

Front Page News Story Archive

March 2022



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
News Stories Posted Monday March 7, 2022	3
Women in philanthropy by Pam Booker, president, Georgia College Alumni Association Board of Directors	3
The Heidi Samprone Women's Leadership Luncheon impacts students for life	6
Professor's lifelong passion of nature and nurture is passed onto others	12
Funds from Women's Giving Circle promote women	16
Future lawyer aspires to help others	20
News Stories Posted Wednesday March 9, 2022	25
Basketball standout leads on the court and in the classroom	25
News Stories Posted Friday March 11, 2022	29
Three Georgia College students named Fulbright semi-finalists	29
News Stories Posted Monday March 14, 2022	34
Georgia College students hold bilingual story time at elementary school	34
News Stories Posted Tuesday March 15, 2022	39
Senior psychology major Anne Elise Beals named Truman Finalist	39
News Stories Posted Wednesday March 16, 2022	42
First Georgia College Team to advance in Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute Research Challenge	42
News Stories Posted Thursday March 17, 2022	45
Future Georgia Educators Day aims to recruit high schoolers to teach	45
News Stories Posted Monday March 21, 2022	50
Five psychology students study impact of COVID on Georgia College peers	50
News Stories Posted Monday March 28, 2022	55
Bon Appétit: Students learn history by picking up the fork	55
University Housing helps in transition to college	60
News Stories Posted Tuesday March 29, 2022	63
Georgia College receives federal grant for writing and literacy outreach in Baldwin Schools	63
News Stories Posted Thursday March 31, 2022	66
Georgia College's 25th Annual Student Research Conference sports diversity of topics	66

News Stories Posted Monday March 7, 2022



Women in philanthropy by Pam Booker, president, Georgia College Alumni Association Board of Directors

[Alumni](#) : Monday March 7, 2022

As we celebrate National Women's History Month, it's a perfect time to reflect on the impact of women's contributions to philanthropy. It is estimated that women account for over 60 percent of all charitable monetary giving.

Historically, philanthropy has been expressed through the giving of monetary donations. However, today philanthropic acts are demonstrated in the giving of a person's resources in diverse ways, which may include their time, skills and expertise for the betterment of humanity.

Melinda Gates stated, "Philanthropy is not about the money. It's about using whatever resources you have at your fingertips and applying them to improving the world."



Pam Booker

There are countless examples of women using whatever is at their disposal to help towards the resolution of a need.

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“As women who are achieving great success, not just in the marketplace but in our communities, churches and homes, we should never lose focus of the impact our philanthropic gifts have in the lives of people who are recipients of our generosity. Whether it is the establishing of scholarships, monetary donations to various projects, or giving non-tangible resources, each of us can be a philanthropist. It’s not the amount that makes the difference, it’s the motive of our hearts and the strategic, intentional and consistent dedication to making an impact.”

- Pam Booker

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I believe anyone can be a philanthropist, but philanthropy starts in the heart. It is intentional, purposeful and strategic. Compassion and a heart for those who, many times through no fault of their own, find themselves in situations requiring assistance, becomes the driving force for the giving of one’s money and resources.

As I reflect on my own charitable giving and acts of service, I give because I believe “to whom much is given, much is required.” I have been the recipient of a wealth of love, support and encouragement. There have been both women and men who have poured into my life. I have many examples of women who are intentional with their giving to various causes, but the woman that best exemplifies philanthropic giving is my mother, Irene Booker. She is my role model for philanthropy. She is consistent and strategic in the giving of financial support and resources—time, talent, expertise—to causes that burn deep within her heart. It is because of my parents that I too have a deep desire to make an impact through philanthropic acts.

As women who are achieving great success, not just in the marketplace but in our communities, churches and homes, we should never lose focus of the impact our philanthropic gifts have in the lives of people who are recipients of our generosity. Whether it is the establishing of scholarships, monetary donations to various projects, or giving non-tangible resources, each of us can be a philanthropist. It’s not the amount that makes the difference, it’s the motive of our hearts and the strategic, intentional and consistent dedication to making an impact.

“Success isn’t about how much money you make. It’s about the difference you make in people’s lives,” said Michelle Obama, former first lady of the United States of America.



GC students at the Elevator Pitch competition.



The Heidi Samprone Women's Leadership Luncheon impacts students for life

Athletics : Monday March 7, 2022

Twelve female student-athletes attended the Heidi Samprone Women's Athletics Leadership Luncheon in February. They heard from top women administrators at Georgia College and learned what it takes to grow as a leader.



Student-athletes and Georgia College leaders are: (lower left) Dr. Holley Roberts, associate provost for Academic Affairs and director of the Graduate School, (upper left) Jamie Grodecki, assistant athletic director, leadership/senior woman administrator/head softball coach/deputy Title IX coordinator for Athletics, (lower right) Cathy Cox, J.D., president, Georgia College and (upper right) Dr. Sheri Noviello, dean and professor, College of Health Sciences.

Dr. Sheri Noviello, dean of the College of Health Sciences described the volatility of health care and what it takes to be a leader.

“You don't have to be in a position of authority to be a leader,” she said. “I truly believe that each one of you—sooner or later—must ask yourself, ‘Where am I leading others? Where are they going?’”

Noviello transitioned from a trauma nurse to an administrator. She learned some lessons from being a nurse that she applies in her role today. Noviello cited what nurses do with each patient: They assess, plan, implement and evaluate the plan. She encouraged students to apply this regimen to a future leadership position and life experiences.

“In a leadership role, you often have to learn how to prioritize quickly and do the right thing,” she said. “Oftentimes, we want to just turn our head and say, ‘I don't have time to deal with that.’ But at the end of the day, I have to lay my head down on my pillow and know I did the right thing.”

Dr. Holley Roberts, associate provost for Academic Affairs and director of the



GC President Cathy Cox listens to a student-athlete during a roundtable discussion at the luncheon.

Graduate School, stressed the importance of perseverance and patience. She took the student-athletes through her journey of teaching, and informed them how important it is to say “yes” to career and learning opportunities. Roberts climbed the ranks from elementary school teacher to administrator to Georgia College faculty member to associate provost and director.

“I just kept doing the work and really embracing what I was passionate about,” she said. “By saying ‘yes,’ I got these opportunities that’ve now led to a larger leadership position at Georgia College where my impact is stronger.”

She spoke about the importance of relationship and building up others.

“Make sure you lift each other up,” Roberts said. “I think that’s an area where we fall short sometimes.”

She stressed to use that opportunity to open the door for other female leaders and those who they will mentor.

“I think the best attributes you can have as a leader are communicating often and having empathy and compassion,” Roberts said. “Then, be an advocate for someone, willing to put action into what you believe, not for yourself, but for someone else. Tie in these opportunities, because they will build up to something that you never even dreamed of.”

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“As a nurse, no matter what my position is or what department I’m in, I can provide leadership qualities that are essential parts of a team to function and work efficiently. Good teamwork leads to better patient care, and that all starts with how the team is led.”

- Emma Fleming

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Georgia College President Cathy Cox closed the luncheon by challenging attendees to take risks in search of their profession.

"Research shows that men will typically apply for a job if they've got about 60 percent of the qualifications. But women will rule themselves out if they don't have 100 percent of the qualifications," she said. "So, guess who gets most of the jobs? The men."

She hopes they'll take the experience they've had as student-athletes and go forward in their careers weighing the risks against the benefits.

"I might not be fully qualified, but I can take that pitch. I can make this layup. I'm ready for that next jump ball. And I will put myself out there and not limit myself with the enormous opportunities I'm going to have in life," Cox said.

"Those kinds of risks opened a lot of doors for me in life and gave me enriching life experiences that I never would have expected because I said 'yes' to an opportunity or experience that was off-the-wall to a lot of other people," Cox said. "I hope that you will do the same. I'm proud of the way you represent Georgia College and I look forward to following all of your successes."



Student-athletes are (left to right): Emma Fleming, Cassie Markle and Harper Vick.

Senior Emma Fleming (tennis), learned from the luncheon not to fear failing. She also was intrigued by knowing when to say "yes" to a good opportunity.

"Oftentimes, we don't want to take the risk of an opportunity that's been handed to us because of the thought of failing," she said. "I was really encouraged by these women's personal experiences with taking opportunities. Although, some led to failure, some led to success. I learned to not be afraid to take the risk."

What also stood out to Fleming is you don't have to be in a leadership position to be a leader.

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“Being invited to this luncheon means that there’s value in women being in leadership positions, and there’s a focus on molding young women to move into leadership. This is a huge honor because I aspire to be one of those women.”

- Cassie Markle

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“As a nurse, no matter what my position is or what department I’m in, I can provide leadership qualities that are essential parts of a team to function and work efficiently,” she said. “Good teamwork leads to better patient care, and that all starts with how the team is led.”

Senior Cassidy “Cassie” Markle (basketball), aspires to become an athletic trainer and practice leadership skills in this role.

“Being invited to this luncheon means that there’s value in women being in leadership positions, and there’s a focus on molding young women to move into leadership,” Markle said. “This is a huge honor because I aspire to be one of those women.”

Because of what she learned from the speakers; she won’t be afraid to land the job she wants or go after the goals she set for herself.

“The message that stood out to me was taking risks, because you never know what doors might open for you,” said Markle. “Even if you fail in taking that risk, it might help with another opportunity you didn’t know you needed.”

Senior Harper Vick (basketball) thought all the messages were amazing. However, like Fleming and Markle, Vick doesn’t want to limit herself from anything due to a fear of failing.

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“I am honored to have attended this luncheon. I want to follow in the speakers’ footsteps as I leave Georgia College and embark into the real world.”

- Harper Vick

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“I’ve failed multiple times in my athletic career, but I’ve picked myself back up and

overcome them," she said. "I need to take the same mindset into the real world. I do not want to limit myself in job promotions or opportunities from fear of failure. The worst that will happen is I will not get the job. Therefore, I want to push myself and strive for everything I desire."

Vick feels she'll be able to apply many aspects the speakers shared, like communication, to her career as a physical therapist.

"I'll treat my patients, coworkers and superiors as I would like to be treated," she said. "I will persevere through difficulties on the job and not give up when it gets hard. I will not limit myself in applying for jobs or promotions due to fear of not getting them. I will speak up and have difficult conversations when needed, but I will also approach the situation in the correct way."

Vick believes there should be more women in leadership roles.

"I am honored to have attended this luncheon," she said. "I want to follow in the speakers' footsteps as I leave Georgia College and embark into the real world."



Professor's lifelong passion of nature and nurture is passed onto others

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Monday March 7, 2022

At age five, Dr. Harriett Whipple, professor emerita, developed a fascination with flowers. She and her friends observed roses in her yard and made clover chains in kindergarten. Little did she know that this passion would carry her through to her mid 20s, when she would get her Ph.D. in botany.

Whipple came to Georgia College in 1968. For nearly 50 years she taught botany and biology—a once male-dominated field.

“When I was hired, there were mostly men in my profession,” Whipple said. “I was hard pressed to receive equal pay and rank as my male counterparts for teaching.”

At the time, she thought, “Is that wrong?”

“What was unusual was when I came here, I had my Ph.D. in hand from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, yet Georgia College hired me as an instructor,” Whipple said, “while the men who were hired that year with me became assistant professors.”

Change would come later.

“Back then, women's salaries were not the same as men's salaries,” she said. “So, we formed ‘Seven Women.’”

The women became active, rallying for Affirmative Action by talking with administration for equal pay.

“The administrators knew we were serious,” Whipple said, “and all that was eventually straightened out.”

This was, in large part, due to the efforts of former Georgia College Vice President Dr. Ralph Hemphill, who Whipple enjoyed working with.

“He helped equalize things with women and men,” Whipple said. “I give him a lot of credit to assure that Affirmative Action was carried out.”



Dr. Harriett Lipscomb, later known as Whipple, transfers bacterial cultures to a vial.(Spectrum 1969)



Dr. Harriett Whipple

From then on, Whipple became more and more involved with Georgia College. Among other things, she helped start the Community Action Team, now known as the Academic Outreach program.

"It's where Georgia College students teach science and nature in the local community," Whipple said. "Those experiences are so valuable. We also used Lake Laurel and Lockerly Arboretum to teach, so students gained experience teaching biology in nature."

Many of her students work in the education system, and she stays in contact with a lot of them including: Charles E. Lundy, Jr., '90, '01, superintendent of Jones County Schools in Gray, Georgia and Aimee Colston Lundy, '99, '01, '06, Elementary Exploratory STEAM teacher at Georgia Military College.

"Harriett Ellis Nelson, '75, '80, '96, and her husband, Marion Nelson, '76, met in my class in 210 Herty Hall," Whipple said. "Harriett has the prettiest garden in Baldwin County."

Marion worked with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and Harriett became a teacher.

Another couple who met in Whipple's class is Greg Eilers, '03, and Ruth Braddy Eilers, '02, '16.

Ruth has worked for Whipple as a graduate assistant, and is now in charge of Georgia College's Academic Outreach program. Greg works as the assistant director of Lockerly Arboretum, where he oversees horticulture and education.

Whipple's relatives who are affiliated with Georgia College include: Katie Griffin Whipple, '06, '11, lecturer in Music Therapy, Undergraduate Music Therapy Program coordinator and Music Therapy Clinic coordinator and Helen Menchinger DuPree, '19, '21, lecturer, Public Health. Whipple's children are Fielding Whipple Jr., '02, Ann Whipple DuPree, '98, '99, and her grandson is first-year student Jackson Taylor.

When Whipple started teaching at Georgia College, she lectured to approximately 200 students in Herty Hall's auditorium. Later, she moved to the College of Arts and Sciences building, but she loved teaching outside the most. Her botany classes were held on campus, at Lake Laurel, the river and Lockerly Arboretum.

Whipple especially enjoyed hosting academic workshops, along with other professors, for students on the weekends. Called "Tripping through Georgia," groups would travel to different locations for "Cows, Cultures and Connections," "Cotton Bowls" and "Native Trails."

For fun, she played tennis with friends and was on the Georgia College Faculty Tennis Team, playing matches with students at the courts behind Beeson Hall, where she lived in the basement. Whipple also played first base for Georgia College softball—the only girl on the team.

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“When I was hired, there were mostly men in my profession. I was hard pressed to receive equal pay and rank as my male counterparts for teaching.”

- Dr. Harriett Whipple

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Now, she enjoys attending music concerts and basketball games. She also helps decorate Georgia’s Old Governor’s Mansion (OGM) each holiday season. Whipple recalls when Matt Davis, ’02, ’04, director of Historic Museums at Georgia College, was a docent at the OGM and says he’s always been a pleasure to work with.

In addition to being a faculty advisor, Whipple has worked with Alpha Delta Pi, Inc. since 1974. She also serves as a board member on the Boys and Girls Club of Baldwin and Jones Counties and Lockerly Arboretum.

“We’ve done some great community service,” Whipple said.

As a faculty advisor, Whipple has a special passion for helping students with disabilities and watching them succeed in their studies.

“I’ve had so many great students over the years and just loved working with these kids,” she said. “I think by helping students get going in college helps them to succeed in life.”



Funds from Women's Giving Circle promote women

[Women's Center](#) : Monday March 7, 2022

Throughout the year, you can make an impact on women at Georgia College and fulfill their needs, campus-wide, by donating to the Women's Giving Circle (WGC). WGC members contribute an annual gift, then determine where funds are allocated.

"We researched other Women's Giving Circles across the nation, talking about how we wanted to structure ours on campus, doing an initial outreach to folks. Then we launched it for the first time in the fall of 2020 and worked on fundraising," said Dr. Jennifer Graham, director of the Women's Center and interim chief diversity officer and executive director for the Office of Inclusive Excellence.

In early fall, there's a call for grant proposals to the campus community to fund projects. Voting where to allocate funds occurs in late fall.

"Anybody on campus can submit a request for funding, but it has to be something tied to the betterment of our campus community and for individuals who identify as women," Graham said. "The focus is promoting gender equity, fighting sexism and improving the climate for people who identify as women."



Dr. Jennifer Graham

Individuals can request similar or the same project every year. Selections of funded projects are made based on the number of proposals the Women's Giving Circle receives.

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“We hope to get more proposals each year from more and different projects around campus that could benefit the lives of women and girls. We can work to eradicate sexism and promote gender equity.”

- Dr. Jennifer Graham

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“These projects are instrumental in developing leaders, gaining real world experiences and opportunities and bettering our students and campus community,” said Jill Selby, donor engagement associate for Annual and Constituent Giving. “Donors should be proud and encouraged to know their gifts to these projects are being used timely, providing direct financial support for so many.”

Once the WGC receives the proposals, WGC members vote on what they would like to fund. Those become the funded projects for the year.

“So, we take those proposals, then let our members vote on them,” Graham said. “These are donor-directed dollars at work.”

A sample of this year's projects include: Whistling Hens—creating an equitable, sustainable future for women composers. This chamber music ensemble was founded by soprano Dr. Jennifer Piazza-Pick, lecturer in voice and aural skills and clarinetist Dr. Natalie Groom to combat the inequity female composers face in the arts by performing and commissioning music by women.

Part of their mission is to create multi-faceted economic opportunities and sustainability for fellow women artists by producing numerous live performance recordings and programming opportunities that enable each partner to benefit from performance royalties, sheet music sales and material for conferences, festivals and competitions.

The Whistling Hens' endeavor is to record a music album with eight works by living women composers. Having studio recordings will contribute to each woman's discography and enable their music to be heard through formalized global distribution.



Dr. Jennifer Piazza-Pick

“This project is pivotal in our industry,” said Piazza-Pick, “We’re asking arts institutions and audiences to reflect on the impact male privilege has had on traditional music programming, question the status quo of gender inequality in classical music and engage with music by women of various backgrounds at a time when women’s music is programmed as a one-off event, effectively tokenizing it.”

The work of Whistling Hens is a deep-rooted culture and commitment to changing the status quo for female artists everywhere.



Dr. Natalie Groom (left) and Dr. Jennier Piazza-Pick record their album titled *Reacting to the Landscape*.

“We want the economic means to be the catalyst for change in our curriculum, programming and performances,” she said. “Every piece of music on the album will be a world-premiere recording.”

She identifies the album as a natural outgrowth of the Whistling Hens’ programming work and educational outreach and hopes the album makes a worldwide impact.

“While our long-term goal is to focus on those outside of our arts-loving community, we have to begin by changing our academic and presenting infrastructure,” Piazza-Pick said. “We need platforms where we can show arts colleagues the merits of including women composers in our curriculum, on our stages and in our headphones.”

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“These projects are instrumental in developing leaders, gaining real world experiences and opportunities and bettering our students and campus community. Donors should be proud and encouraged to know their gifts to these projects are being used timely, providing direct financial support for so many.”

- Jill Selby

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Another example of this year's projects includes, The Menstruation Station Project. The Women's Center & LGBTQ+ Programs along with the Student Government Association teamed to provide free menstrual hygiene products in select restrooms across campus.

“Menstruation Stations help students in that periods can be unpredictable, and we don't want an unexpected period to keep a student from attending class or any other school activities,” Graham said. “Additionally, these types of products can be expensive, and we work to ensure students have access to them for free across campus. If a student needs longer-term assistance paying for period products, we can help connect them with additional resources.”

WGC has already started raising money for next year's projects.

“We hope to get more proposals each year from more and different projects around campus that could benefit the lives of women and girls,” Graham said. “We can work to eradicate sexism and promote gender equity.”

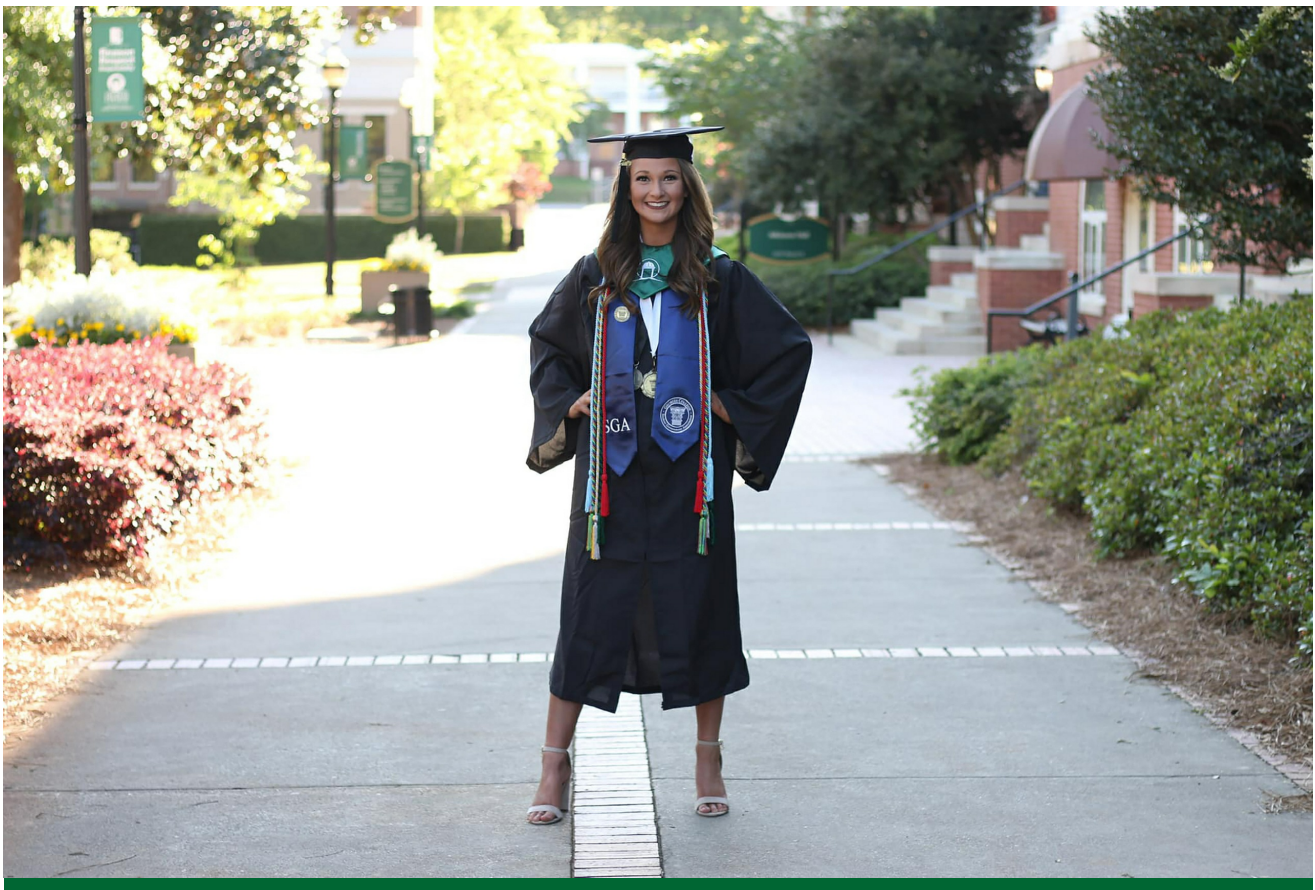
Joining WGC is simple. Members give an annual gift anytime [online](#) by credit card or by mailing a check with “Women's Giving Circle” noted on the memo. Checks can be mailed to: University Advancement, Campus Box 96, Milledgeville, Georgia 31061.



Future lawyer aspires to help others

[Psychological Science, Department of](#) : Monday March 7, 2022

S. “Meghan” Pittman, ’19, is about to receive her Juris Doctor from Mercer University School of Law this May. She has recently been published in Mercer Law Review for her work about limiting the scope liability for third parties under the Georgia Streetgang Terrorism Prevention Act—which made its way to the Supreme Court of Georgia this past summer.



Meghan Pittman in 2019.

"There wasn't a lot of work published yet about the case *Star Residential, LLC v. Hernandez* and its implications on limiting liability against third parties so I thought this would be an interesting topic to write about," Pittman said. "If someone's searching online for a secondary source to help understand this case's implications more, mine would be one of the few to immediately pop up."

The citation—Pittman, S. Meghan (2021) "Trouble with Treble Damages for Third Parties: The Georgia Streetgang Terrorism and Prevention Act," *Mercer Law Review*: Vol. 73: No. 1, Article 23—is available to help individuals understand more about limiting the scope of liability for third party commercial property owners under this act.

"It was really interesting in terms of when victims under this statute could recover and when they could not extend this recovery a step further," Pittman said. "The Court of Appeals held one way in 2020, but within a year the Supreme Court of Georgia overruled that opinion and held differently. I thought that was really interesting. And, of course, the latest opinion is now what controls the issue unless the state legislature decides differently."

She most enjoys helping others. And, soon she'll be able to do this by practicing law. Pittman discovered her passion for helping others when she attended the first-year student seminar for students with undeclared majors at Georgia College.

"I took an aptitude test to figure out what my mindset was and what traits stood out for me in picking a career," she said. "The main thing I noticed was I really enjoy helping people and talking through things with them."

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"Each case is so different. Even if something starts to seem repetitive, it's someone's issue that needs to get resolved. My hopes are that I'll be able to ease them through that process and give them a bit of peace."

- Meghan Pittman

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At that time, Pittman thought she wanted to become a counselor, so psychology, which was her major, would provide a good background for that career path.

"Now, with my legal education and background, I'm doing a lot of the same type of activities I learned at Georgia College," Pittman said. "It's really hands-on, talking to people and trying to help them figure something out. There's a lot of overlap there."

Early in her junior year, she decided to pursue law.

Pittman minored in rhetoric to improve her public speaking skills with large groups. She took a class with Dr. Jan Hoffmann and soon realized public speaking was something she enjoyed.

"I thought speaking in crowds and being comfortable carrying out the message I intend to convey to others was a really good skill for me to have in this field," Pittman said.

She also minored in political science to get some background in the legal field. The late Professor Jennifer Hammack, J.D. taught pre-law courses, which is one of the reasons Pittman took them.

"I wanted to get involved in as many pre-law courses as possible with Professor Hammack," she said. "Minoring in political science really helped me make connections with others. My pre-law background rendered such an important skill that it's going to carry me along after law school, as well. Specifically, Professor Hammack was the first one to push me in trying advocacy programs like mock trial."

Pittman especially enjoyed classes with Dr. Scott Dillard, professor and rhetoric coordinator, who provided experiences that proved valuable in her law classes.

“He taught me how to think quickly on my feet to convey a message and refine my public speaking,” she said. “These skills proved beneficial with mock trial at Georgia College, as well as with court advocacy programs at Mercer Law School such as mock trial and moot court.”

Once Pittman’s an attorney, she plans to continue serving her community.

“Dr. Dillard’s accomplished a lot at Georgia College, but he took that a step further,” Pittman said. “He found ways to get involved in the community and involved his students, as well. I feel like that’s one of the really important things about any profession you’re in—finding a way to give back.”

She was a member of the Council of Student Ambassadors, Student Government Association, Student Alumni Council, Mock Trial Team, Georgia Education Mentorship program and Phi Alpha Delta, the pre-law fraternity. Belonging to these organizations helped build her confidence and make connections with many people from different backgrounds.

“I’m not really the same person today than I was when I first came to Georgia College,” Pittman said. “Belonging to these organizations gave me the courage to get involved with things I would not otherwise want to try, because I didn’t think I’d be good at them.”

When Pittman first decided on law school, she didn’t tell anyone for six months, because she thought they’d think it was outlandish. But the more she talked to other students and faculty, she realized pursuing her J.D. was attainable.

In late February, she won the National Trial Competition, Region 6, competing against 30 other teams. She and her teammate won the championship—a first win for Mercer University School of Law since 2009. Pittman plans to compete in the National Championship in April.



Meghan Pittman recently received the co-championship title for the National Trial Competition, Region 6. She and her teammate competed against 30 other teams. It was the first win for Mercer University School of Law since 2009.

Pittman will primarily practice education law, insurance defense and litigation. She especially wants to practice civil defense, because she's drawn to litigating, as things are constantly changing.

"This is a very dynamic area of law," Pittman said. "I'll have to really get accustomed to the facts of each case. If I worked a similar case before, it could be completely different the next time around, because there may be news that could change the whole situation."

Ultimately, she aspires to help calm future clients, who are going through a stressful time.

"Each case is so different. Even if something starts to seem repetitive, it's someone's issue that needs to get resolved," Pittman said. "My hopes are that I'll be able to ease them through that process and give them a bit of peace."

News Stories Posted Wednesday March 9, 2022



Basketball standout leads on the court and in the classroom

[Athletics](#) : Wednesday March 9, 2022

As senior Wesley Simpson walks across campus, he can strike up a conversation with anyone he passes. Whether he knows them through classes or sports, with his friendly demeanor he never meets a stranger.

The economics major and standout basketball player credits growing up in a military family and moving around for his outgoing personality.

"I was able to develop my ability to get to know people fast," Simpson said. "I am able to make connections and make friends easily. I've also become very good at the small talk."

It's those skills and his capabilities on the basketball court that helped as he moved from Florida to New York then to Germany, Washington and finally to

Georgia while growing up.

"I would say basketball is a passion," Simpson said. "Sports was kind of one thing that helped me make friends as we moved to each different location. You're trying to come and fit in, going from playing recess to rec sports in the community. Basketball really helped me get to know people and make friends."



Wesley Simpson

As his skills grew on the court, Simpson saw how basketball could open doors for his future through collegiate play. Since joining the Bobcat Basketball team, he's been a leader and major contributor to the team's success.

"I am extremely proud of Wes and all of his accomplishments on and off the court," said Head Basketball Coach Mark Gainous. "He exemplifies what a student-athlete should be. What sets Wes apart is his positive attitude, relentless work ethic and outgoing personality. I could coach another 20 years and not have another young man that is as well-rounded as Wes Simpson."

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What sets Wes apart is his positive attitude, relentless work ethic and outgoing personality.

- Head Basketball Coach Mark Gainous

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Among his many accolades on the court, some of the most important to him are those tied to academics like being named twice to the [CoSIDA \(College Sports Information Directors of America\) Academic All-District team](#) and a two-time [D2ADA \(Division 2 Athletics Directors Association\) Academic Achievement Award winner](#).

"Those are big awards for me, because they show that I'm doing both athletics and academics at a high level. I take pride in that, and it's something that I work towards all the time," he said. "I would definitely say that we have an athletic program that puts a lot of emphasis on student athletes being students first."

He's intentional about giving 100% both in his sport and his classes.

"Watching Wes play basketball is a clear indication of how he approaches everything in life. Even when the game is not going well, even when there's so much work to be done, even when he's playing hurt, he does not quit. He does not reduce his effort; instead, he somehow finds more to give during those times," said Dr. Brooke Conaway, associate professor of economics.

An economics major came naturally for Simpson. Since he was a kid, he's always been money conscious. When he took a test in high school to help guide his career path, it clearly pointed to the economics and finance field.



Simpson plays basketball.

"I would say that we have the best department as far as professors go on campus. They have been super supportive, super understanding of my schedule with basketball and that's just allowed me to want to give them the most that I can when I am in the classroom and make them proud with my assignments."



Wesley Simpson

According to his professor, his senior research project "covers the important topic of civilians, primarily people of color, experiencing fatal interactions with police."

"He hand-collected data on the value of military surplus equipment filtered to police departments, as well as various state police protocols, to explore the factors affecting civilian

deaths during police interactions," Conaway said. "He is currently working through the preliminary empirical results, but his early findings show that states with younger populations, lower per capita incomes, and stand-your-ground laws are associated with more civilian fatalities during police interactions."

As for his future, Simpson plans to pursue graduate school. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, he also has one more year of eligibility for basketball. He's not quite sure what next year will look like for him, but through his faith, he trusts it will all work out—just like it did for him to end up at Georgia College in the first place.

"I really do believe this is the spot that I was destined to be at this point in my life," Simpson said. "I honestly didn't know what Georgia College was coming out of high school. But coming on visits and just seeing the family atmosphere here in the athletics department and in the econ department, it has truly been a great experience in all aspects."



Simpson and the 2021-2022 Georgia College basketball team made the NCAA DII Tournament.

News Stories Posted Friday March 11, 2022



Three Georgia College students named Fulbright semi-finalists

[National Scholarships Office at Georgia College](#) : Friday March 11, 2022

Three Georgia College seniors majoring in early childhood education, communication and art have been named Fulbright semi-finalists.

They join a growing number of semi-finalists in recent years from Georgia College.

If selected as finalists, their travels will take them to South Korea, Greece and Argentina. Their applications are being sent to these proposed host countries to be reviewed. Roughly half to one-third of all semi-finalist applications are accepted as 'finalists,' the term used for Fulbright Scholarship recipients. Final status should be announced no later than June.

“

The Fulbright Scholarship provides wonderful opportunities for our alumni to learn more about the world and how to engage as respectful global citizens.



The university's 2022 Fulbright semi-finalists are: Annabelle Erb, a senior early childhood education major from Johns Creek; Anagha Ramakrishnan, a senior communication major and English minor from Marietta; and Maya Whipple a studio art major with a minor in Spanish from Gordon.

"I am very proud of the hard work that not only these semi-finalists put into their application but all that our applicants demonstrated in applying to the Fulbright Scholarship Program," said Anna Whiteside, coordinator of Georgia College's National Scholarships Office.

"The Fulbright Scholarship provides wonderful opportunities for our alumni to learn more about the world and how to engage as respectful global citizens," she said.

Selection for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program is rigorous. About 12,000 apply each year. In the U.S., about 1,900 grants are awarded annually for all fields of study that take place in 160 countries. More than 400,000 Fulbright recipients have participated in the programs since its inception in 1946.

Prior to Whiteside's helmsmanship and the creation of a National Scholarships Office in 2015, the university had three Fulbrights. Since then, more than 30 Georgia College students have received Fulbrights and other illustrious scholarships or fellowships—such as the Marshall Scholarship, Truman Scholarship, Newman Civic Fellowship and National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship.

Numbers increased as students came to value and utilize advice and support from the scholarship office. Applying for national scholarships can be complicated and take more than a year. Whiteside navigates students through the myriad of different programs, keeping them informed of deadlines and informational webinars.

She also helps students improve their personal essays by reading multiple drafts and making suggestions for added details or striking the right tone. She and a group of professors conduct mock interviews to ready students, and these can be intense with difficult questions. Faculty interviews help students clarify their goals and present clear visions.

Applicants are selected based on statement of purpose, academic or professional record, personal qualifications, language preparation, engagement in host communities and impact candidates could have promoting an understanding between nations.

“While our semi-finalists are each applying to different programs,” Whiteside said, “the one unifying factor is that they each exhibited the ability to represent the U.S. well abroad and to promote mutual understanding.”

More details on each semi-finalist:



Alternate Text

Annabelle Erb applied for an English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) in South Korea. She hopes to use her early childhood education degree to teach English to children there. She believes this will “greatly benefit” her future teaching of phonics in the U.S.

If selected, she’s looking forward to traveling and learning a new language and culture.

At Georgia College, Erb enjoyed co-teaching in local schools. This structure is similar to what she expects as a teacher in South Korea. Getting integrated into a new culture will help her connect with future students from different backgrounds.

Erb’s been interested in Fulbright since sophomore year when Whiteside suggested she apply. Her “vote of confidence” kept Erb going, and she was “pleasantly surprised” at achieving semi-finalist status.

“I feel so thankful to have been recognized as worthy of making it this far,” Erb said. “Teaching English abroad through the Fulbright would allow me to grow as an educator and model lifelong learning to my future students.”

“

I hope I can show my students how going after your dreams and working hard can open so many exciting doors and opportunities.

- Annabelle Erb

”

Anagha Ramakrishnan applied for an English Teaching Assistantship in Greece. A communication major and English minor, she hopes to teach at Athens College, sightsee and get involved in a debate and English language theatre club.



Alternate Text

Ramakrishnan worked on her application for a year, but to get a Fulbright U.S. Scholarship she needed to be an American citizen. Ramakrishnan took her oath of allegiance in September 2021, one month before the application deadline.

“I’ve always been fascinated by Greek culture, and I felt like my personal values aligned with Fulbright’s,” said Ramakrishnan,

who plans to get a Master of Fine Arts in film and become a documentary filmmaker.

She’s grateful for Whiteside’s guidance.

“She encouraged me in so many ways and eased my anxieties,” Ramakrishnan said. “I really cannot thank Ms. Whiteside enough for seeing the potential in me.”

“

I feel incredibly grateful to have made it this far. Fulbright is such a prestigious award. Even if I do not make it as a finalist, just being named a semifinalist is an honor in and of itself. I’m so thankful to the faculty and staff at Georgia College who have supported me throughout this journey.

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Alternate Text

Maya Whipple applied for an English Teaching Assistantship in Argentina. She hopes to expand her education in studio art and Spanish while “immersed in the Argentine environment.”

Becoming a semi-finalist was a little nerve-wracking, Whipple said, because she’s never been outside the country for long.

“But it would be the experience

of a lifetime,” she said. “I’ll continue to polish my Spanish-speaking skills and do everything necessary to ensure my best performance as a teacher’s assistant in Argentina. Latin culture is filled with vibrant art, which is something I look forward to.”

In the future, Whipple would like to be an entrepreneur and open her own bakery and art studio. She plans to conduct a supplementary project involving art and baking in Argentina.

Whipple is also appreciative of the help she got from the National Scholarship Office. Her application went through so many edits and revisions at Georgia College, she didn’t think she’d make it through the first round of Fulbright deliberations.

“

I feel very accomplished to have made it this far in the process. Becoming a Fulbright semi-finalist has instilled a great deal of confidence within me.

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News Stories Posted Monday March 14, 2022



Georgia College students hold bilingual story time at elementary school

[World Languages & Cultures, Department of](#): Monday March 14, 2022

Exposure to a second language doesn't usually begin until high school. By then, too many are fearful of new territory and have built barriers.

Not young children. Like a sponge, they're eager to absorb new experiences.

“

They're not afraid to make mistakes, and that's something I have to get over myself. It's so freeing to see them learning and accepting other languages and cultures.

- Christopher Jackson

”

“They're not afraid to make mistakes, and that's something I have to get over

myself. It's so freeing to see them learning and accepting other languages and cultures," said junior Christopher Jackson of Gray.

Jackson is double majoring in communication and world language and cultures with an emphasis in Spanish. He's part of Dr. Mariana Stoyanova's language service-learning class that provides weekly bilingual story times in Spanish and French to 3rd graders at Midway Hills Academy and occasional Saturday readings for 2- and 3-year olds at Mary Vinson Library, both in Milledgeville. Library coordinators told Stoyanova the sessions are popular, attracting the library's highest story-time attendance since the pandemic.

Pupils in Karlettia Jackson's 3rd grade class also enjoy seeing and learning from college students. They cheer when Bobcats enter the classroom.



Christopher Jackson leads a class recently at Midway Hills Academy.

Dr. Eric Carlyle, principal at Midway, welcomes this exposure for his students and the "expansion of learning" it provides. He's always looking for ways to improve curriculum and create collaborative opportunities.

"They love it. It's a nice change to the traditional instruction they get on a daily basis," Carlyle said. "It's always great for students to have an opportunity to learn from various people—whether they're teachers in-training or students who are coming in from different realms of life."

“Secondly, I think it helps our teachers to have people bringing in fresh ideas and different ways of presenting information to our students,” he said. “And I think it really helps us continue forging partnerships with community partners. To have an institution of higher learning of this magnitude here is extremely beneficial.”

Before entering the elementary classroom, Georgia College students must first understand the theory of acquiring a second language and ways young students learn. Hands-on experience in a classroom setting is valuable, Stoyanova said. Students design lesson plans and practice their own language skills while teaching others. This builds leadership and gives them a chance to interact with different age groups.

“

They learn to give clear and concise instructions and guide younger students in their learning by adapting to their needs. Such skills go beyond the classroom and are applicable in many situations, including professional settings.

- Dr. Marianna Stoyanova

”

“They’re also meeting a growing need for elementary-aged children to gain access to different cultures. This helps them become well-rounded individuals and global citizens,” Stoyanova said.

“They learn to give clear and concise instructions and guide younger students in their learning by adapting to their needs,” she said. “Such skills go beyond the classroom and are applicable in many situations, including professional settings.”

This semester, students are teaching young pupils greetings, colors, animal names and numbers in Spanish. They read age-appropriate bilingual story books and create activities to reinforce vocabulary. This includes games, music with Spanish lyrics like Disney’s “Encanto,” short online clips and worksheets.

One student read from Dr. Seuss’ “One Fish Two Fish” (“Un pez dos peces”) to teach numbers in Spanish to 20. Others read books like Bill Martin Jr.’s “Brown Bear” (“Oso pardo”) and “Polar Bear” (“Oso polar”) and Patricia Seibert’s “Three Little Pigs” (Los tres cerditos”) to strengthen vocabulary and help kids with story organization.

Young pupils pick up language quickly, Stoyanova said. They memorize most words by the end of a 45-minute lesson and show comprehension by successfully completing associated activities.

“The young ones love it when Georgia College students show up,” she said,



Dr. Stoyanova helps an elementary student.

“because it’s like a special treat outside their regular curriculum. They enjoy the interaction because they get to learn something new in a fun way.”

When Jackson stood in front of the 3rd grade class recently, no one could tell he was nervous. He started his bilingual story time by asking questions. This stirred up memories of the previous lesson. He interacted

with them in a lively, fun manner—and they loved it.

“Hey chicos,” Jackson called out, “what’s your favorite animal?”

They responded with a variety of animal names.

“Oh, that’s great. Does anybody see their favorite animal up here?” he said, pointing to a smart board. “Does anyone remember what we talked about last week? That’s right, pets. In Spanish they’re called ‘mascotas.’ Can you say it with me?”



Callie Smith helps a child with her Spanish vocabulary.

This interactive banter keeps the elementary students focused and actively involved. Jackson used his lesson to review color words in Spanish, while introducing new sound words. Pretty soon, the classroom was reverberating with all kinds of animal noises—barking, meowing, growling, roaring, snorting, chirping and hissing.

“A second language is a beneficial tool to have in this

ever-evolving world we’re in,” Jackson said. “To be aware of different languages and cultures is never a harmful thing to have. It’s also really interesting to see the native speakers in the classroom. They’re so happy their peers understand them and have an appreciation for another language.”

Junior psychology major Callie Smith of Norcross is minoring in Spanish. When she signed up for Stoyanova’s class, she didn’t know they’d be going into local schools and libraries to teach. The class has given her a glimpse of what it’s like to be an

educator. She plans to adapt these skills in the future as a psychologist.

“

The opportunity to teach at Midway Elementary has shown me what it means to teach and challenge children effectively with a second language. It's always very sweet to watch children have their interest piqued and potentially see a new passion beginning in them. Surprisingly, this class has been one of my favorites throughout my years at Georgia College. It's been very cool to see myself grow and adapt.

- Callie Smith

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Jackson said he's grown and adapted, as well. This experience has reinforced his dream of teaching language, making him feel more comfortable and capable of teaching younger learners.

Leaving the elementary class recently, he waved to the kids and said, “We're going to be back next week, and we're going to learn even more Spanish. Anybody remember how to say goodbye in Spanish?”

They replied in chorus: “Adios!”

News Stories Posted Tuesday March 15, 2022



Senior psychology major Anne Elise Beals named Truman Finalist

[Honors College](#) : Tuesday March 15, 2022

For Anne Elise Beals, service work was never a choice. Rather, it was the chance convergence of a lifetime of interests that lead her to being named a finalist for this year's Truman Scholarship.

"Being a psychology major," she said, "and always analyzing the way that people think and why we interact socially the way that we do—it's that mixed background, that liberal arts education, that's helped me to combine my interests."

“

Being a psychology major, and always analyzing the way that people think and why we interact socially the way that we do...it's that mixed background, that liberal arts education, that's helped me to combine my interests.



Beals' passion for working with LGBTQ+ youth to prevent homelessness and incarceration and her work for the Women's Center led her to the attention of her philosophy professor, Dr. James Winchester, who suggested that she might be a good candidate for the Truman Scholarship.

None of this was in the plan. Beals credits the work of her non-biological Aunt Beth for inspiring her to pursue public service.

"We met her when I was two, and her daughters went to the same dance studio that I did," Beals said. "She has her own circle of rehab centers for people who are recovering from addiction. Seeing her not only beat addiction in her lifetime but also help her daughter overcome it and help this whole network of people around her overcome their addictions was incredibly inspiring."

Only 189 students, pulled from 126 institutions from across the nation, have been recognized as Truman finalists. The award recipient will receive a \$30,000 scholarship for graduate school, and will become part of the larger network of Truman Scholarship alums, who are some of the highest achieving public servants in the world.

The scholarship was originally founded as a "living memorial" to the 33^d President of the United States, Harry S. Truman, for those who exhibit excellence in education and public service. Since its inception, many of the nation's most notable public figures have begun their careers as Truman Scholars.

Current Georgia Governor candidate Stacey Abrams (1994) among them, as well as former Director of Speechwriting for President Barack Obama Jon Favreau (2002) and Pulitzer Prize winner Marcia Chatelain (2000). Anne Elise Beals is also joined by several GC alumni who have also been named Truman Finalists; [Kendyl Lewis \(2020\)](#) and Dillon Johnstone (2016).

Winchester referred Beals to Anna Whiteside, the assistant director of the John E. Salstrom Honors College and National Scholarships coordinator, who helped guide Beals through the application process and conducted interviews to determine whether or not to nominate candidates.

"Part of the Truman application is giving a policy proposal," Beals said. "You have to identify an issue and explain how you think it should be fixed."

Since the announcement of the finalists, Beals said life has been "crazy." People



Anne Elise Beals

who she never would have expected have been contacting and offering their congratulations.

"I went on the website and they have a list of all the finalists and the schools that they come from," she said. "A lot of them are from schools like Princeton, Yale, Harvard. I didn't know that was going to be my competition."

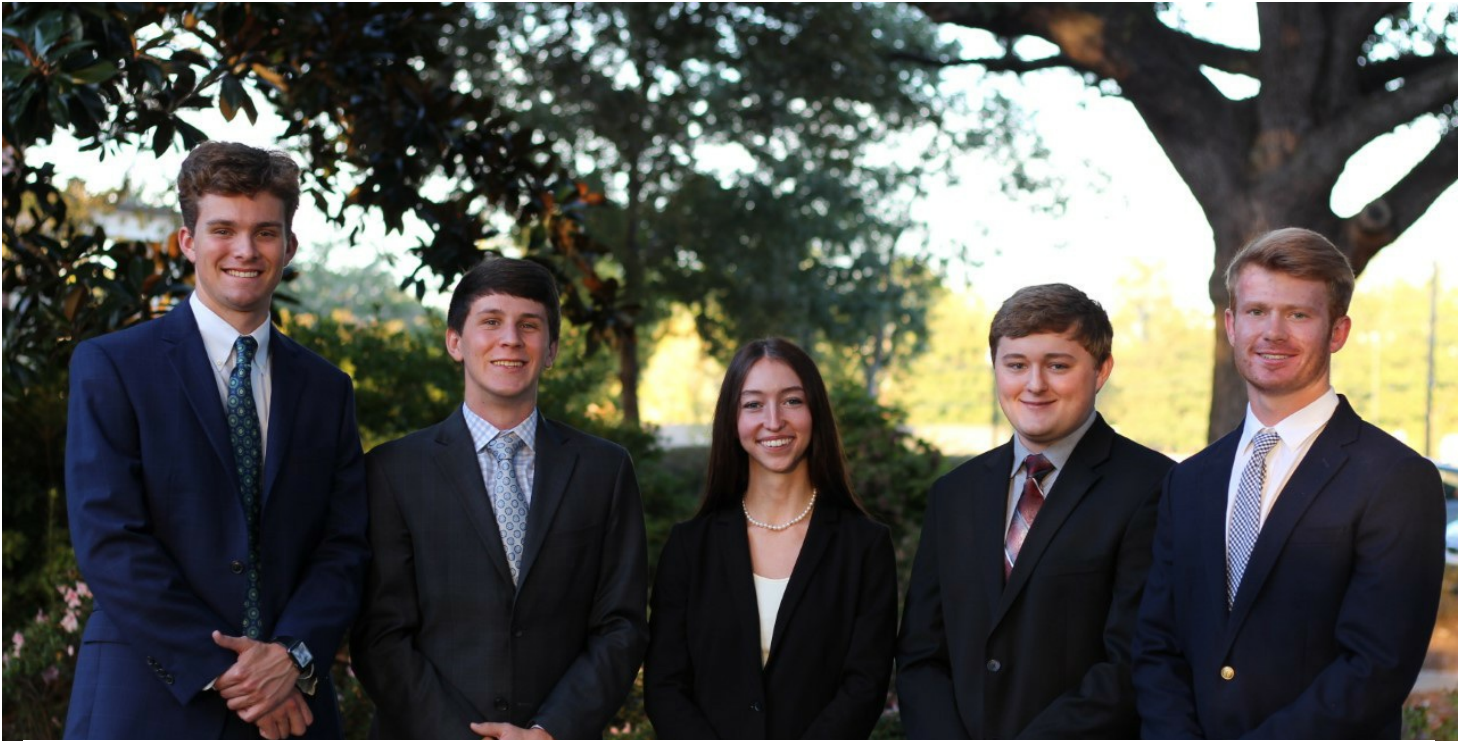
In addition to more mock interviews for the Truman Scholarship, she's also gearing up to coordinate and run her second [Bi+ Community Week](#) March 21 – 24. She spoke in her application about the instruction from Women's Center director Dr. Jennifer Graham and program coordinator Melissa Gerrior's mentorship in running the event last semester and is excited to take on more of a leadership role

this semester.

"There's always more," Beals said. "Melissa helped me to realize there's always more that we can evaluate, and look at and ask, why does that happen?"

Beals plans to obtain a Master's of Social Work and a Master's of Women's and Gender Studies after graduation with long-term hopes of one day opening her own community center reminiscent of Hope Homes, the recovery network that her aunt runs. The center would serve as a one-stop-shop for health care, access to food, shelter, water, showers, basic needs, as well as community programming, and above all, a sense of support and belonging.

News Stories Posted Wednesday March 16, 2022



First Georgia College Team to advance in Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute Research Challenge

[Economics & Finance, Department of](#) : Wednesday March 16, 2022

Even though they were eliminated later, a team of five students were the first from Georgia College to advance to the second round of the Southern Classic Research Challenge, a sub-regional competition in the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute Research Challenge.

The annual, global competition rigorously tests university students on their analytical, valuation, report writing and presentation skills. As part of the Southern Classic sub-region, students from Georgia College competed against 25 other universities from Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina.

After scoring in the top five in the first round, Georgia College advanced to the presentation round alongside teams from Kennesaw State University, Auburn, Clemson and Mercer University. Despite all odds, the team placed third in the presentation round with a score of 86.8 out of 100. Mercer University placed first,

and Kennesaw State University placed second.

Only Mercer University will advance further in the competition this year, but the Georgia College team isn't discouraged. Made up of five students: junior economics major Lauren Moskowitz, junior economics major Clayton Gardner, junior management information systems major James "Slate" Fluker, senior economics major Nathan Snow and junior marketing major Nick Brooks, the interdisciplinary team is proud of what they've achieved.

“

We, a small school without a finance major, made it to the next round of a global finance competition.

- Lauren Moskowitz

”

“We, a small school without a finance major, made it to the next round of a global finance competition,” Moskowitz said. “Our goal when we started the competition was to make it to the presentation round. We feel like we prepared very well.”

The students, selected in September of 2021, were tasked by the CFA Institute to analyze the entire financial picture of a designated company, and provide a recommendation to judges on whether stock should be bought, sold or held. This grueling work, completed over months of balancing other commitments, resulted in a 20-page financial analysis report.



Team photo (left to right): Slate Fluker, Nick Brooks, Lauren Moskowitz, Nathan Snow, Clayton Gardner.

The report was graded by judges from companies like Truist and JPMorgan. The Georgia College team made it to the presentation round by beating out teams from schools like the University of Alabama. The third team from Georgia College to compete in as many years, they were the first from the university to advance to the next round for presentations.

They learned the news in a finance class. Snow was out sick when Gardner received the notification.

“We were all freaking out,” Moskowitz said. “After we shared the news the whole

class started cheering. They knew how much time and effort we'd put into it.

Their advisors, Dr. Isarin Durongkadej, assistant professor of finance, and Dr. Leng Ling, professor of finance, could only provide the team with 10 hours of help.

"The students have a limited knowledge as opposed to a finance majors with 30 credit hours of experience," Durongkadej said. "I think it's a huge accomplishment. I can't believe they've had this much self-discipline. I'm so proud of them."

Durongkadej selects students for the challenge every September, encouraging all majors to apply. By taking part in the challenge, students gain real-life knowledge of stock and financial analysis. They get access to an industry mentor and networking opportunities at large financial companies, he said.

Students who advance are also made part of a resume book, which is sent to employers for networking and employment opportunities. The demanding, real-world work helps students discover whether they truly want to work in finance.

"We all got together and the students told me, 'I feel so empty now,'" Durongkadej said. "I think that's good feedback, meaning they put a lot of time into the project and enjoyed it."

"It sounds like they want more projects," he said with a laugh.

News Stories Posted Thursday March 17, 2022



Future Georgia Educators Day aims to recruit high schoolers to teach

[Teacher Education, Department of](#) : Thursday March 17, 2022

It's hard to know what career path to take as a young adult. In many cases, students face challenges understanding what a specific job entails and therefore have a hard time visualizing themselves in that career.

To respond to those challenges and help bridge the teacher shortage gap, Georgia College's John H. Lounsbury College of Education along with the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) partnered to bring nearly 200 high school students to campus to see first-hand what a career in education could look like for them.

Students came from across the state to participate in the Future Georgia Educators (FGE) Day.

"They are invited to come to a college for a day where we talk to them about a



Georgia's 2022 Teacher of the Year Cherie Bonder Goldman

career in teaching," said Mary Ruth Ray, FGE coordinator for PAGE. "They hear a presentation from an award-winning educator, and they participate in interactive workshops presented by the host college about teaching topics, teaching strategies or college life in general."

Georgia's 2022 Teacher of the Year Cherie Bonder Goldman presented the keynote address recounting her journey from a

career in advertising to education.

"When I stepped into the classroom, I stepped into my passion, and with each and every day, I believe in it more and more," said Goldman, who teaches in Savannah-Chatham County. "I can assure you that if you ultimately get into teaching, you are getting into something that has a purpose. You are getting into something that makes a difference. You are getting into a job that you can believe in."

That sentiment echoed throughout the day as the high schoolers visited a College Fair and sat in on presentations from Georgia College students. Dozens of education majors and others from across campus volunteered to make presentations or assist with the day's events.

"I spoke in a session and walked them through cohort life in the education programs and the benefits of becoming a teacher," said senior Georgia Denny, special education major.



Georgia Denny (left) makes a presentation for high school students."

She was joined by other students from the early childhood and middle grades programs to help the high school students understand the paths in college to become a teacher.

"We're basically trying to recruit them and show them that, if you want to be a teacher, it is possible. It's not as scary as it seems," Denny said. "We want to plant that seed in their head that they can do it."

Like so many educators Denny felt called to the field. She “wants to make a difference,” and has found she has an innate ability to connect with students with disabilities.

The same is true for other college students like junior Catherine Waters. She decided to pursue middle grades teaching because “it’s such a big changing point when a student starts figuring out who he or she is as a person.” Waters hoped to provide information about middle grades education to pique interest in the young students.

“For the high school students, we’re really pinpointing what middle grades is because a lot of people know about early and special education, but they don’t really know much about middle grades,” said Waters. “There’s so much that goes on in the middle of school, so we’re giving an overview of that.”

The high school student’s knowledge about the education field varied. Some knew very little about the process to become a teacher, while others had already decided this was going to be their career.

Ky-Amber Butts, a senior at Baldwin High, wanted to attend FGE Day to learn more about the profession she’s wanted to pursue most of her life.



Catherine Waters works with students.

“I want to be a teacher because students like me—they need somebody to push them,” she said. “I feel like I can find students that relate to me and help them.”

Tapping into those passions and skills in high school students is one reason FGE Day exists.

“As the state’s largest education association, part of our responsibility is to reach out and cultivate the next generation of teachers,” Ray said. “We think bringing them to a college campus is a key part.”

“For a lot of these students, this might be the first time they’ve ever set foot on a college campus. If they go to college, they might be the first one in their family to ever attend college,” Ray said. “By partnering with our friends in the colleges, we’re almost breaking down barriers that some students might have, so they might begin to envision themselves attending college for the first time.”

Students from 11 high schools across the state participated, coming from as far away as Carroll and Thomas Counties. Local schools from counties including

Baldwin, Jones and Washington sent student delegations as well.

“We were so grateful for the turnout and for the opportunity to host FGE Day for the first time,” said Claire Garrett, GC College of Education’s partnership and field placement director.

FGE Days take place across the state at different colleges. The pandemic put a halt to many events, but in a typical year, PAGE hosts about eight to 10 FGE Days per year.

“Our goal in the College of Education is to highlight the positive aspects of being an educator and to let students know that it's not just an admirable profession, but it's a career in which you can make a positive difference in the lives of children as they learn and grow. There are not many professions where you can do that,” said Garrett.

FGE Day is a great example of just one way the College of Education works to connect with those interested in education, share their knowledge and empower young adults to pursue a teaching career.

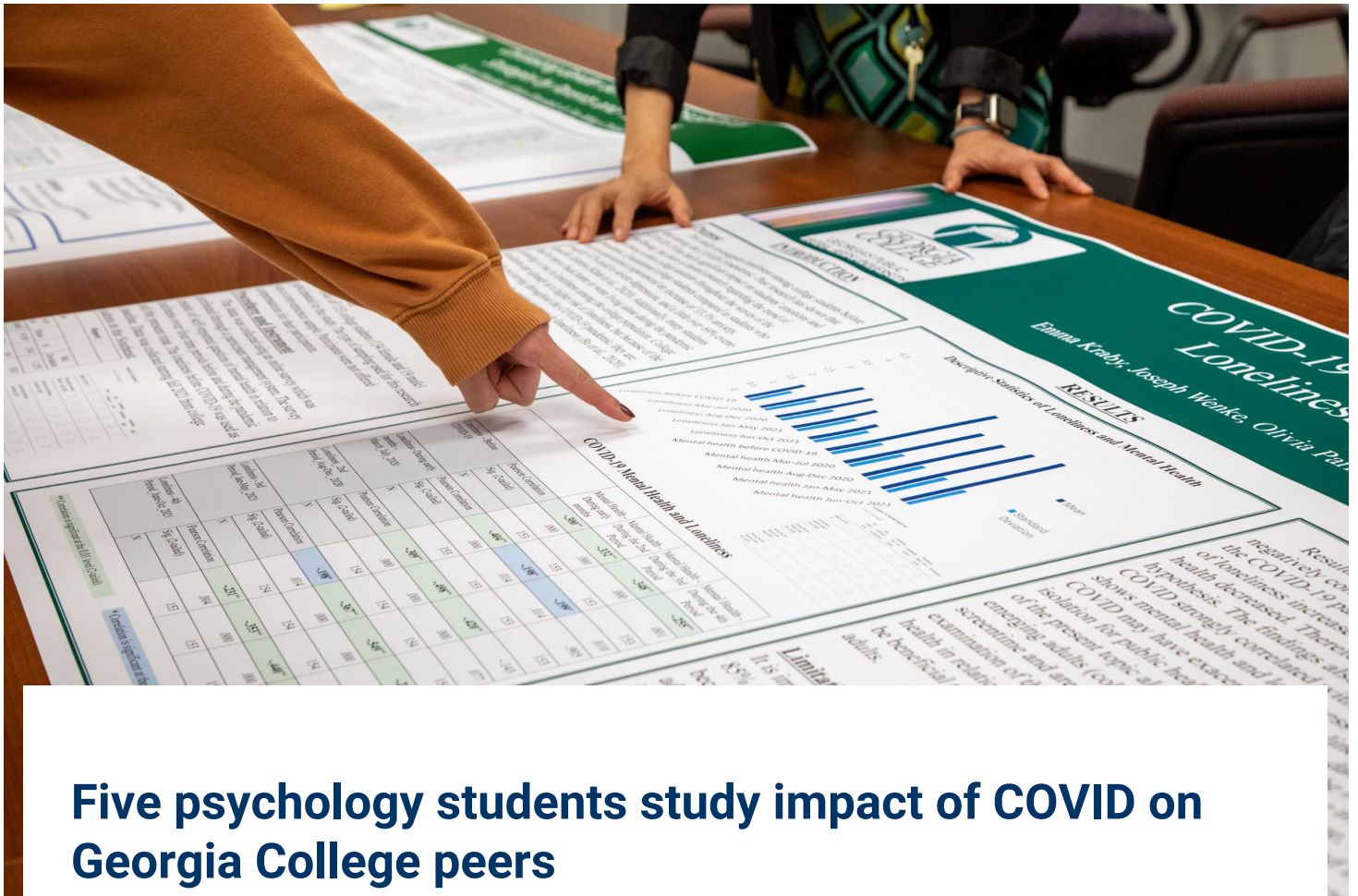


Mary Ruth Ray



The College Fair brought together colleges and universities from across the state to provide information to students.

News Stories Posted Monday March 21, 2022



Five psychology students study impact of COVID on Georgia College peers

[Psychological Science, Department of](#) : Monday March 21, 2022

Five psychology majors are finishing data analysis on several projects relating to coronavirus and worldwide lockdowns that left millions dealing with mental health issues.

The results showed students at Georgia College—like people everywhere—weren't immune to the fallout of isolation and loneliness.

"Our conclusions were that loneliness increased and the reported overall state of mental health decreased, which corresponds to a strong negative correlation between loneliness and mental health across all stages of the pandemic," said senior psychology major Emma Kraby of Athens.

"We can only assume mental health will continue to improve," she said, "but it's not quite to the level it was before."

“

Generally, the results that I've seen show introverts were more negatively impacted by quarantining than extroverts, and so were people who entered college before COVID.

- Senior Joseph Wenke

”

Kraby studied COVID anxiety and mental health with fellow researcher Joseph Wenke, a senior psychology major from Roswell. From March 2020 to Oct. 2021, they surveyed 154 of their peers, learning the effects of quarantine, fear and isolation. As lockdowns continued, charts show loneliness going up and mental health coming down.

Wenke took the research further by examining how loneliness can be mediated by personality traits. He looked at screen time and other variables, like whether students had a pet. More screen time correlated with impaired mental health, while having a cat or dog to cuddle helped fight discouragement.

Upperclassmen, whose lives were interrupted by COVID, were more negatively impacted than those entering college after the pandemic died down, Wenke discovered. Social distancing, wearing masks and other restrictions seem to be the new normal for younger students and more-easily accepted.

Contrary to what one would expect—introverts were more negatively impacted than extroverts by isolation.



Joseph Wenke, front, watches with classmates as Dr. Tsu-Ming Chiang runs off a conference poster.

Things have improved two years later but only a little. Kraby and Wenke were surprised to find loneliness continues to be present in college students.

“It could just be the habits from quarantine—maybe people got used to more screen time and less physical activity. Maybe they’re staying inside more. Or maybe people have gotten used to not having contact with friends,” Wenke said.

“There’s a lot more to be done on that,” he added. “Generally, the results that I’ve seen show introverts were more negatively impacted by quarantining than extroverts, and so were people who were in college before COVID.”

These results follow similar patterns experienced by the rest of society and campus. Psychology department chair Dr. Lee Gillis said students and faculty in general are dealing with various levels of stress, anxiety and depression.

“

The pandemic has worn folks thin. ‘Languishing’ has been used as a term to describe how people are feeling. These symptoms include a sense of emptiness or existential crisis; an absence of wellbeing, even if you’re not sick; an inability to describe your feelings; and feeling as if there’s nothing to look

forward to.

- Dr. Lee Gillis, chair of psychology

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Psychology majors Maryelle Michael of Roswell, a senior, and Carson Beasley of Woodstock, a junior, are studying COVID from a different angle. They’re examining the role of exercise and how physical exertion improves anxiety levels.



Senior Maryelle Michael listens as Dr. Chiang explains data analysis.

“Pre-pandemic, exercise data was pretty consistent,” Michael said. “But come March 2020, there was a big halt of exercise among adolescents and adults, because we were all in shock. No one knew what to do, essentially, and you couldn’t go to the gym.”

Data suggests a reduction in exercise correlates to a reduction in mental health and increased feelings of loneliness. But people soon found creative ways to

exercise. They joined online initiatives like TikTok and workout routines on YouTube or Zoom.

Nevertheless, exercise levels—like loneliness and mental health states—are not back up to pre-COVID levels.

“That makes sense,” Beasley said. “Some people are still scared to go out in public or go to the gym and join classes. I think a lot of people underestimate the positive effects physical activity has on mental health. Because COVID has impacted that, we weren’t really shocked to see physical activities fall so low.”

The COVID research teams will present their findings at a regional conference at the end of March. Twenty-six psychology students will attend the Southeastern Psychological Association’s annual conference, showcasing various topics in addition to COVID, such as:

- Microaggressions in the classroom
- Substance abuse in ADHD and bipolar disorders
- Belonging and wellness of minorities in predominately white institutions
- Self-injury and suicide among transgender and gender nonconforming college students

- Stereotypical gender beliefs and harsher disciplinary strategies for male children
- Effects of lying on memory

Conducting quality research in undergraduate years is invaluable, said Dr. Tsu-Ming Chiang, professor of psychology. Her research students often perform higher than peers in graduate school and jobs after graduation. They find themselves ahead in skills like generating ideas, formulating questions, data collection, analysis and communication.

Beasley said he learned to collaborate in groups, listen to other ideas and interpret information. He's soaking in as much experience as he can before graduation and hopes to get a job as a professional counselor.

“

This research not only prepared me for any situation I find myself in as an undergraduate, but it's also given me a lot of hands-on experience as I prepare to go to graduate school. I wouldn't feel as confident in my own ability and experience without it.

- Senior Emma Kraby

”

Kraby's COVID research helped her gain acceptance into the University of Denver's Master of Counseling Psychology program in Colorado.

“Undergraduate research makes you a competitive applicant for programs like that,” she said, “especially in psychology, where most programs are research-based. Not only conducting the research—but having the opportunity to present it at conference is a really big opportunity.”

“This research not only prepared me for any situation I find myself in as an undergraduate,” she said, “but it's also given me a lot of hands-on experience as I prepare to go to graduate school. I wouldn't feel as confident in my own ability and experience without it.”

News Stories Posted Monday March 28, 2022



Bon Appétit: Students learn history by picking up the fork

[History & Geography, Department of](#): Monday March 28, 2022

Food connects all human beings. Every region has its tribal traditions, every culture a certain food heritage, every family its own roots and recipes.

But, mostly, food is just plain fun to eat.

A group of Georgia College history students recently expanded their knowledge of food the fork-to-mouth way on a Foodways study away trip to Savannah during Spring Break. They chronicled the diversity of food rituals in this Southern port city while eating at Lowcountry, Greek, Indian, Italian, Latin and Asian restaurants.

"It relates to history because it's a different perspective of history. It not only shows the major impact food had on the South but also the world," said senior history major Elijah Lopez of New York City, New York.

"We're not just eating food and getting an 'A,'" he said. "We have to understand the history and significance behind food. Food ties in so deeply with people's lives and



Elijah Lopez and Grant Van den Berg at Yia Yia's Greek restaurant in Savannah.

cultures and, being from New York, it has been an eye-opening experience to learn about the way of life down South."

Fourteen students went on the five-day trip as part of the "Experiencing the Ethnic South Through Food" class co-taught by history professors Dr. Craig Pascoe and Dr. James "Trae" Welborn. The unique course goes beyond what most people see as Southern vittles, like biscuits and gravy, and

introduces students to another side of Southern food—an inherently multicultural palate shaped by the relocation of diverse ethnic groups who made cities like Savannah their home.

“

We talk about patterns of migration and how different food influences and cultures intermingle to create new food traditions. Southern foodways and traditions have always been inherently multicultural and really global in scope from the influences of all the different people who end up here.

- Dr. Craig Pascoe

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Enslaved Africans brought with them knowledge of growing rice crops. Certain dishes are distinctly connected to the Gullah Geechee culture found on Sapelo Island in Georgia and sea islands of the Carolinas. Enslaved Africans also brought cooking traditions that helped them survive in desperate conditions, like cooking “one-pot meals” over a “three rock fire.”

Details like these captivate students as much as the foods they get to eat in this course.

A number of Irish immigrated to Savannah during the potato famine in the 1840s and '50s. Later that century, Chinese immigrants began to settle in the city. Many Asian foods merged with Southern cooking for dishes we see today across the Southeast. Few know the Chinese were the first in the Mississippi Delta to sell

tamales, normally known as a Mexican fare. Tamales were an easy food to fix and sell, Pascoe said.



Students at NaaN on Broughton, an Indian restaurant in Savannah.

Prior to Spring Break, students learned how to make tamales from Letty Short at El Tequila in Milledgeville. They toured Comfort Farms in Milledgeville to learn about African plants like okra, a mainstay in many Southern recipes.

Later this semester, they'll eat at the Thai restaurant LaDDa Bistro and a Creole restaurant in Macon. They'll also go on a "food crawl" along Buford Highway to visit the Buford Highway Farmer's Market and sample foods at ethnic restaurants there. They'll eat traditional street food by Muslim-Chinese Uighurs, as well as Vietnamese, Salvadorian and Ethiopian foods. Students are encouraged to try the unfamiliar, like octopus, stuffed intestines and goat genitals.

In the classroom, students learn the history and culture of various minority groups residing in the South. They tried various Southern ethnic dishes like biscuits and country ham, Asian shrimp salad, black-eyed peas and cornbread.

"The South is not simply a black and white kind of society. It's always had a lot of different ethnic and racial groups," Welborn said. "As a port town, Savannah's going to have the greatest concentration of different ethnic groups than anywhere else. You'll also see ethnic groups throughout the South in smaller towns like Statesboro or Jackson, Mississippi, where you might have a Jewish family running a deli or a Greek family running a restaurant."

The Spring Break trip was the highlight of the course, bringing all these concepts together.

Students heard presentations from restaurant owners, who talked about how they ended up in Savannah and why they serve certain foods.

The group ate at The Flying Monk with its fresh-cut Asian noodle dishes; FraLi Italian with its old-World recipes handed down from generation-to-generation; Yia Yia's Greek Kitchen with its gyros and pastries; NaaN on Broughton with its warm Indian flavors; Latin Chicks with its Caribbean and South American cuisine; and The Grey, an old bus terminal where new-South delicacies are found.

But it wasn't all fun and eating.

Beforehand, Students analyzed historical patterns of food production, consumption and associated cultural meanings among Southern ethnic groups. They took field notes during meals in Savannah, answered questions and will be tested on the historical significance of it all. They'll research ethnic recipes and prepare a potluck dinner with a presentation at the end of the semester.



Greek food at Yia Yia's.

“

This class has made me think about how food is a part of history. It's been a good reminder of how many cultures there are in America and the South.

- Sydney Satori

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The class trip helped junior history major Sydney Satori of Cumming expand her palate. She calls herself a “picky eater” and generally doesn't like meat. But the chicken dish, “Saltada de Pollo,” at Latin Chicks was “the best chicken” she ever had.

“I learned I'm not as picky of an eater as I thought,” Satori said. “I enjoyed many foods on this trip that I never would've tried otherwise. This class has made me think about how food is a part of history. It's been a good reminder of how many cultures there are in America and the South.”

Senior psychology major Lucas Baird of Woodstock said his favorite restaurant was Yia Yia's. He enjoyed the owner's tale about the Greek restaurant's role in the community. He also savored the “amazing Louisiana-style food” at Huey's and liked the Indian food at NaaN on Broughton.

Baird was most surprised “by just the sheer amount of variety within Savannah and how diversity seems to be a prevalent theme.” Food is a major factor in the city's identity, intermixed with its rich history of change and struggle during immigrations, he said.



Jillian Akers and Lucas Baird at Yia Yia's.

"I think what stood out the most on this trip was the variety and rich culture that could be experienced within one town," Baird said. "We not only got to try foreign foods, but also hear the owner's or chef's story and of their experience and cultural journey."

"My eyes have been opened to just how varied the South has become," he added, "and how a lot of foods have been co-opted

by Southerners to create their own unique hybrid."



University Housing helps in transition to college

[University Housing](#) : Monday March 28, 2022

Meet junior nursing major Taya Green. She's served as a Community Advisor (CA) in University Housing for two years and plans to next year as well. CAs live on a wing in a Central Campus residence hall or at the West Campus apartments. They work closely with students in their area throughout the year, developing a rapport with each of the residents. They help organize programs, assist students in finding campus resources and distribute information to residents.

Taya shares how the foundations built in Housing can help you throughout your college career.

What year are you? I'm a junior

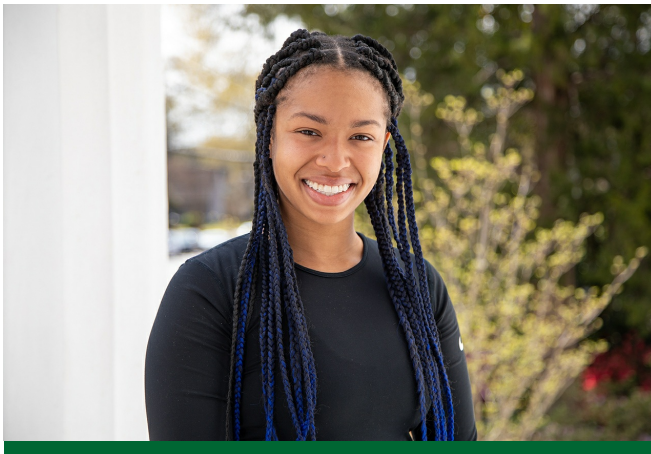
student

What's your major? I'm a nursing

Where are you from? I'm from

Toccoa Georgia, a small town

How did you decide to become a CA? I saw flyers around campus and inquired



Taya Green

about the position then decided that it would be a good fit.

How do CA's help students with issues and get acclimated to campus? CA's are the people a resident looks to for guidance on campus. Being a freshman and not knowing much about the campus or the resources the campus offers can be difficult to maneuver, so CA's help bridge the gap.

What's the benefit in your perspective to choosing your roommate instead of being assigned one? It gives residents more autonomy and comfortability in knowing the person they will be sharing a space with. Having the option of choosing your roommates would really benefit the transition to college life because you're living with someone you know you connect with.

How does living on campus help students adjust to their first year of college? I think it helps ease the transition of being on your own for the first time. It can be difficult to manage at first. For the Central Campus residence halls, it's convenient because you can just walk to class. You're still figuring out where you are and how to get around, but just being able to have that close proximity of classes and where you live is great.

Any advice you'd give to first-year students? Remember why you're at school, choose wisely who you befriend and don't be afraid to ask for help.



Cat Crew helps during the move-in process.

News Stories Posted Tuesday March 29, 2022



Georgia College receives federal grant for writing and literacy outreach in Baldwin Schools

[Andalusia Institute](#) : Tuesday March 29, 2022

A nearly \$400,000 grant will help promote writing and literacy skills for youth in Baldwin County schools. Georgia College has been awarded funds for a new Writing for Success program from the Department of Education.

The program will include a combination of workshops, one-on-one consultations and peer advising for K-12 students at their schools.

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This program draws from our liberal arts mission to develop creative problem solvers, skilled communicators and engaged citizens.

- Dr. Costas Spirou, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

“Georgia College is committed to supporting our community and is dedicated to fostering the success of students in our local public schools. This program draws from our liberal arts mission to develop creative problem solvers, skilled communicators and engaged citizens,” said Dr. Costas Spirou, Georgia College’s provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

Many rural school districts in the state struggle with adequately preparing students with the skills they need for successful careers. Initiatives like the Writing for Success program aim to address these challenges and offer participants an opportunity to develop the skills to improve their academic performance and overall career readiness.

“We hope to spark passions and spur opportunities for students as we work to promote greater literacy. Our community and the state will benefit from students who are better prepared to communicate and succeed in their futures—whether they go directly to college or to careers,” said Dr. Irene Burgess, executive director of the Andalusia Institute.

“Who knows. Some students may even follow in the footsteps of famed authors Flannery O’Connor and Alice Walker who called this area home,” she said.”

Georgia College will begin work in the coming months with local educators and administrators to assess the district’s needs and the needs of their students. Once those are identified, facilitators will formulate programming to meet those needs. Programming could include training for teachers, hands-on engagement for students or enrichment activities.



Student study in the classroom.

“We all know how important reading, writing and speaking skills are for all life situations. This new program will help expand the reach in our schools and bring new opportunities for our students to have support in these vital areas,” said Dr. Noris Price, superintendent of Baldwin County Schools. “We are grateful for the partnership with Georgia College on this initiative and look forward to seeing how this benefits our students as we move forward.”

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“Investing in our students means investing in future generations of change-makers, thinkers, and innovators.

- Sen. Rev. Raphael Warnock

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The \$385,000 grant is funded through the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, which was recently signed by President Joe Biden. Georgia College is grateful to Sen. Raphael Warnock, who advocated for this initiative.

“Investing in our students means investing in future generations of change-makers, thinkers, and innovators. I am proud to have secured these funds for the Writing Success for Central Georgia Youth program because I believe writing is a gateway for young people to positively express themselves and contribute to our society. Students deserve our unwavering support, and I will continue pushing for federal policies that invest in the constructive development of tomorrow’s leaders,” said Sen. Rev. Raphael Warnock.

News Stories Posted Thursday March 31, 2022



Georgia College's 25th Annual Student Research Conference sports diversity of topics

[Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors \(MURACE\)](#) : Thursday March 31, 2022

[Video](#)

As the state's public liberal arts university, Georgia College is in the unique position to showcase a diversity of topics—especially when it comes to undergraduate research.

More than 60 students from all disciplines participated in the university's 25th Annual Student Research Conference at the end of March. In addition to oral presentations, there were virtual and in-person poster sessions outside Arts and Sciences and in Peabody Auditorium. New this year, there were also special sessions on "Digital Humanities" and "Community-Based Engaged Learning."

Georgia College's Undergraduate Research Conference is one of the oldest in the country. It has run non-stop, even during the recent pandemic.

“Despite COVID, we’ve had dedicated faculty who are finding ways to continue mentoring our undergraduate research students. It’s both amazing and inspiring, and our undergraduate research students continue to find success at GC and beyond,” said Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost for Transformative Learning Experiences.



Alternate Text

Plenty of research-based subjects, like biology and physics, were featured. Reflecting the university’s liberal arts mission, there were also a slew of other topics like graphic art design, psychology, math and history. Far-reaching themes—like use of free libraries in Baldwin County, the effect of COVID on student grades, port industries in Savannah and ways terrorist engage in warfare—were also prevalent, as well as

community-based service projects about mothers in the workforce and how women’s self-care has changed since Civil War days.

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Despite the difficulties brought on by the pandemic, our students have persevered and continue to tackle big questions in their research with their amazing faculty mentors.

- Dr. Stefanie Sevcik

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“We had students sharing their work on a diverse range of topics—from the hyperlocal to the global, showing undergraduate research at Georgia College is going strong. Despite the difficulties brought on by the pandemic, our students have persevered and continue to tackle big questions in their research with their amazing faculty mentors,” said Dr. Stefanie Sevcik, lecturer of English and co-organizer of the conference along with Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge, associate professor of physics, and Dr. Doreen Sams, who played a huge role in undergraduate research through MURACE (Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors) over the years.

During the 2020-’21 academic year, 1,737 students participated in research at Georgia College—about 31.3% of the student population. During their four years here, 65% of all students engage in creative endeavors and faculty-mentored

undergraduate research.

This year, four students are also attending Posters at the Capitol, a research event started a few years ago by Georgia College. During the event, undergraduates display their work to legislative representatives, lobbyists and the general public. In addition, Georgia College publishes the only national book on mentoring students and launched a national journal on undergraduate research—the first of its kind—in 2021.

This intense focus on undergraduate research caught the attention of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) in 2021. It awarded Georgia College its Campus-wide Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments (AURA).

Some students presenting research at the campus conference were:

- Sophomore physics major **Wesley Sutton** of John's Creek: His group worked on a portable solar energy pack that could help people during natural disasters and blackouts.

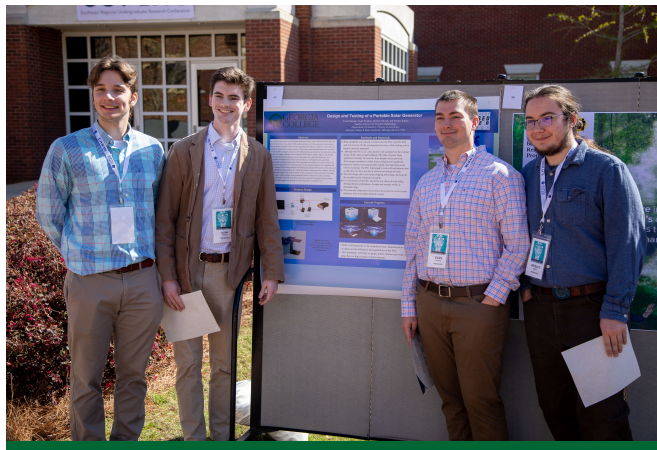
- Sophomore biology major and Spanish minor **Alexandra Furney** of Alpharetta: Her research was to develop an understanding of "internal ribosome entry sites" and how they control genes. This work could one day help prevent cancer growths and other diseases.

- Senior biology major **Maung V. Tlung** of St. Simons: He looked for toxic algae at Lake Sinclair that cause diarrhea, nausea and fever. Levels were safe, but he stressed the need for more awareness about toxins produced by fertilizer runoff.

- Senior psychology major and marketing minor **Avery Smith** of Johns Creek: She planned a survey project to gauge self-control. Smith's looking to see whether students spend extra money on necessities or splurge on luxury items.

- Senior graphic arts major **Logan Maiola** of Atlanta: She created graphic designs for an imaginary hotel. These included branding items and brochures. She used color theory and crafted signs for transportation vehicles as well as labels for body wash, soap boxes and shampoos found in hotel bathrooms.

- And first-year nursing major **Jocelyn Taylor**: Her group did a community-based engaged learning project, planning a campus event on mothers who work. Their objective is to raise awareness of microaggressions that take place in the workplace and social issues facing women.



Wesley Sutton, right, stands with his research group. They explored how to make portable solar generators.

All students expressed gratitude for the exposure to undergraduate research that Georgia College offers.

“It was definitely a lot of work,” said Maiola about graphic design. “Something like this would take several years to do. I had to squish it down into a couple of months. But it’s definitely worth it. I’m learning a lot of real-world skills.”



Anna Boughton explains her meditation research.

Tlung said his algae work at Lake Sinclair has been “eye-opening.” Georgia College “does a really great job” giving undergraduates opportunity for research, he said.

Biology majors get a lot of exposure to lab work at Georgia College, Furney said. This helps when applying to graduate schools or entering the workforce.

The experience made Smith realize she’s interested in marketing research.

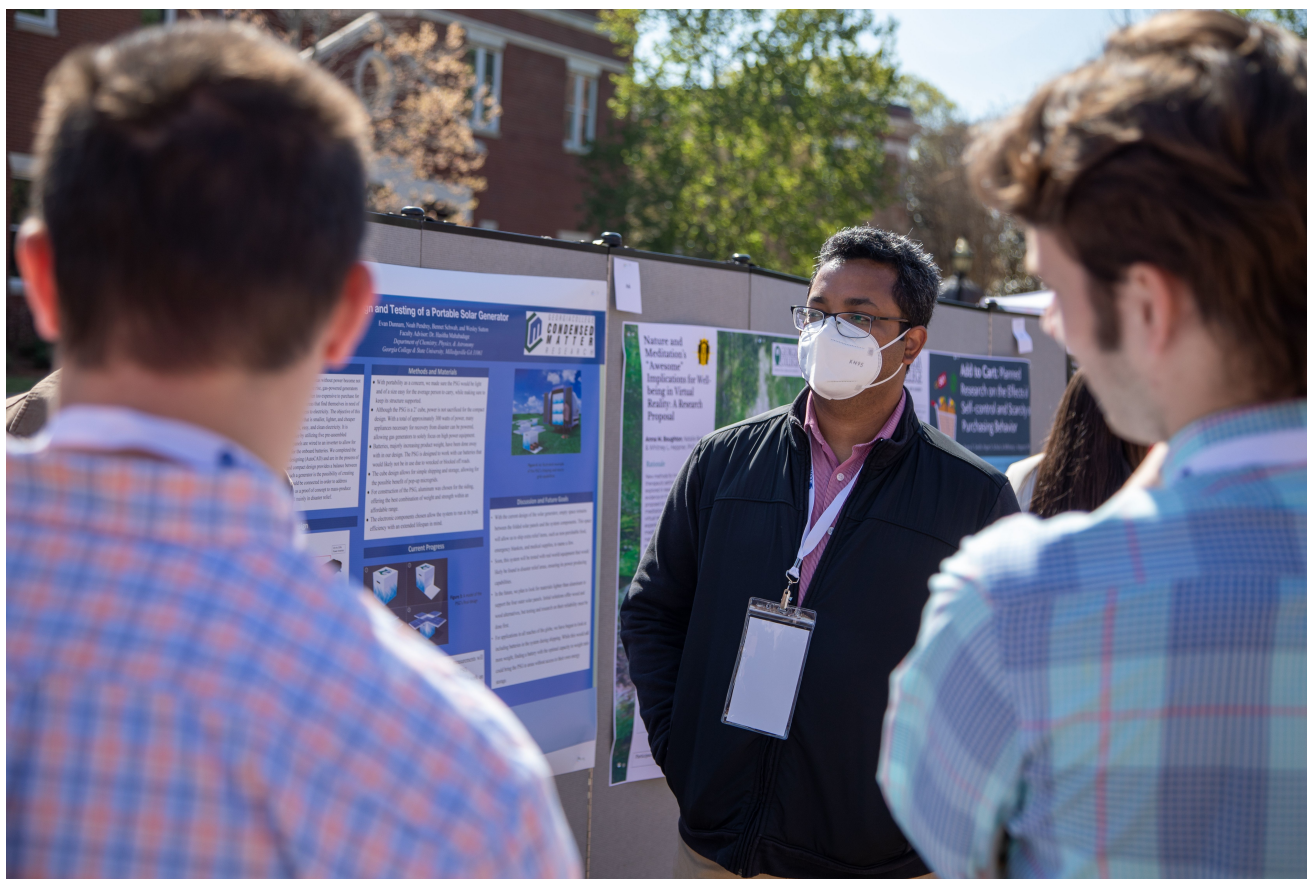
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It’s really given me a new passion for research. Initially, I thought research wasn’t up my alley. It seemed really complicated. But when you’re able to do research in something you care about, it becomes pretty easy to do. It’s definitely changed my whole perspective. It makes me feel very, very accomplished.

- Senior Avery Smith

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That’s the point of undergraduate research and Georgia College’s on-campus conference. It allows students to showcase work in the “safest and most comfortable place,” according to Mahabaduge.



Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge speaks with students at the recent Student Research Conference on campus.

Undergraduates practice before familiar faculty and peers—before going to regional, national and international conferences. Among friends, Mahabaduge said, students can make mistakes without fear. They learn how to submit abstracts, create polished posters and explain their work in simple terms to viewers.

“

Holding our students to the highest standards within our conference makes them well-prepared for conferences elsewhere. Continuing this tradition for over two decades and never compromising quality over quantity is what helped us be nationally recognized as a leader in undergraduate research.

- Dr. Mahabaduge

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Getting into the conference is still competitive, however. At least two faculty members review submitted abstracts before students are accepted.

“The reviews provide a great example of how faculty members genuinely care about the success of our undergraduate researchers,” Mahabaduge said.

“Holding our students to the highest standards within our conference makes them well-prepared for conferences elsewhere,” he added. “Continuing this tradition for over two decades and never compromising quality over quantity is what helped us be nationally recognized as a leader in undergraduate research.”