

# News Stories Posted Wednesday May 1, 2024



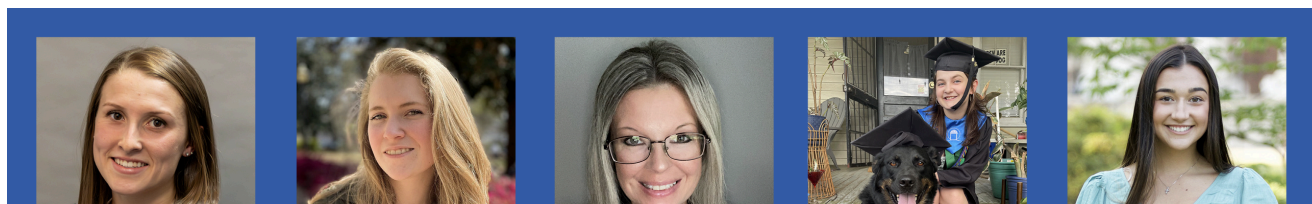
## Outstanding Graduate Assistant Award Recipients for 2023-2024

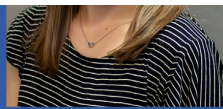
[Graduate Programs in Education](#) : Wednesday May 1, 2024

*By Liz Newlin, senior*

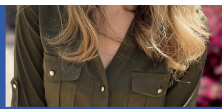
The [Graduate School](#) at Georgia College & State University recognizes the outstanding contributions graduate assistants provide in supportive roles to students, faculty, staff and the university while pursuing graduate studies. Established in 2019, the awards showcase celebrates the hard work, dedication and impact of Georgia College graduate students.

The following students have demonstrated excellence in position and good work ethic. Attitude and performance go beyond the job requirements and take on new responsibilities. For example, supervises and/or mentors other student workers and graduate assistants.





Anna Agi



Sara Carr



Candace Gates



Brenna Hendrix



Alexis Vallianatos

#### Outstanding Graduate Assistant 2023-2024 Award recipients

Awards are also presented to students who have made important contributions to the faculty member's research or department's operation. For example, scholarly achievements such as publications, conference attendance and presentations, program or service-related activities that promote a positive impact at the university or within the community, etc.

[The Graduate School](#) recently awarded six Outstanding Graduate Assistant Awards for AY 2023-2024. Below are the recipient names, majors and location of their GA position.

Anna Agi, [Master of Science in Biology](#) - Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences

Sara Carr, [Master of Music Therapy](#) - College of Education, Maker Space

Candace Gates, [post MSN Certificate, Nurse Midwifery](#) - Graduate Nursing, Clinical Placements

Brenna Hendrix, [Master of Science in Biology](#) - The Learning Center

John "Jack" Powers, [Master of Science in Biology](#) - Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences

Alexis Vallianatos, [Master of Science, Health & Human Performance](#) - Wellness & Recreation

The AY 2023–2024 award recipients—Agi, Carr, Gates, Hendrix, Powers and Vallianatos—represent the highest levels of accomplishment in their respective fields of study. Their dedication, diligence and optimistic outlook have not only improved the scholarly and administrative activities in their departments but have also made a substantial impact on the university community at large.

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**Georgia College's graduate assistants are vital to the institution's operations and prosperity, and we appreciate their accomplishments. The university's purpose of excellence in education, research and service is made possible by their commitment, enthusiasm and hard work.**

**- The Graduate School brochure**

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These students have shown remarkable talents in a variety of ways, such as taking on extra duties, mentoring other students, participating in volunteer projects that benefit the university and the community at large and contributing to faculty research.

Georgia College's graduate assistants are vital to the institution's operations and prosperity, and we appreciate their accomplishments. The university's purpose of excellence in education, research and service is made possible by their commitment, enthusiasm and hard work.

By recognizing the specific achievements of these exceptional graduate assistants, we also emphasize our ongoing commitment to cultivating a graduate student-focused culture of quality, support and acknowledgment. In the upcoming years, we anticipate our graduate assistants' ongoing excellence and significant contributions.







## Class of 2024: Student-Athlete Macy Sheley

**Commencement** : Wednesday May 1, 2024

**Q&A with Class of 2024 Graduate Macy Sheley, Exercise Science with minor in Public Health from Savannah, Georgia**

by GCSU junior Kathryn Price

**Q: Why did you choose exercise science as your major?**

A: I always knew throughout college and into my future career I wanted to work in athletics as someone with a major passion for exercise. My main intent is to help athletes themselves be able to perform better. I found out about Georgia College's exercise science program through my sister, who was also an exercise science major. I chose to add a minor in public health because nutrition is particularly important to me.

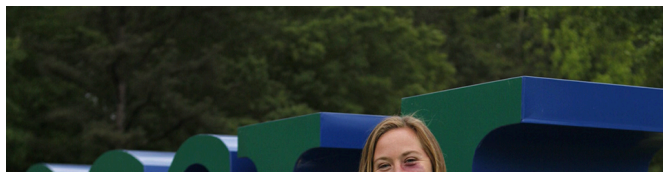
**Q: And why did you choose Georgia College & State University?**

A: I never even toured here. But my siblings went here, and my brother was here at the time. I was between two schools and I let the deciding factor come down to wherever I found a roommate first. Fortunately, that deciding factor lead me here.

**Q: What have you enjoyed doing at GCSU outside of academics?**

A: I competed on the cross country team from my first year all the way up to my junior year and decided to take on a role with the team's social media for my senior year. I have also been a sister of

Kappa Delta, a leader within my campus ministry and was on the 2022 and 2023 National Women's Flag Football teams for Georgia College Intramurals where we won two state championships.





**Q: What is it like to be a student-athlete?**

A: Being a student-athlete was one of the hardest but most rewarding things I could have done. Through my learning experiences as a student-athlete, I was able to choose to prioritize the things that meant the most to me and things that I had a passion for.

**Q: What kinds of community service are you involved in?**

A: My most memorable community service was when the athletics teams got together to do the Potato Drop. I had no idea what to expect, but came out of it having met other student athletes. I also found out I had made the cross country team that day, which was so exciting for me. I have also done a few community service projects with the Campus Outreach program and the cross country team, leading others through my ministry and gardening at the local high school.



Macy is a student-athlete and a sister of Kappa Delta.

**Q: What do you think is your biggest achievement?**

A: I would say learning more about Jesus and making him Lord of my life and all other things became accomplishments through him like being able to graduate knowing I have fulfilled my time here at Georgia College. Also my ability to be involved and make an impact in the community here is a big accomplishment by far. And I was just named Georgia College's All-Time Winningest Female for intramurals.



Macy, at left, celebrates graduation with friends. Macy advises incoming GCSU students, "Get to know as many people as you can."

**Q: What have been some of your biggest challenges?**

A: One big challenge for me was not being in the dorms my sophomore year; I felt distant from everyone compared to freshman year when I was constantly surrounded by others. Though this was a challenge, it gave me an opportunity to dig deep to find real community and get more involved around campus. Another challenge I faced was being a student-athlete and learning time management and prioritization.

**Q: Who are your favorite faculty?**

A: Mike Martino, professor of exercise science and Exercise Science Program coordinator. He cares about his students and has been a good motivator for me when taking his courses. I would

recommend him to anyone needing to take the classes he offers. All the professors are extremely helpful and want the best for their students. With my knowledge of life beyond the classroom, I now have an idea of what I want to do in the future since I have experienced all the realms of college.

**Q: What advice do you have for incoming students?**

A: Try everything and anything, especially the first year. Get to know as many people as you can and dive into things that you want to do, as it is your college experience. Dive into campus ministries and

find your true purpose in life. Experience it all.

**Q: What's next for you, Macy?**

A: Attending Clemson University's Athletic Leadership Master's Program. I also plan to be super involved in Clemson's athletic programs and overall campus life.



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](#)





# News Stories Posted Thursday May 2, 2024



## Class of 2024: Christian Reinhard Diaz of Venezuela aims for a career in sports medicine

[Commencement](#) : Thursday May 2, 2024

**Q: What attracted you to Georgia College & State University?**

A: I came here because my best friend, [Jesus Villamizar](#), who I've known since I was four years old, came to Georgia College because of a tennis scholarship. He told me to try it. He invited me to come here and visit him. I talked with Susie Ramage of the International Education Center and got scheduled for a campus tour. And I just took a chance, applied and got in. Georgia College is a very nice university. I really enjoyed it.

**Q: Why did you move from Valencia, Venezuela to the United States?**

A: When I was super young, I came with my mom to Miami each summer vacation to visit her side of the family. They have lived here since 2005. My mom and uncles tried to help me out. So, I moved to

Miami when I was 18 years old. I lived with my uncles. I completed my first year of English and then started my college education.

**Q: How does Milledgeville compare to Valencia?**





A: They are similar in the aspects of being small and everybody knows each other.

**Q: Why did you choose to major in exercise science?**

A: I've attended Georgia College for three years. I've enjoyed learning about the power of sports medicine.



Christian Reinhard Diaz

**Q: How has a Georgia College empowered you to become a leader?**

A: All the people around me helped me become a leader. I was treasurer of the International Club. This put me in a spot where I could make new friends.

**Q: How has Georgia College improved your communication skills?**

A: It helped me a lot. When I came here, I didn't want to give presentations. I didn't like them. I used to get nervous, but now I'm capable to speak in front of groups of people. Before I was super nervous. Now I know what to say, and I'm confident.



Christian and his mom, Maria Diaz, who came from Miami for her son's graduation.

**Q: What's your favorite class and why?**

A: Methods of resistance training was my favorite class. I really enjoyed it because we had class in a lab, where we had to apply what we've learned. So, every class we used to go to the gym and learn different exercises using the right form.

**Q: You have said that professors Dr. Brittney Hardin, lecturer of athletic training and athletic training clinical education coordinator and Dr. Mike Martino, professor of exercise science and exercise science program coordinator, are your favorite professors. Why?**

A: They helped me prepare for my future. I've met with them to get advice on what to do after I graduate. They are very nice to me and helped me a lot. I really appreciate their efforts.

They guided me to see what area I should go into.

**Q: What did you learn from these professors that you'll apply in your sports medicine career?**

A: They taught me consistency, how to be outgoing, speak in public and have patience. I will use these things I've learned with my future patients and be confident with my work.



**Q: Why do you want to pursue a profession in sports medicine?**

A: I've always enjoyed helping others. I'll get to make connections and talk with a bunch of people every day. I also like every aspect of health.



Christian and his dad, Andreas Reinhard, who came from Venezuela for his son's graduation.

**Q: What will you miss the most about Georgia College?**

A: I'll miss the people here, including my professors and friends. I'm used to doing things with my friends and being close to them.

**Q: Which family members are coming for your graduation?**

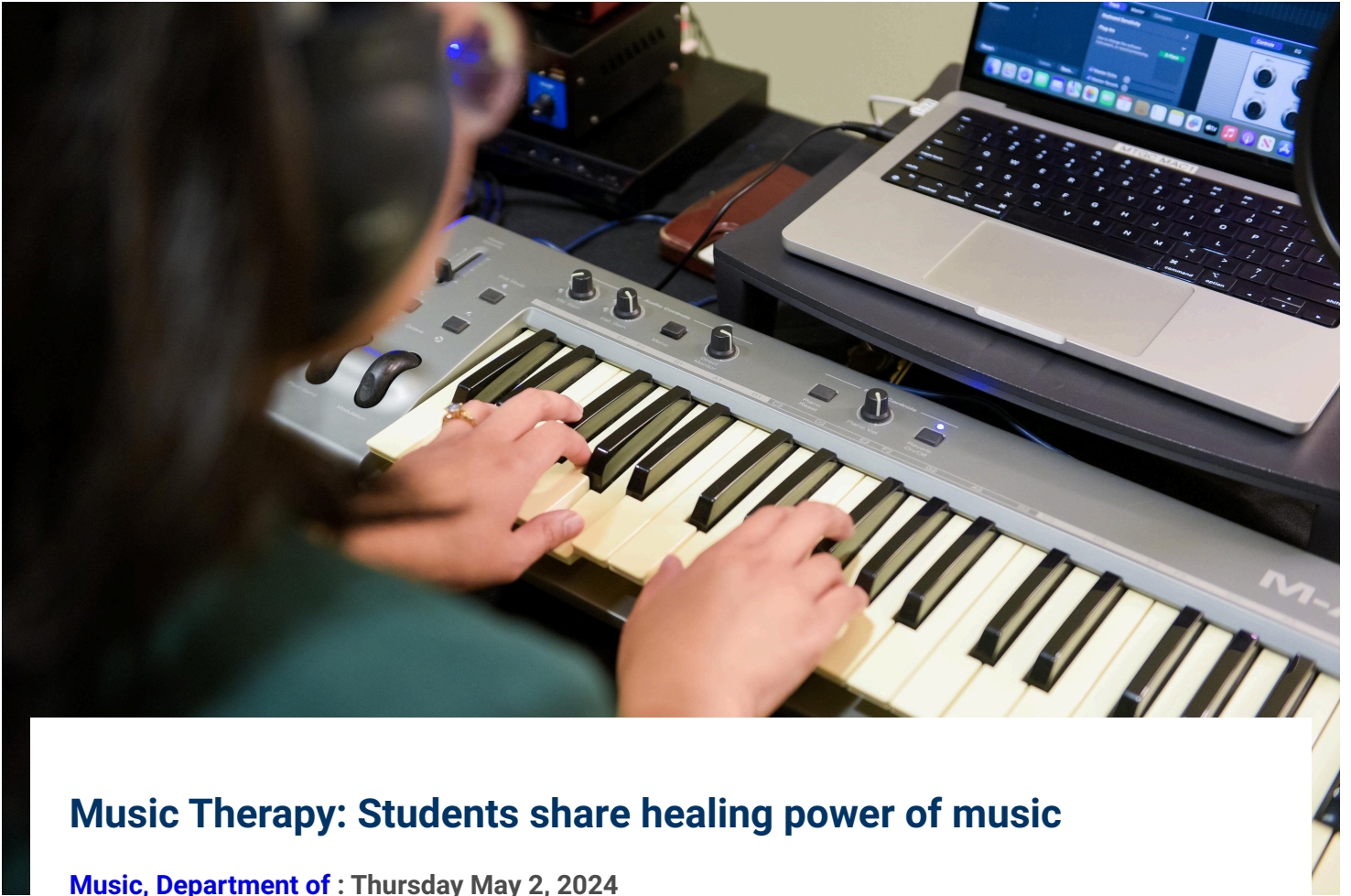
A: I haven't seen my dad since I came to America six years ago. But he's coming to the U.S. for my graduation. I've seen my mother a couple of times. My mom and uncles are coming to see me graduate too.



Christian's relatives who came from Miami for graduation.

The fact I'm not with them makes me stronger. I'm going to build my future for them, so I can be with them. Later, I'll help them like how they've helped me succeed.





## Music Therapy: Students share healing power of music

[Music, Department of](#) : Thursday May 2, 2024

Bob Marley is quoted as saying, "One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain." Billy Joel said, "Music in itself is healing." And Jimi Hendrix was certain, "If there is something to be changed in this world, then it can only happen through music."

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**I saw music therapy as a powerful avenue to connect with individuals on a deeper level.**

**- Daisy Gates**

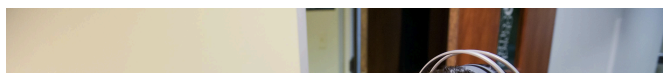
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At Georgia College & State University, 34 undergraduates and 14 graduate students study this phenomenon and bring its healing technique into the community.

Students work with elderly adults in five assistant living facilities in Baldwin County, including the Cottages of Milledgeville at Woodland Terrace, Green Acres Health & Rehabilitation and Georgia War Veterans Home. They serve people experiencing depression, grief, stress, family issues, loneliness, isolation and dementia.

[Music therapy](#) students also assisted other organizations, like Montessori Academy and Life Enrichment Center in Milledgeville and Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon.

The university's [Music Therapy Clinic](#), run by coordinator and music therapist Gabrielle Banzon, offers the only clinic-



based and licensed music therapy treatment for the broader community in Middle Georgia.

Through it, Georgia College students also work in Baldwin County's K-12 special education program.

Music therapy helps elementary, middle and high school students with developmental concerns, physical impairments and learning challenges. This program, contracted through Baldwin County Schools, was started in 2016 by Katie Whipple, program coordinator for Georgia College's undergraduate Music Therapy program.

The program has expanded to provide eight weekly sessions to about 80 K-12 students in the county's classes for exceptional children. Groups range anywhere from a few children to about 20 at schools like Midway Hills Primary, Lakeview Academy and Oak Hill Middle School.

This semester alone, Georgia College Music Therapy students provided 700 service hours in the community.



Gabrielle Banzon plays the piano keyboard at GCSU's Music Therapy Clinic in Parks Hall.

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**That is impressive!**

**- Katie Whipple**

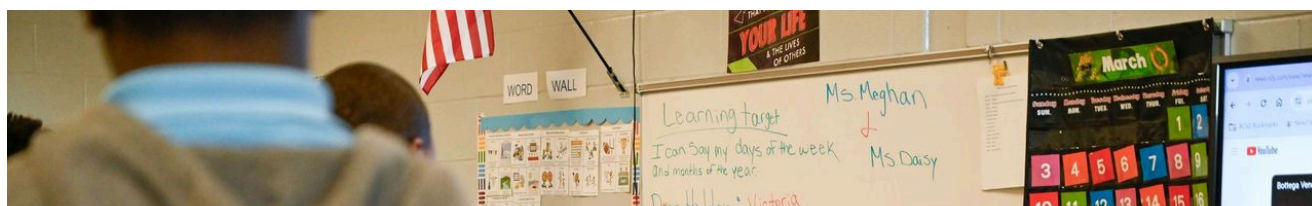
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“That is impressive! That doesn't even include the work our students are doing in their intensive, off-campus internships,” Whipple said. “This has been an awesome ongoing partnership that provides hands-on experiences for our undergraduate and graduate students, while allowing them to work and observe a professional music therapist directly.”

Thanks to a Student Technology Fee grant this semester, Banzon was able to add more technology in student therapeutic work. The \$500 funded assistive technologies like microphones, MIDI keyboards, USB adapters, Bluetooth speakers and iPad apps.

Tech is used in therapy sessions and for creating adapted track music for performances.

“We support what they're learning in classes and help them transfer everything they're learning in classes into real-world applications,” Banzon said.







Graduate student Meghan Jennings leads a therapy session at Oak Hill Middle School.

The school music therapy program ends each spring with a collaborative performance, showcasing music, songs and instruments used during the semester. The concert coordinated nicely this year with World Music Therapy Week, held in April. The concert, called “Jungle Jukebox,” was held at Oak Hill Middle School.

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**When they see people with disabilities on the stage, engaging in a musical space, they start to see them in a different light.**

**- Gabrielle Banzon**

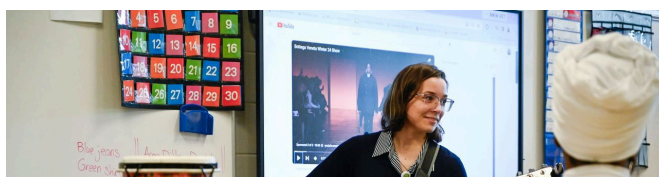
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“People in the audience might not have interacted with people with disabilities before,” Banzon said. “When they see people with disabilities on the stage, engaging in a musical space, they start to see them in a different light.”

At the clinic, Banzon also sees clients from Middle Georgia. She has instruments for them to play, special lighting effects and a vibrating music chair.

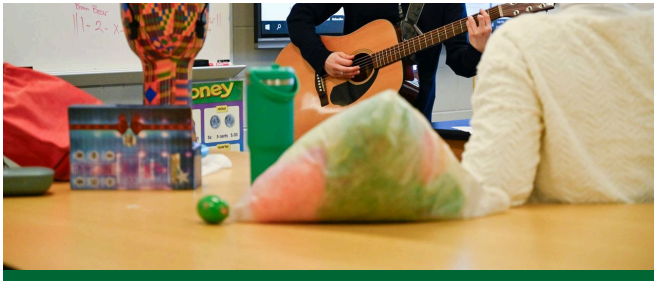
Banzon also teaches three courses a semester and helps students plan therapy lessons. She oversees their use of music to increase listening, communication and social interaction. Students learn to keep track of progress reports.

Two [graduate](#) students—Meghan Jennings of Suwanee, Georgia, and Daisy Gates of Miami, Florida—met with clients every week in Baldwin County schools this spring.



Jennings got her undergraduate degree in music therapy at Georgia College in 2023. After completing about 200 practicum service hours, an internship at a forensic psychiatric hospital and passing a test to become board-certified in music therapy—





Meghan Jennings plays guitar for students at Oak Hill Middle School.

she decided to pursue a master's in music therapy as well.

As an undergraduate, Jennings worked with preschoolers at St. Stephen's Day School, with kids of all ages at the Boys and Girls Club in Baldwin and Jones counties and with adults who have intellectual and developmental disorders at LEC.

During her six-month internship at Central State Hospital, she also worked with patients in psychiatric crisis.

"To date, that has been my favorite population to work with," Jennings said, "because I got to see how powerful music can be for people who need an outlet to express what they truly feel in the most authentic way."

"Working in forensic psych opened up a new door for me," she said, "because I honestly did not expect to love it as much as I did."

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**Working in forensic psych opened up a new door for me, because I honestly did not expect to love it as much as I did.**

**- Meghan Jennings**

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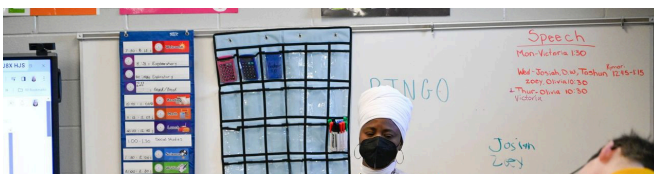
Jennings recalls one individual plagued by hallucinatory sounds and voices. She realized his interest in the guitar could help.

Gradually, he made eye contact and started singing. Playing helped him "focus on the music, not the voices," he told her.

This year, Jennings led musical interventions in three Baldwin County classrooms. This involved creative lesson planning based on skills her clients needed. Music helps with things like impulse control, conversation, eye contact, decision making, emotion identification, memory retention, creative thinking and following directions.

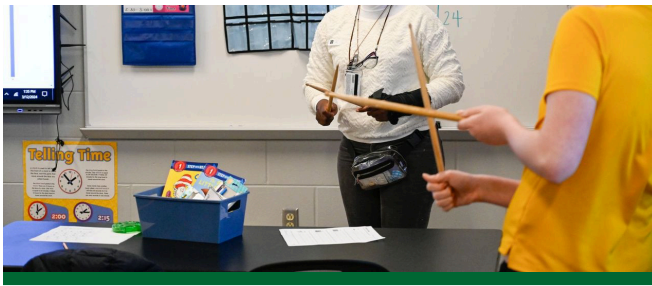
Each lesson begins with a greeting song, followed by high-energy activity like movement to music, freeze dances and instrument play alongs. The group works on basic skills, and there's a cool-down period with calming music and stretching.

Music therapy students play multiple instruments. Jennings plays the trumpet, guitar, piano, drums, ukulele, accordion and recorder.



At Oak Hill Middle School this semester, Jennings was joined by Gates.

Early in her master's program, Gates



Graduate student Daisy Gates engages a student by using drum sticks.

mostly observes. But she also helps execute lessons and interacts with clients. She got her bachelor's in popular music at Florida Memorial University and a master's in music education from Florida International University.

She plays the violin, viola, cello, drums, xylophone, marimba, recorder, didgeridoo, guitar and piano.

Gates was drawn to music therapy as “a new path in my journey beyond the classroom.”

“I saw music therapy as a powerful avenue to connect with individuals on a deeper level,” Gates said. “I also want to be a representation for my community by shedding light on this impactful career and inspire others to explore this avenue of healing and community service through music.”

In addition to what Georgia College’s Music Therapy program already offers—which includes [summer music therapy camps](#)—Banzon hopes to provide more in the future. She’d like to start an all-inclusive rock band for underserved teens of all abilities and develop teletherapy sessions on Zoom for clients who can’t travel.

A group therapy session might be added to clinic offerings, along with a new partnership with Atrium Health Navicent in Macon. This will solidify an already-strong program, giving students more ways to practice job-ready skills. All aspects of the program help students for careers in private practices, psych hospital units, nursing homes and schools.

“

**Disability is not a scary word. Neither is psychiatric disorder. When you understand what something is, it becomes less frightening and more approachable.**

**- Jennings**

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# News Stories Posted Friday May 3, 2024



## Class of 2024: GIS certificate helps geography major map career

Commencement : Friday May 3, 2024

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**You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go...**

**- Dr. Seuss, Oh, the Places You'll Go!**

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The first thing everyone asks Tanner Adams when they learn he's graduating with a major in [geography](#) is "What are you going to do with that?"

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**... geography will apply to almost any job.**

**- Tanner Adams**



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But for Adams, the bigger question is: “What can’t I do?”

It boggles his mind more students aren’t elbowing their way into the field.

“For a lot of people, geography reminds them of a sixth grade map quiz,” Adams said. “But it’s so broad. There are so many things you can do with it. The problem, like my professor always said, is ‘You will never find a job called geography.’”

“Some people don’t realize geography is even a discipline,” he said. “But if it’s what you really want to do, if you open your eyes to the idea—geography will apply to almost any job.”



Senior geography major Tanner Adams in the map room at the Baldwin County government building.

Adams should know.

The Savannah resident landed a job in February—well before graduation—doing GIS data work at Spatial Engineering Incorp. in Rincon, Georgia. In fact, several companies reached out to Adams after reading his resume on LinkedIn.

He’s one of four students graduating this spring from Georgia College & State University with degrees in geography.

In addition, Adams earned a [certificate in GIS](#). His knowledge of geographic information systems led to two

internships doing GIS mapping for the Baldwin County Board of Commissioners.

The job involved a technical mixture of computer software and creative visualization in the art of ‘cartography’ or mapmaking.

“

**If you’re lucky, if you manage to follow the GIS certificate and get an internship and little bit of real-life experience, it puts you above the curve. Just having those opportunities and having so many people reach out to me has given me hope—not for me, but for my peers and anybody else interested in this industry because, clearly, there are jobs.**

**- Tanner Adams**

”

Adams knows a Georgia College alum who works as a GIS analyst in Colorado and another who works with FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Understanding the earth and things like location, topography, environmental issues and how humans interact all connect for Adams. In elementary school, he was a whiz at map quizzes and games that name locations.



A finger pointing to a map.

He started his college years interested in culture, urban development and emergency relief—all things you can do with GIS.

The first day of classes—getting to know faculty like Dr. Doug Oetter, Dr. Amy Sumpter and Dr. Chuck Fahrer in the department of [history and geography](#)—Adams was encouraged by the very real

prospects of his chosen field.

“I don't regret it for an instant. Obviously, I've had amazing experiences here,” he said. “Being able to work in GIS at a smaller school, especially in a smaller program, I've been presented with so many opportunities. I'm so lucky to be where I am today.”

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**I'm so lucky to be where I am today.**

**- Adams**

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Careers using geocoded data can be found in a multitude of trades like forestry, agriculture, oceanography, transportation, municipalities, law enforcement, disaster planning and storm tracking. GIS and digital maps visually simplify problems, leading to solutions. For example, maps are used for tax purposes, telecommunications, marketing, construction, healthcare and real estate. They can show voting districts, floodplains and wildlife populations.

The possibilities seem endless.

GIS requires analytical skills, cartography, data management and computer programming.

Workers must understand geospatial analysis, which includes math and geometric properties. They explore the meaning behind data and communicate outcomes, so personal skills are also important.

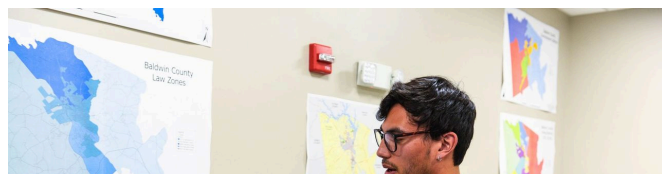
As a Baldwin County intern, Adams refined skills he learned in class.

He worked with county addresses and maps in a variety of ways creating spreadsheets, dashboards and digital maps. He assessed and corrected online county data about roadways, safety signs and where fire hydrants are located.

He also helped create borders for new subdivisions and mapped business licenses.

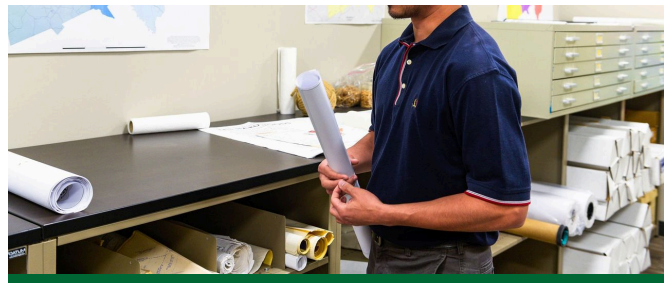
To do this, Adams had to become familiar with computer software like Python, Esri and ArcGIS Pro. They help solve problems through visually appealing, informative maps.

“Because everything nowadays is so digital, you can take for granted how hard it is to make something on a screen. You know, it just pops up,” Adams said. “People don't realize all the actual detail that goes into making something like



this.”

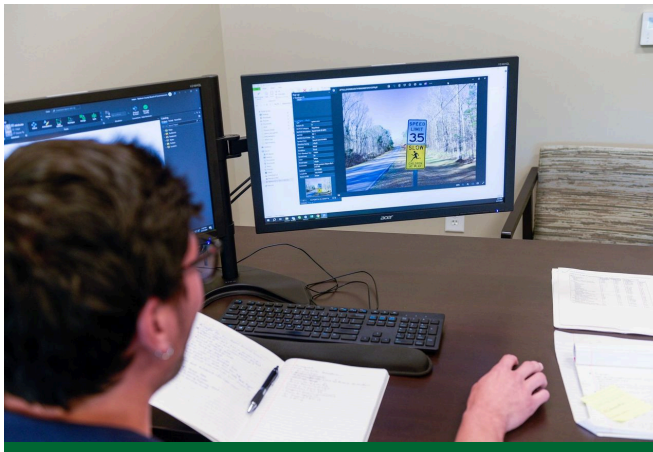
“I’m super appreciative of the era I was born into,” he added. “Cartography has been around since the beginning of the recorded era. But being able to use computer software and make things that are not only super visual and appealing to the eye but also informative is really cool.”



Adams in the map room at Baldwin County.

Ensuring students learn GIS software to efficiently manage data is an important element of the Georgia College geography program. Adams credits Oetter for this and appreciates being pushed by him to work hard.

The program also offers opportunities for original research. Adams was in a student group that analyzed waste/hazard sites in Milledgeville and the surrounding area using a public participatory GIS method. They surveyed residents and used recorded data to map waste sites.



Adams looks at road signs for a GIS map he helped create.

As an intern, Adams organized the county’s map room and digitally scanned rolled-paper maps dating back to the late 1800s.

He also helped create an interactive map with “real-life application,” where residents can locate county road signs. This included going in person to check and take pictures of signs.

His supervisor in Baldwin County was Brandie Hagler, GIS technician and addressing coordinator. Hagler called Adams an “absolutely fabulous” intern.

“He exceled at everything we asked him to do, and he was a great asset,” Hagler said. “Tanner is definitely a step above most interns. The project he took on was a big undertaking, but he seemed to handle it with ease.”

At Georgia College, Adams was a member of the Men’s Club Soccer team, Geography Club and Dean’s Student Advisory Board. In addition to GIS, he earned a certificate in Sustainability and completed another internship at the university’s composting site.

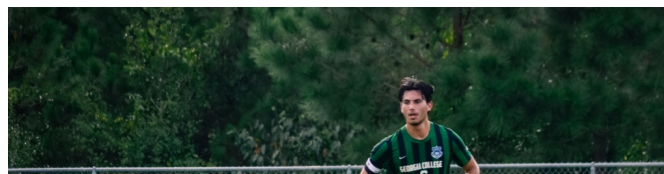
Both certificates are offered through the geography program.

Adams changed a lot in four years. He matured, became more responsible. His advice to incoming students is to take time to stop, breathe and focus.

“Do not rush,” Adams said. “The key to success in college is balance. It sounds easy. But managing work, stress and free time can be challenging. I’ve managed to enjoy my college experience by prioritizing everything.”

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**Georgia College has provided me with the tools and knowledge to land a job. The rest is up to me.**





- Adams

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In 10 years, the soon-to-be graduate sees himself managing a GIS team in a metro municipality outside a big city in the Southeast, creating digital maps to solve problems and improve lives.



Tanner Adams playing soccer.

“Georgia College has provided me with the tools and knowledge to land a job. The rest is up to me,” Adams said. “Being able to study as a geography major has been unique. I don’t take it for granted. It has prepared me, I truly believe, for anything I’ll face in the future. I am more than prepared to face any challenge.”

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**So be sure when you step, Step with care and great tact. And remember that life's A Great Balancing Act. And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed! (98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  percent guaranteed) Kid, you'll move mountains.**

- Dr. Seuss, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*

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PILLAR IV

**ENGAGE**

(verb): 1. To occupy, attract, or involve (someone’s interest or attention), 2. To participate or become involved

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



# News Stories Posted Saturday May 4, 2024



## Federal Reserve Board Gov. Lisa Cook gives keynote address at GCSU commencements

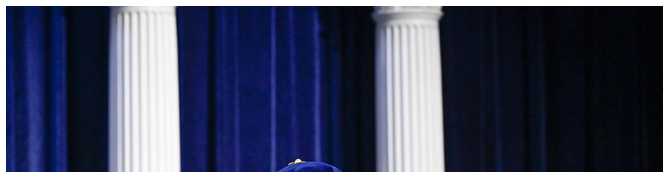
**Commencement** : Saturday May 4, 2024

The Honorable Lisa D. Cook, Ph.D., returned to her roots and hometown in Milledgeville to give two inspirational keynote addresses at [Georgia College & State University](#) commencement ceremonies.

Governor Cook is the first Black woman and fourth native-born Georgian to serve on the Federal Reserve Board in its 111-year history. She was also a faculty member at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and Michigan State University.

"Dr. Cook has throughout her career consistently demonstrated a commitment to mentoring and advocating for underrepresented groups in the field of economics," said Georgia College [President Cathy Cox](#), when introducing Cook at commencements for the university's College of [Business & Technology](#) and College of [Arts & Sciences](#).

"All of Dr. Cook's impressive achievements would make her a prestigious selection as our commencement speaker this year," Cox said, "but there is more to the story that brings her here to Georgia College today."





Cook's mother, the late Mary Cook, was the first Black tenured faculty member in Georgia College's [School of Nursing](#), where she taught for 17 years.

Her father, the late Rev. Payton Cook, was a chaplain of Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, where a building now bears his name. Her father led and participated in numerous Baldwin County community organizations and served on the university's [Foundation Board](#).



Federal Reserve Board Governor Lisa D. Cook, Ph.D., spoke at two 2024 GCSU commencement ceremonies.

**My feelings about GCSU begin with immense gratitude. It was rare in the early 1960s for colleges to hire, let alone tenure, an African-American woman or man, particularly in rural Georgia.**

**- Dr. Lisa D. Cook**

In addition, Cook's two sisters have ties to Georgia College. Pamela Cook served as director of Minority Affairs for more than four years, while Melanie Cook served as a Foundation Board trustee. Both were present to hear Cook's keynote addresses.

The sisters grew up with Georgia College as a second home, often visiting their mother on campus. They attended the Peabody Laboratory School as pupils for student teachers in the university's [College of Education](#). Their babysitters were Georgia College students, and their Baldwin County teachers were trained at Georgia College.

The family also hosted dinners for [international students](#), who introduced the sisters to the world. Cook herself now speaks five languages: English, French, Russian, Spanish and Wolof, a Niger-Congo language spoken in a subregion of West Africa.

"I am not a graduate of GCSU," Cook told students. "However, my roots run much deeper than that. I was born in Milledgeville and, in many ways, it was Georgia College...that was my home... I grew up here, on this campus."

"My feelings about GCSU begin with immense gratitude," she added. "It was rare in the early 1960s for colleges to hire, let alone tenure, an African-American woman or man, particularly in rural Georgia."

For her family, Cook said, Georgia College represented the Civil Rights Movement promise that education can make the world fair and just for all people.

"For me personally, from an early age, GCSU, and the world it opened to me, was evidence that I could do anything in life and be anyone I dreamed of being, regardless of where I was raised or my race and gender," she said.

Cook congratulated the Class of 2024, urging them to find hope and





meaning in her personal story. She said Georgia College prepared them well, and they are limited only by their “motivation, preparation and imagination.”

“...whoever you are, wherever you come from, and whatever anyone has said about you and your capabilities,” Cook said, “you can be anything and anyone you want to be.”

“

**If you ever wonder what the future holds for someone like you—someone educated here in a small town in Georgia who then makes her way in the world, I am here to tell you today that you are not where you come from, and where you come from is not where you are going. The possibilities are endless.**

**- Dr. Lisa Cook**



Dr. Lisa Cook with GCSU President Cathy Cox.



President Cathy Cox and Provost Costas Spirou present Governor Lisa Cook with an honorary degree from GCSU.

For her many accomplishments, Cook received the highest recognition a university can bestow.

Cox and GCSU Provost and Vice President for [Academic Affairs](#) Dr. Costas Spirou presented Cook with an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, from Georgia College & State University.

Cook was named to the Federal Reserve Board in 2022 by President Joe Biden to fill the final two years of an unexpired term. She was renominated and reconfirmed in 2023 to a full 14-year term that ends in 2038.

Cook received her B.A. in philosophy and physics magna cum laude from Spelman College, where she was awarded the prestigious Truman and Marshall Scholarships. She and her sister, Pamela Cook, were the first two sibling recipients of the Truman Scholarship.

As Spelman's first Marshall Scholar, Cook earned a second B.A. in philosophy, politics and economics from the University of Oxford, England. Cook earned her Ph.D. in macroeconomics and international economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Her teaching career began at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, where she also served as deputy director for Africa Research at Harvard's Center for International Development.

“

**...whoever you are, wherever you come from, and whatever anyone has said about you and your capabilities, you can be anything and anyone you want to be.**

**- Dr. Lisa Cook**

”

In 2000-01, Cook was senior advisor at the U.S. Treasury Department of International Affairs. She was an international affairs fellow for the Council on Foreign Relations. She also was a national fellow and research fellow for the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Cook advised the Nigerian government on banking reforms and the Rwanda government on economic development.

In 2005, she became a professor of economics and international relations at Michigan State University. Under President Barack Obama in 2011-12, Cook served on the White House Council of Economic Advisers. She held visiting appointments at the National Bureau of Economic Research, University of Michigan and Federal Reserve Banks of New York, Chicago, Minneapolis and Philadelphia.

Throughout her career, Cook has been an advocate of advancing underrepresented groups in the field of economics. She worked several years as director of the American Economic Association Summer Training Program and was awarded the Impactful Mentor Award. The award recognized Cook for mentoring graduate students through AEA's Mentoring Pipeline program.

# News Stories Posted Monday May 6, 2024



## Class of 2024: Bailey Clark, double Bobcat

**Commencement** : Monday May 6, 2024

When Bailey Clark stepped on the Georgia College & State University campus for an orientation session prior to her freshman year in 2018, little did she know that a chance encounter would help shape not only her academic career path, but her future as well.

"Georgia College has changed my life," said Clark. "If I had gone anywhere else, I'd still be struggling along and trying to get into med school – a goal I'm not sure I ever really wanted."

Clark attended her orientation session and visited the Bobcat Athletics promotional table at Bobcat Marketplace. There, she met Al Weston, then Assistant Athletic Director for Communications, and struck up a conversation. That conversation turned into an offer for student employment.

"When I met Bailey, I had such an immediate positive interaction and 'vibe' off of her and her family," said Weston. "In that role, I relied heavily on student workers to help promote the athletic department and run the different aspects of hosting home events. Bailey started working and immediately hit the ground running. One of the things that stuck out the most early on is she was absolutely fearless



when it came to work. She was willing to try anything or take on any job asked of her. You could tell she was just trying to soak it all in."

“





Double Bobcat Bailey Clark

**The relationships you make at Georgia College aren't superficial...they become like family. It feels like I've known these people my whole life.**

"When I came to campus, I had no idea that meeting Al at orientation would be the most pivotal point in my life," said Clark. "Growing up I always told everyone that if I could work in sports I would. I particularly always enjoyed statistics in sports and didn't realize there was a job for that until working for Al as a student."

Clark started to pick up the different roles of a sports communicator very quickly. She began assisting with live statistics, live broadcasts and gameday promotions. It was part way through her sophomore year that she decided to make the switch to a mass communication major.

"After two years of struggling with biology and chemistry classes, I switched my major to mass comm and instantly enjoyed going to class," Clark said. "With all of my professors, like [Amanda] Respass, [Angela] Criscoe, [Mikkel] Christensen, [Christina] Smith and many others, I instantly felt a connection. Each of them made me feel like they were genuinely invested in my future. I don't think any other school gives you that."

After completing her undergrad degree in May 2022, Clark fielded offers from different athletic departments, including some Division I programs, but it was her love for Bobcat Athletics and the opportunity for a GCSU master's degree that kept her in Milledgeville. Clark finished her master's in public administration this month.

"In my master's, the elective courses I chose were based on nonprofits to align research more with my interests in intercollegiate athletics," said Clark. "I feel like those classes are going to help me down the road when I run my own show somewhere – becoming an athletic director or sports information director – to find where money comes from and how to use it more responsibly."

Weston truly enjoyed watching the evolution of Bailey Clark in her academic career.

"No one loves GCSU more than Bailey Clark," he said. "It's cliché to say that someone bleeds school colors, but I wouldn't be surprised to see a little blue and green going through her system. She had a passion to promote the great work our student-athletes and coaches do and went above and beyond any expectations I had for her every step of the way."

Clark will be looking for jobs in collegiate athletic communications. An avid softball fan, she hopes to land in a department that has a top-notch softball program.

Having a resume that includes multiple ESPN+ broadcasts for nearby Division I Mercer University, she has thought about pursuing a broadcasting career as well.

"This has been my home for six years," said Clark. "The relationships you make at Georgia College aren't superficial. I've made relationships with faculty, staff, students in my classes and student-athletes; they become like family. It feels like I've known these people my whole life."



Bailey Clark, at right with President Cox, received her Master's of Public Administration degree at commencement on May 4.



PILLAR V

# ADVANCE

(verb): 1. To move forward in a purposeful way,  
2. To make or cause to make progress

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



# News Stories Posted Tuesday May 7, 2024



## Class of 2024: Biology major aspires to take readers behind the science

[Commencement](#) : Tuesday May 7, 2024

Grace Cote of Dahlonega is a [biology](#) major with a double minor in [environmental science](#) and [Spanish language and culture](#). Her well-rounded experience at Georgia College & State University has laid the groundwork for her to eventually become a scientific editor and grant writer.

But first, she'll begin pursuing her Master of Science in scientific writing at Texas A&M University in the fall.

"Knowing I'm comfortable with writing and love what I accomplished at Georgia College, I feel confident that I'm going to love pursuing my masters and a career in this field," Cote said. "I hope this grad school program will help me explore niche topics in the field to guide me toward a specific profession."

She feels confident in writing scientific terminology she learned at Georgia College. This is due to her classes, tutoring students in [the Writing Center](#) and presenting at the Southeastern Writing Centers

Association and leading MURACE (mentored undergraduate research and creative endeavors) workshops.

At the MURACE conference, they spoke about demystifying the thesis statement, getting over writer's block and planning a paper.





"I was scared to speak at the conference," Cote said. "But the way it was set up was a panel with me, two graduate students and Dr. Bracewell—all of whom I feel very comfortable with. So, I had the camaraderie, and I also knew my speaking part, which helped me grow my leadership skills."

Cote worked many hours at [the Writing Center](#), helping her peers gain skills which made them confident in their writing. Working at [the Writing Center](#) not only transformed Cote's students into better writers, but also grew her writing skills.

Oftentimes when students come to [the Writing Center](#), they lack confidence in their writing ability.

"They're always bashing themselves, she said. "So, my favorite part is to exude and facilitate confidence in these students. I point out what they're good at. Then, I lead them through what they need help with to make them feel more confident as writers."

Cote enjoys seeing her reoccurring students' progress, especially when they use the concepts provided by her commentary. Eventually, they get more confident in their writing thanks to Cote who cheers them on.

"I enjoy seeing the personal development with the reoccurring students who come in," she said. "It's always exciting when that happens."

"I don't want any student to leave [the Writing Center](#) feeling bad about their paper," Cote said. "I want to lead them through it. I also want them to appreciate writing and learn more about it, while feeling confident in the process because that's what writing is all about."

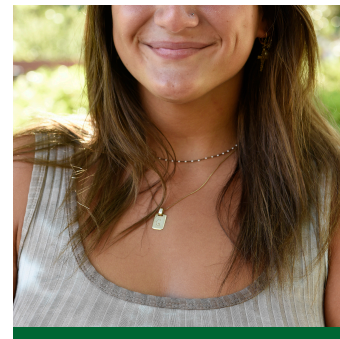
She liked the ecological sciences the most. Her course of study included agricultural ecology, ecology and soil ecology.

She enjoyed Dr. Allison Rick VandeVoort's and Dr. Bruce Snyder's [environmental science](#) and ecology classes and labs.

"They showed me how to create deeper developments in science and to not only think about scientific concepts, but outside of these realms," Cote said. "They made science fun. This made me more passionate in this field."

She's also a member of Beta Beta Beta (TriBeta) Biological Honor Society which improves the understanding and appreciation of biological study through scientific research.

When Cote took 4000-level Spanish classes, Dr. Aurora Castillo-Scott, associate professor of [Spanish](#), put her mind at ease.



Grace Cote



Grace Cote tutors a student at the Writing Center.

“She’s fantastic,” Cote said. “The high-level class was scary at first, because I was surrounded by students who were Spanish majors, and I was a [Spanish minor](#). I didn’t want to participate in class. But Dr. Castillo-Scott was so great at making the environment super safe which made me feel confident in my feedback and studies.”

“

**Knowing I’m comfortable with writing and love what I accomplished at Georgia College, I feel confident that I’m going to love pursuing my masters and a career in this field.**

- Grace Cote

”

She’ll take what she learned and apply it in her career and in life.

“Dr. Castillo-Scott taught me tenacity, confidence and communication—the things that are often overlooked in colleges,” Cote said. “I also learned the thought processes behind higher-level thinking.”

Throughout her four years as a tutor in [the Writing Center](#), Cote got to review a variety of student papers. She especially liked reading the scientific ones.

“When I first came to Georgia College as a biology major, I was so scared because I didn’t understand how tethered [biology](#) and writing are,” Cote said. “Now I understand why my lab reports and research papers are so important. Combining writing with the sciences is such a neat thing.”



## Faculty profile: Dr. Jan Hoffmann

[Communication, Department of](#) : Tuesday May 7, 2024

*Story by Georgia College & State University senior Caroline Hubbard*

Dr. Janet Hoffmann started at Georgia College & State University in fall 2002 as a professor of Rhetoric. She decided to come to Georgia College from Macon State College, now known as Middle Georgia State University, following the creation of the Rhetoric major, because it allowed her to foster the growth of a new program.

Hoffmann has served in many areas, from hosting Times Talk and participating in every undergraduate commencement ceremony since 2003 to leading the Georgia College chapter of the American Democracy Project.

Preceding her time at Georgia College, Hoffmann earned a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from Florida State University, a Master of Arts in Speech Communication from San Jose State University and a Doctor of Philosophy in Speech Communication from the University of Washington.

Hoffmann says that her favorite place on campus is her office on the second floor of Terrell Hall because of the beautiful view from her window.

Times Talk, a national weekly discussion series on current and significant public events and issues as reported by the New York Times and other reputable sources, has been an enormous part of Hoffmann's time at Georgia College.

"It is one of the longer traditions on campus, and we change topics





depending on whatever the student, faculty, staff or volunteer facilitator would like to discuss and share their expertise and perspectives about,” Hoffmann said. “So, if you do not like it this week, next week might be something that fascinates you.”

Another large part of Hoffmann’s Georgia College experience is her role in leading the Georgia College chapter of the American Democracy Project as one of its founding members.

ADP is a network of 300 colleges and universities collaborating to deepen public higher education’s impact on preparing students to be engaged community leaders by developing civic skills of critical thinking, deliberation, thoughtful listening and dialogue, particularly with opposing views and perspectives.



Dr. Jan Hoffmann



Dr. Jan Hoffmann leads a discussion during a Times Talk session.

She has also served as one of the designated deputy registrars for Georgia College since 2005, where she was trained to know the rules of voter registration, answer questions accurately and honestly and help get people registered to vote.

“I do voter education drives, registration drives and tabling when anybody needs it,” Hoffmann said. “If they want to table, I will train students, so they know all the important rules to do it legally and ethically.”

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**How lucky am I to have a career in this place.**

The best part of working at Georgia College, according to Hoffmann, is when she gets to read out a student's name at graduation, knowing that it is a student whose educational journey she was able to experience.

“We have that glance together, where we just realize this was such a special moment,” Hoffmann said. “And they are about to walk off and start their new adventure. We are ending an adventure that, in many cases, I got to start with them four years ago when they first started out in the Bridge Scholars program, which is cool.”

Hoffmann enjoys the little things involved with being a professor and mentor to students, from sitting with them on the front porch of Terrell Hall to keeping up with them after graduation.

“How lucky am I to have this career in this place.” Hoffmann said.





## Class of 2024: DNP betters quality of life for PTSD survivors

[Nursing, School of](#) : Tuesday May 7, 2024

Dr. Avis Simon, commander in the Nurse Corps at the Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command at Camp Lejeune, wants to help individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. She already has a plan in place designed to identify it early in military members and veterans.

Recently, she successfully defended her Doctor of Nursing Practitioner project at Georgia College & State University titled "Effectiveness of an Educational Intervention on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Screenings for Healthcare Providers in Ambulatory Settings."

Simon's project addresses the screening and diagnosis of PTSD in veterans early on, which is crucial for improving their healthcare outcomes.

PTSD is a mental health problem that's challenging for veterans and healthcare providers' ability to recognize, diagnose and successfully treat.

Simon experienced second-hand PTSD at Camp Lejeune. It spurred her interest in improving the lives of military members, veterans and their families.

"I've served in the Navy for 30 years," she said. "I've been to several bases and seen PTSD in the rarest form."

As part of her project, Simon worked with military healthcare providers, military

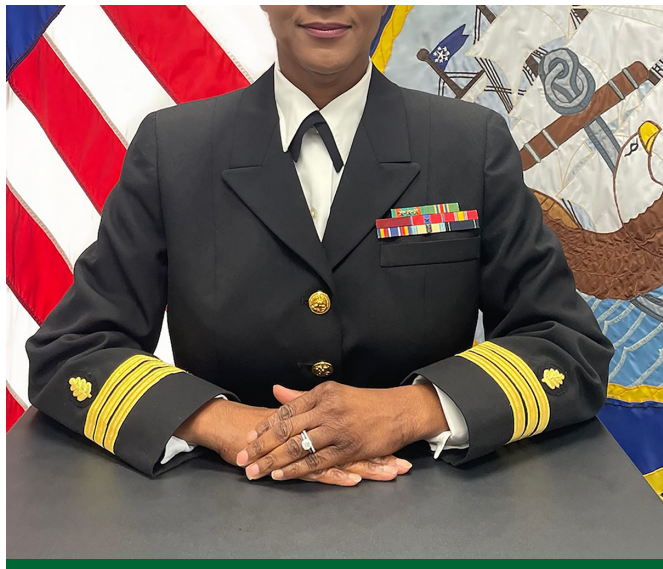




members and veterans to get their insights on PTSD. She viewed the process at Camp Lejeune's clinic firsthand.

Simon is passionate about diagnosing PTSD early. Her husband suffered from it when he returned home after serving in Iraq, and she saw how healthcare providers downplayed it.

"It was frightening," she said. "I took him to the emergency room at WellStar. And they said, 'He's just depressed.' So, they gave him medicine after medicine."



Dr. Avis Simon, commander in the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps



Dr. Avis Simon(left) explains her Georgia College DNP project and its findings to Nurse Corps officers who work at the VA in Atlanta. She stressed the need and timeliness of this discussion to support veterans by using PTSD screenings.

Her husband continued having flashbacks.

"He kept telling me he heard gunshots," Simon said. "He had to sleep with his rifle."

After visiting a Veteran's Affairs Clinic, her husband is doing much better. Getting proper care was what he needed. This experience was a lot for Simon to process.

"That opened my eyes that PTSD is real, and it's personal for me," she said. "I thought it would be easier to educate healthcare providers on this issue."

This project had always been on her mind, from the moment she started pursuing her DNP in May 2021. She wanted to help educate healthcare providers on the issue.

At Georgia College, Simon enjoyed the camaraderie of learning beside her peers the most. She considers them friends and values the mentorship the program offers.

Dr. Debby MacMillan was her favorite professor because of her thoughtfulness and encouragement.

"Dr. MacMillan and I both lost our moms in January within one week of each other," Simon said. "I wanted to stop going to school. But she kept encouraging me as I went through a grieving process. She took the time to check on me and considers others before herself—that speaks volumes of her character."

MacMillan modeled how to be a servant leader—something Simon hopes to emulate in her profession.

"She taught me how to really care for others, investing so much compassion and time in me and kept helping me with my project," Simon said. "She texted frequently just to check on me."

In May 2023, Simon put her Georgia College project to work with healthcare providers on base. Her project of educational intervention on PTSD screenings for healthcare providers in ambulatory settings concluded in July.

Last summer, an Army veteran came to a military base and said he was hearing voices. He was turned away from getting the care he needed. Later, he killed four people, then was shot himself.

"Did we even bother to screen him? The answer is no," Simon said. "We didn't take the time to do our due diligence."

This tragedy makes Simon work even harder to help those she can. Even though there are protocols in place, she knows there are military nurses and medical doctors who don't know how to diagnose PTSD.

"It's up to me to educate them on how to use these screening tools," Simon said. "Early intervention of PTSD is crucial to get our clients the appropriate care and medical referrals they need."



Dr. Avis Simon, commander in the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps

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**“Even in the civilian world, many veterans won’t say anything when they get screened after returning from overseas. You have so many people saying, ‘I’m okay.’ But my husband was not okay. If we can meet people halfway, by giving them a safe environment, they’ll feel they can report it.**

**- Dr. Avis Simon**

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Much of the U.S. population is homeless due to PTSD, Simon said. Sometimes even a vet’s family can’t be bothered with them. They return home from war—sometimes broken and wounded—and find they have nowhere to go. That isn’t good enough for Simon. She believes vets deserve better after serving their country.

“It’s my sincere hope that people with PTSD get the care and treatment they need to live productive, normal lives,” Simon said. “I also want to keep them off the streets by making sure they know about the resources available to them and to let them know that there’s no fear in reporting PTSD.”

Now, armed with her doctorate, Simon plans to implement her project in her field. She’d like to teach in a nursing school.

In the meantime, PTSD often continues to go unreported. Too many are afraid, uncertain how the diagnosis will impact their military careers. They’re afraid of being judged.

“Even in the civilian world, many veterans won’t say anything when they get screened after returning from overseas,” Simon said. “You have so many people saying, ‘I’m okay.’ But my husband was not okay. If we can meet people halfway, by giving them a safe environment, they’ll feel they can report it.”



# News Stories Posted Thursday May 9, 2024



## Retired nurse and GCSU Alumna gives keynote speech at COHS commencement

[Nursing, School of](#) : Thursday May 9, 2024

Retired registered nurse Anresa Davis of Savannah gave a keynote commencement address at her alma mater, [Georgia College & State University](#).

Her message to students graduating from the university's [College of Health Sciences](#) was simple: to identify their unique strengths, always be prepared to care for those who cannot care for themselves and go forward "brilliant and kind."

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**You arrived here curious, hopeful and brimming with potential. You depart educated, skilled, prepared and more confident in your ability to provide both excellent patient care and unmatched customer service.**

**- Anresa Davis**

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Davis served more than 20 years as a nurse in surgical intensive care units and



emergency rooms in Georgia. Then she joined the leadership team of Park Springs, a lifecare community in Stone Mountain, Georgia, where she worked until her retirement.

Davis received a bachelor of science in [nursing](#) degree from the Medical College of Georgia in 1976 after earning her associate degree in nursing at Georgia College in 1975. She was active on the Milledgeville campus as a resident advisor, basketball cheerleader and library work study student.

Davis remains an enthusiastic supporter, serving as a trustee on Georgia College's [Foundation Board](#). She's also a member of the leadership board in the College of Health Sciences.

In 2013, Davis established and endowed the "M. Catherine Summerlin Honorary Scholarship" at Georgia College. It honors longtime nursing faculty member Catherine Summerlin, an associate professor of nursing from 1969 to 1988. Summerlin served as department chair and director of Georgia College's nursing program, as well. The scholarship is awarded annually to students pursuing nursing careers.

Davis told the health sciences class of 2024 how she grew up during college, and how her mentor—the strict Cathy Summerlin—helped her mature instantly when relaying only half the class would graduate. To those who would make it through, she said, "From this day forward, you will treat every person you care for as if that person is your mother."

That statement changed Davis' life forever.

"In that moment, the old me evaporated," Davis said, "and Mrs. Summerlin became a major influence in my nursing career."

Similarly, she urged today nursing graduates to lean on the knowledge and support they received in college and remember "that everyone has value and a voice."

“

**You are the guardians of dignity, safety, health and comfort. No matter your field, you are an advocate. Treat every vulnerable person with transparent compassion and empathy. Never forget that the least among us most often has the most to teach.**

- Davis

”



Anresa Davis







## O'Connor Scholar Bruce Gentry reflects on decades spent studying Flannery

**O'Connor Institute** : Thursday May 9, 2024

With dozens of academic publications to his credit on the subject of Flannery O'Connor, '45, you would never know that Dr. Bruce Gentry had a negative reaction the first time he read the famous author's work.

"The first time I was given a Flannery O'Connor story to read, it scared me," Gentry said. "I didn't immediately fall in love with this author. But I couldn't forget 'A Good Man Is Hard to Find.'"

Gentry says that as an undergraduate student of English and journalism at the University of Arkansas, his favorite author was Franz Kafka. While perusing a used book sale, Gentry found a book that likened Kafka's writing to that of O'Connor. So Gentry was determined to give O'Connor another try.

"I'm the rare individual who was hooked on Flannery by reading 'Wise Blood,' of all things. That's not typical," explains Gentry.

“

**I didn't immediately fall in love with this author. But I couldn't forget 'A Good Man Is Hard to Find.'**

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"I thought I was going to do other things in college. Then I wrote a paper about O'Connor at one point in

graduate school, and the professor wrote at the end of it, 'I think you've got a dissertation topic,'" Gentry said. "I never thought I would have anything to say about that weird author O'Connor. But then it just became an obsession, as these things do."

Gentry earned his master's degree in English from the University of Chicago, then his doctorate with an emphasis on American literature from the University of Texas. His continued study of [Flannery O'Connor](#) led Gentry to attend an academic conference in Denmark in 2002 where he learned of the opportunity to live and teach at the epicenter of O'Connor scholarship: Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville, Georgia – Flannery's alma mater, in her [hometown](#).



Dr. Bruce Gentry, Flannery O'Connor Institute fellow, professor of English and editor of "The Flannery O'Connor Review."

Gentry's extensive scholarship includes articles and essays exploring O'Connor's impact on feminism and gender dialog; reflecting on the author's use of violence, criminality and "meanness;" and critical comparisons of O'Connor to other authors including Truman Capote, Erskine Caldwell, Alice Walker and others.

"People want to put Flannery in the Southern Gothic genre and put her with Erskine Caldwell and Carson McCullers and others she should have liked, but that she didn't," Gentry says. "But her cohort is really authors like Kafka, Dostoyevsky and Dickens. She would place herself with the likes of Walker Percy. And she loved Hawthorne and Conrad."

For those not familiar with O'Connor's works or who want to discover the author for the first time, Gentry recommends a trajectory that starts with her later work. He says to begin with "Revelation," then move on to "Parker's Back" and "Good Country People."

"There are a lot of people who start reading Flannery O'Connor and say, 'Yuck!' And even people who become great fans often have a very negative emotional reaction at first," Gentry explains. "In a way they're right, because if you read O'Connor a lot, you figure out that she didn't particularly like her audience. She's

attacking. I mean, she's been beating up on me for 40 years now."

After more than 20 years as Professor of English at Georgia College and Editor of the Flannery O'Connor Review, Gentry is looking at retirement. But with O'Connor's continued popularity and even a new movie out about the author – Ethan Hawke's ["Wildcat"](#) now in limited release – Gentry knows he probably won't ever stop studying and talking about Flannery. He does hope that his role will evolve.

"I think, in the future, my role in O'Connor studies is going to be to read manuscripts for other people, encourage them and continue to do my book club meetings...I think I did my bit and now we want to see the next generation take over and take charge with me, you know, cheering on the sidelines. Maybe correcting a comma here and there for them," Gentry says, laughing.

Gentry's colleagues at Georgia College



say his importance to the university and O'Connor scholarship cannot be overstated. Fellow Flannery scholar Dr. Jordan Cofer, professor of English and associate provost for transformative learning experiences at Georgia College, first met Gentry while in graduate school.

"He helped me out as he has done for so many Flannery O'Connor scholars," Cofer said. "Dr. Gentry has been essential for Georgia College as an amazing professor, and as a Flannery O'Connor scholar. He has edited the journal for many years, and organized conferences for scholars. I'm so glad he agreed to serve as the Flannery O'Connor Institute for the Humanities fellow and continue to lead the monthly book discussions."

[The O'Connor Institute](#) supports Flannery O'Connor scholarship and engages community members with the arts and humanities. Institute programming includes the [NEH Summer Institutes](#) on Flannery O'Connor, which are made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Gentry has secured three major NEH grants during his career at Georgia College.

"Dr. Gentry's teaching and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students, publications and presentations, editorship of the 'Flannery O'Connor Review,' and leadership in organizing and delivering NEH Summer Institutes has strengthened the academic reputation of the university and helped guide future scholars in their understanding of O'Connor," said Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Costas Spirou.

The Flannery O'Connor Institute for the Humanities is hosting an academic conference this fall, fully funded by their latest NEH grant. "[Flannery O'Connor's Second Century: Looking Forward, Looking Back](#)" is Sept. 12-15 at Georgia College.

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**Dr. Gentry's teaching and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students...has strengthened the academic reputation of the university and helped guide future scholars in their understanding of O'Connor.**

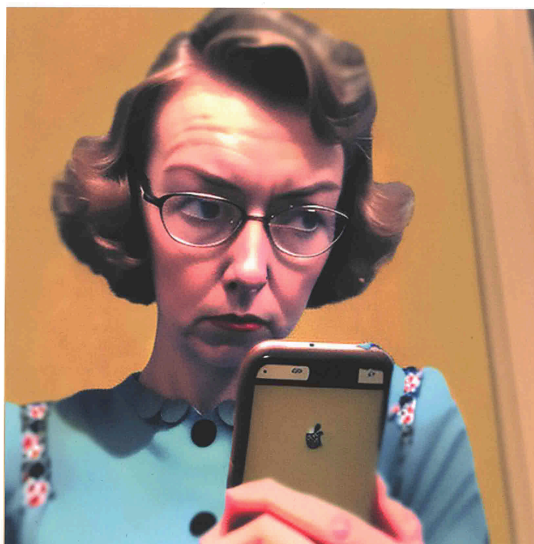
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Gentry is reviewing conference submissions. He anticipates that at least a quarter of the papers submitted to the conference are going to be about race.

"The article by Paul Elie saying Flannery O'Connor was a terrible racist...that shocked me some. Not totally, but some. I wasn't used to having people say to me that they couldn't teach Flannery O'Connor anymore because she was such a terrible racist," Gentry said.

# Flannery O'Connor

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VOLUME 21 • 2023

The 2023 edition of The Flannery O'Connor Review.  
Cover art: "The iLife You Save May Be Your Phone," AI  
art by Joseph F. Brown.



Literary critic Paul Elie published a piece in The New Yorker in June 2020, titled "[How Racist Was Flannery O'Connor?](#)" The subtitle reads, "She has become an icon of American letters. Now readers are reckoning with another side of her legacy."

"I don't have much patience for the idea that we shouldn't teach people who have flaws. People say, 'Oh, we didn't know that racism was out there.' Sure it was. And it was everywhere. And that's not surprising. This is important and what's topical. And disability studies, as well. There is a book being written now that is a double biography of Flannery and [her mother] Regina."

Cofer agrees that O'Connor scholars like himself and Gentry still have a great deal to uncover and study.

"It's amazing that she has such a relatively small corpus (two novels, two books of short stories, some essays and letters), but that scholars continue to find new aspects of her work to discuss," Cofer says. "There are hundreds of scholarly books written about her, multiple biographies, thousands of dissertations and we are still finding new things to say about her. In a lot of ways, she was talking about the big issues that humans still care about—and the lessons in her work are still as relevant now as when she wrote them."



## 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](#)



# News Stories Posted Friday May 10, 2024



## Bobcats win Southeast Regional No. 2 with 4-3 win over No. 19 Mount Olive

[Athletics](#) : Friday May 10, 2024

Georgia College & State University got seven strong innings from starter Jacob Ryan and held on for a [4-3 baseball decision](#) over No. 19 University of Mount Olive in the finals of the 2024 NCAA Division II Southeast Regional No. 2 Saturday (May 18) afternoon at Ray and Bea Dillard Field at Ashmore Park on the University of North Greenville.

With the win, the seventh-seeded [Bobcats](#), who are 8-0 so far this postseason, won their ninth consecutive game as they improved to 37-20, while the No. 3 seed Mount Olive ended its campaign at 39-18. GCSU, which won all three meetings with the Trojans in 2024 and are 7-2 all-time against UMO in the postseason, will advance to the Southeast Super Regionals for the first time in program history when they will travel to Salisbury, North Carolina, May 24-25 where they will face Catawba College in a best-of-3 series to determine who will represent the region at the NCAA Division II Baseball National Championship in Cary, North Carolina, June 1-8. First pitch at Newman Park for game one is slated for 6 p.m. Friday (May 24), with game two to start at 3:30 p.m. Saturday (May 25) with an if-necessary game to follow.

Mount Olive took a 1-0 lead in the first inning on an Aiden Cottle sacrifice fly, but the Bobcats tied the game at 1 in the second. Matthew Mebane led off with a walk and moved over to second base on a wild pitch. Mebane advanced to third on a Mitch Cowan ground out and scored on Cam McNearney's sacrifice fly to left-center field.

The Trojans reclaimed the lead at 2-1 in the third on a ground out from Dylan Jeffries, but GCSU tied it up at 2 on Braeden Smith's solo home run to right field in the fourth. It was Smith's sixth long ball of 2024. The Bobcats took the lead for good in the fourth inning against UMO starter Brian Robertson (0-1). Mebane drew another walk and moved to second on an Evan Cowan ground out. Mebane advanced to third on an infield single by Mitch Cowan and scored on McNearney's RBI ground-rule double to right field. Mitch Cowan later scored on Rand Bestermann's sacrifice fly to right to give

GCSU a 4-2 lead.

Ryan improved to 8-2 on the hill for the Bobcats as he scattered six hits - only two after the third inning - and struck out four over seven innings. Lex Kenny recorded his seventh save as he pitched the final two innings to preserve the win, allowing just a homer to right-center field by Case Kermode to start the ninth inning.

GCSU collected five hits against the Trojans with Mitch Cowan recording the only multi-hit game for the Bobcats with two.







## Lee County education leader gives keynote address at GCSU commencement

[College of Education](#) : Friday May 10, 2024

Superintendent of Lee County Schools Dr. Kathleen Truitt gave a keynote commencement address at her alma mater, [Georgia College & State University](#).

She told students graduating from university's [College of Education](#) that she was "dumbfounded" when asked by GCSU President Cathy Cox to speak at commencement.

"I am simply a regular person and what would I have to really offer you at such a pivotal moment," Truitt said. "And then it occurred to me, maybe just maybe I could share how a regular person can use the tools they have to do big things."

An esteemed leader with more than two decades of innovative educational experience, Truitt began her career in 2001 as an elementary and middle grades teacher in the Henry and Clayton County school systems.

She advanced into various administrative and leadership roles, which included roles as principal and assistant superintendent. She led teams that developed groundbreaking learning models to address underperformance and enrichment in literacy and mathematics.



In 2023, Truitt became the first woman to serve as superintendent in Lee County.

Truitt received a bachelor's degree in communication with a Spanish minor from the University of Louisville in



Dr. Kathleen Truitt

Kentucky and a master's of education from Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky. She got her specialist in [educational leadership](#) degree from Georgia College & State University and a doctorate in educational leadership from Columbus State University. She was also certified in educational leadership at the University of West Georgia.

Truitt told the class of 2024 she grew up in an education family. Both parents were educators and two aunts "rode mules to teach in one room schoolhouses in Western Kentucky." She talked about the night an abandoned teenager, one Christmas Eve, became her "new big brother."

“

**This work is not for the weak at heart, but it just might be some of the best work that we can do for the communities we serve...I cannot wait to see the futures that you will build.**  
- Kathleen Truitt

”

"That night, I watched whatever it takes happen right before my eyes," Truitt said. "My parents made a difference from that moment on...and I wanted to make a difference too."

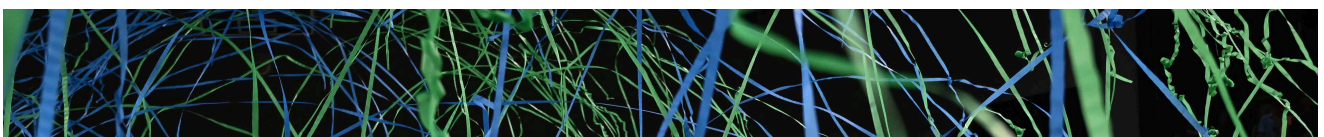
"That need to make a difference became a driving force, both in my personal and professional life," she said. "That need to make a difference is the very reason why I'm standing in front of you today."

Truitt told COE majors her acronym for LIFE is: Learning, Initiating, Failing and Energy. She asked new graduates to keep learning; not wait for things to happen but initiate; be willing to take calculated risks and fail in order to bring about change; and put energy into their efforts.

"You are entering into a challenging career," Truitt told them. "There has never been a time in history where serving a community in public education has been more challenging."

She mentioned the global pandemic, divided politics and troubled families. She urged graduates to be the impact that "creates cultures where all children have opportunities and dreams, and they have real experiences where there is trust and belief in public education."

"I will not stand here and lie to you," she said. "This is hard work. This work is not for the weak at heart, but it just might be some of the best work that we can do for the communities we serve...I cannot wait to see the futures that you will build."

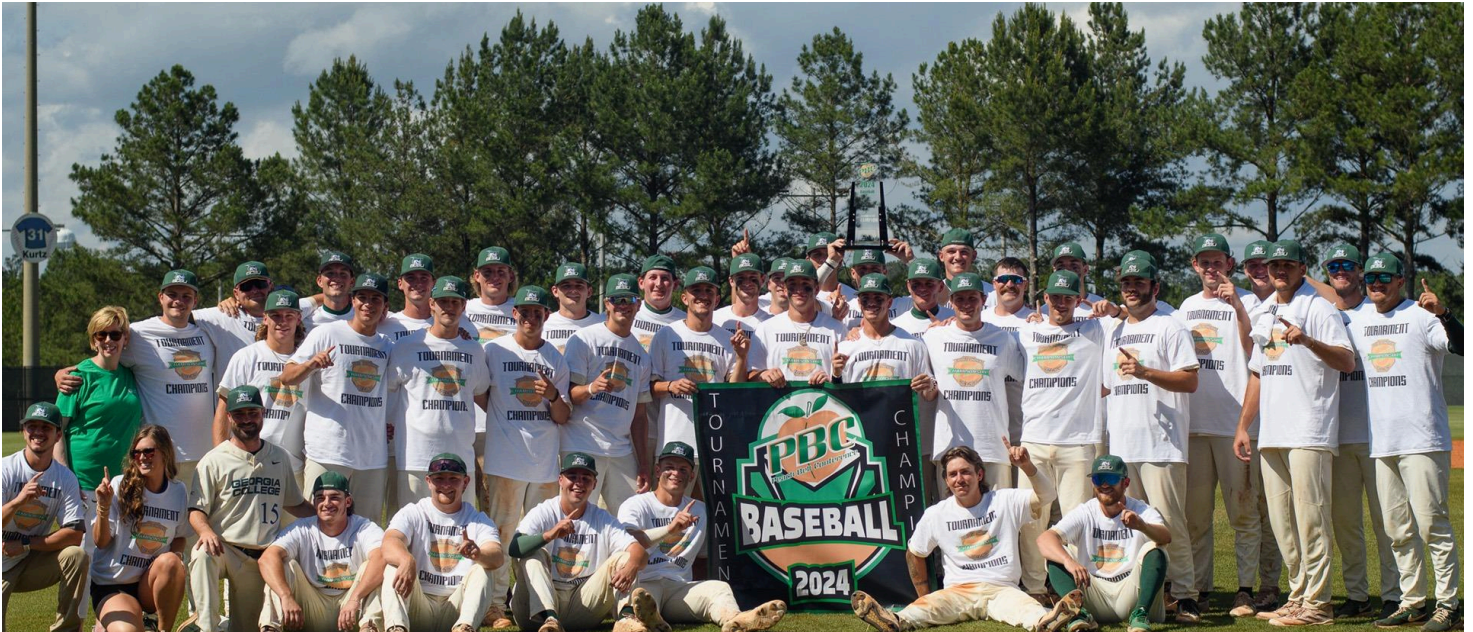






Alternate Text





## Mebane walks it off as GCSU wins PBC Tournament 5-4 over Flagler

**Athletics** : Friday May 10, 2024

[Matthew Mebane](#) sent a 3-2 pitch over the left field wall in the bottom of the ninth inning for a two-run homer and gave Georgia College & State University a [5-4 victory over Flagler College](#) in game two of the Peach Belt Conference Baseball Championship Series Friday (May 10) afternoon at John Kurtz Field.

[The Bobcats](#) won their fifth PBC Tournament title and first since 2018 as they won the best-of-three series with the Saints 2-0. GCSU, which won sixth game in a row to improve to 34-20, earns the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Division II Tournament, which begins on campus sites Thursday (May 16). The Bobcats, who will be making their 15th appearance in the NCAA tournament, will find out their opponent and where they will play when the NCAA holds its selection show at 10 p.m. Sunday (May 12) on NCAA.com. The Saints ended their season at 29-24 and it was also the final game for Flagler head coach Dave Barnett, who is retiring after 37 years in the dugout.



Matthew Mebane at Family Day

Flagler jumped out to a 3-0 lead with three runs in the fourth inning as All-PBC tournament performer Matthew Burke singled to center before Bryce Fitzgerald drove in two more with a double to left-center field.

The Saints expanded their lead to 4-0 as All-PBC Tournament performer Jesse Sullivan added a solo home run - his fourth of the season - to left-center field.

The Bobcats cut the deficit in half as they scored twice in the bottom of the eighth inning off All-PBC Tournament performer Cooper Smith (8-5). Cam McNearney started the one-out rally with a double to center before scoring on Mason Poole's double to left-center field. Poole later scored on a Gabriel Wuerth's single to center. That extended Wuerth's hitting streak to 24 games.

After GCSU reliever Owen Thomas (2-2) worked a scoreless top of the ninth, the Bobcats rallied in their half of the inning. Braeden Smith singled to right and moved to third on All-PBC Tournament performer Brandon Bellflower's single to right field. Braeden Smith later scored on a Cooper Smith's throwing error trying to pick him off at third base. Mebane, who was named to the Most Valuable Player of the PBC Tournament, connected on a two-run homer - his 17th of the season - to left field to secure the win for the Bobcats.

Braeden Smith and McNearney had two hits apiece as the Bobcats, who won their second game this season out of 18 after eight innings, collected 10 hits, including seven in the eighth and ninth innings.

John Luke Glanton and Mitch Cowan were also named to the All-Peach Belt Tournament team for the Bobcats.



# News Stories Posted Monday May 13, 2024





## **Nurse Honor Guard services expanded by GCSU faculty**

[Nursing, School of](#) : Monday May 13, 2024



Three faculty at Georgia College & State University have created the Order of the White Rose chapter for the Georgia Nurse Honor Guard, which now spans the width of Georgia.

Assistant Professors of nursing Dr. Amy Malcom, Dr. Joyce Norris-Taylor and Dr. Catherine Fowler co-founded the chapter to expand free funeral and tribute services to 14 rural counties in Georgia.

A new program, the Georgia Nurse Honor Guard was established in January 2024 to provide funeral services to nurses, similar to those performed for law enforcement and military personnel. The guard's chapters also offer living tributes to former nurses who live in hospices.

"It's a way for nurses to honor other nurses," Malcom said. "It's a way to show unity. We're all together, we're all unified in what we do and we're stronger together."

In their funeral service, the volunteer guards dress in full-white nursing attire with the lit Nightingale lamp of the nurse who has passed away. Another member of the guard lays a white rose for the nurse, and their name is called three times. After a chime is rung and the name is called a third time, their candle is extinguished.



GCSU Nursing faculty Marcia Henry, left, and Dr. Amy Malcom are members of the Nurse Honor Guard.



The Order of The White Rose Nurse Honor Guard attended the memorial service for GCSU nursing student Alexis Gunter, who passed away in June.

**Dr. Joyce Norris-Taylor**

**- We don't just honor the nurse's sacrifice, but the sacrifices folks make for that nurse to be available for others.**

"Nursing is not a nine-to-five job, your family pays for you to be a nurse," Norris-Taylor said. "You come home emotionally and physically exhausted, so your family gives just as a military family gives. We don't just honor the nurse's sacrifice, but the sacrifices folks make for that nurse to be available for others."

To request free funeral or living tribute services in Baldwin, Butts, Clarke, Greene, Hancock, Jasper, Johnson, Lincoln, Morgan, Oglethorpe, Putnam, Taliaferro, Washington or Wilkes County, family members can reach out to Malcom at [amynp43@gmail.com](mailto:amynp43@gmail.com)

or visit the Georgia Nurse Honor Guard website.

Their chapter is also seeking volunteers. Practicing nurses who would like to volunteer are required to be licensed, and retired nurses must be in good standing with the Georgia Board of Nursing. Volunteers must apply by contacting Malcom, as well.

"We get a Nightingale lamp when we graduate from nursing school, and we extinguish their lamp and return it to their family as thanks for their sacrifice," Malcom said. "It's a full-circle kind of thing."

**UPDATE:** This story was originally published in May 2024. The Order of The White Rose Nurse Honor

Guard attended the campus memorial service July 9, 2024, for Alexis Gunter, a Georgia College nursing student who passed away at the end of June. Several members of the Nurse Honor Guard are GCSU School of Nursing faculty who taught Gunter and wished to recognize her as an honorary member of the profession.



PILLAR III

# EMPOWER

(verb): 1. To give (someone) the authority or power to do something,  
2. To make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in  
controlling their life and claiming their rights





# News Stories Posted Wednesday May 15, 2024



## GCSU and Fouts Bros announce educational partnership for regional workforce readiness

[College of Business & Technology](#) : Wednesday May 15, 2024

Georgia College is partnering with Fouts Bros in Milledgeville to help increase workforce development and readiness in the region.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by President Cathy Cox and Fouts Bros CEO and President Scott Edens Monday, May 13, at the Fouts Bros facility located at 138 Roberson Mill Road in Milledgeville.

“

**We are proud as a university to partner with Fouts Bros...We hope they will find this to be a big win-win partnership in so many ways because we're really grateful for this opportunity and for all the things that will grow out of it.**

**- President Cathy Cox**

”

The MOU fosters a partnership between the [College of Business & Technology](#) and [Fouts Bros](#). The family-owned company builds fire trucks, tankers and other emergency vehicles used in fighting fires

around the world.

"We are proud as a university to partner with Fouts Bros both for their benefit to show the local community what intellectual capital we have, and for our students' benefit of experiential learning," said President Cox. "These students and graduates speak for themselves. We hope that Fouts Bros will find this to be a big win-win partnership in so many ways because we're really grateful for this opportunity and for all the things that will grow out of it."



Fouts Bros is a family-owned company that builds fire trucks, tankers and other emergency vehicles used in fighting fires around the world.

The mutually beneficial agreement ensures growth of an educated workforce that's ready to fill jobs in Central Georgia. The partnership creates a steady pipeline of highly talented and skilled applicants for jobs at Fouts Bros, as well.

"This collaboration elevates the opportunities for those in both our university community and the broader Milledgeville-Baldwin County area," said Dr. Micheal Stratton, dean of the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business & Technology.

"We have some of the brightest students in the state, if not the south," Stratton continued. "We are thinking about Fouts

as a laboratory for our students to experiment and engage with professionals in the field, across disciplines, whether it's marketing, or tech, or accounting or finance. I think it is going to be very special for them to learn as they go, and to learn from folks in the field."

“

**We are thinking about this as a laboratory...I think it is going to be very special for them to learn as they go, and to learn from folks in the field.**

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The arrangement provides experiential learning, research and engagement opportunities for students and faculty. Through the university's [Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#) and individual classes, students will have new options to put theory into practice.

In addition:

- Business faculty will act as consultants, helping Fouts Bros address research challenges.
- Students from a variety of disciplines will participate in teams from majors, like marketing, finance, business technology and management information systems.
- They will collaborate with Fouts Bros staff on existing and emerging ventures. These project-based learning opportunities will be supervised by faculty experts.
- Semester and summer internships at Fouts Bros will give juniors and seniors paid additional training, while providing additional personnel for ongoing projects.
- Fouts may also hire a lead intern through the university's Double Bobcat Program to ensure smooth transfers of responsibilities.
- Fouts Bros leaders will facilitate a professional development workshop for students as part of our GC Column Society monthly series.





President Cathy Cox and Fouts Bros President and CEO Scott Edens sign the MOU.

Scott Edens said of the company's Georgia College interns, "We're currently just a little over 300 employees and adding about eight to 10 per month. We're trying to recruit as many people to stay in Milledgeville. Not all the options have to be in Atlanta or New York or somewhere else. There are options here. The GCSU interns are out on the floor, they're in the office, we've already got them activated. And I can't wait to get more here."

Grant Motley, a junior [MIS major](#) from Canton, Georgia, is one of Fouts Bros' new interns from the College of Business and Technology.



Fouts Bros has a much faster turn-around time than most large scale manufacturers for their custom emergency services vehicles.

"It's a lot that I've learned in my MIS classes and now seeing it firsthand. The real world experience has been great because it feels like when you're in the classroom sometimes you wonder 'Am I ever going to use this one day?' and then getting here and actually seeing it firsthand," Motley said.

Other parts of the agreement include giving Fouts Bros preferred access to career events at Georgia College and putting them on the judges' panel for the university's yearly "Elevator Pitch Competition," which gives students 60-seconds to summarize their skill and abilities.

"This is only the beginning of a strong partnership that has limitless opportunities for building a more resilient economy and workforce," Stratton said.



PILLAR IV







# ENGAGE

(verb): 1. To occupy, attract, or involve (someone's interest or attention), 2. To participate or become involved



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



## Pesticide On Your Plate: GCSU scientist and students study toxins affecting our food

[Chemistry, Physics, & Astronomy, Department of](#) : Wednesday May 15, 2024

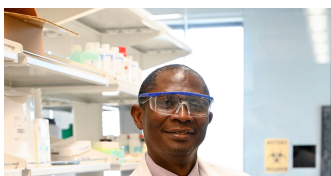
In his study of chemicals used to kill insects, weeds, rodents and other pests—Dr. Sayo Fakayode has come to call it: Pesticide on Your Plate. The slogan creates a terrifying mental picture, clearly outlining what's become a worldwide problem.

"We want to see what's in consumable products, especially food items, that can be problematic for public health. Pesticides are a debilitating challenge for humanity," said Fakayode, chair of Georgia College & State University's Department of [Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy](#).

He's been researching this issue for more than two decades, recruiting undergraduate students and working with scholars worldwide to find quicker, cheaper and more accurate ways for detecting and analyzing pesticides in the human body.

His ultimate goal is to pave the way for a medicine that will help.

"I've said it repeatedly. Chemistry is chemistry anywhere in the world," Fakayode said. "If you have the right skill set, and you are trained in analytical instrumentation—then what they do at Harvard or Yale or MIT or Georgia Tech—you can do right here on this campus."



"At Georgia College," he said, "we are making that little contribution to science."

More than 1,000 different pesticides are used around the globe, according to the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO). They're important for destroying vermin that eat or damage crops. But



Dr. Sayo Fakayode

these toxins also make their way onto people's plates. Nearly 75% of non-organic produce sold in the United States contains some amount of potentially harmful pesticides, according to the [Environmental Working Group](#) and reported by [CNBC](#).

It's not enough to wash pollutants off before cooking.

They've already been absorbed into the foods we eat.

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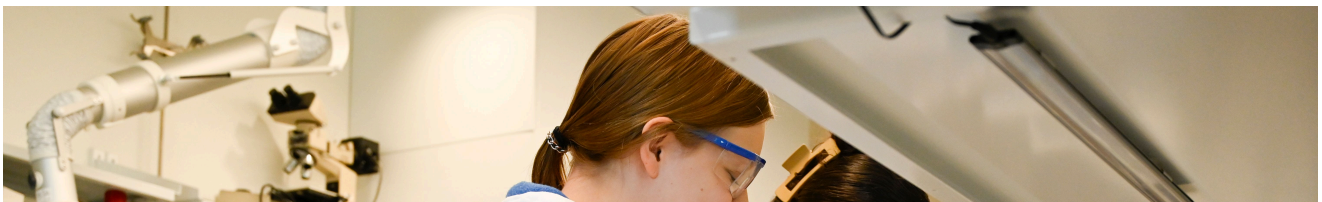
**Pesticides can leach into underground water. When it rains, they can be washed from topsoil to the river, and it's the same river water that we will process and drink. Even plants can absorb pesticides. That magnifies toxins from the root to the leaves to the fruit. It concentrates as it goes along.**

**- Dr. Sayo Fakayode**

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These contaminants can cause health problems like birth defects, miscarriages and developmental disabilities in children, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC).

In addition, three chemicals used in making pesticides are considered “Group 1 carcinogens”—arsenic, ethylene oxide and lindane, according to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#).







Chemistry majors Bailey Dassow, left, and Brinkley Bolton, right, do pesticide research in the lab.

“

**I’ve said it repeatedly. Chemistry is chemistry anywhere in the world. If you have the right skill set, and you are trained in analytical instrumentation—then what they do at Harvard or Yale or MIT or Georgia Tech—you can do right here on this campus.**

**- Fakayode**

”

Tackling global problems like these is a bit mindboggling for Fakayode’s two research students.

Rising senior Brinkley Bolton of Bremen, Georgia, and rising junior Bailey Dassow of Dacula, Georgia, are both majoring in chemistry with minors in criminal justice and concentrations in forensic science.

They were the youngest presenters recently at a research conference for the American Chemical Society in San Francisco, California. In January, they were also named as co-authors on a [study](#) with Fakayode and other university scholars in the Journal of Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics.

Finding a solution to the worldwide problem of pesticides is a “top priority,” the group concluded.

Seeing their names on an issue of global importance—alongside scientists like Fakayode and collaborating partners from Kennesaw State University in Georgia; Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana; and Red-Green Research in Bangladesh, India—was surprising.

“It’s a bit daunting to me, knowing we could have such an impact,” said Dassow, who began working with Fakayode freshman year.

“

**That our small efforts could lead to medications and help hundreds of thousands of lives, and all we did was spend a few weekends in the lab doing our little part is kind of scary. When you look at the big picture and realize it could help so many people, it’s pretty exciting.**

”

Bolton agreed it’s “kind of crazy.”

“Not gonna lie,” she said. “I didn’t think I was going to be published at the age of 19 or 20. It’s weird. I’ve only been here three years, and I’ve already accomplished so much.”

“I didn’t think I could do this,” Bolton said. “I didn’t think I could do it until I was actually presenting research in California. Because it’s a small school, I’ve gotten so many more opportunities at Georgia College with research and being mentored by faculty like Dr. Fakay, than I could ever have gotten anywhere else.”

“

**Being here is worth much more than I ever could’ve imagined.**

- Brinkley Bolton

”

“Being here,” she said, “is worth much more than I ever could’ve imagined.”

Dr. Eric Tenbus, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, said he’s “extremely proud to have faculty and students of such high caliber contributing to the science of discovery here at GCSU.”

Fakayode also expressed pride in his “hardworking” students, who are part of the “creative thinkers and next generation of STEM researchers” produced in his department.

Dassow and Bolton helped Fakayode detect and analyze pesticides in the protein serum albumin. This protein is produced in the liver and enters the bloodstream, helping transport things like fatty acids, nutrients, vitamins and medicine to organs.

It can also transport bad things.

Toxins get into the bloodstream once a person is exposed to enough pesticides. As a delivery system, serum albumin is “the most abundant plasma protein capable of binding with herbicide and pesticide residues,” according to the group’s study.

“This protein is not selective,” Fakayode said. “It will distribute toxins to various organs over time, accumulating pesticides and damaging tissues. If you look at deposits—you’ll see lipid fats. Pesticides are comfortable living inside fatty organs.”

Fakayode and his students wondered if they could develop better methods to evaluate how four widely-used pesticides interact with the serum albumin protein. To do this, they ran samples through

Raman spectroscopy, a Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) instrument, mass spectrometer and molecular dynamic simulation.

These instruments compute data that



allowed Fakayode and his team to detect changes as they occurred. The group accurately identified locations where the four pesticides bind with the protein.

The next step will be collaborating with other universities for animal tests. The endgame is developing a medicine to target and remove pesticides from proteins.

At Georgia College, Dassow will continue her work with Fakayode and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop a rapid, low-cost and accurate protocol for pesticide analysis in fruits, vegetables and dairy products. Bolton is currently researching polymers and plastics.



Bailey Dassow, front, and Brinkley Bolton, back, use complex science instruments to analyze data.

“

**...our slogan is 'NFAA—No Failure At All.'**

**- Fakayode**

”

“This kind of work takes determination and dedication,” Fakayode said. “I tell my students our slogan is ‘NFAA—No Failure At All.’ I look for students who are ‘people oriented.’ They have to work as a team. Any student can learn, and every student can be successful. The question is, ‘Are you willing? Are you trainable? And do you want the job?’ I tell them, ‘It’s not easy.’”

Bolton and Dassow are used to working weekends with Fakayode. One Friday night, they spent 11 hours finishing a samples analysis.

“It’s mind-boggling,” Dassow said. “I’m a sophomore, but I’ve already been published twice. It’s so much craziness. But I thrive on craziness and hard work. I learn so much more that way.”







Bailey Dassow, Dr. Sayo Fakayode and Brinkley Bolton.

Fakayode can be demanding, students said. But his high expectations help mold and ready them for the future. Research experience looks good on a resume and will put them a step ahead when applying for jobs.

“

**That's what Dr. Fakay has given me—the confidence to show 'I can do this.'**

**- Brinkley Bolton**

”

Bolton and Dassow both plan to become forensic scientists and work in crime labs at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or Georgia Bureau of Investigation's [Division of Forensic Sciences](#).

“When I started Georgia College, older students would tell us, ‘You have to defend your research senior year,’” Bolton said. “And I was like, ‘OK, you’re kind of scaring me.’ But then I went to California and presented to people from all over the world. I was scared. You can ask anyone. I was very scared. I was like, ‘I don’t want to do this.’”

“But you know what?” she asked. “I did it. That’s what Dr. Fakay has given me—the confidence to show ‘I can do this.’”



PILLAR I





# INNOVATE

(verb): 1. To make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or products



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

## News Stories Posted Thursday May 16, 2024



**Cicadas about to disappear for another 13 years—after hugely impacting ecosystem**

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#) : Thursday May 16, 2024



Some people love the red-eyed buzzing critters. Others can't wait for them to go.

But for soil ecologists like Dr. Bruce Snyder, these last few weeks are a waning opportunity to learn more about [periodical cicadas](#) and the lasting impact they leave behind.

The clock is ticking.

Soon, millions of cicadas from the Great Southern Brood XIX will go silent. They won't be back until 2037.

"When they're gone, they're gone," said Snyder recently, as he checked multiple wire cages and netted traps set in the woods at [Georgia College & State University](#)'s Biological Field Station at Lake Laurel.

An associate professor of [biology](#), Snyder studies millipedes, earthworms and other invertebrates, like cicadas, which impact soil and forests.

"Timing is super important with this research. We only have a small window of time," he said. "One of the big challenges of studying periodical cicadas is that in any one location you only get them every 13 or 17 years."

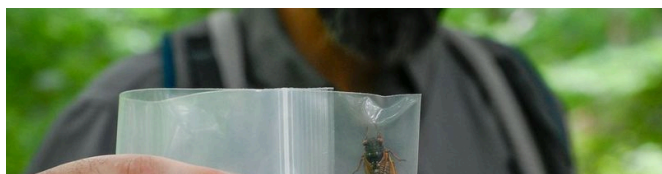
"It makes it more difficult to answer certain questions," he said. "It also means you have to plan ahead and have traps set out ahead of time."

Snyder checks his traps every day. He bags specimens of exoskeletons and cicadas to take back to the lab. He freezes them for preservation and future analysis.

He and his colleagues—Evan Lampert at the University of North Georgia and Mac Callaham with the U.S. Forest Service—hope to learn the impact cicadas make on forests and other organisms in the short time they're here.



A cicada after emerging from its exoskeleton.



According to [VOX](#), the brief appearance of periodical cicadas “shape forests for years to come.” As Snyder and his colleagues have theorized, many scientists believe periodical cicadas are a huge “binge feast” for all sorts of predators like birds, snakes, reptiles, spiders, even ants.



Alternate Text

Cicadas are a good source of protein. Copperhead snakes “especially love them,” Snyder said.

This burst of easy protein sends a “ripple effect” throughout the ecosystem. VOX spoke with a zoologist at the University of California, Berkley, who noted more baby birds were born following a periodic cicada emergence in 2021.

In fact, birds were so satiated with cicadas, they ate fewer caterpillars.

This allowed the caterpillar population to explode. They ate more leaves. This led to more leaf damage in trees.

All because of one noisy little creature who shows up infrequently and stays a short while.



Dr. Bruce Snyder in the woods at Georgia College's Biological Field Station, Lake Laurel.

In Snyder's research, he noticed microhabitats are just as important as temperature for determining when cicadas emerge.

Nymphs come out of the ground when soil 8 inches deep turns 64 degrees. But, oddly enough, they emerged in Central Georgia along the fall line before South Georgia, where they're only now starting to appear. Snyder thinks that's because they live near rivers there, where soil is colder.

“

**We're talking about millions of cicadas coming out, huge amounts of food for all kinds of organisms. We're trying to figure out which organisms eat cicadas and how the energy they absorb moves through the ecosystem.**

**- Dr. Bruce Snyder**

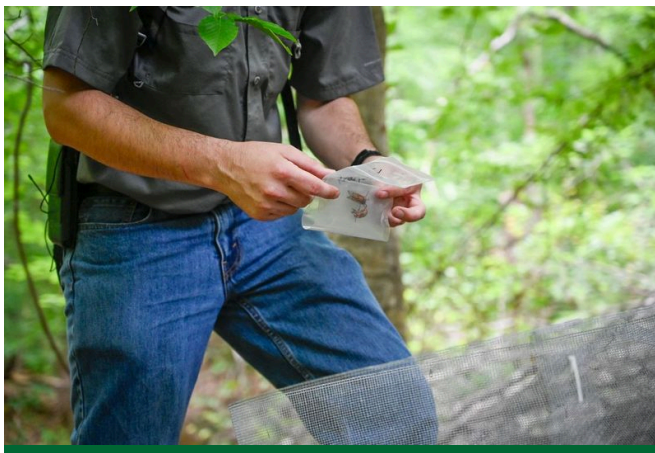
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Cicadas also emerged earlier around campus and other areas in Baldwin County with more concrete and open canopy. Those areas warmed sooner than the deep forest around Lake Laurel.

“Between here and our other sites in Baldwin County, there's slight differences in timing,” Snyder said. “We won't really know more until we get into the data and actually identify all the specimens we've collected. But we're seeing some basic differences based on microhabitats.”

Snyder's also studying the role cicadas play in regulating the amount of nitrogen in forests. He'll examine specimens later this summer, measuring their biomass, carbon and nitrogen content.

This information will help him calculate “how much energy comes out of the ground” during a periodical cicada year. Where that energy goes is an important part of understanding how ecosystems function. Snyder wants to know how much energy cicadas expend during noise making, flying, crawling and reproducing.



Snyder checks his cicada traps at Lake Laurel.

Trees need nitrogen, but it's a limited resource in terrestrial ecosystems. Snyder wonders if any nitrogen is left in their bodies for trees when cicadas die and decompose.

“We're talking about millions of cicadas coming out, huge amounts of food for all kinds of organisms,” Snyder said. “We're trying to figure out which organisms eat cicadas and how the energy they absorb moves through the ecosystem.”

“We're not able to track every piece of this,” he said. “We're only quantifying a

few steps in the process. It's very difficult to track these sorts of things, because we have 13-year gaps in between to establish our research.”

For the next few weeks, Snyder will continue checking traps at Lake Laurel every day for cicadas—as the unique sounds from three species in the brood reverberate around him.

Then, once females cut a slit in an upper tree branch, lay their eggs and die, it'll go quiet.

Six weeks later, eggs will hatch. Tiny nymphs will drop to the ground and burrow in, sucking sap from tree roots, unseen, for another 13 years.

“



**All that noise, all those cicadas—thousands or millions that are out there in the trees above us and around us—it's quite a spectacle.**

**- Dr. Bruce Snyder**

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# News Stories Posted Monday May 20, 2024



## Newell Scholar's research synthesizes music and history

[Newell Visiting Scholar Program](#) : Monday May 20, 2024

*By recent GCSU alumnus Cale Strickland, '24*

Dr. Evren Kutlay, this semester's Martha Daniel Newell Visiting Scholar, has always been fascinated by the intersection of music and history.

As a child, she would listen to her neighbor, a professor and piano teacher, play for hours. Inspired and encouraged, Kutlay auditioned at a local conservatory but was told she was "too old" to learn piano. She proved otherwise, as, under the guidance of her neighbor, she finished three years' worth of lessons in one year.

She went on to pursue her other academic interests, including mathematics, and eventually left Turkey to start her MBA at the University of West Georgia on a full scholarship. Kutlay's Ph.D. combined her love of music and knowledge of business, analyzing the relationship between the art form and consumer behavior.

Today, she's performed across Europe and the United States and contributed to various Turkish media outlets, including a plethora of music journals, the national newspaper "Star" and the public broadcast channel TRT.

A professor and lifelong learner, she uses an interdisciplinary approach to fill in the gaps between Eastern and Western music she found in academic literature years ago.

“You may ask, ‘How is it related to math?’ My systematic approach to things, which I think I inherited from my problem-solving abilities, is something that I learned from studying math,” Kutlay said. “So, those are the things that I’m combining and working on and bringing as a new output, a niche that didn’t exist in academic literature, let’s say, at Georgia College.”

She encourages Georgia College students to follow their passions and dreams, ask questions and take opportunities as they come.

“

**You should pursue your passions, dreams, and you should expand your horizons.**

**- Dr. Evren Kutlay**

”

“Nothing was planned,” Kutlay said. “So, that’s what I would say to Georgia College students. You should pursue your passions, dreams, and you should expand your horizons. Explore things and ask questions about them and see that nothing is separate.”

She performed a series of pieces, focused on music’s effects on diplomacy, and featured Georgia College students, in Max Noah Recital Hall April 4.

And on April 12, at Allied Arts of Milledgeville, she discussed the influence of Western musicians who visited and spent time in Turkey, particularly Istanbul, on the region and its music.

She credits her success to her lifelong passion for, and curiosity about, music.

“I was curious,” Kutlay said. “I loved listening and just watching and listening and so on, and I had that passion in me, somehow.”

[View this story in the spring 2024 edition of the A&S Newsletter.](#)





## Geography professor links physical and cultural worlds—and sports

[History & Geography, Department of](#) : Monday May 20, 2024

*By recent GCSU alumnus Cale Strickland, '24*

When Dr. Doug Oetter came to Georgia College & State University to work as a physical geographer and teach geographic methods, the university did not have a dedicated geography department.

That all changed in 2010, when—with just three professors—Georgia College started its geography bachelor's program.

Oetter's childhood fascination with maps led him to the discipline.

"When we were on family vacation, even though I was the youngest of four children, they would give me the maps and ask me which way to go 'cause I could just do it," Oetter said. "Later on, I discovered that there was an academic field called geography, and it had to do with maps, and I was like, 'Well, this looks like fun,' and I fell in love with geography in the first class I took."

But, he says maps themselves are just the tip of the iceberg.

"Geography is the study of the physical and cultural processes that influence spatial patterns on our planet," Oetter said. "Every day, human societies are influenced by environmental, economic and historical patterns. The patterns direct our decisions and activities, from what crops we grow for food to how we select a restaurant for



dinner. Geography asks where something is and why it is there.”

That “compendium of knowledge” is valuable to a plethora of disciplines and fields, which is why Georgia College began offering two geography-adjacent certificates in addition to its four-year degree: one in geographic information science, or GISc, and one in sustainability.



Doug established the Myrtle Ridge disc golf course alongside his students.

Geographic information systems combine maps and multiple layers of information, on both regions themselves and the people who inhabit them.

“They’re really more than maps,” Oetter said. “They’re actually spatial databases.”

Sustainability is the process of balancing a company’s economic and environmental responsibilities to create a business that prioritizes the interests of all affected: shareholders, consumers and the earth.

“

**Patterns direct our decisions and activities, from what crops we grow for food to how we select a restaurant for dinner. Geography asks where something is and why it is there.**

**- Dr. Doug Oetter**

”

Oetter says the term sustainability—and companies’ interest in it—is relatively new.

“It’s only been around for about 30 years now, and it says that people who practice sustainability will be invested in social ethics, they’ll be knowledgeable of the environment and ecological principles, but at the same time, they will remain true to economic profitability,” Oetter said.

When Oetter was asked to map West Campus’s cross country course, his teaching merged with one of his biggest hobbies and passions: disc golf.

“When I was out there walking around, mapping the course, I realized, ‘This is where we need to put a disc golf course,’” Oetter said.

Four years later, Oetter and his students finished Myrtle Ridge, Georgia College’s own 18-hole course.

Dr. Max Harleman, an assistant professor of public administration at Georgia College, is the faculty advisor for the university’s disc golf club and works with Oetter to maintain Myrtle Ridge.

“There’s a lot of momentum to build a disc golf community here,” Harleman said. “And what Doug and I are trying to do is leverage the momentum we have, given that we have a course here at Georgia College, on West Campus, and also the momentum we have with the disc golf club and league, in order to support that growth of the disc golf community.”

On first thought, the connection between geography, sustainability and disc golf may not be obvious, but Oetter says all three involve the same process: analyzing information to create continual efficiency.

“That’s what geography really is: how we come up with consistent, predictable and desirable choices about management of our surface area,” Oetter said.

[See this story come alive in the spring 2024 edition of the A&S Newsletter.](#)



# News Stories Posted Tuesday May 21, 2024



## Augmented reality awakens past at Andalusia

[Andalusia](#) : Tuesday May 21, 2024

Georgia College & State University has introduced augmented reality to [Andalusia](#), once home to its famed alumna and popular Southern writer Flannery O'Connor, '45.

An interactive, self-guided grounds tour is now available at [Andalusia](#), allowing visitors to scan a QR code, located in the Interpretive Center, with their smartphone for a more in-depth glance into the past.

"This new feature is on the cutting edge of delivery methods for interpretation in this area," said Matt Davis, director of Historical Museums at Georgia College. "There's no need to download an app. We've removed as many barriers as possible. Technology without barriers is where we want to be."

By simply scanning the QR code with their smartphone, guests can pull up information about various aspects of the property. For visitors who don't own a smartphone, iPads will be provided.

“

**This new feature is on the cutting edge of delivery methods for interpretation in this area. There's no need to download an app. We've removed as many barriers as possible. Technology**



without barriers is where we want to be.

- Matt Davis

”

Not only does written information pop up after scanning the QR code, but guests feel as if they're at O'Connor's old farmstead, experiencing the Andalusia of long ago through 3D imagery, panoramic views, videos and sound effects.

As visitors walk through where the Nail House once stood, they get a three-dimensional glimpse of the original structure and hear sounds of animals that were once housed in the pen and run beside it. [youtube embedcode="8H1PNXS22U4" style="right"]BES Studios gives us a look behind the scenes of creating the 3D imagery of what once was the Nail House. The company partnered with ARtGlass.[/youtube]



The augmented reality tour begins outside of what once was Flannery O'Connor's home at Andalusia.

When visitors return home, their [Andalusia](#) experience continues. They can resume learning about O'Connor's home and the grounds long after they leave with a tap of their phone.

Tours guided by docents will continue inside O'Connor's home. This provides visitors with the traditional interpretive experience at Andalusia, while giving Georgia College students experiential learning opportunities.

"This value-added upgrade, funded by donors, is a remarkable way for guests to interact with [Andalusia](#)," Davis said. "We hope everyone comes to experience Andalusia in 3D."

Georgia College partnered with [BES Studios](#) and [ARtGlass](#) to create the tour.

To learn more, visit [Andalusia's tour website](#), call 478.445.8722. Scan the QR code located in the Interpretive Center for the self-guided tour of the grounds when visiting [Andalusia](#).

# News Stories Posted Friday May 24, 2024



## GCSU Bobcats manage polling precincts during election

[Government & Sociology, Department of](#) : Friday May 24, 2024

We all know the traits of a proper bobcat. They [leap 12 feet](#) to catch prey. They can [see in the dark](#) and run 30 miles per hour. They're extremely [territorial](#).

Now we can add another characteristic to the tufted-eared, bob-tailed cat: *Taking responsibility for the management and duties of a voting precinct.*

Five [Georgia College & State University](#) Bobcats did exactly that at polling locations in two counties during Tuesday's Georgia Primary Elections.

"Five students in two counties—that's awesome," said Claire Sanders, senior lecturer of political science and [public administration](#).

Sanders oversees the university's [Election Administration Certificate](#), which began in 2022. Georgia College administers the state's [first and only](#) election certificate. Few schools in the nation offer one.



Senior Lauren Trinkwalder takes a voter's ID at the Georgia Primary Election May 21, 2024. (Photo credit: 13WMAZ)



"I saw firsthand their leadership and problem-solving skills," Sanders said. "They weren't sitting on the sidelines with their internships—they were in the trenches and doing the heavy lifting of election administration."

“

**They weren't sitting on the sidelines with their internships—they were in the trenches and doing the heavy lifting of election administration.**

**- Senior Lecturer Claire Sanders**

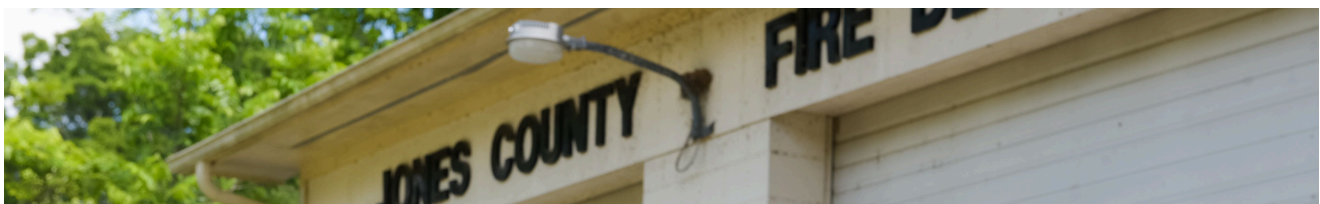
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"They demonstrated leadership, critical thinking skills and the ability to work as a team with the common goal of ensuring a smooth election process," she said.

Two recent graduates acted as managers at polling precincts in Jones County. Two rising seniors majoring in [political science](#) were poll workers. A Jones County poll worker was also present at both locations.

They were among about 8,000 officials and 100,000 poll workers throughout the United States who administer elections.

- Georgia College's first [Truman Scholar](#) and recent graduate **Colin Hall** of Jones County helped his hometown by managing the James Fire Department Station 4 precinct. He was joined in his polling duties by senior **Lauren Trinkwalder** of Flowery Branch, Georgia.
- Recent graduate **Nicholas Wimbish** of Milledgeville managed a precinct at the Jones County Senior Center with senior **Emily Lanham** of Augusta, Georgia.
- A fifth student, sophomore political science major **Mia Simmons** of Gainesville, Georgia, was a poll worker at the Oakwood II precinct in Hall County.





Recent graduate Colin Hall and senior political science major Lauren Trinkwalder at their voting precinct in Jones County.

Being trusted to run a voting precinct is immense responsibility—especially for college students.

Marion Hatton has been the elections superintendent in Jones County for about 25 years. This was the first time officials there let college students run a precinct.

“

**It's unusual for me to see young people able to do the work with knowledge about elections and the law. We didn't have to babysit them.**

**- Marion Hatton, Jones County Elections Superintendent**

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They helped ensure all machines worked properly and reviewed voting data from Georgia's Secretary of State.

On election day, they arrived at precincts around 5:30 a.m. to set up. As people arrived, they checked IDs and addresses, handed voters their party ballots, directed them to an open booth and ensured votes were securely scanned.

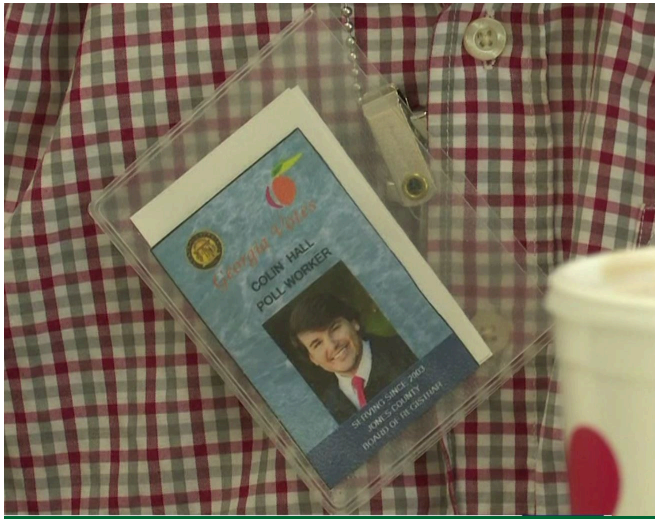
“They are still working with us as we speak. They're great, just fantastic. They're part of our team now,” Hatton said. “It's unusual for me to see young people able to do the work with knowledge about elections and the law. We didn't have to babysit them.”

In May, Georgia College students also “pretty much conducted all the early voting” in Jones County, Hatton said, leaving her time to tend to other matters.

Will she continue using Georgia College students in the future?

“Yes, please,” Hatton said.

The Election Administration Certificate is a big reason students can handle accountability.



(Photo credit: 13WMAZ)

Hall was the first to complete and earn the certificate.

On election day, Wimbish, Trinkwalder and Lanham finished their last 120 hours of polling and voting administrative work needed for the certificate.

Other [requirements](#) include taking courses on topics like the U.S. Constitution, election laws, policymaking, democracy and Southern politics. Research transforms the learning experience, along with internships in local and state government.

“The internship hours are perhaps the most important part of the certificate program,” Sanders said. “Watching the students out in the field—taking on leadership roles and developing expertise in how to conduct an election—confirmed there is no substitute for that kind of experience.”

“

**...there is no substitute for that kind of experience.**

**- Claire Sanders**

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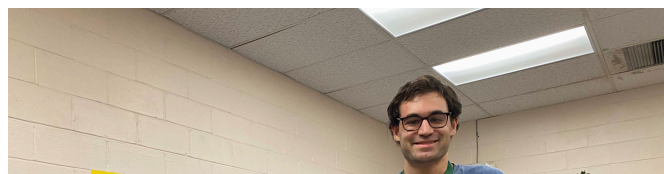
This week was Hall’s third time as a poll worker in Jones County and first time assisting as manager. The experience gave him a “newfound respect” for civic duty and the role election officials and poll workers “play in protecting and fostering democracy.”

Soon, Hall will begin a summer internship with U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), then seek fulltime employment in the political arena of Washington, D.C.

He credits his education at Georgia College for preparing him so well and Jones County election officials for their trust.

“The Jones County Board of Elections and superintendent have a bright vision for the next generation becoming civically involved with the process,” Hall said. “Americans need to step up to the plate when they hit 18 and become adults and contribute to their country.”

Wimbish is a double bobcat. He started earning his master’s in public administration as an undergraduate. In May, he graduated with a degree in political science and minor in rhetoric. He’d like to teach in the future or get a job





managing elections.

Coming to Georgia College, Wimbish knew there'd be opportunity to practice book learning in real-world settings—but he feels he got “a whole lot more.”

“I aimed for a well-rounded experience within my department and throughout my time in college,” Wimbish said. “I thought this certificate would be a way to add personal and academic value to my experiences.”

“It's been great to explore a potential career path in this field. I never realized the true meaning of this work and that it's something I could make a career out of, until I met Professor Claire Sanders,” he said.

He knows democracy can break down due to human error. When he was named poll manager, in charge of a precinct in Jones County, Wimbish said it put him “on the edge.”

He didn't want anything to go wrong.

But he said the experience was “a huge success.” He and Lanham, his precinct partner, are eager to go back for the U.S. Presidential Election in November.

As election officials age—some are in their 70s Wimbish said—more young people are needed.

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**Georgia College students making up the majority of poll workers and managers and leading both precincts is definitely an achievement. It's really history-making, both for GCSU and for the state of Georgia.**

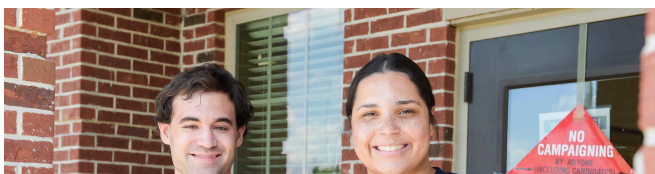
**- Nicholas Wimbish**

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“I was honored to be a part of it,” he said. “Working any election in any capacity—whether for an internship or not—is a crowning moment. The sense of achievement, being a part of democracy-in-action, is rewarding.”

Lanham's father got her interested in politics early on. If you want to be governed by people you like, he said, “you have to take time to cast your vote.”

Her experience this week emphasized his wisdom and helped her value freedom even more. She plans to get a master's after college, work in Washington, D.C. and do her part to protect democracy.



Like an adult who lets go of a baby taking its first steps, Jones County officials were confident enough in Georgia College students to step back.

Lanham was grateful for the chance to



Senior political science major Emily Lanham, left, and recent graduate Nicholas Wimbish, standing, at a polling precinct in Jones County. (Photo credit: Jones County News)



Nicholas Wimbish and Emily Lanham outside the Jones County Senior Center polling place.

lead.

“The trust between election officials and us students was built during early voting,” she said. “They gradually trusted us with more and more as the weeks went by. Before the election, they had Lauren and I securing ballots, marking devices and preparing supply bags for the precincts.”

Like Lanham, Trinkwalder was nervous beforehand. She didn’t know if she’d be

able to remember all the rules and regulations. She wanted voters to have a good experience.

When the time came, however, she realized how well she was prepared. She looks forward to doing it again in November.

“I learned a lot more goes into voting and the civic process,” Trinkwalder said. “In order to maintain safe and stable elections, everyone from volunteer to poll worker, has to be involved with an all-hands approach.

“

**Once you finish 12 hours at the polls on election day, it feels as though you’ve accomplished something for the greater good.**

**- Lauren Trinkwalder**

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# News Stories Posted Wednesday May 29, 2024



## Georgia College Earns Top Awards from Peach Belt Conference

[Athletics](#) : Wednesday May 29, 2024

The Peach Belt Conference awarded Georgia College & State University numerous accolades during the annual Peach Belt Conference (PBC) awards event in May. GCSU was awarded the PBC Institution of the Year Sportsmanship Award, in addition to earning team sportsmanship awards for volleyball, men's tennis and men's basketball. The GCSU sports information staff was also recognized with the SID Staff of the Year award.

The PBC comprises 10 NCAA Division II member institutions and includes 18 championship sports. Georgia College is a charter member of the PBC and President Cathy Cox is the incoming President of the PBC Board of Directors.

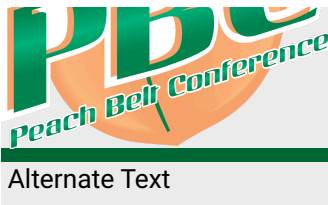
Georgia College was presented the 2023-24 Peach Belt Conference Institution of the Year Sportsmanship Award. A banner that rotates from winning school to winning school will remain in Milledgeville for a second-straight year. The award is the fourth overall for GCSU after previous wins in 2017 and 2021.



The annual honor is given to the institution displaying the best overall sportsmanship for the 2023-24 season and culminates the PBC's season-long sportsmanship recognition program.

Following each championship sports season, a Team Sportsmanship Award is presented to the team in that sport that





best exemplifies what the award stands for: the spirit of sportsmanship, a high degree of integrity, character and class. Each team award is voted on by other teams who compete in that sport and points are awarded on how each team finished in the voting.

In 2023-24, GCSU won Team Sportsmanship Awards in men's tennis, men's basketball and volleyball. The three awards give the Bobcats 29 since the inception of the program, tied for second-most in the PBC, and represents the ninth time GCSU has had multiple awards in the same season.

The sports information staff at Georgia College was honored as the SID Staff of the Year at the PBC annual awards dinner.

Led by Assistant Director of Athletics for Communications Michael MacEachern, the Georgia College sports information office provided outstanding coverage of the institution's 11 sports programs using social media, website coverage, photography, press conferences and public events. The office manages gcsubobcats.com, the official website of GCSU athletics, as well as the Bobcat Sports Network, which produced 154 live broadcasts during the 2023-24 athletic year.

The office also produced the broadcast for the 2024 PBC baseball championship, hosted at John Kurtz Field in Milledgeville, and was instrumental in assisting the PBC with its first-ever basketball media day coverage.

This is MacEachern's second SID Staff award, as well as the second award for Georgia College which last won the award in 2015. MacEachern, who joined Georgia College last year, is the longest-tenured athletics communications professional in the Peach Belt.

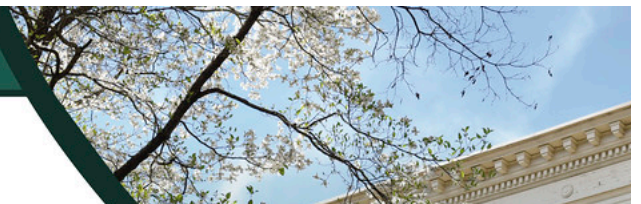
MacEachern is joined in the GCSU Sports Information Office by graduate assistant Bailey Clark, along with a dedicated team of student workers.



President Cathy Cox, Graduate Assistant Bailey Clark and AD for Communications Michael MacEachern at the PBC Awards Dinner on May 28, 2024.



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](#)