

Front Page News Story Archive

June 2022



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
News Stories Posted Thursday June 2, 2022	3
Tennis player will apply teamwork learned on the court to nursing	3
News Stories Posted Friday June 3, 2022	7
Strengthening the LGBTQ+ Community at Georgia College	7
You wrote; we'll heed your input	13
News Stories Posted Tuesday June 7, 2022	15
Inaugural Leadership Tour takes business students across Georgia	15
Georgia College recognizes new advancement VP and executive director of the GCSU Foundation	18
Mass Comm students learn about media and life in Denmark	23
News Stories Posted Wednesday June 8, 2022	28
Pressing need for nurses spurs 3rd nursing cohort at Georgia College	28
News Stories Posted Thursday June 9, 2022	32
Class of 2026: First-year student finds right fit at Georgia College	32
News Stories Posted Friday June 10, 2022	34
Class of 2026: Basketball star aims for her dream job	34
Welcome, Bobcats! First orientation in full swing.	38
News Stories Posted Wednesday June 15, 2022	41
Pride Month: Georgia College S.T.A.R. Allies pilot students through tough times	41
News Stories Posted Friday June 17, 2022	47
Class of 2026: Marketing major moves forward despite unimaginable obstacles	47
Class of 2026: Biology major reflects on father's advice for success in college	52
New Bobcats break the ice at orientation	55
News Stories Posted Thursday June 23, 2022	58
Class of 2026: Music motivates incoming freshman	58
Class of 2026: Future physician assistant is ready to jump into her major and the college experience	61
News Stories Posted Friday June 24, 2022	64
Class of 2026: Chemistry major wants to give hope as a doctor	64
News Stories Posted Monday June 27, 2022	67
#BobcatBound students share their spirit	67
News Stories Posted Thursday June 30, 2022	69
Georgia College generates \$285 million impact on local economy	69
The Cherrys' selfless acts benefit many others	72

News Stories Posted Thursday June 2, 2022



Tennis player will apply teamwork learned on the court to nursing

[College of Health Sciences](#) : Thursday June 2, 2022

Emma Fleming, '22, knows how to apply herself on and off the tennis court. In the four years she's been at Georgia College, Fleming has achieved nearly 100 individual wins and was voted Peach Belt All-Conference in doubles, all while completing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Since Fleming was eight years old, she has enjoyed playing tennis. This fall, she'll begin her fifth year of playing tennis at Georgia College. She was eligible to play another year due to the COVID pandemic when no one played.

Fleming's general tennis scholarship allowed her to compete on the court while acquiring her nursing degree.

"It's helped me with school and allowed me to play tennis—the sport that I love," she said. "This wouldn't be possible without the scholarship donors."

Fleming's record was exemplary throughout her time at Georgia College.

“Emma has been a phenomenal asset to our tennis team and university during the past four years,” said Steve Barsby, assistant athletics director and head tennis coach. “She is a true student-athlete, balancing her tennis on a nationally-ranked team, as well as graduating from GC’s nursing program.”

Fleming especially enjoys the team atmosphere. Some of her teammates are her best friends.

Despite this, she also has a competitive edge.

“I love competing on match days,” she said. “It’s so much fun. I’ve really gotten to know my team while playing a sport I love. It just doesn’t get better than that.”



Emma Fleming

On the academic side, Fleming appreciates lessons she learned from Dr. Talecia Warren, assistant professor of nursing.

“

“Tennis has shown me the impact a good team dynamic makes knowing that no matter if you are having a good or bad day, your teammates are there for you while still being responsible for your part. I will take this experience into my future career as a nurse.”

- Emma Fleming

”

“She taught with such passion and cares for her students,” she said. “It felt like she really cared about me. She was more than willing to help me succeed.”

Fleming also learned a lot from Angela Roberts, lecturer in nursing, who was her clinical instructor.

“She taught me how to care for my patients while being efficient in managing a tough patient load,” Fleming said. “She also showed me how to prioritize patient care and treat patients like more than just a number or diagnosis.”



Emma Fleming prepares to serve the ball.

Playing tennis taught her skills like time management, discipline, leadership and teamwork, that she'll use in her career.

“Tennis has shown me the impact a good team dynamic makes knowing that no matter if you are having a good or bad day, your teammates are there for you while still being responsible for your part,” Fleming said. “I will take this experience into my future career as a nurse.”

Fleming chose to become a nurse because she loves people and wants to build patient-nurse relationships.

“I want to care for people when they may not have anyone there to care for them,” she said. “A lot of patients, especially with COVID, their family wasn't able to come in as much and visit with them.”

Her next step is to get her master's degree in Health and Human Performance with a concentration in health promotion.

She looks forward to learning how to prevent acute, chronic diseases and how to live a healthy lifestyle, among other things.

Her career aspirations include working in underserved communities, forensic nursing or epidemiology. Whichever field she goes into, Fleming envisions working as a team with fellow nurses to ensure her patients are cared for.

“My hope for my future patients is for them to be physically and mentally healthy when they're discharged,” Fleming said. “But more than anything, I want them to leave the hospital knowing they were cared for, and we, as a team, were able to make an impact on them.”

News Stories Posted Friday June 3, 2022



Strengthening the LGBTQ+ Community at Georgia College

[LGBTQ+ Programs](#) : Friday June 3, 2022

The 2019 National Collegiate Health Assessment (NCHA) indicates that LGBTQ+ students are far more likely to consider suicide than their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts.

Sixty-four percent of LGBTQ+ students, compared to 23% of non-LGBTQ+ students, have considered suicide. And, 6.4% of LGBTQ+ students attempted suicide in 2019, compared with 1% of non-LGBTQ+ students.

The importance of having LGBTQ+ programs on campus to support students is evident.

“Research indicates that, if LGBTQ+ youth have at least one accepting adult in their

life they are 40% less likely to attempt suicide,” said Melissa Gerrior, program coordinator of the Women’s Center and LGBTQ+ Programs. “It’s really about having something in place that makes it so that those students know they have somebody in their corner to help them navigate their college experience.”

A more recent statistic by National Public Radio (NPR) dated May 5, 2022, notes that nearly half of LGBTQ+ youth have considered suicide in the past year. However, the trend is rising according to the article.

“Our numbers are similar to the national average,” Gerrior said. “We see this population tends to also struggle with depression, anxiety and other kinds of mental health concerns at a higher rate than non-LGBTQ+ individuals. Often that’s due to the communities they’re in and the ways they are received.”

With Gerrior at the helm, Georgia College offers a range of educational opportunities including self-advocacy, better communication and building resiliency. She hosts movie nights, tie dye events and a social mixer with faculty and staff each semester.

“Finding community is one of the things that’s stressed a lot within the LGBTQ+ community,” Gerrior said. “Atlanta Pride allows for community on a major scale where people come together to celebrate something that oftentimes isn’t so accepted within a broader society.”

GC Pride Alliance President and senior Shiloh Allen whose pronouns are they/them, is double majoring in philosophy and liberal studies with a concentration in gender and sexuality. They are excited to attend Atlanta Pride. The Georgia College Pride Alliance will march in



LGBTQ+ students participate in "Out in the Wilderness."



Melissa Gerrior

the Atlanta parade in October.

“It's not often we get to surround ourselves with the larger LGBTQ+ community,” Allen said. “We know theoretically we are a part of something bigger than ourselves, so the little progressions we can make in our communities add up to a larger effect. Attending Atlanta Pride is a way to experience that empowerment in reality.”

There's also a need for programs like STAR (support, teach, affirm, respect) Ally. It's an education-based program designed to equip students, staff or faculty to support LGBTQ+ students on campus. STAR Ally trained individuals can link LGBTQ+ students to appropriate resources.



Shiloh Allen

“

“Young LGBTQ+ people need adults looking out for them, and all young people need the tools and space to understand themselves. I want to help them do that.”

- Shiloh Allen

”

Since the program began, a few hundred staff and faculty have been trained. They have put in the effort towards creating a space that's welcoming and affirming for individuals within the LGBTQ+ community.

“Students have told me the importance of walking through hallways in certain spaces, and seeing that faculty or staff member's sticker on their door,” Gerrior said. “They take comfort in knowing that they have been through the training and the ways they can just make them feel a little bit more welcome and comfortable in the classroom and on campus.”

As the student facilitator for STAR Ally, Allen has an opportunity to educate the LGBTQ+ community.

“Over the years, the training has been instrumental in creating a safer and more positive environment for LGBTQ+ students, staff and faculty,” Allen said. “Seeing our community grow, and others support the community, brings me so much joy.”

During LGBTQ+ History Month in October, LGBTQ+ Programs will host events to

celebrate the history of the overall LGBTQ+ community and provide opportunities for learning. The annual Come-Out Cookout will take place. It's hosted by the Georgia College Pride Alliance student organization and is open to the Georgia College and Milledgeville community.

Georgia College has been hosting programs and events around National Coming Out Day Oct. 11. This event is held on the anniversary of the march in Washington, D.C. for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

"This event reminds us of the power in being 'out,' since when people know others who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community, they're more likely to support equal rights for LGBTQ+ individuals," Gerrior said. "Representation matters—so it can be important and helpful, especially for LGBTQ+ youth, to see others who are out and living their life and being successful."

Georgia College also hosts Out in the Wilderness—a collaboration with the Outdoor Education Center. The title is a play on words—"Out" being a term used in the LGBTQ+ community in conjunction with the "Coming Out" process. It gives LGBTQ+ students the chance to interact with another department on campus and allows them to spend some time in nature.

“

"Students have told me the importance of walking through hallways in certain spaces, and seeing that faculty or staff member's [STAR Ally] sticker on their door. They take comfort in knowing that they have been through the training and the ways they can just make them feel a little bit more welcome and comfortable in the classroom and on campus."

- Melissa Gerrior

”

Thirty students attended Lavender Graduation in April. It was Georgia College's 11th event to celebrate graduating LGBTQ+ students and allies for their strength and persistence in the face of adversity, as well as their achievements and contributions to the university.

"This year's Lavender Graduation felt very emotional for me," Allen said. "My partner and several of my close friends graduated—all who are a part of my chosen family. It was wonderful to celebrate them and their achievements."



Lavender Graduation spring 2022

After students graduate, Gerrior wants them to stay connected to Georgia College. One way is by serving on the LGBTQ+ Alumni Council. In doing so, alumni can help students envision what they can accomplish after they graduate.

“The ability of students to see alumni who are successful after leaving here is really important,” she said. “I hope they’re in a place now where they feel empowered.”

Allen’s time spent with LGBTQ+ Programs has been the most formative experience they have had at Georgia College.

“It made me realize that working with LGBTQ+ youth is my passion,” they said. “I would like to pursue a career working with them.”

Additionally, it has helped Allen personally by providing them with a space for self-exploration, where they have been able to learn about their self and the community.

When Allen graduates in 2023, they want to pursue a career, working with LGBTQ+ youth groups. They’re passionate about educating and empowering others to make

social change possible. This is the example older LGBTQ+ generations have set for Allen. Now, they want to pay it forward.

“Young LGBTQ+ people need adults looking out for them, and all young people need the tools and space to understand themselves,” Allen said. “I want to help them do that.”



You wrote; we'll heed your input

[Alumni](#) : Friday June 3, 2022

May's eConnection readership survey yielded some interesting results. Here's what respondents prefer to see in their monthly newsletter:

- Most loved stories:
 - o Dr. Whipple
 - o Milo Morris
 - o Georgia College
 - o Where alumni are now
 - o History of dormitories
- Respondents want to learn more about:
 - o Art, athletics, campus organizations, Flannery O'Connor and other historical sites and people, how GC is making a positive impact in Milledgeville, Georgia,

alumni from the 1950s and Central State Hospital.

- Respondents want to see more of the following subjects in eConnection—listed from greatest to least:
 - o Alumni spotlight
 - o Past event recap
 - o Scholarship recipients
 - o Faculty spotlight
 - o New projects or initiatives
 - o Student spotlight
 - o College of Arts and Sciences
 - o Donor stories
 - o John H. Lounsbury College of Education
 - o College of Business
- Most respondents want to receive their newsletter early morning Wednesday.

Georgia College thanks all individuals who completed the survey.

News Stories Posted Tuesday June 7, 2022



Inaugural Leadership Tour takes business students across Georgia

[Business & Accounting](#) : Tuesday June 7, 2022

In a five-day tour, 10 business students representing six majors applied their education in travels across Georgia, visiting businesses, business leaders and Georgia College alumni in May.

“On the first day, I told students I hoped, through their visits and travels, that they would gain a greater appreciation for the state of Georgia, including its economic and physiographic diversity,” said Jehan El-Jourbagy, assistant professor of business law and engineer of the tour. “Milledgeville to Monticello to Atlanta and beyond, I wanted to show them the love, time and energy citizens put into their communities.”

“

Milledgeville to Monticello to Atlanta and beyond, I wanted to show them the love, time and energy citizens put into their communities.

“From small family businesses to multinational manufacturing, I wanted to give students a behind-the-scenes look at the economic engines of our state.”

El-Jourbagy arranged the tour with J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology (COBT) Outreach Coordinator Kari Brown, and support from GC Journeys and COBT Dean Micheal Stratton. The pair led students to places like the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce, the Georgia Bioscience Training Center at Stanton Springs, Chick-fil-A Support Center and Amicalola Falls State Park.

From day one, their trip was packed with tours of manufacturing facilities, small businesses, networking events and alumni meetups. At Amicalola Falls State Park in Dawsonville, students hiked five miles to their off-the-grid lodging.

“Students got to see leaders in action and listen to their words of wisdom,” El-Jourbagy said. “They got to meet professionals over meals and walk factory floors with corporate leaders. They practiced their own leadership skills through building connections, entering professional conversations, public speaking and expressing gratitude.”

Colette McCarty, '22, is a graduate student of accounting and attended the tour. She's interested in public accounting and will start an internship with certified public accounting firm, Aprio, in June.

During the tour, she shared meals with certified public accountants (CPAs), tax commissioners and bankers. Toward the end of the trip, she got to meet Cal Brantley, partner of Nichols, Cauley & Associates, LLC, an accounting firm.

“I don't think I've had an experience like this,” McCarty said. “It was very transformational, and I can't compare it to anything else I've done. Establishing relationships with people is a really beautiful thing, and it's great to have connections like that.”

Networking is important for all careers, according to Forbes. The global media company said



Cal Brantley (center) answers questions of those on the leadership tour.

networking opens channels for idea exchange, creates opportunities and develops self-confidence.

That's true for Matthew Fosberry, '22, a management graduate who attended the tour.

While touring the YKK Corporation of America (YCA) plant in Macon, former chairman and chief executive officer (CEO), Alex Gregory, took a seat beside Fosberry.

"When you're in a classroom, you don't see people like Gregory as people, you see them as legendary," Fosberry said. "You realize they were people the whole time, and that was very disarming. It brought down the barriers of speaking to people like that and showed me how much social skills were involved in their success."

The tour went so far as to alter students' perceptions of their professional future.

"There's a lot of growth in Atlanta, but even in small towns like Monticello, there's still business growth," McCarty said. "The tour opened my eyes to different industries out there and definitely exceeded my expectations."

Due to the trip's success, COB will continue to offer this leadership tour experience to students.

"The students are some of the most impressive and kind people I've ever met, and together they were a fantastic unit," El-Jourbagy said. "They made Georgia College proud as we traveled across the state. We would definitely like to provide this experience for students every year."



Georgia College recognizes new advancement VP and executive director of the GCSU Foundation

University Advancement : Tuesday June 7, 2022

Georgia College welcomes Dr. Shelley Strickland, who has been named vice president of University Advancement and executive director of the GCSU Foundation. She will begin her duties July 1, 2022.

"I was attracted to this position because of the opportunity to work for President Cathy Cox," she said. "Also, as I looked at both facets of the mission—it's a public institution, but it's also a dedicated liberal arts university—that unique combination really appealed to me."

Strickland has a wealth of experience working in philanthropy, donor stewardship, alumni engagement, community interactions and board of trustee relations. She also has significant experience in building and managing effective teams, as well as planning for ambitious campaigns.

Until June 3, she served as the vice president for Philanthropy at the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation in Michigan for nearly eight years. Strickland has held concurrent appointments at the University of Michigan: teaching an undergraduate philanthropy course and designing a concentration in fundraising and philanthropy for a master's degree program. She also trained development and alumni staff at

Emory University and served as director of Foundation Relations at Kennesaw State University.

Strickland began her career as the annual giving director for Western Michigan University (WMU), following years in marketing and communications.

She earned her undergraduate degree in English from WMU and her master's degree in English from the University of Virginia. In 2013, she was awarded a Ph.D. in Higher Education from the University of Michigan.



Dr. Shelley Strickland

Strickland never intended to get into fundraising as a career. Instead, it chose her.

"I've spent my career trying to encourage other people to be more intentional from the start," Strickland said. "A dean at the medical school where I had been in marketing and communication said to me, 'You should add fundraising to your portfolio because you get people excited about the institutional mission.'"

At the time, she was doing volunteer fundraising work for other organizations.



Dr. Shelley Strickland and her husband, Tim, and son, Mitchell, enjoy a game of golf.

"I didn't realize that development was this viable profession in its own right," Strickland said. "He set me on the path of looking into it and to understand it better. I did informational interviews. A WMU development leader I interviewed asked me to come work for him. That changed my career from that point on."

The key to successful fundraising for Strickland is to treat people the way you want to be treated—like you would treat your friends and family.

"People say that fundraising is about relationships, but then don't always apply the same principles they use in other relationships," she said. "That means you don't forget about donors. You keep them informed and maintain that relationship throughout. It's really about giving people an opportunity to be informed and engaged so they can be part of something that's bigger than themselves and make a meaningful difference."

“

"I actually get excited about waking up and being part of advancement work because I love it. It's the opportunity to interact with amazing people who really

want to help others to make a difference, whether it's students who are furthering their studies, faculty work or construction of a building. People want to do something outside of themselves and even anonymously. I find that incredibly inspiring."

- Dr. Shelley Strickland

”

Strickland says alumni engagement starts the moment a student sets foot on campus and continues long after they've graduated.

"The needs of alumni and the ways they engage with the university will change over time," she said. "So, it's really about a breadth of opportunities for people to engage in different ways over the course of their lifetime."

Outside of work, Strickland enjoys cooking, golfing and spending time with family and friends.

An avid reader, Strickland reads a lot of work-related books on philanthropy and leadership, but balances that with fun novels, such as those written by the late Carolyn Gold Heilbrun under her pen name Amanda Cross. She was a literary critic Strickland studied as an undergraduate.

"I just finished the entire collection," Strickland said. "One of the titles is 'Death in a Tenured Position.' These murder mysteries are set on a campus, and they're clearly done by someone who's an insider. They're fun and light, but at the same time thought provoking."

Soon, Strickland will move from Michigan back to Georgia, where she's excited to work with President Cox and help Georgia College embark on this next chapter of its path to preeminence.

"Georgia College & State University will benefit greatly from Dr. Strickland's broad experience at both public and private universities, as well as from the expertise she gained working in philanthropy beyond higher education," said Georgia College President Cathy Cox. "She joins us at an exciting time and will have the opportunity to enhance our capable team in fundraising, alumni relations and donor engagement by filling a number of vacancies in the advancement office and putting her own touch on its strategic direction. I look forward to working with her as we lay the foundation for ambitious philanthropic goals and aspirations."

And that's just the kind of challenge that excites Strickland.

"I actually get excited about waking up and being part of advancement work because I love it," Strickland said. "It's the opportunity to interact with amazing

people who really want to help others to make a difference, whether it's students who are furthering their studies, faculty work or construction of a building. People want to do something outside of themselves and even anonymously. I find that incredibly inspiring."



Mass Comm students learn about media and life in Denmark

[Communication, Department of](#) : Tuesday June 7, 2022

It took a study abroad program to Denmark to renew Michael Marcinko's faith in journalism.

A senior mass communications major and music minor, Marcinko was one of 14 Georgia College students who traveled to Denmark in May. They met various government personalities and engaged with Danish journalists. This enabled them to compare Denmark's public broadcasting network and Danish methods of persuasion to media content in the U.S.

"It renewed a bit of my faith in journalism, which has been almost completely eroded in the United States," Marcinko said. "Visiting different state-funded news organizations, as well as independently run organizations, seeing their differences and strengths, and noticing how serious they hold the truth in their reporting gave me a renewed sense of hope in journalism as a career and as a watchdog for government and private organizations."

The study opportunity was the department of communication's first abroad program since 2012, and its first to Denmark—considered to be one of the happiest places in the world.



The Prime Minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen, is pictured in the front left corner.

Most people in the group started out as strangers but quickly became friends.

“My overall impression of Denmark is that it’s a beautiful, quaint, clean and easy-going country with some of the happiest people I have ever seen,” said senior Rob Trotter, a mass communications major with a minor in music.

“I would highly encourage others to visit Denmark after the experiences that I’ve had,” he said. “It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime trip that I’m so grateful and lucky to have been a part of.”

“

I would highly encourage others to visit Denmark after the experiences that I’ve had. It was truly a once-in-a-lifetime trip that I’m so grateful and lucky to have been a part of.

- Rob Trotter

”

The two-week program was led by Denmark native and Assistant Professor of strategic communication Dr. Mikkel Christensen and Dr. Janet Hoffman, professor of rhetoric. This was homecoming for Christensen, who worked as a reporter for the Danish Broadcasting Corporation in Copenhagen.

The group followed a challenging and fast-paced agenda—touring Christiansborg Palace, where the Danish parliament resides; walking Copenhagen with a boat ride on the Nyhavn Canal; meeting the editor of the Danish Broadcasting Corp.; talking with a musician and AIDS activist; visiting the Berlingske newspaper and National Museum of Denmark; and getting a photo with Mette Frederiksen, the prime minister of Denmark. They learned about 'spin' on news, what it's like to work with reporters, politics and relations between the U.S. and Denmark.



Georgia College mass comm students at the Danish Broadcasting Corp. in Copenhagen.

The group also toured the TV2 News station; a Danish minority newspaper in Flensburg, Germany; the Børneavisen, a newspaper for children; a Danish radio station; and the Danish School of Media and Journalism.

Students were expected to collaborate with each other to document their experiences through texts and photos. These will later be published online.

"Often it was hard to remember what all I did each day," Marcinko said, "because we did so much! It was hard work, exhausting and required a lot of walking, but well worth it."

"Having visited Denmark," he said, "I've been given a positive outlook on the country, on their politics, on their journalism, on their culture, on almost every aspect of life there. I'd love to visit again and plan on doing so in the future and I would encourage others to visit, if they can."



Georgia College students and Martin Justesen, Denmark's prime minister's chief of staff pictured (front-left) after he spoke about politics, media relations and the relationship between the U.S. and Denmark.

Junior Kaitlyn Holtz is a mass communication major with a pathway in strategic communications and a concentration in advertising. This opportunity was the highlight of her year, she said, allowing her to connect class lessons with

interactions with journalists and politicians. Holtz's most prized moment was meeting Denmark's prime minister and learning new political perspectives. She also enjoyed talking with Brigitte Borup, foreign editor for Denmark's biggest newspaper.

"It was really eye opening being able to hear her speak freely about American politics. But most importantly, she wanted to hear what we thought. Seeing a woman in a power position like that especially in such a tough industry was truly inspiring," Holtz said.

"Being able to not just do the normal tourist things but being able to actually meet people working in the industry we are all striving to get into was priceless," she said. "Also, the first-hand personal experiences and the hands-on learning we were able to do with professionals in the industry is something I will never forget."

Along the way, the group sampled traditional Danish food like Danish meatballs on rye and pickled herring with curry sauce. They spent time at Christensen's family beach house and two nights at Løgumkloster Folk High School—a type of summer camp where young adults explore relaxing topics like mindfulness, board and card games and even how to maintain chicken coops.

Marcinko especially liked the folk high school, because he's always had a fear of "falling behind in life." It helped him realize life is not all about finding a career. He'd like to return to Denmark someday and attend a folk camp.

"It made me realize that life isn't a sprint, and it doesn't have to be a marathon," he said. "I could go and learn things that interest me. I could do things for my own happiness, rather than my own success, and I could be in a community with people that share my same thoughts."



Prior to going abroad, the students weren't sure how Danes would accept Americans. But they quickly discovered that Nordic culture is friendly, laidback and unsuspicious. So much so, in fact, Trotter was surprised to see parents leaving babies unattended in strollers on the sidewalk, while they watched from inside restaurants.

"We were greeted by pleasant culture shocks," Trotter said. "Danes are very trusting of one another. This gave me hope in humanity and reassurance that not everyone has ill intentions."

The study abroad opportunity was “an eyeopener,” giving Trotter a firsthand view of the possible careers he can pursue in communications—something he is “extremely grateful for.”

Christensen was delighted to share his home country with the group. As a former reporter for a consumer magazine, plus radio news and the Danish Broadcasting Corp., Christensen—in devising the program—felt his connections and experiences would offer a perspective his students were unlikely to encounter otherwise.

“

I saw growth in them. They all showed tremendous curiosity throughout the program, and that paid off as they learned so much.

- Dr. Mikkel Christensen

”

News Stories Posted Wednesday June 8, 2022



Pressing need for nurses spurs 3rd nursing cohort at Georgia College

[Nursing, School of](#) : Wednesday June 8, 2022

Through the receipt of additional state funding, Georgia College's School of Nursing (SON) has added a third cohort to their Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree.

There are only 1,329 nurses per 100,000 residents in Georgia, according to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce (GBHCW) Nursing Workforce Data dashboard.

"It is estimated that an additional 175,900 registered nurses (RNs) will exit the workforce each year for personal reasons or through retirement, and the field is expected to grow by 7%," said Josie Doss, interim director and associate professor of the SON. "Though Georgia has around 100,000 RNs, we still have one of the lowest densities in the nation. We're preparing nurses to fill that need."

The inaugural cohort was admitted this summer and included 40 students. These students will attend classes for four continuous semesters, allowing them to graduate in just 15 months. Traditional nursing students typically do not take courses during the summer and graduate in two years.

Though they are increasing the number of nurses trained at Georgia College, the SON isn't sacrificing quality to meet Georgia healthcare needs.

"We're giving the students the tools they need in their undergraduate years so they're prepared for the workforce," said Morgan Fordham, lecturer of nursing.



Rachel Najjar (center) is a part of the new summer cohort.

"I'm teaching them high-pressure situation skills and stress management techniques to help them after they graduate, because it's not enough to have warm bodies in healthcare," she said. "A good quality nurse is going to save a life."

“

I'm teaching them high-pressure situation skills and stress management techniques to help them after they graduate. A good quality nurse is going to save a life.

- Morgan Fordham

”

Summer classes are Monday through Thursday in the new cohort, with clinicals Mondays and Wednesdays. Students have lecture courses Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Following their summer semester, students in the cohort will have a schedule typical of fall and spring cohorts. The following summer, the students will graduate ahead of their peers because of their rigorous summer semesters.

"Seeing how impactful and important nurses are means a lot, so I am excited to fill those gaps," said junior nursing major Kerry Kidwell. "When it gets challenging or I'm tired, it's nice to have everyone in the cohort that I can relate to."

Nurse burnout is a major factor in the shortage. So, the faculty teaching foundation courses—Fordham; Joyce Norris-Taylor, assistant professor of nursing; and Tormechi Chambliss, lecturer of nursing—are focusing on stress and time management in addition to technical skills.

“I already see how awesome and dedicated our professors are to teaching and helping us learn and understand these concepts, so we’ll be better prepared when we go into the workforce,” said junior nursing major Rebecca Fausett. “Because there is such a shortage, we’re going to be able to step up and help nurses and help patients.”

“I feel called to nursing, I’m excited about it and I’ll make personal connections with patients and everyone I work with,” Fausett said.

Their professors say this cohort has a theme: hardworking and enthusiastic.



Students in the 3rd cohort practice nursing techniques.

“The cohort is fast-paced and one of the hardest things I’ve had to do so far,” said junior nursing major Rachel Najjar. “They care about us learning, not making mistakes in the future and really preparing us for whatever can happen in the nursing world and real life.”

“They’re there for us: emotionally and physically,” she said. “They keep us accountable for everything.”

News Stories Posted Thursday June 9, 2022



Class of 2026: First-year student finds right fit at Georgia College

[College of Arts & Sciences](#) : Thursday June 9, 2022

Mackenzie Taylor Jones

From: LaGrange, Georgia

Major/minor: I plan on pursuing a major in biology in hopes of going into nursing. I am currently undecided on a minor.

Why did you choose Georgia College? I chose Georgia College for multiple reasons. One of those reasons is its location and size. GC is not too big or too small.

What were your biggest achievements in high school? Although I had many academic achievements, some of my largest achievements were through sports. I was a member of LaGrange Academy's back-to-back softball state champion teams and the basketball state champion team.

It was truly an honor to be captain of both these teams my senior year of high school.



Mackenzie Jones

What activities/sports/community service will you pursue in college? I hope to participate in intramural softball or soccer. I also hope to be a part of the Georgia College Baptist College Ministry and other campus ministries.

“

I am so excited to start a new experience at Georgia College. I cannot wait to meet new friends and start pursuing my future career.

- Mackenzie Jones

”

What are you most looking forward to? I am so excited to start a new experience at Georgia College. I cannot wait to meet new friends and start pursuing my future career.

Future plans: I hope to pursue a career in nursing. Although I am undecided in a specialty, I am considering Labor and Delivery or Pediatrics.

News Stories Posted Friday June 10, 2022



Class of 2026: Basketball star aims for her dream job

[Business & Accounting](#) : Friday June 10, 2022

Cameran Francis of Sandersville, Georgia, is extremely goal oriented. She became Brentwood School's all-time scoring leader in basketball with 2,310 career points. She also holds the record for the most three-point shots made in a game and is recognized as a four-time, all-state, all-region selection.

In addition, Francis was valedictorian of her class, served on the Washington County Leadership Board and was a two-time track championship winner.



Cameran Francis at orientation.

“It feels unreal,” she said. “When I was a little girl, I remember walking by the retired basketball jerseys and looking at all their records with amazement. Now that I am one of those people, it’s unbelievable. I don’t think reality has set in yet.”

Francis began playing basketball with the local recreation department at age four. She also participated in Georgia College’s basketball camps from childhood until high school. She has enjoyed the feeling of winning with her best friends, while being surrounded with constant love, support and encouragement from those who are close to her.

When Francis begins her journey at Georgia College, she’ll shift gears to play intramural basketball, focusing more on her studies.

“

“No matter how impossible something may seem or how far a goal seems out of reach, work hard, be determined and have a good attitude. Then, you can accomplish anything.”

- Cameran Francis

”

She also looks forward to making new friends and memories at Georgia College. Francis wants to hone her leadership skills—ones she learned while serving on the Washington County Leadership Board.

“Words are not the only way to be a leader,” Francis said. “People are always watching you. So, your actions are very powerful and a big part of being a good leader.”

On the board, she learned how to work better with others; discovered more about herself and her community; and how she could give back.

Francis made such an impression on her peers that she was voted Miss Brentwood for the 2021-2022 school year.

Now, she’s excited about starting the 2022-2023 school year. She chose to major in accounting, following in the footsteps of her father and grandfather who were both accountants.

“I’ve always loved working with numbers, and math has been my favorite subject in school,” Francis said. “My school provided me with the opportunity to work with a business my senior year, and that experience helped me realize accounting is something I want to pursue.”

She plans to engage in the Georgia College experience by making new friends, playing intramural sports, being independent and getting her accounting degree.

Through basketball and her studies, Francis learned to never give up—a lesson she’ll take with her to college and her career.

“No matter how impossible something may seem or how far a goal seems out of reach, work hard, be determined and have a good attitude,” she said. “Then, you



Cameran Francis as Miss Brentwood.

can accomplish anything.”



Welcome, Bobcats! First orientation in full swing.

[Undergraduate Admissions](#) : Friday June 10, 2022

Two hundred and thirty-nine new Bobcats and their families met for the summer's first orientation June 10.

And it couldn't be a better time. This was the first in-person orientation since the COVID-19 pandemic began. It's good to see students milling about, laughing and enjoying campus.

"Understand and explore what interests you," said President Cathy Cox during her welcome address. "We can help you find and pursue your dreams."

Georgia College ambassadors and admissions staff educated incoming students on campus resources and shared ways to connect with fellow Bobcats.

Shawn Brooks, vice president of student life, invited students to stand and introduce themselves to one another. His request was met with big smiles and enthusiasm as the room erupted in socialization.

Following their initiation into Georgia College, students set out with orientation leaders. These upperclassmen are trained to introduce new students to campus. In

one group, orientation leader and senior accounting major, Caroline Leonard, interviewed students and encouraged them to share their interests. From chemistry majors to undecided, she helped students out of their shell.

Students wore their passions on their lapels, indicating what aspects of campus life interested them and where they'd be residing their first year.

Cox captured the spirit of orientation in her closing remarks to students.

"We can help you change the world," Cox said.



Caroline Leonard (center) brought students together.

News Stories Posted Wednesday June 15, 2022



Pride Month: Georgia College S.T.A.R. Allies pilot students through tough times

[LGBTQ+ Programs](#) : Wednesday June 15, 2022

On a dark night, it's the brightest stars that guide.

This is true of Georgia College's [S.T.A.R. Allies](#)—a campus-wide system of mentors lighting the way for LGBTQ+ students who can face harassment and bullying in addition to the challenges of everyday college life.

Known by the S.T.A.R. Ally sticker on their doors, these confidantes form a constellation of supporters to help navigate students through dark moments.

"It means a lot to our LGBTQ+ students to be able to walk around campus or visit a professor's office hours and see there are individuals visibly willing to support them as an LGBTQ+ person—since that's not something that can always be counted on," said Melissa Gerrior, coordinator for LGBTQ+ Programs at the Women's Center.

“

It lets them know that they're not alone. There are people who care about their well-being.

- Melissa Gerrior

”



The S.T.A.R. Ally sticker.

Safe Space programs have been on college campuses since the 1990s. They started as a way to educate others on basic LGBTQ+ terminology and ways universities could be more inclusive. In 2019, Georgia College changed its Safe Place program to S.T.A.R. Ally. The acronym for S.T.A.R. more aptly reflects the mission: “Support. Teach. Affirm. Respect.”

S.T.A.R. Ally stickers signal to students there’s a trained and empathetic ear waiting inside. “Someone they can talk to without concern that they’re going to be shunned or met with some other negative response to their identity,” Gerrior said.

Gerrior has trained about 200 faculty, staff and student leaders in the past four years. She points to challenges the LGBTQ+ population often faces on campus and in the community. These include discrimination, healthcare problems and mental health concerns.

During training, participants learn about coming-out, how to listen to and support students and what resources are available to help. A peer facilitator often joins Gerrior to provide faculty with a student perspective.



Shiloh Allen

Shiloh Allen of Rossville, Georgia, is a senior double majoring in philosophy and liberal studies, with a concentration in gender and sexuality, and a minor in women’s studies. Allen liked the small-school atmosphere at Georgia College. When touring the Women’s Center, they knew this was the right place for them.

Allen immediately got involved with Pride Alliance on campus and helped raise funds for the LGBTQ+ Programs. During this time, they learned about the S.T.A.R. Ally program.

Allen knows the value of having someone to talk to in

a time of need. Last semester, they were burned out and thinking of dropping out of all their classes. It wasn't due to a gender or identity issue, but they were struggling just the same.

A faculty member recognized Allen was in trouble and reached out. It felt good knowing someone was there to support them. Without that faculty member, Allen said they would've failed all their classes. Instead, Allen changed majors, took more time for themselves and got to a place where they could be successful in school again.

Now, Allen is a student co-facilitator for the S.T.A.R. Ally program. It's one of their favorite tasks on campus.

“

The fact we have programs like this shows there are people at Georgia College who are committed to making LGBTQ+ people feel secure and appreciated on our campus

- Shiloh Allen

”

“I believe S.T.A.R. Ally has been an integral part of making our campus a safer place for LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff,” Allen said. “It's critical that college campuses have efforts to teach their community about LGBTQ+ people and allyship, so those who are in the community can feel safe and welcome.”

“The fact we have programs like this shows there are people at Georgia College who are committed to making LGBTQ+ people feel secure and appreciated on our campus,” they said.

Although Allen's experience with a mentor was not gender related, many of their friends in the LGBTQ+ community can experience discrimination. This puts them at risk for depression and possible suicide attempts. S.T.A.R. Ally volunteers know how to identify students in crisis and refer them to services.

Programs like S.T.A.R. Ally reduce anxiety, Gerrior said. Just having someone to listen—without fear of judgment—makes students feel safe, giving them a sense of belonging on campus.



Dr. Rob Sumowski's a S.T.A.R. Ally with a big heart.

Dr. Rob Sumowski has been an associate professor of special education at Georgia College for 12 years. He got involved in Safe Space in 2017 after a rise in hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ population. When the program changed to S.T.A.R. Ally, he stayed on.

Sumowski's a happy, approachable mentor. His smile and exuberance are contagious.

"No matter who you are, where you're from or what you believe—there is a place for you here," Sumowski said. "So, you be you and I'll be me, and no matter what that looks like for each of us, that's perfectly OK. It's cool."

“

No one should have to be anybody other than themselves.

- Dr. Rob Sumowski

”

Finding a place in the world is hard for everyone, Sumowski said. But, add the apprehension and challenges of college life to the ignorance of others and being bullied for who you are, and life can become unbearable.

He likens it to a person jumping into the deep end of a pool and having a moment of panic.

The first reaction is to reach out to the side of the pool for safety.

S.T.A.R. Allies are that solid ground for the LGBTQ+ community.

“S.T.A.R. Ally provides a non-judgmental ear for folks wrestling with who they are, where they belong or questioning their value to the world,” Sumowski said. “We listen. Sometimes we guide students to other resources or simply validate that who they are is already good enough.”

“No one should have to be anybody other than themselves,” he said.

Dr. Kasey Karen, associate professor of biology, is another S.T.A.R. Ally. She took additional training when Safe Space became S.T.A.R. Ally to stay up to date on her knowledge. She often incorporates diversity issues into her courses. Her students know Karen’s comfortable discussing any topic.

“In the last few years, especially, I’ve been seeing more students having they/them pronouns and being more comfortable bringing up topics related to LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning or Queer, Intersex, Asexual+) issues,” Karen said. “At the same time, we’re seeing legislative efforts to limit transgender rights across the country.”

“It is more important now than when I first started to be knowledgeable on the subject,” she said, “to relate to our students more and be more comfortable talking about it and in bringing these topics into the classroom.”

It’s this feeling that someone’s ‘got your back’ that helps LGBTQ+ students out of uncertainty and isolation and into a place of authenticity.

Alumna Katy McKellar, ’22, of Atlanta got her degree at Georgia College in special education. She took a diversity course on Zoom during COVID-19. She appreciated the efforts of professors to become more understanding and aware of their students’ identities.

It’s important for programs like S.T.A.R. Ally to exist, McKellar said. Having a support system for LGBTQ+ students shows Georgia College is committed to making all students feel safe and welcome.

She knocked on a professor’s door when she saw the S.T.A.R. Ally sticker. He helped build her confidence and believe in her ability for success. She no longer felt she had to hide her identity.

After that, she visited her S.T.A.R. Ally regularly.

“I was pleasantly surprised he was not only very accepting of me as a queer student in the education program,” McKellar said, “but that he also supported me and wanted to engage in a discussion with me about how he could help me be successful.”

“

Finding a friendly shoulder and listening ear is very comforting when I’m upset. If that person had not been there the day I sought help, it would’ve made me feel a lot more isolated, like my feelings were not valid.

- Katy McKellar



Katy McKellar

”

News Stories Posted Friday June 17, 2022



Class of 2026: Marketing major moves forward despite unimaginable obstacles

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Friday June 17, 2022

Most new students worry about transitioning into college, making friends and doing well in their classes. Jared Jordan of Macon is nervous about those things too. But he has additional things on his mind.

Jordan's been in a wheelchair since a pool injury at age 15.

Last Sunday was the three-year anniversary of his accident. Yet, Jordan is upbeat and positive. He's worked hard to be where he is today.

His focus is on the future.

“

I just try to surround myself with things that I enjoy—whether it be people, watching the Braves every day or playing with the dog. All the time, I try to do

something that I enjoy and not just dwell in my thoughts.

- Jared Jordan

”

“I just try to surround myself with things that I enjoy—whether it be people, watching the Braves every day or playing with the dog,” said Jordan, who will join Georgia College’s class of 2026 in the fall.

“All the time,” he said, “I try to do something that I enjoy and not just dwell in my thoughts.”

Before his sophomore year at Mount de Sales Academy in Macon, Jordan was enjoying a summer day at a friend’s house. He was getting out of a pool. To avoid getting tagged, he turned and dived back in.

It was the shallow end, and he hit his head.

His life hasn’t been the same since.

“I was like shocked, and I couldn’t move my arms or my legs or anything,” Jordan said. “I was face down, and I was just struggling because I couldn’t breathe and, close to a minute later, somebody noticed I couldn’t turn over and pulled me out.”

Jordan’s mother, Jennifer, was called. A nurse, she rushed to her son’s side. Even then, she said Jordan was calm. He told her not to cry.

At first, Jordan thought his injuries would be taken care of, and he’d resume a normal life. But—after spinal surgery for neck fractures, being in ICU 10 days and 4 ½ months rehabilitating—he began to realize he might not walk or play football again.

Today, Jordan has only a little sensation in one leg. He can’t use the fingers on his right hand but has some muscle control in his left arm. He beat the odds, however, and can do things now his surgeons never thought possible.

The family renovated their house



Images from the FaceBook page "Prayers for Jared" from his high school days at Mount de Sales in Macon.

to accommodate Jordan's disabilities. Mount de Sales gave him a full scholarship and assigned peers to help him through his first semester back. Jordan was determined to do things on his own and quickly grew out of the need for assistance.

It wasn't easy. Jordan was right-handed and had to learn to do even simple tasks, like brushing his teeth, with his left. But despite the difficulties, it didn't take long for him to regain optimism in life.

"At first, my focus was therapy and learning how to do things I could no longer do," Jordan said. "Everything I can do for myself and not have someone else do for me—that's a win."



Jared Jordan plans to major in marketing and hopes to work for the Atlanta Braves someday.

At school, he adapts by taking notes on an iPad and dictating longer assignments. He plans to continue figuring things out for himself at Georgia College.

“

My biggest achievement has been overcoming the challenges I've faced...

- Jordan

”

“My biggest achievement has been overcoming the challenges I’ve faced living with a disability,” he said, “and learning how to creatively do everyday activities, given my circumstances. It’s been a process for several years, and I still learn and practice new things frequently.”

It’s this determined doggedness and calm demeanor that’s carried Jordan through to orientation as a Bobcat.

“I am most looking forward to proving to myself I can do things that at one point I never could have imagined were possible,” he said.

His mother likes Georgia College, because of its great support system and Student Disability Resource Center. Jordan likes Georgia College for its size and because it’s close to home.

“

I chose Georgia College, because it was a great fit for me. I love the feel of a tight, small community where everyone knows each other. It was an easy choice.

- Jared Jordan

”

“I believe I have a very outgoing personality. I love to joke and have a good time but,” he said, “I’m also very focused on making the best out of this opportunity. I don’t want to take it for granted.”

Jordan plans to major in marketing. He enjoys the psychological component of advertising and thinks he has a natural gift for persuasiveness. He thinks he’ll enjoy learning how to appeal to consumers.

In addition, Jordan hopes to get involved with Georgia College’s baseball team in a marketing or social media role. He’d like to help out in any way needed, since the experience would help him reach his future goal.

“My dream job is to work with the Atlanta Braves in marketing,” he said. “I’ve always been a huge fan and supporter of the Braves, and it’d be a dream come true to work for them in some capacity.”

College will be a test to see if he can live on his own, but Jordan thinks he’s ready.

To others who have obstacles to overcome in their lives, he said, “Just don’t let it emotionally affect you. Try to stay level-headed. That’s what I’ve done through this whole experience.”



Class of 2026: Biology major reflects on father's advice for success in college

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Friday June 17, 2022

Reese Monroe attended Georgia College's first in-person orientation in June 2022.

With Father's Day just a week away, both Reese and his father, Jeffery Monroe, talked about the next steps in Reese's educational journey.

Where are you from?

Macon, Georgia

What high school did you attend?

The Academy for Classical Education.

What is the most important thing you learned in high school?

To do my best work, not half do it.

Major/minor:

Biology; I plan to do pre-Med.

Why did you choose Georgia College?

I always saw Georgia College while driving through Milledgeville, so I thought 'why

not here?’

Jeffery Monroe: I grew up in Hancock County, and so Milledgeville and Georgia College were a part of me growing up. I was pleased that he chose Georgia College. He's not too far from both his grandmothers. I think he chose well.

What activities/sports/community service will you pursue in college?

I'm just excited for the whole college experience.

How do you feel about your son starting that college experience?

Jeffery Monroe: It is going to be interesting because he's a little bit of an introvert. I'm thinking that a college experience may draw him a little bit more out of his shell, expose him to a lot, which a liberal arts experience would do for him. So, we're looking forward to it.



Reese Monroe

“

I think the great thing about the college experience, especially at colleges like Georgia College, is the great number of people that you meet from parts of the state that you've not visited before and getting to know those people and establishing friendships that stretch across the state and stretch across the nation, that's the great thing about coming to college.

- Jeffery Monroe

”

What is the best piece of advice you've been given, and who shared it with you?

It was probably my dad; he said just try your best at everything you do.

Is there any advice that you were given, or that you are reflecting on today, as you're watching your son make this step:

Jeffery Monroe: It's not about any one particular thing—any magic bullet. It's about habits. If you can establish habits of reading, preparing, keeping yourself situated, staying up on your work, you'll be successful.



New Bobcats break the ice at orientation

[Undergraduate Admissions](#) : Friday June 17, 2022



Alternate Text

A good ice breaker can bring together strangers, demolish shyness and tear down barriers. They're great conversation starters.

And they're also just plain fun.

At Georgia College's second orientation of the summer—hundreds of new students showed the usual hesitation to participate in ice breakers. Then, within seconds, sessions were

abuzz with chitchat, laughter, high fives, handshakes and hugs.

When surveyed, incoming students regularly rate the ice breakers as their favorite orientation activity, noted Brittany Bryan, assistant director for New Student Programs and the GC Welcome Center.

It's not hard to figure out why.



Alternate Text

Students played familiar games, like Rock, Paper, Scissors. Each winner would raise their hand and find another winner, then play again, until only six winners were left. It got down to two competitors in each session with a final chance to win great swag.

Another ice-breaking game divided students into four groups. They were asked questions about their favorite ice cream flavor, vacation spots and seasons. Students moved to join like-minded peers.

Simple activities like these reduce tension and spur conversation. Students found others who lived in their hometowns, planned to major in the same field or liked the same sports and clubs.



Alternate Text

Ice breakers helped forge new friendships, and groundwork was laid for students to recognize familiar faces when they return to campus in August for Week of Welcome 2022.



Alternate Text

News Stories Posted Thursday June 23, 2022



Class of 2026: Music motivates incoming freshman

[Music, Department of](#) : Thursday June 23, 2022

Yalonda Wright of Milledgeville, Georgia lives for musical moments. The moments when musicians are in a group setting, playing well and harmonizing.

She thought performing was her future, but volunteering and leadership opportunities have spotlighted a new path to the young star.

“

Having the chance to be that leader for somebody in music: helping them develop, seeing them grow and watching them amazed at the final product and themselves for doing it led me to this

- Yalonda Wright

”

“Having the chance to be that leader for somebody in music: helping them develop, seeing them grow and watching them amazed at the final product and themselves for doing it led me to this,” Wright said.

Entering as a music education major, Wright has already made an impact with her

instructors.

“She has a beautiful, clear sound, great technical control and a real ability to shape a beautiful melody,” said Dr. Andrew Allen, assistant professor of music. “Yalonda is very intelligent and an incredible young person of high character who will leave an extremely positive impact across campus in her time here.”

Trombone is her instrument of choice, but now that’s she entered the collegiate level of music, Wright wants to broaden her musical horizons. She hopes to learn new instruments, like piano, trumpet, flute or saxophone.

She’ll also take advantage of the philanthropic and leadership opportunities Georgia College has to offer.



Yalonda will explore new interests in college.

“No matter what I’ll be doing, I’ll be helping people,” Wright said.

Though COVID-19 threw a wrench in her plans for high school competitions, Wright was still able to make district and all-state honor band. She was brass captain and a part of clubs like Beta Club and the National Honor Society.

While brass captain in marching band, Wright led her section. She made sure they had music, directed their sound and helped them correct their marching.

When she wasn’t leaving a mark on her band peers, Wright practiced helping others. She read stories to children, assisted with food and coat drives and helped prepare celebrations, including Teacher Appreciation Week.

Wright chose Georgia College for its closeness to home, interdisciplinary opportunities and its well-rounded music department. Since middle school, she’s had the opportunity to impress music faculty.

“Everyone here is willing to help me with whatever I need,” Wright said. “They want me to thrive, and they were excited when they found out I was coming here.”

But really, she added, she just wants to be an excellent music educator for her future students.

“After college, I want to have grown as a person,” Wright said. “A lot can happen

from here to four years from now, and I would like to have grown into the best version of myself."



Class of 2026: Future physician assistant is ready to jump into her major and the college experience

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Thursday June 23, 2022

Sarah West

- **Where are you from?** Dalton, Georgia
- **Why did you want to major in chemistry?** I love any kind of puzzle. Chemistry is like a puzzle, and I love putting together the pieces. As the formulas and problems are put together, each piece acts like puzzle pieces, creating something bigger, like the reaction or the solution to an equation. Sometimes things fall into place, but sometimes the pieces don't quite fit together, and I like that challenge; it keeps me on my toes.



Sarah West

- **What are your plans once you graduate from GC?** I'm currently hoping to attend physician assistant (PA) school. Many PA programs require prior healthcare experience with hands-on patient care, so I will also look for opportunities to gain that experience.
- **Why would you like to pursue this profession?** I want to pursue this profession because my top priority in the career I choose for myself is knowing that I am making a good difference in other people's lives. I hope they become healthier and happier in mind and body after my care. I love and want to help people and have a close team to work with to provide care. However, I also want a work-life balance, and I have heard that PAs have a much better balance than most other healthcare careers.
- **What student organizations would you like to join at GC?** Although I'm not sure which I would like to join at the current moment, as that's what I'm hoping to find out at orientation, I do know I'm looking specifically for a meditative group, a religious group and a leadership group.

- **How do you think they'll change you as a person?** I would join the meditative group to help keep myself grounded and mentally well, a religious group would help keep me connected to my faith. A leadership group would give me experience, close friends, mentors and confidence.
- **What are you most looking forward to at GC?** I'm ready to meet new people. I'm so excited to dive into the college experience, learn more and grow as an independent human being. To adventure and beyond!

News Stories Posted Friday June 24, 2022



Class of 2026: Chemistry major wants to give hope as a doctor

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Friday June 24, 2022



Alternate Text

Carlos Lopez Blackwell of Columbus wants to be the kind of doctor who finds a way to help each and every patient.

His caring nature already hints at an impeccable, future bedside manner.

“

I don't want to live in a world where someone is told, 'We can't do anything for you.' If I can find a way to change that, even for one person, that would mean the world to me.

- Carlos Lopez Blackwell

”

Lopez is entering the university's 2026 class as a chemistry major with a premed path. He's looking for academic toughness, and his high school friends told him Georgia College is the place to be.

“I like the smaller nature of this school. It's more like family, a family environment,” Lopez said. “I liked how focused it is. Georgia College has always had a good reputation. I like the academic focus this school instills in their students.”

Lopez knows a Physician Assistant (PA) who works with his mother, Regina, a surgical technician. The PA is an alumnus of Georgia College's premed program and told Lopez he'll love it here.

“

I like the smaller nature of this school. It's more like family, a family environment. I liked how focused it is. Georgia College has always had a good reputation. I like the academic focus this school instills in their students.

- Lopez

”

His mother also likes Georgia College. She appreciates it's a place where her son can receive individualized attention and get to know professors one-on-one. Their family visited the university for a science competition when Lopez was in 7th grade. A campus tour earlier this summer reinforced this was the right choice.

“We've heard nothing but great things about this school,” Regina said. “Just talking to people—this is the place for us.”

In high school, Lopez played varsity soccer and was involved in multiple activities, like Model UN, the debate team, investment clubs and national honors societies.

At Georgia College, he'll play club soccer and be part of the Latino Student Association. He wants to transition into college life before joining anything else, but he's



Carlos Lopez Blackwell is looking forward to

also interested in investment and financial clubs.

a challenging curriculum.

"I like to be in group settings, do activities and meet people," Lopez said. "I'm most looking forward to the rigor of the classes, meeting new people and making friends at Georgia College."

Lopez already seems at home, sporting a big smile and a Georgia College T-shirt at orientation.

He says he's ready.

"What I bring to Georgia College, I think, is a sense of determination in my academic studies," Lopez said. "I hope to bring a sense of excellence in all I do."

News Stories Posted Monday June 27, 2022



#BobcatBound students share their spirit

[Undergraduate Admissions](#) : Monday June 27, 2022

That's a wrap on new student orientation for June!

Around 750 incoming students came through the doors of the Arts and Sciences Auditorium to learn about the people, places and resources that will support their collegiate journey.

Getting their Bobcat cards gave students the opportunity to picture themselves at college. But that wasn't the only opportunity these students had to shine on camera.

Many took advantage of the Bobcat Booth for photos, and here are some of the results.

News Stories Posted Thursday June 30, 2022



Georgia College generates \$285 million impact on local economy

[President, Office of the](#) : Thursday June 30, 2022

The impact on the regional economy by Georgia College reached more than \$285 million in 2021—an increase of \$2.7 million from the previous fiscal year.

For each job created on campus, two off-campus jobs exist due to university-related spending.

“

With more than 1,100 people working on our campus every day, and thousands of our students spending money in the local area, Georgia College clearly has a significant impact on our local economy. Our annual payroll alone was nearly \$65 million this year. In addition, we bring substantial intellectual capital to our region, and I hope our greater community recognizes the tremendous benefit of having a state university in its midst.

- President Cathy Cox

Numbers are from an annual study commissioned by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG). They show the economic benefits Georgia College imparts on both the private and public sectors which extend to Baldwin, Bibb, Hancock, Jones, Putnam, Wilkinson and Washington Counties.



Businesses in Milledgeville benefit from student and faculty spending.

In 2021, Georgia College created 1,013 jobs on campus for community members and supported another 1,778 jobs off campus through products and services its employees and students purchased.

Overall, USG schools had a \$19.3 billion impact on the state's economy. That's a 3.8% increase since 2020. This included \$13.1 billion in initial spending by students and USG's 26 public

colleges and universities on personnel and operating expenses. More than 152,620 full and part time jobs were generated by USG schools.

The report highlights the vital contribution colleges and universities make toward a healthy state economy. They promote jobs, higher incomes and greater production of goods and services, according to the study conducted by the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business.

Benefits for each institution were divided into several categories of related expenditures for colleges and universities. Those include spending by institutions for salaries and fringe benefits, operating supplies and expenses and other budgeted expenditures; spending by students who attend the institutions; and spending by institutions for capital projects.

Economic impact was measured by the initial spending of an institution for operations and personnel, as well as student spending. Total economic impact includes the effect of initial spending and secondary or indirect and induced spending that occurs when initial expenditures are re-spent.



The Cherrys' selfless acts benefit many others

[Alumni](#) : Thursday June 30, 2022

Donald “Trey” Cherry, ’10, and Whitney McCullough Cherry, ’10, believe in something bigger than themselves—the power of giving back to their community and Georgia College students.

Years ago, they met in Parkhurst Hall at Georgia College. The couple started dating their freshman year and have been married for 10 years. They worked together at Phone-a-thon, calling Georgia College alumni to generate donations for the university.

Whitney was involved in the campus chapter of the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, where she served as president. She was also a big sister through the GIVE Center and is still in touch with her little sister.

Georgia College played a large role in the couple’s success today. Whitney is an occupational therapist in an acute care hospital serving older adults who are recovering from major illnesses and injuries. Trey is a founding partner at an investment banking advising firm, helping small- and medium-sized business

owners with legacy planning. They live in Richmond, Virginia, closer to extended family, have two-year-old twins and are expecting their third child in October.

“

“We’re really committed to giving back. Georgia College prepared us so well for the real world that when we were financially able to do it, we thought it was our responsibility to steward what we have. And we want the scholarship to bless students who seek to live out their passion and help their communities.”

- Whitney Cherry



Trey Cherry and Whitney McCullough at graduation.

”

“Every class I took as a sociology major at Georgia College helped me learn about the social structures in our world that affect us all on a personal, societal and global level,” Whitney said. “We must ask ourselves, ‘how we can try to make change in our small areas?’”

Her classes helped her understand human behavior and expand her awareness of different cultures, customs and religious belief systems.

“I have to understand all that if I’m helping someone regain independence in their daily life with selfcare and work-related duties,” she said. “I don’t know that I could do my job effectively without it.”

Whitney holds Drs. Robin Harris and Stephanie McClure in high regard. Both taught her to think critically and apply what she learned in class to the real world.

I think critically about the effectiveness of the interventions I provide as an occupational therapist,” Whitney said. “I learned strong foundational research skills, so that I’m always thinking about what I’m doing—if it’s evidence based and the right thing for the individuals I work with.”

Dr. Nicholas Beadles, professor of management had a great impact on both Whitney and Trey. The couple took his business management course together. Her strong work ethic partially stems from Beadles' teachings of professionalism, accountability and doing the right thing.

Beadles was Trey's favorite professor.

"He taught me to be accountable, which helped me later as I got older and experienced the iterations of life," Trey said. "Dr. Beadles provided a good foundation for me."



Whitney, Trey and their twins: Caroline and Noah

"I want them [scholarship recipients] to focus more on being scholars and ambassadors for Georgia College. Hopefully it'll relieve a bit of financial burden on the students, and then show them this is something they could do in the future too."

- Trey Cherry

After graduation, Trey was accepted into a competitive 10-month leadership training program with BB&T in Winston-Salem North Carolina. Out of approximately 10,000 applicants, BB&T selected 50.

"It was cool that most of the employees from the best schools around the southeast were competing along with myself," Trey said. "All the things that Georgia College taught me prepared me to land that opportunity."

"There are a lot of things you've got to do to successfully to get through school. And for me, the size of Georgia College was conducive to learning," Trey said. "You couldn't just blend into the background—you had to be involved."

"In college, you're still trying to figure out who you are," he said. "You reach a point

in life where you're going to be leader and you've got standards.”

Beadles would assign articles to be read for class and would call on his students when the articles were due. If the students couldn't answer his questions, he would light-heartedly “fire” them, excusing them from class that day, just as an employer would expect employees to be prepared for work.

“I thought, ‘okay, this does happen in the real world,’” Trey said. “This lesson taught me to be accountable, which I have to be every day.”

“Dr. Beadles taught me the difference between management and leadership, the first is ‘doing things right’ while the second is ‘doing right things,’” Trey said. “His teachings were based around leadership.”

In addition to serving on various community boards in the past, Trey currently serves on the downtown Richmond YMCA board.

“I like to stay involved,” he said. “Being able, at some local level, to engage with what’s going on in the community is important to me and Whitney.”

The couple offers a scholarship that will be awarded to Bibb County students attending Georgia College. It’s personal and meaningful to them since Trey attended public schools in that county.

“We’re really committed to giving back,” Whitney said. “Georgia College prepared us so well for the real world that when we were financially able to do it, we thought it was our responsibility to steward what we have. And we want the scholarship to bless students who seek to live out their passion and help their communities.”

Although it’s a little earlier than the couple intended, Trey and Whitney feel now’s a good time to step forward. They hope their gift will help ease the financial burden



Whitney and Trey Cherry on their wedding day.

that comes along with pursuing a higher education.

And in doing so, they hope scholarship recipients appreciate alumni giving back and that it might influence them to do the same for someone else.

“I want them to focus more on being scholars and ambassadors for Georgia College,” Trey said. “Hopefully it’ll relieve a bit of financial burden on the students, and then show them this is something they could do in the future too.”