 10, 2021



Class of 2021: Student helps provide community to children in need

[Career Center](#) : Friday December 10, 2021

Hannah Hair

Tell me about your major, what led you down that path?

I chose business administration and management wanting to go into the nonprofit sector. My grandfather is the CEO of a foster care organization in Florida, Children in Crisis. I fell in love with what he did, what the staff did and taking care of the kids. I chose management because I want to be a leader in that industry, and make it better.

What do you want to change in foster care?

My dream is to be part of a nonprofit working in community engagement, with foster care specifically. In the United States, there is a large failure by states to

raise children. Children need communities and they need loving people around them, and I want to be that person that gives that to them.

What prompted you to work with Children in Crisis?

I went there the summer after my freshman year of high school, and I just fell in love with it. I loved meeting people, and I loved going out and meeting people. I loved really engaging with the staff and learning what each one of them did. And I loved being around the kids, just knowing that they were in an environment that they were cared for, that they were getting an education. I just fell in love with that way of helping these kids and putting them in good environments, and I just kept coming back.

What do you love about the work you want to do?

It's amazing to watch a kid who's sad and broken, become a kid who's thriving, who's happy, who loves life and other people. Just seeing their smiles and their hearts change is overwhelming to me, sometimes. It's amazing. And it's something that I really want to get into doing and helping with.

What are hobbies you enjoy outside of your work?

I really like being outdoors. I love walking, hiking and biking. I love playing flag football. I played on one of our intramural football teams for two, two of my three years being here. And I really love to read, as well, whenever I get the chance, which is not often, as I have found. I also spend a lot of time with my church community at the Branch Church Milledgeville.

Where do you want to go from here?



Hannah Hair

I'm graduating in just a couple of weeks, and I don't know what the next step is yet. But ideally, I want to be around kids, to be really impacting them, and to just make an impact with anyone that I can.



Class of 2021: Photographer gives snapshot of life at Georgia College

[Art, Department of](#) : Friday December 10, 2021

In the darkroom, you start out with a blank sheet of paper. You have no idea how the picture's going to turn out. Add a few chemicals here and there and, voilà! An image slowly appears.

That's how senior studio art major Laurie Gentry of Trion, Georgia, recalls her time at Georgia College—the slow appearance of who she is today.

“I had struggles, of course, throughout my time here,” Gentry said, “but I know I wouldn't feel as proud of myself or like I had come this far, if I hadn't started where I did and been able to grow to where I am now.”

“It's really bittersweet to graduate,” she said. “Obviously, I have such an affinity for this place and these people. But it's also great to move on to a new season in my life and take with me all the knowledge I've gained. It makes me really comfortable knowing I faced the unknown here—and somehow made it work—so I know I can do it again.”



Senior Laurie Gentry with her photo exhibit at Leland Gallery.

Gentry's been interested in art since age 4, when she "learned to grip a pencil." She minored in psychology while earning two art concentrations in printmaking and photography. Both art and psychology will be useful since she plans to get a master's in art therapy and help children with developmental disabilities.

“

I had struggles, of course, throughout my time here, but I know I wouldn't feel as proud of myself or like I had come this far, if I hadn't started where I did and been able to grow to where I am now.

- Laurie Gentry

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Gentry understands hardship. She entered college, grappling with the loss of her father, who passed away in 2015. She also questioned her desire to major in art, since her family didn't think it an employable field.

Professors like William Fisher, Valarie Aranda and Matt Forrest helped Gentry grow and see her worth as an artist.

“These were people who really helped shaped me into who I am now,” she said.

“They gave me great advice and such love. I can’t say enough how I wish I could thank them. They’ve done so much for me.”

In the same way, Gentry found photography and the hours she spent in the darkroom to be therapeutic. Mixing chemicals and developing pictures seemed almost magical.

“I call it the wizard room,” she said. “It’s very calming in there. It’s so rewarding. You really have no idea what the picture’s going to look like. That anticipation builds up, and that’s what makes your final product so meaningful and better. You feel more pleased, and you pat yourself on the back, and you say, ‘Wow this is hard, but it yields such good results.’”



Alternate Text

Gentry tried every form of art in college and first delighted in printmaking. She planned to do her senior capstone in linoleum block prints but felt stuck for ideas. In photography, however, Gentry could use entire rolls of film for exploration. She found it a “more forgiving” medium with room to experiment. She worked with various subjects, angles and lighting.

Ideas started flowing.

Gentry quickly learned darkroom techniques and changed her capstone exhibit to photography. Her work, “Notions of Serenity,” is displayed at Leland Gallery at Ennis Hall. Ten black-and-white photos tell the story of her college years, but also give viewers a sense of timelessness.

“I felt I had shut myself in a box,” Gentry said. “Doing these photos, I was able to just take pictures of the things that are meaningful to me. I was excited to go develop them. I wanted to be in the darkroom. I loved it. It became my safe haven.”

“

These ideas are closer to me. It’s more intuitive, and that’s how I prefer art to be. I want it to be something where you don’t consider how it’s going to be viewed. It’s really just art you want to produce, and that you’re happy to see on the wall.

- Laurie Gentry

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Her subjects are deceptively simple: a friend’s door; a small shack on Columbia Street; her meadowy backyard at home; a path on the Greenway in Milledgeville; rocking chairs on an Ennis Hall balcony; keys hanging in a keyhole.

The close-up intimacy of the exhibit makes it meaningful—not only for Gentry who has special memories tied to each subject—but for viewers who find themselves standing before the photos longer than anticipated, mesmerized by their stillness and endurance.

“

I’ve dreamed of having my pieces up here in the gallery since I was a freshman.
- Gentry

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Gentry hopes the pictures resonate with gallery visitors, causing them to pause and think about items in their own lives that carry weight and meaning.

“I want people to see this is a personal project. It obviously means a lot to me. I’ve dreamed of having my pieces up here in the gallery since I was a freshman,” Gentry said. “These are all things from my season of life here at Georgia College. These are some of the things and experiences that’ve given me peace and comfort during my time here.”

“I think it’s clear everyone has those kinds of experiences—places and people in their lives that really meant a lot,” she said. “There’s a lot of ebb and flow in life, so commemorating these things was really important to me, because I took these things for granted until doing this project.”

Her work ties in with the overall capstone exhibit called “Boundless.” Eleven students from the class of 2021 displayed artwork that shows the obstacles they’ve overcome. They lived through COVID lockdowns and online classes. They faced the unknown.

Like Gentry’s photos, the exhibit speaks to their resilience and ability to adapt.

“I want people to be able to identify with those things in their own lives—the things that bring them peace and comfort and show them a little bit of confidence and ability they didn’t know they had. That’s what these things have done for me,” Gentry said, “and why I thought they needed to be shared.”



Alternate Text

During college, Gentry was involved with the student council for inclusion and diversity and the Georgia Education Mentorship program. She worked at the library and as a practicum student in Aranda's drawing class. She was also an honors student and president of the Women's Action Collective on campus.

All these things help Gentry know she'll continue to overcome and do well in the future.

Her advice to incoming students is "don't be afraid to ask questions," because professors really do want to help. For art students, specifically, she recommends trying out more than comfort allows.

"This is the time to experiment and make mistakes," Gentry said. "I don't think I did that until later, and I wish I had started sooner, because it shaped me into who I am. I'm much happier with how I'm leaving Georgia College than how I came."

“

If I can do a fragment of what these people and Georgia College did for me—if I can do that for somebody else, I'll feel so accomplished.

- Laurie Gentry

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News Stories Posted Tuesday December 14, 2021



Students teach songs in sign language, volunteer as farmhands for service-learning

[Health & Human Performance, School of](#): Tuesday December 14, 2021

As part of community and public health courses through the College of Health Sciences, three students chose unique opportunities to volunteer this semester.

The senior public health majors Donovan Fraser, Jamie Puckett and Brennan Smith were tasked with choosing an organization with which to volunteer. Facilitated by Dr. Ernie Kaninjing, assistant professor of health and human performance, the exercise teaches students practical skills for interacting with unique communities.

For his philanthropic work, Fraser chose the Life Enrichment Center (LEC), a private nonprofit program for adults with intellectual disabilities established in 1967. At their on-campus sessions, Fraser works as an assistant and helps keep clients on track with creative expressions through music.

“We get everyone situated, make sure they’re all participating and make sure they’re having fun,” he said. “We’re making a sense of community so they know we’re here for them.”

He has a personal connection to the LEC’s mission. Before he was born, Fraser’s mother was told he may have complications. That wasn’t the case, but Fraser would want someone to make him comfortable if he were in their shoes.



Fraser at a music in motion session.

“

Some individuals have a negative perception of those with any type of disability,” Fraser said. “Volunteering with them breaks down those barriers and those misconceptions you see on television. It’s totally different in real life.

- Donovan Fraser

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“Some individuals have a negative perception of those with any type of disability,” Fraser said. “Volunteering with them breaks down those barriers and those misconceptions you see on television. It’s totally different in real life.”

He volunteers for the sense of community he feels with peers and clients. He said the clients he works with open their arms to new students each semester and make them feel like family.

“In public health, we have vulnerable populations. The individuals I’m working with are considered vulnerable populations,” Fraser said. “This experience will allow me to navigate sensitive situations and talk with different people. I won’t be blindsided or unaware of how to interact with those who have disabilities or intellectual disorders.”

Puckett and Smith also work with vulnerable populations. They assisted at Brave Meadows, a therapeutic horse-riding center for disabled children and adults.



Puckett and Smith collect new sand.

They typically performed farm work throughout the week, and supported those who need help riding on Saturdays.

“All our hard work pays off when the children come and have a blast on the farm,” Puckett said. “I see value in the life skills it gave us like time management skills. I also see value in the positive outcomes we visibly saw

in the day-to-day farm operations, in the owner Shannon, and the kids that would visit.”

Smith decided to pursue volunteering at Brave Meadows from working with special needs children while in high school.

“My favorite part was being outside and working with the animals,” she said. “After working with Ms. Shannon, I started to appreciate volunteering more, because I truly saw how us being there really helped her.”

After their experiences with community-based learning, each student is prepared to engage with the communities they will become a part of after leaving the university, Kaninjing said.



Curious sheep at Brave Meadows.

News Stories Posted Wednesday December 15, 2021



Leader sees power of teamwork as key to success

[College of Business & Technology](#): Wednesday December 15, 2021

Jackson DeFore, '09, has primarily worked in a supportive role throughout his professional career. He served with the Army National Guard for 10 years, where he served as a combat medic and commissioned officer.

Today, he uses the teamwork principles he learned in the Army National Guard and at Georgia College in his new role as deputy director for administration and finance for the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC).

DeFore pursued his Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Georgia College's Warner Robins Campus and the downtown Macon location.

"We would meet downtown at restaurants to cram and discuss topics about our classes and then go to class afterwards," he said.

Although many of his Georgia College professors influenced his learning, Dr. Stephen Payne was especially attentive to ensuring that



Jackson DeFore

students grasped the subject matter.

“Dr. Payne would ask us questions,” DeFore said. “He could tell based on our responses when we didn't completely understand the subject matter. Dr. Payne would stop everything he was doing from his lesson plan and immediately address our needs.”



Jackson DeFore, pictured far left, received an award at the Georgia Department of Corrections annual Employee Appreciation Awards Ceremony for innovation and process improvement. [/image]

Georgia College’s professors taught DeFore that there are a lot of aspects to consider when being decisive.

“They took all of the outside factors and presented them to help us understand that you don't just consider the direct impact of things and make a decision,” DeFore said. “You look at all factors, such as your stakeholders, opportunity cost and long-term investments.”

He also learned the importance of working with a team, as his professors taught by example, working alongside DeFore and his classmates. During class projects, DeFore was frequently put in a leadership role.

“There was no working solo in the MBA program,” DeFore said. “I had to learn to use people to the best of their strengths. I carry that over into my job today, where I make decisions to empower employees to utilize their strengths. Then, I help them improve on their weaknesses.”

In his profession, DeFore knows the value of collaborating with others who have

different experiences; this helps him make difficult decisions.

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“Just don't give up. Enjoy where you are now. Seize the moment, and learn from your current job. Even when you're dealing with hard situations, or if you're in a job you don't like, you still must look for the positives and learn from the negatives. Because one day, you may be in a position to use those experiences to make important decisions that affect others in a positive way.”

- Jackson DeFore

”

“Every day, I'm making hard decisions,” he said. “I've learned to make them based on what's best for the organization. Over the years, I've also learned how we can work most effectively and efficiently. Sometimes, the right thing to do is not the most popular thing.”

DeFore collaborates with GDC's CFO and the chief of staff to work toward completing GDC's vision.

“We've really done a lot of positive things for GDC over the last few years, and we're continuing to see the results,” he said.

Although his work is now in finance, the leadership lessons from his military career and Georgia College contribute to his work each day at GDC. DeFore also knows the importance of mentoring his employees to be the best they can be.

“I have employees that have been with GDC longer than I have, and others are new to the agency. I like to create a vision for all my employees so they can grow and become assets to the agency. Successful employees make GDC better.”

DeFore hopes fellow Georgia



Jackson DeFore and his team gathered toys, clothes and gifts for the annual Monroe County CARE Cottage wishlist drive.

College alumni are also able to find success in their field.

“Just don't give up,” DeFore said. “Enjoy where you are now. Seize the moment, and learn from your current job. Even when you're dealing with hard situations, or if you're in a job you don't like, you still must look for the positives and learn from the negatives. Because one day, you may be in a position to use those experiences to make important decisions that affect others in a positive way.”

News Stories Posted Monday December 20, 2021



Georgia College Athletics tops in academic success rate

[Athletics](#) : Monday December 20, 2021

At Georgia College, not only do student athletes excel on the field and court but they're also ranked nationally for their academic achievements.

For the second-straight season, [Georgia College Athletics](#) was honored with the Presidents' Award for Academic Excellence, from the NCAA.

The Bobcats were one of 43 schools to earn the honor in all of Division II and ranked first in Academic Success Rate (ASR) among Division II public schools.



women's basketball

The NCAA Division II Presidents' Award is presented to all member schools earning an ASR of 90% or better. Georgia College posted a 93% ASR, tops among Peach Belt Conference (PBC) schools. The Bobcats were tops also among public schools and best among schools in the Division II Southeast Region.



men's tennis

"I am so proud of the success of our student-athletes and the mentoring from our coaches, faculty and staff that support their efforts," said Director of Athletics Wendell Staton. "We strive for academic, social, and athletic success, and this national recognition is another positive sign of excellence along the path towards 'Graduating Champions for Life.' I am thrilled for our student-athletes to be recognized for their outstanding work."



men's basketball

The 93% mark is a three-percent increase over last year's report for Georgia College.

The ASR is the percentage of student-athletes who graduate within six years of initial collegiate enrollment and includes virtually all Division II student-athletes.

Unlike the federal rate, the Division II ASR includes nearly

34,000 non-scholarship student-athletes and accounts for those who transfer to a Division II school after initial enrollment elsewhere, while removing student-athletes who leave school while academically eligible. The national ASR for the four cohorts of student-athletes who entered college from 2010 to 2013 is 73%.

The full list of award recipients is available [here](#).



baseball team