

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

# NEWSLETTER



FALL 2020

Editor's Note



Welcome to the fall 2020 edition of the College of Arts and Sciences newsletter. A college as diverse as the College of Arts and Sciences truly benefits from the cross-discipline application of ideas and practice. We witness various approaches to our teaching practice

and think about how to apply them in our home disciplines. As evidenced in the following pages, faculty are busier than ever, despite (and because of) the pandemic. This edition features the imaginative ways faculty are utilizing technology as a pedagogical tool, beyond the critical role it has played in adapting to the global pandemic.

While technology has become critical to our ability to teach and connect with students, it also impacts how we advance our pedagogy and scholarship in a modern and globally connected world. Our ability to use technology in new interdisciplinary ways characterizes the liberal arts spirit and this edition highlights how faculty are sourcing technology to enhance curricular experiences for students. For example, this edition features stories of how technology can build efficiency into insect identification and can create virtual writing communities. We also see how it advances faculty scholarship on renewable energy, on our understanding of artificial intelligence and on global communication and media.

We are also shifting our approach to delivering co-curricular experiences in our fine arts, humanities and sciences. We learn about new ways of rehearsing, performing and collaborating on performances as well innovative ways to build community. Technological advances also enhance the experiences of our alumni in transition to their post-baccalaureate lives, particularly for those pursuing careers as diverse as forensic science, neuropsychology and fashion.

We are very pleased to spotlight our Department of History and Geography as our fall 2020 featured department. It seems quite fitting to highlight our historians and geographers in this significant time as we struggle to understand our present, our past, our place and our global connectedness. Please keep reading to discover the faculty scholars, outstanding students and fascinating curriculum of our Department of History and Geography.

DR. CARRIE COOK  
Interim Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

# Dean's Message

When I was working on my doctorate in British history, I studied the Black Plague of the 1340s, the terrible London plague of 1664-65, and the incessant cholera epidemics in the United Kingdom in the 1840s, but I can safely say that I wasn't educated for what we are experiencing the last six months. A global pandemic is certainly historic.

This pandemic has pushed us in higher education into areas about which we never thought we'd have to learn. In addition to our work as educators and administrators, we have had to quickly pick up specialty knowledge in information technology, psychology, counseling and facilities management, as well as new areas of pedagogy that many of us did not even know existed, that now must be considered within the purview of our job duties. As we sometimes say when faced with circumstances we did not expect, graduate school certainly didn't prepare us for this.

Or did it? Most of us are graduates of and educators within the liberal arts and sciences. We have been educated to think broadly across many disciplines as undergraduates and learned in-depth critical thinking in our graduate programs. We have been educated to expect the unexpected, to handle new challenges, to pivot and shift gears when necessary, and to use data to make difficult decisions. Come to think of it, that's what we've all been doing since March 2020. In fact, this is the very kind of education that we offer at Georgia College, especially within the College of Arts and Sciences.

A liberal education frees and empowers us to work through adversity, to understand and appreciate complexity and diversity, to handle uncertainty and to succeed in a constantly changing world. We educate students at Georgia College to tackle today's and tomorrow's challenges with flexibility, confidence, innovation, empathy and maybe even a healthy dose of humor.

As hard as it has been, perhaps we are better prepared to put our minds to the task of continuing the high level of education at GC than we initially thought.



.....  
DR. ERIC TENBUS  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences





# Contents

**COVER STORY** **4**  
BIG PICTURE THINKING:  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
AND GEOGRAPHY

**FACULTY AND  
PROGRAM NEWS** **8**

**STUDENT  
NEWS** **26**

**ALUMNI  
NEWS** **35**

ARTS AND SCIENCES  
2020 **NEWS**LETTER

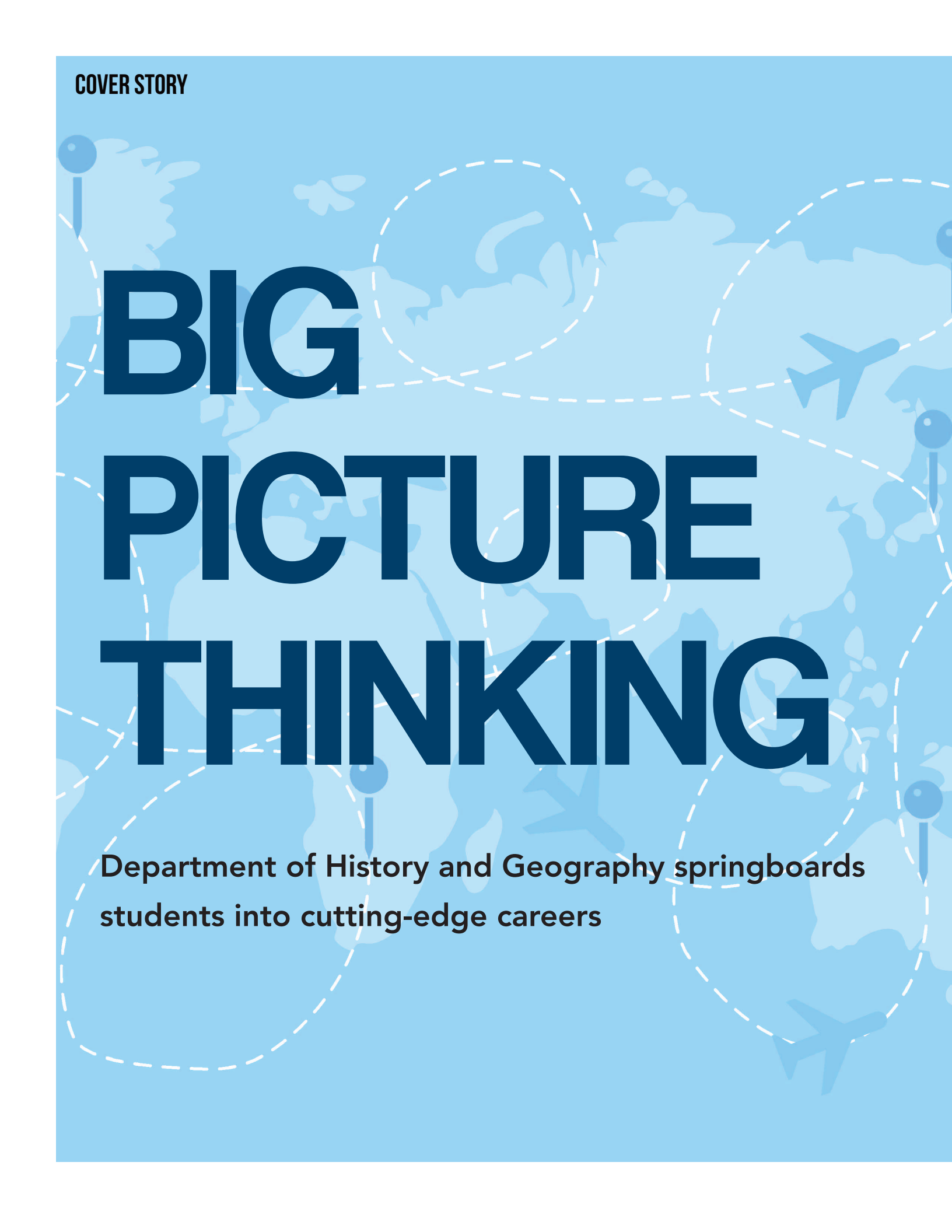
**DEAN**  
ERIC TENBUS

**EDITORS**  
CARRIE COOK  
AUBRIE L. SOFALA

**PHOTO CREDITS**  
ANNA LEAVITT  
AUBRIE L. SOFALA

**WRITERS**  
AUBRIE L. SOFALA  
CINDY 'DONNELL  
MARGARET BROWN

**COVER STORY**



# **BIG PICTURE THINKING**

**Department of History and Geography springboards  
students into cutting-edge careers**



Sylvester Clark has a history with banana pudding.

That's why, when he was asked to bring in a dish as part of his Southern Foodways and Traditions class, he knew exactly what he was bringing.

"This is a dish that all the men in my family love," Clark said, now a graduate student in the MAT program at Georgia College. "I can see my Papa's smile opening the fridge and seeing that banana pudding that Big Ma made for him."

Food as a lens into history and culture is the goal of Professor of History Dr. Craig Pascoe's Southern Foodways course. His hope is that students like Clark use food as a context to history and culture.

"Most students tell me they never looked at food this way before," Pascoe said. "I have this exercise in my class where they have to talk about a special meal and explain what's involved in it. Everything from who's cooking to who's setting the table to who is being invited — that all has to deal with a specific culture and history of a region."

Student interest in Pascoe's Southern Foodways course inspired the department to offer a Global Foodways Studies Certificate Program that launched this semester. The program allows students to concentrate on foodways courses and obtain a certificate upon completion of 15-18 credit hours. This type of programming is what makes the Department of History and Geography unique. Chair of the Department Dr. Aran MacKinnon said certificate programs are just one way the department is prepping students to solve the issues of today and tomorrow.

"What we have at Georgia College is distinctive," MacKinnon said. "Our certificate programming reaches beyond what you imagine to be the traditional heart and core of liberal arts. We're taking it a step further, thinking ahead and preparing our students for the jobs of the future."

Along with the foodways certificate, the Department of History and Geography has also offered the Geographic Information Science Certificate Program since 2016.

"Advanced geographic technologies have allowed us to keep an eye on Earth from a wide range of spatial perspectives," said Professor of Geography Dr. Doug Oetter. "Whether it's a consumer using the GPS device installed on a smart phone to

contribute crowd-sourced data, or one of dozens of satellites imaging Earth every minute, geographers use incredible tools to portray spatial patterns and processes."

The first student to graduate with this certificate was in 2017. Since then, ten students have garnered the certificate with another ten more enrolled in the program. Oetter said career opportunities are limitless with this as a need for spatial decision-making spans across industries.

"Our graduates are winning desirable positions with public and private organizations, from the city and county level to regional and international scales. We encourage our students to apply their skills to solving local problems for nonprofits, schools and public agencies," he said. "They've done some incredible work to benefit groups like Baldwin County High School, the Oconee River Greenway and Bartram Forest."

MacKinnon has rallied a department of faculty who lean on their own expertise to guide students along their chosen academic paths. Dr. Stephanie Opperman's latest work involved creating a cookbook in the Summer of 2020, which combined her love of history and its connection to food. "Comfort Food" is filled with 140 foods and beverages from Opperman's family and friends. Recipes came from the halls of campus as well as multiple states and one international site. Opperman teaches Foodways courses as part of the new Certificate Program.

"Having the program in mind for my classes undoubtedly helped me formulate the idea for this cookbook," Opperman, associate professor of history, said. "The cookbook also definitely grew out of feeling isolated during COVID. It was a chance to stay connected to friends and family I was missing without asking too much of them."

Opperman said it was a way to preserve family and community traditions. "I would love for the cookbook to serve as a small artifact of community in this unprecedented time," she said. "It's a fun way to preserve traditions, create new ones and build/sustain community."

While the department encourages a focus on local community, history and geography students also have opportunities abroad. In 2019, MacKinnon obtained a grant to take four history students to Brussels, Belgium — where they visited a newly-renovated museum that reinterpreted its mishandling of the Congo.



Dr. Aran MacKinnon and GC students in Brussels, Belgium



Students making Phyllo in Kea, Greece

“The Royal Museum of Central Africa had a momentous task of dealing with their own history in tackling telling the history of Central Africa and steering away from what was told in the past,” said senior Cassandra Gill, who attended the trip in fall of 2019.

Gill said it was eye-opening to see how museums deal with difficult pasts. It was integral information for Gill, who wants to become a museum curator.

“The most important thing is this trip helped me come to terms with just how complex history is, and one of the best spaces for these discussions of history is in museums.”

The department also boasts two original, faculty-led study abroad programs that offer in-depth regional knowledge and perspective. One of these is an interdisciplinary, transnational tour of Paris, France and Amsterdam with Drs. Stephen Auerbach, professor of history, and Elissa Auerbach, professor of art. For more than five years, the husband-wife duo has taken students to study art and history, offering site-specific content knowledge of the locations they visit. Original research is an important aspect of the program. A month prior to leaving, students take a pre-trip course, reading scholarly articles and books. They write research papers on a particular work of art or architecture. This knowledge is enhanced with on-site learning. Then, students finish projects with final presentations at historical sites.

“Students often give presentations with strangers gathered around for what they most likely think is a free guided tour,”

Stephen said. “Study abroad is a transformative experience by nature. We try to push that experience to its limit in the short time we have our students overseas.”

Pascoe leads the other study abroad, Mediterranean History and Culture through Foodways. Students venture into restaurants, markets, cooking schools, factories and companies involved in food production. The goal is to have students understand how Mediterranean food traditions reflect the culture and history of a region.

“Some of our students come here not quite understanding liberal arts,” said Pascoe. “It’s a more holistic way of learning and that’s what the courses reinforce. Whether in Southern Foodways or study abroad, they can look at a recipe that’s been passed down, examine it and see it as not just a family tradition but as a piece of history.”

MacKinnon said through the department’s study abroad programming, certificate offerings and faculty expertise, history and geography at Georgia College is spring boarding students into industries where their number one asset is to think critically.

“Understanding relationships in time and place are at the heart our liberal arts programs in history and geography,” said MacKinnon. “Now, it is just so exciting to see our new high impact certificate programs further enhance our graduates’ opportunities to apply liberal arts skills in careers that help better that understanding as well as the human experience.” ■





Mercato Centrale, Florence



GC group in Rome



Dr. Craig Pascoe - Pig Pickin

# COMFORT FOOD



A community cookbook of treasured recipes collected from friends and family during the 2020 global pandemic



Student presentation at Bernini's Fountain in Rome





Dennis Parmley, retired emeritus professor, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences

## Prehistoric shark named after retired Biological and Environmental Sciences professor

Dr. Dennis Parmley's close encounter with a shark didn't happen at a crowded beach or the ocean — but in a kaolin mine in Wilkinson County.

He was never in danger. It'd been dead 35 million years.

But the shark — or rather some fossils of its teeth — recently earned Dr. Parmley the rare honor of having a prehistoric and previously unknown species named after him. The news has given Parmley and Georgia College the kind of acclaim that lasts, well, as long as the fossils themselves.

For 17 of his 30 years at Georgia College, the vertebrate paleontologist dug fossils from sediment at Hardie Mine in Gordon. Hundreds of students joined him there over the years. As did his colleague and friend, David Cicimurri, curator of natural history at South Carolina State Museum and world expert on shark fossils. Together, they found many nautical remnants showing Middle



Georgia was once a coastal region. The mine was rich in bones from whales, fish, marine snakes, crocodiles and even a leatherback sea turtle.

But it was a long, smooth shark's tooth — noted for its pair of smaller teeth on either side — that recently led Cicimurri and two other scientists to believe they'd stumbled across something new. Cicimurri and his team believe they're from an ancient ancestor of today's sand tiger shark, long extinct, and never before identified by modern science.

After isolating hundreds of teeth and comparing them to contemporary sharks — the group named the species "Mennerotodus parmleyi" after Parmley to honor his contributions to vertebrate paleontology in Central Georgia. No one knows the Gordon site better or has collected more shark fossils than him, Cicimurri told Parmley.

Middle Georgia — where ocean met land in the late Eocene Age — is "definitely unique," Parmley said. During some catastrophic event, sharks and other marine animals at the mine must've been quickly covered in rock sediment often found above layers of kaolin.

"It's an important discovery," Parmley said, "because it's part of our national treasure in this state. It gives us a little window into the past — not only about the kinds of animals and diversity of animals back then, but also the ecology and what habitats there were."

Parmley retired in 2018, but not from science. He still has a tiny space in the basement of Herty Hall and keeps busy categorizing relics of 'boney fish.'

"Most people retire and ride off quietly into the sunset. Dennis appears to be going in a blaze of glory," said Indiren Pillay, chair of the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. "Although retired, he is still publishing papers, and this recognition is a fitting tribute."

Parmley collected thousands of fossilized teeth from the mine. One of his greatest accomplishments was finding the vertebra of a colubrid water snake, determined to be the oldest snake fossil of its type in the world. These and many other fossils are still stored at the university — along with teeth from *Mennerotodus parmleyi*.

Parmley estimates the shark would've been 7-to-10 feet long and, like modern sand tiger sharks, fished along the shoreline. It lived at a time when the climate and water temperatures were changing, like today. This makes discoveries like this even more significant.

By recognizing past patterns, he said, we might predict future trends.

"There was a cold snap. Then, it warmed up again. Something happened in the environment that the sharks just couldn't tolerate," he said. "There's an old saying, 'You either adjust or you migrate, or you die.' And a lot of them died. They went extinct, and others will again in the future." ■

---

***"This is an honor. It's prestige for the college too, and that's a good thing. It shows students who like this kind of work that it's still being done. It's not archaic. Some people think paleontology's a dying science. It's not, at all."***

***- Dr. Dennis Parmley***

---

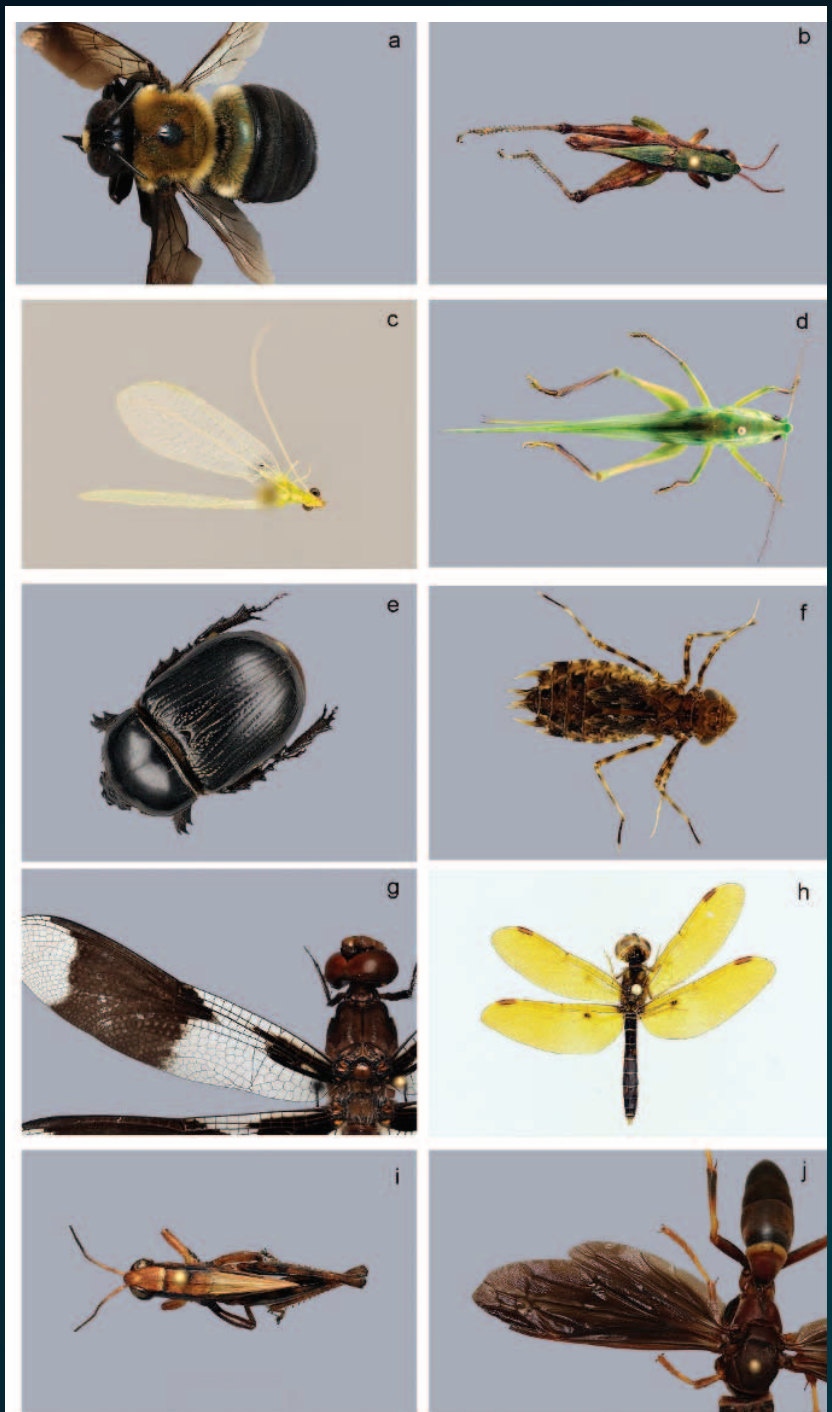


Shark teeth from the new species *Mennerotodus parmleyi* in storage at the William P. Wall Museum of Natural History, Georgia College.

# Technology gives biology students a deeper look into world of small organisms

A Student Technology Fee Grant, awarded to Assistant Professor Dr. Kristine White, has helped modern technology make its way into White's General Entomology course in the fall 2020. In addition to learning traditional collection and identification methods, students in the class are gaining experience using modern technology that is frequently used by experts studying insects and other small organisms. A portable macro-rail imaging system is being used by the students both at the Lake Laurel Biological Station and in Herty Hall. The system bypasses the need for a microscope to create stacked images that provide enough detail to identify species based on minute characteristics, without extensive photography training.

The macro-rail system moves the camera minute distances, automatically focusing the camera at each step. The resulting images can be "stacked" using computer software to form a composite image that is in focus at every plane. Students will have to submit stacked images as part of their insect collection for the class. One student, who is pursuing a photography minor, is completing an honors option by creating a stacked image portfolio of the prominent insects of Milledgeville. The images shown here are the first or second attempt for each student using the macro-rail imaging system during lab session this fall. ■



Stacked images taken as part of General Entomology Fall 2020.

All images were taken with a 100 mm lens on a Canon 7Ti DSLR camera; a. Sydney Marks b. Savannah Tyler c. Adrin Free d. Trey Tharpe, e. O'Nekia Samuel, f. Annsli Hilton, g. Lindsey Wilson, h. Madeline Olliff, i. Noah Ratliffe, j. Thomas Burriss





# Inaugural Paul Coverdell Visiting Fellow brings peacebuilding expertise to campus

In fall of 2019, Inaugural Paul Coverdell Visiting Fellow Dr. Marisa Ensor joined Georgia College. Ensor is a Senior Fellow at the Institute of International Migration at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Her fall 2019 course, Conflict Analysis and Resolution, introduced students to conflict causation, management and resolution from interdisciplinary theoretical and practical perspectives. Her experience working with the United Nations in a peace-building capacity positioned her well for the purposes of the Coverdell program, which emphasizes domestic and foreign public policy issues, global democracy and peacemaking. Students in the class used problem-solving approaches to analyze and resolve real-life conflict examples.

Her public lectures and workshops focused on topics of youth in global conflict, bio-environmental security and the human and environmental consequences of conflict. The public events drew students and faculty from various disciplines, including social sciences, humanities and STEM fields. Ensor’s academic training (Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Florida) and peacebuilding and research initiatives in areas like the South Sudan and Columbia made her an invaluable mentor to numerous students who anticipate pursuit of peacebuilding careers.



---

# Using biofiction to understand what it means to live and be human

---



Michael Lackey, the 2020 Martha Daniel Newell Visiting Scholar, became fascinated by the world of biofiction nearly eight years ago upon picking up a copy of Jay Parini's "Benjamin's Crossing."

The novel, written about the famous scholar and literary critic Walter Benjamin, is written in the genre of biofiction that names its protagonist after an actual historical figure.

"My students absolutely love biofiction," said Lackey, who teaches at the University of Minnesota Morris. "In fact, at the end of every biofiction course I have taught, students have asked me to recommend biographical novels for them to read. This is precisely what we professors want for our students — for them

to be so excited about learning that they will read literature on their own."

Lackey saw the response from his own students in Minnesota and was curious if other students find the genre as enthralling. He applied for the Martha Daniel Newell Visiting Scholar and his suspicions were confirmed. "My Georgia College students were extremely enthusiastic about biofiction," he said.

In his spring semester, his vision was to have students do public interviews with famous biographical novelists Joanna Scott and Lance Olsen. In February, two students interviewed Scott at an event titled Feminist Biofiction. Scott had dinner with the two students that interviewed her, met with prospective writers to give them suggestions about grants and fellowships, and even gave advice on authoring publishable fiction.

Unfortunately, the disruption caused by COVID-19 cancelled the Olsen interview. However, two students were able to conduct a valuable email interview with Olsen over the course of the semester.



"My teaching is about empowering students; and giving students the opportunity to work closely with famous authors and preparing them to engage professionally with intellectuals enables them to understand how they can contribute to the world of literature and thought," said Lackey.

Lackey remarked that the purpose of the genre is to give readers a deeper look into the complexities of the life surrounding historical figures — one that isn't always recorded in the history books.

"Readers don't go to biofiction to get an accurate portrait of someone like Walter Benjamin; rather, they read such works in order to understand what it means to be human and how we live," he said.

Closely tied to Lackey's work is a focus on social justice. Lackey notes Charles Johnson's novel "Dreamer" as being a prime example of how the two can be closely tied.

In "Dreamer," Johnson explores Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s support of socialism and how it affected his choices to mobilize a movement.

According to Lackey, "what emerges in the pages of 'Dreamer,' then, is an extremely complex man: a King who had to sacrifice some of his ideals for the sake of reaching a larger audience, and a man who was never really certain whether he succeeded or failed."

Lackey reflected that his biggest takeaway from his time at Georgia College has been the extraordinary students he met.

He said, "I am immensely grateful to Martha Daniel Newell for making it possible for me to teach and learn from such smart and motivated students, like the ones I met during my semester on this campus." ■

## Creative Writing Program Highlights

GC's Creative Writing Program's 2020-2021 Virtual Visiting Writer Series is planning the African Writers Festival, featuring 12 writers from the African Diaspora (online Feb. 26-27, 2021)

### The MFA program collaborates with Allied Arts

Dr. Kerry Neville is the facilitator and organizer of Write Space, a Community Writing Workshop, in partnership with Allied Arts.

"The mission of this writers workshop is to nurture all writers, regardless of style and genre, so we can achieve our goals. We will spend most of each session writing (if needed, we will have writing prompts), sharing our writing with each other (but no pressure to share if you'd rather keep it private) and discussing the writing process and writing roadblocks." This workshop meets weekly, is free of charge, and we've been meeting throughout the pandemic online.

Dr. Kerry Neville and Allied Arts organized the October Saturday Writers Workshop Series with GC Creative Writing MFA Faculty.

On Nov. 7, graduate students from Neville's Creative Writing Pedagogy Course will be participating in a free Community Writing Workshop Festival, offering a series of mini-writing workshops for K-100+ in conjunction with Allied Arts.

# MFA Faculty News

---



## Dr. Kerry Neville

In June, **Dr. Kerry Neville**, participated in Livestream event, "Narrative 4's 'A Narrative for Limerick' Storytelling Event in partnership with Narrative 4 (a global network of educators, students and artists who use art and storytelling to build empathy between students while equipping them to improve their communities and the world) and the Limerick Post.

On Sept. 18, Neville virtually participated in WritePace Limerick's "Readings from the (Shannon) River," Culture Night Ireland, 2020.

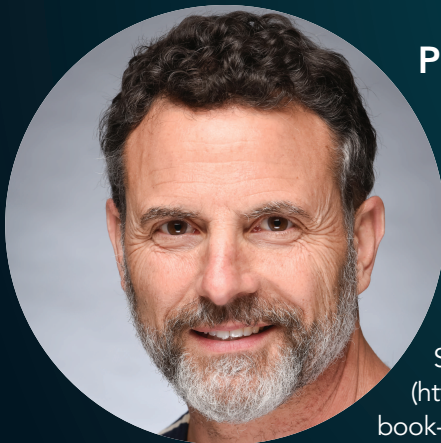


## Dr. Chika Unigwe

Dr. Chika Unigwe participated on an online panel event with two other authors from the University of London.

On Sept. 30 Unigwe was a guest speaker at the Pan African Writers Association (PAWA)(Online Literature Series).

Unigwe was also a judge for the Institute for Immigration Research New American Voices Award, <https://fallforthebook.org/nav2020ceremony/>



## Peter Selgin

Professor Peter Selgin was interviewed by Roz Morris, "Memoir: How We Write About Ourselves."

Selgin's first three of a series of essays on obscure and neglected writers published in the journal "CRAFT: Exploring the Art of Fiction: An Extremely Disorganized Life," about the life and work of Japanese novelist Osamu Dasai; "Master of the Touching Detail," about French novelist Emmanuel Bove, and "More than Mere Oblivion," about Scottish-Italian author Alexander Trocchi and his autobiographical novel "Cain's Book" in (<https://www.craftliterary.com/>). Two other essays — one about Gabriel D'Annunzio and his book-length prose-poem "Notturmo," the other about Marcelle Sauvageot and her uncategorizable short masterpiece "Commentary," are forthcoming for the same journal.

Selgin's essay "A Matter of Perspective" was just published in "Transformations," a new journal of narrative nonfiction co-sponsored by the Arizona State University and the Los Angeles Review of Books.

Selgin's novel "Duplicity" was among five finalists selected from over 300 entries by judge Christy Sitwell for the 2020 Elixir Press Fiction Award. The novel's first chapter was also a finalist for the CRAFT First Chapter Contest. "Duplicity" has been accepted for publication by Serving House Books and is slated to appear before the end of the year.

Netflix Producer David Nichols, his novelist and screenwriter brother Peter Nichols, and Selgin are collaborating on a series proposal for Netflix based on a speculative novel.



# Communication lecturer podcast featured on London radio station

"The Chad Whittle Podcast," a podcast hosted and produced by Georgia College Department of Communication Lecturer Dr. Chad Whittle, aired for a week in July on London's Podcast Radio.

According to the radio station's website, Podcast Radio "showcases fantastic podcasts to the world. From the weirdest to the most wonderful, the biggest and the best, to the exciting and unheard gems awaiting your discovery."

On his podcast, Whittle is joined by media professionals to discuss the latest technology developments, their careers, how technology is changing their field and more. Past notable guests on the show includes James Cridland, editor of Podnews; Brodie Lawson, on-camera host for the Canadian Football League; Jeff Ehling, reporter at KTRK ABC 13 Houston; Seth Emerson, staff writer for The Athletic; and Michael Harrison of "Talkers."



To find out more about Whittle and to listen to the podcast, visit [chadwhittle.com](http://chadwhittle.com). ■

---

# Sociology students focus on community engagement



Eryn Viscarra's GC1Y Social Problems course conducted their last in-person story time at Mary Vinson Library in spring 2020; the story time subject was disability acceptance.

Lecturer of Sociology Eryn Viscarra partnered with Communication Professor Angela Criscoe for Viscarra's Fundamentals of Sociology course in spring 2020. Students created a web series called "Sociology in a Minute," where they explained sociological concepts like white privilege, heteronormativity, drag and toxic masculinity in a minute. They worked with mass communication students to film, edit and produce the show. It was uploaded to Facebook as a GC Today web series. For the first part of the semester, they collaborated face-to-face, but they had to adapt to the coronavirus quarantine mid-way through the project and recorded the rest of the episodes virtually.

Typically, Viscarra's GC1Y students partner with Communities In Schools and the Mary Vinson Library to do story times on different social issues such as diversity and inclusion, bullying, body image, etc. Since the coronavirus and social distancing did not allow them to go into classrooms this semester, the students will create virtual story times for children on the same issues and will upload their video story times to a YouTube channel. The students maintain their collaboration with mass communication practicum students to produce the videos and partner with Communities in Schools to share them with the Early Learning Center preschool students. Check out the YouTube channel — Bobcat Buddies Story Time, for more information. ■

# Making music in the age of COVID-19



## “How are you going to do band online?”

It’s the question many band directors have heard since the onset of the pandemic. Where some might see obstacles, however, Georgia College Director of Band Activities Cliff Towner saw new ways to learn.

With both the GC Wind Symphony and Jazz Band being moved online, Towner found platforms to allow his students to keep making music together. Live rehearsals are held on Zoom, and students submit periodic playing samples on Flipgrid so Towner can provide individual feedback. Both ensembles are also using Soundtrap, an online recording studio that allows each musician to record their part in tracks that can then be put together as a single ensemble recording. Program tools allow for blending of musical voices and added effects such as reverb. The end result for each ensemble will be a virtual concert featuring all of the pieces recorded on Soundtrap.

Towner admits that the new format has come with a learning curve. Latency can create minor delays in the audio of the live Zoom rehearsals, so he has to limit how many students can be on the microphone at one time. Also, with precise musical timing being crucial to the success of putting tracks together in Soundtrap, students have had to adapt to playing with a metronome. There are also challenges in maintaining tone quality when playing through a microphone. Towner has encouraged collaboration to find solutions to such challenges.

“I’m letting ideas flow inside the Zoom sessions from the students that are having success, and hopefully that will help others have success,” said Towner.

One such student is senior music education major Sarah Griffin. Griffin has already been experimenting with Soundtrap for a couple of years, and she shares troubleshooting tips with other students to help them





with the platform. While she admits that the virtual setting has made it difficult for the ensemble members to replicate the nuances that come with performing side-by-side, she is excited by the new skills she can take from the experience.

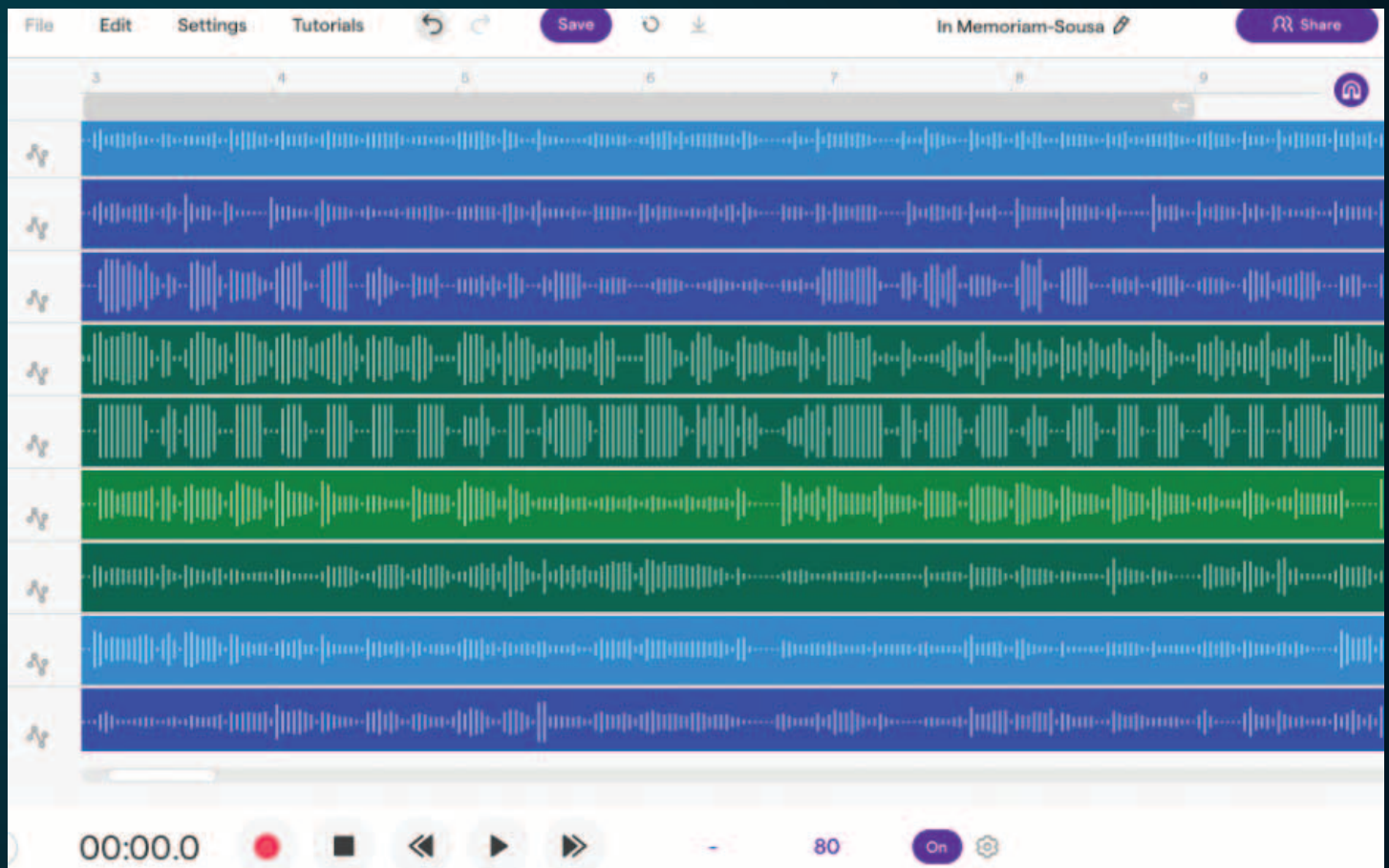
“I think my experiences will allow for me to enter my field with a more inquisitive mind, adaptable teaching style and a newly-defined sense of musicianship,” said Griffin.

Sophomore economics and mathematics major Max Harley plays in both ensembles as well. He has found it necessary to carve out more time outside of class for his musicianship.

“It is teaching me more discipline as a musician and helping me to develop enhanced practice habits,” said Harley.

Towner says maintaining a focus on the positive has been crucial to the ensembles’ progress. He knows that for some musicians, it is challenging to play solo on the microphone in rehearsal, but he sees the necessary self-reliance of the virtual setting paying off by creating an environment where all ensemble members share equal responsibility in making the final product come together.

“My hope is that every musician in the ensemble, though frustrated at times, is going to get stronger individually,” said Towner. ■



Soundtrap allows musicians to record individual tracks that can be blended together into one ensemble recording.

# Philosophy, Religion and Liberal Arts

## FACULTY FEATURES

### Three Books in As Many Years



Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Juli Gittinger may have a heavy course load, but that hasn't stopped her from diligently researching and writing about the things she loves. In three years, Gittinger has published two original manuscripts and co-edited a volume for which she also wrote the introduction. Her first book, "Hinduism and Hindu Nationalism Online" (Routledge 2018), was the first book in her field to comprehensively address the volatile discourse



of Hindu “authenticity” as nationalist groups in India take to social media and other digital spaces to effectively sway global perceptions of Hinduism. Her book has sold widely and even gathered the attention of the U.S. State Department officials, who invited her to Washington, D.C. in 2019 to speak to security and intelligence analysts who work in South Asia.

Her second book, “Personhood in Science Fiction: religious and philosophical concerns” (Palgrave-Macmillan 2019), engages a wide range of popular culture texts including novels, television and film. As a self-professed “nerd,” she explores ideas of personhood and human rights as represented through alien-others, artificial intelligence, transhumanism and other speculative sci-fi narratives. Continuing that affection for science fiction, she curated a volume with a friend on “Theology and Westworld” (Lexington Books, 2020) which addresses the HBO series and the numerous religious tropes the show has to offer.

Although the pandemic has interrupted her disciplined writing schedule, she has plans for a third book which she hopes to finish in 2021. ■

## **PALS faculty work for social change through their publications**

In spring 2020, Dr. James Winchester, professor of philosophy, published “Refugees in an Age of Anger,” in “Eco-ethica,” an annual journal that presents work in several languages from international symposia in the field of eco-ethics. “Eco-ethica” is the Latin name for the ethics of the human world newly enlarged by technology and culture. In this paper, Winchester argues that the refugee crises in Europe and along the southern border of the United States are the direct result of colonial and neo-colonial politics. The nations that have caused the problems, therefore, have a moral responsibility first to accept refugees and then to work to fix the problems they created so that the refugees can return home. He also argues that the problems people in the industrialized world are facing are often directly tied to the problems that are making refugees flee. Furthermore, he argues, there are good reasons to think that Western nations can accept more refugees without creating a

xenophobic backlash if they work to address the problems that their own citizens are facing.



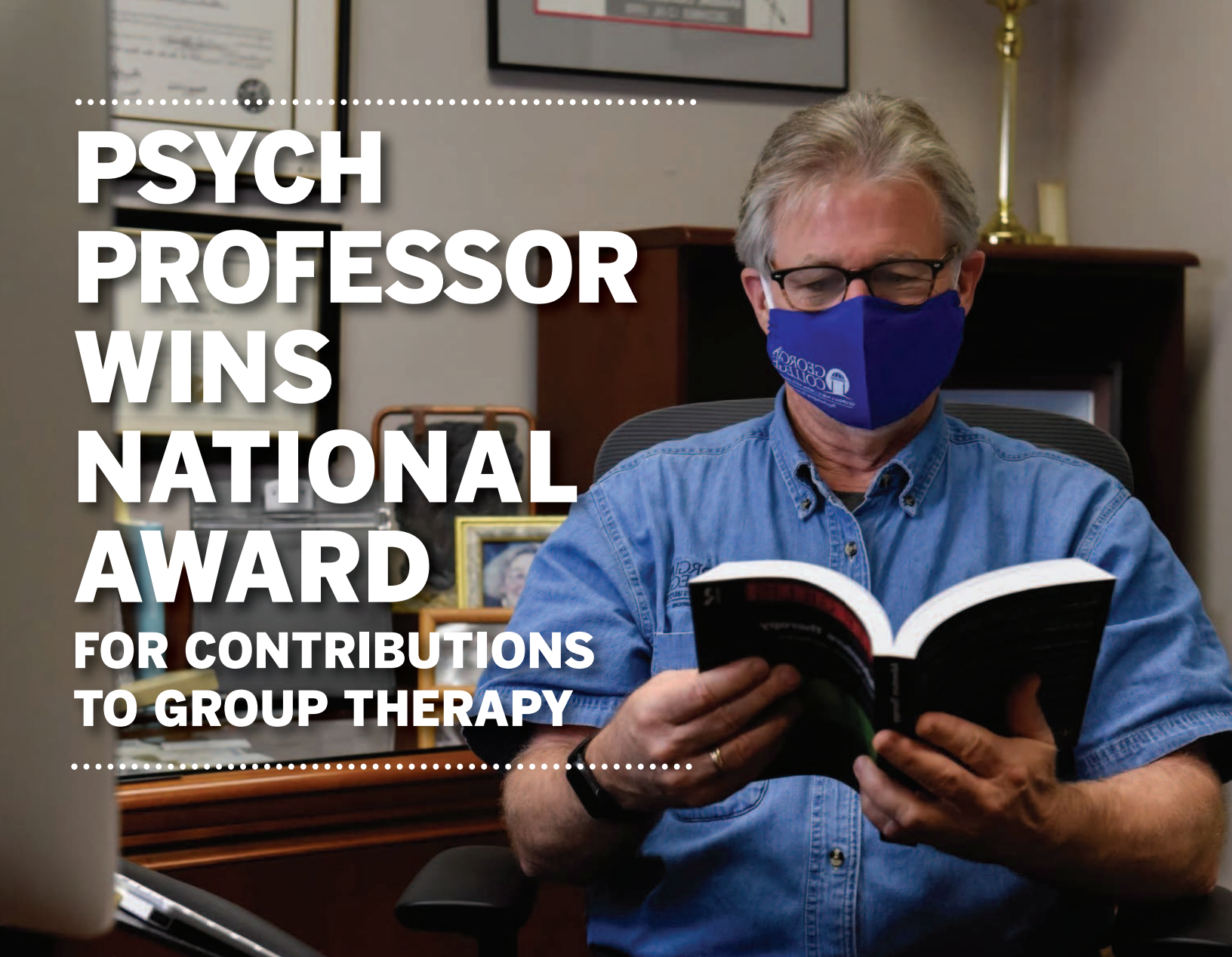
In fall 2020, Dr. Brooke Rudow, lecturer of philosophy, contributed to a special issue of “Radical Philosophy Review on Climate Change.” Her article, “Environmental Ignorance,” explores the relationship between ignorance about the

environment and race-based ignorance. She argues that both climate change denial and the failure to take up responsibility in the face of climate change (even when one believes in human-caused climate change) are largely caused by pervasive and pernicious environmental ignorance. Her conception of environmental ignorance is analogous to and overlapping with Charles Mills’ “white ignorance,” though solutions to these forms of ignorance are vastly different.



Dr. Sunita Manian’s, chair of the Department of Philosophy and Liberal Studies, article titled “I resent society’s irrational fear of sex: An intersectional inquiry into youth sexuality in two Indian States,” was published in the journal “Sexualities” in October

2020 (it was previously published online in Fall 2019). Based on ethnographic research the article investigated attitudes about sex, sexuality and sexual pleasure, as well as awareness regarding reproductive and sexual health among Indian youth. The article underscores the ethical and public health implications of withholding information about sex and sexuality from youth in India against a backdrop of a sea change in the last few decades brought about by economic liberalization, rapid commercialization and consumerism, which has in turn been accompanied by changes in sexual mores especially among youth in India. ■



# PSYCH PROFESSOR WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO GROUP THERAPY

Many people are tempted to Google their own names.

If H.L. Lee Gillis did that, he'd find more than 1.6 million hits directly connected to his work in psychology — a fitting legacy of his many years researching group psychotherapy and adventure therapy.

It's no wonder, then, Dr. Gillis was nationally recognized by the Society of Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy, Division 49, of the American Psychological Association (APA). He was recently presented with APA's "2020 Arthur Teicher Group Psychologist of the Year Award" which honors important contributions to knowledge of group behavior.

"For me personally, it's a matter of having adventure therapy recognized by a national organization. This is a big deal. I was honored just to be nominated," Gillis said.

"There's an acknowledgment there that's been really powerful," he added. "On the Division 49 board, I've gotten to meet and work alongside people I respect. I had read their publications. Great scholars. Great academics. Making those connections through the years was an avenue to getting our work published in higher-tiered journals."

Gillis has been a professor of psychology at Georgia College since 1986 and department chair for the past





15 years. His journey to “mindful group adventure therapy” began at age 10, when he started attending summer camp. Gillis worked as a camp counselor through the 1970s, guiding youth in small-group activities.

He got his first taste of psychology at Davidson College in North Carolina and became involved with a Wilderness Instructors course in Blairsville, Georgia. It introduced Gillis to enterprises like “trust falls” and 12-foot rappelling walls. During a summer course on abnormal psychology, he helped a psychiatrist conduct rock climbing with male adolescents. It was there, Gillis noticed a peculiar change. Patients, who wouldn’t ordinarily talk and answer questions, were suddenly opening up.

“Something happened when they started climbing. The conversations were different,” Gillis said. “I’ve essentially been chasing that my whole career. What was it? What made the difference? Was it the risk, the excitement, the fear? Being able to accomplish something they thought they couldn’t do?”

Over the years, he’s won numerous honors, including Georgia College’s “Distinguished Professor Award” in 1993. Gillis co-authored three books, multiple textbook chapters and a copious number of publications. He’s given over a dozen keynote addresses and nearly 145 professional presentations. He helped make training videos, as well. All revolved

around wilderness groups and adventure therapy. In fact, Gillis was among the first to write on this subject and co-authored “Adventure Therapy: Theory, Research and Practice.” He’s also been a board member, fellow and past president of APA’s Division 49. Gillis has taught Georgia College courses on group dynamics, interpersonal relationships and personality theory, as well as senior seminars in adventure therapy and teamwork.

A couple dozen students have worked in Gillis’ adventure therapy lab — about seven per semester. They analyze data from the Canadian organization, Enviros, and its “Shunda Creek” program in Alberta, Canada. The 12-week program treats young men with substance abuse disorder. Students use data from biweekly questionnaires to determine how wilderness-based activities lead to improved self-worth and recovery. Treatment groups go camping, canoeing, hiking, biking and rock climbing — but Gillis said what makes the therapy powerful is “intentionally connecting” each activity directly to issues young adults are experiencing.

“That’s what I’m working towards with my students too. They’re problem-solving,” Gillis said. “It’s learning, instead of lecturing. This develops trust and makes it psychologically safe for students to be themselves and share with each other.” ■







## GC costume designer sews medical masks for health care workers

Doing her part by staying at home didn't seem like enough. Cathleen O'Neal wanted to do more to help her neighbors and the world get through the COVID-19 crisis.

As Georgia College's Costume Supervisor — charged with making costumes for productions performed by the department of theatre — O'Neal put her sewing skills to good use. In less than a week, she constructed and donated 30 surgical and N-95 masks for hospitals in Atlanta. She went on to donate 110 surgical and N-95 face covers for Atlanta area hospitals and 30 N-95 face masks to meet a critical need at Eatonton Health & Rehabilitation nursing home.

She found out about the nursing home shortage from Shannon Blair, a 2018 graduate of Georgia College, who received her master's in criminal justice in May. Blair is the

home's social service director, charged with the "mental wellness" of 78 residents.

Since COVID-19, the nursing home was experiencing a shortage of protective masks for its nurses and staff. Blair had worn the same mask all week.

"The struggle for protection is everywhere, but this has given our facility one less worry in the middle of the crisis," Blair said. "Many people think about hospitals, but they forget the nursing homes are struggling too."

On March 25, O'Neal joined a rapidly growing Facebook group called, "Sewing Masks for Area Hospitals COVID-19-Atlanta." It began in Early March with three women, who wanted to do more. Quickly, it'd grown to more than 6,000



volunteers. The group has donated more than 6,000 masks, and health care facilities like The Children's Hospital of Atlanta and called for more.

It takes about 10 minutes for O'Neal to make one pleated, surgical mask. About 50 surgical masks can be sewn in a day without breaks. The N-95s are more involved with wired pockets around the nose that hold filters.

O'Neal was quick to find a way to help in the coronavirus crisis. She also acted fast to rearrange the final project for her Intro to Costume class.

Some students don't have sewing machines at home, so O'Neal was afraid she'd have to cancel the last assignment: making a full garment. Students were going to use commercial patterns to make dresses for young girls in developing countries. Then O'Neal noticed the nonprofit, "Dress a Girl Around the World," allows for easier T-shirt dresses to be constructed by hand.

She sent students packets with all the materials they need for the dress, which attaches a rectangle of fabric as a skirt to a child's T-shirt. O'Neal made a video tutorial for students to follow, so they didn't feel "overwhelmed." ■

---

## Pandemic doesn't stop GC theatre



Despite the pandemic requiring everyone to work from home from March through July 2020, Dr. Karen Berman, chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance, worked to have the department produce films of short plays created by current students and recent alumni to keep theatre active.

"Theatre is necessary in times of crisis," Berman said "and we want to encourage artists to create original works."

Berman and two 2020 graduates of the program, Alexander Billmayer and Chandler Stephenson, worked together to create a YouTube series of short new plays on Zoom. Billmayer had numerous leading roles here at Georgia College including Bottom in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and Cliff Bradshaw in "Cabaret." Stephenson also had a number of lead roles including Ram Sweeney in "Heathers," and he directed "Brilliant Traces" here at Georgia Colleges as his senior capstone.

The first film that premiered on You Tube on June 23, 2020, was a film of a short play, "Sweatshirt," written by Billmayer and performed by him, Stephenson and senior theatre major Claire Hemenway, who starred as Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." This humorous play was followed by another short play, "Egg," written by Stephenson and performed by him, Billmayer, and senior theatre major Erden Mohl. Mohl starred as Veronica Sawyer in "Heathers" and as Romola De Polzsky in "Ballet Russes." The team completed one more film titled "A Liar and a Thief" that starred theatre major alum Jeremy Colwell and theatre minor alum Will Anderson.

The plays were a big success and allowed the department to continue to bring theatre to audiences virtually during the summer of this pandemic. The team currently is working on a film of the short play "Dear Mr. White Man – an Open Letter from a Sista Dealing with Heartbreak and Rage" by African-American playwright Afua Boahene.


In the dual pandemic of COVID-19 and racism, Berman also worked with theatre minor and communication major Mason Baxter to create a film of commentary by students on Black Lives Matter. Baxter completed the film, titled "Black Lives Matter," late this summer. The film included the personal stories on the topic of Black Lives Matter from theatre major Priya Hemphill and theatre minor David Wolmack. Two recent theatre alumni Kayla Warfield and Cedric Norris Jr. also appeared on camera with a postscript by theatre alumna Candiss Moss.

We are proud of our students and alumni, who refused to allow the pandemic to slow down creativity and inventing new works for audiences. ■

# **PHYSICS PROFESSOR GARNERS NATIONAL AWARDS**







**G**eorgia College Physics Professor Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge has been named a 2020 Fellow of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSoTL). He was one of nine educators — and the only U.S. applicant — to receive the prestigious lifetime award.

“This is a very competitive international fellowship and a great honor. I think it speaks highly of both Dr. Mahabaduge’s hard work and Georgia College’s commitment to excellence in teaching and learning,” said Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost for Transformative Learning Experiences.

Dr. Eric Tenbus, dean of the College of Art and Sciences, offered his congratulations too, saying, “What a fantastic honor! It’s a wonderful reflection of Dr. Mahabaduge’s commitment to undergraduate education and teaching excellence.”

Mahabaduge has secured several fellowships since joining Georgia College in 2016. That year, he was named a Russell Library Faculty Fellow. He moved from the university level to get a SoTL Fellowship with the University System of Georgia (USG) in 2017 and participated in the Governor’s Teaching Fellows Program at the University of Georgia in 2019.

Earlier this year, Mahabaduge was also the 2020 recipient of the USG’s Board of Regents Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award — bestowed for “a strong commitment to teaching and student success.”

Being named an ISSoTL Fellow is a lifetime title. Fellows are expected to impact the scholarship of teaching and learning at local, regional, national and international levels — demonstrating a particular commitment to mentoring emerging and junior scholars. They also support the development of emerging regions.

Mahabaduge was a prime candidate, due to his willingness to engage students in his own solar cell research and advocate in the community. He started an annual Renewable Energy Day for local elementary students and, last summer, traveled to India to teach Tibetan monks about physics. Mahabaduge has also connected his physics classes with university students from his home country, Sri Lanka.

“This international scope and diverse perspective on higher education will definitely benefit me to grow as a professor,” Mahabaduge said. “I can bring in successful teaching strategies used by educators around the world to my classroom that will benefit our students.” ■

STUDENT NEWS



**DANCER USES**

**NOFEMANI**

**TO INSPIRE,  
TEACH AND HEAL**



Senior Alecea Housworth's whole outlook on life has changed since becoming a rhetoric major and learning the art of persuasion.

But it's her minor in dance that helps her convey meaning in ways words cannot.

The Covington, Georgia, resident recently used dance to express her feelings on current events. Using screen-dance skills learned in "Modern Workshop" class — Housworth choreographed and produced a polished video supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. The unassigned project acknowledges her feelings about inequality and injustices she feels as an African-American.

"I want the video to reach the masses and let people know: Enough is enough. We can no longer say nothing. It's time to rise up and make a change. If we stand for nothing," she said, "we will fall for anything."



Being a student at Georgia College means having an open mind and being ready to be challenged, Housworth said. Her professors and dance instructors were always caring and supportive. Their encouragement strengthened her confidence, enabling her

to step forward and take a chance. College helped her tackle hard topics like race and inequality.

Housworth created the dance video to acknowledge racial strife and promote healing in the Black community. In it, she is joined by her sister, Elaina Housworth, and senior biology major Jada Moore. Dance instructor Natalie King consulted and King's husband, Michael Crews, did the videography. It's filmed against familiar backdrops in Baldwin County, as well as Andalusia and Georgia's Old Governor's Mansion.

The work, entitled "Now is the Time," is a candidate to represent Georgia College in film at the American College Dance Association conference in the spring.

"Alecea is an exceptional artist," said King. "She creates smart and entertaining works that make audience members feel and think. Her movement moves. Our younger students in the GC Community Dance Program really look up to her when she teaches and performs."

Dance instills discipline and control, Housworth said. She's learned to communicate through body movement and use her surroundings. She does jazz, hip hop, ballet, modern, African and West African dance, tap and pointe.



For this project, however, Housworth wanted to do more than just dance. Videotaping it ensured her message would have a platform to reach more people.

She chose the song "Stand Up" by Cynthia Erivo, because it made her soul "cry." It sounds like a song that might've been sung in the fields by those who were enslaved. But she said it's also an "alarming call to freedom."

"My main objective is that minds, hearts and souls be moved — that we may also change mindsets and transform culture," she said. "Now is the time for justice. Now is the time for equality. Now is the time for peace. Now is the time for unity."

She's been part of the GC Community Dance Program and dance group "Catastrophic" for three years. During her time at Georgia College, Housworth has also been involved in intramural ultimate frisbee and flag football. She's participated in the Black Student Alliance and Community Council. Both groups help African-American students adapt to life on campus. Housworth spent eight years with Hosea Helps, as well. It's a community service organization in Atlanta that clothes, feeds and assists the homeless.

She's "definitely grown during college" and advises students coming after her to be unafraid and adapt to change. Her years here helped Housworth know herself better and see clearly where she's going.

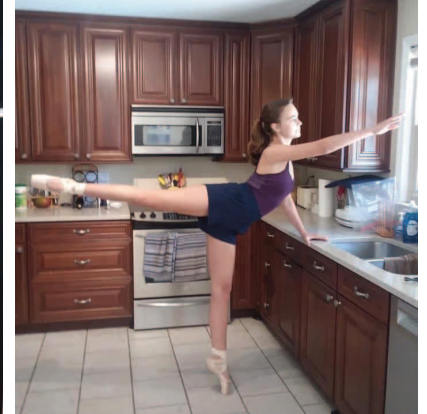
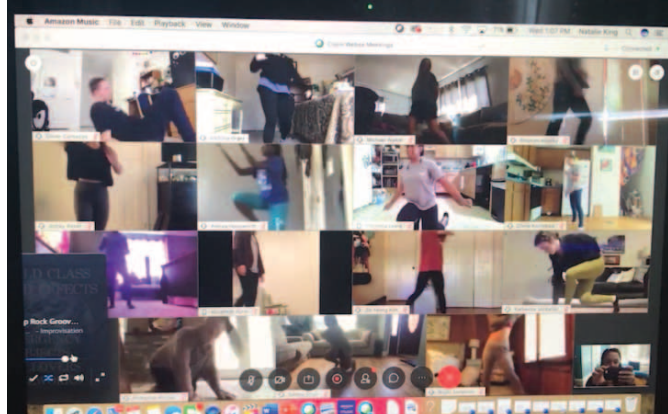
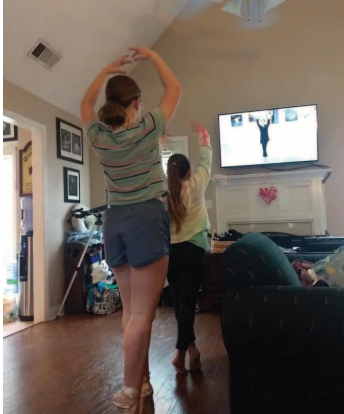
She hasn't decided exactly what she'll do in the future. But Housworth knows it'll include dance — either in her own studio or with a dance company. She hopes to travel the world and explore different cultures, as well.

Mostly, she wants to spread unity.

To view Housworth's YouTube video, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRHrrm8-WgA&feature=youtu.be> ■

# Distance dancing: GC dancers find a way to keep moving

Student instructors from dance pedagogy used online tutorials to continue teaching their young community pupils in the Georgia College Community Dance program during the spring semester. ■



## Class of 2024: Pursuing two passions at Georgia College

Nicole Snyder has two passions — dance and chemistry. The Marietta-based first-year student started dancing at age four, and, through the years, she perfected her talent, performing as the Sugarplum Fairy in the Nutcracker and in competitive dance throughout Georgia. Snyder plans to major in chemistry and minor in dance at Georgia College.

"From my very first dance class, I knew I was right where I belonged," she said. "When I'm on stage, it's as if the world completely melts away, and it's just the music, the lights and my troupe. There's just the joy that comes with doing what I love, the emotion of the piece itself and the trust in myself and my training."

Snyder competed in Fusion Regional competitions, Platinum Regionals and On-Point Regionals, as well as other competitions. Her team competed nationally every other year, and a few of her dances made it into the finals.

She decided on attending Georgia College, because of some experiences she had at the university.

"The thing that first drew me to GC was how much they emphasized that students were names, not numbers," Snyder said. "Some of my best classes in high school were the ones where the teacher was able to truly connect with the students individually, and I wanted to continue that as I moved into college."

"Then, in the spring of my junior year, I attended dance classes under Amelia Pelton and Natalie King. Watching how they connected with their students and had personal relationships with each one of them sealed the deal for me,"

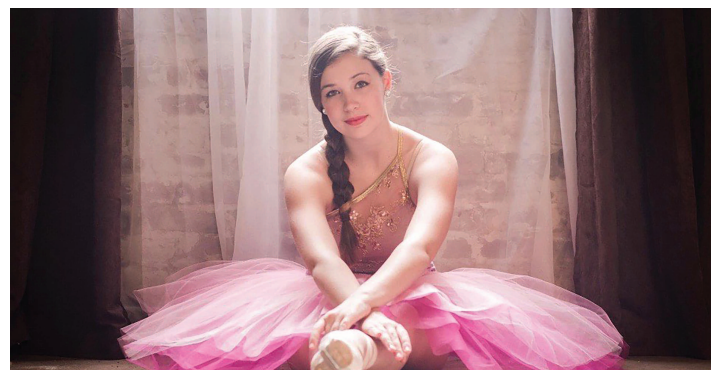
she said.

After Snyder graduates from Georgia College, she plans to pursue her Ph.D.

"With the research I have done into chemistry-related jobs, it's become very clear most jobs require at least a Ph.D. in order to climb up the ranks within the profession," Snyder said.

She would like to work in a research facility for chemistry, and in her later years, teach at either an AP class in high school or at the college level. "I'm actually not 100 percent certain which chemistry field I'd like to dive deeper into. I hope to figure that out while I'm at GC," she said.

"As for teaching, I tutored throughout high school and loved it," Snyder said. "Explaining subjects in a different way and watching the understanding in my students' eyes was incredibly satisfying. I truly cared for each student I worked with and found that tutoring came to me very easily, which made me think of teaching as an eventual career." ■





# Environmental science student named NOAA Hollings Scholar



A Georgia College environmental science major is one of only two students in the state to win a distinguished national science scholarship named after the late Senator Ernest F. Hollings, who supported ocean policy and conservation.

Junior Nadya Gutierrez of Johns Creek was recently selected as a National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration scholar (NOAA). This honor includes a two-year academic award of \$9,500, a 10-week paid summer internship at a NOAA facility and funding to present her NOAA research at two national scientific conferences.

"It's very competitive — only 123 scholarships were awarded across the country this year," said Anna Whiteside, assistant director of Georgia College's Honors Program and coordinator of its National Scholarships Office.

The scholarship was established in 2005. To be considered, college sophomores must major in a NOAA mission field such as oceanic,

environmental, biological and atmospheric sciences, math, engineering, remote sensing technology, physical sciences, social sciences or teacher education.

Gutierrez was referred to the National Scholarship Office by one of her professors, Dr. Allison VandeVoort. She applied, excited by the chance to work with professionals in careers she dreams of joining.

"It's such an honor to be selected for this scholarship," Gutierrez said. "I am very humbled and grateful for such an amazing opportunity. It will help me in so many ways by giving me experience in conducting and presenting research."

Her application stood out, she thinks, because of Georgia College's commitment to undergraduate research. Last year, Gutierrez explored the infrastructure of dams and how they affect macroinvertebrates populations. Most students wouldn't begin such study until junior year, she said.

Gutierrez also worked as a supplemental instructor leader at the Learning Center for Biology and Ecology. This tutoring experience — as well as her geology minor and high school involvement at national environmental science competitions — made her a well-rounded candidate.

Her hope is to get an internship that benefits the livelihood of Americans and helps her gain a deeper understanding of the world. She'd like to study population ecology in estuary ecosystems and learn how urban runoff affects different populations in natural habitats. Gutierrez hopes to present management plans that restore estuaries.

"I am very grateful for the scholarship I've been awarded," she said, "but I am more excited for the internship that comes with the program. There aren't many opportunities to conduct mentored research with professionals from federal agencies such as NOAA." ■

---

## Honors Global Literacy Residential Learning Community receives funding

Associate Professor Dr. Steven Elliott-Gower and Associate Director of Student Development in University Housing Lori Burns have received an award of \$500 from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) in support of the Honors Global Civic Literacy Residential Learning Community. The 47 first-year Honors students in the Residential Learning Community are all living on the second floor of Bell Hall, and take one of two sections of Gower's GC1Y Global Challenges class. Online instruction is supplemented by webinars, online seminars, online book discussions and documentary film screenings and discussion related to the topics of the class, which include globalization, cybersecurity, global health and global migration. ■



# Leading by example:

## Art major encourages other students to find their niche

**T**o see her leading campus tours and serving as a leadership facilitator, you'd never guess junior Maya Whipple had a shy bone in her body. With her bubbly personality and creative nature, she thrives working with others.

"Coming to college, I really wanted to explore a different side of myself. I wanted to become more outgoing, adventurous and open to trying new things," said Whipple. "So I just decided to get involved with a lot of things that could help me grow."

She jumped right in during her first year, joining the Council of Student Ambassadors — where students serve as admissions representatives and campus tour guides, as well as role models and informal mentors to prospective and new students.

"Through doing the Student Ambassador program, I applied for the summer orientation leader position. I did that last summer, and I was hoping to do it this past summer, but it didn't really work out with the pandemic," said Whipple.

She also joined the Emerging Leaders Program, now known as the Leadership Academy — a program for first-year students to begin and grow their leadership skills.

"That led into me doing the Leadership Certificate Program," said Whipple. "And this coming fall, I will be doing what is called Leadership Facilitator. Basically, I'll be helping the incoming freshmen as we advise them through Leadership Programs at Georgia College."

The staff she works with through Leadership Programs recognizes her dedication and drive to make a positive impact on the world around her.

"Maya's achievements and accomplishments in her academic and civic life are her own," said Ashley Copeland, assistant director of Leadership Programs. "Maya carved her own pathway at Georgia College, utilizing knowledge gained from her courses, resources at the university and in the Leadership Programs office to support her passion."

"She seeks to bring communities together through art and an appreciation for creativity and innovation."



Maya understands the unique link between a career and civic life and what it means to be a leader for the public good," Copeland said. "Because she extensively applies herself in her field, to studying leadership and practicing her skills through community involvement, she can and will make a difference in the lives of others."

When she's not serving and supporting others in her roles outside the classroom, the art major is usually found in Ennis Hall, pursuing what's been a passion of hers since childhood.

"I have a concentration in studio art, which is any type of hands-on physical art. I mainly do drawing, painting, photography and printmaking," she said.

"Honestly, I couldn't see myself doing anything else," said Whipple. "My mom really wanted me to do nursing or something like that, but I told her 'Mom, I do not want to be a nurse, I want to be an artist.'"

She hopes to couple her artistic skills with her leadership and entrepreneurial spirit for her future career.

"I want to go back to school to earn a master's degree in business administration because I'd like to, someday, open my own art studio," said Whipple. ■



Maya initially chose Georgia College to "be close to her family," who lives in her hometown of Gordon. After just a few short years here, she's been able to have both those familial ties and develop into a strong, independent person.

"I think I've grown, and I think a lot of that has to do with Georgia College and the opportunities I've had here," said Whipple.

Whipple understands the transition to college can be tough, but she encourages all students to overcome their apprehensions and hesitations by simply trying new things.

"I would tell them to really to find their place — whatever is going to make them feel comfortable, welcomed and engaged," said Whipple. "Just go for it. Even if you're kind of nervous about having new experiences, you never know how you'll grow into a role or what difference you'll be able to bring to an organization."

"You also never know what's going to come from an opportunity or what kind of other opportunities will come because you did this one thing. So, don't always stick to what you know. Explore different avenues, and just have fun while you're doing it."

– Maya Whipple

# Georgia College student attends National Forensics Academy Collegiate Program

Over the summer, Georgia College Master of Criminal Justice student, Dalton Skaggs, attended the National Forensics Academy Collegiate Program (NFACP). This is an excellent opportunity for students to learn about forensic science and the intricacies of crime scene investigation as well as a chance to visit an actual body farm. Another undergraduate criminal justice student, Morgan Goette, attended the program in the summer of 2019 and is currently pursuing a forensic nursing degree at Emory University.

Skaggs prepared a narrative about the experience:

"The NFACP is offered once a year during the summer semester at the Law Enforcement Innovation Center (LEIC) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee in partnership with the University of Tennessee at Martin. This three-week class is something I did as a transient student at the University of Tennessee at Martin which is in all the way in the Northeast corner of Tennessee, but the program itself is actually held in Oak Ridge which is a short drive from Knoxville. The class offers up to nine elective hours for undergraduate and graduate students. It's an on-site program where classes are held at the LEIC, but students are housed in apartments away from the LEIC with a roommate, and housing is a part of the financial fee for the class. Food is not provided. The total cost for the class is \$4,800, and I would do it over and over again if I could.

This summer was the ninth time this class has been offered, and this year the program was referred to as "NFACP Session IX." Of the nine years the class has been offered, this graduating class makes the total number of graduating students 205 from all 50 states and territories. Session IX this year consisted of 21 total students. For this session I was the only graduate student, I was the only student from Georgia College, and I was the only student from the state of Georgia.

Our instructors consisted of highly experienced staff at the LEIC, special agents from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (including GC alumni Todd Crosby), the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Minnesota HERO Center, the founder of the "Bodyfarm" Dr. Bill Bass, renowned anthropologist Dr. Arpad Vass, Dr. Melissa Muendel and many other very special guest speakers and instructors.

To explain what the "Bodyfarm" is, it's a multi-area research facility where students and scientists can study the body decomposition and anthropology of the human body under different circumstances. The bodies that are used are donated to the University of Tennessee for scientific purposes. The bodies are scanned for biological diseases and contaminants to ensure the safety of students and researchers, and the remains are respected and kept together to honor possible family requests to get their loved one's remains back from the

university. Our class spent one day at the Bodyfarm, July 30. I have two cool stories about finding a snake and scorpion while excavating our grave, and moving a dead body and placing it in an open grave at the end of the day (moving a dead body is not part of the class, but I was asked to help the staff move a dead body, and legally burying a dead person is not something you always have the chance to do in life).

To give a break down the curriculum, we were taught, practiced, studied and tested on: Crime scene management, crime scene documentation, crime scene sketching, forensic photography, impression evidence, latent fingerprint physical and chemical processing, bloodstains and adhesives, DNA identification and collection, forensic anthropology, biological profile and skeletal biology, time since death estimations, entomology, clandestine grave recovery at the Bodyfarm, shooting incident reconstruction, and bloodstain pattern analysis.

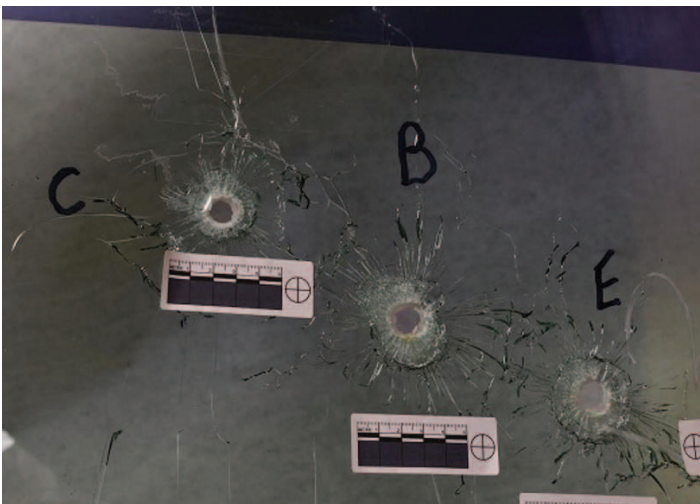
The main assignment I had to do for the class was a large portfolio assignment that consisted of over 150 photographs and 5-7 pages worth of typed material with five scholarly sources. The portfolio assignment I made was a large PowerPoint presentation, but I did not actually present it; I just submitted it for grading, and it counted for fifty percent of my final grade. Thirty percent of my grade were tests worth ten percent we had at the end of the week, and the final twenty percent was a final practical crime scene exam we had on the last day of class.

The information taught at the National Forensic Academy Collegiate Program in just three weeks was astonishing! The exclusivity of instruction from special agents, forensic experts, and doctors in anthropology was unmatched. We had hands-on experiences in areas like forensic photography, physical and chemical fingerprinting, bloodstain pattern analysis, human remains recovery at the Body Farm and more. We not only learned at the Body Farm and the UT Arboretum but we worked in the labs at the LEIC which provided a well-rounded experience of lab work and field work. For me, this course proved beyond a doubt that criminal investigations, especially crime scene, is the career path I want to pursue. On weekends we were able to explore East Tennessee with our classmates, and I personally made some friends that I still speak with daily during this experience. The NFACP not only provides you with valuable information and professional connections in the field of forensic science, but it places you in a unique position as a student and future job applicant as only 205 students have acquired this training since the NFACP's inception nine years ago. The education, expertise and experiences are well worth your time and investment. To learn more about the NFACP, you can reach out to me at [dalton.skaggs@bobcats.gcsu.edu](mailto:dalton.skaggs@bobcats.gcsu.edu). ■





Bloodstain analysis with criminal justice alumni and GBI Special Agent in Charge, Todd Crosby



Gunshot in windshield



Bodyfarm



Laser bullet path trajectory

# Two GC graduates land 2020 Fulbright scholarships

Two recent graduates — Madison Graham and Amara Tennessee — have been named Fulbright finalists, joining three other Georgia College students to receive the prestigious scholarship in recent years.

One award constitutes the university's first Fulbright for a music major and the other to a South American country. A third graduate was chosen as a Fulbright alternate.

The awards follow a windfall year for Fulbright applications. More Georgia College students than ever before, 15, applied for the coveted scholarship. Nine were named semi-finalists — another record number for the university, said Anna Whiteside, assistant director of the Honors Program and coordinator of National Scholarships.

Music graduate **Madison Graham** of Louisville, Georgia, will do an English Teaching Assistantship in the Czech Republic. He hopes to volunteer at a Basic Art School there, which is the primary venue for art education in the Czech school system. He also plans to join a Czech performing ensemble and explore the country's rich culture.

Graham wanted to return to the Czech Republic, after studying abroad there with the Georgia College Jazz Band last summer.

"I had several opportunities to observe parts of the Czech education system," he said, "particularly the approach to music education. I was impressed by the size of music programs in the country, as well as the depth of knowledge that is taught there."

After getting a master's degree, Graham hopes to work in arts education. The Fulbright will help him with diversity and a global perspective.

"As a musician," he said, "the opportunity to live in the heart of the Western music tradition is quite exciting."



Amara Tennessee

**Amara Tennessee** of Roswell, Georgia, has double degrees in public health and world languages. She'll do an

English Teaching Assistantship in Columbia, hosting a program on health behavior and attitudes. Tennessee double minored in global health studies and Latin American, Caribbean and Latino studies.

After high school, she lived in Paraguay, where she worked as a medical volunteer in a mobile vaccination clinic and cardiology and diabetes specialty center. She sees the Fulbright as an amazing opportunity to travel and share her African-American culture, while learning about Columbia.

In the future, Tennessee hopes to work in global health, reducing the incidence of chronic disease through health education and programming.



Laura Swarner

**Laura Swarner** of Buford, Georgia, has double degrees in English and theatre. As a Fulbright alternate, she could do an English

Teaching Assistantship to Bulgaria, if funding becomes available. She's passionate about storytelling and plans to use it a tool for language development.

Swarner also hopes to get her master's in scenic design and work as an artist telling stories that "are important and relevant to the modern world and help shift perspectives."

Selection for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program is rigorous. They receive about 12,000 applications a year. In the U.S., about 1,900 grants are awarded annually in all fields of study in over 140 countries. More than 360,000 Fulbright recipients have participated in the program since its inception in 1946.

Four additional Georgia College students were recipients of the Fulbright in the past 10 years. That includes Lisa Baer to Mongolia in 2012; Audrey Waits to Finland and Kevin Morris to Macedonia in 2017; and Janileyah Thompson to South Korea in 2018.

"The Fulbright Scholarship is one of the nation's most prestigious postgraduate fellowships," Whiteside said. "The fact that we have semi-finalists in a broad range of disciplines — STEM, social science, humanities and the arts — really shows the degree to which Georgia College prepares our students and graduates to compete on the national stage."

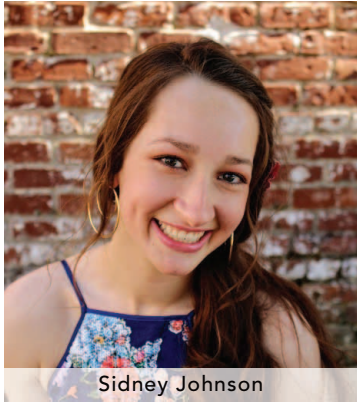
In addition to the two Fulbright finalists and alternate — another recent graduate was honored with Germany's equivalent to the Fulbright. Math and physics graduate **Cain Gantt** of Johns Creek, Georgia, received a German Academic Exchange Service (DADD) to pursue his graduate degree at the Universität Hamburg. ■



Madison Graham



# Student presents research focused on music therapy and traumatic brain injuries



Sidney Johnson

Junior music therapy major Sidney Johnson's research poster titled "Interdisciplinary Collaboration Between Music Therapy and Medical Ethnomusicology and the Perceive Impact on Individuals From Traumatic Brain Injuries" was accepted for the research poster session during the

national 2020 American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) conference Nov. 19-22, 2020. Johnson completed her research poster as a part of the Research in Music course taught by Assistant Professor Laurie Peebles.

"During summer 2019 after my freshman year, I had the opportunity to volunteer at Adam's Camp in Colorado serving as a student music therapist for children with developmental disabilities. Adam's Camp provides a combination of

treatment plans and therapy options such as speech, occupational, physical and music therapy in a summer camp-like environment," Johnson said.

Johnson said she was able to experience first-hand what it means to work across disciplines with a variety of professionals.

"The topic of medical ethnomusicology — applying music from non-Western cultures as a form of healing — has always sparked an interest. As a Spanish minor, researching music therapy and medical ethnomusicology seemed like the perfect interdisciplinary combination. Neurological music therapy is simply fascinating, so I chose to narrow my research population to clients recovering from traumatic brain injuries. As a continually evolving field, music therapy relies heavily on research, and it plays a vital role in continuing to strengthen and further develop the profession. I am honored to be presenting at the upcoming AMTA conference, and to keep researching a music therapy topic, and serving the profession and clients that hold a special place in my heart." ■

---

## ALUMNI NEWS

# Mass communication, art grad combines disciplines as a brand ambassador

Sarah Krull, '19, graduated with a bachelor's degree in mass communication and a minor in photography. Krull is currently employed by Techtronic Industries (TTi) as a Field Sales and Marketing Representative.

In her role for TTi, she manages three major tool brands in The Home Depot, which include Milwaukee, Ridgid and Ryobi tools. She is a brand ambassador for each of those brands helping consumers find solutions for all of their needs and projects. Her current position will allow for advancement into marketing and other creative applications of her education received at Georgia College. She credits her cross-disciplinary academic and professional success to the support she received from her instructors and the GC administration. ■



# Fashion guru takes studies into the heart of the industry —

## Manhattan

In the fall of 2020, alumna Sophia “Sophie” Daniel began her two-year Fashion and Textile Studies Master of Arts program at Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). FIT is a state university of New York in Manhattan, where she will study the conservation track and intern by handling a costume/textile collection. Daniel was one out of 20 chosen nationwide for this program. Her curiosity in fashion began at a young age in her father’s dry-cleaning business.

“I remember he would push me around in a buggy, and I would just look at all the cool, grown-up clothes that were there to be cleaned,” Daniel said. “This experience taught me that we must take good care of our clothes for them to stay nice, whether it’s a good pair of jeans or a 3-D printed dress by Fashion Designer Iris van Herpen.”

While attending Georgia College, Daniel was greatly influenced by Lecturer of Art Gallery and Woodshop Technician Ernesto Gómez and Art Department Chair and Professor of Art William “Bill” Fisher.

“They taught me to think three steps ahead and explain my thought process in a more articulate way,” she said. “These are just two of the thousands of spoken and unspoken lessons I learned from them. Both of them also showed me the value of myself as a student and person.”

Daniel and Co-curator Grace Calloway spent two years consistently meeting with Fisher and Gómez for their capstone project — an Exhibition: Unhindered Spirit: Embracing Imperfection by Iowa Fiber Artist Judy Bales.

Bales works with recycled and salvaged materials exploring different ways to give them new life by modifying their intended purpose. Daniel’s capstone project will help her in several academic areas at FIT.

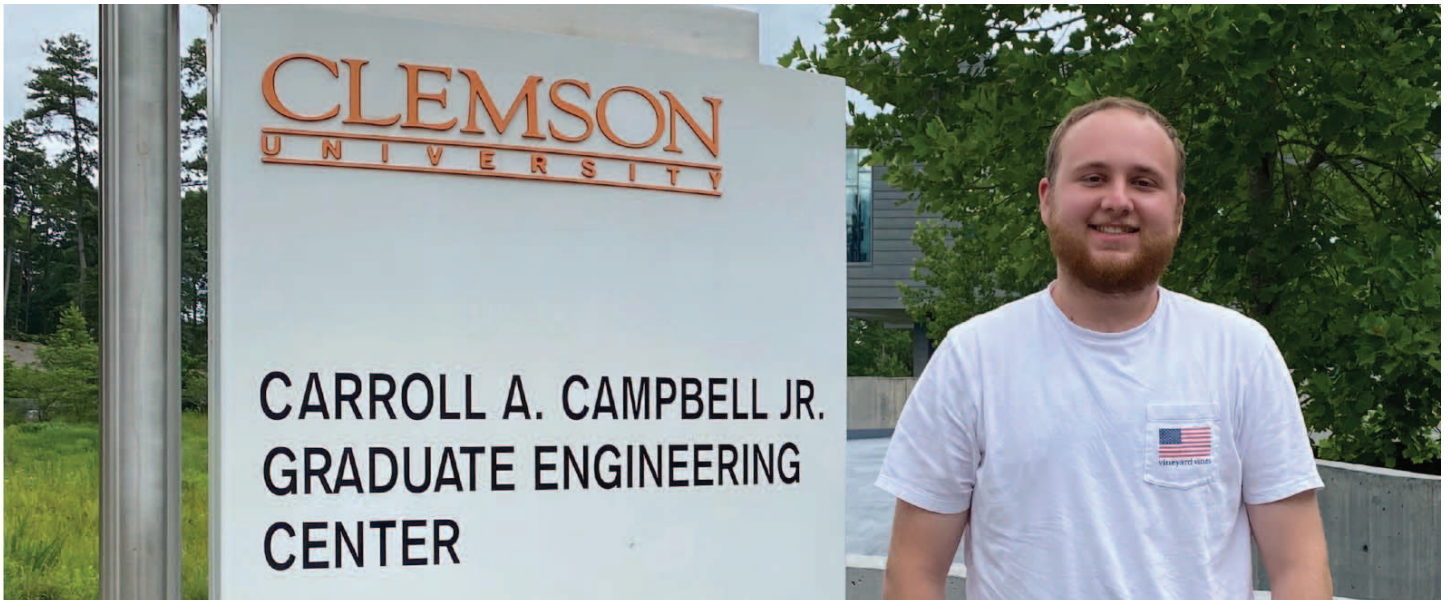
“I learned a lot from Judy Bales’ work,” she said. “I am stronger at researching specific pieces of art, installing a gallery, handling art, documenting and working in a collaborative manner. For one of my future courses, I’ll need to design an exhibition with my peers, so I’m already very familiar with this process.”

Daniel’s grateful for the various concepts she learned from many departments at Georgia College. Doing so enabled her to push out of her comfort zone. She intends to apply her independent thinking skills at FIT and in her profession.

“I will constantly preplan, research, think and rethink my ideas, then back them up with arguments to support my ideas,” she said. “I plan to always be prepared with my work and ideas, which will help me come up with creative solutions and ideas no matter where I end up. I hope to be a valuable asset in my ability to think in different ways from others and also use it in a collaborative manner.” ■







## Using automobiles to help students grasp physics

At the age of five, Zachary Wolff, '20, developed a passion for automobiles. He recalls sitting in the backseat of his mother's car, where he would peer out the window and name the makes and models of the cars driving by. As he grew older, he perused automotive manufacturers' websites to read about specific models and what made them special. Now, he will use that knowledge and what he gained at Georgia College in a prestigious Fellowship at Clemson University.

At Georgia College, Wolff served as a lab assistant for introductory physics courses. He combined his love of automobiles with physics to help students understand the lessons.

"I tried to connect many of the concepts of the labs in PHYS 1111L to the real world," he said.

Wolff came up with the idea of referencing automobiles to physics and asked the professor if he could make this happen.

"Professor Dr. Sharon Careccia allowed me to be very independent in how I assisted with instructing the labs," Wolff said. "She encouraged me to make real-world connections to help solidify the students'

understandings of the concepts. She also introduced the students to the concepts. Then, it was up to me to make sure the students correctly proceeded through the labs with the correct understanding of the overall concepts."

Wolff helped students in the lab better understand 'rotational inertia' — an object's resistance to change motion.

"The lab centered around the difference in rotational inertia between a disk and a ring," Wolff said. A disk's mass is evenly spread out over its diameter, whereas a ring's mass is concentrated over the outside edge of the ring."

"I proposed this real-world question: 'Say you had the choice of two sets of wheels and tires for your car — one with a similar rotational inertia to the disk and one with a similar rotational inertia to the ring,'" he said. "Which would you choose for your car and why?"

Most of the students, he said, made the connection that you would want a wheel and tire set with a low rotational inertia, as a low rotational inertia means it would take less

energy to get and keep those wheels and tires turning — resulting in lower fuel consumption and reduced emissions.

After graduating from Clemson University, Wolff plans to be an automotive engineer for a major automotive company. He plans to give back to the global community in terms of automotive safety.

"I will continue my research with autonomous vehicles I started at Georgia College and at Clemson, and hope to, one day, see my idea for a device that can be added to many vehicles that would enable a warning of an imminent collision and automatic braking to prevent a collision," he said.

The liberal arts experience at Georgia College allowed him to gain important skills outside of his major.

"Communication and planning were a few of the major parts that allowed me to graduate early as I would have to communicate with several parties in regards to my schedule planning and research proposal," Wolff said. "Without this communication and planning, I would not be where I am today and on the path I'm on." ■

# Liberal Arts as a Way of Life: PHILOSOPHY ALUMNI IN CHINA



Justin Markowitz at Fudan University  
(in front of a statue of Mao Zedong)

*In Fall 2018, two Philosophy majors, Bobby McCullough and Justin Markowitz, were both admitted to the MA Program in Chinese Culture and Philosophy at Fudan University, with full scholarship support. Located in Shanghai, Fudan University is one of the premier universities in China and is often referred to as the Yale of China. The following is the account of one of the two students, Justin Markowitz, about his time at Fudan University, and his timely departure from there just as the virus hit, that would later be called COVID-19.*

**By Justin Markowitz:**

I graduated from GC in December of 2016 with a degree in philosophy. I spent the next two years living in various American towns, working on a boat in

Savannah, Georgia, and as a ski instructor in Crested Butte, Colorado. The goal was to practice living far from home, to grow accustomed to a hardiness and daring requisite for journeying alone across the Pacific to a land mysterious and distant, to a new home: China.

Sept. 4, 2018, marked the date of my one-way ticket, Atlanta à Shanghai, and Sept. 6, the beginning of my 20-month EMA program in Chinese philosophy. I hugged and kissed goodbye, sat in a 777 for 14 hours, miraculously found the sole bus running across the Shanghai megalopolis to Fudan University, and arrived at my new home.

Confusion, wonder and adrenaline propelled me into a psychological twilight zone where I had to adapt, go home or keel. I learned academic, spiritual and worldly



philosophies, I wondered countless miles of streets off random subway stops, I attempted to fathom the vastness of twenty-five-million people in one city. I roamed still farther over proceeding seasons, visiting ancient sites and sublime natural monuments. Family and dear friends visited, including GC's own Huaiyu Wang, and I slowly grew to love China and Shanghai.

On Jan. 15 of 2020, I left Shanghai to see my family in America. Whispers of some mysterious, unidentified pneumonia were circulating, but no one foresaw the events to unfold. Less than ten days after my departure, China began to shut down. Recovering from jetlag with my heart caught between continents, events puzzled me. They still puzzle me.

Early 2020 I was planning for a life in China after graduating with a master's, my dorm room was full of invaluable items collected from months' worth of adventure, and I relished the prospect of a new apartment in ever more familiar Shanghai.

Today, everything has changed. A friend packed up only my most valuable possessions (a fantastic tea collection and some first edition books are missing in action), my thesis defense occurred in the depths of night on Zoom, and I couldn't return even if I wanted to.

I look back at my perceived security with a comical bitterness possible to render only from the deepest ironies experienceable. Disappointment in lost endeavors lingers, but I can will only hope for the future. No disruption keeps the adventurous soul downtrodden forever.

*Post Script: Last we heard from Justin Markowitz he is continuing to explore the world and is now working in Genoa, Italy. ■*

## Psychology alumni updates



Anastasia Kerr-German

After graduating from GC, **Anastasia Kerr-German, '14**, received her Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee Knoxville and is currently a research fellow at Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska where she serves as director of the B.E.A.R (Brain, Executive Functioning and Attention Research) lab. While at PSYC-CON this past year, Anastasia met **Hannah Pollock, '19**, who is now one of the newest research assistants in the B.E.A.R. lab. ■



Hannah Pollock



Maddie Drives

**Maddie Drives, '20**, graduate and member of Psi Chi, the psychology honors society, is working as a registered behavior technician for a company called Autism Learning Partners in Atlanta. She works with children with autism and uses different applied behavior analysis strategies to implement their intervention plans. She credits the GC psychology department with helping her advance in the workforce.

In her interview for her job, the employer indicated that they were very impressed with the research opportunities that the program provided her at the undergraduate level. She also credits both her research labs (with Psychology Professors Drs. Tsu-Ming Chiang, professor of psychology, and Kristina Dandy), as well as all her other psychology courses, for giving her an advantage by allowing her to implement the skills that she learned in class with her my sessions. ■



ARTS AND SCIENCES **NEWSLETTER**  
2020