

Front Page News Story Archive

August 2022



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
News Stories Posted Monday August 1, 2022	3
Music resonates in newly-expanded Spirit of Macon mural	3
News Stories Posted Tuesday August 2, 2022	6
Every drop we drink: Environmental science major interns at Macon Water Authority	6
News Stories Posted Wednesday August 3, 2022	12
Class of 2026: Leadership skills acquired in high school build confidence for college	12
Test Story to Preview Attribution	14
News Stories Posted Thursday August 4, 2022	15
From the big apple to the peach state: internship teaches a new way of life	15
News Stories Posted Friday August 5, 2022	19
The first face to new students: orientation leaders	19
News Stories Posted Monday August 8, 2022	23
Fauna and flora: Ecosystems teach students about diversity and sustainability	23
News Stories Posted Thursday August 11, 2022	28
Robust and enthused: Class of 2026 arrives on campus to chart its future	28
News Stories Posted Monday August 15, 2022	32
GC Gives Day promotes service as important part of GCSU Experience	32
News Stories Posted Tuesday August 16, 2022	37
Student trustees know the importance of making connections	37
Alumna strives to improve healthcare through functional medicine for optimal health	40
Outstanding alumni and staff to be recognized Alumni Weekend 2022	46
August is National Make-A-Will Month	53
Consultant empowers clients through decluttering	55
News Stories Posted Thursday August 18, 2022	60
Where bison roamed: Paleontological dig shows a different Georgia	60
Join us for history in the making: GCSU to inaugurate President Cathy Cox	70
News Stories Posted Monday August 22, 2022	72
Cathy Cox inaugurated as 12th President of Georgia College & State University	72
News Stories Posted Tuesday August 23, 2022	76
Message from President Cathy Cox: The Passing of Mrs. Sandra Dunagan Deal	76
City of Paris illuminates art, history and culture on study abroad program	79
News Stories Posted Thursday August 25, 2022	85
In Memory of Sandra Dunagan Deal	85
News Stories Posted Tuesday August 30, 2022	87
Teacher of the Year nurtures her students through math and life	87
News Stories Posted Wednesday August 31, 2022	93
Study abroad program strengthens leadership skills, honors past participant	93
GCSU intramural sports fields record-breaking number of teams this fall	98

News Stories Posted Monday August 1, 2022



Music resonates in newly-expanded Spirit of Macon mural

[Art, Department of](#) : Monday August 1, 2022

The Spirit of Macon is renewed with the visual representation of music in the streets.

In a press conference last week, the Macon Transit Authority formally presented the expansion of a public art installation that has enlivened a drab corner of downtown with vibrant colors, dynamic images of native wildlife and graphic renderings of Macon's iconic city skyline.

Georgia College Associate Professor of Art and Graphic Design Abraham Abebe updated his Spirit of Macon mural to feature the musicality of the city that launched the careers of Little Richard, Otis Redding, the Allman Brothers Band, Robert McDuffie and Jason Aldean.

In his new artist statement, Abebe writes:

“

Music plays an important role in our lives. It can make us calm and relaxed and allows us to feel all emotions. This mural reflects the importance of music and its power when reflected and expressed in visual forms.

”

[The Spirit of Macon II builds upon Abebe's original Spirit of Macon mural that transformed an MTA bus stop into a focal point for the city's urban revival.](#)

“Public art is very important for the city, for the community,” Abebe said. “We need to continue bringing artists into public art [so we can] serve the community by bringing the visual arts to the public.”

The Spirit of Macon mural is located at the corner of Poplar and Fifth streets in downtown Macon.

The Spirit of Macon II mural is the beneficiary of a grant from the Linda Harriet Lane Fund administered by the Community Foundation of Central Georgia. It is a joint venture between the MTA and the Community Foundation.

You can learn more about the mural and see day-by-day documentation of the



Abraham Abebe
(Photo from MTA)

creation of the Spirit of Macon murals on the [MTA's Facebook page](#).

News Stories Posted Tuesday August 2, 2022



Every drop we drink: Environmental science major interns at Macon Water Authority

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Tuesday August 2, 2022

Story, video and photos developed by University Communications.

Most people turn on faucets without much thought about how the water gets there.

Until this summer, Avery Lundy of Jones County was one of them.

“We’re dealing with people’s livelihoods and the fact everybody who turns on their tap is affected by what we do here,” Lundy said, standing before a series of computer command screens that would make NASA Mission Control envious.

From there, he can watch the entire process: from water collected in the Ocmulgee River to its filtration at the Amerson Water Treatment Plant. That’s where Lundy is finishing up a summer internship for the Macon Water Authority, which won an award in 2008 for the best tasting water in the country.

Six weeks ago, all the science and supervision required for drinking water was a bit overwhelming for him.

Today, Lundy takes visitors around like an expert—pointing to advanced equipment; dangerous chemicals; enormous pipes; pumps and pools—as if he was born for the job.



Recent environmental science graduate, Avery Lundy, keeps close watch for changes in the Macon water supply.

Chuck Mixon, assistant plant manager, thinks Lundy’s ready, too. When a job becomes available, he said, the recent environmental science graduate is top on his list to hire.

“I’ve been here 20 years in April,” Mixon said, “and I’ve seen a lot of interns come and go. Some good, some bad. Avery stacks up in the top 1%. He’s always asking questions; he’s always working.”

“

We’re dealing with people’s livelihoods and the fact everybody who turns on their tap is affected by what we do here.

- Avery Lundy

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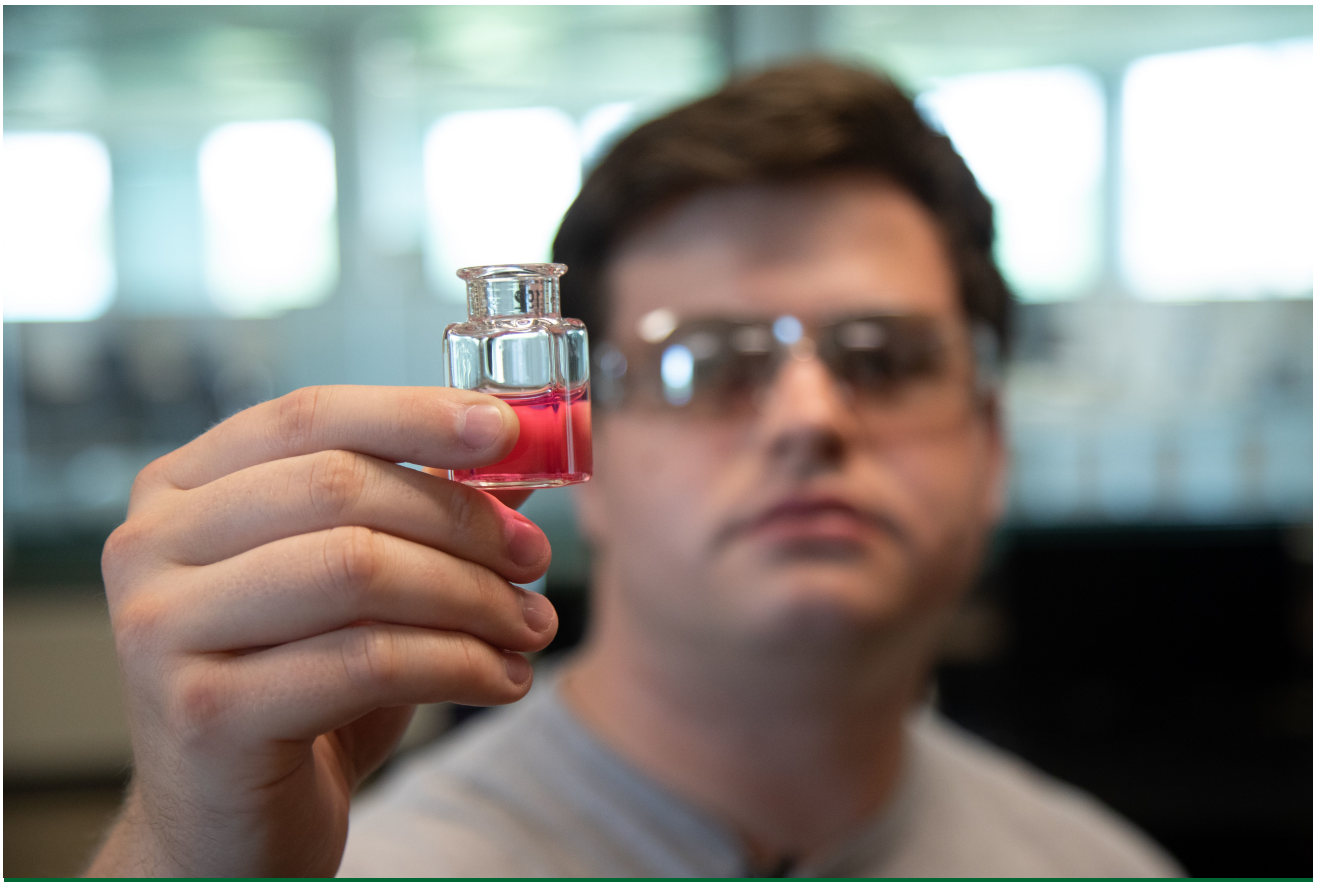
Mixon said he looks for an intern who’s inquisitive, interested and enjoys the work. Anyone can learn to change valves or do paperwork, he said. Mixon likes interns who are hands-on and part of the team.

In the future, Mixon would like more interns from Georgia College. He’ll expect to see in them the same work ethic he found in Lundy.

“He’s basically become an all-round water treatment operator, and that’s what I’m looking for,” Mixon said. “He would be great for the Macon Water Authority and for the water industry in general. We need young talent, and Avery could fill a huge hole.”

Still, the job carries a lot of responsibility.

Lundy knows one wrong move could result in contamination or a violation. But he learned a valuable lesson the day he discovered a clogged pipe at the plant. After a coworker took him through the appropriate remediation steps—he learned he can handle it.



Lundy examines water mixed with chemicals.

“I’ve been very fortunate to be given people who are willing to teach me and show me what this plant is all about and what goes on here,” Lundy said.

His first day on the job was “a mind-flood of information.” Lundy was surprised by the number of government rules regulating the water industry. As the weeks progressed, however, he realized Georgia College had prepared him well.

“

It’s a lot to learn. But it all goes back to wanting to learn and absorbing information the best you can and putting forth the effort to keep that information inside your head. Georgia College has done a lot to influence my way of retaining knowledge.

- Avery Lundy

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Originally, Lundy thought he might like to be a health inspector. But, after taking several hydrology classes with Dr. Samuel Mutiti, his interest turned to water.



Alternate Text

Mutiti taught students about state standards and how to test water through class projects, like Georgia’s Adopt-A-Stream monitoring program. Lundy broadened his understanding of water issues in biology classes with Dr. Al Mead and in Dr. Bruce Snyder’s soil ecology course.

Georgia College’s liberal arts curriculum made Lundy a well-rounded student. The mathematical skills he learned

have been especially useful at the water treatment plant.

He also appreciates the help he got at the Career Center, where his internship was approved, and paperwork finalized.

“Georgia College very much turned me around and opened my eyes to different career paths,” Lundy said. “My major doesn’t require an internship but being in the real world and getting real-world experience is very important to me.”

“

...being in the real world and getting real-world experience is very important to me.

- Lundy

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Internships give students a chance to solve real-life problems, strengthen analytical reasoning and work on vital projects in ways that are transformational, according to Brittany Archer, assistant director of employer relations and internships at Georgia College.

That has been the case with Lundy. He feels the experience makes him more employable.

“I definitely think I put my best foot forward by doing an internship,” he said. “Not only does it give me knowledge and skills, but it gives me workplace experience with coworkers and management.”

On a typical day, Lundy uses a computer software system to check water levels, water pressure and make sure all pipes are flowing. He tests water for chlorine every hour, makes reports and contacts maintenance if he sees a problem.

He’s constantly aware of the seriousness of the job, especially in the lab, where workers measure water quality.

They test for bacteria, E. coli, minerals and metals. Naturally occurring minerals, like fluoride can, at high levels, be “very dangerous and dissolve concrete in a matter of minutes,” Lundy said.



Alternate Text

Contaminants are collected at the bottom of giant pools.

Clear water filters through layers of sand, rock and carbonated peat. Then it’s stored in 5-million-gallon holding tanks before distribution to homes and businesses throughout Macon.

It's a process that fascinates Lundy and impresses upon him the significance of his job.

By playing his part, he knows he's contributing to a fundamental part of civil society.

“

Like everyone, I took water for granted. Coming here has definitely opened my eyes to the importance of water and how much work it takes for us to turn on the tap.”

- Avery Lundy

”

"Like everyone," Lundy said, "I took water for granted. Coming here has definitely opened my eyes to the importance of water and how much work it takes for us to turn on the tap."

“This experience has been very educational,” he said. “From this career path, I can go just about everywhere in the country and find work, because everyone needs water.”

News Stories Posted Wednesday August 3, 2022



Class of 2026: Leadership skills acquired in high school build confidence for college

[Undergraduate Admissions](#) : Wednesday August 3, 2022

Full name: Brayden Miller

Where are you from? Adairsville, Georgia

School

What high school did you attend? Adairsville High

What is the most important thing you learned in high school? When I first started high school, especially moving from a different city, I didn't try very hard. But I learned the importance of giving the effort I have to what I do while I'm doing it—in extracurriculars like Cross Country and in my academics, especially environmental science.



Brayden Miller

Are there any teachers that you had in high school who made an impact on your life and your educational path that you would like to give a shout out to? Definitely Adairsville Cross Country Coach John Ford.

“

In Cross Country, it would have been very easy to just kind of take it easy and let myself be in the middle or coast through in the back, but I tried to give everything I had to every practice and every race.

- Brayden Miller

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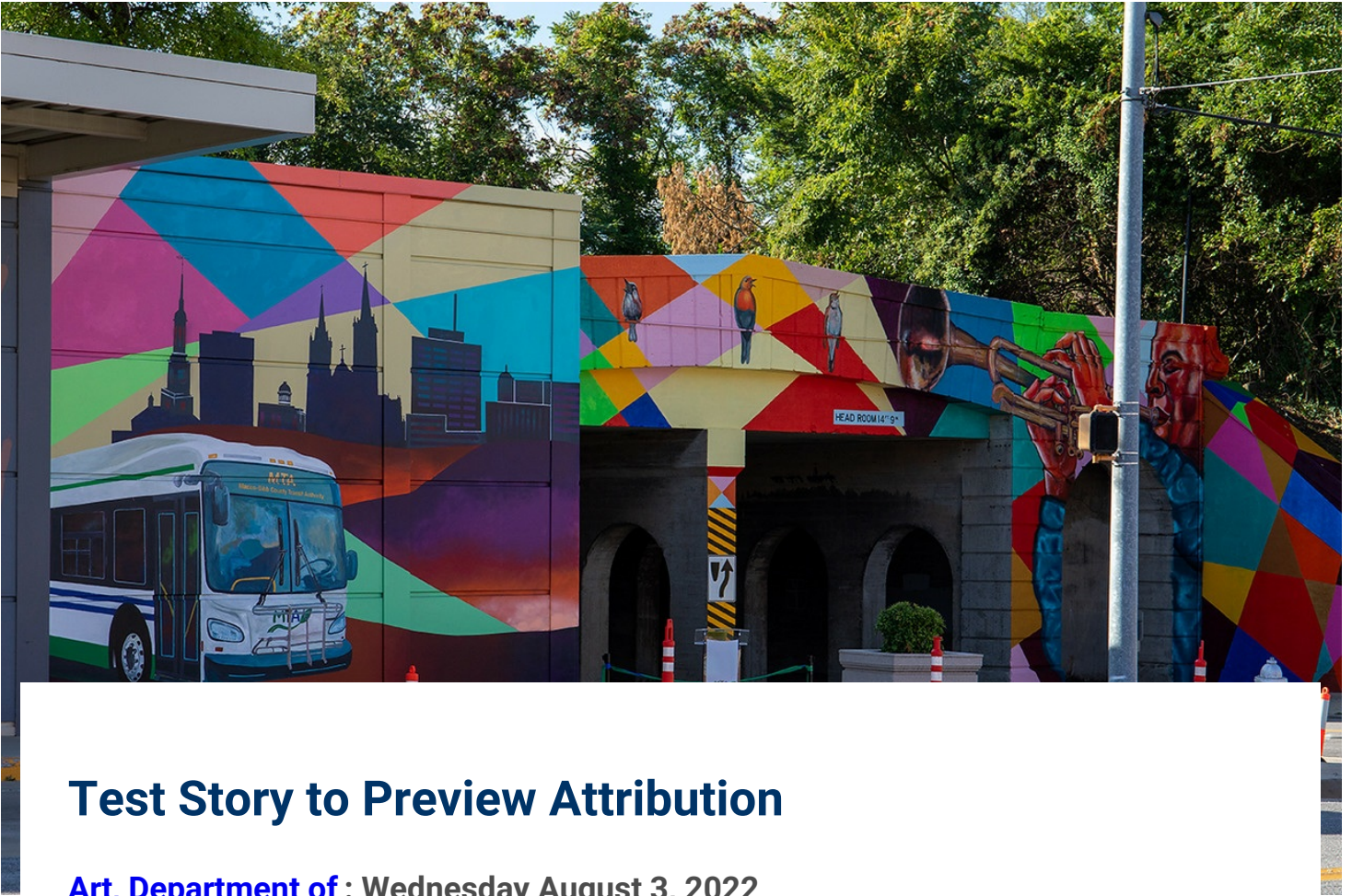
He did a good job of showing me the value of putting in hard work and taking pride in what you do.

In Cross Country, it would have been very easy to just kind of take it easy and let myself be in the middle or coast through in the back, but I tried to give everything I had to every practice and every race.

Major/minor: Undecided

Why did you choose Georgia College? I don't have the best idea of what I want to do with my life at the moment. I'm undecided [on a major], and I thought a liberal arts school like Georgia College would be a good place to branch out and try to figure out what my interests are.

What will you pursue in college? I really enjoyed my class in environmental science. It's very interesting to look at natural systems—the animals and the plants—and ways they interact.



Test Story to Preview Attribution

[Art, Department of](#) : Wednesday August 3, 2022

Story written and developed by University Communications.

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News Stories Posted Thursday August 4, 2022



From the big apple to the peach state: internship teaches a new way of life

[History & Geography, Department of](#): Thursday August 4, 2022

Story and Photos developed by University Communications

In New York City, the wildlife is sparse and specific: pigeons, raccoons, squirrels, etc.

Can you imagine how surprised Elijah Lopez was when he traded his home in the Big Apple for a working farm in Milledgeville, Georgia?

"It's so small, there's not a lot of cars honking, there's no pigeons flying around everywhere. It was a complete culture shock," Lopez, a senior history major, said. "I'm always ready for change, but it can be a little scary."

Lopez chose Comfort Farms for his summer internship, the capstone experience prior to receiving the department of history and geography's Global Foodways

Studies Program Certificate.

The certificate program nurtures students' education in culture and history through food and more.



On the farm, Lopez helps with sowing, planting and harvesting crops.

“Students like Elijah embody the mission of Georgia College by cultivating a better understanding of diverse cultures and peoples, engaging in community development and fostering greater social awareness,” said James “Trae” Welborn, associate professor of history. “They forge a well-rounded intellectual perspective that engenders cultural empathy and appreciation—crucial characteristics of good citizenship.”

Lopez was drawn to Comfort Farms, a small, veteran-owned, family farm and veteran rehabilitation project, after learning about Jon Jackson, its owner.

Jackson is a former Army Ranger. He started Comfort Farms to honor fellow Army Ranger, Kyle A. Comfort, who died during a deployment in Afghanistan. As a reservist in the National Guard and a member of Georgia College's Senior Division Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), Lopez felt a personal connection to Jackson.



A service member himself, Lopez was drawn to veteran-owned Comfort Farms.

The internship at Comfort Farms introduced Lopez to a whole new world, where he met livestock like poultry, rabbits and pigs for the first time.



Lopez works with a variety of livestock, including hogs.

"Everything I've done for this internship, and this course, has been humbling," Lopez said. "I'm from New York City, so I have very limited access to understanding what goes into food production."

On the farm, Lopez assists in planting, care of livestock, harvesting plants and animal products, cleaning and manning the weekend market.

"Instead of becoming just a historian, now I have management capabilities, the skills to work in a restaurant and I understand where food comes from," Lopez said. "More importantly, it teaches you that you need to get down and dirty sometimes, and it's okay if you mess up, because there are people willing to help you."

"I've learned to never take something for granted," he said.

Following his graduation, Lopez hopes to make active duty. But if that falls through, he's got a job lined up to teach middle grades at a charter school in the Bronx. He's also been offered a fellowship for teaching middle grades that would cover costs for a master's degree.

“

At Georgia College, I've developed as a leader and stepped out of my comfort zone. And as a person, I couldn't be more pleased with my results.

- Elijah Lopez

”

“At Georgia College, I've developed as a leader and stepped out of my comfort zone,” Lopez said. “And as a person, I couldn't be more pleased with my results. Since arriving as a transfer student two-and-a-half years ago, every milestone I've reached has made me who I am.”

His worldview has shifted, he observed. Now, he considers where he buys food, what that means for the community and what he can do to contribute. Nothing is stopping him from growing his own food and sharing that expertise with later generations.

“Jon Jackson said that if I have room for gray space, or down time, I have room for improvement,” Lopez said. “If you want to change or want something to be different, don't be scared, embrace new possibilities.”

News Stories Posted Friday August 5, 2022



The first face to new students: orientation leaders

[Student Life, Office of](#) : Friday August 5, 2022

Story and photos by University Communications.

Behind each orientation held this summer, there were eight peppy students greeting nervous newcomers and herding the new class to each day's events. Orientation leaders are the glue that holds orientation together. They are some of the first faces new Georgia College & State University students see, making it vital they represent all things Georgia College.

Let's meet three orientation leaders who used this opportunity to grow and help nurture first-year students this summer.

Caroline Leonard is a senior accounting major.

"Being an orientation leader has encouraged me to think on my feet and be bold," she said. "This role requires creativity and flexibility. These are things I will carry with me into my professional career."

After Leonard graduates, she intends to pursue a Master of Accountancy program

and get her certified public accountant certification. She wants to pursue a career in advisory accounting.

“This line of work will allow me to apply my skills in a way that can help a business maximize its financial success,” Leonard said.

Like other orientation leaders, she’s worked all six orientations. Leonard wasn’t sure what to expect, since the Coronavirus pandemic put a pause on Georgia College orientations for two years.



Caroline Leonard

“

“Orientation is the first time newcomers get to feel like students. They’re no longer prospective students. It’s their first taste of freedom and college. I love the ability to connect with students and parents as they begin their GCSU journey.”

- Caroline Leonard

”

“The energy level among new students has been great,” she said. “It has been so exciting to greet the first-year students and create a welcoming environment for them at GCSU.”

“Orientation is the first time newcomers get to feel like students. They’re no longer prospective students,” Leonard said. “It’s their first taste of freedom and college. I love the ability to connect with students and parents as they begin their GCSU journey.”

Keller Pantsari, a junior mass communications major, became an orientation leader to help refine his social skills. This training should serve him well in his chosen field as a sports broadcaster.

“Being an orientation leader helped me get out of my comfort zone, especially when it comes to talking with new people,” he said. “It also gives students an opportunity to share their experiences and to make new students more excited to start their journey at GCSU.”

Pantsari, or “Gold Leader”—the name he’s called over the orientation walkie talkies—thinks the anticipation level among new and current students has been high.

“Current students have been excited to table for their organizations and introduce

themselves to new students,” Pantsari said. “I also see the excitement on a lot of their faces as they gear up for a new phase in their lives.”

“

“It gives them a chance to explore campus as a student for the first time and the opportunity to meet peers and current students. Having this experience makes the college transition much easier and more comfortable.”

- Keller Pantsari



Keller Pantsari

”

He feels it’s vital for new students to attend orientation for the exposure to campus and student life.

“It gives them a chance to explore campus as a student for the first time and the opportunity to meet peers and current students,” Pantsari said. “Having this experience makes the college transition much easier and more comfortable.”

Christina Lewis is a senior majoring in psychology and minoring in public health. Once Lewis graduates in May 2023, she’ll return to Georgia College in the fall to pursue her Master of Science in health and human performance with a concentration in health promotion. Her goal is to become a health education specialist, focusing on mental and sexual health.

As a child, she loved helping people. Now, she wants to pursue that passion in a career that puts people first.

“I view myself as a bridge, connecting people to resources and information,” Lewis said. “As a health education specialist, I will provide information and recourse to community members.”

Being an orientation leader sharpened her public speaking skills and built her confidence.

“



Christina Lewis

“My favorite part of orientation is when guests approach me and say that I was

their tour guide. It's rewarding and a full-circle moment, knowing I was able to help students in their college search process."

- Christina Lewis

”

“I have the opportunity to talk to students and guests and be one of the first smiling faces they see once they arrive on campus,” Lewis said. “It also helps networking with GCSU faculty and staff.”

Orientation allows students and families the chance to envision themselves on campus and experience what students' lives would be like for the next few years.

“My favorite part of orientation is when guests approach me and say that I was their tour guide,” Lewis said. “It's rewarding and a full-circle moment, knowing I was able to help students in their college search process.”

Her most memorable moments happen with Lewis' orientation team. They run errands, make welcome packets and gather together at 6:30 a.m. on orientation mornings.

“Without this team, I would not be able to do my job effectively,” Lewis said. “I'm appreciative of our boss, Brittany Bryan, who leads us every step of the way and allows us to take part in different leadership experiences. We are from different walks of life, but come together to make sure people have a positive experience—even if they are only on campus for one day.”

News Stories Posted Monday August 8, 2022



Fauna and flora: Ecosystems teach students about diversity and sustainability

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Monday August 8, 2022

Story and photos developed by University Communications.

From bluffs and dunes to rocky cliffs and mountain peaks—six environmental science majors took multiple mini-trips this summer to learn about the state's diverse ecosystems.

The monthlong study-away program was headed by Dr. Bruce Snyder and Dr. Christine Mutiti, associate professors of biology and environmental science. Faculty led students on informative day trips and longer camping excursions. Together, they studied the biogeographical imprints of forests, upper and lower coastal plains and vast canyons.

"Georgia is an incredibly diverse state and few students have had a chance to visit



Six environmental science students explored eco-systems this summer. Drs. Christina Mutiti and Bruce Snyder in back.

many of these sites,” Snyder said. “We rarely teach from this approach where we look at the whole ecosystem.”

“While there’s a big emphasis on understanding plant communities, we also brought in geology, topography, soils, fire regime and other aspects that make each ecosystem unique,” he said.

Ecosystems are biological communities of interacting organisms—vegetation,

waterways, wildlife and human impact. Students got up close and personal with these worlds, going beyond lectures and textbooks.

During fieldwork, students had the opportunity to examine a variety of habitats and interact with plants and animals. They set up camp sites, sometimes in the pouring rain. They hiked miles of terrain, kayaked and cooked by campfire. They came across alligators, racoons, squirrels and other critters and learned how rattlesnakes are tracked on Jekyll Island.

“You can’t really understand the connections within ecosystems—or even between systems—from the classroom,” Snyder said. “Something as simple as ‘Where do we find or not find particular plants’ can’t effectively be replicated indoors.”

“

Being immersed in the experience is critical. Sitting still in a forest or by streamside reveals all kinds of new things that you don’t notice if you’re just walking by.

- Dr. Bruce Snyder

”

It was an ambitious adventure. Snyder said they “only scratched the surface” at 16 spectacular study-away locations:

- **Week One:** Students hiked among the pine and oak trees at Bartram Forest; the rocky shoals of Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge; and the glade at Oconee National Forest.



Group on top of Blood Mountain in North Georgia.

- **Week Two:** Students discovered the lower coastal plains at Moody Forest with its longleaf pine trees; Jekyll Island with its beaches, dunes and maritime forest; Cathead Creek, where students kayaked in tidal streams and old rice canals; and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge with its swamps and marshes.
- **Week Three:** Students explored the upper coastal region at Spirewell Bluff Wildlife Management Area; walls of sandy cliffs at Providence Canyon State Park; and the boyhood residence of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, now a national historic park in Plains, Georgia.
- **Week Four:** Students learned how fire is used in forest management. They explored

Tallulah Gorge State Park with its bluffs and ravines; Vogel State Park in the Chattahoochee National Forest; Sosebee Cove, a picturesque forest between two mountains; Blood Mountain, the highest peak along the Georgian Appalachian Trail; and Black Rock Mountain State Park in Georgia's Blue Ridge Mountains.

Senior Anna Lippy of Lilburn said the study-away course immediately caught her eye when advertised last fall.

"It sounded like a great opportunity to get into the field and apply what I've been learning in class," Lippy said.

Her favorite location was Providence Canyon in Lumpkin, Georgia. The red and white cliffs looked more like portions of the American West. Students spent all day exploring the canyon. They saw salamanders, kaolin deposits and even old cars that were abandoned there.

Another location Lippy found fascinating was Moody Forest in Baxley, Georgia. The 4,500-acre preserve is home to 200- and 300-year-old longleaf pine trees. Students spotted endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers on their trek. They could smell the smoldering debris from a prescribed fire, done to keep invasive plants from crowding out pines.

Students learned to identify longleaf pines from similar slash, loblolly and shortleaf pine trees. At several locations, Mutiti pointed out sourwood leaves for students to taste.

Lippy was also interested in coastal plain ecosystems, which cover 60% of the state.

“Subtle changes in topography can have a huge impact on the ecosystem, because this area is so close to the water table,” she said. “These are mostly sandy ecosystems, so the sediment moves easily, making this very dynamic area.”



Anna Lippy (right) with Kristen Wilder at Providence Canyon in Lumpkin, Georgia.

“

I didn't feel like I was in a class, yet I learned more than I do in a normal classroom. It was an environment that cultivated learning and curiosity unlike any class I've taken before.

- Senior Anna Lippy

”

Each trip was previewed with lectures and students did reflective writing. At various sites, they interacted with forest managers and park rangers to learn about potential careers in environmental science.

They ended the course understanding the vulnerability of ecosystems: How they're changing, what threatens them and what can be done to sustain them.

Sometimes ecosystems are converted for agricultural purposes. Neighborhoods or parking lots are constructed in them. Or resources like timber and coal are extracted from them.

“We saw the interactions of human development, climate change, invasive species, fire or the lack thereof,” Snyder said, “and how these affect, threaten or endanger natural communities.”

Seeing with her own eyes the beauty, diversity and fragility of ecosystems made

Lippy want to continue studying and help find ways to protect the planet.

Study away helped crystalize what she'd learned in class. She created visual memories that help her recall information with ease.

"I didn't feel like I was in a class, yet I learned more than I do in a normal classroom," Lippy said. "It was an environment that cultivated learning and curiosity unlike any class I've taken before."



Photo credit: Dr. Bruce Snyder.

News Stories Posted Thursday August 11, 2022



Robust and enthused: Class of 2026 arrives on campus to chart its future

[Enrollment Management](#) : Thursday August 11, 2022

Story and photos developed by University Communications.

From a record number of out-of-staters to historically-high grade point averages (GPAs), the class of 2026 promises to be a collection of smart, impassioned young adults who'll amaze and surprise everyone—even themselves—in the next four years.

“

To know they're going to have that special experience here is satisfying.

- Joel Robinson

”

“To know they’re going to have that special experience here is satisfying,” said Joel Robinson, senior associate vice president for Enrollment Management. “Very seldom do students get a private-school education at a public-university price. We’re special in that way.”

With the conclusion of six orientations, the Georgia College & State University campus is preparing to welcome nearly 1,400 excited and slightly nervous freshmen.



Alternate Text

What are the characteristics of the class about to embark on a journey of knowledge and self-discovery?

Here are some preliminary stats:

- About 11% of the incoming class arrives with a high school GPA of 4.0. The average GPA for this class is 3.65—up from 3.58 last year.
- Georgia College continues to be a top choice for in-state students. They come from 214 towns and cities and 106 counties in Georgia.
- The number of out-of-state students rose 78% over last year to about 14. They come from eight states: Alabama, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Washington and Virginia.
- The average SAT score is 1167 and ACT is 25 for incoming freshmen.

- International students are traveling from six countries: Australia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Vietnam and United Arab Emirates.
- Top majors for this class include business undecided, nursing, undeclared, biology, psychology, exercise science, marketing, education, mass communication and accounting.

Javier Francisco, interim executive director of Admissions, said he's impressed at the amount of research prospective students put into choosing a university—right down to the curriculum.

When on campus tours, future students asked about several new courses offered this year: a marine biology class connected to the university's new Aquatic Sciences Center; as well as two business and technology courses—data science and finance.

"We recruit some great students," Francisco said.

"Seeing them excited about their potential, their future at Georgia College as they start their journey with us—that's always the exciting part."



President Cathy Cox interviews a new student at orientation.

Parents especially like Georgia College's focus on early career services, leadership development, undergraduate research and community outreach. Georgia College develops these pursuits through its GC Journeys program, which encourages students to partake in five transformational experiences, including study abroad and internships.



Alternate Text

This concentration on the personal development of each student is a hallmark of the Georgia College experience.

"That's our big strength and one we want to preserve—that smaller environment and liberal arts approach, where faculty know your name and you're going to be in a community of people who know and care about you," Robinson said.

You're not going to be a number in a huge lecture hall. That's one of the nice things about not trying to grow like other campuses. We're trying to stay right where we are and serve our students well. That makes a big difference.

- Joel Robinson

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News Stories Posted Monday August 15, 2022



GC Gives Day promotes service as important part of GCSU Experience

[Student Life, Office of](#) : Monday August 15, 2022

Story and Photos by University Communications.

For incoming Georgia College & State University freshmen, the Saturday before classes start is not the last opportunity to get some rest - it's their first chance to give back.

GC Gives Day is an annual right-of-passage, in which new students team up with their hall mates and fan out across Baldwin County to engage in community service projects and learn more about the community that will host their college experience.

This year, roughly 1,360 first-year students participated in 35 different projects that introduce the many community organizations, local non-profits and volunteer opportunities students can partake in throughout their time at Georgia College.

Residents on Foundation Hall's third floor packed into Baldwin County school buses to travel to Walter B. Williams Park, where they helped clean up trash and debris, beautify flower beds and improve the area around playgrounds.

“

It's one of the most integral parts of what makes Georgia College unique and the GCSU experience special for our students.

- Cassie Napier

”



Student volunteers helped beautify the park and contribute to regular maintenance during GC Gives Day.

Baldwin County Recreation Department Director Traci Bowden said the work student volunteers contribute during GC Gives Day matters a lot more than they realize. Recreation department workers divide their time between three parks and multiple athletics facilities. After maintaining the grounds and playing fields, there's a lot of important work that can fall through the cracks.

"We stay busy cutting the grass and weed eating," she said. "Some of the little things that matter a lot don't get done—so when organizations like Georgia College come out, it's a huge help."

Loading mulch onto the back of all-terrain vehicles headed to the playgrounds, first-year student Ty Watson recalled all the time he spent on playgrounds and ballfields growing up in Macon. Watson said he was happy to spend the first Saturday of his college experience helping the Milledgeville-Baldwin County community.

"It's nice to give back and make sure the kids have a good place to hang out and play, just like I did," he said.

“

We are here for each other, and we should all be willing to help whenever there is a need.

- Jacob Hall

”

Watson's hall mate and fellow volunteer Georgia Barham-Taylor said the service project was a welcome break from meetings that familiarize incoming students to Georgia College and what they can expect during their first weeks on campus. They agreed that volunteering is a good way to introduce new students to the community.

They didn't have to wait long to see an impact.

Milledgeville native Bonnie Bell brought her grandsons Cullen Hamm and Kaleb Hughes to the Walter B. Williams playground. Before volunteers finished leveling out the new layers of mulch they'd applied, Cullen and Kaleb were flying high on the swing set.



GC Gives Day volunteers watch Kaleb Hughes and Cullen Hamm swing on the playground at Walter B. Williams Park. The volunteers had just finished replenishing the mulch under the swing set.

"It's always great seeing young people out cleaning up the community so it's a safer place for kids," she said. "It helps get them familiar with the area, and they get the opportunity to come back and enjoy what they have done."

That kind of reciprocity was on Blakely Queen's mind too. As a community advisor for Foundation Hall, Queen was excited to volunteer at a park because it brought back memories of her family.



Baldwin County Recreation Department Director Traci Bowden said the parks benefit greatly from the work volunteers contribute at events like GC Gives Day.

“My grandparents used to take us to parks all the time; and they would always help clean up when we were there, whether they were asked to or not,” Queen said. “So, it reminds me of them, and I feel like I’m also doing a service for them as well.”

Georgia College staff members Cassie and John Napier volunteered to help lead the GC Gives Day project at Walter B. Williams Park. For them, it was an opportunity to give back to a

place that holds a lot of memories for their family. The Napier’s three children grew up on the playgrounds and ball fields at Walter B. Williams.

“

It's nice to give back and make sure the kids have a good place to hang out and play, just like I did.

- Ty Watson

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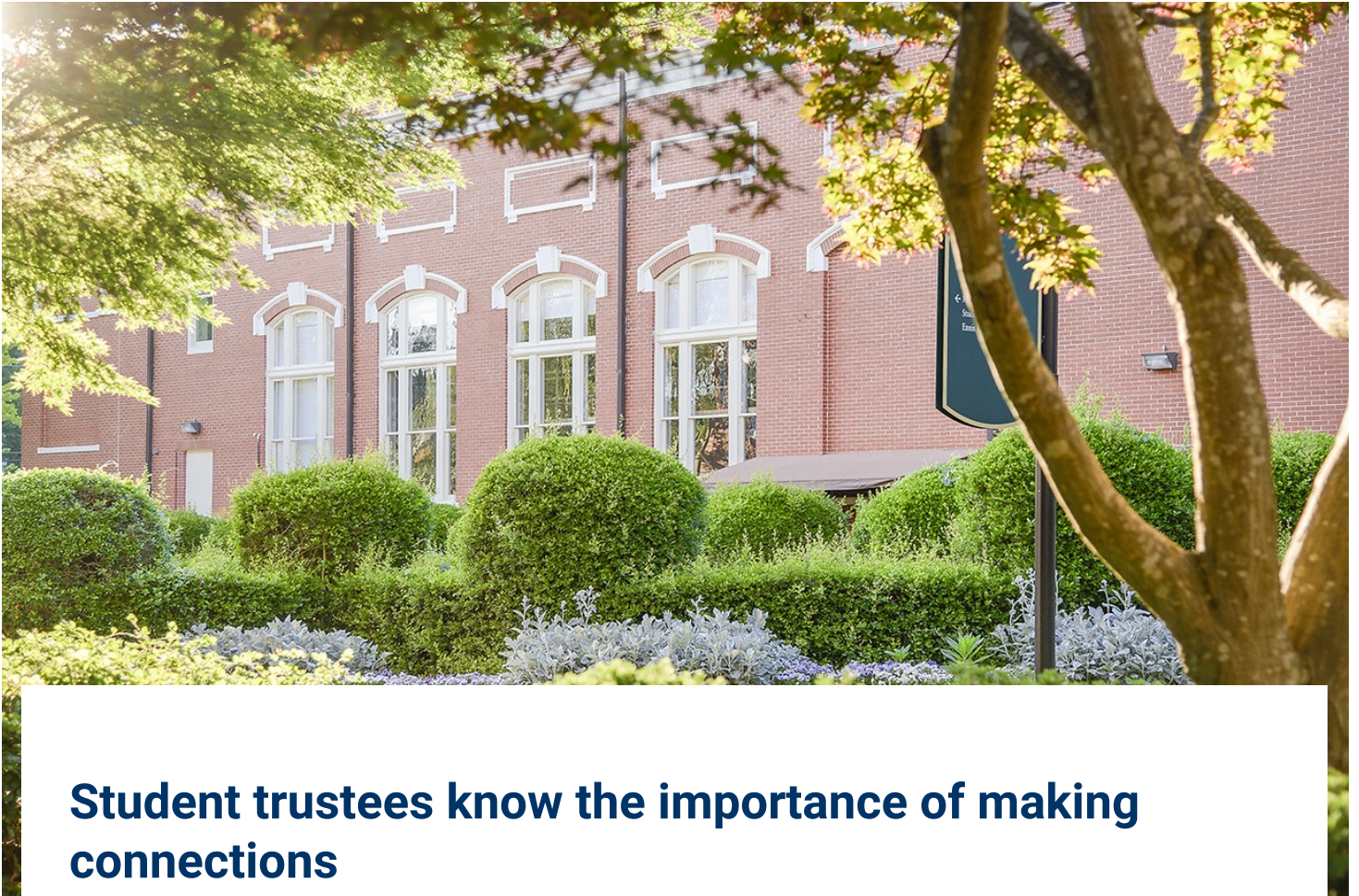
After two years of restricted gatherings and fewer volunteer opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cassie Napier said it is a relief to get back to activities that bind Georgia College students to their host community.

“It's great to build those ties again, and have that relationship building going on so that we don't lose that,” she said. “It's one of the most integral parts of what makes Georgia College unique and the GCSU experience special for our students.”

It’s that spirit of cooperation that helped freshman Jacob Hall understand GC Gives Day as the beginning of his college experience.

“We are all in this situation together,” he said. “We are here for each other, and we should all be willing to help whenever there is a need.”

News Stories Posted Tuesday August 16, 2022



Student trustees know the importance of making connections

[University Advancement](#) : Tuesday August 16, 2022

Membership on the Georgia College & State University Foundation Board of Trustees promotes creative leadership in service to our institution—both for regular members and its four student trustees including Ainsley Brown, Sebastian Nunez, Molly Robbins and Lauren Schroeder.

We caught up with two of the student trustees to see how their service benefits them and Georgia College.

Senior mass communication major Lauren Schroeder has served as a Georgia College Student Trustee and on the stewardship committee for two years.

Schroeder began serving during her sophomore year after joining the Student Government Association.

“We meet every two months,” Schroeder said. “However, I interact a lot with the students on the board by just seeing them around campus.”

“

This experience will help me tremendously throughout internships and other jobs, because it has allowed me to understand the importance of a simple thank you, as well as networking and connecting with others.



Lauren Schroeder

- Lauren Schroeder

”

Her service doesn’t stop there. After the foundation board of trustees’ meetings, she follows up by writing thank you notes and calling donors who contribute to scholarships. She tries to dedicate an hour after each meeting to connect with supporters of Georgia College.

What Schroeder enjoys most about serving as a student trustee are the connections she makes with foundation board members and fellow students who serve as trustees.

“Everyone is always so friendly and helpful,” she said.

Schroeder knows why it’s important to serve as a student trustee.

“It gives students a chance to meet alumni, as well as understand different aspects of what happens at Georgia College,” she said. “I encourage new students to get involved with the board, because it’s a great way to make connections and learn some cool things about Georgia College, and how you can still be a part of the university after you graduate.”

Schroeder works in an internship where she encourages continuous learning across the company. She feels her experience as a student trustee will benefit her career.

“This experience will help me tremendously throughout internships and other jobs,” Schroeder said, “because it has allowed me to understand the importance of a simple thank you, as well as networking and connecting with others.”

Junior business management major Ainsley Brown looks forward to making an impact at Georgia College too during her first year serving as a student trustee.

She's already a student assistant in member services at the Wellness and Recreation Center, where she interacts with faculty and students. Now, she'll work with the foundation board of trustees to help strive for excellence. She will also serve on its fundraising committee.



Ainsley Brown

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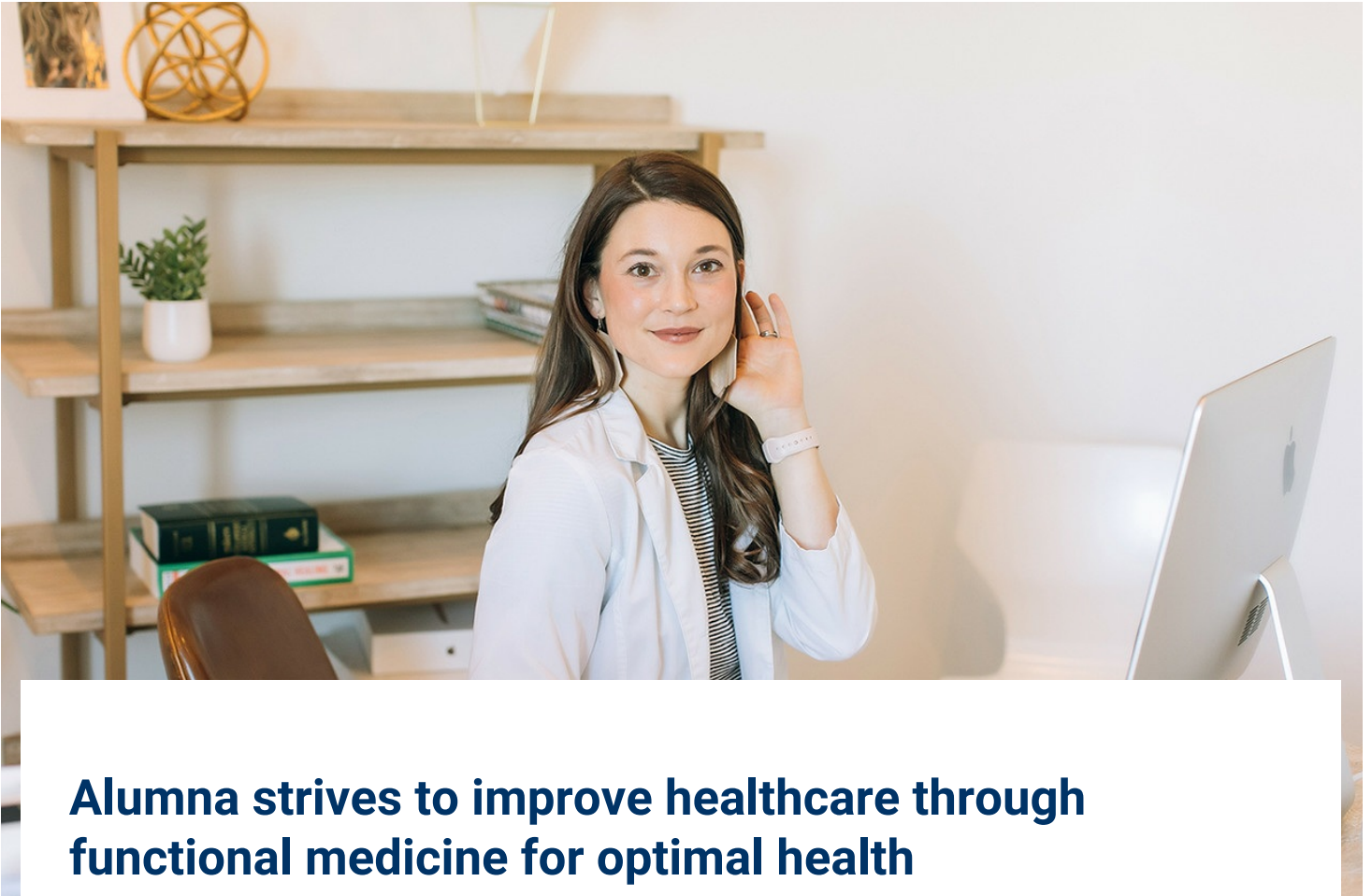
As a student, being able to have a voice is really important to make sure that students' concerns are heard. I hope to add a significant perspective to important discussions.

- Ainsley Brown

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“As a student, being able to have a voice is really important to make sure that students' concerns are heard,” Brown said. “I hope to add a significant perspective to important discussions.”

“Serving as a student trustee will allow me the opportunity to make meaningful connections with people who are influential at Georgia College,” she said. “I look forward to helping my college thrive and, hopefully, make it a better learning place.”



Alumna strives to improve healthcare through functional medicine for optimal health

[College of Health Sciences](#) : Tuesday August 16, 2022

Dr. Kristin Corbin Oja, '11, '14, '15, always knew there was a better way to treat patients.

“When providers prescribe medication without understanding the root cause, we are putting a Band-Aid® on an issue,” Oja said. “The patient may feel better, and medication can prevent diseases from progressing, but we’re not addressing the root cause. If we don’t understand the root cause, other symptoms and diseases can occur.”

As a result, she practices functional medicine—a quality approach in treating the whole patient with a focus on health optimization and longevity.

In 2014, Oja founded STAT Wellness as a bootcamp held in a school parking lot. Five years later, she opened her brick-and-mortar facility in West Midtown Atlanta with a different business concept of combining functional medicine and movement. In January 2022, she opened the second location in historic Roswell. Now, she’s looking for a third location with hopes of growing nationwide.

When the Atlanta STAT Wellness opened its doors in 2019, Oja taught around 16

fitness classes per week, saw about eight functional medicine patients per day, started IVs, drew patients' bloodwork, gave B12 shots and checked patients out.

Today, 85% of her time is spent seeing patients one-on-one, writing treatment plans and helping them understand the results of their lab work.

"We're very data driven," Oja said. "So, I don't want to just tell my patients, 'We've reduced your inflammation.' I want to show them, 'This was your C-reactive protein (CRP) when we first started working together. And a year later, your CRP went from 12 to two—that's remarkable.'"



Dr. Kristin Oja at STAT Wellness

My favorite part of my work is transforming people's lives. My biggest goals are to instill hope in people, and to empower them to make the changes they need to become the best version of themselves.

- Dr. Kristin Oja

Around 15% of her time is spent working with her staff to make STAT Wellness one of the best places to work.

Her husband, Cameron "Cam" Oja, '11, recently joined the team of 26 employees as chief operating officer. In that role, he oversees operations, growth and partnerships.

The couple met at the end of their senior year at Georgia College. After dating five years, they got married and have two children—Emery (21 months old) and Letty (five months old).

Dr. Sallie Coke, professor of nursing made a significant impression on Oja at

Georgia College. She was her biggest cheerleader and chaired Oja's dissertation. She credits Coke for enabling her to graduate with her DNP.

"Dr. Coke always said to make sure you understand what's going on with your patients," Oja said. "That's everything when it comes to functional medicine—understanding what's happening to patients and discovering the root cause."

Although the term "functional medicine" wasn't used in nursing school, Coke wanted to ensure students had a clear goal to discover the origin of patients' illnesses.

"That's what we do as nurses. We treat the whole person," Oja said. "Dr. Coke was so good at teaching that."

She recalls Florence Nightingale, who treated the whole person, recognizing symptoms and signs and how various parts of the body work together.

"Over the years, the more we've learned, the more we've become so fragmented and siloed in treating patients and seeing specialists for different ailments," Oja said. "We need to look at how the body works miraculously as a whole."

She often draws on what she learned in pathophysiology to find out what's going on with her patients and how their bodies are connected to health issues.

"If we don't address why they have high blood pressure, that person may develop high cholesterol, blood sugar imbalances and cognitive issues at some point in their life," Oja said. "It will have a domino effect on them."

"Prevention is understanding what imbalances there are in your body," she said. "How can we start working on healing those imbalances?"

Oja believes the standard American diet leads to diseases prevalent in society



Kristin, Cam, Emery (left) and Letty Oja

such as, heart issues, obesity, Type 2 Diabetes and more.

“These medications that we're putting people on are Band-Aids®, because we're not addressing why individuals have those health issues,” she said.

The absence of disease is not a facet of optimal health either.

“Being healthy is very different than just being disease free,” Oja said. “We're trying to optimize your health, quality of life and longevity.”

Every day, she sees patients who are disease free, but they're exhausted, their hair's falling out and they're gaining weight. Their digestion is irregular. They don't sleep well. But they have no diagnosis; they just don't feel good.

“Prevention is not just preventing disease,” Oja said. “It's about helping you live your best life and be the best version of yourself. Because life is too short to not feel your best.”

She wants her patients to understand why they're on a health journey. When patients understand this principle, they're more likely to achieve their goal.

Oja tells patients to strive to be healthy at least 80 percent of the time.

“That's how I live my life,” she said. “And that's how I want to work with my patients, because nobody can do anything 100 percent of the time. If you're striving for perfection, you will fail and then spiral out of control.”

That's why Oja loves the saying “little by little a little becomes a lot.” She also has a podcast with this name.

Oja is passionate about empowering her patients to make changes so they'll feel better.

“My favorite part of my work is transforming people's lives,” she said. “My biggest goals are to instill hope in people, and to empower them to make the changes they need to become the best version of themselves.”



Dr. Kristin Oja at work

Oja also serves on Georgia College's College of Health Sciences (COHS) Leadership Board. Her favorite part of serving is working with board members who're passionate about transforming people's lives, including the next generation of nursing students.

"In this industry, if we're working to change medicine, I have to think of the students who are graduating after me by investing in their education," Oja said. "And we make Georgia College the best college ever for everybody. The better Georgia College gets, the better your résumé gets, the better graduates we have, the more they're invested in their career and prevention. But I can't change the future of medicine if I don't look at changing the graduates."

She feels passionate about nursing and her Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree. Through her endowed scholarship for Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) students, she hopes the graduates from the MSN program will continue to pursue their DNP.

"The scholarship gives them hope they can help choose their career path," Oja said.

She feels fortunate to have parents who supported her through college. Now, she wants others to have that same opportunity.

“Education is expensive. And a lot of people aren’t in the same situation I was in,” Oja said. “I feel for a student who’s willing to put in the work. I don’t want money to be a barrier.”

She hopes others who were able to get an education view this similarly and will pay it forward.

In the meantime, Oja will continue to help transform healthcare by helping her patients live their best life.

“Having a serving heart is our core principle. I live that out every day with my patients, staff and family,” she said. “It makes the hard days so much better, knowing that we’ve touched one person’s life or made one person a little bit healthier.”



Outstanding alumni and staff to be recognized Alumni Weekend 2022

Alumni : Tuesday August 16, 2022

Seven exceptional Georgia College & State University alumni and staff will be honored during Alumni Weekend 2022. Discover what sets them apart for receiving these accolades.

- The Alumni Achievement Award is given to graduates who've excelled in a professional field, having attained prominence and/or having had a positive effect on the state, regional or national level.

Major General Thomas F. Grabowski, '90 is the 2022 recipient of the Alumni Achievement Award. As assistant adjutant general in the Georgia Air National Guard, Grabowski commands the development of policies and programs affecting more than 2,900 Georgia Air National Guard Airmen and civilians. They serve in two flying wings, seven geographically-separated units and training centers across six locations. Prior to his current assignment, Grabowski served as the special assistant to the director of the Air National Guard for Total Force Integration, Office of the Air Force director of staff, U.S. Air Force, Arlington, Virginia.

Grabowski joined the Georgia Air National Guard in 1985 as an enlisted telecommunications specialist. He was later commissioned as a communications officer through the Academy of Military Science in 1994. As a master air battle manager, he's held command, staff and supervisory positions that include commander of the 116th Air Control Wing at Robins Air Force Base, where he was responsible for the worldwide employment of the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS). His aviation career includes more than 2,700 flying hours and more than 1,700 combat hours in the E-8C.



Maj. Gen. Thomas Grabowski



Dr. Marcia Perry

Maj. Gen. Thomas Grabowski and Dr. Marcia Perry

- The **Alumni Heritage Award** is presented to an alumna who, in four or more decades of service, has demonstrated those ideals that best exemplify the traditions and heritage of the university.

Dr. Marcia Perry, '61, will receive the Alumni Heritage Award during Alumni Weekend. After graduating from Georgia College, she earned a Master of Science in mathematics education from Florida State University and a Ph.D. in measurement, statistics and evaluation from the University of Georgia. She also studied at Drew University, Vanderbilt University and Western Michigan University.

Perry taught mathematics at Albany and Rockdale County high schools, Oxford College of Emory University and Georgia College. She taught research and statistics at Florida International University and Daniel Webster College. She also worked as a program specialist with the National Student Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), program evaluator with the Palm Beach County school system in Florida and Title I evaluator for the the Educational Testing Service's southern region.

During the last 25 years, Perry has focused on academic assessment. She started with the Georgia Assessment Project, where she developed the college Regents' Tests in mathematics and criterion- referenced tests in mathematics for Georgia Public Schools. Perry later developed tests for two commercial testing companies:

Measured Progress and the California Testing Bureau. She retired in 2010 after working 15 years for the Virginia Department of Education, where she managed the development of tests in mathematics and science for Virginia public schools.

- **The Alumni Service Award** recognizes graduates who have rendered the greatest service in recent years to both the university and the Alumni Association.

Pamela Booker, '97, is this year's award recipient. A retired human resources assistant vice president, Booker led an award-winning talent acquisition function at AT&T Inc. She developed a reputation for excellence and industry-leading performance across sales, operations and talent acquisition. As a result, the Career Community Group recognized Booker as a 2015 Woman of Color STEM - Leader in Technology award recipient.

She discovered a love for higher education while serving as the Alex Gregory Leader in Residence at Georgia College. During her two years in the role, she utilized her professional expertise and leadership training as an instructor, guest lecturer and mentor.

Today, Booker serves as the executive director/chief human resources officer for Middle Georgia State University in Macon, Georgia.

She served as the director of ministry management at Bibb Mt. Zion Baptist Church, where she launched the Trailblazers Adopt-A-School initiative and the Level-Up Internship Program. She also served as a mentor at the Department of Juvenile Justice Macon Camp. In addition, she served as a chaplain for Houston Healthcare's Volunteer Chaplaincy Program in Warner Robins, Georgia.

Booker also served as the president of Georgia College's Alumni Association Board of Directors and is a trustee on the GCSU Foundation Board of Trustees. She is a J. Whitney Bunting School of Business and Technology Hall of Fame recipient and in 2021, Booker was inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society.

She believes in providing opportunities for students to achieve their education and career goals. Booker and her family fund the James J. and Irene A. Booker Endowed Scholarship at Georgia College. She also sponsors the Faith, Love and Service Educational Scholarships. These yearly scholarships were inspired as a tribute to her parents and are awarded to college students at Union Grove Baptist Church in Warner Robins, Georgia, and Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Lawrenceville, Georgia.



Pamela Booker



Amy Raburn

Pamela Booker and Amy Raburn

- **The Ethel Rae Mozo-Stewart Alumni Community Service Award** is given to graduates, as well as associate and honorary alumni. It was established in memory of an alumna from the class of '46, to honor the spirit of volunteerism among graduates. Candidates are characterized by a history of exemplary service, not necessarily in leadership positions, that resulted in visible improvements within his or her community.

Amy Tanner Raburn, '96, is the 2022 recipient of this award. She earned her Bachelor of Science in early childhood education. Raburn has worked in Middle Georgia as an educator and in local churches for over 26 years. Those roles led to her current position of executive director of Milledgeville-Baldwin Habitat for Humanity. She's excited about their plan to build house number 20 next year. Amy has been married to her husband, Clint, for 26 years and they have four sons. Her son, Preston, is the fifth generation in her family to attend Georgia College.

- **The Honorary Alumnus Award** is reserved for non-graduates who have rendered outstanding service to the university through work with the GCSU Alumni Association.

The award recognizes **Max Crook** for his exemplary service to Georgia College. A graduate of the University of Georgia and the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Rutgers University, he spent over 40 years in the banking and financial services

industry. Crook concluded his professional career as a financial advisor with Morgan Keegan and has been actively involved with the Foundation Board of Trustees for over 29 years, serving as board chair in 1997 and chairing the finance committee for over 10 years. He was the 2010 recipient of the William Bone Golden Key Award and a 2012 inaugural inductee into the Academy of Distinguished Alumni and Friends. The university has a Max Crook Volunteer Service Award established in his honor. Crook resides in Macon with his wife, Susan. They have three children and seven grandchildren.



Max Crook



Javier Becerra

Max Crook and Javier Becerra

- The Outstanding Recent Alumni Award is bestowed to Georgia College alumni who've graduated within the past 10 years. It honors the achievement of notable recognition in a professional or business career and promise for continued success.

Javier Becerra, '12, senior corporate counsel at Global Payments, is the recipient of this award. Before arriving at Global Payments, he was a junior counsel at Imerys and an assistant general counsel at Primerica.

Becerra is a graduate of Indiana University Maurer School of Law, where he was a research assistant and managing editor of the Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality. He won the Best Brief Award in the Sherman Minton Moot Court Competition for his work there. During law school, Becerra served in multiple

leadership roles: director of the Pro Bono Immigration Project and vice president of the Latino Law Student Association. Currently, Becerra serves on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association, where he was a former vice president in 2018 and president 2019-2021. He was also president of the Atlanta Echelon chapter, national board member of the Echelon Leadership Council, member of the Indiana University Maurer School of Law Steering Committee and member of the board of directors for the Young Lawyers Division of the Georgia State Bar.

Becerra was recognized in the Latino Leaders Magazine Winter Edition 2020 as a “Top Latino Lawyer to Keep on the Watch.” He was also recognized in Atlanta Magazine’s Top 500 Most Powerful Leaders in Atlanta 2021 and 2022.

A Cuban refugee, Becerra grew up in Gwinnett County and now resides in Barrow County. An avid traveler, he’s been to over 12 countries and enjoys spending his time with his friends and in the outdoors. Becerra also likes attending Atlanta United games and cheering on Real Madrid.

· Bestowed occasionally, the **William Bone Golden Key Award** is reserved to honor friends of Georgia College who’ve rendered outstanding service to both the university and its community. Nominees are not required to be alumni or connected to the Alumni Association; however, they must not have received honors from either the university or the association within the past four years.

Glenn Waddell, a structural superintendent at Georgia College, is the 2022 recipient of the William Bone Golden Key Award. He has worked for Georgia College for 28 years and has also been a big help in the community, working on Habitat for Humanity houses in Baldwin County for 20 years. He frames and trims houses, hangs doors and does additional interior work. Waddell volunteers for Habitat for Humanity, because it makes him “feel good to provide people with a place to live.”



Glenn Waddell

Glenn Waddell



August is National Make-A-Will Month

[University Advancement](#) : Tuesday August 16, 2022

August is National Make-A-Will Month. This month, Georgia College & State University encourages us to look ahead to ensure we have a sustainable, secure future to deliver our liberal arts mission.

We have partnered with FreeWill to offer our community a free online resource empowering you to create an estate plan. FreeWill's secure online tool helps you write a will at no immediate cost to you, so you can rest assured that your assets have a plan in place.

This August, we invite you to join your fellow Bobcats, Colonials, Royals, Irish, Elephants and Thunderbirds who've created their will using FreeWill, and also consider supporting Georgia College in your legacy. [Make my will today.](#)

Thinking about what's included in your estate can feel overwhelming, but taking inventory of your assets can help. FreeWill's estate planning tools are available for you to take this important step to secure your future.



Consultant empowers clients through decluttering

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Tuesday August 16, 2022

Since elementary school, Ansley Latting Hudson, '20, has been passionate about helping others declutter their lives. Later, she realized she could help individuals relieve stress and save a substantial amount of money by helping them get organized.

"When I was young, I would spend some Saturdays helping my parents tidy their Tupperware® containers and pantry and explain to them how to keep organized," she said. "Then, with every job I've had, I've always found at least one space to tidy up."

Hudson recently decided to make a career out of helping others reap the benefits of being organized.

She started Simply Sage Tidying in February 2022. Through her business, she helps her clients reduce stress, clutter and save money through tidier living.

The National Association of Productivity and Organizing Professionals provides the following statistics:

- People who live in cluttered households spend as much as 20% of their annual income replacing items they've misplaced.

- One in 11 Americans need a storage space.
- One in four Americans say they want to be more organized.

“The main takeaways are the unnecessary purchases due to disorganization, which is especially enlightening considering today’s inflation rates,” Hudson said. “But also, the anxiety that accompanies being cluttered and not knowing where things are can be immense.”



Ansley Hudson organizes her closet.



Ansley Hudson meets virtually with a client.

"I always knew I wanted to start my own business, which is one of the reasons I majored in management at Georgia College," she said. "My degree really helped with that. Just starting Simply Stage Tidying was an extension of myself by helping others find peace through organizing."

Dr. Karl Manrodt, professor of logistics at Georgia College & State University taught Hudson how to be confident in running a business.

"He taught me how to value myself, my services and be confident in my brand," she said. "He also mentioned that I'm the expert in my field, and my prices need to reflect that."

At Georgia College, Hudson served as the treasurer of the Community Council for Adams Residence Hall. That experience taught her how to be creative while maintaining a realistic budget—a skill she uses today in budgeting her own business.

Her service on the Student Government Association (SGA) Student Judicial Board taught her to be confident when assessing complicated situations—another talent she applies when working with clients.

“

The main takeaways are the unnecessary purchases due to disorganization, which is especially enlightening considering today's inflation rates. But also, the anxiety that accompanies being cluttered and not knowing where things are can be immense.

- Ansley Hudson

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Hudson was trained by Marie Kondo, a Japanese tidying expert who authored a best-selling book on the subject and stars in her own popular streaming television show, featuring her principals and methods for organizing.

“Marie and I have never had any repeat clients—that’s the goal,” Hudson said. “Decluttering your home should be a once-in-a-lifetime event.”

She teaches Kondo’s KonMari method, which focuses on tidying by category versus space. So, Hudson’s first session always deals with clothes, as they the most eye-opening category of items to declutter.

“We take every clothing item and put them in one big pile,” she said. “That can bring a lot of anxiety because most people say, ‘Oh, this is so much.’ But it provides an amazing reality check for people to see how much they really have.”

Hudson and her clients walk through the exercise together, only keeping the items that bring them joy and that they see themselves using in the future.

“I’m not just coming in and cleaning a space for you, I’m teaching you a method as a consultant,” she said. “I teach you to commit yourself to that process.”

Each client session is a minimum of three hours. Hudson works with two clients a day, teaching them different organizational methods for various categories. She also assigns them homework to help them practice the methods she taught them.

The results are unique to each client, because every person is different. Her job is to empower clients to take control of their space.

“I love walking through their life with them as a coach and a guide, and letting them process the emotions that have come with all the items they’ve gathered throughout their lives,” Hudson said. “Then, I teach them simple methods to move forward in the future to the life they want.”

When she meets with a client, they commit to a “tidying festival.” It’s a celebration

as they go through items that need to be organized.

“I teach methods that ensure that if you move, you can translate these methods no matter what point you are at in life,” Hudson said. “My methods focus on the client and what their ideal lifestyle looks like, and making sure that everything they own aligns to that.”

Her hope is that they commit to the method and that they see life-changing results.

“I really just want my clients to have renewed peace and joy when walking into their space, not being weighed down by clutter,” she said. “Ultimately, at the end of each session, I want them to feel that sense of ‘wow, this space is my own now that I know where everything is.’”

To learn more, visit: <https://www.instagram.com/simplysagetidying/>.

News Stories Posted Thursday August 18, 2022



Where bison roamed: Paleontological dig shows a different Georgia

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#): Thursday August 18, 2022

Imagine a Georgia—60,000 years ago—where the coastal city of Brunswick was 70 miles from the ocean and most of the state was a great, grassy plain where the bison and mammoths roamed.

“

Paleontology is a true liberal arts science because of all the passion of discovery that goes along with the liberal arts.

- Dr. Al Mead

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In an era when most people think paleo is a diet, a small public liberal arts school in Central Georgia is leading the way to unearthing this past.

In doing so, it reminds the world just how hip and modern real paleontology can be.

“Some people say paleontology is a dying profession and, at big research universities, that’s probably true. Many have eliminated their paleontology departments,” said Dr. Al Mead, a biology professor at Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville, Georgia.

“But in this environment,” he said, “it can thrive. Paleontology is a true liberal arts science because of all the passion of discovery that goes along with the liberal arts.”

Mead is a paleomammalogist who studies ecosystems of the past.



Dr. Al Mead at the dig site in Brunswick, Georgia.

In the last 20 years, he and about 40 Georgia College students have dug and backfilled muddy trenches in the swampy marshes of Southeast Georgia. Since excavating a near-complete bison skull in 2002, they've uncovered thousands of prehistoric bones, bone fragments, shells and teeth.

In recent years, scientists from other universities have joined the Georgia College team. They come together for a collaboration of minds, each sharing their expertise to help paint a better picture of what happened long ago at the Pleistocene-aged site.

Their discovery points to a past that teaches us about the future, about climate change and about survival of the human race.

"One of the primary lessons here is we're looking at the effects of climate change," Mead said. "There is a use for paleontology. If we understand history, then we can make a valid prediction about what happens next."

The dig site—the only excavation of its kind in Georgia—was discovered by twin brothers in 2001. Joshua and Kelly Clark were in high school at the time but later got undergraduate and masters' degrees at Georgia College in 2006 and '09.



A near-complete bison skull.

Sloshing through the creek on their family property, looking for salamanders to feed their pet turtle, they came across an enormous black bone sticking out of the muck.

Unsure of what it was, they gave the bone to their sister who was studying at the University of Georgia (UGA). Professors there turned to Mead, the area's sole expert on fossilized mammal

bones.

He took one look and knew instantly: It was the jawbone of a prehistoric bison—an enormous creature weighing about 3,000 pounds with a horn span of 7 feet.

“

There is a use for paleontology. If we understand history, then we can make a valid prediction about what happens next.

- Dr. Al Mead

”

Mead recalled reading about a similar find in the same area along the Brunswick Canal, dug in the 1830s. The dredging unearthed a large tooth, catching the attention of world-renowned geologist Sir Charles Lyell. He brought the fossil back to England for study. It was the remains of a Columbian mammoth—then long extinct.

Finding mammoth bones only miles from the Atlantic “was just unheard of,” Mead said. The giant, long-tusked elephant, like bison, prefer grazing areas like the American Great Plains.

After the 1800s, talk of bison and mammoth bones in Georgia faded almost into legend—until the Clark brothers took their fateful walk.

The jawbone they discovered proved giant prehistoric mammals did once inhabit Georgia. Back then, the environment looked much different than the seaside marshes and thick, Spanish-mossed forests we see today.

“Georgia would’ve been similar to the great prairies, not this jungle of trees we’re standing in now,” Mead said. “Paleontology gives us an indication of what the

climate was like back then, what the vegetation was like and what kind of organisms lived here.”



Graduate biology student Todd Bennett.

“Today, we’re in a period where carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are increasing rapidly. 2020 was the hottest year ever recorded, since recording began,” he said. “What’s within the realm of possibility? Can it get much warmer? Has it been this warm before?”

Questions like these can be solved by examining riddles of the past.

Mead relies on scientists from other universities, like Dr. Alex Cherkinsky, a carbon-dating expert from UGA; Dr. David Patterson, an isotope paleontologist from the University of North Georgia (UNG); Chris Seminack, a sedimentologist from UNG’s Gainesville campus; and Russell Cutts, an anthropologist at

Oxford College of Emory University in Atlanta. Other collaborators come from Kennesaw State University in Georgia, Temple University in Philadelphia and Utah State University.

The core team is a labyrinth of Georgia College connections—such as Mead’s wife, Heidi, the university’s fossil technician who teaches students to prep, catalogue and store specimens.

Former students, like the Clark brothers, still contribute. Josh is an instructor and Kelly a lab coordinator at Brunswick’s College of Coastal Georgia. Josh co-authored a paper on snakes at the site, and Kelly is working with Mead to describe birds from that time.

Mead’s current graduate student, Todd Bennett, is researching rodent taphonomy—how biological material fossilizes after death—and looking for evidence of rodent bones from owl pellets to determine the ecological landscape.

“

Science these days is not what science used to be. You have to bring in people who are relevant to your questions and experts in things that you are not. You have to be able to work with them, listen to them. It really propels the project forward.

- Dr. David Patterson

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Bennett studied undergraduate biology at UNG under Patterson, who worked the site as a Georgia College undergraduate and graduate student, '07 and '09. Through carbon and oxygen readings in teeth, he determines what plants prehistoric animals were eating and what the environment looked like.

“Science these days is not what science used to be,” Patterson said, “where you can be an expert in every subject. You have to bring in people who are relevant to your questions and experts in things that you are not. You have to be able to work with them, listen to them. It really propels the project forward.”



(Left to right) Todd Bennett, Dr. Al Mead, Dr. David Patterson and Heidi Mead.

The dig site is a boggy acre named Clark Quarry after the twins. For years, only Mead and Georgia College students dug there. Some summers, they waded chest

deep through tick-infested, cypress wetlands to get to the site—hidden off a residential road in Brunswick.

Teams sweat in the heat, swatting at swarms of mosquitoes, as they pickaxe and shovel through dirt and hardened clay to get to the sandy layer, 6 feet down, where fossils are found.

Excavated mounds of dirt are thrown onto a screen for spraying. As soil washes away, the group identifies tiny pieces—like raptor claws, hip bones of frogs, mice teeth, lizard jaws and shells.

The biggest fossil they've found is the enormous shin bone of a mammoth.

Over the years, they've discovered teeth, jaws, elbows, shoulder blades, ribs, feet and horns of bison; bones of giant rodents the size of dogs; and shells of now-extinct large turtles.

This summer, for the first time, they found the partial skull of a juvenile mammoth.

It's hard work. But recruiting students is easy.

Patterson recalls his digs as a student—emerging at day's end exhausted, caked in mud and excited. He considered going pre-med and becoming a doctor. But getting dirty and finding bones in the ground changed his mind.

"Even as a kid or college student," Patterson said, "you think it's really not possible to be a paleontologist, like it's not a real job. It's something you see in the movies."

"But it was really interesting to me," he said. "It allows you to look back into this world that's very different than the one we live in now."



Mead holds the jaw of a juvenile mammoth.



Students and scientists at the dig site this summer.

Bennett is interested in evolutionary biology. He hopes to find bones of predators. So far, the only evidence of their presence 60,000 years ago are the damaged remains of bison and mammoths—suggesting they were attacked and killed by carnivores.

At least five bison found at the site—adults and juveniles—don't appear to have died all at once in a natural catastrophe.

“

There are bite marks all over these bones, but we don't have any fossils of the carnivores...

- Todd Bennett

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The climate was in flux, very much like today, forcing mammals to gather around shrinking water holes where vegetation still existed. That made them easy prey for big sabertoothed cats, large cave bears and dire wolves, who lived at the time.

“There are bite marks all over these bones, but we don't have any fossils of the carnivores, which is interesting,” Bennett said. “Why are we missing that group? We

have snakes, birds, turtles, frogs, lizards, bison, mammoths, deer—but no carnivores. They must've eaten and died somewhere else."

The team thinks bison, however, died in this one location at separate times. If they'd died together in a flood, bones from each mammal would be in one place, Bennett said, not scattered as if pulled apart and dragged by predators.

Clues supporting this hypothesis include a broken bison horn. It was already skeletonized before being buried.



The humerus bone of a bison.

Bones have puncture marks and parallel scratches, suggesting they were gnawed and trampled upon. Often, one side of a bone is cracked and more aged, as if left in the sun, while the other surface is soft and smooth. This indicates bones may have lay on the ground for years before burial.

"What we envision," Mead said, "is a gradual accumulation of bones on the floodplains, and

then floodwaters came and pushed all that sand. It's like putting icing on a cake—there's a layer of sand all across the floodplain."

Finding bison and mammoths in Georgia always seemed a bit preposterous, which makes solving this puzzle even more satisfying.

It took all the right elements in place for Mead to find what has become the greatest discovery of his career.

He now lives to see the thrill of discovery in his students.

“

What I look forward to seeing most is the students' eyes lighting up when they find that jaw or that tooth and realize they're the first human to ever see it. It sparks the passion of discovery.

- Dr. Al Mead

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Alternate Text



Join us for history in the making: GCSU to inaugurate President Cathy Cox

[President, Office of the](#) : Thursday August 18, 2022

On Friday, August 19, Georgia College & State University formally inaugurates Cathy Cox as its 12th president.

During the investiture ceremony, Cox will don the university regalia and accept the presidential medallion, symbolically conferring leadership of the institution.

The inauguration ceremony is an opportunity to rally the campus community around Cox as president, reaffirm what Georgia College has accomplished in the past and mark a new chapter in the university's history.

The 3 p.m. ceremony will take place at Centennial Center, followed by a community reception. All members of the campus and Milledgeville-Baldwin County communities are encouraged to attend.



President Cathy Cox

Expected guests at the inauguration include delegates from various colleges, universities, learned societies and student organizations; officials in the University System of Georgia; as well as dignitaries from local and state government.

Festivities will continue into the evening when Georgia College hosts a celebratory BBQ beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Front Campus.

You can learn more about President Cox, the investiture ceremony and send a celebratory message at the [inauguration website](#).

News Stories Posted Monday August 22, 2022



Cathy Cox inaugurated as 12th President of Georgia College & State University

[President, Office of the](#) : Monday August 22, 2022

Story and Photos by University Communications.

The Georgia College & State University community gathered to mark a new chapter in the institution's 133-year history, the inauguration of President Cathy Cox.

In the ceremonial highlight of the daylong celebration, University System of Georgia Chancellor Sonny Perdue conferred upon Cox a presidential medallion emblazoned with the official seal of Georgia College & State University, signifying the transition to her leadership of the institution.

"President Cox, leading this university must be for the benefit of the students, the community [and] the state," Chancellor Perdue said. "By accepting this responsibility, you're making a commitment to this college's mission of the liberal arts and to preparing students to make a difference in this world."

The inauguration ceremony included remarks from dignitaries representing various stakeholders within the university community.

Dr. Jennifer Flory is the presiding officer in the University Senate. She expressed her hope that Cox's leadership will continue confidently progressing Georgia College on the path to preeminence that began with the announcement of the public liberal arts designation under former President Dr. Rosemary DePaolo.

"We know you as a student-focused and aspirational leader with the insight and persistence to lead us into an uncertain but promise-filled future," Flory said. "We are very fortunate to have you at the helm at this point in our history, and I am confident that you are the right person to lead our institution."

Kaitley Congdon, president of the Student Government Association, commended Cox for the way she forges meaningful relationships with students.

"As president of a university, there is always some important task on the agenda that must be taken care of, but even with her busy schedule, President Cox always goes out of her way to make sure she is where the students are," Congdon said. "This means a lot to students."

The inauguration was a true community event with delegations representing fellow USG institutions, both houses of the Georgia General Assembly, Georgia Military College, Central Georgia Technical College, the City of Milledgeville, the Baldwin County Commission, the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office and the Baldwin County School District.

In her inaugural address, Cox thanked everyone for celebrating this historic



Cathy Cox brought her signature humor to inauguration.

occasion with her. She then reiterated the importance of the task before her: harnessing the power of a liberal arts education to prepare students to take ownership of and lead a world beset with complexity, complacency and indifference.

“

Our graduates will make the world a better place...they won't be satisfied with the status quo, and neither are we.

- Cathy Cox

”

“I am excited by the idea that we can utilize one of the most classic forms of education—the liberal arts—to train students to recognize, to analyze, to care about and to help solve some of the most challenging issues that society faces today,” Cox said. “Our graduates will make the world a better place. Armed with superior abilities to analyze issues, apply innovative solutions and build teams and communities that sustain a better way forward. They won’t be satisfied with the status quo—and neither are we. The future looks better because we at Georgia College & State University will make it so.”

News Stories Posted Tuesday August 23, 2022



Message from President Cathy Cox: The Passing of Mrs. Sandra Dunagan Deal

[President, Office of the](#) : Tuesday August 23, 2022

Georgia College & State University (GCSU) is deeply saddened by the tremendous loss of alumna Mrs. Sandra Dunagan Deal. Mrs. Deal earned her B.S. ('63) and M.Ed. ('66) in Elementary Education from GCSU then named The Woman's College of Georgia.

Mrs. Deal embodied the highest aspirations of Georgia College & State University. As a former language arts teacher, Mrs. Deal understood the impact education has on the lives of her fellow Georgians and worked tirelessly to promote reading as the pathway to student achievement and lifelong success. When given a platform as Georgia's First Lady, she dedicated herself to modeling the civic virtues of literacy, volunteerism, and community service.

As her alma mater, GCSU was pleased that the Georgia General Assembly opened

the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy in 2017 on the GCSU campus to carry on Mrs. Deal's legacy and commitment to advancing childhood literacy programs across the state of Georgia. The university benefited greatly from Mrs. Deal's support and service to the Governing Board of the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center and the GCSU Foundation Board of Trustees. Georgia College & State University is honored to carry on her legacy by serving future generations of Georgians with the same servant's heart that Mrs. Deal so eloquently modeled for GCSU faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Governor Deal and the Deal family.

Cathy Cox, J.D.
President
Georgia College & State University



**Mrs. Sandra Dunagan
Deal**



City of Paris illuminates art, history and culture on study abroad program

[Philosophy Religion & Liberal Studies, Department of](#): Tuesday August 23, 2022

Georgia College & State University students got a taste of the good life during a study abroad program this summer in the City of Light.

Drs. Sunita Manian and James Winchester led 23 Georgia College students on a study abroad program to Paris France May 10 through June 15, 2022. The program called, "GC France: Gender, Culture and the Good Life: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Paris," encompassed a wide variety of cultures, rich history, sites, food and more.

"Paris is one of the world's great cities," Winchester said. "It offers a wealth of diverse cultural experiences."

The group stayed in the heart of Paris for 25 days.

"The city has wonderful food and is very easy to get around in," Winchester said. "The students really get to know the city and feel comfortable there. They had metro passes that allowed them to move freely all over the city. We were a mere 25-minute walk from Notre Dame."

In France, students visited the Palace of Versailles and two of the most famous chateaus: Château de Chambord and Chenonceau, the latter known as the Château of Women, because women were instrumental in building and maintaining it.

In Paris, they toured the Louvre Museum, where they focused on Black images in European art. They also explored the Musée Rodin and the Musée d'Orsay—home to the world's greatest collection of Impressionist art—with particular focus on female artists such as Camille Claudel, Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt. Students were also able to visit a special exhibition called "Pioneers of artists who challenged gender norms in the 1920s." In addition, students saw one of the greatest collections of modern art in the world at the Centre Pompidou.

Walking tours included: places relating to Black History in Paris, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir's Paris, West African, North African and South Asian immigrant neighborhoods and the Marais—which has beautiful palaces built in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 19th century, the Marais became home to many Jewish immigrants. Students also toured the Paris Mosque.

Manian and Winchester wanted students to learn about the history and many cultures found in Paris.

"In our classes, students read about immigrants in Paris and then saw their neighborhoods," Manian said. "Students read Sartre and Beauvoir—in particular, they read about Beauvoir's efforts on behalf of women's rights. They also learned about James Baldwin and Richard Wright. Then they saw the cafés where they worked, the buildings where they lived and, in the case of Sartre and Beauvoir, their very simple graves."

Senior Meghan Hankla, who's double-majoring in psychology and liberal studies, learned to pay more attention to the world, especially how other countries may approach similar issues. She learned concepts that she will apply in her life and



Students and Drs. Manian (left) and Winchester (right) visit Château de Chambord.

career.



Meghan Hankla with Paris in the background.

“While most of our readings and assignments were focused on France and French issues, there were ties or similar issues that could have similar applications,” Hankla said. “This will be important in life and my career, as it’s vital to look for guidance in history and what has already been done.”

She wanted to study abroad in Paris because of her professors.

“When the pandemic started, I thought I’d never get to study abroad because of health concerns and restrictions,” Hankla said. “However, the professors’ excitement and cautiousness made me feel more comfortable and excited about the experience.”

“

France, like the United States and many other countries, has a complex history in relation to gender. It’s important to see how they’ve improved beyond our country, so that we can help create change at home.

”

Her favorite food in Paris was the chocolate éclair.

“I also had éclair-flavored coffee that was amazing,” she said. “My favorite bakery was located just down the street from our hotel.”

The part of the study abroad program Hankla especially enjoyed was the walking tours.

“They were not only interesting, but they made Paris feel small,” she said. “It was amazing being able to walk for a couple of hours and then recognize a part of the city that we had been in a couple of days before.”

Hankla feels study abroad is a great way to explore oneself and nurture independence.

“I tried new foods and explored more because I had time, and I was surrounded by people who also wanted to explore,” she said. “While there was a language barrier, it wasn’t daunting. I’m so glad I went on this.”

Many people fall in love with France. This study abroad program allowed her to look beyond the beauty and history and examine the complexities in the country. Hankla learned how concepts of gender shape its culture.

“France, like the United States and many other countries, has a complex history in relation to gender,” she said. “It’s important to see how they’ve improved beyond our country, so that we can help create change at home.”

Georgia College senior liberal studies and philosophy major Elizabeth Haygood learned how it feels to be immersed in a culture that values philosophy.

She learned about the prejudices and violence against Muslims, especially Muslim women, in France.

“I plan to research this violence, publicize it and hopefully assist the need to push the French government to take responsibility and address this issue,” she said.

Her favorite food there was a classic baguette and cheese.

“

The financial aspect held me back from going initially, but there are accessible scholarships to apply for that really decrease the financial burden. You'll build relationships with your professors and discover a unique culture that's completely different from the United States.

- Elizabeth Haygood



Elizabeth Haygood relaxes in Jardin Luxembourg eating her favorite food—a classic baguette and cheese.

“Although it’s simple, I would go to parks such as the Jardin Luxembourg and read while snacking on my bread and cheese,” Haygood said. “This was a very relaxing way to spend my afternoons when I wasn’t in class or walking around Paris.”

Haygood also became comfortable with Paris, its metro system and getting to explore on her own with confidence.

“Drs. Manian and Winchester gave me the foundation and wisdom to better understand the value of what I was seeing,” she said. “I also really enjoyed the artwork and perusing Carrefour, the market next to the hotel.”

Haygood suggests students should go on a study abroad program before they graduate. She also recommends learning the language in advance.

“The financial aspect held me back from going initially, but there are accessible scholarships to apply for that really decrease the financial burden,” Haygood said. “You’ll build relationships with your professors and discover a unique culture that’s completely different from the United States.”

News Stories Posted Thursday August 25, 2022



In Memory of Sandra Dunagan Deal

[President, Office of the](#) : Thursday August 25, 2022

Sandra Dunagan Deal, '63, '66, dedicated her life to empowering the young people of our state.

As an educator, and as First Lady of Georgia, she advocated for future generations of Georgians by focusing on literacy as the key to a successful life and personal fulfillment.

Each step of the way, Mrs. Deal brought her alma mater with her. Georgia College & State University is proud to carry on her legacy of service through the [Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy](#). With her example, we will make the lives of Georgia students better.

News Stories Posted Tuesday August 30, 2022



Teacher of the Year nurtures her students through math and life

[College of Education](#) : Tuesday August 30, 2022

Despite life's obstacles, Seticia Smith, '10, '12, '17, has given 110% in the classroom. And the Baldwin County School District noticed.

She's the 2022 Baldwin County Teacher of the Year, a seventh-grade mathematics teacher, department chair and family engagement coordinator at Oak Hill Middle School. Smith is also a survivor of breast cancer and a heart attack. Yet, she puts her students first.

The Baldwin County School District nominated six teachers for Teacher of the Year. Smith won the honor. She is in her 10th year of teaching. Smith prefers teaching middle schoolers, because they are starting to change from children into

young adults.

“I just love to help them figure out where they want to go and what they want to be in life,” she said. “I’d like to be a part of that transition—finding out who they are.”

Smith believes in making math fun for students. Whether it’s solving scavenger-hunt problems or using their body shape to determine x- and y-axis coordinates or making videos that show kindergarteners how to solve math problems—students thrive in Smith’s class.



Seticia Smith with one of her students.

Smith found her calling to become an educator when she started teaching Sunday School at her church and volunteering with Oak Hill Middle School’s girls basketball team. Those were the moments she realized she wanted to teach middle school students.

“I just love being with children,” Smith said.

“

I get to go through life with my students every day. We have good days and bad days, but to me, these students are like family for 180 days. We grow together and learn from each other. That's what family does.

- Seticia Smith

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While at Georgia College & State University, Smith worked three jobs to help pay tuition. She was determined to get her degrees.

“I was happy that the library stayed open 24/7,” Smith said. “I would get off of work and go to the library to study; get up and do it all over again the next day.”

Her undergraduate degree is in psychology, which helps her understand young adolescents and their thought process. She earned her master’s degree in middle grades education and then completed a specialist in education degree.



Pictured from left to right are: Dr. Noris Price, superintendent, Baldwin County Schools, Seticia Smith, Kemyada Bonner Pinkston, Communities in School coordinator at Midway Hills Primary School and Smith's fiancé, Dr. Sharon Hunt-Simmons, assistant superintendent, Baldwin County Board of Education and Dr. Daymond Ray Jr., principal at Oak Hill Middle School.

At Georgia College, Dr. Angel Abney, professor of mathematics, made math fun for Smith.

She helped Smith become the teacher she is today by modeling how to keep math interesting.

"Dr. Abney was very excited about math," Smith said. "She wasn't just at the board, giving instruction. Dr. Abney did a lot of hands-on activities and encouraged students by leading us in the right direction towards solving problems. She never just gave us the correct answer. I found that to be very helpful."



Seticia Smith, center, celebrates being named Oak Hill Middle School's 2021-2022 Teacher of the Year.

Smith tries to emulate Abney's teaching methods by encouraging her students to find the solution to their math problems on their own and not just giving them the answer.

"It's very difficult to do this with students," she said. "Sometimes middle schoolers just shut down when they can't get it. But I try to make learning fun for them."

Smith enjoys seeing the positive strides her students make in math throughout the school year.

"When students start school about 75% to 80% of them hate math, because they didn't do well in it," she said. "I don't force a seventh-grade math curriculum on them, but just see where they are in math and what they can do to focus on their strengths and weaknesses."

Smith enjoys teachable moments where she can put students at ease with math.

"I have students tell me, 'You make math seem easier than what I thought,'" Smith said. "And I tell them, 'I'm glad you're starting to see that math is not so hard—it's

not a monster.”

Sometimes those teachable moments come full circle, when students teach her new things.

“My students keep me updated with what's going on in the world,” Smith said. “They're forever evolving and fun to be around. They even teach me new dances—all sorts of new things. I’m not just their school teacher. I’m able to connect with them on another level.”

Smith also thrives outside the classroom, providing service to her school and community.

Throughout the year, she volunteers with Georgia College’s YES Program—an afterschool and summer learning program for kids. She’s also the voice of Oak Hill Middle School’s football games and Baldwin High School’s basketball games. She coached high school girls basketball and middle school girls track. This will be her first year not coaching due to illness.



Seticia Smith with a student at a Baldwin High School basketball game.

“I had a lot of things going on before I got sick,” Smith said.

“I’ve had more support than I thought I’d ever have from my co-workers, community, church family—everybody pitched in and was there for me.”

Now, she’s ready to get back in the classroom, working with her students and seeing them progress in math and life.

“I enjoy seeing them grow by the end of the year, as they develop more love for the subject,” Smith said. “They will at least try to solve problems instead of just giving up.”

Some of her students have issues in their lives, but when they get to school, it's just a relief for Smith to see smiles on their faces.

“I get to go through life with my students every day,” she said. “We have good days and bad days, but to me, these students are like family for 180 days. We grow together and learn from each other. That's what family does.”

News Stories Posted Wednesday August 31, 2022



Study abroad program strengthens leadership skills, honors past participant

[Leadership Programs](#) : Wednesday August 31, 2022

Hope Browning, a senior at Georgia College & State University, never thought she would venture overseas with people she didn't know. Yet, that's what she did, thanks to the Erin Semple Morrarty Memorial Scholarship and an additional Georgia College study abroad scholarship.

As a candidate for Georgia College's Leadership Certificate Program (LCP), one of the requirements for the certificate is to complete an internship, practicum or study abroad program. So, Browning chose to participate in this past summer's Leadership Study Abroad program in Strasbourg. Located in northeastern France, Strasbourg is the capital city of the Grand Est region and formal seat of the European Parliament.

Some of Browning's study abroad program highlights included visiting landmarks like the Haut Koenigsbourg castle, Notre Dame Cathedral of Strasbourg, Louvre

Museum, European Parliament and European Union.

“I especially enjoyed seeing the Eiffel Tower,” Browning said. “It was so much bigger than I’d imagined.”

The Eiffel tower was just one of those things you feel like you’ll never get to see, so actually being there and climbing it was the best.”

Her biggest takeaway from the Study Abroad program is to always be open to new experiences and to take big risks.



Hope Browning at Heidelberg Germany.



Hope Browning (front: fifth from left) at the Council of Europe.

“I’ve learned a lot about myself and will use this to guide me in my career and in everyday life,” Browning said. “I have also seen firsthand that the biggest risks can sometimes reap the greatest rewards.”

By challenging herself to step outside her comfort zone, Browning said she unlocked a new part of her personality.

“I learned I’m an authentic leader, and I lead through my core values,” Browning said. “I never saw myself as a leader—I thought I was just being myself, but it turns out that this is a way people can lead others.”

“It’s important to study abroad because it opens you up to new cultures, lifestyles and people,” she said. “You get to see how the rest of the world lives and how privileged we are to live in America.”

The most fun she had on the study abroad program was exploring the city and other countries with her new friends.

I've learned a lot about myself and will use this to guide me in my career and in everyday life. I have also seen firsthand that the biggest risks can sometimes reap the greatest rewards.

- Hope Browning

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“We made lots of memories together that I will remember for a lifetime,” Browning said.

“I believe all students should study abroad if given the opportunity,” she said. “There are many scholarships available, and they are worth taking the time to apply.”

Browning participated in this transformative experience with the assistance of the Erin Semple Morrarty Memorial Scholarship.

Valerie and David Semple created the scholarship to honor their daughter, Erin Semple Morrarty, '03, who passed away in December 2013. The scholarship is available to help Georgia College students who participate in a study abroad program.

“Erin loved Georgia College and what it had to offer, including travel,” Valerie said. “When Erin died so tragically, we wanted to create a memorial fund in her name. The first thing we thought of was giving back to Georgia College, because it had done so much for Erin's growth. Our hope is that this scholarship will do the same for others.”

Morrarty traveled internationally on Georgia College Study Abroad programs to countries like Greece—where she spent five weeks studying at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Morrarty also went to France for three weeks and visited the European Union, Louvre Museum, Porsche Factory and Paris. She was fond of impressionism, especially the French painter Claude Monet.



Erin Semple Morrarty
(Feb. 17, 1982 - Dec.
16, 2013)

“I thank the Semples for enabling me to have such an amazing experience,” Browning said. “It was truly a summer I'll never forget. I cannot come up with the right words to express how grateful I am.”



GCSU intramural sports fields record-breaking number of teams this fall

[Intramurals & Recreational Sports](#) : Wednesday August 31, 2022

Story developed by University Communications

It's going to be a competitive year!

Georgia College & State University (GCSU) Intramural Sports will field 430 teams competing in 9 different sports at the beginning of this semester.

That's a GCSU Intramural Sports record for the number of teams competing at one time. With about 1,400 students signed up to play intramural sports heading into the first phase of the semester, roughly one out of every four GCSU students participates in an intramural sport.

"Our participation rate is one of the highest in the country," said Drew Bruton,

associate director of Wellness and Recreation.

As many as 2,200 students will participate in intramural sports by the end of the academic year, Bruton said. That's about 38% of GCSU's 5,500 undergraduate students. The national average is closer to 11%, down from 18% in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“

Intramural sports offer a social outlet that you're not going to find anyplace else on campus.

- Drew Bruton

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Bruton attributes the jump in participation to students looking for ways to meet people and find their niche.

“Intramural sports offer a social outlet that you're not going to find anyplace else on campus,” Bruton said. “Students enjoy the programs they are in, and they let the freshman know about it.”

And the increased participation will have an effect on the level of play. Bruton said the greater number of teams allows his office to set the schedule and pair teams based on competitiveness.

“Our goal is for players to have fun,” Bruton said. “We want people to feel welcome and have a good time, even if they're not the most competitive person.”

Competition in the early fall phase, or season, of the semester has already started and will last through Oct. 6, 2022. During that time, teams and individuals will compete in flag football, softball, indoor soccer, kickball, cornhole, spikeball, kan jam, pickleball and soccer tennis.

And even though the intramural action is already underway, students can join an existing team at any time during the season.



A group of students play cornhole during an intramural tournament. One student, with his back to the camera throws a bean bag toward a board, with two other competitors standing around it.



A group of students play flag football.

"Intramural sports are something that make Georgia College special and different from other University System of Georgia schools," Bruton said. "It's something unique because of our participation rate, the level of competition and the number of teams that compete at Georgia College."

You can learn more about Intramural Sports, join an existing team or sign up for the next phase of play at imleagues.com/gcsu.