

News Stories Posted Tuesday August 6, 2024



Business students experience multiple thrills in New Zealand

[College of Business & Technology](#) : Tuesday August 6, 2024

Fourteen business students barely had time to breathe during a two-week excursion to New Zealand this summer. It was jam packed with practical learning about leadership and best-sustainability practices, but also featured spectacular vistas, indigenous people, great food and even ziplining.

They also visited [Hobbiton](#), where the blockbuster movie series “Lord of the Rings” was filmed.

“This trip allowed me to grow so much, not only in terms of my future career, but as a person,” said senior [marketing](#) major Alanna Filberg of Alpharetta, Georgia.

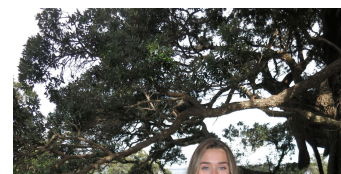
“

I would do it again in a heartbeat to experience it all over again ...

- Alanna Filberg

”

“The journey was a long one with a 5-hour plane ride to Los Angeles, followed by a 13-hour journey to Auckland, but I would do it again in a heartbeat to experience it all over again,” Filberg said. “This opportunity made me realize there’s a whole world out there for us to explore.”



New Zealand is called a land of contrasts with rugged mountains, low valleys, subtropical forests, volcanoes and sandy beaches.

Jehan El-Jourbagy, associate professor of [business law](#) and ethics at [Georgia College & State University](#), chose to bring her students to New Zealand for its progressive environmental policies and business infrastructure.

Its [Climate Change Response Amendment Act](#), passed in 2019, aims to make New Zealand net carbon zero by 2050. That would put the nation at net zero for greenhouse emissions due to human activities.

"I chose New Zealand, because I wanted students to be inspired by business leaders with a strong commitment to sustainability and also realize how reliant other nations are on United States' policies," El-Jourbagy said.

"I was also hoping they'd learn some of the innovative ways governments and companies lessen our environmental impact," she said, "through the use of renewable energy, compostable takeaway cutlery and containers, and public transportation."



Senior marketing major
Alanna Filberg.



Alternate Text

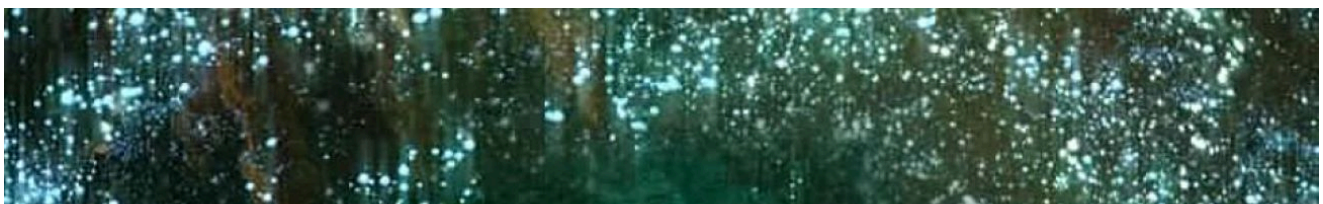
Some students were able to go thanks to scholarships through Georgia College's J. Whitney Bunting [College of Business & Technology](#) and the [International Education Center](#). Filberg was one of those students. The scholarship, coupled with her savings, made the dream trip possible.

In addition to their business agenda, students visited [Giapo Ice Cream](#) in Auckland—"because normal ice cream is boring." One student along with El-Jourbagy jumped freefall by wire off [Sky Tower](#), the second-tallest free-standing building in the southern hemisphere.

They saw the [Hundertwasser Art Center](#) and [Whangārei Falls](#) and learned about

sacred kauri trees in [Waipoua Forest](#).

Students also skied and snowboarded inside [Snowplanet](#). They toured the [Auckland War Memorial Museum](#), hiked [Karangahake Gorge](#) and strolled the stunning white-sand beaches of [Mount Maunganui](#). They rode go-carts through the twists and turns of [Luge Rotorua](#), saw glow worms in the [Waitomo Caves](#), explored geysers at [Wai-O-Tapu](#) and [ziplined](#) over Waiheke Island.





Business abroad students under glow worms in Waitomo Caves.

Lilian Alfaro of Milledgeville is a senior [management information systems](#) major. Originally from El Salvador and raised in East Texas, Alfaro especially enjoyed learning the culture, rituals and beliefs of New Zealand's indigenous [Māori](#) tribe, "tangata whenua"—"people of the land."

"I was surprised at how well-integrated the country is with its indigenous people," Alfaro said. "Everywhere you go, you see everything written in Māori first, then English. That was surprising to me, but I also thought it was amazing. This showed a deep respect for the Māori culture and its significance in everyday life."

Before going to New Zealand, students were asked to complete coursework on sustainability and leadership. While abroad, they wrote eight blogs and one LinkedIn post.

They met leaders on the forefront of global sustainability, like founder Mark Yates of [Ecotricity](#), which deals in clean energy, and founder Shaun Seaman of [Mushroom Material Limited](#), which uses sustainable packaging.

They visited [Zespri](#), the world's largest marketer of kiwi fruit, and met women entrepreneurs like Kiri Hannifin of [Air New Zealand](#), Nikki Wright of [Wright Communications](#) and Annarosa Petrucci of Giapo Ice Cream.



Senior management information systems major Lilian Alfaro at Hobbiton.

“

This opportunity made me realize there's a whole world out there for us to explore.

- Alanna Filberg

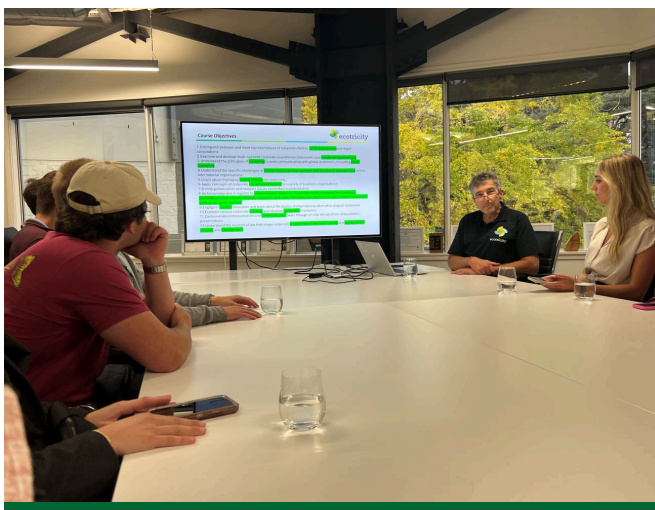
”

The students made her job easy, El-Jourbagy said.

“This group was amazing. They were all considerate of each other and always willing to put in maximum effort, even when they were tired,” she said. “We had some very funny moments, such as a group giggle fit when a very serious tour guide had us gather around a composting toilet at the Hundertwasser Museum in Whangārei. We also had magical moments, such as when a Māori forest guide sang a traditional song as we walked to the oldest tree in New Zealand.”

Students feasted on fresh seafood and oysters, locally raised lamb, artisan cheeses and a Lemon & Paeroa soft drink dubbed L&P. Filberg’s sure she’ll rave about the food culture of New Zealand for years to come.

The country is known for its coffee and she said it “did not disappoint.”



Students learned about sustainability from business owners like Mark Yates of Ecotricity.

Learning directly from business experts was the most inspiring, enriching what she learned in marketing at Georgia College.

“I loved getting to hear firsthand the passion these leaders have for what they do,” Filberg said. “As I begin my senior year and start to explore opportunities in corporate recruiting or public relations, I will remember the amazing people I got to meet, the experiences I embarked on and the personal growth I obtained by traveling abroad and exploring New Zealand.”

“I am so beyond grateful,” she said, “to

Professor El-Jourbagy and the Georgia College International Education Center for making this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity happen.”

This study abroad helped Alfaro gain deeper understanding of sustainability. She hopes to use what she learned—how New Zealand businesses leverage technology, data analytics and innovative strategies for sustainable outcomes—to help U.S. businesses go green.

The trip exceeded her expectations.

“Places like Hobbiton, Waipoua Forest, beautiful mountains and clean oceans and lakes will only continue to exist if we take care of our world,” Alfaro said. “Many conversations stuck with me and made me think deeply about our planet’s future.”

“

Many conversations stuck with me and made me think deeply about our planet’s future.

- Lilian Alfaro

”

“The trip reinforced the importance of sustainability in every aspect of life and business,” she added,

“and inspired me to integrate these practices into my future career.”



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 Wednesday August 7, 2024



Caroline Bagwell

GCSU student intern grows Bleacher Report Betting TikTok by 20k

Communication, Department of : Wednesday August 7, 2024

If you'd told [mass communication](#) senior Caroline Bagwell that she'd be in control of TikTok for [Warner Bros Discovery's Bleacher Report Betting](#) this summer, she probably would have blanched.

“

Georgia College is a small school, but a lot of people have big wins. The way those get celebrated at Georgia College is super cool to see, because I feel like everyone gets their chance to shine.

- Caroline Bagwell

”

Now that she's grown their TikTok followers by 20,000 in a few months, Bagwell's internship is another star experience to add to her resume.

“My first day, I created and posted my first TikTok to their page,” Bagwell said. “Ever since then, if I had an idea, they want me to run with it—[I'm filming it, I'm posting it](#). I've grown a lot of confidence.”



She helped her team with TNT Sports' coverage of the NBA Finals and promoted her original content on Bleacher Report Betting's TikTok. She planned and developed original content, managed the



Caroline on the NBA Finals stage.

content of their TikTok page and worked with a close-knit team of media professionals.

Her favorite part so far are the people. The team at Bleacher Report took her in immediately and encouraged her growth.

"I'm going to take how I've created relationships at Georgia College and Warner Brothers with me throughout my life," Bagwell said. "I know how to speak to people, and the classes I've taken have helped me understand social media. I hope to bring what I've learned back to my classes and beyond."

While working for Bleacher Report, Bagwell discovered a passion for sports, especially football.

Now she knows she wants to take her talent to sports media, and Bleacher Report is ready to give her a spot.

"I was offered an extension to continue working for them during the fall," Bagwell said. "I'll be working closely with college football and the NFL. I'm excited to stay with them and keep growing these relationships."

Now that she knows her path, she's eager to take the next step.

"Georgia College is a small school, but a lot of people have big wins," Bagwell said. "The way those get celebrated at Georgia College is super cool to see, because I feel like everyone gets their chance to shine."



Caroline's supervisor congratulated her on her hard work.



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 August 15, 2024



GCSU's impact on regional economy rises to \$308 million

[Finance & Administration](#) : Thursday August 15, 2024

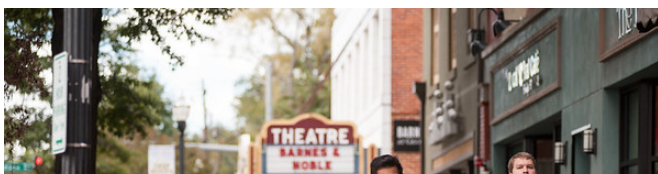
Georgia College & State University's economic impact in Central Georgia jumped to \$308 million in 2023, up 1.8% over the previous year.

That figure marks a 9% increase—\$26 million—over the past three years.

The university continues to create jobs in the area, as well. According to a [report](#) released by the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia, GCSU generated more than 2,840 jobs in the local area, both on- and off-campus.

"This amazing surge in our economic impact, plus the added income a college degree provides to our graduates, emphasizes the worth of a liberal arts education and our overall contributions to this community," said [GCSU President](#) Cathy Cox

The study was commissioned by the University System of Georgia [Board of Regents](#). Numbers are based on institutional spending for personnel services, operating expenses and student spending. Data was collected between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.



“

This amazing surge in our economic impact, plus the added income a college degree provides to our



Alternate Text

graduates, emphasizes the worth of a liberal arts education and our overall contributions to this community.

- Cathy Cox

”

During that time, 26 colleges and universities in the USG contributed a total of \$21.9 billion to the state economy, a 9% increase over the previous year. This

amounts to about the same employment impact in the state as the top five employers combined, the study found.

In 2023, Georgia College generated 982 jobs on campus, while another 1,856 off-campus positions existed due to institution-related spending. Every campus job creates two jobs off campus, according to the study.

This economic impact extends to Baldwin, Bibb, Hancock, Jones, Putnam, Washington and Wilkinson counties.

In addition, 2023 graduates with a bachelor’s degree can expect to earn \$1.4 million more throughout their lives.

“As the county’s largest employer, we are committed to improving lives on campus and beyond,” Cox said. “This economic value not only translates into jobs, higher incomes and spending in local restaurants and shops—but we also offer continuing education for adults, summer and sports camps for children and many free cultural events throughout the year.”

“

This relationship between university and society and the intellectual capital we generate benefits everyone.

- President Cox

”



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 August 20, 2024



Environmental science major scores internship with state parks

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#) : Tuesday August 20, 2024

For Georgia College & State University senior Sydney Irons, persistence paid off in the form of a summer internship with [Red Top Mountain State Park](#) in Acworth, Georgia—part of the [Georgia Department of Natural Resources](#).

This year was Irons' second with the state park system and her first with a new title: naturalist intern.

"I'm responsible for creating public programs and interacting with the public," Irons, an [environmental science major](#), said. "Whenever someone's got a question, they ask me. My things are hikes, a lot of reptile stuff and bug things, but I do arts and crafts for kids, too."

She scored her spot after working as a reptile caretaker at a park closer to Milledgeville. After some encouragement from her boss there, patience and an email led to her favorite job yet.

"I loved working there, interacting with people and showing people that nature is cool," Irons said. "I would go to reptile shows as a kid, and now I get to be the person leading those—it's amazing. People have come back again and again to hang out with me, whether it be arts and crafts or night hikes."



"I bring in a lot of bugs, and always bring out the reptiles to let people hold things they would never have thought about holding before, and they tell me they didn't even know they were outside," she said.

As a [biology minor](#) with the goal to become a professor, Irons is passionate about promoting education—even if that topic might be scary to some. Over the summer, she's helped more than a few people overcome their fears.



Irons ran reptile programming for all ages at the state park.

"I've grown up being an outdoorsy kid and I've always loved reptiles

and the weird, creepy crawlies outside," Irons said. "I think they're fascinating, these things that live so much differently than I do. It's so cool to nerd out all day long and do what I've always done. But now I get paid to do it."

She walks the walk.

On campus, Irons is heavily involved in mentored undergraduate research. She's in the middle of a project to test millipede marking techniques with [Dr. Bruce Snyder](#), associate professor of Biology. She's working with fluorescent powder to mark and track the activities of millipedes over time.

Between growing her confidence at the state park and collecting scores of millipedes for the lab, it's clear Irons will be a prepared leader by the time she graduates.

"I encourage more people to get involved with this kind of work, because it's really cool," Irons said. "If you're interested in the outdoors or history, this is the perfect field to go into."

"It's good to go on hikes, be curious and ask questions," she said, "because curiosity is the biggest motivator for learning."



Sydney leads hikes in which she displays wildlife for guests to observe.



Red Top Mountain State Park.



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 Wednesday August 21, 2024



GCSU students study coral reefs abroad in Okinawa, Japan

[Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of](#) : Wednesday August 21, 2024

Not threatened by a typhoon promising to skirt the country, Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Kristine White led a team of students to study the coral reefs of Okinawa, Japan, this summer.

Amid the pristine, blue-green waters were fish and corals of many colors, all part of vibrant reefs full of life.

"I love the water, I love the ocean, and so being there was my favorite part," said senior [biology major](#) Kali Holierhoek, who has a concentration in marine biology. "Swimming around and finding things like Nemo and Marlin in a little anemone—there's nothing like it. The reefs there are so healthy, it's cool to see."

Students attended lectures by night, snorkeled by morning and explored the greater city of Okinawa in between.

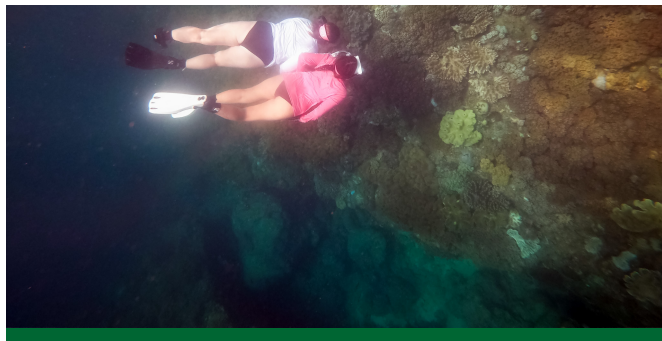
Four teams of two students were assigned a type of organism—fish, algae, corals or echinoderms, like sea urchins—to identify and draw. Each morning, they



put lecture into practice by snorkeling through Okinawa's reef sites.

"The idea was to see new things each day to highlight that a coral reef isn't just coral," White said. "Learning the information, you can do, but to really remember it, I think you have to go do it."

So, they did. Even recent Georgia College & State University graduate Angelina Cofrancesco, '24, who walked in May before leaving for Japan. She studied biology at Georgia College with a [pre-med focus](#) and is now applying to medical schools.



Two students swimming during a snorkel trip.



Group touring the Nakamura Residence.

"It never felt like work, because it was so enjoyable to be in the water. It was so warm and we got to see so much," Cofrancesco said. "I really love traveling to other countries, because it really shows you how we're all caught up in one way of life. By going to Japan, it opened my point of view. You just need to know that there's way more out there than just what you're doing in that moment."

"As a doctor, you want to understand where patients are coming from and have cultural context when speaking to someone about their health plan," she said. "That really affects a person's way of life, so I think cultural education is a big part of being a doctor."

Outside the classroom, each student took part in cultural excursions and explored Okinawa in their free time.

They visited a large, open-air market with fishmongers, the historic Nakamura House that preserves 15th century Japanese architecture and enjoyed a party on the beach with the members and associates of James Reimer's MISE lab from the University of the Ryukyus—the hosting university and White's former postdoctoral host lab.

The group particularly enjoyed relaxing in an izakaya, an informal restaurant that allows groups to sit in their own, private room.

"It was like a little restaurant, and we had our own private room," said rising sophomore and biology major Odeya Atar. "We went with a sensei from the university, and we had a bunch of food on many plates that we passed around. It was a fun environment."

"At the market, all the fish were so vibrant, and all the shopkeepers were so friendly," she said. "The people in general were really friendly and respectful. For sightseeing, the ocean was just beautiful—anywhere—it was the bluest water I've ever seen."

The trip they recently returned from is a program offered by the [International Education Center](#) at Georgia College as an option for studying abroad. They flew to Japan and stayed for two weeks,



absorbing the warm salt water and sites of Okinawa.

White intends to offer the program again in 2026, as she alternates with the program for marine biology in the Bahamas.

"I never thought I would get the opportunity to go to Japan," Holierhoek said. "I have always wanted to go to Japan, and I did it. I did it because programs like this are offered and funding is offered. You just have to take the opportunity and do it because, truly, it will change you."

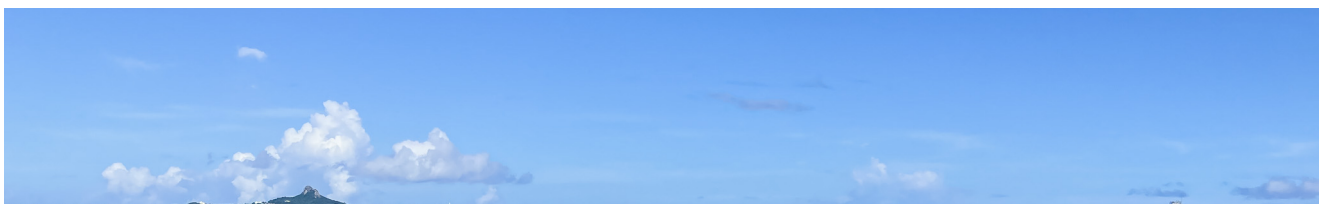
"Seeing something that different opens your eyes," she said. "It's important to pick yourself up and throw yourself somewhere else, because it makes you think differently. I think it makes you a better person."



The fish on display in the open-air market.



Odeya Atar catalogs coral in the reef.





Odeya (second from left), Kali (fourth from left), Angelina (standing, right) and Dr. White (laying, center) pose with lil' Thunder in snorkeling gear.



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 Monday August 26, 2024

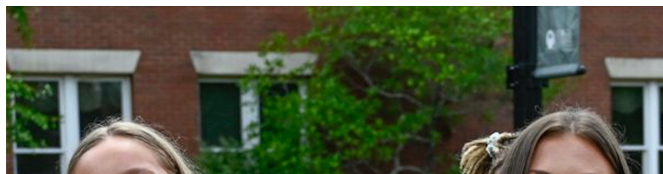


GCSU's Class of 2028 shows bobcat spirit

[Enrollment Management](#) : Monday August 26, 2024

They are the second largest and most academically prepared class in [Georgia College & State University](#) history, but their involvement and interest is what really sets our newest bobcats apart.

From the start, these first-year students have been engaged. Attendance at preview days like Fallfest and Springfest increased, while summer [orientations](#) witnessed a spirited wave of blue and green, with many new bobcats sporting



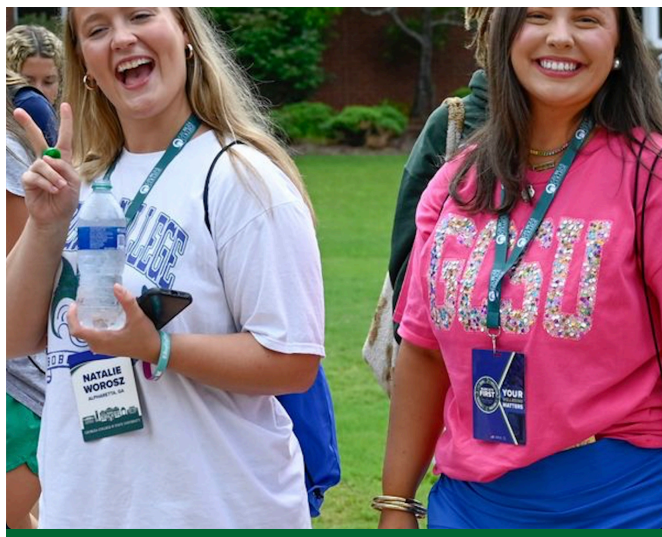
GCSU T-shirts and swag.

“

The interest in Georgia College has never been greater. Students are looking for the unique experience we offer that you can't get anywhere else in Georgia.

- Joel Robinson

”



Students in GCSU's Class of 2028 are enthusiastic and engaged.

“The interest in Georgia College has never been greater,” said Joel Robinson, senior associate vice president for [Enrollment Management](#). “Students are looking for the unique experience we offer that you can't get anywhere else in Georgia.”

Robinson credits the university's elite private school atmosphere that comes at a public university price and the small class sizes Georgia College offers as the driving factors for much of this interest.

New students also submitted an unparalleled number of applications—about 8,300—for the 2024-25 academic year. That's an increase of 44% over the past two years. Despite being more selective, admitting 11% fewer students, Georgia College anticipates this class will be approximately 1,800, just shy of last year's [record-breaking freshmen class](#) of 1,816.

“We admitted 560 fewer students than we did in fall 2023, but a much higher percentage of admitted students chose Georgia College this year,” Robinson said.

“Students respond positively to our national rankings, high retention and graduation rates, as well as the curricular and co-curricular transformative experiences that we offer,” he added. “We've also seen an increase in the academic preparedness of our incoming class. This is a group of exceptionally talented students.”

One of the state's top three most-selective public universities, Georgia College has become a destination of choice for the best and brightest students from across the state and beyond. Many of these first-year students hail from 111 different counties across Georgia.

GCSU's class of 2028 also boasts a record number of high-achieving students—over 850. Their unweighted average high school GPA is 3.64. More than 150 students graduated high school with a perfect 4.0 GPA.



Alternate Text

“

We're really impressed with this group's bobcat pride. Their affinity and their commitment to Georgia College is really high. It's an exciting time, and I know we are going to continue in this direction, building that excitement with the next class in 2025.

- Javier Francisco, executive director of Admissions.

”



Alternate Text



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 Tuesday August 27, 2024



Míele kafuwòm

恭喜你

Félicitations

Congratulations!

Two GCSU students earn spots in competitive Department of State program

[National Scholarships Office at Georgia College](#) : Tuesday August 27, 2024

Junior [nursing major](#) Ama Kpoyizoun and sophomore [management major](#) Matthew Malena were two students of 500 from across the country to land a spot in the [U.S. Department of States' Critical Language Scholarship](#).

Chosen from a pool of 5,000 students nationwide, Kpoyizoun and Malena are now part of a government initiative to "expand the number of Americans studying and mastering foreign languages," according to the Department of State.

"It was unbelievable that I got accepted, but I was also grateful for it," Kpoyizoun said. "So now that I'm in, I'm trying to take advantage of every resource at hand."

In tandem with their summer studies at Georgia College & State University, both students participated in the CLS Spark program for learning Mandarin Chinese from an institution based in Beijing, China.

The program, online this summer, covered all expenses for language instruction, textbooks, learning materials and more.

Kpoyizoun, from Lithonia, Georgia, is fascinated by language. Born in Togo of



West Africa, she already speaks three languages: her tribal language, Ewe, English and French.

"I hope to marry my fascination with languages to nursing," she said. "When I was first applying for colleges, I was having difficulty choosing between language, mathematics or nursing—but I chose nursing because it would be the most difficult to learn on my own."

She credits her mentor, [Assistant Director of the Honors College Anna Whiteside](#), with her success in attaining access to this prestigious program.

"You couldn't do this program without this scholarship, and Anna Whiteside was so helpful," Kpoyizoun said. "I have to reapply and show them my growth to take the study abroad program, and I definitely plan on asking Anna for help from the first day of classes."

Now, she'll continue her studies within the nursing cohort. And while she can't say she's fluent yet, Kpoyizoun is well on her way to mastering a fourth language.

"It felt awesome to experience my growth because I recognized it in myself," she said. "It wasn't just a teacher telling me 'You're such a good student,' and it felt immensely good."



Ama Kpoyizoun.



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 Wednesday August 28, 2024



GCSU Gives Day generates around \$120,000 in donated labor

[Student Engagement, Office of](#) : Wednesday August 28, 2024

While most students spend their first weekend in college relaxing, around 1,600 Georgia College & State University first-year students spent their first Saturday morning improving the community they're going to live in for the next four years.

They worked at 37 sites in the Greater Milledgeville area, benefitting the community with approximately \$120,000 worth of student-donated labor.

This volunteer experience will benefit the Greater Milledgeville area and Georgia College students now and for years to come.



Henry Lewis cleans kennels during GCSU Gives Day.

Some work sites included Bike Walk Baldwin, Georgia War Veterans Home, Georgia's Old Capital Heritage Center at the Depot, Inc., Life Enrichment Center, Memory Hill Cemetery, Rocking A Farm, LLC and Stepping Stone Child Advocacy and Sexual Assault Center.

Georgia College President Cathy Cox read to children during the Kids Block Party at the Urban Arts Village. She also visited Memory Hill Cemetery to pay her respects to

“

We need to realize that we're all part of one big community. We should help out where we can.

- Henry Lewis

”

the American-famed author Flannery O'Connor, '45 along with some former Georgia College presidents buried there. Cox also visited Lockerly Arboretum.

Nearly two dozen students bathed and exercised dogs at the Animal Rescue Foundation of Milledgeville. They also cleaned kennels and comforted cats.

Henry Lewis is an undeclared Bachelor of Science major with a music minor from Macon, Georgia. He felt this experience will help him learn to work better with people and meet new friends. He cleaned the dog kennels.

“We need to realize that we're all part of one big community. We should help out where we can,” he said while cleaning dog kennels.

Mass communication major Raegan Sims of Dacula, Georgia, volunteered in the room where the cats were kept, giving them attention and cleaning kennels and floors.

"I love cats," she said. "I think it's important for them to have human interaction. They will also thrive in a cleaner environment."

Sims knows the importance of volunteering. After graduation, she sees herself volunteering in an animal shelter or a food pantry. For now, Sims plans to help wherever a need exists in Milledgeville.

"If we see what needs work around the community, then we can continue to grow by volunteering for four years," she said.

That sentiment was echoed by the ARF President Allene Veazey.

"It's great for students to volunteer early on to give them a sense of accomplishment and belonging. It helps to know what we're doing is important," Veazey said.



Raegan Sims bonds with a cat at the Animal Rescue Foundation.

“

I love cats. I think it's important for them to have human interaction. They will also thrive in a cleaner environment.

- Raegan Sims

”

Abandoned and neglected animals are a serious problem in Baldwin County and the Southeast. ARF gets calls daily to accept more animals. But it's a limited intake facility.

There are many misconceptions about animals," Veazey said. "So, we educate students and the public not pick up every stray animal they see."

"Volunteering helps students, as well as the animals," she said. "There are different ways students can contribute to help us out. We can't do it all by ourselves."

More than a dozen Georgia College students ventured to Project Linus. Cookie Noel, coordinator for the Milledgeville/Oconee Region Chapter of Project Linus, has volunteered since 2000. Since then, the chapter has handmade and distributed 18,000 blankets to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, abused or in need.

A few years ago, the chapter donated several handmade blankets for child victims of human trafficking. Volunteers also made blankets for siblings of a drowning victim, children whose parents were victims of homicides and children who are seriously ill or in need.

As a social service worker, Noel appreciates seeing young people making a difference.



"In today's world, I'm tired of people not getting what they need," Noel said. "There are over 300 kids who have been abused in this area."



Christopher Baker hand ties a blanket for Project Linus.

“

One day I'll look back on my college days and know that I made an impact.
- Christopher Baker

”

world where it's about, me, me, me, and I'll do what I want—I think volunteering to get us back to the mindset of caring about other people is good.”

As Christopher Baker, a Spanish and economics double major from Augusta, Georgia, hand tied blankets, he thought about how his effort and GCSU Gives Day will benefit local children.

“I'm glad I can be here to make an impact in the community,” Baker said. “This fabric is really soft and has fun colors. Kids who've been through traumatic experiences will get a warm hug from these blankets when they need it.”

“

These blankets will provide a little light in the darkness for children, who've gone through something traumatic.

- Tess Davidson

”

“One day,” he said, “I'll look back on my college days and know that I made an impact.”

Tess Davidson, a theatre major from Rome, Georgia, especially enjoyed meeting and volunteering alongside other theatre majors. Making blankets for a cause, while making new friends, was a great way to spend the day.

“These blankets will provide a little light in the darkness for children, who've gone through something traumatic,” Davidson said. “Many of us may not be familiar with Milledgeville, so GCSU Gives Day helps connect us with each other and with this town that'll be home for the next four years.”



Tess Davidson makes a blanket for Project Linus.

[See more photos of GCSU Gives Day.](#)



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](#)