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March 2024



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News Stories Posted Friday March 1, 2024



Grace Hopper and TAPIA celebrations pave the way for women in computing

[Information Systems & Computer Science, Department of](#): Friday March 1, 2024

Madison Farmer, a GC WIT club member, shares her experience from Grace Hopper.

Story by GCSU senior Cale Strickland.

From smartphones to social media to artificial intelligence, the technology industry is critical to our day-to-day lives. But it is not representative of our society.

"It's so heavily male-driven still," said Jeannie Pridmore, chair of Georgia College & State University's Department of Information Systems & Computer Science. "I mean, if you look at the field of computing as a whole, it's about 24% female. If you look at the market, only about 24% of the jobs are held by females. And when you look at going up the ladder, or you look at other demographics, like color or ethnicity, it drops down to like 3%."

She says the long-term goal is for the field to be 30% female.

"There's something magic about that 30% number," Pridmore said. "When you get at least 30% diversity in the population, it changes the systemic view and thought of what's happening. Once you reach 30%, it's no longer the one woman in the room; now, it's three women in the room."

In an effort to improve representation overall, the department sends female, non-binary and minority students to two conferences: the Grace Hopper Celebration of Computing, or Grace Hopper Conference, and the CMD-IT/ACM Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing Conference, or TAPIA.

Grace Hopper is for female and non-binary students; TAPIA is for minority male students.

Last year, the department sent 25 students to Grace Hopper and four to TAPIA.

Madison Farmer, a senior management information systems major, landed a full-time job at last year's conference and found the on-site interview process refreshing and reassuring.



Grace Hopper attendees pave the way for future women in technology.

"Going into my career post-graduation, I had nothing but a team of female interviewers when it came to my job that I have lined up for July," Farmer said. "Seeing that everybody on my team is very diverse in both gender and ethnicity, race, it's very welcoming, in a sense, considering I had two female employees kind of lead me in the direction. I was able to get the job through them, so it's kind of more reassuring that I feel like I'll be more welcomed there."

Junior MIS major Richa Moses still has a little over a year to line up an internship or full-time job. She says the conference made her more confident in herself and her career path.

"I felt completely empowered," Moses said. "I felt like such a superwoman there, just being and hearing their journeys, and the best part about that environment was how these women — who are in great positions — really humbled themselves to speak to us, to encourage us and to be able to share about their journey with us. And just staying in that environment, I definitely was like, 'OK, I chose the right path, and I'm not alone in this.'"

Margeaux Messier, a senior MIS major, left the conference feeling optimistic about the possibilities within the industry.

"Grace Hopper helped me prepare for my future career by showing me that, honestly, the sky's the limit," Messier said. "We are going to define our own past, and if you're a hard worker, and if you are dedicated to pushing this goal and pushing this dream and making that a reality, then really, there's nothing that's ever going to stop you."

The Women in Technology Club hosted Women in Technology Day Friday, Feb. 23. GCSU students walked local high school students through workshops in an effort to increase young women's interest in technology.

Pridmore hopes the event and the conference will create a cycle: increasing female interest in technology, providing them with opportunities to succeed, both in the classroom and in the workforce, and giving back to the girls who come after them.

"Seeing how our school, in particular, is very supportive of the women and non-binary individuals going into this field, and they're wanting us to succeed and find that job or internship and get that valuable experience out of it, I'm very thankful for it," Farmer said.



Some Grace Hopper attendees led GCSU Women in Technology Day.

News Stories Posted Wednesday March 6, 2024



Alumni Honored at Alumni Awards Dinner

[Alumni](#) : Wednesday March 6, 2024

Story by GCSU senior Cale Strickland.

Georgia College & State University held its annual Alumni Awards Dinner in Magnolia Ballroom Friday, Feb. 16.

Four awards were given: the Alumni Heritage Award, the Outstanding Recent Alumni Award, the Alumni Achievement Award and the Ethel Rae Mozo-Stewart Alumni Community Service Award.

Georgia Military College Colonel Pamela Harvey Grant, '82, '87, '07, received the Alumni Heritage Award, which is presented to an alum who has exemplified Georgia College's ideals through at least four decades of public service.

Grant has climbed the ladder at GMC. She began as a student teacher before becoming a faculty member, then the assistant principal, the first female principal of the Preparatory School and now, assistant superintendent for the Preparatory School.

Grant's commitment to education and scholarship is reflected by the five degrees she received from Georgia College: bachelor's degrees in political science and public administration, master's degrees in English and school leadership and an education specialist degree in school leadership.

In addition to her professional and academic accomplishments, Grant is heavily involved in her community. She served on the Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber Board of Directors and teaches Sunday School at Milledgeville First Methodist Church, where she is part of their college-student ministry.

Dr. Juawn Jackson, '16, received the Outstanding Recent Alumni Award, which is presented to an alum who graduated in the past 10 years, has achieved significant success and displays the promise of future, continued success, in a professional or business career.

In January 2023, at the age of 29, Jackson became the youngest president of the Bibb County Board of Education, where

he previously served as chairman of the Policies and Rules Committee.

Jackson is also a program coordinator for Alpha Phi Alpha Educational Talent Search, a college and career readiness program and federal TRIO program of the United States Department of Education and president of the Georgia Association of Special Programs Personnel.

Additionally, Jackson is chairman of the Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church Board of Trustees, held positions on the Bibb County Education Foundation Board and the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, and was president of the Macon-area chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, of which he is a lifetime member.



Attendees enjoy a performance by junior music education major Riley Greer.

Dr. Beverly Vashon Woods, '78, received the Alumni Achievement Award, which is presented to an alum who became prominent in a professional field and positively affected the state, region or country.

After completing her bachelor's degree in special education at Georgia College, Woods returned to her hometown of Buena Vista in Marion County, Georgia, and began working as an interrelated resource teacher before pursuing a master's degree in mental retardation, learning disabilities and a specialist degree in administration.

Soon after, Woods became the director of special education for the Marion County Board of Education, where she served for 27 years.

While pursuing her doctoral degree, Woods taught in the Phenix City, Alabama, Public School System and worked toward a master's degree in divinity at the Candler School of Theology.

Sherrill Crowell Jones, '69, '75, received the Ethel Rae Mozo-Stewart Alumni Community Service Award, which is given in honor of a late Georgia College alumna and presented to a graduate or associate or honorary alum who has displayed a continued commitment to service and effected positive change within their community.



Alumni had a chance to reconnect during the events of Alumni Weekend.

Jones has dedicated her life to education. She completed a B.S. in elementary education at GCSU, an M.Ed. in Reading Education at the University of Georgia, an education specialist degree from Georgia College, and certifications in Education Administration and Supervision.

During her 34 years in the public school system, Jones served as a first-grade teacher, county reading coordinator, assistant principal, principal and school system elementary curriculum, staff development and gifted program coordinator. She was named Northside Elementary School's Teacher of the Year — twice — and received the Georgia College John H. Lounsbury Award in 2000.

For over 50 years, Jones has been an active member of the Milledgeville community, serving on

a myriad of boards, including those of the Old Capital Historical Society, Baldwin County Program for Exceptional Children, Milledgeville/Baldwin County Allied Arts, Lockerly Arboretum Foundation Trustees and Twin Lakes-Mary Vinson Memorial Library.

Today, she serves on the Baldwin County Board of Health and as a recorder for the Oconee Greenway Authority. She volunteers at Lockerly Arboretum, Oconee Master Gardeners, Milledgeville-Baldwin Convention & Visitors Bureau, Georgia's Old Governor's Mansion, River of Life, Milledgeville Main Street's Adopt a Planter program and a Memory Hill Cemetery maintenance group she started in 2020.

The award is a full-circle moment for Jones, as she respected and admired Stewart tremendously; she was the first principal Jones taught under.



Mentorship helps lead alumnus to medical school and beyond

Alumni : Wednesday March 6, 2024

Dr. Ahmed Al-Bayati, '12, has come a long way from growing up in war-torn Baghdad where he served as a translator to reaching the peak of his education as a medical school graduate and soon will be wrapping up his surgical residency.

His journey began in Baghdad when he was a teenager. At that time, very few town people knew English, but Al-Bayati did. So, he became a local translator for the U.S. Army stationed in Baghdad during the war. A few years later the war escalated; his uncle and cousin were killed.

"People eventually came after me because I was labeled as a traitor," said Al-Bayati. "My whole family had to escape."

The family then moved to Dubai where Al-Bayati finished his first year of undergraduate medical school. He knew he wanted to do a surgical residency, but spaces for surgery were limited to United Arab Emirates citizens. So, Al-Bayati returned to Baghdad where he worked at a U.S. compound hospital in the barracks.

"It was quite gruesome," he said. "The type of trauma we treated were the results of explosions, burns, assassinations and gun shots. This motivated me even more to become a surgeon, because I want to be one of those people who fix these types of problems."

He applied for a visa to further his education, and chose to attend Georgia College & State University, which provided him with an international student scholarship.

"The premedical mentoring program at Georgia College was one of the most important steppingstones to my career in medicine," said Al-Bayati. "I knew I had to eventually apply to medical school."

Through the mentorship program, he was exposed to what being in medical school entailed.

"That was a real eye-opener for me, because Dr. Ken Saladin designed this program to familiarize us with as much as physically possible," said Al-Bayati. "He informed us what to anticipate and what the requirements were for the medical school application process. He also told us what our lives are going to look like in the next 20 to 30 years."



Dr. Ahmed Al-Bayati

Al-Bayati took comfort in knowing fellow students were in the same situation as him.

"Being around others who were applying to medical school was very helpful, because we could provide feedback to each other," he said. "Dr. Saladin also helped us with his referral letters and made sure we had our personal statement before we applied."

Saladin went one step further by helping him land a research internship at the University of Miami. Al-Bayati moved there to do cancer research for three years.

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There are a lot of good people out in the world like Dr. Saladin, who I will always be grateful to. There are also my research mentors, who really saw what I was trying to do and helped guide me through. None of this would've happened if it weren't for them."

- Dr. Ahmed Al-Bayati

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"He connected me to a physician with a cancer research lab," he said. "So, I moved to Miami with the hopes of helping this person in the lab. I familiarized myself with the lab and really took to it like a fish to water."

Then, Al-Bayati got accepted to medical school at the University of Miami with a focus on cancer research. While going to medical school, he remained involved in his research projects.

This mentorship came full-circle May 12, 2018, as Al-Bayati walked across the stage at the University of Miami to receive his medical school degree with Saladin and his wife, Diane, there to cheer him on.

"Cancer is a gateway to understanding basic cellular biology," he said. "That was a motivator for me to go back to the basics of how this disease works, and then maybe once I go up the ranks, I'll be able to understand how to target it better."

Within a few years, Al-Bayati began developing antibodies that are very particular to receptors on cancer cells. His research means a lot to him as cancer struck home.

"There are a lot of people in my life who've been affected by this disease including my mother and father's side of the family, friends and mentors," he said. "Cancer kills millions of people every year. So, whatever dent I might be able to put in that number, whatever contribution I can make to humanity and for the people I love, I can only be happy to partake in researching this disease."

Albayati developed a strong interest in surgical oncology. He matched at Vanderbilt University general surgery after medical school and did this for three years.

Then, he realized his desire to help cancer patients in a different way. So, he transferred to plastic surgery at the University of Kentucky during his third year at an integrated plastic surgery program, where he'll graduate, then join a private practice in Lexington, Kentucky, specializing in aesthetics in June 2024.

He credits his mentors with his success.

"There are a lot of good people out in the world like Dr. Saladin, who I will always be grateful to," he said. "There are also my research mentors, who really saw what I was trying to do and helped guide me through. None of this would've happened if it weren't for them."



Artistic alumna: The first Black woman to open tattoo studio in Milly

[Art, Department of](#) : Wednesday March 6, 2024

Antionette Reames, '12, discovered her zeal for art when she was seven, after an Orlando city bus encounter with a young rider who held a sketch book.

"My mother and I noticed he kept looking at me," Reames said. "She eventually walked over to ask, 'Why do you keep staring at my daughter?' He said that he was drawing a picture of me. I was sitting in a chair with my little teddy bear. When he showed us, I just knew that's what I wanted to do."

Years later, she did just that. Taking advantage of her natural drawing and painting skills, Reames opened her own private tattoo studio, Black Barby Ink, in 2021. She's the first African American woman to do this in Milledgeville.

When Reames was young, she enjoyed playing with Barbies™. Her mother wanted to get Barbies™ that looked like her.

"She would bring me Black Barbies™," Reames said. "Every time we went somewhere my mother would always call my sister and I her 'Black Barbies™'."

"This stuck with me," she said. "Right before I decided to open my business, I took my daughter to the store to pick out a Barbie™. Before I cut my hair, I had curly hair with a 'fro' on top. She came to me and said, 'Mommy, this is you.' I kid you not. The Barbie™ doll looked just like me."

Reames started tattooing as a student at the University of North Florida. The first tattoo she did was on the owner of Black Ink Orlando. Since then, Reames built on that experience by applying her refined drawing and painting skills that she learned from Georgia College & State University.

"I thought, Okay, I can do this—I can get certified," she said. "I studied everything including the latest equipment and different tattoo styles, and I passed my exams. So, I was able to open a private tattoo studio."

Not only does Reames tattoo her artistic works at her studio, but she also takes her talent on the road, touring places like Atlanta, Barbados, Chicago, Jacksonville and Trinidad.

Reames came to Georgia College from UNF, where she majored in art and played basketball for three years. The coaches at Georgia College noticed her skill and contacted Reames to see if she would visit campus. She hopped on a Greyhound Bus bound for Milledgeville.



Antionette Reames at her Tattoo Studio.



She performed well during basketball practice drills, and the players seemed to like her.

"Women's Head Basketball Coach John Carrick, '74, '77, and Women's Assistant Coach Maurice Smith, '01, '06, are great individuals," Reames said. "I enjoyed my visit to Georgia College. After touring the campus and meeting everyone in the Art Department, I decided this is where I wanted to graduate."

She played basketball for two years as a front/center at Georgia College. At UNF, she had torn her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) during her sophomore year—just seven games into the season. So, the university gave her the year back for an extra year of eligibility to play.

As a student-athlete, Reames developed organizational skills that she still uses in her profession.

"I had to plan things out daily so I could focus on time management," she said. "We would do early morning workouts, then I had classes and tried to fit lunch into my schedule and go to basketball practice and then classes again."

Traveling out of town for a game or tournament meant Reames had limited time for homework. So, she used a tutor and study hall to keep her focused.

Art classes and painting were a welcome relief in her tight schedule.

"After I finished my homework and basketball practice, I went home to rest," Reames said. "Then, late at night, I'd go to the Art Department to paint. It was very relaxing for me. That was my time."

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I know the different values and understand where light hits on the face so I can add shadows and detail to the nose, eyes and lips—everything. I love drawing and painting. I use those same painting techniques I learned from Georgia College; except I just use a machine and needles instead of a paintbrush.

- Antionette Reames

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She thought Dr. Tina Yarborough, former professor of Art History and Interdisciplinary Studies, was “amazing.”

"She made art history interesting and kept me engaged," Reames said. "She understood that I was a student-athlete and extremely tired from early morning workouts."

The long days were worth it, however. Playing basketball and leading the team at Georgia College taught Reames leadership skills.

"I learned how to socialize and articulate my thoughts while considering people's feelings on and off the court," she said. "I had to collaborate with my teammates to help them understand what the coach wanted within a short time frame to execute the play."

Another one of Reame's favorite professors was Valerie Aranda, professor of art, drawing and painting, who strongly encouraged her to push her ability to the limit.

"Antoinette, you're a well-developed artist," Aranda would say. "We know you can paint and draw but we want to see you do more."

"She knew I could effortlessly paint and draw things that I was naturally capable of doing, like portraits," Reames said.

Aranda wanted to see something different from Reames.

"One day, I looked at a basketball located in the center of the room," she said. "I was like, 'Why don't I paint on a basketball?'"

Reames researched to see if anyone had ever painted on the surface of a basketball or football before. She found nothing.

She went to Aranda with the idea, who approved it. Aranda told Reames to create a step-by-step guide on how she would accomplish this and articulate her plans to the class.

"That's what I did," Reames said. "This became a way bigger project than I expected. But I like a challenge."

Her painting ability and creativity are well suited for creating tattoos. Reames specializes in tattooing portraits on people.

"I know the different values and understand where light hits on the face so I can add shadows and detail to the nose, eyes and lips—everything," she said. "I love drawing and painting. I use those same painting techniques I learned from Georgia College; except I just use a machine and needles instead of a paintbrush."

Reames embraces the challenges tattooing presents.

"Not everyone can do a pop-up portrait," she said. "If you do one of these, you must get it right on the first try because it's permanent. I'm able to nail it every time from my experience with painting."

From extra small to extra large, tattoos can take anywhere from 15 minutes to three days, depending on the size and intricacy of the artwork.

"The best part of owning my own business is knowing that I put that time and dedication into it," she said. "I want it to flourish and want the grit that comes with it. It's all about the independence—I can make my own work-life balance."

Every day, Reames draws inspiration from her children—Kaiden, London, Jordyn and Zuri, who inherited their mother's drawing creativity.

"They are beautiful, intelligent and amazing," she said. "I look at them, even when I'm dog tired, and they're so comforting. Then, when they come into the shop, they're constantly with their sketchbooks, drawing things."

Reames is thrilled she became a tattoo artist, opened her own studio and can be a role model for her children and others.

"The best thing about being a tattoo artist is the freedom to know I can travel anywhere in the world and be in a trade where the demographic is huge," she said, "and I can do what I love—painting."



Antoinette Reames at Black Barby Ink.



Bobcat and Welspun Tubular CEO credits his success to graduate degree in logistics

[Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of](#): Wednesday March 6, 2024

Gerald Mosley, '97, is at the pinnacle of his career as CEO of Welspun Tubular LLC—a national manufacturer of steel pipes for the oil and gas industry.

The Little Rock, Arkansas, subsidiary of Welspun Corp. spans six continents. Mosley's [Master of Science in Logistics Management from Georgia College & State University](#) has helped him focus on best practices and perspectives that assisted the big business of piping to long-term success.

"Today, logistics management is present in every facet of our lives and woven into the fabric of businesses," Mosely said. "It's a competitive differentiator. It's a business. If you don't manage logistics well, you're not going to be competitive for very long."

He predicted the demand for logistics management skills before earning his master's degree at Georgia College. That's why he pursued his degree in this field.

"I vividly remember one of my Georgia College professors describing how logistics is a key component of business," Mosley said, "and how when logistics and the management of logistics is done well, it can be a key competitive differentiator for companies."

Mosley was stationed at Robins Air Force Base when he earned his master's. During the day, he was an aircraft maintenance officer. In the evening, he took classes at Georgia College's satellite facility on the base.

The university was recommended by colleagues who were pursuing their degree or had gone through the program.

"They were impressed with the program and raved about the quality of instruction and the professors," he said. "I was just as impressed with the college's reputation."

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Having the opportunity to take people who are part of my team and feel like I had some small part in helping them develop to be the best version of themselves and watch them go on to achieve higher levels of success is more rewarding than anything else.

- Gerald Mosley

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"The professors brought a lot of real-world, practical knowledge about how to apply logistics management concepts because they'd worked in the industry," Mosley said. "They taught us practical applications of the concepts we discussed in class."

Professors stressed the interconnectivity of the global economy and how logistics was the piece that was going to make it all come together.

"The world is interconnected," he said. "If you're not prepared or structured to do business on a global scale and you're not plugged into that global economy, then you're at a disadvantage."

Mosley's logistics management degree has served him well in his career. He's taken on leadership roles and increased responsibility with global organizations.



Gerald Mosley stands in front of Welspun Tubular LLC.

"It's not just about the international reach of products and services," Mosley said. "We have a more global workforce so it's important to understand the cultural nuances that accompany managing leading a global team. I think these nuggets, that were imparted on me at Georgia College, have just proved to be truer as I advanced in my career."

A key component to Mosley's leadership approach at Welspun Tubular is listening to others. As his career progressed, he discovered that asking the right, quality questions is important. He frequently meets with sales and marketing staff and customers to better understand industry and market trends, so he can position Welspun to provide the best products and support. He also spends his time on the plant floor in operations, getting insights from his associates on how their jobs are going and what they feel can be done to improve the process.

"It's important to stay plugged into both areas and know where the markets and business are headed," Mosley said. "We have to make sure we are prepared to take care of not just the business that's in front of us, but that we're also doing the right thing, structurally, to make sure we're prepared to take care of the business 10 years or more down the road."

Mosley's studies at Georgia College help him define strategy and drive the business growth at Welspun. He manages the outbound logistics of the company's finished products through rail cars, semi-trucks and barges.

"Logistics management is a critical component of executing business on a high level," Mosley said. "I didn't realize how much my experience and degree in this area would help me going forward."

"We've found that being a differentiator—if we're able to do that more effectively and satisfy the customer's needs—then logistics is often the reason that we win or lose jobs," he said.

Although Mosley has held other positions through the years, the best part of every job has been the people. At Welspun, he builds high performing teams, so his associates can be the best version of themselves. He accomplishes this by equipping people with the tools, training and support they need. Then, he sets the strategy for them, so they can thrive.

"Watching teams evolve to be successful and achieve levels that maybe they haven't achieved before—that motivates and excites me," Mosley said.

He and his team provide best-in-class products and services to their customers by helping them solve problems, address challenges and by finding answers to questions they may not have asked yet.

"We're able to look forward to start developing those solutions that are going to address challenges five to 10 years down the road," Mosley said.

He is inspired by sustained excellence and those individuals who can achieve it.



Gerald Mosley in the warehouse.



Gerald Mosley often meets with Welspun's sales and marketing team.

"That's a different level of success," Mosley said. "It takes a different level of teamwork and commitment to reach the summit of the mountain. And then to immediately start looking for the next challenge."

What he learned from Georgia College helped Mosley get to a place where he sees himself as a business leader. Now, each day, he's inspired to mentor others to achieve sustained excellence.

"Having the opportunity to take people who are part of my team and feel like I had some small part in helping them develop to be the best version of themselves," he said, "and watch them go on to achieve higher levels of success is more rewarding than anything else."



Gerald Mosley (right) talks with a Welspun operations associate.



PILLAR II

DISTINGUISH

(verb): 1. To make noteworthy or remarkable: to give prominence or distinction, 2. To mark as separate or different

[Learn more about the Distinguish Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)





GCSU's Homecoming and Alumni Weekend ushers a new era of alumni engagement

[Alumni](#) : Wednesday March 6, 2024

Georgia College & State University's Homecoming and Alumni Weekend took place Feb. 12 -17, 2024, ushering a new era of alumni engagement. This was the first time in several years Georgia College combined the two events. There were plenty of activities for alumni and their families.

The elevated events and activities for alumna allowed us to welcome back a strong alumni percentage with the hope for this to continue to grow in the years to come.



Bobcat Girls Basketball players at work.

Some events included: Biscuits and Brew with the Alumni Crew, an Alumni Awards Ceremony, a Homecoming Parade and Alumni Watch Party, Milly Night Out: Reunion Edition, Tent City and Alumni Tailgate, a VIP Hall of Fame, Athletic Alumni Reception and more.

"The alumni-to-student connection is important, and opportunities to celebrate together and rally around our beloved alma mater is special," Nadirah Mayweather, director of Alumni Relations said. "We added events this year to provide extra opportunities for alumni to engage in."

"This year, we were also honored that alumnus Virgil Miller and his company, Aflac, gave a major contribution to not only help the institution but also to assist with health initiatives in our community," she said. "This is just one example of alumni making positive impacts on the world."

During Alumni Weekend, alumni and friends honored the accomplishments and positive impacts made by four award recipients at the Alumni Awards Ceremony. In turn, these alumni inspire others to do great things like Dr. Juawn Jackson who received the Outstanding Recent Alumni Award. In January 2023, at the age of 29, he became the youngest president of the Bibb County Board of Education.

One alumna, who was enjoying Tent City and Alumni Tailgate, was glad she came for the festivities.

"It's important to attend these events so that diversity is represented," said Vallera Gibson, '84, who's a management career track officer with the U.S. Department of State.

When Gibson was a student here, her favorite events were the Thursday night parties at the Maxwell Community Center at Georgia College.

"Homecoming and Alumni Week provided an opportunity for our alumni to 'come back home' and interact with students, feel the excitement and embrace the nostalgia of their time here," Mayweather said, "while also experiencing the momentum of the future and connecting with students who will keep the life and innovation of our institution moving forward."



Vallera Gibson at Tent City.

Be sure to save the date for Homecoming and Alumni Weekend Feb. 22, 2025.

News Stories Posted Friday March 15, 2024



GCSU held its annual ceremony for the President's Volunteer Service Awards

[Student Organizations & Clubs](#) : Friday March 15, 2024

Story by GCSU senior Elizabeth Newlin

Georgia College & State University recently honored several students who received the President's Volunteer Service Award and the Eve Puckett Giving Tree Award.



Winners of the President's Volunteer Service Awards and the Eve Puckett Giving Tree Award.

The President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) embodies the spirit, honoring individuals whose dedication to service enriches communities and transforms lives. Established in 2003 by President George W. Bush, this prestigious award recognizes the invaluable contributions of volunteers across the United States. Led by the AmeriCorps and managed in partnership with Points of Light, this program allows certifying organizations to recognize their most exceptional volunteers.



Winners of the President's Volunteer Service Gold Awards from left to right are: William Thomas, Kayla Roberts, Abigail Lee and Christy Garlock.

PVSA celebrates individuals of all ages and backgrounds who have demonstrated a sustained commitment to serving their communities. Whether it's in local schools, hospitals or community outreach, recipients of the award exemplify the ethos of selflessness and compassion to those who surround them.

The award criteria are based on the number of volunteer hours completed within a 12-month period, with varying levels of recognition based on the cumulative hours of service. Bronze level awards are presented to individuals who have contributed 100-249 service hours, Silver awards are presented to individuals who have contributed 250-499 service hours and Gold awards are presented to those who have contributed more than 500 service hours.

Students who received the Bronze award: Brittany Benner, Ariana Bridgett, Caroline Brown, Kaitley Congdon, Cara Cost, Ashley Dovico, Haley Dovico, Anna Gabriel, Emma Godfrey, Abigail Griffin, Delia Guy, Emma Hancock, Paige Holcombe, Kali Holierhoek, Kelsie Hunt, Isabella Katzmark, Mary Kuchinski, Katelin Lanier, Anna Martin, Anna Matthews, Grace Mistretta, Elizabeth Newlin, Katherine Payne, Amelia Pound, Blakely Queen, Skylar Robinson, Nicolette Rodgers, Aiden Shuster, Kaitlyn Smith, Kaitlin Stokes and Ashley Talafous.

Students who received the Silver award: Shaun Bellmer, Jordan Burns, Samantha Freeman, Alexis Keeney, Bailey McCurtain, Lillian McGalliard, Robyn Meeks, Hailey Mosely, Grace Phillips, Irati Rodriguez Matesanz, Kate Shade, Emory Sutherland and Andrea Truax.



Winners of the President's Volunteer Service Silver Awards from left to right are: Lillian McGalliard and Alexis Keeney.

Students who received the Gold award: Sarah Brown, Leslie Farr, Christy Garlock, Alexandra Hershman, Anna Iako,

Abigail Lee, Amy Pickett, Kayla Roberts, Madison Schroder, William Thomas, Kaitlin Van Voorhis and Jenna Zapf.

"Receiving this award has made me feel like I have made a difference within the Georgia College community and beyond. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to be honored and that the time I dedicated to volunteering has been recognized," Katelin Briggs said.

Briggs completed several different types of service to receive the award.

"As a member of Alpha Omicron Pi, I participated in many events throughout the year to raise awareness and support our national philanthropy with the Arthritis Foundation," she said. "I also spent time over the summer volunteering in the Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation and Maintenance Program at Stephens County Hospital to earn hours toward grad school. Throughout the year I volunteered for different organizations and at events through the Give Center."

Georgia College also highlights a student with the Eve Puckett Giving Tree award. This award is given to an individual who is nominated and will have a tree planted on campus in their honor.

This year's recipient was Blakely Queen. The nomination was submitted by Dr. Scott Butler, professor of Public Health.

"Blakely is an outstanding honors student at GCSU who is majoring in public health and minoring in sociology. Through her volunteerism, Blakely is highly active on our campus and in our community," he said. "For example, she has a passion for helping animals, serving as a Kennel Technician at Ashley Hills Pet Center and as an Assistant Coach at Shiloh Horse Ranch, and volunteers (100+ hours/year) through the campus Shelter Buddies RSO. Since 2022, Blakely has served as a Community Advisor in the Residence Halls and over the last year has served as my research assistant. In addition, she participated in the GCSU Leadership Academy, is the President of the National Residence Hall Honorary and actively volunteers in the community through the Center for Health and Social Issues. Blakely has received numerous awards including the Pauline Kelly Malone Scholarship, the 2024 Outstanding Sr. in Public Health Award, and the GCSU Bronze Service Medal. Overall, Blakely is a kind-hearted student and one of the most altruistic public majors I have ever met. I believe she represents the ideals of Eve Puckett and that she would be an excellent ambassador of Eve's legacy."

The estimated tree planting ceremony will be in April with a detail about the event to come.



Dr. Scott Butler and the Eve Puckett Giving Tree Award and the President's Volunteer Service Bronze Award winner Blakely Queen.

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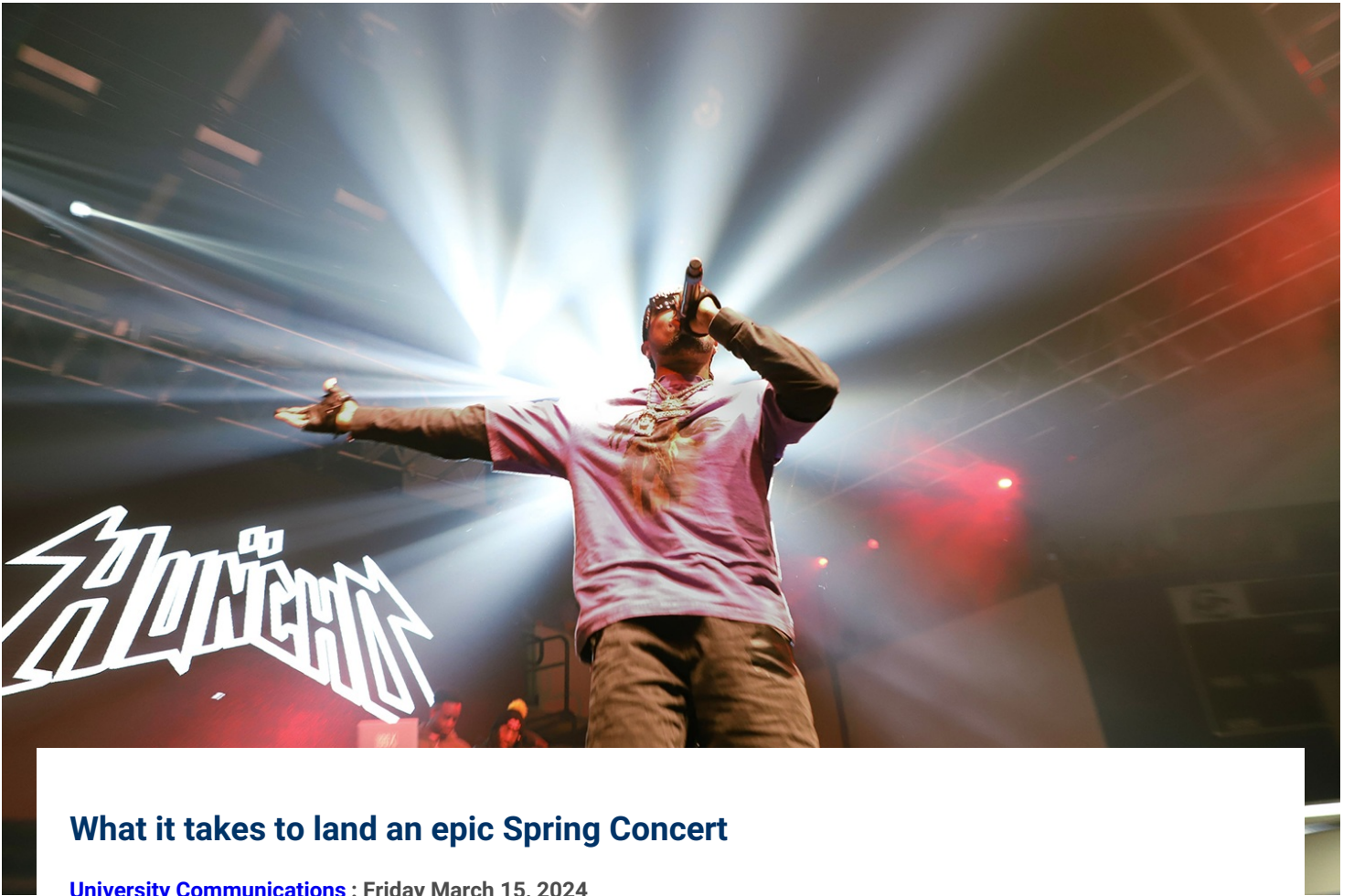
Receiving this award has made me feel like I have made a difference within the Georgia College community and beyond. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to be honored and that the time I dedicated to volunteering has been recognized.

- Katelin Briggs

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The President's Volunteer Service Award serves as a reminder of the power of compassion. It honors those who embody the spirit of service and inspires us all to work toward a bright future, one act of service at a time.

Georgia College is extremely proud of these students for continuing to have generosity and service to our community.



What it takes to land an epic Spring Concert

[University Communications](#) : Friday March 15, 2024

As the lights went down inside Georgia College & State University's Centennial Center on Friday, March 8, hundreds of GCSU students gathered for the university's annual Spring Concert.

After winning Battle of the Bobcats, the college's annual music competition, student-led band Subject to Change earned

the concert's opening spot. The Stews, an up-and-coming band that formed at Auburn University, and Quavo, one-third of Atlanta rap trio and hallmark Migos, rounded out the show's lineup.



Subject to Change takes the stage. Photo by Peyton Miller.

Subject to Change kicked off the night with a series of covers from '90s grunge staples including Nirvana, Alice in Chains and Deftones. Then, The Stews introduced Milledgeville to their blend of alternative and indie rock. Quavo closed out the night, delivering a mix of fan-favorite Migos songs and tracks from his two solo albums, "QUAVO HUNCHO" and "Rocket Power."

For students, this was the culmination of weeks of Homecoming celebrations and festivities, but for the Office of Student Life, it was the result of months of work.

And Sara Goodelman, student engagement program coordinator for Georgia College, has been at the forefront. As an alumna, she has been to her fair share of Spring Concerts, but this is her first year working on one.

"We have been doing this for over seven months, preparation, with getting contracts back and forth between artists," Goodelman said. "It's a lot of preparation and a lot of little, tedious things, but it's fun to learn what goes on behind the scenes."

Student Life balances students' tastes with a budget before whittling down a list of artists and, finally, deciding on the main act.

"In our office, we use a talent manager," Goodelman said. "And my boss, Kristy Johnson [GCSU associate dean of students for Student Engagement], sends our budget and a list to the talent manager. He sends us back a list within the budget. She sends out the survey. We take the survey into consideration, and then the contract's negotiated, and boom! Mr. Quavo? He's in the building."

As someone who has been on both sides of the concert, she says students have no idea how much time and energy goes into putting the show together.

"I was a student here," Goodelman said. "I graduated last May, and now, I'm on the production side of everything. Students have no idea what goes on in it — because I didn't. It's tedious, and logistically, talking back and forth between bands and managers and touring dates, it's tabs on tabs open. But in a way, it's fun. It's like a big maze, and then everything comes together for the concert."

She says working with students to put together a concert they'd be excited for was her favorite part of her experience.

"My favorite part would definitely be listening to the students about who they want to come see, getting the students' feedback and especially when coming to pick the opener, which is The Stews this year," Goodelman said. "My favorite part is getting the students what they want."

Story by Cale Strickland

Photos and Video by Peyton Miller

Photos by Liz Newlin



The Stews perform at the Spring Concert. Photo by Peyton Miller.



Quavo on stage at the Centennial Center. Photo by Peyton Miller.



Quavo performs at the Spring Concert. Photo by Liz Newlin.



First public midwifery program in Georgia now fully accredited

[Nursing, School of](#) : Saturday March 23, 2024

The nurse midwifery concentration in Georgia College & State University's Master of Science in Nursing is now fully accredited through the Accreditation Commission of Midwifery Education.

[Watch as a graduate student simulates a birth to complete graduation requirements.](#)

Pre-accredited since May 2020, the program has graduated two cohorts of nurse-midwives and is the first public program of its kind to be accredited in Georgia.

"The establishment of the Nurse Midwifery program at Georgia College stands as a powerful testament to our unwavering commitment to advancing women's services in Central Georgia," said Dr. Josie Doss, director of the School of Nursing. "The prestigious ACME accreditation serves as an unequivocal endorsement of our dedication to excellence in both midwifery education and practice."

The program is specifically designed to solve healthcare problems in Georgia, a state that ranks poorly (48th) for pregnancy-related death. Student clinicals must be completed in Georgia, some aid programs at Georgia College specifically target local students and all graduates have continued to practice in-state so far.

The program has graduated 12 students across two cohorts while under their pre-accredited status. Monica Ketchie, associate professor of nursing and nurse-midwifery program coordinator hopes to graduate 10 nurse-midwives from each cohort.



Current graduate student Ashley Porter simulates a birth with new technology.

"At this point in time, each of our graduates are still practicing within the state of Georgia—this is huge for the state," Ketchie said. "We're passionate about women's health, we're passionate about addressing maternal mortality, and we offer support and teaching to our students."

Cavetta Tulloch-Lewis was a 2023 graduate of the program's second cohort. She traveled across Georgia to assist as a student nurse-midwife while in the program, and currently works at St. Theresa's OB/GYN in Snellville, Georgia.

Originally a registered nurse and midwife in Jamaica, Tulloch-Lewis chose Georgia College's master's program because it seemed "family-centered and close knit."

"It met my expectation, and my prior experience with midwifery made my second year easier for me," Tulloch-Lewis said. "If there was a point in time that I had a concern or needed information, my director Monica Ketchie was always available."

"That's what I liked about the program—the lecturers made themselves available to us," she said. "It's amazing that we're fully accredited, because I know Dr. Ketchie has worked hard for it."

At her current position, Tulloch-Lewis sees mainly Medicaid patients, a population she considers underserved. She is a warm confidant for her patients and often requested by name.

"We provide the missing piece that our patients are looking for," Tulloch-Lewis said. "To know that I'm actually helping to provide these women with the care they need, giving them a voice and addressing their concerns is an amazing feeling."

She hopes to return to Georgia College and complete her Doctor of Nursing Practice, after which she'd like to become an educator of midwifery herself.

"I don't think a lot of people understand how important midwifery is," Tulloch-Lewis said. "I want to help others grasp the concept and have that passion toward it as I do."



Nurses training at GCSU have access to state-of-the-art simulation technology.

News Stories Posted Sunday March 24, 2024



GCSU government students create ordinance for public art in Milledgeville

[Government & Sociology, Department of](#): Sunday March 24, 2024

Every once in a while, an obstacle isn't an obstacle at all.

It's the perfect opportunity.

That happened last fall when people on campus noticed the city had no public art ordinance. For years, Milledgeville City Council members said they wanted one. Without one, they had no guidelines for approving municipal art.

That void gave a Georgia College & State University policymaking class some real-world experience. By proposing rules for art in the city, that class may also pave the way for future art students to use community space as their palette.

"Everyone was just waiting for somebody to take action," said Dan Lavery, director of principle, planned and estate giving for [University Advancement](#). He oversees a \$30,000 grant to the GCSU Foundation from the Knight Foundation through the Community Foundation of Central Georgia.

The grant specifies beautification of Milledgeville through public art. But regulations didn't exist for artistic improvement.

To use the GCSU Foundation grant, Lavery turned to Dr. Max Harleman, assistant professor of [public administration](#) who teaches "Public Policymaking." Harleman had extended the course's federal scope to include state and local regulatory policymaking.

The town's need for an ordinance, he said, "just fell into my lap at the right time."

A [draft](#) of the public ordinance awaits approval by the Milledgeville City Council and other community leaders. Once ratified, the student-written policy will immediately advance projects awaiting municipal guidelines.

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Fortunately, we were lucky to have a policymaking class to jump in and really make this happen. It's a little out of my purview to shape city policies. But, thanks to Georgia College, we have the ability, the resources and the intellectual know-how to move this forward.



Dan Lavery, right, speaks with Dr. Max Harleman and senior Grace King.

- Dan Lavery

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Milledgeville faced a similar situation about eight years ago, when the Oconee River Greenway Foundation had a grant to install art on public property near the Greenway. The grant required the establishment of an ordinance for additional art projects the foundation wanted to fund.

“

I wanted to learn more about policymaking and, the first day of class, Dr. Harleman said we'd actually work on a public ordinance. I was like, 'Oh my gosh. This is amazing. It's gonna be the best course ever.' I never had a professor do something like this.

- Grace King

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Unfortunately, according to City Councilman Walter Reynolds, the idea for a policy “never gained traction.”

“Thankfully, all these years later, the public policy class at Georgia College was able to get this over the finish line,” Reynolds said. “I appreciate the efforts of Professor Harleman and his students to advance this much-needed ordinance and look forward to its passage.”

Harleman involved his entire class—19 students—in formulating the new policy. They worked in teams to design legislation, write guidelines and produce an implementation plan. Some cited ways the city would evaluate artwork and prevent deterioration. Others acted as a communications team, creating PowerPoint slides to publicize class ideas.

“The four teams worked in collaboration with each other on the final project, which was the report presented to the city council,” Harleman said. “I think the work was of extremely high quality and so did council members. So, I couldn't be happier with the outcome. The only better outcome would be to get the ordinance passed and see some public art. That is ultimately what we care most about.”

Senior Grace King of Cumming, Georgia, is doing dual degrees in [political science](#) and [criminal justice](#). She took Harleman's policy class after an internship in Gov. Brian Kemp's office, where she watched policy makers, advisors, lobbyists and legislators in action. By taking notes in committee hearings, she learned what to look for in an executive measure—its purpose and who it may affect.

“Once I got a bite of policy life,” King said, “I was like ‘Sign me up.’ I wanted to learn more about policymaking and, the first day of class, Dr. Harleman said we'd actually work on a public ordinance. I was like, ‘Oh my gosh. This is amazing. It's gonna be the best course ever.’ I never had a professor do something like this. I was super excited.”

“That students can have an impact that directly changes laws or how things run in government is really awesome,” she said. “To know we helped provide something beneficial to our community makes me happy.”



Senior Grace King is doing two majors: political science and criminal justice.

residents can show appreciation for their communities and help preserve historic value. Public art can also have economic impact—showcasing a city’s culture in a vibrant way, increasing tourism and enriching life for residents.

The report included measures for public hearings, definitions of what public art is and where jurisdictions lie—“you know, all the nitty-gritty details you don’t really think about,” King said. In broad terms, students defined types of art that can be publicly displayed like sculptures, murals, temporary exhibits and lighting.

To oversee applications for municipal art, students specified the creation of a Milledgeville Public Arts board. They provided guidelines for this board to determine appropriateness, thus ensuring future art in Milledgeville is welcoming, family friendly, non-commercial and not political.

Town organizations and groups have long been interested in using art to “characterize our sense of place and provide creative expression,” according to Rebekah Snider, executive director of [Visit Milledgeville](#).

“It quickly became clear that our community was searching for a roadmap, proven success stories and a process for how we begin to welcome and activate public art while also maintaining a balance between Milledgeville’s historic assets and artistic expression,” Snider said.

“The drafted ordinance helped us to address a clear process for incorporating public art into the city—ensuring its long-term sustainability and effectiveness,” she added. “We eagerly anticipate the uniqueness it will add to our neighborhoods and the expansion of our community identity. We are incredibly grateful to Georgia College and specifically Dr. Max Harleman and Ashley Copeland for their support of our passion and vision for what the future may hold concerning creative placemaking. We believe that the best is yet to come.”

The ordinance isn’t the first community-based engagement project to come out of Georgia College’s Department of [Government and Sociology](#), Harleman said. But it’s the first university project involving policy written by students that may soon become regulatory law.

Knowing it might also create a way for future residents and art students to paint public murals makes the work even more gratifying, King said.

Taking Harleman’s course solidified her desire for a career in government. She plans to get a master’s in public administration, then work as a policymaker or lobbyist.

King first [presented](#) the idea to the council in December 2023. She was joined for a [formal presentation](#) in January 2024 by Renata Ocampo and Vivian Cassaniti, students who worked on the project before graduating last May.

An [article](#) in the Union Recorder relayed how impressed city council members were with the presentation. Several said they couldn’t recall anybody, let alone college students, presenting an idea with a ready-made policy to go with it.

The ordinance was the culmination of months of work.

First, the class researched others cities that allow beautification by art, like Athens and Atlanta, Georgia, and Nashville, Tennessee. Through art,

A Framework for Civic Expression



Image Source: The Union-Recorder (Collins, 2014)

The Georgia College & State University Students of POLS 4401: Public Policymaking (Fall 2023):

Lauren Trinkwalder, Ricky Smith, Celica Schmetterer, Kylie Rowe, Renata Ocampo, Nina Nicholson, Rebecca Meghani, Rory McInnis, Isabelle McClintock, Cheavelle Marquart, Lyla Lynch, Emily Lanham, Grace King, Harrison Jarrard, Colin Hall, Gavin Gilliam, Vivian Cassaniti, Davis Anderson, and Chloe Allensworth

Along with:

Dr. Max Harleman (Georgia College & State University),
Dan Lavery (Georgia College & State University Foundation)

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It definitely confirmed my decision to be involved in legislation. I don't want to do anything else. I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing that'd be more rewarding.

- Grace King

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News Stories Posted Monday March 25, 2024



The science and hubbub behind the coming eclipse

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#): Monday March 25, 2024

Some say the solar eclipse on April 8 is a lucky omen. Others say it's a sign of God's judgement.

But one thing's for sure.

No matter what you believe, this year's darkening of the sun by the moon promises to be an astronomical display that's [bigger and longer, brighter and more spectacular](#) than the last total solar eclipse that crossed America in 2017.

Georgia will not experience total blockage of the sun. But, weather permitting, residents will still see a remarkable occurrence, said Dr. Donovan Domingue, professor of [physics and astronomy](#) at [Georgia College & State University](#).

It will be the last partial eclipse visible to Georgians until 2045.



Adobe Stock.

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Having to wait 21 more years to experience a phenomenon that historically has impressed so many people should encourage us to view this partial eclipse now or travel to its path of totality. The event can really give us perspective on the connections between the sun, earth and moon and our relative motions in space like few events can.

- Dr. Donovan Domingue

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On March 26, Domingue will give a 6 p.m. public talk at Mary Vinson Memorial Library in Milledgeville. He'll explain the nature of solar eclipses, their history and details about April 8.

As he did in 2017, Domingue spent many months traveling to Baldwin and Jones County schools, prepping teachers on the science behind an eclipse. He helped create informational lessons and activities for the big day.



Hundreds of students watched the partial solar eclipse on the first day of classes in August 2017 on Front Campus.

Between the two events, Domingue also supplied about 30,000 safe-viewing glasses to schools and local libraries.

About 20,000 of those were handed out for April 8—funded by Georgia College’s [Science Education Center](#), Department of [Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy](#) and the university’s Astronomy Kaolin Endowed Chair.

But safety’s not the only thing on people’s minds this year.

Today’s Internet is engulfed with “wild conspiracy theories” about the April 8 eclipse despite “perfectly reasonable scientific explanation” for the phenomenon, according to [Newsweek](#).

The 2017 and 2024 eclipse pathways overlap to create a giant [X across America](#)—a sign of heavenly disapproval to some. But others will travel long distances to the X’s center point near [Carbondale, Illinois](#), thinking it the luckiest place on Earth that day.



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Certain people fear the eclipse corridor passes too close to the New Madrid Seismic Zone. They point to a series of earthquakes in the Mississippi Valley that occurred just months after the September 1811 solar eclipse—though Newsweek found no scientific evidence to connect the two.

The 2024 eclipse path caused more uneasiness when people realized it moves through Jonah, Texas, and at least two towns called Nineveh in Indiana and Ohio—calling to mind the Old Testament story of repentance.

More strange happenings surround the eclipse. Just days before, there’ll be an [alignment of four planets](#). Then, a horned celestial object nicknamed the ‘[Devil’s Comet](#)’ becomes visible—yes, you guessed it—on April 8.

Superstitions and [portents in the sky](#) have plagued eclipses since ancient days. Even [animals and birds act confused](#) during eclipses.

But Domingue takes these things in stride.

No stranger to fun—the astronomer has Star Wars memorabilia and toys in his office—his reaction to conspiracy is one of a staunch scientist.

On the question of city names, Domingue said, “Each eclipse path is a part of a family of eclipses that all have the same path direction but land on different parts of the globe. When looking at a few centuries worth of eclipse paths—that creates a jumble of lines from the different families of eclipses. These families are called ‘Saros cycles,’ and they repeat every 18 years, 11 days and 8 hours.”

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All are mathematically predictable. Nature would be indifferent to choosing any existing cities that happen to lie in any paths.

- Dr. Domingue

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Besides, there’s plenty of ‘real science’ about April 8 to interest people.

[Two important things](#) make this year’s solar eclipse brighter and more spectacular. The sun will be close to a solar maximum (2017 was close to a solar minimum), and the moon will be a couple thousand miles closer in orbit to Earth.

This means viewers may be treated to large [eruptions of solar material](#) as they watch the eclipse, while a closer moon appears bigger and blocks more sun.

Other fascinating facts:

- Solar eclipses happen almost every year somewhere on the planet, but total solar eclipses over specific communities are rare. A [community might not experience one](#) in 200 or more years.
- For a region like the U.S. to get two total solar eclipses in just seven years is “[a truly remarkable occurrence](#).”
- In 2017, the eclipse moved northwest to southeast from Oregon to South Carolina. It was the first U.S. coast-to-coast total solar eclipse in 99 years.
- This year, [the trek](#) is southwest to northeast from Texas to Maine. (See this [interactive map](#).)
- In 2017, a narrow corridor through 14 states of the U.S. experienced the total solar eclipse—but only the northeastern tip of Georgia did. This year, [13 states in America](#) will experience the eclipse in totality.
- This year, [maximum viewing times](#) are nearly twice as long—4 minutes and 28 seconds in 2024 compared to 2 minutes and 40 seconds in 2017.
- The 2024 [corridor is wider](#) too—about 115 miles in 2024 compared to approximately 70 in 2017.
- Like last time, millions of Americans will see the 2024 eclipse. But this year’s eclipse will be seen by even larger populations as it moves through [more densely populated areas](#).

Mostly, April 8 is another chance in recent years to see an amazing, natural occurrence.

Domingue urges everyone to not to miss it. The next coast-to-coast total solar eclipse in the U.S. is more than two decades away on [Aug. 12, 2045](#). It’ll move from California, passing through Georgia, and into Florida.

After that, the good news is: A total solar eclipse will pass directly through Milledgeville and Macon. The bad news is: It’s not until 2078, so most of us won’t be around to see it.

On campus, a partial eclipse will be 2 hours and 34 minutes long, from 1:47 p.m. to 4:21 p.m. Maximum sun coverage by the new moon will occur at 3:05 p.m. At that time, roughly 20% of the sun will remain unobscured.

Weather is hard to predict, but a [simulation](#) at USA Today shows a 68% chance of clear skies in Milledgeville at peak viewing time, 3:05 to 3:40 p.m.

Safe eclipse glasses must be used at all times during a partial solar eclipse.

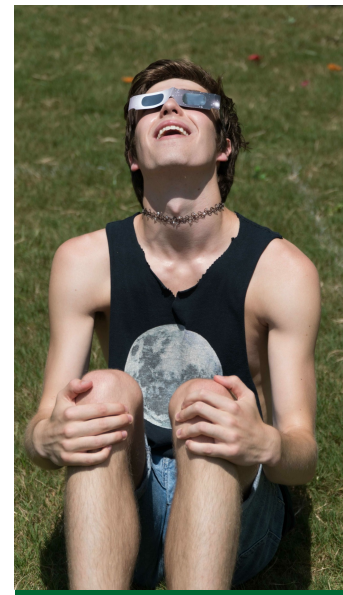
Free protective glasses are available in limited quantities to students through campus housing and faculty, students and staff at Ina Dillard Russell Library.

Milledgeville residents can get Georgia College eclipse glasses at Mary Vinson Memorial and Twin Lakes libraries.

Safety glasses will also be distributed from 2 to 4 p.m. April 8 at the Arts & Sciences Fountain. There will be solar “sunspotter” telescopes at A&S as well. They project images of the sun onto paper.



Former GCSU President Steve Dorman and his wife enjoyed the 2017 partial solar eclipse.



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