

News Stories Posted Monday March 3, 2025



President Cox Featured in Georgia Trend Cover Story 'The Power of Representation'

[President, Office of the](#) : Monday March 3, 2025

by Amanda Respass

Georgia College & State University President Cathy Cox is featured in Georgia Trend magazine's [March cover story](#) "The Power of Representation: Eight Notable Women to Watch in Georgia."



The cover story asks, “What causes a leader to stand out? The women highlighted here frequently noted hard work, sacrifice, mentorship – receiving and providing it – humility, taking risks and collaboration as key reasons for their success.”



Cathy Cox is the 12th president of Georgia College. (Photo by Anna Gay Leavitt)

After serving in the Georgia House of Representatives and as Georgia’s first female Secretary of State, President Cox made the leap to higher education in 2007. Cox became the 12th president of Georgia College Oct. 1, 2021, having previously served as president of Young Harris College and dean of Mercer University Law School.

Cox told Georgia Trend, “I knew it was a huge risk, but I also knew this life wouldn’t end if I didn’t win the race [for Secretary of State]. I went for it, and I made it. But had I not taken that risk, a million other doors wouldn’t have opened for me that have been even more fulfilling for my life than I ever dreamed of.”

At this point in her career, Cox has spent more time in higher education than in politics. And she relishes connecting with college students.

“

I love being out with our students and knowing as much about them as possible so I can know more ways to help them pursue their dreams.

- President Cox

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“I’m known for taking selfies on campus,” Cox told Georgia Trend. “I love being out with our students and knowing as much about them

as possible so I can know more ways to help them pursue their dreams.”

Previously, President Cox was named to this year’s Georgia Trend list of "[Notable Georgians](#)," the publication’s ‘Georgia 500’ list in 2023 and nine times to its “100 Most Influential Georgians” list.

A native of Bainbridge, Georgia, Cox served as a state legislator and two terms as Secretary of State, the first woman in Georgia elected to the Constitutional office. Her distinguished career in law, education, politics and journalism embodies what it means to have a liberal arts background, which is at the heart of GCSU’s mission.

Header Photo: *President Cox stands on the front porch of Atkinson Hall. (Photo courtesy of Georgia Trend)*

News Stories Posted Wednesday March 5, 2025



GCSU Undergrads present research during Posters at the Capitol

[Undergraduate Research](#) : Wednesday March 5, 2025

by Anna Gay Leavitt, Video and Photos by Chris Brown

Three Georgia College & State University students recently presented their research under the gold dome of the Georgia State Capitol.

Posters at the Capitol, presented by the Georgia Undergraduate Research Collective, highlights current undergraduate research. The annual event inspires future scholarship and fosters collaboration across disciplines.

Presenting to an audience of state officials, policymakers and participants from 15 other institutions were Raven Glover, mentored by Dr. Catrena Lisse; Crystabel Kwarteng, mentored by Dr. Arbab Sengupta; and Ziv Moench, mentored by Dr. Dominic DeSantis.

“Undergraduate research is an amazing opportunity for students to hone their skills and get a more well-rounded idea of their field,” said Natalie Clark, coordinator of undergraduate research at Georgia College.

Posters at the Capitol provides students with the opportunity to

engage and connect with the wider community by educating others on their research.

For more about Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors (MURACE) at Georgia College, [click here](#). And save the date for [Research Day 2025](#) on April 16.

News Stories Posted Friday March 7, 2025



Chemistry Alumna Helps Brands Like Lululemon Become More Sustainable

[Chemistry, Physics, & Mathematics, Department of](#) : Friday March 7, 2025

by Kristen Simpson

Georgia College & State University alumna Ashley Baena Lampp

(’06) is a chemist with LanzaTech Freedom Pines Biorefinery in Soperton, Georgia. The company captures carbon from the air, converts it into ethanol and manufactures a proprietary microbe called Biocatalyst.

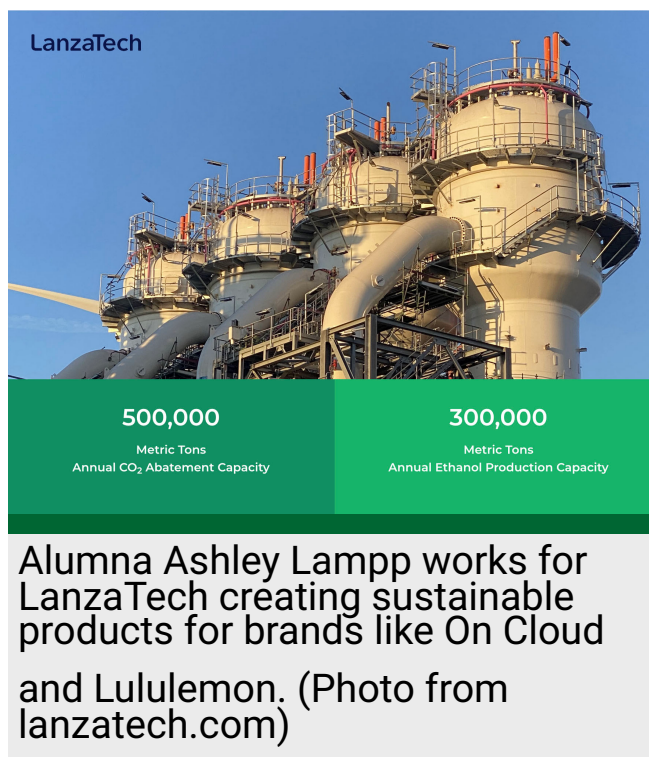
As a biomanufacturing production lead, Lampp ensures smooth operation through organization and training. She’s also responsible for maintaining manufacturing quality.

“The opportunity to work for a company constantly pushing the envelope, trying new things and doing things that haven’t been done before is absolutely exhilarating,” Lampp said.

The ethanol Lampp helps produce is recycled into new products or transformed into other chemicals. Their recycled carbon has been used by companies like On Cloud and Lululemon to create perfumes, sustainable fuels, fabrics, apparel and packaging material.

“In my job, I utilize a lot of chemistry principles and a lot of the equipment that I learned to use as a chemistry major [at GCSU],” Lampp said. “The most important skill I developed is the ability to solve problems, be adaptable and think critically — those skills are an absolute necessity.”

Lampp wasn’t always an industrial chemist with LanzaTech. She got her start as an educator for the first 13 years of her career. As an undergraduate, Lampp was a founding member of Georgia College’s Women in Chemistry Alliance, a member of the chemistry



club and volunteered in the [Science Education Center](#).

The center is directed by Dr. Catrena Lisse, professor of chemistry, and brings science into local schools through outreach events directed by student volunteers.

“I was blessed to have lots of amazing teachers and professors during my years of education, but one stands above the rest. That’s Dr. Lisse,” Lampp said. “She was such a positive role model to me and truly shaped me into the adult I am today.”

“Her enthusiasm for chemistry, and life, is infectious and I caught the bug!” Lampp said.



Ashley Lampp, left, with her mentor Dr. Catrena Lisse, celebrating Lisse's birthday. (Photo courtesy of Ashley Lampp)

None of what Lampp does today would have been possible without her education. As a first-generation student on her father’s side, Lampp appreciated the opportunity to immerse herself within other cultures and explore interdisciplinary topics.

“I think my greatest takeaway is a great appreciation for the liberal arts education I received at Georgia College,” Lampp said. “I was taught by incredible teachers from a wide range of course opportunities.”

“The well-roundedness of the education I received has infiltrated my life in so many ways and as a result, it’s made me a better person,” she said.

GCSU'S NEW INDUSTRIAL CHEMISTRY PATHWAY

Georgia College students earning their chemistry degree can now choose Industrial chemistry as a [specific concentration](#) within the [Department of Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy](#).

“Any students who decide to be in our industrial chemistry concentration will receive critical skills and abilities that are not found elsewhere, from experts that have industrial experience and connections,” said Dr. Peter Rosado Flores, associate professor of chemistry. “Our faculty open doors toward graduate degrees in chemical engineering and other fields, while showcasing all sides to chemistry.”

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- Ashley Baena Lampp ('06)

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Header Photo: Ashley Lampp, right, prepares a batch of slime for a Science Education Center outreach event. (Photo courtesy of Ashley Lampp)

News Stories Posted Tuesday March 11, 2025



TOWNSEND PRIZE FOR FICTION

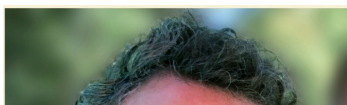
Two Georgia College Faculty are Finalists for Prestigious Townsend Prize

[English, Department of](#) : Tuesday March 11, 2025

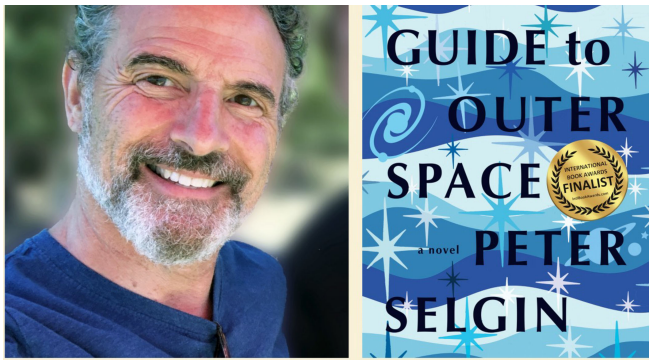
by Amanda Respass and Maggie Forrester

Two faculty from the [Georgia College Department of English](#) are finalists for the 2025 Townsend Prize for Fiction. Professor Peter Selgin is an award finalist for his novel "A Boy's Guide to Outer

Space." Assistant Professor Dr. Chika Unigwe is nominated for her novel "The Middle Daughter."



"A Boy's Guide to Outer Space"



Peter Selgin's "A Boy's Guide to Outer Space" was released by Regal House Publishing in November 2024.

Selgin said the news of his nomination as a Townsend finalist is "a very pleasant surprise" which he was honored to receive.

The message of his novel, Selgin says, "...is that we can rediscover our sense of wonder.

And we don't need to

look to the planets or the stars or the moon or infinity with it. It's actually right there around us, if only we can learn to see it. If only we can see what's already right around us, which is wondrous, which is mysterious."

"A Boy's Guide to Outer Space" was released in November last year by Regal House Publishing. Selgin says he is gratified by the public's reaction to the book.

"I think that the main satisfaction for me was that people took away more or less what I think the book is about," Selgin said. "Just because the book has to do with young boys, it's not a book just for boys or for young people. It's a book, hopefully, for the young person in any of us."

Selgin is the author of two other novels, two children's books, three books on the writer's craft and two essay collections. His short story collection "Drowning Lessons" won the [Flannery O'Connor Award for Fiction](#) in 2007.



"The Middle Daughter"

Unigwe's "The Middle Daughter" was published by Dzanc Books in April 2023 and is a modern



Dr. Unigwe's "The Middle Daughter" was released by Dzanc Books in April 2023.

reimagining of the story of Hades and Persephone, within the framework of a Nigerian family. Unigwe was born in Enugu, Nigeria.

Being named a
Townsend Prize finalist

is "Incredible!" Unigwe says. "I am a self-doubting writer and acknowledgements from prestigious bodies like the Townsend is incredibly validating."

"The Middle Daughter" has reached international audiences, even being translated into Dutch. Unigwe has given readings in Belgium, Germany and Qatar. She just returned from an appointment as writer-in-residence at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, and is soon headed to Kennesaw State University as a visiting scholar.

Unigwe is pleased with readers' response to her work.

"The reaction has been great! I think that my job as a storyteller is to entertain above all else. Whatever lessons or insight readers get is up to them. What I can control is how well I tell a story. So, I hope that a reader comes out of it thinking I've done a good job," Unigwe said.

"The Middle Daughter" has earned additional accolades including being named to Oprah Magazine's list of books to read and is an Independent Bookstore Pick in the United Kingdom. Unigwe's other books include "On Black Sisters Street" and "Better Never than Late."

The Townsend Prize for Fiction

The Townsend Prize is awarded biennially and honors the best piece of literary fiction written by a Georgia author. Originally established in 1981 in memory of Atlanta magazine founding editor Jim Townsend, the prize is now stewarded by the Atlanta

Writers Club and Georgia Writers Museum. Previous Townsend Prize winners include Celestine Sibley, Alice Walker, Ferrol Sams, James Kilgo and Terry Kay. This year's Townsend Prize award ceremony will be held April 16 in Atlanta. A total of ten finalists are in the running for the prize.

News Stories Posted Wednesday March 26, 2025



Bobcat Professor Earns Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate Award

[First-Year Experience](#) : Wednesday March 26, 2025

by Caroline Duda, Contributing Writer

For many Georgia College & State University students, the [First-Year Academic Seminar](#) is their initial foray into their intended



major — and their first real impression of college life. One Bobcat is working to ensure that it's a positive one.

Dr. Kasey Karen, professor and biology program coordinator, first realized in 2019 that some students “felt kind of lost within a relatively big program on campus.”

When the university embarked on a 2021 redesign of the First-Year Academic Seminar (FYAS), she made it her mission to ensure students felt at home and supported in the [Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences](#).

“It was the perfect time to revisit our efforts to engage first-year students...so everyone felt more welcome,” Karen said.

In February, the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition honored Karen with its 2024-25 Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate Award.

The prestigious award, which recognizes “exceptional work in the areas of student learning, development and success,” is conferred to just 10 educators each year and is a testament to Karen’s student-first approach to teaching.

“Dr. Karen’s unwavering commitment to student success, innovative pedagogy and dedication to inclusive practices have made a significant impact on our first-year students,” said Dr. Dana Gorzelany-Mostak, associate professor of [music](#) and faculty success coordinator.

Gorzelany-Mostak nominated Karen for the award, adding, “Her efforts not only enrich the students’ academic experience, but also



Dr. Kasey Karen, right, accepts the Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate award. (Photo: The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience)

foster a supportive and engaging learning environment where students can grow as professionals as they acquire marketable skills.”



The Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate Award is given by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience. (Photo: The National Resource Center)

Karen teaches one of the department’s biology FYAS sections. Her seminar introduces students to the biology major, while also sharing strategies and resources for academic success.

Her FYAS section, which she first began to design at the Summer High Impact Practices Institute, has been so successful that she has

since shared it with colleagues at other Summer HIPs Institutes and New Faculty Orientation.

As part of her redesign, Karen explores these elements through the lens of scientific literacy — a critical skill for biology majors. She helps students place biology within the broader context of the liberal arts and the world.

“It feels very rewarding to be recognized for my efforts,” Karen said of the award.

Karen joined the College of Arts & Sciences in 2013. “I was really excited about the prospect of working at a public liberal arts

college that also had a master's program in biology,” Karen said. “It really felt like the best of both worlds, teaching and research.”

Her FYAS students are immersed in a Freshman Engagement Series (FES), offering a more casual environment in which to meet fellow majors and faculty. The series includes meet-and-greets

with faculty members, social events like science trivia and table talks.

During table talks, “students enjoy free lunch with faculty members in the dining hall to get to know the faculty and learn about biology research,” said Kaitlyn Donovan, a senior biology major. With a maximum of six students and three faculty members per table talk, the resulting conversations often lead to lasting impressions and stronger faculty-student relationships.

“FES events are a wonderful opportunity for students to find friends in their major, get to know their current and future professors better, and even find research mentors,” Donovan said.

For Heather Vincent, who will graduate this spring with a bachelor's degree in Biology, Karen is a vital and long-term mentor committed to her academic, personal and professional success.

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- Dr. Kasey Karen

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“I met Dr. Karen my freshman year after sending her an email inquiring about her research lab,” Vincent said.

The two met in person and Vincent quickly joined the lab. Over the almost four years since, she has also enrolled in three of Karen’s classes, participated in two of the student organization executive teams Karen advises, and helped to further develop the FES.

“I am so thankful to have met Dr. Karen my freshman year,” Vincent

said. “She has given me advice that feels tailored and insightful to my experiences...I’ve gained invaluable communication, presentation and team-management skills by working with her during my undergraduate years.”

Vincent hopes to attend medical school and credits Karen with helping her prepare. “Dr. Karen helped me make the most of my undergraduate career, but it wasn’t just because she is a great professor or research advisor,” Vincent said.

For incoming first-year students, Karen offers some simple advice for making the most of their time in Milledgeville, “Be open to new experiences. Become more comfortable being uncomfortable – some of the most important learning experiences will take you out of your comfort zone.”

Header Image: Dr. Kasey Karen, center, accepts the award for Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate, awarded by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. (Photo: The National Resource Center)

News Stories Posted Friday March 28, 2025



Bobcats make Science fun for everyone at Atlanta Science Festival

[School of Continuing and Professional Studies](#) : Friday March 28, 2025

by Margaret Schell

Georgia College & State University joined around 100 other organizations from across the state for the [Atlanta Science Festival](#) on Saturday, March 22. The event was estimated to bring in nearly 50,000 participants.

Georgia College [Academic Outreach](#), the [Science Education Center](#), the Department [Biological and Environmental Sciences](#), and the [Chemistry and Physics](#) programs all participated in the event. Science faculty members Drs. Kasey Karen, Catrena Lisse, Kalina Manoylov and Sam Mutiti were joined by several of their students, who led science-based activities

Lisse ran the “Magic of Chemistry” booth and hosted more than 200 children.

Mutiti coordinated the water activities on behalf of the [Aquatic Sciences Center](#), Aquatic Science Club and the Biological and Environmental Sciences Department. His students led the experiments and demonstrations.

Georgia College students and event goers participated in making tornadoes, identifying macroinvertebrates, testing the properties of water and observing groundwater and contaminant flow in a model.

Mutiti’s students had algae diversity displays of 12 algal groups. They showed algae from polluted and pristine

environments with macroscopically visible differences in colors and connection to water quality analyses as part of completed Georgia College research for state and federal projects.



Biology graduate student Hasari Bermudezsoto staffs a demonstration table the Atlanta

Science Festival. (Photo: Angela Criscoe)

Hasari Bermudezsoto ('25) is a first-year graduate student majoring in biology and who has an environmental sciences degree. He rotated between demonstrations, but primarily facilitated the groundwater contamination model, showing the importance of reducing pollution and ways to remediate affected areas.

"Students learned how to communicate science to a non-science audience by conducting experiments and demonstrations," Mutiti said.

"I learned new ways to explain scientific concepts to various age groups," Bermudezsoto said. "The best part of this event was interacting with families and explaining the science behind everyday things in our environment. I attended these kinds of events growing up, so it was satisfying to be on the other side of the demonstration, explaining these concepts."

"It's a great way to extend learning beyond the classroom through continuing education by recruiting and showcasing the work faculty, staff and students do at Georgia College," said Angela Criscoe, executive director of the Georgia College [School of Professional and Continuing Studies](#). Criscoe coordinated GCSU's participation in the event.

She sees the event as a win-win for Georgia College students and Pre-K through 12th grade students.

"GCSU students showcased their skills, shared what they learned and connected with faculty beyond the classroom," Criscoe said. "For young students, we hope they see GCSU as a great

educational institution where learning science and technology can be fun, engaging and rewarding."

“

The best part of this event was interacting with families and explaining the science behind everyday things in our environment.

- Hasari Bermudezsoto

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“I hope these students go on to be great, successful scientists who will effectively engage with the community,” Mutiti said.

Bermudezsoto aspires to work in environmental remediation and conservation.

“The environmental problems we face now won't be fixed within my lifetime,” he said, “But I want to do what I can to help build momentum toward that goal alongside other scientists.”

Header Images: GCSU faculty, staff and students volunteered to bring science to life for the thousands of people who attended the Atlanta Science Festival on March 22. (Photos by Angela Criscoe.)





56,000 ATTENDEES

2,300 VOLUNTEER HOURS

142 PARTNERS

Pink and multicolored Atlanta Science Festival graphic