

News Stories Posted Monday December 2, 2024



MFA alumna aspires to be the change

[English, Department of](#) : Monday December 2, 2024

by Margaret Schell

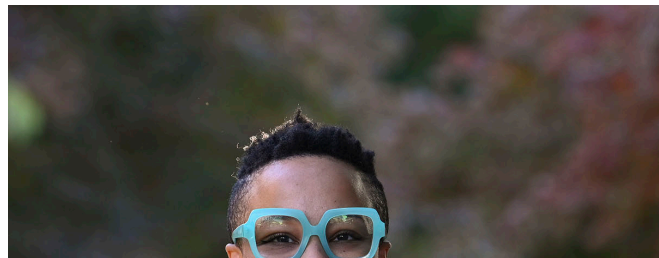
For as long as Denechia “Neesha” Powell-Ingabire (’22) can remember, she wanted to write a book—one that would spark social change. As a movement journalist, essayist and community and cultural organizer, she writes about environmental, gender, racial and reproductive justice.

“I’ve had my eye on Georgia College & State University’s [MFA in Creative Writing program](#) for more than a decade,” Powell-Ingabire said. “So, I enrolled.”

The MFA Creative Writing program seemed ideal to Powell-Ingabire, as the program requires students to write a book-length manuscript for their thesis. Her thesis evolved into her [nonfiction book](#), “Come By Here: A Memoir in Essays from Georgia’s Geechee Coast,” published in September 2024.

“It’s been exciting,” she said. “I knew the program would provide dedicated time to write my book. Plus, I needed that structure and guidance the program provided.”

There were [two professors at Georgia College](#) who made a lasting impact on Powell-Ingabire: Dr. Kerry Neville and Dr. Chika Unigwe.



When Powell-Ingabire began the program, she'd never taken a creative writing workshop; she was a journalist for over 10 years.

Both Neville and Unigwe were honest in critiquing her work, and Powell-Ingabire appreciated this.

“Dr. Unigwe taught me an essay needs balance between showing, telling and reflecting,” she said. “I remember these necessary elements when I write now.”

Powell-Ingabire remains passionate about reporting on the justice movements of Black, queer and trans communities.



Neesha Powell-Ingabire photographed during a recent visit to the GCSU campus. (Photo by Anna Gay Leavitt.)

“

I've had my eye on Georgia College & State University's MFA in Creative Writing program for more than a decade, so I enrolled.
- Neesha Powell-Ingabire

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“Some reporters can't gain the trust of Black, trans and queer communities like one from their own communities,” Powell-

Ingabire said. "It's important for me to see this type of reporting in the world. It's not going to exist unless people like me pursue it."

Her work has been published in Oxford American, Harper's Bazaar, Scallawag, VICE, Prism and more. She's also been featured on The Laura Flanders & Friends show on PBS, WABE-NPR and other media outlets.

Her story leads come from the news, social media and word of mouth. Then she researches whom she can talk to about different issues.

Powell-Ingabire grew up in coastal Georgia, pursued her undergraduate degree, then lived in Seattle, Washington, for nearly five years and returned to Georgia in 2018, a year before she started grad school.

"I'd been back in Georgia for one year when the murder of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick happened," she said. "That was one of the catalysts that got me thinking about where I'm from."

In Seattle, Powell-Ingabire developed an interest about Brunswick and started reporting on the town's toxic chemical sites and how polluted air and water impact the Black and Gullah Geechee residents.

"I started being drawn to home," she said. "It felt right to tell my own story through the lens of the community where I grew up. And I learned so many things about where I'm from that I never knew growing up."



Powell-Ingabire found writing her first book fulfilling, as it reflected how her life experiences helped shape who she is today. She also learned



Neesha visiting residents and scouting locations on Sapelo Island for her research. (Photo by Aimée-Josiane.)

more about the Black history of coastal Georgia while connecting it to herself.

“There aren’t many books available written by Black and indigenous Gullah Geechee

residents who live along

Georgia's southeastern coast,” Powell-Ingabire said. “Just knowing I’m able to put out this book for people who come after me feels good.”

“

It felt right to tell my own story through the lens of the community where I grew up. And I learned so many things about where I'm from that I never knew growing up.

- Neesha Powell-Ingabire

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She hopes to educate others through her written works in Black history, especially the Black and indigenous Gullah Geechee residents who live along Georgia’s southeastern coast.

“Through writing, I hope to bring attention to their under-told stories,” Powell-Ingabire said. “I’m trying to make them more widely known and instill a sense of self and pride in them.”

“Writing about Black history and queer and trans issues can create change,” Powell-she said. “I often write about people who are reclaiming ancestral practices or organizing around different queer and trans issues.”

Powell-Ingabire knows the importance of educating individuals

through her stories.

“These things impact me and the people I care about,” she said.
“Bringing attention to these different issues and putting these stories out is important to me. It's a form of activism.”

News Stories Posted Tuesday December 3, 2024



In her Poetry Era: English faculty featured in Taylor Swift-inspired anthology

[English, Department of](#) : Tuesday December 3, 2024

by Kylie Rowe, University Communications Student Assistant and Swiftie

A new anthology of 113 poems inspired by the chairwoman of The Tortured Poets Department, Taylor Swift, is released today and features the work "Auld Lang Syne" by [Dr. Kerry Neville](#), interim co-

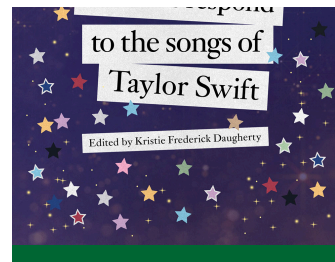
chair and associate professor of English at Georgia College & State University.

"Invisible Strings," referencing one of Swift's songs from the album "Folklore," is currently [available to order as a](#)



[hardcover, e-book or audiobook.](#)

Kristie Frederick Daugherty, editor of the anthology, assigned each poet a song by Swift to use as inspiration for their poem. Neville was given a track from Swift's fifth studio album "Reputation." For each poem in "Invisible Strings," the poets were not allowed to use the title or lyrics from their assigned song, but instead were encouraged to follow Swift's love of puzzles and clues to write a poem that reflects the song.



"Invisible Strings" features the poem "Auld Lang Syne" by GCSU professor Kerry Neville. (Cover image by Penguin Random House.)

Neville's poem reveals the kind of disappointment that is felt when a friend or lover does not live up to your expectations, and how it feels reflecting on that past love after growing from it and realizing that you can be fine on your own.

"It's a poem written from the perspective of this more elderly woman, and she's out in the woods with her dog and there is no husband or boyfriend or partner or lover around, no corks from champagne bottles on the floor and she's by herself and for the most part, content," said Neville.

The goal of the anthology, according to publisher [Penguin Random House](#), is for Swifties to decode the poems to find out which song correlates with each piece.

Neville is the coordinator of MFA and Undergraduate Creative Writing Programs at GCSU and already a published author. Her

memoir, "Momma May Be Mad," will be published in 2025 and she is currently working on a collection of short essays.

“

It's a poem written from the perspective of this more elderly woman...and she's by herself and for the most part, content.

- Dr. Kerry Neville

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“I wouldn't necessarily identify myself as a poet, but I have poetic leanings,” Neville said.

When given the chance to join the other high-profile poets featured in “Invisible Strings,” Neville felt honored to be asked, as she is also a huge Taylor Swift fan.



GCSU professor
Dr. Kerry Neville.
(Photo by Anna
Gay Leavitt.)

There are 113 contemporary poets featured in this anthology, including Pulitzer Prize winners Yusef Komunyakaa and Carl Phillips, and former U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo; Neville and several others will participate in a [live reading on the release date](#), Tuesday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m., where several of the anthology poems will be featured.

“You know my secret hope is that Taylor Swift will read this anthology and say, ‘Oh your poem is the one that got me!’ and she’ll just send me free concert tickets for life and endow the Taylor Swift Chair in Tortured Poet Studies for the English

Department,” Neville joked.

Until then, Neville encourages fellow Swifties and poetry lovers to order a copy of “Invisible Strings” and register for the live Zoom reading tonight.

News Stories Posted Wednesday December 4, 2024



Georgia College Tops Nation in Academic Success Rate Among NCAA DII Public Schools for Fourth Straight Year

[Athletics](#) : Wednesday December 4, 2024

By Mike Cavaliere

For the fourth consecutive year, Georgia College & State University ranked No. 1 for academic success rate in the country among all public universities within NCAA Division II.

BY THE NUMBERS

Georgia College scholar-athletes earned the following

Georgia College tied both Michigan Technological University and the University of Texas at Dallas for the No. 1 spot among public institutions, recording a 92% academic success rate, a metric

earned the following distinctions this year from the NCAA.

- **No. 1 academic success rate among all public institutions within NCAA Division II**
- **No. 1 in Peach Belt Conference**
- **No. 1 of 43 total recipients of the President's Award for Academic Excellence**
- **No. 12 overall among all institutions (public and private) within NCAA Division II**

represents to us.

used by the NCAA to measure the percentage of students who graduate within six years of initial college enrollment.

"I am so incredibly proud of our Bobcat scholar-athletes," said GCSU President Cathy Cox. "They are disciplined, focused and hard-working on their courts and playing fields, as well as in their classrooms."

[Georgia College Athletics](#) also ranked 12th overall among all public and private institutions competing in NCAA Division II. They topped the Peach Belt Conference and placed second among all Division II schools in the three conferences of the Southeast region.

“

Bobcats set big goals for their competition seasons and for their lives, and that's what this statistic

- GCSU President Cathy Cox

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"Bobcats set big goals for their competition seasons and for their lives, and that's what this statistic represents to us," Cox added. "Our scholar-athletes work hard to be the best in everything they do. That's what makes them winners – for life!"

Additionally, Georgia College was one of 43 total NCAA Division II

institutions to earn the Presidents' Award for Academic Excellence this year. Awarded to schools that have achieved an academic success rate of 90% or higher, this distinction has gone to Georgia College for the past five years.

“This recognition pays tribute to the emphasis Georgia College places on student success every single day,” said Wendell Staton, director of Athletics. “From coaches, to faculty, to admissions reps and all staff, Bobcats invest a lot of personal care and attention into our campus. These honors are truly a team effort. Academic excellence at Georgia Collage is not an accident – it’s by design.”

[Academic success rate](#) is calculated based on graduation rate and includes athletes who transfer into a school while removing those who left the school in good academic standing. In addition, the data includes the more than 30,000 student-athletes who are not on athletically related financial aid.





Gold and green graphic with text No. 1 Academic Success Rate NCAA DII Public Schools.

News Stories Posted Monday December 9, 2024



Class of 2024: Double major and tennis player can't wait to take on new adventures

[International Education Center](#) : Monday December 9, 2024

by Margaret Schell

Double [economics and finance](#) major Jorge Robinson of Concordia, Argentina, is prepared for what's next after studying four years at Georgia College & State University.

Robinson started his [tennis career at Georgia College](#) in January 2021 and played through May 2024. During the spring semester, he

was ranked as the Bobcat's top player.

Robinson came to the U.S. to continue playing the sport he loves while pursuing his degree.

Regular training and tennis competitions taught him how to organize his schedule to balance training, rest and other responsibilities.

"Playing tennis helped me remain calm and focused in high-pressure situations," Robinson said. "It also taught me discipline and consistency, like being on time and not giving up until I reach my goals."

His communications skills also improved.

"Tennis taught me to express myself clearly and assertively," he said. "I practice active listening during coaching sessions and when discussing tactics with my partners."

"What I enjoy the most about playing tennis are the relationships I've made," he said. "I've met people from all over the world because of our shared love for this sport."

During the summers, Robinson traveled to Spain, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, Germany, Japan and South Korea to play tennis.

Robinson considers the support and guidance he got while at Georgia College from Susie Ramage of the [International Education Center](#) as "invaluable."



Graduating senior Jorge Robinson poses with the Argentine flag. (Photo by Anna Gay Leavitt.)

“She played a significant role in my life and is very important to me,” Robinson said. “I deeply appreciate everything she did to help me grow and succeed.”

On the academic side, Robinson appreciates Drs. J.J. Arias, Chris Clark, Brooke Conaway and Brent Evans from the [College of Business & Technology](#) for being available to him when he needed their help.

“

Tennis is often an individual sport, but this all changed at Georgia College. Now I’m not just playing for myself, but for something even more important: my team.

- Jorge Robinson, Class of 2024

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“I gained valuable knowledge about investing, taxes, mortgages and more from Dr. Evans,” he said. “His guidance and everything else he taught me will be crucial for my success.”

His tennis coach, Steve Barsby, taught Robinson the value of working with his teammates.

“I had little to no experience working as part of a group or cheering others on. Tennis is often an individual sport,” he said. “But this all changed at Georgia College. Now I’m not just playing for myself, but for something even more important: my team.”

Robinson developed critical thinking skills on and off the court.

“Through a combination of academic challenges, real-world applications and leadership experiences, I was required to analyze complex data, evaluate different viewpoints and challenge assumptions,” he said. “In tennis, I learned to assess different

strategies, support my teammates and make decisions under pressure.”

Robinson was also in the International Club and Finance Club. He made many friends during his time at Georgia College.

“I will miss the people here the most,” Robinson said. “Over the years, I’ve met incredible individuals and created unforgettable memories I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”

He plans to begin pursuing his master's degree in August 2025.

“My appetite for knowledge in economics and finance remains unfulfilled,” he said. “I’m eager to learn more. But first, I want to gain real-world work experience, then see how a master’s degree can further enhance my expertise and career prospects.”

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I’m inspired by the new adventures that await in the world after graduation. It’s time for me to become fully independent, start working, set new goals, make my own decisions and embrace the mistakes that will come as part of the learning process.

- Jorge Robinson

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News Stories Posted Wednesday December 11, 2024



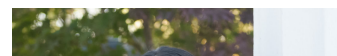
Class of 2024: How to get the most out of college from someone who's done it

[Commencement](#) : Wednesday December 11, 2024

by Kristen Simpson

From El Salvador to Texas and now Milledgeville, Lilian Alfaro's journey led her to graduation from Georgia College & State University this December

The aspiring Double Bobcat is a senior [management information systems](#) major



and continuous improvement intern at [Fouts Brothers](#) in Milledgeville. But she's also secretary for the Dean's Advisory Board, vice president of [GC Women in Technology](#), married and mother to a 10-year-old.



December graduate Lilian Alfaro lives by three guiding tenets: capability, adaptability and willingness. (Photo by Kristen Simpson.)

“I came in with this idea of just getting my education, getting the degree, and next thing I know, I’m getting nominated for GEM, the [Georgia Education Mentorship program](#),” Alfaro said. “Things that most students do didn’t matter to me, but everyone—the staff, the faculty—have been so welcoming to me and made me feel included in their classrooms.”

She’s done more at Georgia College than she ever expected to, and that’s because she embraced three tenets: capability, adaptability and willingness.

“When opportunities knock, take them — and that’s what I’ve done,” Alfaro said. “It hasn’t always been easy; the journey has been tough and full of challenges. But I’ve discovered that I’m capable of handling extra responsibilities and pushing myself beyond the boundaries of my comfort zone.”

Alfaro entered the workforce at age 15 to help support her mother and four siblings. She worked in insurance and finance for 10 years before seeking higher education.

“

Not many women pursue an education in technology, much less Latina women. I believe in amplifying the message about the value of education and breaking barriers. It doesn't have to

be in technology; what matters is taking that first step and going after your goals.

- Lilian Alfaro

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“That made me realize I don’t want to be in the front line of a business,” Alfaro said. “I would rather be backstage where the business decisions are happening – where the business processes are being implemented.”

So she got her associate’s degree of business administration in 2022 from Angelina College in Lufkin, Texas. After her spouse’s work saw them move across the country to Milledgeville, the best decision for Alfaro was to continue her education at Georgia College.

“Not many women pursue an education in technology, much less Latina women,” she said. “I believe in amplifying the message about the value of education and breaking barriers. It doesn’t have to be in technology; what matters is taking that first step and going after your goals.”

“Get the degree now, before life becomes more challenging, before you have more responsibilities. It’s prime time,” Alfaro said. “I wish I would have done it then, but I don’t regret it, because it’s helped me learn what it is I want with my life.”

She’s looking for jobs and hoping to secure a position as she pursues her master’s in management information systems next spring. While she’s at it, she hopes to inspire her daughter.

”

I’m hoping that’s what I’m teaching [my daughter]—the work ethic. Once you take something on, and it’s going to change your life, you have to stick with it. You have to see it through –

persevere.

- Lilian Alfaro

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News Stories Posted Saturday December 14, 2024



2024 Winter Commencement: Over 300 students graduate from Georgia College

[Commencement](#) : Saturday December 14, 2024

by Amanda Respass

On Saturday, Dec. 14, Georgia College & State University conferred nearly 350 degrees on both undergraduate and graduate students in the class of 2024. The Georgia College [December commencement ceremony](#) was held in The Centennial Center on the Georgia College campus.

the Georgia College campus.

A full recording of Saturday's ceremony is available to view on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [LinkedIn](#). The complete Winter 2024 Commencement photo gallery is available to view and download [here](#).

The December graduating class included 224 undergraduate students earning bachelor's degrees and 101 students earning master's degrees. The most popular majors among the graduating class are nursing, management, psychology, biology and mass communication. Members of this graduating class hail from six different states, as well as several countries internationally.

Georgia College President Cathy Cox welcomed the graduates and their guests, and the university faculty, staff and students.

"Many of the students participating in our ceremony today had their educational and professional journeys interrupted four years ago in 2020, a year marked by unprecedented challenges and unforeseen disruptions," Cox told the class of 2024, referencing the COVID-19 pandemic. "Your strength, determination and perseverance during that time speaks volumes about your character and your ability to overcome adversity...You have made it through a lot of challenges – and there are good days ahead!"

The commencement keynote address was given by Prof. Jehan El-Jourbagy, J.D., associate professor of Business Law and Ethics and recipient of the 2024 GCSU Excellence in Teaching Award.

"Be indispensable. Ask questions. Seek the truth," El-Jourbagy told students. "That's it. The secret to life."

This December ceremony marked the [100th commencement ceremony](#) planned and presided over by University Registrar Dr. A. Kay Anderson. During her 17 years at Georgia College, Anderson orchestrated 99 commencements, including one year during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when Anderson organized 47 separate ceremonies to accommodate social distancing protocols

for hundreds of graduates and their guests.

About Georgia College & State University

Located in Milledgeville, Georgia, Georgia College & State University is one of three selective admission institutions in the University System of Georgia, along with Georgia Tech and The University of Georgia. With an enrollment of over 7,100 students from 150 of Georgia's 159 counties, GCSU was ranked sixth among all public regional universities in the South – and first among schools in Georgia – in the US News & World Report's 2025 rankings. Since 2022, GCSU has also produced the No. 1 academic success rate among all NCAA Division II public schools in the country. Hands-on learning opportunities at the university are available in top undergraduate majors, including [Business](#), [Nursing](#), [Education](#), [Psychology](#), [Exercise Science](#) and [Communications](#), plus dozens of [graduate programs](#) and a [pre-med mentoring pathway](#) to medical school admission.

News Stories Posted Thursday December 19, 2024

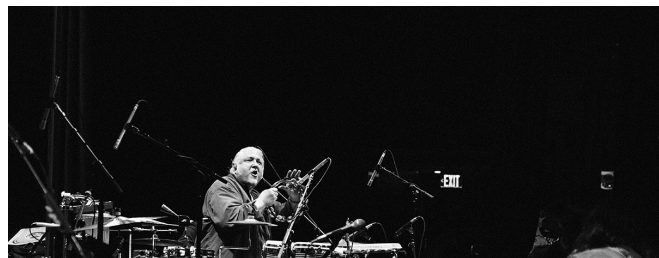


GCSU professor, session man adds Ryman Auditorium to résumé

[Teacher Education, Department of](#) : Thursday December 19, 2024

By: Al Weston

Georgia College & State University special education associate professor Dr. Rob Sumowski is a gifted educator, much loved by



current students and alumni. The walls of his office proudly show photos of him with his students, including ones of him serving as wedding officiant for multiple College of Education alumni.

Sumowski has also served on the University Senate, even as a presiding officer for the 2023-24 school year, the highest role in the Senate.



Rob Sumowski works the tambourine as a member of Brent Cobb's band during a performance at The Ryman, December 5, 2024. (Photo: Jace Kartye)

Sumowski's gifts don't end in the classroom setting, however, as he has a long-standing and decorated history as a percussionist and is one of the most highly requested percussionists in Middle Georgia. Listeners can catch his most recent work on Grammy-nominated artist Brent Cobb's September 2023 release, "Southern Star."

He also performed with the band earlier this month at the historic Ryman Auditorium.

"At my start, I never planned to play percussion," Sumowski revealed. "My plan was to play drum set, until I found a great acoustic songwriter, Leighton Moore. Drum set overpowers an acoustic guitar, so I had to adjust and try using conga drums instead, which worked great with acoustic music. The calls started coming in, and within a year I was one of the only percussionists on the Atlanta acoustic scene. I got to play with all these amazing songwriters. After 30-plus years, the phone still seems to be ringing, and I am grateful."



Sumowski's musical experiences over three decades have varied, but all were opportunities to learn and create with some of the area's most talented artists.

"I've learned a lot from working with great



Rob Sumowski

songwriters,” he said. “Sean Mullins and I worked together a lot back in the day. I remember fondly my time with Billy Pilgrim – featuring Kristian Bush from Sugarland. After shows we’d be dripping with sweat, trading song ideas on guitars while sitting on the floor in some hotel room on the road. Amazing memories.”

The majority of Sumowski’s session work comes at the historic Capricorn Studio in Macon, Georgia, where the Allman Brothers recorded “Brothers and Sisters.” In 2022, Sumowski was invited to perform with Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi at the memorial service of longtime Gregg Allman confidant Chank Middleton. Over time, Capricorn producer Rob Evans has made Sumowski a “first call” when it comes to session opportunities.

When asked, he sees connections between his efforts as a session musician and lessons taught to today’s K-12 teachers.

“The underlying lesson of trial and error is big in both settings,” Sumowski said. “Learning is a process, whether I’m in a recording studio figuring out what to play on this particular project or I’m in a classroom as a teacher, figuring out the best approach to reaching this K-12 or college student.

“

Good teachers have to try different things until we find something that works. These are things we talk about with our students: adjusting, being flexible and understanding it is a process with no shortcuts, just hard work.

- Rob Sumowski

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Those calls for Sumowski’s unique skills keep coming; on Dec. 5,

2024, he played in Cobb's Road band at the artist's request, headlining the legendary Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee. The Ryman is widely recognized as the birthplace of country and bluegrass music.



Brent Cobb's band, featuring Georgia College professor Rob Sumowski on percussion (third from right) performed Dec. 5, 2024, at the Ryman Auditorium. (Photo: Jace Kartye)

News Stories Posted Friday December 20, 2024



SACSCOC Accreditation Reaffirmed at Georgia College & State University

[General Institution](#) : Friday December 20, 2024

By Mike Cavaliere

The Board of Trustees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) voted to reaffirm Georgia College & State University's accreditation for the next 10 years at its annual meeting earlier this month. The reaffirmation was unconditional, with no findings or follow-up recommendations cited.



GCSU, located in Milledgeville, Georgia, celebrated its 135th birthday in 2024.

“Earning SACSCOC accreditation is a mark of distinction for universities in this country, signaling that the schools which have met these rigorous national standards have a true commitment to student success,” said Georgia College President Cathy Cox. “This reaffirmation serves as a badge of

honor to all Bobcat faculty and staff, whose unwavering commitment to hands-on learning and career-readiness are preparing students to become our next generation of industry leaders and innovators.”

Cox added that SACSCOC accreditation is the “ultimate consumer protection marker for students and their families.”

“It assures them that what we offer meets the highest standards of faculty quality, student-focused operations and financial stability,” she said. “It is an arduous process, but truly a full-team effort focused on quality.”

Representatives from Georgia College were also invited to give a presentation on the university’s [Quality Enhancement Plan \(QEP\)](#), titled Bobcats First, at the annual meeting. The plan focuses on the critical area of student mental health. During the presentation, Vice President for Student Life Dan Nadler, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Holley Roberts, Assistant Vice President for Student Health and Wellbeing Emily Jarvis and Director of Institutional Effectiveness Cara Smith outlined several projects and initiatives that aim to expand support services on campus to help students thrive – including counseling workshops and trainings, exercise events, peer advocate programs and more.

“

Earning SACSCOC accreditation is a mark of distinction for universities in this country, signaling that the schools which have met these rigorous national standards have a true commitment to student success.

- Georgia College President Cathy Cox

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“The goal of this five-year QEP plan is to offer students multiple support touchpoints throughout their time at Georgia College,” Nadler said. “While some elements are built into existing initiatives where participation is required – like Week of Welcome orientation events for first-year students – others are new and entirely voluntary. It’s a holistic approach that aims to develop all four domains of student wellbeing: emotional, physical, social and intellectual.”

[Learn more about Georgia College’s various accreditations online.](#)

News Stories Posted Monday December 23, 2024



Alumnus determined to improve outcomes for students with disabilities

[College of Education](#) : Monday December 23, 2024

By Margaret Schell

For students with disabilities, the world looks a little brighter thanks to researcher Logan Roberts ('19), who is passionate about leveling the playing field for people with disabilities and improving their lives and treatment.

After graduating from Georgia College & State University with a

bachelor's in special education, Roberts participated in Teach for America, an AmeriCorps national service network program. This two-year commitment turned into three for Roberts working in a high-need middle school in South-Central Los Angeles where he taught students with academic and behavioral challenges.

“As one of 200 recent college graduates from across the U.S., we moved for the first time to Los Angeles, where we shared that experience,” Roberts said. “It proved helpful in those early years of teaching.”

Although it was a stressful job, he is thankful for his time in the program. Teach for America provided Roberts with an extensive support system and fulfilling experiences, including when he noticed a student who belonged in a more inclusive learning environment.

“The student was incredibly advanced compared to his peers,” Roberts said. “I worked hard with him to make up his learning gaps in writing. When he tested, he performed so well that he moved into a general education classroom, which put him on track to earn a high school diploma. Now, he’s planning to attend college.”

“Often students, for whatever reason, are placed in special education and held there,” he said. “They’re not supported in a way that would help them transition out. I noticed this and was able to



Logan Roberts, a 2019 alumnus of the GCSU College of Education. (Photo provided by Logan Roberts)

help that student navigate that system, which is unfortunately rare.”

Roberts has a master’s degree in education from Johns Hopkins University and is pursuing his doctorate with a concentration in special education at New York University. He plans to graduate in 2029.

Once he earns his doctoral degree, Roberts would like to become a professor of teacher education for special educators like his mentor, Georgia College Special Education Professor Dr. Rob Sumowski.

“

What students remember from their teacher is who they are. Dr. Sumowski loved and cared for his students, but also had high expectations for us. I would not be who I am today if it wasn't for him.

- Logan Roberts

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“I aim to emulate the kind of educator Dr. Sumowski was for me to my students,” Roberts said. “He showed grace for me when I needed it, but still held me accountable because he knew how important providing high-quality education is for every student. He believed in my ability to do that.”

“What students remember from their teacher is who they are,” he said. “Dr. Sumowski loved and cared for his students, but also had high expectations for us. I would not be who I am today if it wasn't for him.”

Part of Roberts’ doctoral research focuses on how inclusive practices can enhance all students' educational and social-emotional experiences and outcomes.

“I realize what a strong impact working with people with disabilities had on me,” Roberts said. “I grew in my moral development. It creates a more robust learning experience. That includes not only race, ethnic or gender diversity, but also diversity of ability.”

Roberts also investigates the criminalization and exploitation of individuals with disabilities. His research interest centers around Central State Hospital, now Central State Prison.

“I'm interested in exploring the reasons, laws and racist ideologies around confining people with disabilities,” he said. “We see a strong parallel between special education and the school-to-prison pipeline. There are high rates of juvenile detention and incarceration.”

“As a society, we must do better. There should be more loving attention to how we treat people differently abled than us,” Roberts said.

Roberts hopes his research will benefit individuals with disabilities and keep them less constrained by systems of oppression.

“

I hope to create a broader conversation around the goodness, strengths and humanity of people with disabilities. I want to challenge those in power and the laws that perpetuate the unjust confinement of people with disabilities.

- Logan Roberts

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