

# Front Page News Story Archive

April 2022



## Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
News Stories Posted Monday April 11, 2022	3
Thinking independently and leading creatively are keys to success	3
Sustainability initiatives educate campus community and save on costs	8
Zero-waste project manager has the planet's best interests at heart	13
College of Business brings sustainability to the forefront	18
Sophomore Double-Major Vivian Cassaniti Wins Newman Civic Scholarship	24
"Sustainability for the Future" alumni panel turned their love of physics into thriving careers	27
News Stories Posted Tuesday April 12, 2022	34
Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award winners aspire to teach others	34
World Language & Culture students translate immigrant letters for refugee ministry	38
Rural Studies Institute strives to improve life in Black Belt Region	43
News Stories Posted Wednesday April 13, 2022	49
Chance to dance: Georgia College outreach program gets Baldwin County moving	49
News Stories Posted Thursday April 14, 2022	54
Class of 2022: Psychology major impacted by faculty mentorship	54
Class of 2022: Criminal Justice major aspires to help others through career in law enforcement	57
News Stories Posted Friday April 15, 2022	60
Outstanding Graduate Assistants recognized for their service	60
Adults with 'disAbilities' learn restaurant skills at Georgia College	62
Georgia College students place in global business competition	67
News Stories Posted Monday April 18, 2022	70
Class of 2022: Geography major mapped Baldwin County roads	70
News Stories Posted Tuesday April 19, 2022	73
Graduate students get first-hand perspective on war in Ukraine	73
News Stories Posted Wednesday April 20, 2022	78
Voices of the Returned: A new GC podcast exploring the lives of the formerly incarcerated	78
Nearly 70,000 pounds of food waste diverted from landfills by GC composting project	82
News Stories Posted Thursday April 21, 2022	86
Class of 2022: Why this 4-year-old goldendoodle will walk with this year's graduating nursing cohort	86
News Stories Posted Friday April 22, 2022	91
Class of 2022: International student and tennis player seeks job in human resources	91
Class of 2022: Exercise Science majors find purpose at Georgia College	94
News Stories Posted Monday April 25, 2022	97
Class of 2022: First students graduate with masters in nurse-midwifery	97
Class of 2022: Nursing student makes an impact through clinicals	100
News Stories Posted Tuesday April 26, 2022	103
Georgia College student's late-night grub hub is educating freshmen	103
News Stories Posted Wednesday April 27, 2022	106
Class of 2022: Management major embraces globalization and technology	106
Class of 2022: A singer's creativity grew as she expresses herself through song	109
News Stories Posted Thursday April 28, 2022	112
Class of 2022: Middle grades major aims to make a difference in children's lives	112
News Stories Posted Friday April 29, 2022	115
Goldwater Scholarship awarded to Georgia College student for the first time	115
The Graduate School provides opportunities for students to share research	118
Class of 2022: Marketing major will become a consultant	122



# News Stories Posted Monday April 11, 2022



## Thinking independently and leading creatively are keys to success

[College of Business & Technology](#): Monday April 11, 2022

Dilanka Seimon's, '03, professors at Georgia College showed him the magic that happens when individuals are allowed to think independently. It commands respect. Now, he applies this skill to his profession as vice president of Alternative Energy for Energy Transfer, one of the largest and most diversified energy infrastructure companies in North America.

During Seimon's Honors class, Dr. Kenneth Saladin, distinguished professor emeritus and evolution theorist, would occasionally debate with another professor, a creation theorist. The opposing views didn't stop the Saladins from hosting this professor and his wife at their home.

"As a 20-year-old, I thought, 'This is pretty amazing,'" said the economics major. "Here are two people on the opposite side of one of the biggest debates of humankind, having a lively, yet respectful debate and maintaining a good

relationship.”

The Honors Program was just getting started during Seimon’s time as an undergraduate. Drs. Saladin and Rob Viau were professors at that time, and Drs. John Sallstrom and Doris Moody were leading the Honors program. The theme of class discussion was the Utopian Society.

“The main take away I learned from that class was how you respectfully have these discussions, particularly with individuals who have different viewpoints than you,” he said.

Although Seimon was president of many organizations at Georgia College, he was particularly impressed with the GEM (Georgia Education Mentorship) program, which was a pilot program in its inaugural year with Moody as the director. He was matched with Paula Rosput Reynolds, former CEO and president of Atlanta Gas Light (now part of Southern Company), who convinced him to pursue a career in the energy business.

“She facilitated my first job in Houston,” he said. “Paula was amazing. She allowed me to go to Atlanta to shadow her in meetings. The company flew me to Houston to visit its subsidiary and talk to energy professionals. A year later, after I graduated, they hired me.”

Seimon has been in the energy business and traveling the world ever since.

In his current position, the challenge is to see how the company can build infrastructure to support an expansion of energy sources. Current energy mainly comes from hydrocarbons and then from wind, solar and other renewables. As the U.S. moves to a lower carbon economy, he poses the question, “How do we build infrastructure to support and accelerate those sources?”

“There’s a lot of debate around the energy transition. The challenge is that a lot of enabling technologies are new,” Seimon said. “So, I tie that back to, navigating those conversations around folks who have diverse views on this topic. You have



Dilanka Seimon



Dilanka Seimon with colleagues in Japan at the anniversary celebration of a liquified natural gas (LNG) project.

to figure out a way for these ideas to coexist and build on each other. Sometimes they won't, and that's alright."

"The energy industry is just so crucial because energy is required for all economic activity," he said. "It has enabled human progression. If you think about the essential goods around us—plastics, cars, chemicals, clothes—many of them come from oil and gas. Those are on top of the more obvious uses of gasoline and natural gas."

Seimon knows energy is such a dynamic and important industry for the growth of the world, especially when there are parts of the world that still don't have access to stable energy. It's interconnected to most everything people do. Without the energy business, the world ceases to operate.

"How do we solve this trilemma of energy security, affordability and sustainability?" he asks. "Because it is not sustainable to depend only on hydrocarbon-based energy, but you can't turn away from them abruptly either. Wind and solar have made great progress and will continue to grow, but we need to go further. So, developing technologies around carbon capture and storage and clean hydrogen are crucial."

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**"One of the greatest gifts I received from Georgia College and classes like the Honors Class is the ability to have respectful discourse with those who disagree with me. This was done with the intention of learning and further honing my thoughts not with an objective to change the other person's mind at all costs."**

**- Dilanka Seimon**

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The biggest challenge he faces in his profession is addressing misinformation about the energy industry.

"It's extremely complex with many geopolitical dimensions," Seimon said. "This leads to a lot of confusion, which, in turn, leads to things like inconsistent energy policy that makes it difficult for long-term planning."

As the world's population grows, emerging and developed economies will demand and consume more energy.

"We need to find new sources of energy to meet that demand," he said. "Because of climate change and the scarcity of hydrocarbons, we have to expand the energy



mix.”

He hopes the use of alternative energy will grow in the U.S. and the world.

“All energy is important,” Seimon said. “My hope is that we’ll figure out technologies and deploy them at scale to deliver the energy the world needs in a way we can balance the tensions between energy security, affordability and sustainability. This is one of the greatest challenges of our times.”



Dilanka Seimon (second from left) with colleagues at a power plant in Chile.

The secret to his success is having the ability to get along with people. This helps towards inspiring them in the pursuit of common goals.

“The ability to be nimble, learn from new information and apply critical thinking skills are at the core of my foundation and biggest aids in my profession,” Seimon said. “I think the Georgia College experience of thinking independently was quite important in this regard.”

Appreciating others for their independent thoughts is a skill that has declined in today’s world, he feels.

“What's discouraging to me is the way things are now,” Seimon said. “It’s like, if you don't see it my way, I don’t want to engage in a constructive debate—whether it’s politics, the COVID vaccine or energy sources.”

“One of the greatest gifts I received from Georgia College and classes like the Honors Class is the ability to have respectful discourse with those who disagree with me,” he said. “This was done with the intention of learning and further honing my thoughts not with an objective to change the other person’s mind at all costs.”

Seimon’s experience at Georgia College has made such an impression on him that he served on the Alumni Board for six years and currently serves on the Foundation Board of Trustees. He also endowed the Murali Thirumal Endowed Scholarship to honor Murali Thirumal, '91, '98, to support undergraduate and graduate Sri Lankan or international students, preferably those participating in the Georgia College Honors Program.





## Sustainability initiatives educate campus community and save on costs

[Sustainability, Office of](#) : Monday April 11, 2022

Georgia College students, faculty and staff take sustainability seriously. Efficiency is at the forefront with recycling efforts, generating and using compost, the community garden and the newly built Integrated Science Complex (ISC).

"There's a lot that goes into the planning stages of the ISC," said Lori Hamilton, chief sustainability officer. "Several individuals on campus were included in conversations about the energy efficiency needs of the building. Those systems were selected for lower energy consumption and subsequent cost."

The new ISC was built with sustainability in mind. According to Mark Bowen, associate director of Facilities Management, the following efficiency measures were taken:

- Bio swales were incorporated into the landscape design to mitigate and filter stormwater through plant materials.



Lori Hamilton

- A light and heat analysis aided energy efficiency while enhancing daylight in the building for users to enjoy. This approach informed the design of the glazing, frit glass and light shelves, as well as ensuring daylight could reach all of the internal spaces in the building.
- All light fixtures use LEDs.
- Motion sensors were installed to reduce lighting energy consumption.
- Sedum trays were installed on the porch roof as a mini green roof.
- Recycled glass provided by the Office of Sustainability was added as a soil amendment in landscaped areas.
- An efficient fume hood design was implemented, where possible, with variable speeds to help reduce power consumption.
- Native and pollinating plants were installed in the landscape.

Georgia College has applied for the ISC to receive the Georgia Peach Green Building Certification—a rating system for high-performance energy modeling and environmental efficiency in the construction of state buildings.

In offices and classrooms across campus, faculty and staff are encouraged to keep the thermostat set between 68- and 74-degrees Fahrenheit. Although most spaces have thermostats that occupants can adjust, many of these are connected to the main HVAC controls system, which limits the range of adjustment.



The new Integrated Science Complex was designed with sustainability in mind.

“We focus energy saving efforts on bigger building systems and components that have a larger impact to the total campus energy cost,” said Ben Mason, director of Operations and Maintenance. “For example, we can adjust temperatures on the larger HVAC units serving the main building systems during low occupancy times without having to change the room temperature settings.”

Another aspect of sustainability at the university is recycling. Georgia College works closely with Attaway Recycling and other vendors to recycle items. Standard blue recycling bins with the universal recycling symbol are located throughout campus for people to discard recyclables.

“We can recycle cardboard, paper, plastics—number 1 and 2—aluminum, metal and steel cans,” Hamilton said. “Those items are deemed acceptable by Attaway Recycling.”

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**“It is important to teach students about sustainability initiatives to help them grow outside of their academic career,” Hamilton said. “And, it's not just limited to composting, gardening, recycling or the environment and how much money we can save: It’s about people taking care of people and doing the right thing. Once you put conservation measures in place, they provide students with a well-rounded experience.”**

**- Lori Hamilton**

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Georgia College staff takes the recycling materials to a larger recycling container. Waste Management, the local waste/recycling hauler, collects, weighs and transports the recycling materials to Attaway Recycling for processing.

Recycling began as a student-led project, which turned into a campus-wide initiative in 2013.

“At that time, we were recycling at about a 3% rate,” she said. “Currently, the rate is at approximately 12%. Any other recycling materials outside of what Attaway Recycling handles, we handle in-house with other vendors.”

The Office of Sustainability also takes in used batteries, light bulbs and glass. The glass is crushed onsite and repurposed on campus.

Georgia College also has a composting unit on site that has diverted nearly 70,000 tons of food waste from landfills since the unit began operating.

“We work closely with Sodexo on getting food waste from The Max, and make sure that we do not have a lot of contamination like silverware,” Hamilton said. “The composter is efficient, and students enjoy working with it.”

The compost curing process takes around six months. After that, it’s used mostly in the West Campus Garden. The Landscaping Department uses the compost, as well.





West Campus Garden

The garden is maintained by the Garden Manager intern. The intern with the Gardening Club solicits volunteers to assist with the garden. The Gardening Club has been involved since the garden was created. In addition, the intern sets schedules for planting, watering, maintaining and harvesting, as well as provides training and gives educational tours.

“A lot of students and faculty members with classes come to learn more about the garden,” Hamilton said. “As part of a pilot program, we’ve opened the garden up to faculty and staff to have their own area in the garden rent-free. So far, I cannot believe the number of people who are interested in coming out to work in their own areas. It has been amazing.”

Georgia College holds the Bronze Award for its sustainability efforts, from The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (ASHE).

Sustainability practices are good for campus, students and the environment.

“It is important to teach students about sustainability initiatives to help them grow outside of their academic career,” Hamilton said. “And, it’s not just limited to composting, gardening, recycling or the environment and how much money we can save: It’s about people taking care of people and doing the right thing. Once you put conservation measures in place, they provide students with a well-rounded

experience.”

[Learn more](#) about sustainability at Georgia College.





## Zero-waste project manager has the planet's best interests at heart

[Sustainability, Office of](#) : Monday April 11, 2022

From a young age, Emma Brodzik, '17, felt a strong connection to nature. She understood the importance of repurposing materials to help the environment. Now she works in the Office of Solid Waste Management and Recycling at Georgia Institute of Technology.

"Sustainability has always been interesting to me," she said. "I used to ask my parents to drive me to recycling stations when we moved to Georgia, because our neighborhood didn't have a pickup."

At Georgia College, Brodzik was an economics major. She liked being active and was involved in the business fraternity (Delta Sigma Pi), Economics Club, Honors Program and the Sustainability Committee. But the organization that made the most impact on her was Student Government Association (SGA), where she served as director of Environmental Affairs.

"It was one of my first leadership positions, so that experience helped me develop those skills," Brodzik said. "I was able to grow in it, and eventually mentor an under classman who I'm still friends with."

During that time, she learned a lot about campus by networking and working with



others.

"We had discussions with leadership to figure things out with different restrictive resource constraints," Brodzik said. "We made sustainability possible, even for people who may not have had an interest in it."

She also served as a student assistant in the Office of Sustainability. SGA helped connect her to that position. Brodzik learned how that office works throughout campus, connecting with other departments to get things done. This collaboration led to her help pilot a recycling program on campus that has continued to grow and flourish.

Brodzik learned many different concepts about sustainability and leadership at Georgia College that she applies in her role today.

She met regularly with campus leadership and participated in planting trees or collecting boxes and recycling cardboard during move-in day. Brodzik has applied what she learned to her career, working as a zero-waste project manager at Georgia Tech.

"I still try to be very hands on with different programs in my profession," she said. "I oversee our solid waste contract with our vendor haulers. Georgia Tech also has a recycling crew. We collect different materials,



Emma Brodzik (second from left) receives an SGA award.



Emma Brodzik plants blueberry bushes at Georgia College.

whether they're traditional or hard-to-recycle items, like paper and plastic or Styrofoam® and scrap metal from different fabrication labs.”

Her work touches on all departments including housing, dining, offices, labs and more. Brodzik finds the best ways for individuals to recycle materials they have and works closely with their Office of Campus Sustainability on policies and materials that the campus buys or distributes, like packaging through the dining halls.

“I'm still involved in move-in recycling, as I was as an undergrad,” she said.

Brodzik facilitates a source-separated program, where the university markets recyclables to Southeast manufacturers who have a demand for recycled items for their production processes. Glass goes to a glass recycler and paper and cardboard go to a paper processor. She oversees more than 150 dumpster sites and 20 to 30 contractor roll-offs.

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**“At their core, these items are trees, petroleum-based plastics and other elements that have been taken from the Earth. We have to ask ourselves, ‘How we can have a good quality of life, while not depleting the Earth of these resources?’”**

**- Emma Brodzik**

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Her biggest accomplishment is expanding the AWARE (Actively Working to Achieve Resource Efficiency) program—an individual desk-side recycling program where office occupants must empty their waste, recycling from their desk and communal areas. Brodzik expanded AWARE from 20 buildings to all buildings across campus during the COVID pandemic to alleviate pressure on the custodial team.

“This helps increase the collection of recycling and the sortation of materials, so we can capture more recycling instead of everything being collected in the trash,” she said.

This process allowed Georgia Tech to reallocate labor time and reduce materials purchased. It also increased its recycling collection. Even as the pandemic wanes, it’s a policy that will remain on campus.

“Waste and recycling are very visual and tangible,” Brodzik said. “You can see the impact, tonnage of material you've collected and the manufacturers’ recycling facilities that the items go to. That’s always been most interesting to me versus something that's more ambiguous like carbon offsets.”



Brodzik was selected for several scholarships through the Georgia College Foundation and the Georgia Recycling Coalition. This made her feel supported for the leadership effort, time and dedication she put into her projects. Now, she pays this forward, so others can feel the same way by offering [a scholarship](#) to Georgia College students involved in sustainability.

“Sustainability can be kind of daunting, and there's a lot of ominous news about what's going to happen in the future,” Brodzik said. “Having some support and feeling recognized in that work is very beneficial for students.”

“I hope they feel encouraged and supported in their efforts,” she said, “and also feel their work in sustainability is important enough to continue practicing after graduating.”

Brodzik continues to have a deep attachment to nature and conservation. It's impactful to her to figure out how materials can be repurposed multiple times or in the best way.

“At their core, these items are trees, petroleum-based plastics and other elements that have been taken from the Earth,” Brodzik said. “We have to ask ourselves, ‘How we can have a good quality of life, while not depleting the Earth of these



Emma Brodzik at work.



Emma Brodzik encourages others to recycle

resources?'"

at a Georgia Tech game.





## College of Business brings sustainability to the forefront

[College of Business & Technology](#): Monday April 11, 2022

When you think of business, you may not automatically think of sustainability. But there's a lot to be learned in supporting locally-owned farmers and learning more about Georgia College's sustainability efforts.



Dr. Micheal Stratton, Jehan El-Jourbagy, JD and Dr. Nicholas Creel



“The dean and I discussed that agriculture is one of the largest industries in Georgia,” said Kari Brown, business outreach coordinator of the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business (COB). “Your local farmers’ markets are small, but growing businesses. We want the Georgia College community to really see where their food comes from and make that connection.”

So, Brown went to work, partnering with the Office of Sustainability, Auxiliary Services and Sodexo Dining Services to hold a Farm-to-Campus event and “Farmer’s Feast”—a farm-to-campus dinner last October.

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**“Sustainability and business are not mutually exclusive. By collaborating with partners across campus and within the community for events like the Farm-to-Campus Festival, we highlight real applications, showcase sustainability as a business model, and support our local vendors. It’s our mission to be a business school for the public good, and sustainability is key to this mission.”**

**- Dr. Michael Stratton**

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“We started with the idea for a Farm-to-Campus dinner, where we would invite local farmers to either bring food to Sodexo Dining Services to have them prepare it, or they would prepare the food themselves,” she said. “We ended up expanding the event to the Farm-to-Campus Festival.”

The COB held a farmers’ market during the day on the front porch of Atkinson Hall. Local vendors came, some of which were students from the West Campus Garden, and sold various products, including pesto and produce, like herbs.



Savannah Taylor (left) and Allison Esmond of the Office of Sustainability sell produce from the Campus Garden and fresh pesto.

Some student clubs participated and sold plants, like succulents, they had grown in the greenhouse. Local farmers sold cabbage, collards, leaf lettuce, potatoes, and more. Sodexo educated the public on nutrition facts of organic foods they offer.

Comfort Farms, a local farm, catered the “Farmer’s Feast.” The dean envisioned the feast to have one long table, so everybody could sit together and introduce themselves to each other.

“Although the farm is small, the owners also care about sustainability,” Brown said. “Everything they catered for the event was compostable, from the plates to the silverware. So, we were able to put these items in the university’s composter.”

Approximately 30 people attended the dinner, also held on the front porch of Atkinson Hall.

There were 12 vendors who participated in the first annual Farm-to-Campus event and around 100 people showed up throughout the day including faculty members who brought their classes by.

A few COB faculty members teach sustainability through business.

“In my business ethics course, which covers environmental sustainability in the

corporate context, my students do 10 hours of service in the community,” said Jehan El-Jourbagy, JD, assistant professor of Business Law. “I always have one or two groups who do their work with the Office of Sustainability, learning about composting, the community garden, recycling glass or many other initiatives spearheaded by that office.”



A Farm-to-Campus vendor arranges sprouts prior to the event.

El-Jourbagy is also excited about taking eleven students to Sweden on a corporate sustainability-themed study abroad program this summer.

“For example, we’ll be going to Copenhagen where we will take a sustainability bike tour, learning about innovative practices in the Danish city,” she said.

More sustainability initiatives in the COB are being reviewed. Dr. Micheal Stratton, dean of the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business, has been working toward innovative learning opportunities like this since coming to Georgia College in July of 2020.

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**“In my business ethics course, which covers environmental sustainability in the corporate context, my students do 10 hours of service in the community. I always have one or two groups who do their work with the Office of Sustainability, learning about composting, the community garden, recycling glass or many other initiatives spearheaded by that office.”**

**- Jehan El-Jourbagy**

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Stratton is leading a 17-person task force of stakeholders to create the COB’s new strategic plan. After surveying COB stakeholders, students, alumni and community members, the two constant areas of interest were sustainability and sustainability in business.

“We just met with a potential partner whose company helps people invest in sustainable businesses,” Brown said. “So, this is also something we’re proposing to do in the future through our Center for Innovation and new classes being

developed.”

“The Center for Innovation hopes to embrace sustainability in a few key ways. For example, it’s our hope to launch a student-managed portfolio that allows them to get hands-on experience with environment, social and governance (ESG) investing,” said Dr. Nicholas Creel, assistant professor of Accounting and Business Law.

“In essence, we want to teach our students how to seek out a profit with their investments while taking into account the effects a company has on the environment and society,” Creel said. “We also plan to initiate a business plan competition for students across the university, with cash grants to help bring their ideas into reality. Sustainability will be a key metric used in judging the recipients of these grants, with our goal being that all businesses launched through the Center for Innovation will fully embrace this concept.”

In addition to proposals by the Center for Innovation, El-Jourbagy is developing an Accounting for ESG Reporting course for the graduate program to provide Georgia College students an advantage in this growing field.

In collaboration with the GC Global Food Pathways program and as an opportunity for a new GC2Y course, a COB faculty member created a new class on the economics of shrimp.

“As students are eating, they’re understanding that it’s more than just, ‘I bought some shrimp,’” Brown said. “It’s like, ‘Oh, it came from this place, and there’s a culture of why these spices were used. There’s a story behind it including an economics and a business side.”

“We have many faculty members who are excited and ready to take on some of these initiatives,” she said. “I see these as interesting and creative opportunities for us to collaborate across disciplines.”

The strategic plan for COB will be confirmed by the end of the spring semester, with some initiatives beginning over the summer. The COB is also partnering with the College of Education for innovative lab space, so it can expand some programs. This will take place next year.

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**“In essence, we want to teach our students how to seek out a profit with their investments while taking into account the effects a company has on the environment and society. We also plan to initiate a business plan competition for students across the university, with cash grants to help bring their ideas**



**into reality. Sustainability will be a key metric used in judging the recipients of these grants, with our goal being that all businesses launched through the Center for Innovation will fully embrace this concept.”**

**- Dr. Nicholas Creel**

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“Georgia College is going to have some cool opportunities in the next five years around Milledgeville,” Brown said. “I see sustainability opportunities growing.”

The Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority is also working with local farmers and producers, helping them grow their businesses. And there is speculation of hydroponic and aquaponic self-sustaining farms moving to Milledgeville.

“Students would be able to work with the self-sustaining, organic farms not just for the sustainability aspect, but to learn how to grow food, make it profitable, and see what can come out of the experience,” Brown said. “I’m excited because there are going to be some really unique opportunities that students won’t be able to get anywhere else.”

The College of Business’ goal is to be a business school for the public good.

“We want our students to not only graduate as good business professionals but good citizens,” Brown said. “Practicing these techniques and incorporating them into their everyday lives, really creates a positive impact.”

“Sustainability and business are not mutually exclusive,” Stratton said. “By collaborating with partners across campus and within the community for events like the Farm-to-Campus Festival, we highlight real applications, showcase sustainability as a business model, and support our local vendors. It’s our mission to be a business school for the public good, and sustainability is key to this mission.”



## Sophomore Double-Major Vivian Cassaniti Wins Newman Civic Scholarship

[Leadership Programs](#) : Monday April 11, 2022

Should you register to vote in your college town, or remain registered in your hometown? That's a question that Student Ambassador and Georgia College tour guide Vivian Cassaniti hears often from students and parents during her tours, and it's one that Cassaniti is uniquely qualified to answer.

Cassaniti grew up with the news always on in her home, so when she was in high school she had a keen interest in how the news influenced and effected those around her. By the time she got to Georgia College, she'd gathered more course credits than most and, rather than graduate early, Cassaniti decided to round out her pre-law degree with a second major in philosophy.

As a Student Ambassador and member of the mock trial team, her stellar performance soon brought her to the attention of Student Leadership Director, Dr. Harold Mock. He nominated her for the 2022 Newman Civic Fellowship, a yearlong program that partners student leaders across the nation for both virtual and in-person networking.

"We appoint a Civic Newman Fellow every year," Mock said, "Vivian represents the best of Georgia College's commitment to leadership for the public good. She has





Vivian Cassaniti

delved deeply into the abiding questions of the humanities and social sciences and is using that knowledge to create good on behalf of others and to inform public discourse.”

Cassaniti’s passion for working with local communities to understand different perspectives led her to winning the Newman Civic Fellowship, which selects leaders from Campus Compact member institutions who demonstrate new ways of solving civic issues. As part of the Fellowship, Cassaniti will receive national recognition on the Campus Compact as well as special scholarship opportunities.

“I strive to educate people,” Cassaniti said, “I think it’s important that we encourage community engagement and

make sure that our leadership and our representatives are, in fact, a representation of the community that they intend to serve.”

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**Vivian represents the best of Georgia College’s commitment to leadership for the public good. She has delved deeply into the abiding questions of the humanities and social sciences and is using that knowledge to create good on behalf of others and to inform public discourse.**

**- Dr. Harold Mock**

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Cassaniti sees her receiving of the Newman Fellowship as a time to act.

“I have a real opportunity here to encourage people to get involved in their community, whether that’s their college town or their community at home to familiarize yourself with your local leadership and those municipal governments

and understand that you can really make an impact.”

The Newman Fellowship is named for renowned educator [Frank Newman](#), who founded the Campus Compact to help create civically responsible agents of change. The issues that Campus Compact were created to address; at-risk youth and the impact of market forces on education, are uniquely aligned with Cassaniti’s own ambitions.

“I’m interested in either civil rights law or immigration law,” Cassaniti said, “just to use my education and the resources that I have to help those who may not have the same opportunities. I would love to work for the ACLU in the future, I think, protecting people’s civil rights and protecting those who may be disenfranchised.”

In order to be considered, Cassaniti needed to be nominated by GC President Cathy Cox herself, and to “take action in addressing issues of inequality and political polarization,” according to their website. Cassaniti’s work as a Student Ambassador and on the mock trial team has positioned her as a representative of the best that Georgia College has to offer.





## **“Sustainability for the Future” alumni panel turned their love of physics into thriving careers**

**Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of**: Monday April 11, 2022

Four physics alumni took part in the Shades of Green “Sustainability for the Future” panel held at Georgia College in November. We caught up with three of them to learn more about how Georgia College helped them set a foundation for their career success and the advice they offered other students.

**Ryan Agnew, '20**, enrolled as a physics student at Georgia College after watching the Netflix show “Cosmos.”



Ryan Agnew measures for solar panel placement. (Right) Ryan Agnew at his workstation.

“I had no interest in physics until after high school,” Agnew said. “But that summer, I really got into the show. I thought, ‘this is what I want to study.’”

“Physics pulled at every fiber of my being,” he said. “It was something I knew I just couldn’t help but try to learn more about. And Georgia College had a great physics program, so I figured, ‘why not?’”

Modern physics was his favorite class. It touched on the development of physics from the Classical era to Modern day. The course placed emphasis on the transition from preconceived ideas of the underlying framework of reality to the modern conventions discovered in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—from concepts like why apples fall from trees to the current understanding of gravity and its relation to space and time.

“Without these important revelations, we would not understand the reality of time travel and the effect it has on your car’s navigation software,” Agnew said.

“Physics blew my mind. The ideas and principles we learned about were enthralling, and painted a picture of the modern concept of how everything works.”

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**“Oftentimes, I have to explain to our Internal Review Board and third-party engineering firms why my designs are configured a certain way. Dr. Bodaghee helped me communicate that to others in a clear and concise way.”**

**- Ryan Agnew**

”

All four years Agnew received a scholarship through the Physics Department to do research. He worked closely with Dr. Arash Bodaghee, associate professor of physics, on a project which was published in the Astrophysical Journal in October. They analyzed a group of stars to discover their age, migration speed and where they were going. They closely observed groups of young binary stars (High-mass X-ray Binaries) gravitationally bound to each other, traveling at great speed from stellar nurseries.

“We created an algorithm that generated several randomized distributions of hypothetical locations of these stars and compared them to a map of their known location that our sister team at Harvard University and other reputable institutions were able to produce for us,” he said. We tried to figure out where they originated from, how fast they traveled, their age and where they were going. I was immediately invested in this.”

As a physics student, Agnew traveled a lot, presenting his research at several conferences. These were great places to network with others. This opened up opportunities for him.

Today, Agnew is on the Engineering Design Team for Radiance Solar, LLC. Much of his job involves defending his work, so he appreciates the analytics he learned from Bodaghee.

“Oftentimes, I have to explain to our Internal Review Board and third-party engineering firms why my designs are configured a certain way,” Agnew said. “Dr. Bodaghee helped me communicate that to others in a clear and concise way.”

He works simultaneously on different projects, chiefly in AutoCAD, the company’s main design software, drawing up large commercial and utility scale ground- and roof-mount solar projects.

“Our company relies chiefly on high-quality engineering and design, so there’s a lot riding on my team’s shoulders,” Agnew said.

He came to Georgia College to speak on the “Sustainability for the Future” panel. It felt like coming home to him—seeing his peers, professors and the Office of Sustainability staff.

Students told the panel about their career interests. It was exciting for Agnew to learn they were on the same professional trajectory and journey as him. He encouraged students to take their time at Georgia College and establish close relationships with peers, professors and state legislators.

“The alumni network here is incredible,” he said. “They will reach out to you. You



feel like you're a person and you're still relevant. It's just a great resource to think independently and lead creatively."

Agnew takes comfort in knowing he's offsetting carbon emissions through his position.

"I feel good knowing what I'm doing is paving the way for a greener future for everybody," he said. "I also know that my work is at least laying the groundwork for a more sustainable future."

Another member of the sustainability panel, Rylan Gordon, '20, was in his senior year of high school, when he discovered his passion for physics. Like Agnew, Gordon said it blew his mind. He, too, enjoyed the modern physics class with Bodaghee.

"That class was just nuts," Gordon said. "It was hard enough where I could understand the material, but just out there enough where every concept blew my mind. I couldn't believe we have math to explain how crazy things happen. Because Dr. Bodaghee's focus is astronomy, all of his concepts made the class extra interesting."



(Left) Rylan Gordon stages boxes of string inverters, transformers, weather shielding, hardware, etc. for the next project.

"Physics was the first thing that gave me concrete answers to questions I had in looking at the world as opposed to arbitrary, opinion-based classes," he said.

Gordon conducted solar power research for nearly four years at Georgia College, fabricating thin film solar cells with a high-pressure magnetron sputtering machine. Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge, associate professor of physics, was

“exceptionally good” at challenging students with open-ended projects.

The lessons he learned from his professors here frequently help him as an operations engineer with Inman Solar. They help him think critically.

“

**“Physics was the first thing that gave me concrete answers to questions I had in looking at the world as opposed to arbitrary, opinion-based classes.”**

**- Rylan Gordon**

”

“Dr. Bodaghee, told us our first day in class that if we ever messed up a math equation in our professional careers, bridges could collapse,” Gordon said. “This taught me to be accountable for my work. Since then, I’ve always double checked all my calculations.”

He felt some great concepts came from the Sustainability for the Future panel.

“It helped reassure students who are panicking, because the physics program is challenging,” Gordon said. “I told them once they graduate and go into the workplace, everything will seem easy. This was a huge message I feel like we got across really well.”

“The future of energy will not be found in fossil fuels,” he said, “but will encompass a full spectrum of diversified energy including solar, which has a positive effect on the economy and environment.”

**Nowsherwan “Nash” Sultan, '21**, was a third panel member. From a young age, he was fascinated with natural phenomena and the science behind them. He studied physics for three years at Georgia College and finished with a mechanical engineering degree from Georgia Tech.



(Left) Nash Sultan after finishing a solar panel project in Macon, Georgia.

At Georgia Tech, Sultan worked for Renewvia Energy doing solar on a commercial and industrial scale. He started off as a design engineer, then was promoted to project engineering manager after graduation.

At Renewvia, Sultan designed solar systems on rooftops, overseeing each project through all its phases. He helped the business team with proposals, created the electrical design and mechanical infrastructure and worked with vendors. On the construction side, he performed quality checks with subcontractors. Once the project was completed, Sultan helped commission it and handed the product to the customer.

In February, Sultan started as project manager of solar independent engineering at DNV, where he manages independent engineering projects for numerous solar companies.

“

**“The future of energy will not be found in fossil fuels, but will encompass a full spectrum of diversified energy including solar, which has a positive effect on the economy and environment.”**

**- Nash Sultan**

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“When solar projects are financed through banks, they require an independent engineering firm to review the different parts of the project to show what risks are associated with each aspect,” Sultan said. “We review all engineering plans for

each solar site to ensure they are up to industry standards.”

One of his favorite classes at Georgia College was with Dr. Jebessa Mijena, associate professor of mathematics. The class was linear regression, where he learned how to use data to generate models and predict future concepts. For a final project, he developed a model to see how GDP in various countries affects use of renewables within the country.

He also helped Mahabaduge retrofit three golf carts with solar panels to see how solar energy increased range and drivability. These carts are being used on campus today.

In addition, Sultan did research with Mahabaduge, including one summer at the University of Nebraska. They worked on a sputtering system that’s used to make and study thin films

“He was always supportive of his students’ ideas,” Sultan said. “For me, Dr. Mahabaduge—whose background was also in renewables—our goals aligned. It was interesting and enjoyable to work with him on projects.”

As part of the sustainability panel, Sultan enjoyed meeting other alumni from the solar industry and students who are in the same situation as he was in a few years ago. Many were interested in solar energy, which Sultan believes is the future.

“There’s been significant research in solar energy over the years,” he said. “This is due to technological advancements in labs across the country, like Dr. Mahabaduge’s, whose research is finding new ways to make the production of solar cells cheaper and more efficient.”



# News Stories Posted Tuesday April 12, 2022



## Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award winners aspire to teach others

[English, Department of](#) : Tuesday April 12, 2022

The 13th annual Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Awards ceremony took place March 30. Out of 51 submissions, three finalists were selected from different writing categories including poetry and short story.

### [The Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Awards Ceremony](#)

The first-year finalist is English and history major Charlotte Aexel of Wind Lake, Wisconsin, who won first place for her poem "Man in the Fog" and second place for her short story "Delanna's Day."

Sophomore biology major Aner Gendellman from Alpharetta, Georgia, placed third with her poem "A Jewish Woman's Plead to Christ."

Out of the Junior and Senior division, junior English and creative writing finalist Olivia McClure of Decatur, Georgia, placed first with her poem "Running Yellow," second with her poem "A Hope for Warmth" and third with her poem "Passing the Time."



During the ceremony, finalists read excerpts of their works and were awarded certificates and cash prizes. First-place winners received \$1,000.

“Winning this award is an honor,” Aexel said. “I wasn’t sure if I was going to enter, but decided to because I’m at a point in my life where—for the first time—I’m really proud of the work I’m producing. I’ve been writing poetry my whole life. Now I’m ready to write prose and share it with others.”

One day, she aspires to teach either college or high school English.

“

**“I can’t imagine my life without writing. And I can’t imagine anyone’s future career without writing. I think even if I teach literature—being able to write and understand the value of expression is really important.”**  
- Charlotte Aexel



Charlotte Aexel placed first in the first-year/sophomore category.

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“I can’t imagine my life without writing,” Aexel said. And I can’t imagine anyone’s future career without writing. I think even if I teach literature—being able to write and understand the value of expression is really important.”

The main reason she chose Georgia College was because of Flannery O’Connor, ’45.

“I really admire her,” Aexel said. “I think it has given me new insight to be at the place where she lived when she wrote.”

McClure feels winning the Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award validates her writing skills.

"I've always been passionate about writing," she said. "I can't imagine myself doing anything else. It's just really nice to have someone tell you that you're on the right track, your work is being noticed and everything you put into it is worth it."

After McClure graduates, she plans to pursue a Master of Fine Arts then a doctorate so she can teach at a university.

"I've been inspired by my professors who've helped me craft my poetry along the way," she said. "I hope to be like one of my Georgia College poetry professors."

McClure thinks students should pursue the Margaret Harvin Wilson Writing Award because people care what you write.

“

**"I've always been passionate about writing. I can't imagine myself doing anything else. It's just really nice to have someone tell you that you're on the right track, your work is being noticed and everything you put into it is worth it."**

**- Olivia McClure**



Olivia McClure placed first in the junior/senior category.

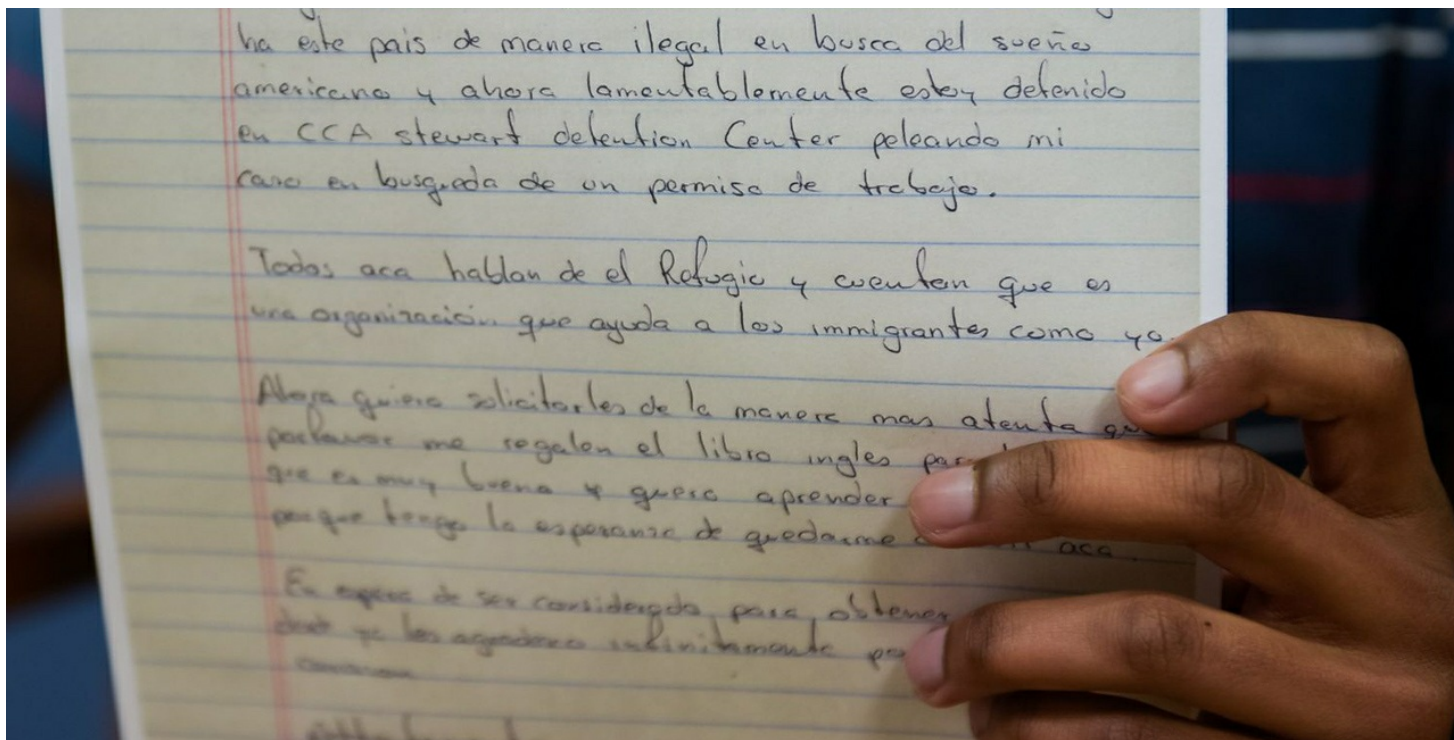
"I entered this competition not expecting to win first, second or third place, but you never know who wants to hear your work," she said. "Regardless of the outcome, students should submit their creative written works. It's just good practice."

The award was established in memory of Margaret Harvin Wilson, '34. She was the first in her family to attend college, since her father provided her with a small trust. Wilson finished Georgia College in three years. While majoring in English and minoring in French, Wilson waited tables in the dining hall, so she could have discounted tuition while living in a free dormitory. As a senior, a teacher encouraged her to enter a short story contest. Winning first prize in 1933 for "Sympathy Speaks" gave her confidence to pursue a teaching career.

She married Leland Wilson in 1938. Their three daughters pursued careers in medicine, law and higher education.

This writing award exemplifies Wilson's drive for students to explore new worlds through creative writing.





## World Language & Culture students translate immigrant letters for refugee ministry

[World Languages & Cultures, Department of](#): Tuesday April 12, 2022

If by reading a letter one can mingle with another's soul—as John Donne the English poet suggested—then transcribing the letters of undocumented immigrants is heart-tugging work.

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**I am passionate about teaching students to think critically about controversial topics that affect Hispanics.**

**- Dr. Virginia Terán**

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Three Georgia College students are learning about the struggles of immigrants detained in the United States at Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia. They engage personally by translating letters written by immigrants in Spanish—but also by listening to stories of their teacher's experience.

Dr. Virginia Terán, a lecturer of Spanish in the department of world languages and cultures, is an immigrant too. She's going back to Argentina in a few months to

comply with a two-year rule for Fulbright exchange scholars and satisfy visa requirements.

"I am passionate about teaching students to think critically about controversial topics that affect Hispanics," Terán said. "I feel it relates to me because I am an immigrant too. I am a privileged immigrant—that's what it's called when we come from privileged backgrounds. But even I want to come back to the United States to have a more decent lifestyle."

"A lot of Americans live in bubbles," she said, "not aware of the problems going on around us."

Terán reviews these problems in Spanish with students as they strengthen vocabulary and conversational skills. As a C-bEL component to the class—Community-based Engaged Learning—students translate letters through the "Reimagine Project." It's part of a ministry called "[El Refugio](#)" in Lumpkin that's building a digital archive, documenting the lives and experience of immigrants detained at the Stewart Center.

Nearly 250,000 people were detained in the U.S. in 2021, according to information on the El Refugio website.



Dr. Virginia Terán in her Spanish conversation class.

Prior to COVID, Terán's students visited immigrants in person at El Refugio. Since then, they've sent Christmas cards, in addition to translating letters. The letters are written by immigrants asking favors of volunteers at the ministry and thanking them.

Junior communication major and Spanish minor Jaylon Brooks of Augusta just translated a letter written by an immigrant his age, 19, from El Salvador. The letter acknowledges he entered the U.S. illegally to obtain a better life.

"In his own words, he says he's looking for the American dream. That's what he's pursuing," Brooks said. "He's hopeful to get a visa and work here, so he can continue living in this country and thrive."

"This assignment has made immigration so real to me," he added. "He's literally just another guy, like me, in a really bad situation. Detention centers aren't the best place to be in. They're basically prisons."

Despite being interned and isolated, many immigrants express gratitude in their letters, Terán said. Many come from "terrible conditions" in Central America. They

leave their families and homes behind for a better chance in life.

Terán understands these feelings of gratitude. She came to America on a scholarship to get a master's, then got a job at Georgia College in 2019. Going back to her homeland means less safety and longer working hours, but she's also excited to reunite with family.



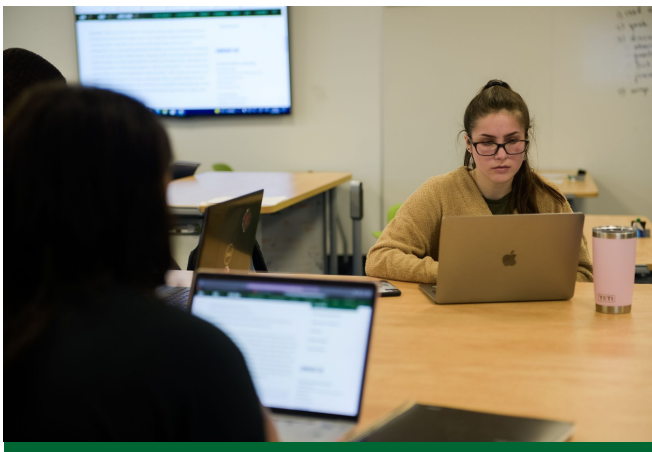
Junior Jaylon Brooks.

"We need to change some things in the U.S., of course. It's not a perfect country," Terán said, "but it's also very good in many aspects, like a stable economy. So, yes, I want to come back someday, because I want to have a more decent lifestyle than I can get in my country."

"And imagine, if I'm telling you I want a more decent type of lifestyle, and I'm a professor, right? The reality is, things are really hard back in our countries," she said.

Argentina has an annual inflation of 50%, compared to 7% in the U.S. Walking the street isn't safe there. Cars aren't safe parked on the street. Passerbys steal cellphones right out of people's hands. Being robbed is a constant threat, and laborers work "insane" hours.

Terán believes strongly she has a responsibility as an educator to expose her students to immigration issues like these. Through her own story and letters from immigrants, she gives them a powerful lesson: Why immigrants risk everything to come to the U.S.



Sophomore Alexandra Furney.

Sophomore biology major Alexandra Furney of Alpharetta is getting a minor in Spanish. Translating the letters of immigrants has been a "transformative" experience for her. Learning about the immigration system makes her want to volunteer at El Refugio once her Spanish skills improve.

Reading a letter is like meeting the writer. Furney translated the



letter of a young man who also sought a better life in America. Once here, his few items of clothing were worn and tattered from traveling to the U.S. He felt embarrassed by his appearance and asked El Refugio for help. He hoped new clothes would help him get a job back home if he's deported.

"I definitely empathize with him," Furney said. "He said he feels he has lost a lot of his dignity, which was something that really tugged at my heartstrings. Because that's not ever a good feeling, for sure."

Senior art studio major Maya Whipple of Gordon is eager to brush up on her Spanish skills. She's a semi-finalist for the U.S. Fulbright Student Scholarship and could teach English in Argentina if she becomes a finalist. Translating letters helped her learn new phrases and conjugate verbs in Spanish more efficiently.



Senior Maya Whipple, left.

In his letter, her immigrant expressed deep loneliness for his family. He asked volunteers at El Refugio to visit him. Detention can last for years as immigrants wait for a court date. Often, they can't afford lawyers and are deported.

"I felt very sad. I had a lot of sympathy for him," Whipple said. "It seemed like he could use a friend. It made me grateful for my own situation, because I'm able to see my family whenever I want."

"I feel more people should be educated about this, because I didn't know all this was going on— not to this extent. We often take our freedoms for granted," she said.

Like her classmates, Whipple has been inspired to help detained immigrants in the future.

This was Terán's goal: for people to see the suffering of real immigrants and care.

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**When you study the root causes of migration, when you can put a human face to immigration by translating letters, then you begin to see this immigrant is**

**not 'illegal.' This immigrant is a human being.**

**- Dr. Terán**

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## Rural Studies Institute strives to improve life in Black Belt Region

[Rural Studies Institute](#) : Tuesday April 12, 2022

When people think of the rural south, most think of agriculture. But that's only half the story.

“We need to expand people's understanding of rural, which is agriculture, but rural is so much more,” said Dr. Veronica Womack, executive director of the Rural Studies Institute (RSI). “All of the things—technology, broadband infrastructure, businesses, entrepreneurs, healthcare access—you need to make Atlanta run, we need in rural communities, as well.”

The Rural Studies Institute was officially launched January 2020 to address rural disparities and build a national reputation through thought leadership, education and outreach, research and scholarship, community engagement and student learning.

Womack has been researching the rural south for over 20 years and has been featured in several media outlets for her thought leadership on rural communities including Georgia Public Radio Georgia Today, The Wall Street Journal, Georgia Trend Magazine, The New York Times, The Nation and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.



Through collaboration, she strives to develop innovative approaches to change in rural areas.

Recently, Georgia College's RSI entered into a partnership with Fort Valley State University (FVSU) to prioritize rural regions throughout the state. The effort will focus on building the capacity of local communities.

"There are many ways we can collaborate and bring our institution's uniqueness to the rural experience," she said. "These communities need leaders with advanced skills and to be connected to all the wonderful things that these colleges have to offer."

Fort Valley State University—a land-grant institution—is connected to an Extension Service, which allows it to work in rural communities throughout the state. Georgia College is a public liberal arts college with a focus on leadership development.

"Their relationships will provide increased connectivity to rural communities for the work that the Rural Studies Institute does," Womack said. "In order for this initiative to be successful, it's got to become part of the DNA of both institutions, which is going to take time."

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**"As a public institution with a public mission, the work I do helps us achieve that. My work is a return on investment in the rural south that was invested in me."**

**- Dr. Veronica Womack**

”

Many FVSU faculty members are nationally recognized researchers, which enriches



Dr. Veronica Womack

their teaching coupled with the expertise of GC faculty, they can make an impact.

“At this point, it's about building partners on their campus and ours, who are interested in working with us,” she said.

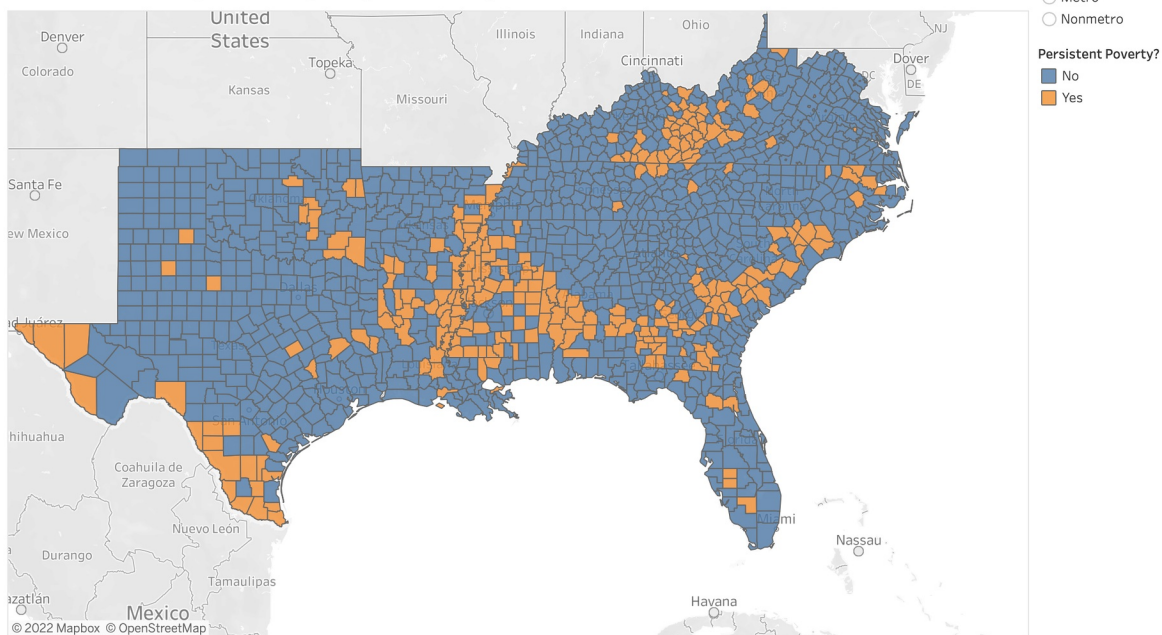
One area that Womack is seeking partners is in her work on rural health disparities. Currently, she is working with several universities and community partners on Covid-related projects. By working with researchers from John Hopkins, Emory, Tuskegee, Kentucky State Universities and the Medical College of Georgia's Institute of Public and Preventative Health, Womack is building a national reputation around rural health disparities. She also believes in the expertise found in rural communities and partners with local organizations and residents, as well. Her most recent work on COVID-19 hesitancy in rural communities encompasses two phases.

The first phase of the work assessed COVID vaccine hesitancy. The second phase includes outreach and education efforts in Tuskegee, Alabama, Albany, Georgia, Augusta, Georgia, and Western Kentucky. These geographies have been heavily hit by COVID-19 and have a history of medical misuse that has resulted in medical mistrust, such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and the Mississippi Delta involuntary sterilization procedures.

“When you have a history of those kinds of medical experiences, it's very difficult for those communities to trust the medical community and the vaccine that you're asking them to take,” Womack said. “To be able to partner with other institutions of higher education, community organizations and community members; giving residents the information, so they know the facts, so they're then able to educate and work in their community is a win-win situation.”

Womack's research also focuses on the rural South and its people, including Black farmers through her study of The Farm Bill and agricultural policy. The Farm Bill piqued her interest, as it impacts rural communities, including food and agriculture, as well as rural development. In an effort to effectively disseminate her research to the public, she founded The Black Farmers' Network, which highlights the stories of Black Farmers in the Black Belt region of the south.

### Persistent Poverty Counties (2000, 2005-2019)



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Decennial Census; 2005-2009, 2010-2014, and 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.  
 USDA, Economic Research Service, "2013 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes". Last updated 12/10/2020.  
 Note: Persistent Poverty Counties are defined as counties that maintained poverty rates of 20% or more for the past 30 years.

## The Black Belt Region

The Black Belt region is identified as over 300 impoverished counties from Texas, up the Mississippi River, across Alabama and Georgia, dipping into Florida, then shooting through the Carolinas as far north as Virginia, according to Womack's first book in 2013, "Abandonment in Dixie—Underdevelopment in the Black Belt."

"I feel like my research with the Black Farmers Network has shed significant light on the work Black farmers have done," she said, "and those socio-economic and political factors that have negatively impacted their numbers and their ability to be successful."

Womack recently received the Trailblazer Award from Dine Diaspora's Fifth Annual "Black Women in Food" Awards for her work in changing the narratives of Black farmers in the Black Belt



Dr. Veronica Womack's book is positioned at an abandoned field in the Black Belt Region. Photo by Suhyoon Cho. Photo courtesy of Black Farmers' Network.



Region.

DINE DIASPORA  
**BLACK WOMEN IN FOOD TRAILBLAZERS TWENTY TWENTY-TWO**

***Karen Washington*** ***Zella Palmer*** ***Veronica Womack***

***Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli*** ***Margaret Nyamumbo***

DINE DIASPORA

Dr. Veronica Womack is honored for her work in changing the narratives of Black farmers in the Black Belt Region.

"I try to tell the story through my research of people who may not have a voice at the table," she said.

She can relate to growing up in the Black Belt Region and now working in the Black Belt region, which inspires her intentional support to take on research and educating others about the region and the rural south.

"To be able to provide some understanding and context to this rural area is the most rewarding thing I could ever do," Womack said. "I'm very excited and fortunate to do this work. Most people who have my background and life

experience, don't get a chance to speak for themselves."

As a social scientist, Womack recognizes and analyzes data of the Black Belt Region, she knows that's not the whole story.

"There are many assets in this area," she said. "You have very resilient, innovative, genuine people who work very hard and have a long, distinct history in the region. So, it's important for me, as a researcher, to have a comprehensive understanding of who those people are."

Growing up, Womack had a community invest in her. She wants the same for other rural residents.

"As a public institution with a public mission, the work I do helps us achieve that. My work is a return on investment in the rural south that was invested in me."

As part of her investment in the next generation of scholars, Womack works with graduate students in the public administration program each semester by partnering with Dr. Kelley Ditzel, assistant professor of Public Administration, to provide students practical experiences in the community in grant writing.

"I work with the students to develop their grant writing skills as a way for them to research the region, learn about the deficits and assets within and enhance their skills of grant writing as part of a transformative learning experience," Womack said.

And her work will yield results. In the next 20 years, she envisions a decent quality of life for the Black Belt Region.

"I hope the seeds we're planting now throughout this region will lead to broadband service, more young farmers, who can support their community and be supported by their community; investments in public education, so young people can continue their pursuits or be a part of the workforce; and will be a place tech companies draw on for their workforce."

"We're at a critical phase right now," Womack said. "We're in a global, knowledge-based economy, where we have the chance for generations of the Black Belt Region to become part of this thriving southern economy."

# News Stories Posted Wednesday April 13, 2022



## Chance to dance: Georgia College outreach program gets Baldwin County moving

[Theatre & Dance, Department of](#): Wednesday April 13, 2022

Children in Baldwin County Schools are getting an opportunity to dance—something they wouldn't be exposed to in their early years if it weren't for dance minors in Georgia College's dance pedagogy class.

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**Our aim is to expand opportunities beyond campus and provide experiences for communities that have limited access to dance.**

**- Natalie King**

”

Community dance is one of the university's biggest outreach programs and has been around in some form for at least 20 years. Last year, a new element started:



free dance lessons twice a week in Baldwin's primary schools and academies.



Dance Professor  
Natalie King.

"Our aim is to expand opportunities beyond campus and provide experiences for communities that have limited access to dance," said Natalie King, dance professor.

"GC dance instructors benefit as much as their students because they get an opportunity to share what they love with a future body of movers. These instructors have dedicated their formative years to the art of movement. Now, they get to inspire young dancers to do the same."

In Baldwin County schools, Georgia College dance students lead bi-weekly lessons for kindergartners through 5th grade. College students are also part of a campus dance program, where they lead or assist in a myriad of paid classes for ages 3 to adult. These include hip hop, tap, ballet, jazz and contemporary dance.

Many dance minors discover a love for teaching through the university's outreach programs. Some go on to open their own dance studios or become performers and choreographers.

Senior accounting major Michala Hill of Douglasville just got hired to be a full-time dance instructor in Baldwin County academies. She'll rotate between grades 3-5 throughout the week, ensuring all kids are exposed to movement and dance.

Hill has danced since she was little. Although she also liked accounting, Hill said she "fell in love" with teaching dance after taking King's pedagogy class. Crafting her own lessons, adjusting for different age groups and adding her own individual twist has been rewarding.



Senior Michala Hill.

"Dance allows students to be individuals and create something that's unique and personal," Hill said. "Sometimes in school, we can be trained to believe there's only one right answer for everything. But, in dance, a lot of times there isn't one right answer. It's whatever you decide to create and what intention and confidence you put behind it. That's what makes it good. That's what makes it valuable."

College students develop interdisciplinary lessons that allow young movers to learn through creative play, King said. This makes learning “fun, engaging and meaningful” for kids who are just beginning to incorporate dance in their lives.

Both Baldwin County and Georgia College are lucky—it’s unusual to have a community dance program, King said. Not many universities have outreach like this where undergraduates gain teaching experience in dance.

The university’s dance minor was certainly a big factor in Hill choosing Georgia College. She researched what other school dance programs are doing and says Georgia College’s outreach program is unique.

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**I'm just very lucky to have this kind of opportunity, because it's just so rare. Finding colleges that offer pedagogy courses in their dance major is very hard to come by. So, I think Georgia College's pedagogy emphasis is really something special.**

**- Michala Hill**

”



Senior Anna Jean Saleeby teaches at Midway Primary School in Milledgeville.

Students acquire everything they need to know in dance pedagogy class—from warm-up to line-up. They choose music playlists and engage learners in interesting ways with overarching themes.

With kindergartners recently, students used emotions to teach youngsters how to act out their feelings. Then, they moved onto weather patterns, exploring moves that show evaporation and precipitation. Stomping out

anger and moving like tornadoes gives children a much-needed break from sitting—bringing a fresh supply of oxygen to the brain.

“We recognize the importance of giving students a voice in their learning process,” King said. “This is especially important for our primary school learners, who are constantly encouraged to regulate their bodies. All day, they sit in neat rows, stand in straight lines and avoid talking out of turn. We give them permission to disrupt these standards and express themselves individually.”

Student instructors are peppy and engaging with their young pupils. They give directions in short, simple sentences. They let kids know ahead of time some movements may seem difficult. But it's OK—their college instructors will be doing the steps with them.

They use 'thumbs up' signals, high fives and supportive statements with kindergartners, like "That was awesome—first-grade behavior if I ever saw it!"

Soon, the studio is abuzz with little bodies swaying, jumping, lunging and twirling to lively tunes.

They're asked to freeze like statues, strike superhero poses and act like raindrops.



Senior Elizabeth Dunn teaching Baldwin County kindergartners.

Senior sociology major Elizabeth Dunn of Marietta is a ball of energy herself. Standing in front of a group of kindergartners, she shows them how to stretch their arms to the sky. They flow side-to-side like the wind. They pretend to rake leaves for fall and swim for summer. They lunge and zigzag like lightning bolts.

"Now, wrap your arms around yourselves and say, 'Thank you, body, for dancing with me today,'" Dunn said at the end of class.



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**This has really pushed me to blaze my own trail.**

**- Elizabeth Dunn**

”

“I’ve been dancing since I was 2,” she said afterward, “and I’d love to help make it more accessible and equitable for children in Baldwin County. Dance is not just for one particular socio-economic population. There are so many counties that can’t afford to offer dance. I’d like to make it happen for them.”

Like Hill, Dunn feels she couldn’t have gotten exposure to community outreach like this anywhere else. Since taking the pedagogy class, she’s developed a passion for teaching.

“This has really pushed me to blaze my own trail,” she said. “They let us come up with lesson plans independently and create our own teaching style, which has been incredible.”

# News Stories Posted Thursday April 14, 2022



## Class of 2022: Psychology major impacted by faculty mentorship

[Psychological Science, Department of](#) : Thursday April 14, 2022

Name: Alex Powers

Major: Psychology

Hometown: Savannah, GA

What made you choose Georgia College:

I am someone who learns best in a small classroom. I also very much appreciated the idea of my professors knowing me personally.

“

**The entire Psychology department has been great, the best of the best.**

-

**What inspired you to pursue a degree in Psychology:**

I was never positive what I wanted to do after school and psychology allowed me the opportunity to explore many different options. I also very much enjoy learning about humans and why we do the things we do.

**Memorable experiences at GC:**

One thing that I learned through my experiences at Georgia College is how to interact with people of all backgrounds. During high school I went to an all-boys Catholic school, so I cherish GC's diverse and accepting campus life that allowed me to learn more about different backgrounds and lifestyles.

**Faculty or staff members who stood out during your time here:**

The entire Psychology department has been great, the best of the best. Dr. Lee Gillis was especially great. From the electives I took, my favorite professors were Dr. Sara Doude and Dr. James Daria.

**Favorite courses:**

I have enjoyed all my classes in Psychology due to the great faculty. I very much enjoyed Cognitive Psychology with Dr. Diana Young, and Learning Psychology with Dr. Kristina Dandy. Race and Crime with Dr. Doude was also a very interesting class.



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**Organizations or programs that you were involved in and how they impacted you:**

I am a part of the Georgia Education Mentorship program where I have been given a mentor who is a part of the board of directors within the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. This program has greatly increased my skills in networking and professionalism. I also started and taught a self-defense focused Brazilian Jiu Jitsu class at the Wellness Center, through which I learned a lot about how to present myself confidently and lead a class.

**What are your plans after graduation:**

I am moving back to Savannah where I will be beginning my career with TradePort Logistics LLC within the HR department.



**What will you miss most about Georgia College:**

While I will miss so many things about Georgia College, the thing I will miss the most is probably just walking through the beautiful campus.



## **Class of 2022: Criminal Justice major aspires to help others through career in law enforcement**

**[Government & Sociology, Department of](#)**: Thursday April 14, 2022

**Name:** Chason Thompson

**Hometown:** Roswell GA

**Major/minors:** Criminal Justice, French and Outdoor Education

**What made you choose Georgia College:**

When I toured here, I felt that I could see myself here. I felt that I could see myself studying in the library and hanging out on Front Campus.

**What inspired you to pursue a degree in Criminal Justice:**

Ever since I was little, I have



**Thompson and GEM Program Mentor Gary Marx attend the GC Leadership Ideas**

been interested in a career in law enforcement. I always knew that

Festival

I wanted to help people and I feel that law enforcement was the best way to do that. A degree in Criminal Justice seemed like the best way to achieve my goals.

### **Memorable experiences you've had during your time at GC:**

My time at GC allowed me opportunities that I never thought I would have. I was able to facilitate an event for 4H students from all over the country because of the classes I took. I was able to get internships that helped me experience things few others get to experience, and one of the most memorable lessons I'll take with me from GC is to keep an open mind and to consider other perspectives.

### **Faculty or staff members who stood out during your time here:**

Billy Copeland, Dr. Jeff Turner, Dr. Sara Doude, Professor Wilkinson, Tanya Darden, and Dr. Liz Speelman.

### **Favorite courses:**

Challenge Course with Dr. Speelman, Drugs and CJ with Dr. Doude, Experiential Education with Dr. Turner, Inside Out with Dr. Liles, and Constitutional Law with Professor Lamparello.

### **Organizations and programs:**

The Outdoor Center and Adventure Programs: I always loved being outside and doing things in the outdoors, and when I came to GC, the Outdoor Center allowed me to continue going on adventures and enjoying the outdoors. The Outdoor Center made me decide to add an Outdoor Education minor to learn more about the outdoors. It even became somewhere for me to work, helping with trips on the weekends and working at the climbing wall at night.

Communities in Schools Baldwin County: I was able to mentor two students at Oak Hill middle school. I hope I've helped them and made a difference in their lives.

The library: I worked in the library for the entire time I spent at GC. It allowed me to continue some of the interests I had in high school, like 3D printing, and it also allowed me to learn a lot about the resources that the library offers to students so that I could make use of them for myself.

### **Plans after graduation:**

I hope to be a police officer with the Gwinnett County Police Department or any other department that will take me.



**What will you miss most about Georgia College:**

I will miss some of the connections I've made and the people I've met along my journey to get my degree.

# News Stories Posted Friday April 15, 2022



## Outstanding Graduate Assistants recognized for their service

[The Graduate School](#) : Friday April 15, 2022

The Graduate School at Georgia College recently awarded the Outstanding Graduate Assistant Award to five students for the 2021-2022 academic year.

The award recognizes the outstanding contributions graduate assistants provide in supportive roles to students, faculty, staff and the university while pursuing graduate studies.

Graduate assistants are nominated by faculty, staff and administrators.

"Graduate assistants are an integral part of the institution," said Dr. Holley Roberts, associate vice provost for academic affairs. "They provide research and teaching support, which proves to be very impactful for the graduate assistant in their growth and development while also positively influencing the university community."

At the April 7 ceremony, the recipients award package was announced, which

includes \$200 cash from the Georgia College Foundation, a framed certificate and an official letter.

This year's winners are:

**Teresa DiMauro** is pursuing a Master of Management Information Systems. She served as the graduate assistant for the College of Business's graduate program.



**Teresa DiMauro**

**Casey Elliot** is the graduate assistant for the School of Nursing working with graduate nursing clinicals. She is pursuing her Doctor of Nursing Practice.

**Hanna Jane Morrell** is working towards her Master of Science in Criminal Justice and is the graduate assistant in The Women's Center.



**Savannah Rawdin**

**Savannah Rawdin** has assisted in the Dean's Office of the College of Education. She is working to complete her Master of Education in Early Childhood Education.

**Hannah Rockecharlie** is pursuing her Master of Accountancy and worked as a graduate assistant in The Learning Center.

To be considered for the award, graduate assistants must be currently enrolled in a graduate degree program, in good academic standing and registered in a minimum of six graduate credit hours.

Students are nominated based on their good work ethic, attitude, and their willingness to go beyond the jobs requirements and take on additional responsibilities.



**Hanna Jane Morrell**





Casey Elliot



## Adults with 'disAbilities' learn restaurant skills at Georgia College

[Continuing & Professional Education](#) : Friday April 15, 2022

### [Video](#)

Chopped strawberries, frozen blueberries, spinach and ice: Blend them all together and what do you get? Lots of noise, laughter and a delicious smoothie made by adults with 'disAbilities.'

"We've been waiting 20 years for this kind of course," said Barbara Coleman, executive director of the Life Enrichment Center (LEC) in Milledgeville. "We had seven college interns and seven candidates, a willing teacher and everything just came together."

For the first time, individuals from LEC are taking a "Food Safety 101" course through Georgia College's Continuing and Professional Education program. They pair up with undergraduates who give one-on-one support during lessons on basic kitchen skills like hand washing, appliance safety, safe food preparation, cleaning and sanitization.

In May, LEC adults will 'graduate' with certificates of competition. These will help them get jobs preparing and serving food at the university dining hall and other food establishments in town.

Their new skills will also be used to open a café at LEC next month, where adults with disabilities will offer coffee, smoothies and healthy snacks to the community.



Senior Zayne Kemler works with Kevin from the Life Enrichment Center.

Senior political science major Zayne Kemler of Griffin is familiar with special needs. His brother has intellectual disabilities. This made Kemler want to get involved and help LEC adults gain real-world experience.

The course also helps Kemler improve interpersonal skills, like working through communication barriers. This will be handy, as he pursues a master's in public

administration and finds work in the nonprofit industry.

In class, Kemler is paired with a talkative and lively young man with Down Syndrome.

"It's always a challenge to get him to sit down, but he wants to learn and is really engaged. It's a joy to work with him and give him support," Kemler said.

"It's definitely very rewarding," he added. "Being able to see them smile brings me a lot of joy. Even days when I'm tired and falling behind—being at the center, there are days I spend my whole day laughing with a smile on my face."

About 60 students a semester work with LEC. Georgia College has partnered with the center for 30 years, running programs for them in music therapy, special education and exercise science. LEC doesn't have the staff to do these things alone, Coleman said. They depend on the university to expose clients to real-life opportunities.





Senior Ashley Burkhalter watches as a LEC student adds blueberries to the blender.

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**To be honest, the university helped me to change the mindset of this community. Working with students has been the catalyst that has changed that mindset, brought in ideas and given us the ability to do more things.**

**- Barbara Coleman**

”

Students plan activities, do internships at the center, create art and music with LEC adults and teach exercise skills. Without Georgia College, Coleman said LEC would be like other organizations that provide day programs with coloring, TV and bingo.

“This partnership has continued to grow and build,” Coleman said. “It’s reciprocal. We take time to educate the students and, in return, the students bring us ideas. They bring us the opportunities, and they make memories that will last a lifetime.”

“To be honest,” she said, “the university helped me to change the mindset of this community. Working with students has been the catalyst that has changed that mindset, brought in ideas and given us the ability to do more things.”

Connie Prezioso was hired as an independent contractor to be Continuing



Education's Food Safety 101 instructor. She's been in the restaurant field 15 years, starting at Sodexo. She now manages a local restaurant and teaches ServSafe courses to restaurant workers. The Georgia College course is a modified version of ServSafe standards.

When Angela Criscoe, interim executive director of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, approached her to lead this course—Prezioso jumped at the chance. She helps LEC adults recall what they've learned by providing plenty of repetition.

It's been a rewarding experience.

"They're doing an absolutely amazing job. They surprise me every day by how much they've learned," Prezioso said. "They seem to enjoy it. They want to be in college. They want to take college classes. They want to learn more, and that's not something you see every day."

"Some people act like learning's a privilege. They just think they're owed it," she said. "For these people, it's a real treat for them to be here, and they try so hard because of that. It just gives you that warm fuzzy feeling inside."



Instructor Connie Prezioso tells the class about food safety.



Burkhalter helps her LEC partner add yogurt to the mixture.

College students make Prezioso's job easier. They let her know what their LEC partner needs in order to learn and retain information. Some can read; others can't. Some are auditory learners, others visual. Students help LEC adults with notetaking and give hints to spark memory.

Senior public health major Madison Harris of Milledgeville creates PowerPoints for the class. She breaks regular

ServSafe lessons into manageable chunks. Learning to adapt lessons for adults with disabilities has been a good learning experience, Harris said.

Ashley Burkhalter, a senior public health major from Jesup, joined to help LEC individuals meet their goals and interact in a college setting. She plans to go into medical sales after graduation and, while this experience isn't directly related to that field, Burkhalter said it's been a good learning opportunity.

“

**It's made me more open and increased my communications skills. It helped me see how each individual is different, but how we're way more alike than we think. It's given me a whole different perspective of life.**

**- Burkhalter**

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## Georgia College students place in global business competition

[Information Systems & Computer Science, Department of](#): Friday April 15, 2022

Five management information system (MIS) students, in their first experience competing, placed sixth in the Enterprise Resource Planning Simulation (ERPsims) North American Competition, a part of the 13th ERPsims International Competition.

The competition pitted seniors Tyler Maxwell, Daniel Marcus, Edward Cooper, Palmer Wilson and junior Jacob Wood against 21 other universities from North America. This included universities like Valdosta State University, University of Southern California and Université de Sherbrooke, in Canada.

After qualifying, the top three teams move on to compete on the international stage, with universities from South America, Europe and Asia. In sixth place, the team missed that shot by a hair, but that only stoked their passion for the sport.

"The fact that we made it to that final round was a great feeling," Maxwell said. "I was very happy with the results, since we got sixth place out of North America. Next year, with our foundational knowledge and experience actually playing, we can help the next team do even better."

The ERPsims competition is a business simulation game powered by Systems,



Applications, and Products in Data Processing (SAP) technology. SAP is a frontrunner in the market world of enterprise application software, a type of large-scale computer software that supports organization's buying, selling and marketing efforts.

Georgia College, a new SAP Next-Gen school, trains its students in this software since it's universally-known and used by many large companies, like International Business Machines Corporation (IBM), Amazon, BMW, Coca-Cola, Samsung Electronics and eBay.

The students first learned to use the ERPsim in Introduction to Enterprise Resource Planning, taught by Joy Godin, associate professor of management information systems—and the team's coach. Using the ERPsim teaches students business process integration, and is an active learning activity in the course.

In the competition, the students worked together as a fictional, virtual company to control all manner of the business' success in operations; think purchasing, manufacturing, marketing and analysis. With one catch—each day is equivalent to one minute.



From left to right: Joy Godin, Palmer Wilson, Jacob Wood, Daniel Marcus and Edward Cooper.

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**Everything you do has to be done by the minute. If you miss a deadline, or miss a day, you could jeopardize the result of the competition.**

**- Daniel Marcus**

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“Everything you do has to be done by the minute,” Marcus said. “If you miss a deadline, or miss a day, you could jeopardize the result of the competition. You have to literally scream sometimes, and make sure your team is working together. You’re not just one role.”

The game isn't played purely for prestige, though. Their performance in the competition gave the students real-world experience, taught them teamwork under pressure and showed employers they are serious about the field. Plus, Maxwell

said, it was fun.

“Some factors of a project you’re working on can be ambiguous,” he said, “so you’re really learning on the go. The idea of learning, implementing and getting results is huge for MIS majors, because computers are always changing.”

Godin was impressed by their work ethic. She plans to send more teams to the competition with what they’ve learned this year as guidance.

“At first I was hesitant about joining because it was a commitment without credit, but I’m infinitely happy I participated,” Marcus said. “I’m proud of the things our team did, I’m happy that I’m a Georgia College Bobcat and that we were able to do this for our school.”

# News Stories Posted Monday April 18, 2022



## Class of 2022: Geography major mapped Baldwin County roads

[History & Geography, Department of](#): Monday April 18, 2022

**Jhalen Reymoreno Billingslea**

**From:** Decatur, Georgia

**Major:** Geography **Minor:** Urban Studies. I chose geography because I always had an interest in maps. I chose urban studies because my degree will earn me opportunities in planning and development. Urban studies enhances my attractiveness to employers.

**Why Georgia College:** I originally chose to attend Georgia College because my best friend from high school decided to go here. I stayed because of the academic quality.

**Activities:** Geography Club

**Internship:** My internship is with Baldwin County Public Administration. I'm working





Jhalen Billingslea

in the Geographic Information System (GIS) department under the leadership of a Georgia College alumnus. Currently, I'm making an interactive web map that contains information on all roads within the county that fall under the jurisdiction of Baldwin County. This interactive map will also have symbols for all road signs that fall under that jurisdiction, along with an attached photo of the sign. The map will save road workers and, hopefully, the fire department precious time that can be used to serve the local people. Currently, when certain information is needed, my superiors must locate physical documents. If they can't, they may have to drive to a street to evaluate it. When this map is complete, it'll allow multiple departments to run more efficiently. We all win in this case, and I'm very proud of

that.

**Research:** I've done small research projects on multiple geographic subjects. One research paper I completed focused on improving birth-rates in Japan. I found that Hungary had found success improving birth rates by gifting couples a new house in exchange for having another kid.

**Biggest achievement:** My biggest achievement in college was making the Dean's list Spring 2020 semester, even though COVID hit that semester.

**Favorite professor:** Dr. Oetter, because he's the main reason I was able to land a great internship.

**Best moment in college:** It was Deep Roots 2019, and my most impactful was being accepted back after taking a two-year gap.

**What he'll miss the most:** I'll miss those first two months of freshman year the most. Everything just felt so magical, and I met people I will never forget, even if we don't hang out anymore.

**Advice for first-year students:** Two things—reach out to the people on your floor when you first get to the dorms and don't be afraid to say "hi" to people you recognize. Many times, someone wants you to reach out to them, but they may not know how. Be polite to your professors and participate in class. I had a professor bump me from an 89 to a 90 because I was polite and engaged during class.

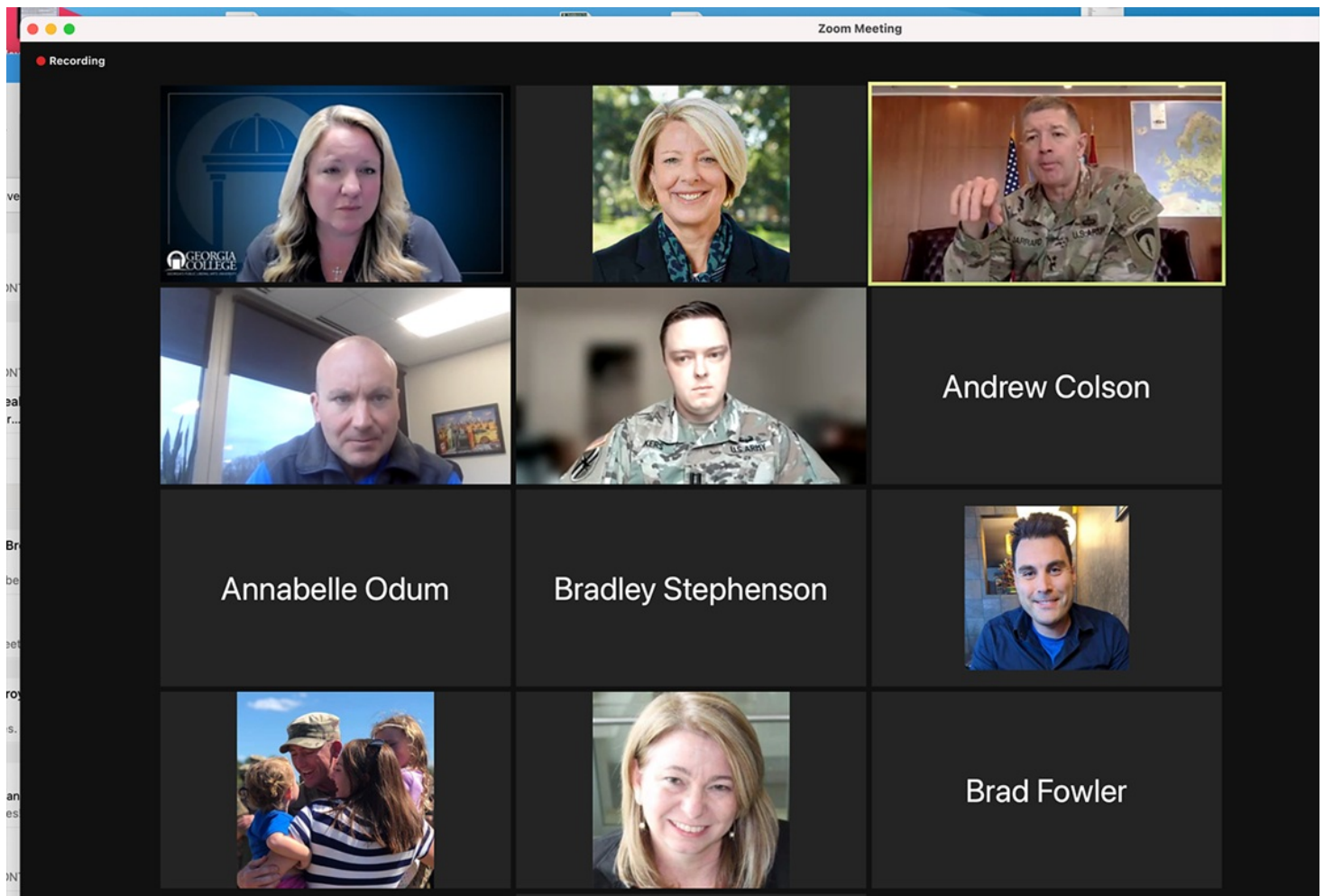
**Key to success:** The key to success for me was learning how to get through the first 10 minutes of an assignment you don't want to do. Those first few minutes, after sitting down to complete an assignment, can be quite painful. Drink a coffee and remind yourself that you can do it. It will stop hurting!

**How he's changed during college:** I was wild coming out of Decatur High School. Now, I am morally a much more upstanding person. I have a much higher work ethic and better character. I am more confident in general.

**Future plans:** I plan to make some high-risk investments, using money from a GIS career to fund them. I'll certainly be working in GIS for at least a couple of years. I would love to live somewhere warm outside of Georgia for a while.

**How Georgia College helped:** The geography department did a fantastic job teaching me the skills to be successful and employed in either the public or private sector. My coworkers at my internship were highly impressed. Thank you, Dr. Oetter, Dr. Sumpter, Dr. Fahrner, Dr. "O" and Dr. Rochello!

# News Stories Posted Tuesday April 19, 2022



## Graduate students get first-hand perspective on war in Ukraine

[Graduate Programs in Business](#) : Tuesday April 19, 2022

The war in Ukraine makes headlines daily as new updates of civilian casualties, Russian advances across the country and sanctions put in place become available in real-time.

At this point, it's hard to fully understand the impact the war is having in Eastern Europe and internationally. Two Georgia College graduate students in the Master of Management Information Systems (MMIS) program are looking at empirical data to try to quantify at least a small portion of that impact.

"The data sets that we've managed to pull, which are pretty wild and, interestingly



enough, are being updated almost every day. It's things like civilian casualties, the number of refugees and officially how much war materiel in Russia has been seized by Ukraine," said Richard Catlin, Ph.D., MMIS student.

Catlin and his partner for the project Gary McKenzie are examining the cost of war from a human perspective and what an asymmetric war—"where the two powers are not ostensibly equal in their war capabilities"—looks like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The project is for Dr. Joy Godin's graduate research project in business analytics course. They are tasked with researching a country and identifying the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that are currently impacting their chosen country.

The students learned how to use the SAP Analytic Cloud system to develop visualizations and dashboards. They collect data from public data sets about the countries they researched and develop visualizations that will help them provide insights into the sustainability issues impacting the country.

"The goal of the research project is to help students learn how to use data to develop visualizations, dashboards and insights to help inform real-world issues," said Godin. "Students also become aware of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and how data can be used to impact the world in which they live. They learn how to conduct a research project by writing a research paper and delivering a presentation about their research."

Catlin chose Ukraine based on the history of conflict with Russia and his background in intelligence for the U.S. Navy. Students were assigned the project at the start of the spring 2022 semester when Ukraine was being threatened, but the hands-on conflict hadn't begun.

"Initially, I was interested in Ukraine, and I wanted to look at the push and pull that was going on with Putin and see how that affected Ukraine's own internal development," Catlin said.

"I kind of duped my partner for the project, Gary, into a war zone," he laughed. "Since we chose it, we've seen an increase of variability for what we were thinking about looking at, which would have probably been a lot more economic in nature."

Russia invaded Ukraine Feb. 24, 2022. The ever-changing situation on the ground in Ukraine turned their original project upside down. They found it hard to collect



Richard Catlin

data once the war began.

Catlin and McKenzie, vice president of claims for GEICO Insurance in Washington DC, mentioned in class some of the struggles they were having, and a classmate jumped in.

“They said they were having problems getting some data now that the war had started,” said Jonathan Akers, U.S. Army logistics officer and MMIS student. “I said, ‘Hey, I’m really good friends with a guy that’s the aide to the Deputy Commanding General in EUCOM, which is second in command of forces in the European region.’”



Jonathan Akers (left) with Nelson Moraga, who serves as the aid to the Deputy Commanding General in EUCOM.

Akers reached out to his friend to see if Gen. Joe Jarrard would be willing to give an on-the-ground perspective to his classmates as they worked through their project. He knew the general was meeting with these military leaders in Europe and looking at what's going on in Ukraine from an intelligence perspective.

A native of Georgia, Jarrard happily took time to answer questions about his experience since the war began in the virtual

session. He helped Mackenzie and Catlin hone in data they could look at for their project.

“In the interview with the general, I was approaching it with questions related to the UN sustainable goals, but I had to kind of pivot,” said Mackenzie. “The general illuminated the damage being done and that people are leaving the country, so they’re having to pick up the pieces. That’s going to make things even harder. He helped us see so many angles of the study that we wouldn’t have previously.”

They called it “fascinating” that somebody of Jarrard’s stature would share their insights with them for the project. And the collaboration from a colleague who used his connection to help with another group’s project shows the personal nature of the Georgia College MMIS program.

“For a two-star general to set aside time to talk to some grad students was amazing,” said Akers. “But it was really Richard and Gary having a project on

Ukraine, and then me just happening to hear that. Then being friends with the guy that works closely with the second in command of Europe. I don't really know how lucky you can get on that end."

With years of military experience, a Ph.D. and multiple master's degrees, these three students highlight the benefits of the MMIS program at Georgia College.



Gary McKenzie

"What's interesting is in all my classes there's a diverse group of students," said McKenzie. "I mean diverse in many ways, including an experience with technology, backgrounds, types of jobs people want to go into. For somebody with a non-MMIS background, you've got people who you can learn from their experiences, which is what Georgia College has done in this program."

While they learn from each other, they also credit outstanding faculty for their engagement and guidance in each course.

"I didn't expect the instructor to class size ratio to be what it is," Akers said. "And then the availability of the instructors. Typically, in a master's program, the professors are juggling a lot, but I can't tell you one instance where I've emailed an instructor, and they haven't gotten back to me within 24 hours. I really appreciate that kind of personalized attention."

The MMIS program is completely online, but as students can attest, it still provides valuable personalized connections with faculty and other students.

More information on the MMIS program is available [here](#).





GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

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The Graduate School

Alternate Text

# News Stories Posted Wednesday April 20, 2022



## Voices of the Returned: A new GC podcast exploring the lives of the formerly incarcerated

[Government & Sociology, Department of](#): Wednesday April 20, 2022

Every episode of Criminal Justice Professor Dr. Alesa Liles' new podcast, [Voices of the Returned: Life After Incarceration](#) features stories about the complexities of reintegration into society following lengthy prison terms told by the people who lived them.

They're celebrating the launch of the podcast as part of [Justice Week](#) which will host events Tuesday – Friday dedicated to different aspects of the American justice system, including “How to Get into Law School” as well as an open discussion on homeless shelters and other human rights non-profits.

Dr. Liles is co-presenting an event with Dr. Stacy Moak from the University of Alabama at Birmingham titled “Re-Entry Simulation and Dialogue,” which will give participants a chance to experience what it's like to try to navigate local county and city departments, church, the grocery store and other areas of everyday life as a formerly incarcerated individual. The event will also be recorded as part of the podcast. Both the event and the podcast are firsts for Georgia College.

Liles said that she launched the podcast along with three of her students after realizing the reason so many formerly incarcerated citizens face so many challenges with reintegration is because of the stigma that comes from being in prison.

“If you can hear people’s personal stories,” Liles said, “if you can hear who they are, that can change how you feel about them and how you might feel about other people as well. Roughly 90 – 95% of the prison population will be released at some point, so if we can’t find a way to connect with those people; if we can’t figure out how to accept people beyond one thing they did in their life, then that’s going to affect everyone, right?”

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**“If you can hear people’s personal stories, if you can hear who they are, that can change how you feel about them and how you might feel about other people as well. Roughly 90 – 95% of the prison population will be released at some point, so if we can’t find a way to connect with those people; if we can’t figure out how to accept people beyond one thing they did in their life, then that’s going to affect everyone, right?”**

**- Dr. Alesa Liles**

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Dr. Alesa Liles

Charlie, the name of their first guest of the podcast, was convicted of murder in 1977 when he was 18 years old. After serving 43 years, he was released in 2021, at the age of 62, and has been working toward reconciling with a world he no longer recognizes.

Alexis Skowranek, a senior criminal justice major who is graduating in the spring and will begin law school in the fall, is one of the students who co-hosts the podcast with Liles. She said that one of the most surprising things about hearing Charlie’s story is how much has changed in the world since he was first incarcerated.



“We talked a lot about Walmart stories,” Skowranek said. “For instance, Charlie had never stepped foot in a Walmart before, and he was just in awe of how much things have changed.”



Charlie

Each episode of the podcast will feature a different guest from around the Southeast region, talking about various challenges of reintegration. Some of those guests will be attending the Re-Entry Simulation and Dialogue on Thursday, April 21 and will be helping to work the stations that attendees can go to as they work their way through the simulation.

“The reentry simulation was actually developed by the Department of Justice,” Liles said.

During the simulation, participants will get cards telling them who they are and how much time they’ve been

incarcerated, and what they have to do. Then they will be given a certain amount of time to achieve their task.

“You might need to figure out, ‘how am I going to get food? Do I even qualify for food stamps?’ Or ‘how much money do I even have?’ and then we’re going to have an open dialogue afterward,” she said.

Liles has invited members from the Offender Alumni Association to help with the simulation as well.

Kaylie Kimsey, another graduate criminal justice student who will be getting her Master’s in May and also co-hosts the show, said that participating in the event is a great way to empathize with their fellow citizens in a unique and fun way.

“We know the statistics,” she said, “and obviously the statistics are out there, but nobody really cares about that. They want to learn by doing something.”

Both “Voices of the Returned” and the Re-Entry Simulation and Dialogue event are innovative ways that the Criminal Justice Department is finding ways of bringing experiential education to the community and to its students.







## Nearly 70,000 pounds of food waste diverted from landfills by GC composting project

[Sustainability, Office of](#) : Wednesday April 20, 2022

Food. It's a necessity of life, yet it also takes up the most space in landfills. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that 30-40% of the food supply is wasted. That's 80 billion pounds each year.

Georgia College's Office of Sustainability works to curb that number, at least as it relates to food waste on campus with a composting operation.

"We've been operating since 2017, and we have processed nearly 70,000 pounds total. That's almost 10,000 pounds just this semester," said Lori Hamilton, chief sustainability officer. "I love this program, the way it was written and the way it operates. It's something we can build off of in the future."

The project started small with a



Molly Robbins puts food waste into the



few faculty members in environmental sciences—Drs.

compost machine.

Sam and Christine Mutiti and Dr. Allison VandeVoort. The Mutiti's initially allowed students to compost at their own home. Then they worked with the Office of Sustainability to formally establish the program on campus and get it funded through the Sustainability Fee Program. From that funding, the facility was built, the machines purchased and student interns were hired to run the daily operations of the program

This semester, Molly Robbins and Jackson Masters serve as student interns for the composting initiative. Their job is to collect the food waste from the MAX and take it to be processed at the facility on West Campus.

"We have two bins in the MAX. One to collect our pre-consumer food, so that's anything that doesn't make it to plates. Then we have another one which collects anything that gets scraped off plates," said Robbins, a junior environmental science major.



Jackson Masters works to turn the piles.

Each morning on Monday through Friday, the team drops off the containers. Then each afternoon, they collect them for processing.

"First, we weigh what we've collected to keep a record of how much compost we're doing," said Masters, senior history major. "Before we put the food in the mixer, we have to add a carbon source, which for us is sawdust."

From there, the mixer combines food waste with the sawdust, which is the beginning of the composting process.

"After about 15-20 minutes, we send it up the auger, which is like a screw that brings it up from the mixer into our machine," said Robbins. "Our machine is a giant drum, and typically the compost turns slowly in the vessel for approximately two to three weeks."

Once it's removed from the machine, the final step is to give compost time to mature in the open air. It allows bad bacteria to continue to die off and good nutrients to increase.

Masters and Robbins work to turn more than 20 piles at the compost site weekly.

“The bacteria that are breaking down all the material is aerobic. It breathes the same air that we breathe, and it needs oxygen. That is why we have to turn the piles,” Robbins said. “

“We also take the temperature to gauge the maturity of the pile,” she added. “When it’s young it’s really hot 140 150 degrees Fahrenheit, but it cools as it matures.”



Robbins remove compost from the machine.

The process takes weeks from start to finish. Once the compost has fully matured it’s used at the Campus Garden.

The project has come a long way since its humble beginnings, but those involved still see potential for growth.



Masters takes the temperature of the pile.

“Our long-term goal is to make our product available for purchase externally. The whole idea is to hopefully make a little bit of money that we can put back into the program,” Hamilton said. “I see us possibly expanding to work with local restaurants, especially downtown. If they collect it, we could come pick it and process it.”

Students also see the value of the learning opportunities provided by the project, both through course research and working as an intern.

“It has great student research opportunities,” Robbins said. “We’ve actually had two environmental science students present on two separate research projects on the composting process, and we have another one approved that they’re going to get started on as well.”

“I’ve just learned so much on this job that’s applicable,” said Masters. “I’ve learned the value of teamwork, especially working with other people in the office.”

The project provides not only the opportunity for personal growth and development but also helps protect our most valuable resource—the earth.

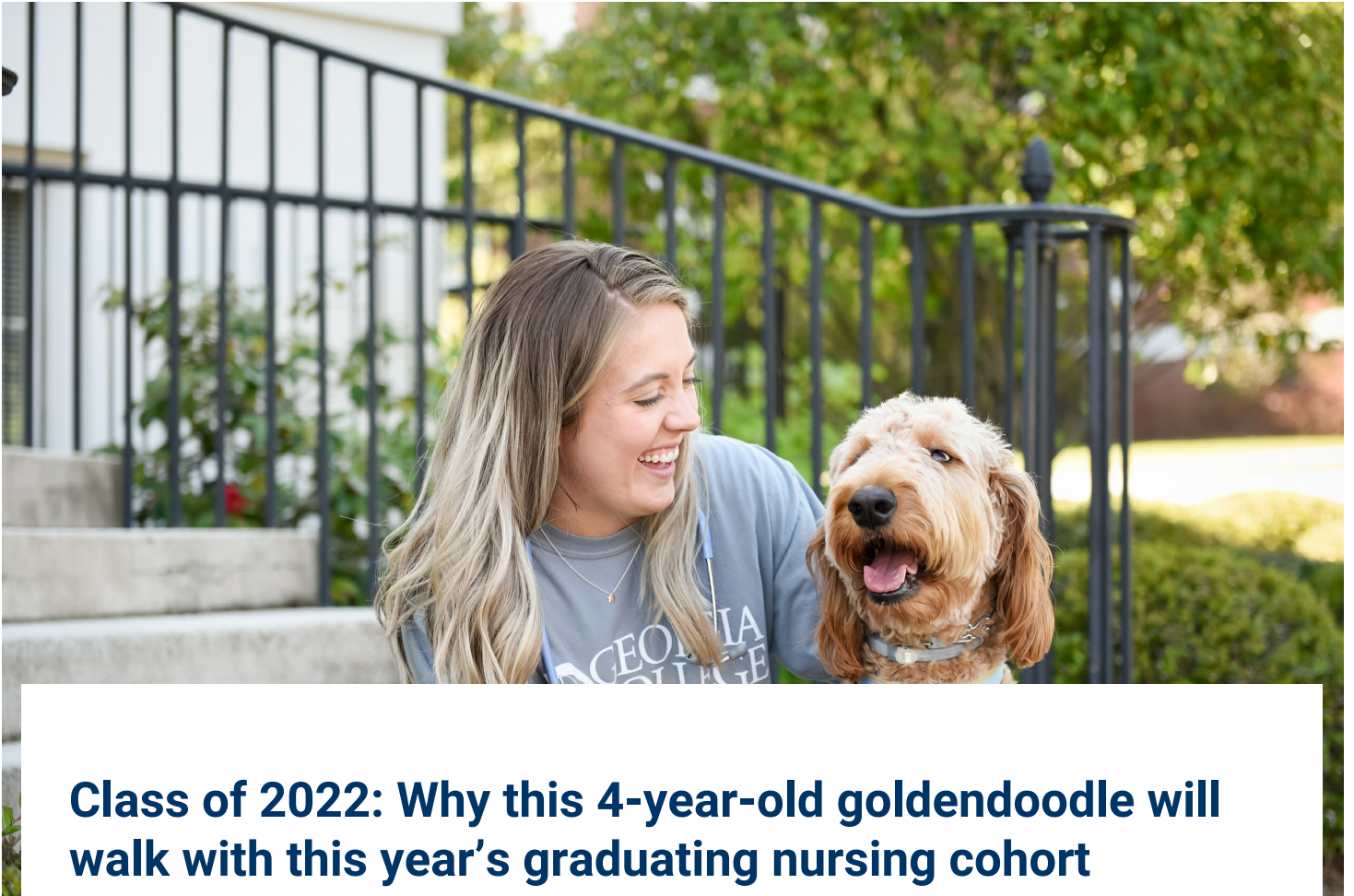
**One huge benefit for the project is we're not sending waste to the landfill. We're reducing the costs that we pay out to have waste hauled from campus, and we're also doing it to benefit the environment.**

**- Lori Hamilton**

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# News Stories Posted Thursday April 21, 2022



## **Class of 2022: Why this 4-year-old goldendoodle will walk with this year's graduating nursing cohort**

[Nursing, School of](#) : Thursday April 21, 2022

Graduating nursing major Samantha Summerville has lived with Type 1 diabetes for the last 15 years of her life. By the time she was ready to go to college, she'd grown so accustomed to all the electronic alarms warning her about blood sugar fluctuations that they didn't wake her up anymore.

A family friend recommended a medical alert dog, and that was how Summerville met Mo, a goldendoodle trained to notice her medical needs before the technology does.

He's also trained in basic obedience, public access and scent training. She adopted him in her freshmen year, and the two of them have become inseparable. In fact, he's as much a part of her nursing cohort as she is; he's been included in the class photos and will be walking with her at graduation.

Since learning first-hand the benefits of having a medical alert dog, in addition to traditional techniques for health monitoring, Summerville has become an advocate

for using them in nursing environments.

"I'm a science-based major so I'm in Herty Hall a lot; in labs and things like that, which traditionally is not a great space to have a dog or an animal on the floor," she said. "So, he ended up wearing booties and a lab coat and laying on a mat on the floor to keep him as protected as we were."

While some pediatric floors have been hesitant to allow Mo there, Summerville said that Georgia College has always been willing to make accommodations.

Dr. Talecia Warren, Dr. Debbie Greene and Dr. Tiffany Parrish have all been staunch supporters of Summerville's efficacy for medical alert dogs. In addition to catching issues faster than the recommended machines typically used for monitoring, Mo is much less stress-inducing. He doesn't bark or sound an alarm when he senses low blood sugar, instead, he places a caring paw on Summerville's leg and looks at her insistently.

Summerville has spoken at classes and hospitals about the strategic benefits of having dogs like Mo.

"The nurses that I'm working with are asking questions," Summerville said, "because we are evidence-based people. We believe in hard science and, of course, people are skeptical. But then they watch him alert me and catch things ahead of time, allowing me to continue to do my nursing work because my numbers aren't low, my brain isn't foggy, and I'm able to think clearly. I've been able to show nurses in an evidence-based way that he does work, and that's been a really cool experience."

One of their challenges is setting boundaries for those who want to greet or pet Mo while he's on duty, which has made Summerville a much more extroverted person than she normally would have been.



Mo in Herty Hall. Photo credit: Samantha Summerville

“In my freshman year, I just kind of went to class and did my thing. I had my small group of people, but when you bring a dog into the mix suddenly everyone has questions,” Summerville said. “So setting those boundaries has just been about learning to speak up for myself.”

Mo has also grown during his time at Georgia College. He’s learned to adapt to many different environments and to keep calm in some of the most strenuous places.

“

**The nurses that I’m working with are asking questions because we are evidence-based people. We believe in hard science and, of course, people are skeptical. But then they watch him alert me and catch things ahead of time, allowing me to continue to do my nursing work because my numbers aren’t low, my brain isn’t foggy, and I’m able to think clearly. I’ve been able to show nurses in an evidence-based way that he does work, and that’s been a really cool experience.**

**- Senior Samantha Summerville**

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“I’ve taken him to Central State, and we went into the prison psychiatric facility there,” Summerville said. “During COVID, there were floor shutdowns, so we had a lot of that overflow and there were people yelling, and some could be loud and belligerent. He’s learned to layout in the hallways of these hospitals with carts going up and down, alarms going off and patients yelling and I think that attests to his training.”





Summerville and Mo

After graduation, she'll start work with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite. Trouble is, Mo will not be allowed to join her on the floor there.

"I was very adamant about having him with me to the point I was willing to turn down my dream job as a pediatric nurse," she said.

But Summerville understands the importance of educating the independent nursing world on the advantages that medical dogs can offer. She's hopeful that, after building a positive reputation with the hospital, that she can convince them how helpful Mo can be not only to her but to everyone around her.

Although Mo isn't officially graduating from Georgia College, he's been a member of Summerville's nursing cohort since day one. The nursing class has insisted that he be a part of their nursing composite photograph that will hang in the simulation center at Navicent Baldwin, and he will be walking at graduation right beside Summerville.

She's even gotten him a little graduation cap.



# News Stories Posted Friday April 22, 2022



## Class of 2022: International student and tennis player seeks job in human resources

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Friday April 22, 2022

**Lukas Zavrel**

**From:** Uvalno, Czech Republic

**Major/minor:** Majored in management with a minor in logistics and a concentration in human resources. It was an area in which I wanted to develop my skills.

**Why Georgia College:** Because of the athletic program, school level and interesting college-life experience. I was first at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC), then I transferred here. It was an opportunity to continue playing tennis and connect it with school and getting a degree abroad.

**Activities:** Being a college athlete is almost like a job, since we have to keep up good grades, practice hard and focus on our matches. There wasn't too much time for other activities.





Lukas Zavrel

**What it's like to study abroad:**

Experiences in America were interesting, especially here in the southern area. People are definitely much different than in Europe. Food is also different—definitely healthier! It was definitely good understanding another culture, learning a new language and meeting new people.

**Biggest achievement in college:**

It's very hard to say. Before I came to GCSU, there were some good tennis results. I would say my biggest achievement will definitely (hopefully) be my degree.

**Favorite professor:** I would say Ken Hendry and his "Special Topics in HR." It definitely gave me a lot from a person who taught us his experiences from the years he's been working as an HR professional.

**Most impactful or fun moment in college:** Definitely every match that we played as a team was enjoyment as nothing else. Travelling and playing with the team is really fun. My most impactful moment is definitely our senior day.

**What he'll miss most:** Life as a student. I still can't imagine going out into the 'real world' and start working.

**Advice for incoming freshmen:** Don't be afraid to enjoy college as much as possible. It's just a part of life that stays in our minds the most, I think. Enjoy talking to people and have fun.

**Key to success in college:** Learn how to be good with time management. Understand and realize what your priorities are.

**How he's changed during college:** Definitely matured a bit. I started college in the USA when I was 21. Living and studying abroad helped me to realize how different it is compared to the country I live in. Also: enjoyments and experiences helped form me as a human being, overall.

**Future plans:** I'm planning to move back to Europe after graduation and get a HR job back home. In the next few years, I'll look for a job in other European countries. Georgia College definitely helped me to improve my English. Business school helped me with understanding the culture, appropriate behavior and what to expect in the future.





## Class of 2022: Exercise Science majors find purpose at Georgia College

[Health & Human Performance, School of](#): Friday April 22, 2022

Imagine stepping foot onto campus for the first time with a dream of helping others live healthier lives yet being unsure how to move forward. That's exactly the situation Caroline Jones and Nicole Andrews found themselves in just four years ago.

Jones recalls being committed to Georgia Tech. Her dad is a proud Georgia Tech alumnus. But if beauty is in the eye of the beholder, then there is something special about Georgia College & State University that many don't initially see.

"I was one of the many who came to Georgia College thinking they would be gone in a year. Boy, was I wrong about that," she said. "I fell in love with Milledgeville, from always having a familiar face on campus to the small class to professor ratio, Georgia College became the place that I knew I would succeed and put me in the best position to achieve my goals."



Caroline Jones



Andrews knew she had found her home after visiting campus for a tour.

“When I first toured the campus, I knew that this is where I wanted to go. The campus was gorgeous and felt like the perfect fit,” Andrews said.



Nicole Andrews

Exercise science was an easy choice for both seniors. While Jones wants to pursue physical therapy, Andrews saw many different career opportunities for a graduate with an exercise science degree. Growth is a common theme both seniors use to describe their time at the university.

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**My time at Georgia College has made me feel more confident and comfortable in my skills both in and out of the classroom.**

**- Nicole Andrews**

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“I have grown in every way imaginable throughout these last four years at Georgia College,” Jones said. “The university has provided me with the space to step out of my comfort zone while knowing that I have a support to fall back on if I needed it. I have learned how to fail well. I know how to work with people who don’t do things the same way as me. I am more confident in who I am and have no doubt in my capabilities.”

Andrews agrees. She credits the open environment and encouragement from her professors as keys to her growth.

“My time at Georgia College has made me feel more confident and comfortable in my skills both in and out of the classroom,” she said. “All my classes have had such an open environment where I felt like I could talk and grow.”

“

**Getting involved on campus is something that made my time at Georgia College so special. It has given me the opportunity to get to meet people I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to know outside of these organizations. Some of my best friends have come from being involved in these things.**

**- Caroline Jones**

As their undergraduate careers conclude, the two seniors are looking ahead to new ambitions on the horizon. Jones will attend Emory University to pursue a Doctor of Physical Therapy. Meanwhile Andrews plans to pursue a nutrition master’s program while working for a local gym. She hopes to ultimately make nutrition and fitness accessible to everyone.

If there is one piece of advice both Jones and Andrews could give to current and incoming students, it would be to get involved with campus. As a student on campus, Andrews worked in the library. She also spent time at the gym either working out or taking classes that were offered.

“Having these social outlets helped me open up while helping me stay in a good place,” she said. “COVID-19 made activities hard, but the school was great about having alternatives available.”

Jones was involved in several organizations on campus such as Georgia College Miracle, Kappa Delta, and Georgia College’s chapter of Delight Women’s Ministries.

“Getting involved on campus is something that made my time at Georgia College so special, Jones said. “It has given me the opportunity to get to meet people I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to know outside of these organizations. Some of my best friends have come from being involved in these things.”

# News Stories Posted Monday April 25, 2022



## Class of 2022: First students graduate with masters in nurse-midwifery

[Nursing, School of](#) : Monday April 25, 2022

Katey Jones, '18, and Heather Laflam will be the first to graduate from Georgia College's nurse-midwifery master's program, the only state program in Georgia.

Still in its infancy, the midwifery program is first of its kind in Georgia. The university is using the degree to educate more nurse-midwives in Georgia, a state ranked 49th in maternal mortality nationally.

The program is unique, because its training nurse-midwives are required to complete clinicals within the state.

"Two years of working, planning and creating programs and classes—and here we are with our first graduating class. It's very exciting," said Monica Ketchie, associate professor of nursing and nurse-midwifery coordinator. "This is for the women of Georgia, and I'm very proud of Katey and Heather—both of them have a lot to offer women's health."



Nurse-midwives, opposed to lay midwives, are certified, registered nurses that specialize in caring for women throughout their lives. Nurse midwives receive focused education in pregnancy, labor and birth, but also learn primary, contraceptive and menopausal care.

And while they can deliver outside hospitals, this is not the norm and most practice within hospitals.

From Conyers, Georgia, Jones has wanted to be a nurse-midwife since high school. Following her graduation in 2020, she was a medical-surgical nurse for a year and has worked as a labor and delivery nurse for three years. She joined the program as soon as it began.



Katey Jones

“My mom was traumatized from her birth experience,” she said. “I wanted to prevent that from happening to other women. If I’m a midwife, I can do that. This program was rigorous, but I’ve learned a lot, and I’m a better provider for it.”

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**My mom was traumatized from her birth experience. I wanted to prevent that from happening to other women. If I’m a midwife, I can do that.**

**- Katey Jones**

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In contrast, Laflam has been a nurse for 22 years—working mostly as a labor and delivery nurse, but a gynecological nurse as well.



Heather Laflam

“Midwife means ‘with woman,’ so we advocate for these patients,” she said. “It’s a great thing to grow with your patients—from teenage to young adult and on—and be there for their special time. You’re making a mother, and you want it to be a good start.”

The work is rewarding. While seeing a patient for her six-week

postpartum visit, Jones recalled the woman insisting that she hold the baby.

“I was the first person to hold that child because I delivered her, and now her mother was insisting I hold her again,” Jones said. “The rapport and trust I get to build with women in my community is truly a privilege.”

With graduation looming, both women are interviewing for positions as nurse-midwives in Georgia. They’ll take the skills they’ve learned with them.

“I’m used to being the one fulfilling orders,” Jones said. “Patients would look to my preceptor for answers. But now, I’m going into an exam room by myself and people are listening to me, they actually want to know what I have to say.”



## **Class of 2022: Nursing student makes an impact through clinicals**

**Nursing, School of : Monday April 25, 2022**

For many, college is about change. Students grow in more ways than one. Class of 2022 graduate Rosemary Macuch epitomizes that.

She came to Georgia College with no clear plan or career path. Yet taking one course completely changed her trajectory.

“What influenced me most was my anatomy class with Dr. Kwan Christenson,” Macuch said. “All of my friends told me not to take that class because it's really, hard, but I just loved it.”

**Until then Macuch says she'd never studied anything that could keep her interested, but she became fascinated with the human body and how it works. That fascination led her to nursing.**

“It's definitely changed my life,” she said. “I've never been a part of a program that has taken such wonderful care of its students and been so involved with our success.”

As a member of Georgia College's nationally recognized nursing program, Macuch



**Rosemary Macuch**

flourished.

She took on leadership roles in the Georgia College Association of Nursing Students and worked as a Supplemental Instructor (SI) and Supplemental Coach in the Learning Center—helping other students who may struggle in courses.

“I actually started off as an SI leader for Dr. Christenson’s anatomy class, and then I got the wonderful opportunity to move up to the position of SI coach,” she said.

“I host weekly meetings with all SI leaders. We meet and go over their session plans,” she added. “I can give them advice. I can give them guidance. I can help them resolve issues that they’re having with students or the professors.

Her experiences inside and outside the classroom helped mold her into the person she is today. Nursing Lecturer and Clinical Coordinator Karen Schwartz noted that during her clinicals, patients responded to Macuch like she’d never seen before.

“In my obstetric clinical, Rosemary stood out as energetic and eager to serve and learn,”

Schwartz said. “When given the choice, patients vocally chose to have Rosemary at their side as they delivered their babies.”

One patient's mother even asked to send a card to Macuch as a thank you for the kindness and care she provided.

“During my clinicals, I just loved it. It was such an incredible experience,” she said. “I didn’t realize how intimate and how wonderful those moments are. That’s when I was like, ‘This is something that I feel like I could really see myself doing.’”

Her clinical experience solidified her career choice and led her to her new job she’ll start this summer as a labor and delivery nurse at Doctors Hospital in Augusta.



**Macuch works in the nursig lab.**



Throughout her undergraduate journey, she's felt supported by the incredible faculty at Georgia College.

"Dr. Kwan Christenson has been so wonderful and guided me through so many things. Dr. Talecia Warren, from the nursing department, Mrs. Karen Schwartz, who was my clinical instructor for OB, and Dr. Marshall Smith, who spent so much time with me in class," Macuch said. "They were just so great."

"Georgia College prepared me for the world in so many ways," she said "I really owe the things I've accomplished to everyone here. Mrs. Jeanne Haslam and Rebecca Cofer from the Learning Center shaped the way I view teamwork and leadership, and the more I reflected on it, I wanted everyone to know that so much of who I am as a nurse and an employee is an amalgamation of the wonderful characteristics of everyone who has guided me."

For other students, she offers this advice.

"Set goals that you think are unreachable. My freshman year I had no idea what I wanted to do. I struggled with some classes, and I never would have thought that I could do something like this," Macuch said.

# News Stories Posted Tuesday April 26, 2022



## Georgia College student's late-night grub hub is educating freshmen

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Tuesday April 26, 2022

In January, junior business marketing major Justin Daffinson and co-founder Walker Petty, senior business management major, opened Milly Grub, a late-night dining spot open until 3 a.m.

The restaurant, located at 125 S Wayne Street in downtown Milledgeville, Georgia, serves simple-yet-hearty meals like nachos, hot dogs and potato bowls. They're open Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m.

Now, business is booming. The eatery, alongside catering services, boasts 25 employees and several recurring customers.

"My employees are the world to me—they're my family," Justin said. "And it makes me happy to know that people are happy to have a safe place to come and hang out, chill, listen to some music and eat a hot dog."

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**It makes me happy to know that people are happy to have a safe place to come and hang out, chill, listen to some music and eat a hot dog.**

**- Justin Daffinson**

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Daffinson has a hand in the running the place, sure, but now he can trust his brother, Josh Daffinson, freshmen business marketing major, with its management.

Justin and Petty have created a system for training their employees together. Justin, who handles scheduling, taxes and expansion, is translating his knowledge to Josh, who will take the helm once Justin graduates.

“We try to spend as much time with our employees as we can at the beginning,” Justin said. “That way they know the standards for future employees. We want it to be a chain-reaction.”

This practice of employees-training-employees reaches all the way to the top at Milly Grub, since Justin hopes the restaurant will become a center of business education.

“While Josh is managing, he’ll teach another manager who comes in as a freshman,” Justin said. “Just like any other restaurant, we’ll continue hiring skilled people to manage our restaurant successfully.”

In fact, his experience running Milly Grub has aided his education, Justin said. But, he also credits his education at Georgia College with helping his business succeed.

“The basic principles of supply and demand, microeconomics and macroeconomics—all of that plays a role in the business world,” he said. “You have to know what you need to satisfy demand. It helps me a lot to know that I can rely on my education, not that I’m done, but what I’ve learned so far.”

Their logo, an orange, flame-engulfed grill atop their restaurant’s name was inspired by Associate Professor of Marketing, Dr. Whitney Ginders’ consumer behavior class. In it, Justin learned the importance of color theory in marketing, and that oranges and reds get people excited about food.

“Once I graduate I’m going to run a business, and this is slowly teaching me how to

properly do that," he said. "This is setting me up for future success after my graduation. So, if you have a gut feeling, go chase it—don't be afraid of failure."



# News Stories Posted Wednesday April 27, 2022



## Class of 2022: Management major embraces globalization and technology

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Wednesday April 27, 2022

**Tommy Nguyen**

**Where are you from?** Vietnam. I transferred to GC for my junior and senior year

**What first sparked your interest in Management?** Business, in general, has always been my interest since a young age. Knowing how to operate businesses is my long-term goal. I hope to have my own business in the future.

**Have you taken part in any groups on campus during your college tenure? If so, which ones and why?** I have joined the GC International Club and the GC Men's Soccer Club. As a business major, learning and understanding new cultures is important. The International Club is an organization that helped me learn about different cultures. I have also always enjoyed playing soccer; not only being able to play soccer in the club, but I also have the opportunity to meet new

friends/teammates.

**What is your proudest moment at Georgia College, and can you describe the events that led to that moment?** I have been proud of my whole journey at GC.

**What are your plans after college?** I will be working for a logistics firm for a year to gain experience. Afterward, I will go back to my home country to work, and hopefully, be able to start my own business.

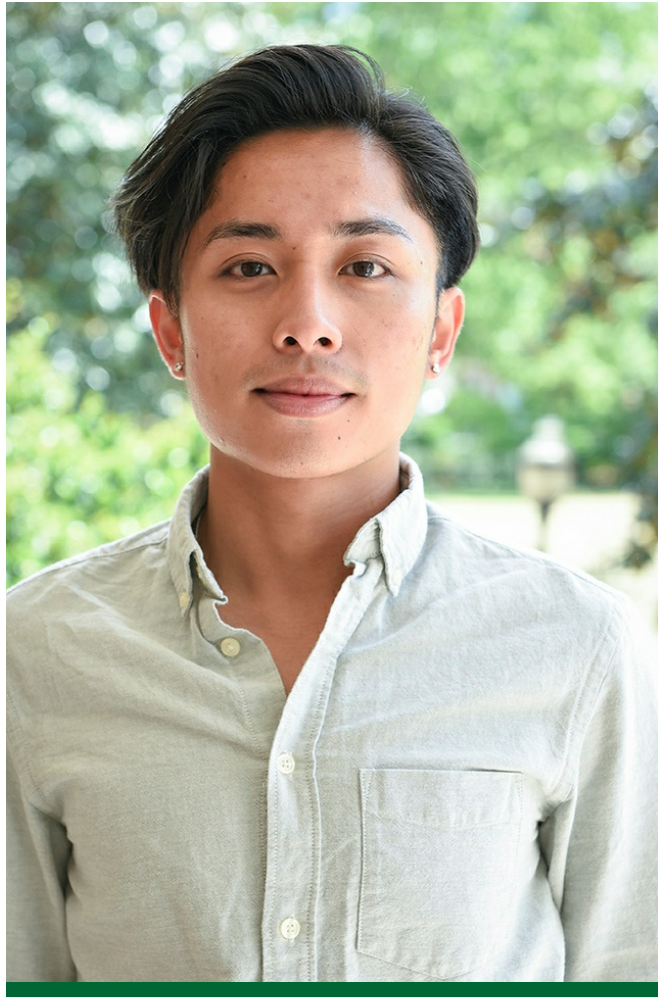
**What led to your interest in Management?** There is no specific event that led to my interest in management since I've always been interested in Business. However, I have a concentration in Logistics/Supply Chain Management. Taking and having an interest in the first course of Supply Chain and Logistics is the most important event that led me to choose my concentration.

**What is the importance of Business Management in today's world?** Today's world is all about globalization and technology; Business Management is the key to connecting them together.

**Where do you hope to go next?** Wherever the world leads me. I would love to work in different countries if the opportunities present themselves.

**What did you find most surprising about Georgia College?** The openness of GC professors is one thing I found surprising, especially in the College of Business. They do care about the students' growth and future success.

**What was your favorite part of attending Georgia College, and how do you think that might influence your future?** The classes are small so that students and professors have more interaction. Plus, the courses are well designed to help students have a good preparation before starting their careers.



Tommy Nguyen

**What advice would you give to incoming students at Georgia College?** Take as many courses, that you think you'd like, as possible. More importantly, be open to any opportunities during college. Lastly, pick the opportunity that gives you the most options in the future.





## **Class of 2022: A singer's creativity grew as she expresses herself through song**

**[Music, Department of](#)** : Wednesday April 27, 2022

Torrianna Harris, a Forsyth, Georgia, native and music major discovered the Georgia College difference.

“What I like most about this university is the freedom to be creative and expressive,” she said. “There are no limitations on how you should act or what you should be like.”

Having access to a variety of classes, workshops and discussions has allowed her to learn about different people, cultures and perspectives. She’s also learned to think independently.

“Because of this experience, I’ve found my own way of thinking,” Harris said. “This allows me to be confident in the decisions that I make with my life.”

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**“The professors I admire most at Georgia College are the ones who never settle for less. They prioritize a solid learning experience to make sure we will be able to take this knowledge with us for the rest of our lives.”**

**- Torrianna Harris**



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Although it’s difficult for her to highlight one professor at Georgia College—as many professors touched her life in so many ways—she especially enjoyed the teachings of Dr. Youngmi Kim, voice coordinator and assistant professor of music. Kim was her voice lesson instructor for the past three years.

“Not only has Dr. Kim contributed to my vocal growth, she has been a motivator during my time at Georgia College,” Harris said. “She always pushes me to be the best I can be and believed in me.”

She broadened her Georgia College experience as a choir director of the Voices of Joy Gospel Choir and a member of the Black Student Association (BSA). These organizations changed her for the better.

“Both specialize in unity with community,” Harris said. “With BSA, it’s been great to see Black students thriving and lifting each other up to be better. I want to continue to do this to benefit my community in the future.”

As the choir director of the Gospel Choir, she teaches the songs, leads rehearsals and directs the choir in performances.

“I’m lucky to have experienced the on-campus performances we’ve participated in during my time at Georgia College—even with the limitations of COVID,” Harris said.

As choir director, she’s also grown as a leader.



Torrianna Harris



Torrianna Harris takes center stage singing at "A Night Under the Stars" African American Alumni Gala in November.

"This experience has helped me structurally and expanded my critical thinking skills," Harris said. "I feel confident that I will be able to take the skills I've learned with me for the future."

This fall, Harris will begin her career teaching general music classes at Waynesboro Primary School. However, her goal is to open a voice lesson studio and become a high school choral director.

She attributes her ability to dream big to her professors.

"The professors I admire most at Georgia College are the ones who never settle for less," Harris said. "They prioritize a solid learning experience to make sure we will be able to take this knowledge with us for the rest of our lives."



# News Stories Posted Thursday April 28, 2022



## Class of 2022: Middle grades major aims to make a difference in children's lives

[Teacher Education, Department of](#) : Thursday April 28, 2022

Kamdyn Radake

**What's your degree?** My degree is Middle Grades Education with concentrations in Language Arts and Mathematics.

**Why were you interested in that area of study?** From a young age, I was interested in teaching, and I had several family members who were teachers that I was able to look up to. Additionally in high school, I participated in my school's education pathway where I fell in love with teaching.

**Where are you from?** I am from Cumming, Ga.

**Why did you choose to attend Georgia College?** From the moment I got to campus for my tour, Georgia College felt like home. I quickly saw the sense of community that was offered, and I was drawn to it.



**Kamdyn Radake**

**What was your favorite class/professor and why?** Dr. Angel Abney is one of the best there is at Georgia College. She taught two of my courses, Concepts in Algebra and Concepts in Geometry for Middle Grades Majors. Dr. Abney did everything she could to make class interesting, and she worked hard to be sure we understood the material. Dr. Abney is also extremely caring and built relationships with each of her students. She is one of the best, and Georgia College is lucky to have her!

**What are your plans after graduation?** My post-graduation plans are to move back to my hometown to begin my teaching career. I will be teaching 7th and 8th-grade mathematics at Lakeside Middle School!

**What other activities, jobs or programs have you been involved with during your time at GC?** During my time at Georgia College, I have been a member of the panhellenic sorority, Phi Mu, as well as served as a Recruitment Counselor for the fall 2020 panhellenic recruitment. I also served as a Middle School Mentor through YoungLife. Additionally, I served as the Community Outreach Chair for Collegiate Middle Level Association Georgia College Chapter. I have also worked for the Georgia College Writing Center as a Desk Assistant for 3 years.

**How did those experiences impact you during your time at GC?** Each experience, program, job, and club allowed me to fall in love and find a home in Georgia College. They all allowed me to build my community and stay connected. Each of them also provided me with skills and leadership experience that I will carry with me.

**Anything else you'd like to mention?** The Middle Grades Program and cohort at Georgia College is special. Not only does it prepare you well for your career, but it allowed me to grow as a person. I am so thankful for everything the John H. Lounsbury College of Education has given me.





# News Stories Posted Friday April 29, 2022



## Goldwater Scholarship awarded to Georgia College student for the first time

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Friday April 29, 2022

Junior biology major Wesley DeMontigny was awarded the Goldwater Scholarship in March—a first for Georgia College.

For general research in the natural sciences, mathematics and engineering, the scholarship identifies future researchers and is the most prestigious of its kind.

“The Goldwater Scholarship is the nation's foremost award for undergraduates studying the natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering,” said Anna Whiteside, assistant director of the Honors College and coordinator for the National Scholarships Office. “To earn this award, recipients must have an extensive research experience in addition to an excellent academic record. Wesley worked very hard on putting this application together, and we are so proud of him.”

The scholarship will provide DeMontigny with \$7,500 toward his senior year and hold tremendous power on his curriculum vitae.

"I woke up that morning, knowing the Goldwater would be announced at noon," he said, "and I was so lightheaded, I thought I would pass out. When I knew I got it, I wasn't as elated as I thought I'd be—all of a sudden, I realized how much weight had been on my shoulders, and I just felt relaxed."

His research centers on environmental microbiology. DeMontigny secured the scholarship with an essay about a project he did. It explored bacteria that engulf themselves in crystals and the potential applications of that ability.

"I'm interested in using genetic engineering for potential environmental remediation for industrial uses," he said.

"Microbes are fascinating in that they are everywhere, they've been around for an extremely long time, and they are the reason we have almost every resource we need to survive."

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**Microbes are fascinating in that they are everywhere, they've been around for an extremely long time, and they are the reason we have almost every resource we need to survive.**

**- Wesley DeMontigny**

”

While growing up in Marietta, Georgia, DeMontigny had a natural talent for science. He taught himself to code in middle school and was a programmer for a healthcare company in high school. Yet, DeMontigny entered college expecting to practice law.



Wesley DeMontigny presenting at the MURACE Student Research Conference.



“As I was getting less interested in law, I learned I was very good at understanding cellular biology,” he said. “Natural laws are a fascinating topic. They are descriptive, rather than prescriptive. So, we aren’t telling nature what to do, we’re describing it. We’re saying ‘This is what it is.’”

Georgia College’s liberal arts approach made his journey possible, he said. If DeMontigny hadn’t been required to take biology, he may not be where he is today.

“If I was in a class of 100 people, getting the professor’s time would be more difficult,” DeMontigny said. “Easily communicating with my professors has been a big deal for both the scholarship and my development as a student.”

Getting the scholarship doesn’t mean DeMontigny is finished. The relief that came with securing the award only lasted four days. After he graduates in the fall, DeMontigny will take an eight-month hiatus, before applying straight into a Ph.D. program.

After that, he plans to go where the graduate experience takes him.

“One of the things I like about the career of a researcher is asking your own questions,” DeMontigny said. “You can ask your own questions and pursue them whether or not someone’s going to pay you to pursue them. I like the freedom to be creative.”



## **The Graduate School provides opportunities for students to share research**

**[The Graduate School](#)** : Friday April 29, 2022

Research is an integral component for graduate studies. Students in Georgia College's master's and doctoral programs receive many opportunities to connect with faculty and conduct hands-on, personalized research and creative endeavors in their area of study.

Georgia College offers 34 graduate programs to more than 1,200 students. From athletic training to education to criminal justice, research is a key component of each experience.

"Engaging in research at the graduate level gives students the opportunity to increase the depth of their knowledge in a specific area while advancing their critical thinking skills within a real-life situation," said Dr. Holley Roberts, associate vice president for academic affairs and director of The Graduate School.

The Graduate School provides several ways for students to share their research by presenting at conferences and at the Research Poster Showcase—where students can share their work with the campus community.

"Being able to present at conferences offers graduate students a variety of

benefits. They can improve their communication, presentation and analytical skills; network with others within their discipline to expand their own knowledge; and have the opportunity to see themselves as professionals in their discipline,” Roberts said. “So many of the graduate student research projects address issues and challenges that need solutions. Graduate students accept the challenge in these areas and seek research experiences that contribute to their fields.

It’s not just about the knowledge gained from research but also the relationships built with faculty mentors.

“I’m directly advised by Dr. Katie Stumpf. She is an incredibly talented and resourceful scientist and ornithologist,” said Christopher Horacek, a biology master’s student. “Under her guidance, I’ve gained so many hands-on skills.”

Horacek and Stumph study birds and how their health can indicate environmental challenges.

“Birds have just an incredible amount of diversity, and they serve as an indicator for a changing climate,” he said. “Studying birds is a really good way to learn more about the world.”

Their current work, now in its third year, focuses on one of the most popular birds in Georgia—bluebirds.

“We are working on a project that is looking at the effects of nest box temperature on reproductive success in eastern Bluebirds,” Horacek said.

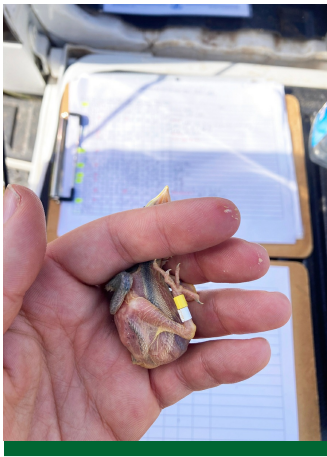
Nest boxes or birdhouses are widely used across the southeast, but they’re technically a replacement for the “natural cavities” birds use in the wild. The birds have lost much of their natural habitat due to deforestation.

“Natural cavities and the artificial birdhouses aren’t equal in regard to the temperatures that they provide,” Horacek said. “We’re also looking at nest box color as a way to lower the temperature. Our goal is hopefully to come up with



Christopher Horacek





Horacek holds a baby bluebird.

recommendations for nest box design that habitat managers can use to improve the success of nest boxes regarding temperature.”

Horacek recently presented this study at the Georgia Wildlife Society and the Georgia Academy of Sciences, where he won the best graduate presentation award.

The Graduate School provides research travel grants to graduate students to support costs associated with presenting their original scholarship at professional conferences. The program awards up to \$400 for expenses associated with conference fees, travel and

accommodations.

Students across all programs receive multiple opportunities to showcase their work both on and off campus. Tara Heimberger will receive her Master of English in May. She’s taken advantage of every chance she could to share her work.

“I presented at the Women's Symposium at Georgia College and at our graduate research conference. I presented at an online conference hosted by Georgia State. Then, I received a graduate travel grant to attend the Sigma Tau Delta —the English Honor Society’s—International Convention,” she said. “My papers at those events vary from Marxist theory and television shows to poetry.”

Heimberger’s variety of work highlights one of the benefits of the English master’s program.

“They really allow you to explore whatever it is that you're interested in,” Heimberger said. “We're not limited like a more traditional program that focuses only on literature. At Georgia College, we can branch out and study things like film and television as well.”

Faculty supported Heimberger through her creative endeavors. From her thesis advisor, Dr. Lauren Pilcher to her advisor Dr. Julian Knox, she’s been encouraged to write about topics that matter to her.

Heimberger has also shared that support and encouragement with her students as a Teaching Fellow. She taught sections of English 1101 and 1102 to undergraduates this academic year. She plans to pursue her Ph.D. to teach at the college level and will pass along the value of publicly sharing one’s work to her future students.

“I think people should know about the resources, especially if they're pursuing a

higher degree in academia or wanting to pursue academia itself,” she said. “It’s important to have the experience of presenting at a conference because it’s such an inherent part of academia. It’s also just fun to be in one place with people who are like-minded and to make connections.”

For Horacek, he knows his experiences as a graduate student at Georgia College will help him in his future career working for a state wildlife resource agency.

“Being able to present my work and win awards is a validation of all the hard work that we put in. The conferences themselves, however, are really the reward,” he said. “The most valuable thing is actually attending conferences because we can get valuable feedback on our research.”

More information on Georgia College graduate research and award opportunities is available [here](#).



Tara Heimberger



## **Class of 2022: Marketing major will become a consultant**

**Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of**: Friday April 29, 2022

**Lorena Aleman**

**Where are you from?** I'm from Lima, Peru.

**What is your major?** I'm majoring in marketing.

**What do you like most about Georgia College?** The community is very welcoming. And I love the campus size. It's not super big or small, so I'm able to see my friends every day, but at the same time, meet new faces. I also like having a close relationship with my professors.

**Who is your favorite professor and why?** My favorite professor has been Dr. Duesing, who I have for my strategic management class. When he lectures, he keeps the class engaged and makes it fun while learning. He also relates well to us by giving us real-life examples of the material.

**What did you learn from him that you plan to apply in your profession?** The strategic management class I'm taking showed me how businesses work. I'll be able to apply some of the concepts I've learned in my profession.



**Which organizations do you belong to? I'm a member of Phi Delta Theta Sorority, the Council of Student Ambassadors and I'm a tele-counselor.**

**How did being a part of any one of these organizations change you as a person? My sorority provided me with a lot of leadership opportunities like helping to organize Homecoming and the events, which allowed me to think for myself. It also gave me a family.**

**How has the International Education Center assisted you at Georgia College? They've given me a lot of guidance throughout my four years. I really couldn't have done it without them. They also introduced me to a lot of other international students and went to a couple of International Club meetings, where I've met a lot of people. It's been great to relate to them.**

**What are your career plans? I'm going to work as a consultant with KPMG in Atlanta.**

**What are you looking most forward to in your new career? I'm ready to be more independent. I'm grateful for my professors, who taught me how to transition to real life.**



**Lorena Aleman**