Front Page News Story Archive

February 2023



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
News Stories Posted Tuesday February 14, 2023	3
GCSU starts first two-year college program for adults with disabilities in Central Georgia	3
News Stories Posted Wednesday February 15, 2023	9
Alumna makes nationwide impact celebrating others	9
GCSU Library puts history on display in new Special Collections facilities	14
News Stories Posted Friday February 24, 2023	18
Student serves bowl of family history at The Max	18
News Stories Posted Monday February 27, 2023	23
New physics concentration prepares students for careers in radiation therapy and medical imaging technology	23
Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy gets new NMR instrument to train scientists of tomorrow	27
News Stories Posted Tuesday February 28, 2023	30
Documentary films celebrate women barbecue pitmasters	30

News Stories Posted Tuesday February 14, 2023



GCSU starts first two-year college program for adults with disabilities in Central Georgia

Teacher Education, Department of : Tuesday February 14, 2023

Story and photos developed by University Communications.

In a recent class assignment, everyone in Betsy Short's arts and literacy class expected Maddie to volunteer for an acting role. But, as parts were doled out, she never raised her hand.

Until the leading role, that is.

That's when Maddie's hand shot up. She got the part and "performed brilliantly," said Dr. Nicole DeClouette, interim associate dean and professor of Special Education.

Madelyn St. John of Milledgeville is one of three young adults with intellectual disabilities in Georgia College & State University's new GCSU Thrive initiative. The

two-year certificate program operates through the university's School of Continuing and Professional Studies to give these individuals hope, options and a place in the community.

"We think this will transform campus and the surrounding area," DeClouette said. "There's a huge potential to make this program more dynamic and inclusive. Disability is often forgotten when we talk about diversity."

In the land of Central State Hospital, this is how far we have come in our treatment of

people with disabilities."



Maddie St. John with her arts and literacy class.

GCSU Thrive is one of more than 300 Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) programs nationwide—eight in Georgia—that offer adults with disabilities the chance to continue their education and access resources their peers often take for granted. The program is a modified path to college, where individuals develop work skills.

Georgia College's IPSE has an interesting distinction.

- Dr. Rob Sumowski

It's located where "150 years ago they warehoused people like this. They were institutionalized just down the road," said Dr. Rob Sumowski, co-director of GCSU Thrive and associate professor of Special Education.

"Milledgeville was home of one of the biggest mental hospitals in the United States," Sumowski said. "That we can come full circle to the point where, rather than warehousing and writing these human beings off, we're helping to plug them into society as active members—that does our hearts good."

"In the land of Central State Hospital," he said, "this is how far we have come in our treatment of people with disabilities."

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Drs. Nicole DeClouette, Stephen Wills and Rob Sumowski.

DeClouette and Sumowski discovered four years ago they were working toward the same goal. Both wanted to provide a higher education experience for adults with intellectual disabilities. They sought and received "amazing support" from Georgia College President Cathy Cox and Provost Dr. Costas Spirou, who immediately said "Of course, we will do it. It's the right thing to do."

"I'll never forget that," Sumowski said. "We walked out of that meeting and Nicole said, 'We've got an ally.' That's what these kids need. Somebody who believes in them."

The pandemic slowed things a bit, but the program finally launched in January with the help of several start-up grants from the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD).

During two years on campus, GCSU Thrive students take eight classes with Georgia College students. They get practicum jobs on campus and do internships in the community. Currently, they're on campus two days a week taking courses in media literacy, arts and literacy, contemporary health issues and writing life stories.

Accommodations include reducing the number of pages to read, adding more pictures to text and having instructions read out loud.

"The goal is for them to be independent," DeClouette said. "We expect them to do the work, do the readings, take the tests, do the projects. But it's all modified, so they can be successful."

GCSU Thrive students also take exclusive classes like "My Money, My Goals, My Future," where they learn practical job and interview preparation skills. Sometimes, they go on excursions—like a recent trip to the Georgia State Capitol, where they met Gov. Brian Kemp on GCDD Advocacy Day.



The first three GCSU Thrive students: Maddie St. John, Gage Williams and Spencer Kirkley at the State Capitol on GCDD Advocacy Day.

Directors plan to increase the

number of GCSU Thrive students this fall to five and add choices in curriculum.

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Each student has a different way of comprehending and learning. You have to adjust to each individual personality and need. I love genuinely forming a connection and being a teacher to them and being able to help them with school —give them that experience that they're in a college life adulting on their own. - Peer Mentor Kaylin O'Riordan

Some intellectually disadvantaged students maneuver classes by themselves, take online tests and complete class projects without modifications.

Others get support from Georgia College education students, who sit in class with them. Peer mentors quietly discuss the lesson, help with note taking, read instructions, go to lunch with GCSU Thrive students and help them study.

This is essential to the program's success, said Dr. Stephen Wills, co-director of GCSU Thrive and professor of special education. ISPE isn't "a feel-good program," he said. Mentors give support but don't do the work for their mentees.

"We really expect them to learn in classes," Wills said. "We've chosen classes on their level—practical skills they can use in life and employment. We want students who will benefit from the college classroom, not just sit in the back."

Spencer Kirkley of Eastman has autism. First-year special education major Kaylin O'Riordan, serves as his mentor.

O'Riordan must quickly evaluate a situation and move in ways that aren't unsettling for GCSU Thrive students. She enjoys the work and said it's great preparation for teaching.

"Each student has a different way of comprehending and learning.



Spencer Kirkley (right) in his contemporary health issues class.

You have to adjust to each individual personality and need," O'Riordan said. "I love genuinely forming a connection and being a teacher to them and being able to help them with school—give them that experience that they're in a college life adulting on their own."

A month into the program, directors marvel at how well GCSU Thrive students are thriving.

Two professors have commented on Maddie's eagerness to participate. She elevates conversation in their classes and raises her hand constantly. Her desire in life is to become a disability advocate, so she can help others.

This is the ultimate goal, Sumowski said, for GCSU Thrive students to earn their certificate in liberal arts education, find their niche in society and shine.

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These kids have beautiful things to offer the world, and we want to give them an avenue by which they can do that. It's so important their gifts are revealed and amplified.

- Dr. Sumowski

News Stories Posted Wednesday February 15, 2023



Alumna makes nationwide impact celebrating others

Outdoor Center : Wednesday February 15, 2023

Olivia Steimle Kelly, '17, is a "people person," and it shows.

As an event specialist on REI's Retail Store Grand Opening Team, Kelly led the opening of the outdoor recreation equipment retailer's new store in Athens Feb. 10. It's the 13th REI grand opening she's helped organize. Her job has taken her across the country, opening stores in Colorado, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, Tennessee and Wyoming.

Within a week of REI Athens opening its doors, Kelly was already coordinating another grand opening in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. It opened the following weekend.

REI is a nationwide cooperative owned by its members. Anyone is welcome to shop

at the co-op and tap into the company's resources in support of an active lifestyle, but members enjoy a range of benefits.

"The people make these events special," she said. "All we have to do is celebrate them."

When a new REI opens, several teams across the co-op collaborate to support each event. Kelly says the best part of her job is working with others.

"The people make what we do happen," she said. "They show up every day really stoked and excited for the grand opening to make it the best possible experience for everyone."

Each opening celebrates REI Coop members and the community. The multi-day events include giveaways, a party and more. Kelly and her team coordinate a preview party for co-op members. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, they celebrate



Olivia Kelly takes a break from grand opening activities in Colorado.

community members and make the experience interactive for everyone.

"[Our] community members are passionate about recreation," Kelly said. "We understand our mutual love for the outdoors and want to make sure the community is at the heart of everything we do."

"It's really cool that we can combine those partnerships and build relationships," she said.

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It's just fun when we get to bring ourselves back to what it is that we love the most at our core. It's just the Bobcat spirit.

Kelly's passion for building community began when she "found her niche" at Georgia College & State University. She wanted a university that would provide a nurturing learning experience. She got that from Georgia College's professors and small class sizes.

"Georgia College is special, because it allowed me to find my space and be unique," she said. "That's what made the whole experience great."



Dr. Will Hobbs officiates Olivia and James Kelly's wedding Oct. 7, 2021.

Outdoor Education Associate Professor Dr. Jeff Turner, Outdoor Education Director Dr. Liz Speelman and former Outdoor Education Professor Dr. Will Hobbs made a big impression on Kelly.

"They impacted me in different ways, but it all came down to how kind they are and the amount of energy they put into us, as students," she said. "It was more than a teacher-to-student relationship. They cared about us and wanted to take us to the next level."

Hobbs mentored Kelly at Georgia College. He always made himself available to talk about life and professional work. He even officiated at Kelly's wedding with her husband, James, '17, another graduate of GCSU's Outdoor Education program. "We have some sweet memories of that experience," she said. "We were always encouraged to go beyond what we thought could be possible. It just shows how well this program spanned beyond our degrees."

Kelly applies what she learned from her professors every day. She still uses theories Turner taught about teamwork. Speelman's group development classes also made a huge difference in her success.

Kelly also learned the "shift, cancel or go" strategy for assessing and setting priorities during times of crisis. She uses this technique in her role today.



Olivia Kelly with her Events Team at the Athens' store grand opening.

"Since the COVID pandemic, we've seen a great deal of delays in my work," Kelly said. "I use the 'shift, cancel or go' method. This allows me to check my decisions and set my team up for success. Then, when the right time comes back around, we get back to what we were doing in the first place."

At Georgia College, Kelly worked as a supervisor at the Wellness and Recreation Center, lead facilitator at the Outdoor Education Center and supervisor at the Climbing Wall. These experiences taught her leadership skills. Kelly's involvement in the Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority taught her to be open minded when working with others—a trait that also comes in handy in her industry.

"My experience at Georgia College was pretty amazing," she said. "I learned how to lift others up. And that's really special. The sorority experience was also impactful for me. I found ways to stay involved in leadership. That taught me how to work with people with different views than mine—the ethos of what this group meant to me."

The people skills Kelly developed at Georgia College have helped her thrive in her profession.

"It's just fun when we get to bring ourselves back to what it is that we love the most at our core," she said. "It's just the Bobcat spirit."



GCSU Library puts history on display in new Special Collections facilities

Ina Dillard Russell Library : Wednesday February 15, 2023

Georgia College & State University offers new resources for exploring history and the evolution of the printed page.

Georgia College's Ina Dillard Russell Library celebrated the opening of a major addition to its Special Collections & Galleries department Monday. The expanded facilities provide new space for collaborating on digital history projects; analyzing and preserving artifacts in the university's collections; and putting history on display.

This initial phase of a two-part renovation includes new digital humanities and oral history labs, an expanded room for archival research, a larger work area for library staff to process and preserve collection materials and a rare book room with additional exhibit space.

"For its size, our institution owns some very unique and special materials," Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Costas Spirou said. "Now we're able to exhibit and make those available in this fabulous new space."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony coincided with the premier of two exhibits featuring items from collections in the university's archive. "To Be Uninvited Guests" and "The Faces of Flannery O'Connor" interpret and display artifacts from the "Thomas F. and Janice C.F. Armstrong Antique Map Collection" and the university's collection of materials relating to its most famous alumna, the author Flannery O'Connor, '45.

GCSU Provost Costas Spirou and Arts and Sciences Dean Eric G. Tenbus view the "To Be Uninvited Guests" exhibit on display in the Rare Book Room galleries of the Ina Dillard Russell Library.

The rare book room and

connected galleries provide the public a place to experience Special Collections' missions of documenting history and culture and ensuring the diverse communities of Milledgeville and Baldwin County receive appropriate historical recognition and representation.

For its size, our institution owns some very unique and special materials. Now we're able to exhibit and make those available in this fabulous new space." - Provost Costas Spirou

The addition of the Oral History and Digital Humanities labs invites Georgia College students, faculty, staff and local community members to contribute to Special Collections' documentation of Milledgeville and Baldwin County history.

The Oral History Lab offers a dedicated space for conducting oral history interviews with the audio and video equipment necessary to make those conversations available to future generations.

The Digital Humanities Lab students and faculty can collaborate across disciplines on projects that utilize digital tools to analyze information, process data and communicate results in new and innovative ways.

These new resources support existing, grant-funded initiatives to train and empower local community members on how to preserve history by creating digital copies of their historical documents, according to Russell Library Director Shaundra Walker. These efforts help inform library programs like "Common Heritage: Reframing and Reconsidering Community Memories from the Perspective of Those Who Lived Them," an exhibit that presents local history from digital artifacts donated by African American community members who participated in the library's preservation workshops.

Resources like the new Oral History and Digital Humanities labs will help the library apply for additional funding opportunities to support that mission. They also support Georgia College's fundamental mission of training the next generation of engaged citizen leaders.

"Most importantly," Walker said, "it provides opportunities for hands on learning for both undergraduate and graduate students, who we see as a central part of our work here at the library."

You can learn more on the Special Collections & Galleries department website

News Stories Posted Friday February 24, 2023



Student serves bowl of family history at The Max

Auxiliary Services : Friday February 24, 2023

First-year student Carly Walker of Marietta shared a little taste of home with diners at The Max.

With the help of Sodexo staff members, Walker served steaming bowls of chicken and andouille sausage gumbo as the first dish to be featured in the Student Takeover The Max program.

This gumbo recipe is possibly hundreds of years old. All the women on the maternal side of Walker's family have served this recipe, and they all make it differently.

But her "Grancy," Carolyn Ferrazzano, makes it better than all the others.

"I've been eating this gumbo since I could eat anything at all," Walker said. "And I've eaten it every time I've been at my grandmother's house. I can eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner." Her grandmother moved around the country because Walker's grandfather served in the military. But this recipe is one of the ways she stayed connected to her home state of Louisiana. Whenever Walker's family visits Grancy in Opelousas, Louisiana, they go home with Ziploc bags full of frozen gumbo.

The secret, Walker said, is preparing a proper roux—equal parts flour and fat simmered and stirred over high heat for no less than 45 minutes. It's kind of an art form. If the roux gets too hot, it'll burn; if the pot's not hot enough, it won't impart the proper flavor.



Carly Walker at the soup station in The Max.

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I've been eating this gumbo since I could eat anything at all ... I can eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

- Carly Walker

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Grancy's decades of experience cooking this recipe mean each bowl of gumbo is a true taste of Cajun culture.

Grancy's recipe is a lot spicier than Walker's, and there are a few local ingredients you can't get in this part of the country. Regardless, Walker was keen to share this family recipe with diners at Georgia College & State University who may not know much about Cajun culture and cuisine.

"This is the best gumbo I've ever had," Walker said. "It's only famous within our family, but now a lot of people get to try her gumbo."

Walker shared Grancy's gumbo recipe as part of the Student Takeover the Max program, which allows students to partner with Sodexo to serve unique dishes as a special menu item in the Max.

Executive Chef Enoch Rutherford said the program originated through suggestions from Sodexo's Student Culinary Council. Each month, The Max will feature a new recipe shared by a Georgia College student.

"The students are what make it possible for us," Rutherford said. "We want as much input from them as possible."

Rutherford invites all Georgia College students and employees to share a recipe through their new Student Takeover The Max program. You can reach out about sharing your recipe by emailing <u>dining@gcsu.edu</u>.

From the Kitchen of : Grancy 6 gts of Chicken stock sint of Davoies dark rout large Donion di ced large bellpepper diced Pen breasts with reb meat (skinless) 5016 cut in half elly's pork squsage but in bite size pieces (about Sor 6 links) Oven Temp : _ Time : ___ Serves : Jeason Chickenwith Sait, garlie powder, black pepper + Cayenne add Rouse To broth + HzO + Cook on med. low STODE until Rous is completely clissolved (about an hour). Add onions & beilpepper Continue to Cookon low heat for another 1/2 hr to 1 hr. Add Chicken + sausage Cook for I to 2 hrs. Taste for seasoning. Add if necessary

Carolyn Ferrazzano's Chicken and Sausage Gumbo recipe.

News Stories Posted Monday February 27, 2023



New physics concentration prepares students for careers in radiation therapy and medical imaging technology

Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of: Monday February 27, 2023

Story and photos developed by University Communications.

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We want physics to be a vibrant and vigorous program to meet the need of students and society.

- Dr. Fakayode

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Starting this fall, a new concentration in medical physics will prepare students to get a master's degree for careers in radiation therapy. It's the second opportunity

for students in recent years—following a new physics education pathway in 2021 to stem the shortage of physics teachers nationwide.

Other initiatives in the works are a dual-enrollment partnership with Auburn University in engineering and opening talks with Georgia Tech to offer dualenrollment for medical physics students.



Dr. Sayo Fakayode

"This is going to be really unique, and it will drive up enrollment," said Dr. Sayo Fakayode, chair of chemistry, physics and astronomy.

"We want to provide many pathways for the student. We want physics to be a vibrant and vigorous program to meet the need of students and society," he said.

The need for medical physicists is thought to be 150 to 200 new clinical practitioners per year, according to estimates at Wayne State University in Michigan. This is due to diseases like cancer. In recent years, early detection and prevention methods like chemotherapy decreased the risk of cancer deaths by 32%. However, cancers involving the breast and prostate are rising,

according to a study published by the American Cancer Society (ASC) Journals.

After getting a master's and working in a residency training program, students must pass an exam to become certified as medical physicists.

Few universities nationwide have an undergraduate medical physics pathway. They're normally found at schools that also offer a graduate degree in the subject. Georgia Tech is the only master's in the state preceded by undergraduate courses in nuclear physics.

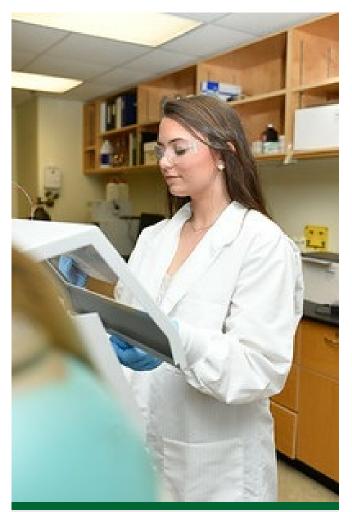
Prior knowledge of nuclear physics isn't necessary to get a master's degree in medical physics. But Georgia College wants to put students ahead of the pack when applying to graduate school, said Physics Professor Dr. Donovan Domingue.

"This will be the first in-depth exposure of that topic for them" Domingue said. "Grad schools don't require that, but we want to give students every bit of advantage we can. To show they've done well in a course that's almost repeated in grad school will help them gain acceptance."

Georgia College has offered a nuclear physics course for years, along with strong anatomy and physiology courses needed to get into graduate school. But students weren't aware of the job opportunities associated with nuclear physics. The new concentration offers them a clear career path to get jobs after college, attend graduate school or get a Ph.D. in medical physics.

Medical physicists can work in hospitals checking radiation equipment without a graduate degree and expect to earn a good starting salary. That rises to sixfigures—between 120,000 and 185,000 per year depending on a master's or Ph.D.—one of the highest salaries for physics majors, Domingue said.

With a master's, medical physicists work side-by-side with doctors controlling the dose of radiation for cancer therapy and working with radiation imaging. They often travel between hospitals checking and certifying operation of radiation equipment and safely disposing radioactive



Alternate Text

materials. They read CT-scans, help diagnose illnesses and perform research for better radiation detection.

The university's nuclear physicist, Dr. Ralph France, is modifying his nuclear physics course to align with the new pathway. To concentrate in medical physics, Georgia College students will be required to take anatomy and physiology, nuclear physics and solid state physics, which teaches principals used in many radiation detection devices.

The subject is perfect for anyone who does well in mathematics and wants a medical career, Domingue said, and prospective students are already showing interest.

Officials hope to start the program with at least five students in fall 2023. If it's anything like the new forensics program—which started with just a few concentrations but quickly ballooned into a third of all chemistry majors—numbers will increase "as the excitement catches on," Fakayode said.

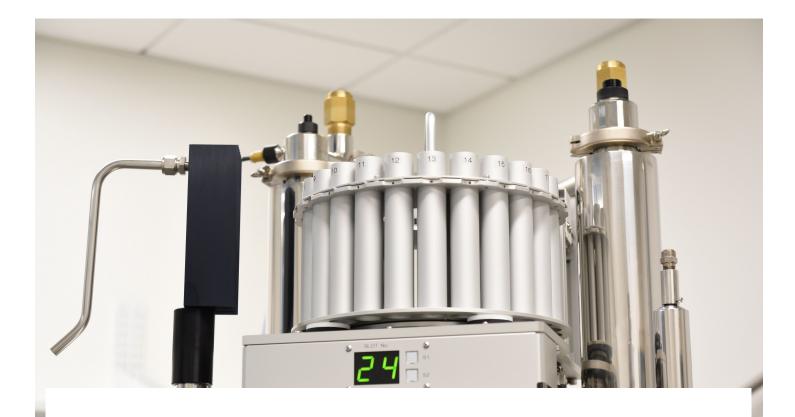
Chemistry faculty are looking for ways to fund scientific equipment to further

assist students, like machines that detect gamma rays and alpha particles.

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To train the next generation, we will be aggressive and go after all the resources the students and faculty will need for the program to be successful. We are open and excited. I just thank my team. They are the very best-very effective and very creative. I see this as an exciting moment.

- Dr. Fakayode



Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy gets new NMR instrument to train scientists of tomorrow

Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of: Monday February 27, 2023

Story and photos developed by University Communications.

The Georgia College & State University Department of Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy purchased a sophisticated high-field 400 megahertz (MHz) Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Spectrum Meter in its efforts to give students the best possible training.

"This is top of the line. That's a Cadillac. It's like going from riding a bicycle to driving a Mercedes Benz," said Dr. Sayo Fakayode, chair of chemistry, physics and astronomy, with an ear-to-ear grin. Showing off the NMR to visitors, he looks like a kid in a candy store.

"That is the instrument that can tell you exactly the chemical structures of organic compounds," he said. "The way you use an MRI to diagnose disease—we use this instrument to diagnose chemicals to know their structure."



Dr. Sayo Fakayode (left) and Dr. Ronald Okoth with the new NMR Spectrum Meter at the Integrated Science Complex.

To think of all the things we couldn't do before, this is an exciting moment. - Dr. Fakayode

Housed in the new Integrated Science Complex (ISC), the new NMR Spectrum Meter cost \$300,000 and will require \$16,000 a year to maintain. Faculty and students can use the NMR in almost any scientific method from organic synthesis, biochemistry, bio-organic and material science to forensics, environmental science and analytical chemistry.

The NMR has a large magnet encased in a Dewar or vacuum container that holds liquid helium which, in turn, is encased in another Dewar holding liquid nitrogen. A solution of chemicals is prepared in a cylinder NMR test tube and placed in a carousel wheel that holds up to 24 samples. The wheel is then placed in the NMR, moving through liquid nitrogen. Readings appear on a nearby computer screen like peaks on a graph, showing structural molecules to minute detail.

Samples used to be transported to another university for examination. Georgia

College's old equipment was limited and could only read at 60 MHz, the maximum for its magnet. The new NMR reads at 400 MHz with a clear resolution.

Fakayode used the analogy of trying to locate a person in the United States with only their first name. It's easier if you add a last name, a specific state and town, job and street address. The new equipment is like being given all the facts necessary to detect the answer, he said.

"To think of all the things we couldn't do before," Fakayode said, "this is an exciting moment."

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I know how to drive a program. The best way to drive a program is to expose your students to the best, because they desire the best.

- Dr. Fakayode

For a small, liberal arts university, Georgia College has an amazing array of scientific machinery. The new ISC is already out of space, he said. It's a good problem to have, because equipment like this give Georgia College students an edge over their peers when applying for graduate school or jobs.

Fakayode is grateful for the support of the College of Arts & Sciences dean, provost and upper administration in getting Georgia College advanced equipment, like the NMR.

"For the size of the institution, for the size of this department," Fakayode said, " I think we're in good shape, and we'll continue to get students what they need to be prepared to be a doctor, a pharmacist—whatever they want to be."

"I know how to drive a program," he said. "The best way to drive a program is to expose your students to the best, because they desire the best."

News Stories Posted Tuesday February 28, 2023



Documentary films celebrate women barbecue pitmasters

History & Geography, Department of: Tuesday February 28, 2023

The Georgia College & State University history professors behind <u>The Georgia BBQ</u> <u>Trail website</u> have veered off the beaten path to explore the stories of two restauranteurs who challenge the stereotype of the southern barbecue pitmaster.

"Keepers of the Flame Fan the Flames of Change: A Digital Oral History Project on Georgia Women in Barbecue" is a series of documentary films from historians Craig Pascoe and James "Trae" Welborn. The first two films in the series profile Jenica Gilmore and Tammy Woodard, the women pitmasters and businessowners behind successful barbecue restaurants <u>Vanna BBQ</u> in Vanna and <u>Smokey's BBQ</u> in Garden City.

In "Keepers of the Flame," Pascoe and Welborn present Gilmore and Woodard as women pitmasters that have overcome preconceived notions of who can cook authentic barbecue and who can be successful in the barbecue business. "The popular image of the southern barbecue pitmaster has been white and male," Welborn said. "But the historical record and present practice both refute such prejudicial presumptions and perspectives with Black Southerners and Southern Women consistently occupying an essential, if marginalized, place around the pit and at the table in the region's barbecue culture and history."



Tammy Woodard of Smokey's BBQ shares photographs during an interview for the "Keepers of the Flame" documentary series.

"Keepers of the Flame" confronts the "authenticity" standards imposed on barbecue. Welborn and Pascoe argue that the historic practitioners of the artform don't conform to the popularized image of the southern pitmaster, and the people fueling the contemporary explosion of barbecue culture will further stretch notions of who fans the flames of this regional culinary tradition.

The popular image of the southern barbecue pitmaster has been white and male. But the historical record and present practice both refute such prejudicial presumptions...

- James "Trae" Welborn

Filmed in 2022, "Keepers of the Flame" also explores the toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food service industry and how these women food entrepreneurs kept their businesses afloat.

"Keepers of the Flame Fan the Flames of Change: A Digital Oral History Project on Georgia Women in Barbecue" premieres in a special screening at 6 p.m., Wednesday, March 1, in the Arts & Sciences Auditorium at Georgia College & State University. Tammy Woodard, of Smokey's BBQ will be present at the screening.

"Keepers of the Flame" is funded in part through Georgia College's Digital Humanities Collaborative. <u>You can learn more about "Keepers of the Flame" on the</u> <u>Georgia BBQ Trails website</u>.



History professors James "Trae" Welborn and Craig Pascoe, center, interview Vanna BBQ owner Jenica Gilmore.