

# News Stories Posted Friday October 4, 2024



## Madagascar program sets student on path to connect people with nature

[Health Promotion, Office of](#) : Friday October 4, 2024

By Margaret Schell

Spending two months in Madagascar this past summer opened a new world of opportunity for a career in natural healing for Kara Drake.

The senior [public health](#) major participated in a [School for International Training program](#). SIT provides honors-level programs in non-traditional locations across the globe.

Drake has been to other continents and felt Madagascar was the perfect choice for her study abroad.

“It was such a rare opportunity,” she said. “It was nice to see how the residents connect with nature.”

Drake studied Malagasy, the dialect of Madagascar residents, and the country’s healthcare system including traditional medicine. Their use of traditional medicine sparked her interest in getting a master’s in

ethnobotany—the study of interrelations between humans and plants; that can be used for food and medicine. The program concentrates on program planning and policy making.

First, she’ll go back to college to pursue her undergraduate degree in anthropology or biology.

The SIT program reinforced her decision to pursue a career in ethnobotany.

“We sometimes forget humans are one with nature,” Drake said. “We’ve been blessed with this world where a lot of things we need to help us medicinally can be found in nature.”



Kara Drake-center-sports a lemur on her shoulder.

She toured the country's botanical park. It has a section of common plants with lists of their names, uses and symptoms they treat. This made Drake think about plants in the U.S. that could be used for healing.

Drake values the interpersonal connections between traditional healers and their patients. She believes it's "more genuine care" opposed to "trying to make a profit off of people."



Kara Drake, fourth from the left in the front row, is pictured with other U.S. students in Madagascar.

"In Madagascar, traditional healers accept gifts but don't charge their patients money for medicine," she said. "They say their gift is given to them by God, and you don't sell gifts. Seeing their passion and knowledge help others was truly inspiring."

SIT Program Academic Director and ethnobotanist Dr. Nat Quansah was Drake's mentor in Madagascar.

"He's truly inspiring," she said. "The experience gave me a passion I didn't know I had for this field."

“If we focus on using our environment in our everyday lives, like natural remedies and traditional medicine,” Drake said, “we’re more likely to take care of it and less likely to cause environmental hazards like we have now.”



The main hospital in Antananarivo, Madagascar.

She visited different hospitals which offer different levels of care. These included trauma centers and clinics, where she met traditional healers.

“It was interesting to see how vastly different traditional healers and hospitals are and the care they provide,” Drake said. “I enjoyed seeing how Madagascar thrives on service.”

She enjoyed spending time with Madagascar’s residents, who were kind to her.

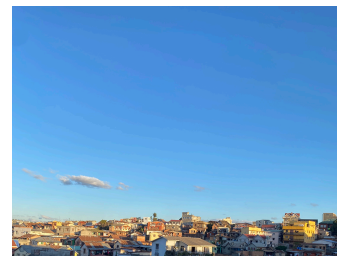
“They are very joyous,” Drake said. “They love to sing and dance and will use any excuse to have a party. They’re so bright and cheery. Even through hard times, they find happiness. They’re truly generous people.”

She keeps in touch with her host family and friends she made there.

Drake stayed with her host family in Antananarivo—the capital of Madagascar. They didn’t have running water in their home so, they used buckets of water to take showers and flush toilets.

“My host family loved me so much that they heated water for me,” she said. “We also had power outages at least once a day. So, I learned how to be more appreciative of what we have in America despite the overconsumption.”

“My host has three sons. Two were away at work, so I only had one host brother



while I was there,” Drake said. “He's like my real-life brother now. He was so kind and took care of me. We had so much fun. I spent almost every day with him. They're a big part of my life now—truly amazing.”



The cityscape of Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar.

She studied the healthcare system, traditional medicine and abuses in Madagascar. Traditional medicine has always been in the Malagasy culture. French colonists tried to push it out and enforce Western medicine. Traditional medicine was acknowledged by the Malagasy Government in 2007.

Madagascar uses modern evidence-based medicine, where patients can see a medical doctor to receive medical care. On the flip side, the traditional healers offer plant-based treatments. Now, the two systems work together to treat patients.

“This was a life-changing learning experience,” Drake said. “It changed my perspective about so many different things.”

“

**I want to normalize traditional medicine, which brings people closer. It's a very giving profession. Ethnobotany will allow me to study other cultures and the medicines and plants they use. With this knowledge, we can connect with each other and our world to make it a happier place.**


**- Kara Drake**

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“I view the world differently now,” she said. “People can still be appreciative even through hard times. This program has inspired me to want to be a more joyous and grateful person, just like the residents of Madagascar.”

Her experience makes her feel more connected with the environment too. She would like to use nature to help people in the future.

“I want to normalize traditional medicine, which brings people closer,” Drake said. “It’s a very giving profession. Ethnobotany will allow me to study other cultures and the medicines and plants they use. With this knowledge, we can connect with each other and our world to make it a happier place.”

Front Campus graphic for Imagine 2030. Text reads: Advance: To move forward in a purposeful way  
[Learn more about the Advance Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)

# News Stories Posted Thursday October 10, 2024



## GCSU assists relief efforts after devastating Hurricane Helene

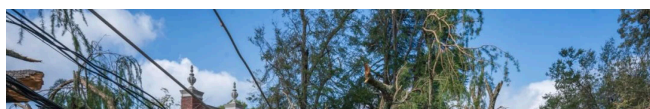
**Facilities Management** : Thursday October 10, 2024

By Cindy O'Donnell

From security and supplies to chainsaws and Chick-fil-A—[Georgia College & State University](#) was there to help its sister institutions, Augusta University and East Georgia State College in Swainsboro,

after Hurricane Helene tore a destructive path through multiple states two weeks ago today.

“So many of our sister campuses in the University System of



Georgia were hit hard by Hurricane Helene—and we had expected to be one of the hardest hit based on original forecasts,” said [GCSU President](#) Cathy Cox.



This photo from Augusta University's website was taken by Michael Holahan.

**I’m glad we were in a position to help ... Our folks are the best!  
- President Cathy Cox**

“I’m glad we were in a position to help and even more grateful that our faculty, staff, students, alumni and community partners have been so generous in helping to provide basic needs to these campuses,” Cox said. “A number of our staff traveled to the heavily damaged areas and worked long shifts to help get these campuses back in operation. Our folks are the best!”

Georgia College largely dodged a bullet Sept. 27, but Augusta University suffered “[unprecedented](#)” devastation after Category-4 Hurricane Helene slammed into Florida’s Big Bend packing 140 mph winds. It raged across Georgia into Tennessee, the Carolinas and as far as Virginia and Kentucky.

Georgia College [Facilities](#) crews responded almost immediately. They cleared debris, sawed downed trees and removed fallen

power lines and road signs at Augusta University’s Summerville campus.

The morning after, Cox delivered Chick-fil-A meals from Milledgeville to Augusta University’s Emergency Response Team



and other first responders. She was aided in this effort by alumnus and Chick-fil-A corporate board member Evan Karanovich, '12.



Photo credit:  
Jeremy Nobles,  
associate  
director of  
Emergency  
Management at  
Georgia College.

Cleanup efforts continued through Oct 10. Two deliveries of non-perishable foods, water, electrolyte drinks, hand sanitizers and other critical items were made. Items were donated by Georgia College faculty, staff, students and [alumni](#), as well as Georgia College's dining and food vendor, Sodexo.

Volunteers in Augusta included five staffers from Georgia College Facilities skilled in construction, carpentry, electricity and air conditioning: Ryan Campbell, Brad Thomas, Eric Griffeth, Alec Hansel and Steven Baxley.

Georgia College also sent two maintenance vehicles, a fuel tanker, dumpster trailer and truck, two tractors and five chain/pole saws.

Two GCSU [Public Safety](#) officers—Sgt. Paul Bernichon and Cpt. Gary Purvis—took charge of police duties for a week at East Georgia State College, so officers there could tend to their own water-damaged homes.

GCSU police took turns in 12-hour shifts running campus security. Georgia College also provided two patrol cars.

Chief Trey Drawdy commented on Facebook: "Captain Purvis and Sergeant Bernichon were a Godsend for the College and its officers. The EGSC Community is immensely grateful! Thank you Chief Hardin for sending these guys to our aid!"

 Front Campus graphic for Imagine 2030. Text reads: Engage: to

occupy, attract, or involve (someone's interest or attention.)

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

# News Stories Posted Tuesday October 15, 2024



## Student Managed Investments Committee manages \$100k in funds

[Economics & Finance, Department of](#) : Tuesday October 15, 2024

by Kristen Simpson

The \$100,000 given to the Student Managed Investments Committee at Georgia College & State University is officially invested.

The new student organization is made up of an executive leadership board and 10 managing directors who oversee groups

of 3-4 student analysts. To become a member, each student had to interview with leadership and complete a test of their financial knowledge.

“I’ve learned a lot about financial modeling, which has allowed me to teach other students in the club,” said Jeff DiBenedetto, junior finance major, co-founder and president of SMIC. “It’s been a great experience, and I love helping other students. I’ve also learned a lot more about companies from hearing all the pitches every Tuesday.

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**Joining SMIC truly was one of the greatest decisions I could have made for myself.**

**- Whitman Kessinger**

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Their executive leadership board is made up of five students who listen to the pitches of each group that represent the S&P 500’s sectors, except for a combination of materials and utilities.

Executive leadership comprises senior [economics](#) and [finance](#) double major Joseph Dubsy, co-founder of SMIC and VP of portfolio management; Whitman Kessinger, junior finance major and VP of membership; Lila Slay, senior [mass communication](#) major and VP of public relations; and Josh Johnson, senior economics-finance double major and VP of investment strategy.

The group reports progress on [their LinkedIn page](#), and their first pitch of the semester has been approved. With an approval rating of 94.29%, SMIC has pitched Amazon stock as their next investment.\





From left to right: Dubsy, Johnson, DiBenedetto, Slay and Kessinger.

“People tend to undersell themselves and their abilities,” Johnson said. “I never thought I could handle the difficulties of being involved in this and juggle being a double major, yet when faced with it, I ended up adjusting and doing well.”

“I hope people who want to join this organization, but are afraid of failing, will challenge themselves and trust that they will step up to the plate,” he said.


Each member on the board has lofty aspirations, and they think leading SMIC will help get them there. Johnson already has plans lined up with a financial planner in St. Simons Island, Georgia, after he graduates in December.

Dubsy wants to attend graduate studies and work in research with the Federal Reserve, Jeff wants to open a business with his brothers, Whitman will pursue banking or consulting and Slay wants to become a writer—and maybe, she said, Wall Street too.

“Joining SMIC truly was one of the greatest decisions I could have

made for myself,” Kessinger said. “There are so many great organizations on campus, but I know this committee will help create a better future for myself.”

“It is a great opportunity to learn more about finance with real world applications that I hope to use in my career,” he said.

 Front Campus graphic for Imagine 2030. Text reads: Engage: to occupy, attract, or involve (someone’s interest or attention.)

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

# News Stories Posted Tuesday October 22, 2024



## **GCSU addresses disparities in rural healthcare with new Mobile Health Unit**

**[Health & Human Performance, School of](#) : Tuesday October 22,  
2024**

By Cindy O'Donnell

Nursing student Alyssa Zuegel tours Georgia College's new Mobile Health Unit. (Video: Stacey Lumley)

As rural clinics and hospitals nationwide are closing their doors

As rural clinics and hospitals nationwide are closing their doors, Georgia College & State University proudly unveiled its new Mobile Health Unit Oct. 22, 2024 — a free screening center on wheels — that will address rural healthcare needs in Central Georgia and train students in preventive care.

During a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the Russell Auditorium lawn, the customized vehicle was open for public viewing and tours. It now hits the road for a health fair in Putnam County, partnering with Putnam General Hospital, as well as free screenings in several local communities.

Spanning more than 40 feet with three retractable awnings, the unit boasts two intake areas, two medical exam rooms, refrigeration for vaccines and a bathroom.

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**Our new, state-of-the-art Mobile Health Unit will address a critical need for residents in rural communities, many of which are losing access to healthcare, while simultaneously providing nursing and public health students with the vital training they need to become future healthcare leaders and frontline workers. It is truly a win-win for all involved.**

**- GCSU President Cathy Cox**

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By 2023, [30% of all rural hospitals nationwide were at risk](#) for closure. That year, U.S. News & World Report ranked Georgia No. 7 for states with the [most rural hospital closings](#). To date, nine rural

hospitals in Georgia have closed. One stopped providing in-patient care, and 18 others are at financial risk, a study by [Chartis](#) found.

These closures compound the grim reality that [people living in rural communities are not as healthy](#).

“Rural hospital closings are becoming more common across the country,” said Dr. Will Evans, dean of the university’s [College of Health Sciences](#). “Often, these smaller hospitals cannot generate enough revenue to cover expenses, since that would require surgical services and specialty services that are not something you typically see available in smaller communities.”

“Preventive screenings are a big part of what we hope to do,” he said. “We’ll bring free services to areas that otherwise might not have them.”



Alternate Text

Greater poverty rates, less access to health care and lack of insurance can lead to more obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and cancer, according to a [report](#) by the Center for Disease Control.

Georgia ranks fifth in the nation for accessibility to healthcare, according to [Forbes Advisor](#). That study showed Georgians as second for people without health insurance. In 2023, the [Commonwealth Fund](#) put Georgia at No. 45 in the nation for overall health and No. 48 for access to healthcare and affordability. This year, [another study](#) earmarked Hancock County as among the least healthy populations in the state.

Georgia College’s Mobile Health Unit will help tackle this problem – bringing preventive care to counties like Baldwin, Bibb, Hancock, Houston, Jones, Putnam and Wilkinson that often lack resources.





President Cathy Cox with students from GCSU's College of Health Sciences. (Photos by Anna Gay Leavitt)

It's unusual for small universities to have mobile health units, Evans noted. Dr. Damian Francis, epidemiologist and associate professor of [public health](#), agreed.

"GCSU is innovative in this regard for a smaller public liberal arts university," Francis said. "This echoes our commitment to community engagement and tackling societal challenges with bold ideas."

The vision for a mobile health unit emerged three years ago to address burgeoning health disparities made worse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most public-health efforts focused on testing and vaccination, Francis said, while the need for basic health screenings for chronic conditions were not being met.

Georgia College began addressing underlying, health risk factors in Central Georgia – like hypertension, obesity, high cholesterol and

diabetes – through its [Center for Health & Social Issues](#), which Francis heads.



"The Mobile Health Unit



Dr. Damian Francis

will increase our capacity to do more and reach a wider geographic area. The work we've done, and its planned expansion through the Mobile Health Unit, is

life-saving," Francis said.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to bring preventive services directly to rural Georgians," he added, "and to address barriers like lack of transportation, health literacy and poverty."

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**We are, in some cases, the only healthcare provider some folks will see in a year.**

**- Dr. Damian Francis**

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With the help of friends and community benefactors — Georgia College is now set to launch the Mobile Health Unit on its first outreach voyage.

Requests for the vehicle are pouring in. Evans anticipates the mobile unit will offer services at 10 community events per year. An outreach visit will typically last 4 to 6 hours, Francis said, with about 10 students participating each time.

The vehicle is an extension of Georgia College's clinical classroom space.

The self-powered, ADA-accessible vehicle is fully equipped with screening tools to assess cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar and hemoglobin. Staff will conduct stress and cardiovascular risk assessments as well.

The Center for Health &

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Social Issues is charged with operating and managing the Mobile Health Unit. Staff will include [nursing](#), public health and [exercise science](#) majors – supervised by nursing faculty.



A College of Health Sciences student practices screening assessments in GCSU's new Mobile Health Unit.

Engaging one-on-one with rural patients, students will see some of the social issues that drive premature disease and strain hospitals. They'll gain firsthand knowledge of how social determinants like poverty, lack of transportation and reduced access to healthcare and insurance often lead to [obesity, elevated blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and cancer](#).

“This ranges from no doctor or primary care professional in their area to no hospital,” Evans said. “Many of our students have not seen what it’s like in these rural areas of Georgia. It should be a good experience for them to learn what preventive care means in high health-risk areas.”

“

**This mobile unit will expand our reach, promote wellbeing and help us get more students out in the field to educate people about health. The screenings we do should catch health risks earlier and save lives in our community.**

**- Dr. Will Evans**

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“This mobile unit will expand our reach, promote wellbeing and help us get more students out in the field to educate people about

health,” he added. “The screenings we do should catch health risks earlier and save lives in our community.”

Before working in the mobile unit, students will undergo specific training and orientation on protocols and procedures for the equipment inside. They’ll be taught how to perform basic health screenings and provide health and nutritional education.

Students will give demonstrations on the benefits of physical activity and CPR. Sports medicine will also be provided, along with mental health checks.

“We are, in some cases, the only healthcare provider some folks will see in a year,” Francis said. “Preventive and primary health care in the U.S. are primarily driven by signs and symptoms people experience. What we hope to do is provide people with these screening services early on to prevent or delay onset or worsening of diseases that are largely preventable.”

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**By offering preventive health services, the Mobile Health Unit will contribute to improving the overall health and well-being of Georgia’s most vulnerable populations, ultimately reducing emergency room visits and lowering healthcare costs in the region.**

**- Dr. Damian Francis**

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To support GCSU’s Mobile Health Unit and promote health in rural areas, please visit the link below.

**SUPPORT THE MOBILE HEALTH UNIT**

 Front Campus graphic for Imagine 2030. Text reads: Innovate: To make changes in something established

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

# News Stories Posted Wednesday October 23, 2024



## Egyptian student shares her heritage and thrives at GCSU

[International Education Center](#) : Wednesday October 23, 2024

By Margaret Schell

Junior computer science major, Farah Dawood, of Behera, Egypt, wants to become a software engineer after she graduates from college. The international student is attending Georgia College & State University this fall semester.

“I like hands-on projects and research,”

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Dawood said. “My concentration in AI allows me to do these things and solve any problem.”

“The technology skills we learn at GCSU apply to so many fields—from management to transportation applications,” she said.

Once Dawood receives her degree, she’d like to live and work in Egypt, Europe or the U.S.



Farah Dawood with the Egyptian flag.

She plans to use what she’s learned from Georgia College and apply them in her profession.

“We work in teams, so the experience here has improved my communication skills, taught me to be open to change and how to collaborate with a diverse group of people,” Dawood said.

The city in Egypt where Dawood’s from, Behera, means “lake.” It’s located about 45 minutes from the Mediterranean Sea. Egypt has a diverse heritage, culture and history.

“I love our heritage because Egypt has 27 different states—all with different cultures,” Dawood said. “Every government has its own heritage.”

“

**GCSU gives me an opportunity to grow academically and personally, I’ve also experienced different events and activities. Everyday there have been five or 10 events that I can go to. And that’s fun, because you can go to clubs or meetings and make friends and have good times.**

**- Farah Dawood**

When she came to Georgia College in August, Dawood had an exhausting, 30-plus-hour flight from Egypt to Atlanta. But Susie Ramage of the [International Education Center](#) immediately made her feel at home.

“Everyone at GCSU is so welcoming of international students,” she said. “It was like that from the first minute I got here.”

Outside of studying, she likes to immerse herself in activities with her friends.

“There are a lot of things to do here—clubs, activities and many places, like the library, to help us every day,” Dawood said. “Whether it’s doing my schoolwork or meeting new people, I enjoy belonging to these things.”

She can’t wait for the [International Fest](#) to take place Oct. 23, from 5 to 7 p.m. on Front Campus.

“I want to show people exciting things about my country, like cultural diversity,” Dawood said.

“Not only do we have many different types of nature, but each one of the 27 states has their own heritage from speaking different dialects of Egyptian Arabic to wearing different clothing.”



Farah Dawood stands over the Nile River in Cairo, Egypt.

On her display table, Dawood will showcase statues and historical items from her home country. She'll also display pictures of different places in Egypt to provide onlookers a new perspective of her country.

"Most people think I live in a desert, but my state is all about agriculture," she said. "We have massive green areas. So, I want to display a new perspective of Egypt like our beautiful nature and attire."

Dawood hopes to educate festival attendees about the beauty of Egypt. She wants to do this in case they're thinking of visiting or moving there for study or work.

The festival "will be so much fun," Dawood said. "I love exploring and experiencing the diversity of cultures at GCSU."



Farah Dawood is pictured in front of the Mediterranean seashore in Alexandria, Egypt.


Dawood has been pleased with Georgia College and has taken advantage of its "welcoming" environment. She belongs to the International Club, Computer Science Club and Women in Technology. Off campus, she participates in the IEC's social outings, like roller skating and bowling.

She especially feels a sense of belonging in the International Club. It consists of students from other countries, as well as many American students.

"It makes me happy to see more and more American students in our meetings," Dawood said. "They're curious to know about students from other countries. It fosters a bond between us."

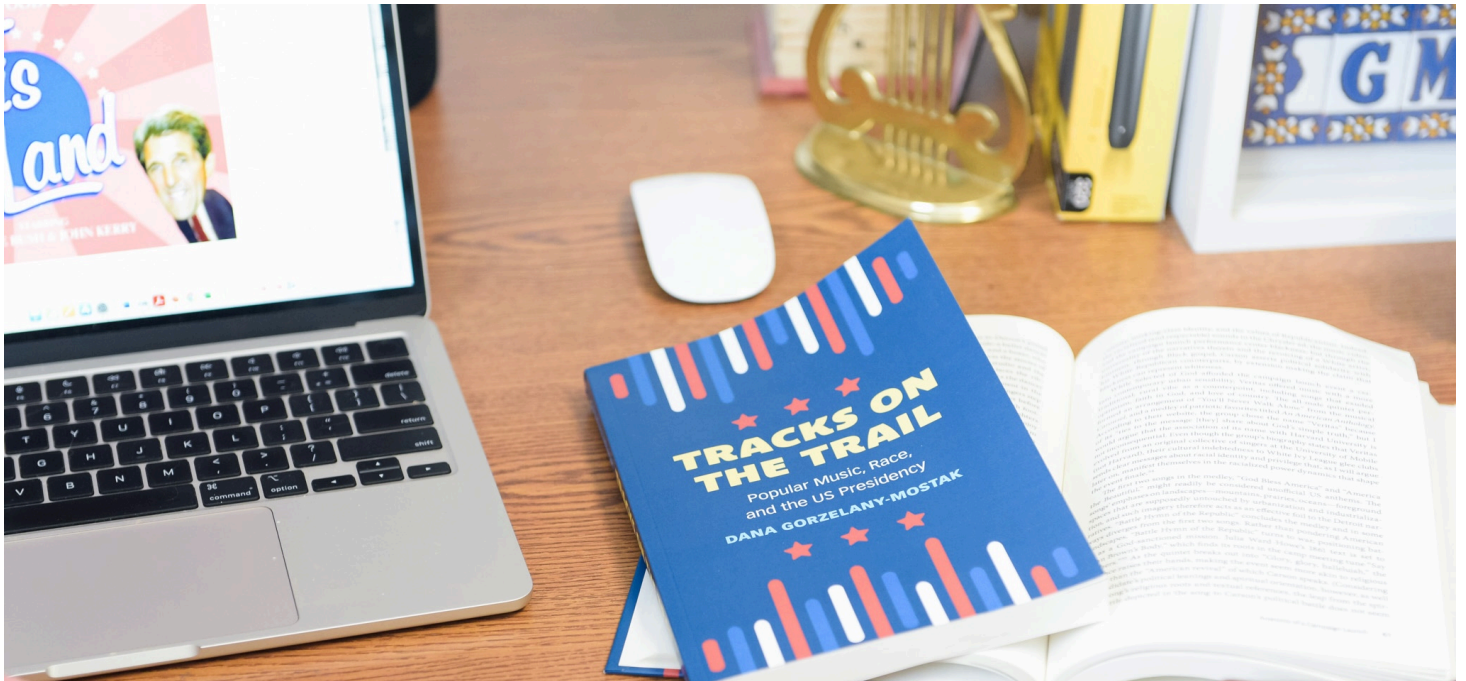
"GCSU gives me an opportunity to grow academically and personally," she said. "I've also experienced different events and activities. Everyday there have been five or 10 events that I can go

to. And that's fun, because you can go to clubs or meetings and make friends and have good times.”

 Front Campus graphic for Imagine 2030. Text reads: Distinguish: to make noteworthy or remarkable, to give prominence or distinction.

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

# News Stories Posted Monday October 28, 2024



## From ‘brat’ to Beyoncé: How music is shaping the 2024 U.S. Presidential election

[Music, Department of](#) : Monday October 28, 2024

By Cindy O'Donnell

Political divisiveness has Americans singing different tunes.

But whether you're tapping to Beyoncé's "[Freedom](#)" — a liberation song used recently by U.S. Presidential candidate Kamala Harris — or swaying to Lee Greenwood's "[God Bless the U.S.A.](#)" — often used by former President Donald Trump — one thing's for sure.

Music makes politics more fun.

“Voters are swayed by emotions,” said Dr. Dana Gorzelany-Mostak, associate professor of [music](#) at Georgia College & State University. “So it only makes sense that candidates are going to gravitate toward a medium of communication that’s all about feeling. I think we’ve certainly seen a lot of that in this campaign season.”



Alternate Text

In 2015, Gorzelany-Mostak founded [Trax on the Trail](#), an online database that examines how music is used for political strategy. This is the third presidential election Gorzelany-Mostak and her students have tracked. The website has a catalog of nearly 13,000 campaign songs.

The site has become an educational tool in classrooms and is used by journalists nationwide. In recent months, Gorzelany-Mostak was interviewed by the [Washington Post](#), [Chicago Tribune](#), [Vox](#) and [Politico](#).

In this election, music continues to play a key role – whether it's [Taylor Swift's alignment](#) with the Democratic party or singer Kid Rock performing "[American Bad Ass](#)" at the Republican National Convention.

Trump uses classic rock from groups like the Rolling Stones and Queen. At rallies, he plays "[YMCA](#)" by the Village People in addition to songs with titles that align with his message. These include Elvis Presley's "[Suspicious Minds](#)," Elton John's "[I'm Still Standing](#)," Tom Petty's "[I Won't Back Down](#)," Bachman-Turner Overdrive's "[You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet](#)" and Frank Sinatra's "[My Way](#)."

Harris' choice of music is "a bit more eclectic," Gorzelany-Mostak said. The vice president uses a broad range of genre from R&B and pop to Latin and hip-hop.

Harris likes Aretha Franklin's "[Think](#)," Beyoncé's "[Run the World](#)," Rihanna's "[Don't Stop the Music](#)," Stevie Wonder's "[Higher Ground](#),"

Megan Thee Stallion's "[Savage](#)" and Andra Day's "[Rise Up](#)." Popular artists like [Lizzo](#) and [Taylor Swift](#) have both endorsed Harris.

“

**Trump is trying to connote something about strength and tradition. Harris, on the other hand, is making a point of being really inclusive with her playlist, and I think that very much ties into the vision she's trying to project of optimism and a focus on joy. These differences in playlists are reflective of the different visions they have for our country and where it needs to go.**

**- Dr. Gorzelany-Mostak**

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Senior psychology major Victoriyah Friend of Hinesville, Georgia, is one of the Georgia College students who have worked with Gorzelany-Mostak over the years.

She enters data on the Trax website, classifying songs used in ads and rallies, notes artists and geographically maps where each song was played.

“It's really opened my eyes to something I came into college thinking I would never want to do — research — and now it's something that I truly love,” Friend said.



Dr. Gorzelany-Mostak and senior psychology major Victoriyah Friend look at a book the associate professor wrote about Trax on the Trail.

"The opportunities and experiences I've had with the Trax on the Trail team have been really impactful," she added. "I gained a lot of knowledge I can use in my future."

Friend especially appreciates the [psychological role music plays](#) in elections. It can strengthen a faltering image, motivate fans, energize voters and manipulate emotions.

Music can keep things from getting too serious. This [parody](#) by Remy pokes fun at both parties, using Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber's song, "[I Don't Care](#)."

It can even turn gaffes into gold.

On TikTok, English singer songwriter Charli XCX earmarked Harris as "[brat](#)," a term that became a positive moniker last summer with her song, "[360](#)." It wasn't an outright endorsement. Yet, referring to Harris as brat, the artist showed the candidate's word blunders as "maybe a little bit messy, a little bit klutzy but cool," Gorzelany-Mostak said.

“

**I don't think we can quantify which of those sounds persuades people to vote. The more interesting question to me is 'How does music allow people to communicate and feel connected to political candidates?'**

**- Dr. Gorzelany-Mostak**

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A particular song can be liked by all sides too.

Eminem's rap "[Lose Yourself](#)" from 2002 has been used by three candidates from both political parties. The streetwise anthem, a song of individual struggle, meant something different for each.

Ben Carson kicked off his 2015 presidential run with a [gospel version](#) of Eminem's rap, turning it into a struggle song for all people. President Joe Biden used the song to show [strength in mask-wearing](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.


To appeal to his base of older voters, Republican [Vivek Ramaswamy rapped](#) "Lose Yourself" during the 2023 primaries and got in trouble by the artist for doing so.

Just a few days ago, former President [Barack Obama rapped](#) part of Eminem's song at a Harris/Walz campaign rally in Detroit.

So it seems music is something we can all get behind.

"My bigger goal for Trax on the Trail is encouraging people to think critically, ask questions and pay attention to the ways sound is used to persuade," Gorzelany-Mostak said. "Think about how we live our lives in the 21st century. We go from screen to screen to screen. We're constantly bombarded with images and sounds."

"I don't think we can quantify which of those sounds persuades people to vote," she said. "The more interesting question to me is 'How does music allow people to communicate and feel connected to political candidates?'"

 Front Campus graphic for Imagine 2030. Text reads: Innovate: To make changes in something established  
[Learn more about the Innovate Pillar in our Imagine 2030 Strategic Plan](#)