

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

# NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2021

## Editor's Note



Welcome to the spring 2021 edition of the College of Arts and Sciences newsletter. As you can see from this edition's content, even in a pandemic our students and faculty remain deeply committed to the ideals that make

this place special. For this edition, we are pleased to feature the Department of Psychological Science.

Though Georgia College has recently been recognized nationally for its commitment to undergraduate research, it has been a defining tenet of this department for quite some time. Their faculty-mentor model in stimulating student inquiry and empiricism is inspiring — and the need for inquiry and empiricism are certainly underscored by our current reality.

Foundational to what sparks our curiosity and how we understand answers is community. A liberal arts education is indispensable in helping us realize our connectedness while preparing us for the challenges and opportunities that are inherent within it. This year has particularly challenged us to consider a community's creation, values, transformation, beneficence, and equity. This edition's interdisciplinary themes demonstrate that our questions and answers are always connected across people and place. We look to art and language to understand our global humanity. We ask science and music to sustain our human needs.

I'm particularly inspired and hopeful to know how prepared our students and faculty are to respond to the world around us. In our pandemic shift, we reaffirmed our commitment to values that ensure our difference in the world. I extend gratitude to all the students, staff, faculty, and chairs who have worked to sustain our community and to take the time to share this experience. You help us tell our story — to tell the world just how fascinating it is to be in this college and this university.

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

## Dean's Message

The Council on Undergraduate Research recently announced its two national winners for the 2020 Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments (AURA). Georgia College was a recipient, along with Utah State University, a large research university. Other past winners include Clemson and Florida State University. This preeminent accomplishment speaks to the prodigious efforts at the ground level of our faculty and students to complete research and, thus, offer our students significant, high-impact, experiential learning opportunities. For years, Georgia College has blazed a trail in this area and the College of Arts and Sciences has been a vital, if not the largest, contributor.

In this and past issues of this newsletter, you have read about innovative faculty working with students on undergraduate research projects, often resulting in conference presentations and even publications for those students. This is part of GC's DNA. It's what we do so well. Having arrived here three years ago from a public university in the Midwest, I know that the emphasis we place on undergraduate research is not the norm across higher education. It might be appreciated at other institutions but it is not prioritized and supported as it is here. That's what makes this university a special place for students to pursue their intellectual passions. That's why it's not unusual in the College of Arts and Sciences to have a student like the young man I spoke to recently on a Zoom call who is majoring in communication and minoring in philosophy. I love interesting double major or major-minor combinations like that.

The logo for the new GC Journeys program is a compass. We use a compass when exploring the world around us. I can't think of a better metaphor to describe the sometimes non-linear paths that our students take as they switch majors or add minors or certificates to their programs of study. In my opinion, higher education isn't about keeping your head down and completing a major as quickly as possible. It's about looking around, following interesting trails, and exploring the numerous intellectual options that are right before you, especially at a place like the College of Arts and Sciences at Georgia College.



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**DR. ERIC TENBUS**

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences





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COVER STORY

# PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

blazes trail for  
undergraduate research





**T**he Department of Psychological Science at Georgia College is a pioneering department of “firsts.” From professor of psychology, Dr. Euri Belle Bolton, who, in 1930, was the first Georgia College alumna to receive her Ph.D., to the first desktop computer on campus, arriving in 1985 — which was located in a psychology research lab.

In 1998, the first interdisciplinary student research conference was organized by the psychology department, highlighting the department’s already long-standing commitment to undergraduate research.

As early as the mid-1960s, and continuing until the mid-1990s, the department was offering students real-world experience through summer practicums at Central State Hospital, which, at the time, was the second-largest mental hospital in the country.

“When I was hired in 1986, research with students was the norm and Dr. Bill McDaniel was the model,” said Dr. H.L. Lee Gills, chair of the department. “We kind of joked that the university research award needed to be named the Bill McDaniel research award because it’s like he won it every single year, deservedly so because he was quite prolific with his research, and it always involved students.”

That commitment to providing undergraduate students with valuable, real-world research opportunities continues today.

“Psychology initiated the first undergraduate research conference at Georgia College,” Gills said. “When the master’s program was deactivated, undergraduate research continued and grew to what it is today, where every full-time faculty member has an undergraduate research program.”

The department’s award-winning faculty provide dozens of opportunities each semester for students to participate in a wide array of research. Through social psychology, mindfulness, wellness, and comparative cognition — to name only a few — students have the chance to make their own contributions to a variety of specialties within the field.

After completing the Research Methods course sophomore year, students then have the opportunity to participate in labs of their choosing if space is available, explained Gills. Some of their best students will be in two or three labs their junior and senior year.

The various research labs cover a broad range of important issues. Associate Professor Dr. Ashley Taylor translated her scholarship interests in race and gender identity development into a robust undergraduate research program focused on the study of social identities and justice.

“We use experimental methods and secondary data analysis to study how social identities such as race, gender, and sexual orientation relate to perceptions of others,” said Taylor. “Recent projects in the Social Issues Research Lab have examined how students perceive racial microaggressions in the classroom, the assets underrepresented students bring to college, gender bias in workplace perceptions, and whether race and sexual identity revealed on social media influences how we evaluate potential roommates.”

Involving students in her research is an important part of her approach to scholarship.

“Students in the lab are involved in every step of the research process,” she said, “from developing the concept for the project, designing and implementing the study, to presenting the findings. Undergraduate research exemplifies the type of rich experience that a smaller institution can contribute to student development and that is central to a liberal arts mission.”

Dr. Eric Rindal’s research examines the effects of misinformation on memory and situations in which we come to believe something that never happened — particularly with applications to eyewitness memory where witnesses or investigative questioning may provide erroneous testimony. Rindal, who leads the Memory Lab, explained that these errors often have consequences, citing groups like the Innocence Project, which discovered hundreds of cases of erroneous eyewitness testimony, resulting in the innocent serving lengthy prison sentences.

“As someone that studies the effects of misinformation, I’m acutely aware of how prevalent misinformation is in our society and the problems it can cause when we take everything at face value,” Rindal said. “Through research I attempt to instill in students the importance of data to answer questions and provide the tools to better understand how to access and evaluate data.”



From deciding on the materials used — such as a clip of a movie involving a bank robbery, the type of details they ask participants to lie about — to developing the memory tests used to assess false memories, students in Rindal's lab participate in all aspects of the research. Prior to COVID, students would run the participants through the studies in person, but this time, they created an online version of the study, analyzed the data, and presented their data at the Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) Annual Meeting as well as the Psychonomic Society Annual Meeting.

Attending conferences has become an integral experience for both students and faculty in the department, explained Gillis. "Several years ago, the department decided collectively to focus energy on one conference that supported undergraduate research across the broad field of psychology. That annual conference was through SEPA. We have attended regularly with our undergraduates and contribute more than 20 posters and presentations each year with the help of funding from MURACE."

Dr. Kristina Dandy engages undergraduate students in all phases of the research process in her lab, where she broadly investigates animal models of learning, specifically complex choice behavior and factors that impact impulsivity.

"My ultimate goal in providing students with hands-on research experience is to build transferable skills that transcend the laboratory, including tolerance of ambiguity, independent thinking, problem solving, and effective teamwork," said Dandy.

"Most recently, students in my lab have presented their work

assessing factors that impact aggressive displays of *Betta splendens* (Siamese fighting fish) at the Behavior, Biology, and Chemistry Conference and at SEPA," she said.

Conference participation and labs have a profound impact on students as they progress through the program. Senior psychology major Kylie Knox, who is active in both Dr. Gillis's Adventure Therapy Lab, as well as Dr. Whitney Heppner's Social Psychology and Wellness Lab, discovered through labs a passion for working with individuals with Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

"I learned to think critically about what makes good research, and I got experience setting up my own experiments with some guidance from professors," said Knox. "I was allowed to work on things that interested me and self-direct my efforts."

"Also, I learned a lot about independence in my work as well as what it takes to lead a team in research. I got to explore various interests to see if any could be a part of my career," she said. "In fact, I recently applied for a job as a mental health technician at a recovery center for people with SUD, because I realized in Dr. Gillis's lab that I want to be a part of the recovery process we had been learning so much about."

Senior psychology major Jordan Butler has been participating in Dr. Stephanie Jett's Comparative Cognition Lab since fall 2019, where she led a project titled "Outward Physical Changes and Reestablishment of Civilian Identity in Veterans."

"Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces have always been a population of interest because the subculture has such a high need for treatment of mental health," said Butler, "however, very little treatment is usually provided. This research will contribute to a larger body of work









# Music in the air: Students serenade isolated memory care residents

Ludwig van Beethoven believed “music can change the world.”

Two Georgia College students are taking that to heart, lifting the spirits of elderly residents in Milledgeville one song at a time.

“I believe music has the power to open real connection between humans, and I want to use music as a tool to heal,” said graduate student Matthew Seymour of Augusta, who’s getting his master’s in music therapy.

“I feel a sense of gratitude to be able to bring some enjoyment to the residents. I always leave with a full heart,” he said, “and I’m humbled the residents are enjoying themselves.”

Seymour and senior music therapy major Reed Tanner, Jr. of Carrollton, Georgia, serenaded the elderly twice a week at Fellowship Home at Meriwether. Memory care residents there had been isolated and in lockdown for almost a year due to COVID.

Music puts smiles on their faces, stirring up long-forgotten memories.



Jared Norrod, director of resident care at Fellowship, said it's "a wonderful opportunity for our residents to interact with someone who is educated on how to connect through music and this often breaks through some of the common barriers seniors face, such as memory impairment and physical limitations."

About a half dozen residents sat in the sunshine this week to listen and remember. Others listened from windows inside the assisted-living facility, while students performed from inside a protective plastic bubble.

It was hot inside the bubble — but you wouldn't have known it by listening. Like a stand-up comedy team, the lively duo joked with their audience, teased, and even did a little harmless flirting.

One woman danced a two-step shuffle, as Seymour and Tanner crooned oldies from her past like Frank Sinatra's "LOVE," Elvis' "Hound Dog," "Folsom Prison Blues" by Johnny Cash, and "Hey Good Lookin'" by Hank Williams.

When Tanner sang out "kiss me," a woman whooped happily, waving her arms. She clapped heartily to each song, kicking up her legs.

A gentleman in a wheelchair nearby nodded his head, mouthing the words to each song.

Memories become elusive. But foot-tapping lyrics can resurface them, like: "raindrops keep falling on my head," "ain't no sunshine when she's gone," "just sitting on the dock of the bay," "my bags are packed and I'm ready to go," and "what can make me feel this way? My girl."

"We play songs from their adolescent years, and there's not a feeling like it," Tanner said. "I've seen residents, who can't remember their names, but they can remember the words to songs we're playing from the '40s and '50s."

"It's memory recall," he said. "The music you grew up listening to you don't forget. It's ingrained."

The serenade is part of 180 practicum hours students need with different age groups, before getting internships in music therapy.

There are 55 undergraduate and 14 graduate students taking music therapy at Georgia College, according to assistant professor Dr. Laurie Peebles. They work with children and adults with developmental disabilities and autism, the medically fragile, senior citizens, and people with neurological ailments like Parkinson's Disease. Coursework includes guitar studies, piano, percussion, voice lessons, and clinical training.

"COVID has caused the music therapy faculty and students to think outside-of-the-box," said Peebles. "We have managed to adapt to the circumstances, in order to continue to provide clinical experiences and training for our students."

In the future, Seymour hopes to work with older adults or teens at a veteran's hospital, alternative school, or in prison reform. Once Tanner's board certified, he'll work as a music therapist before getting his master's degree.

To engage more personally with the elderly, the two have gotten their vaccination shots against COVID. Soon, they'll be able to leave the bubble and window serenades behind and interact inside with residents.

"It's been great," Seymour said. "We've truly been honored and blessed to come out here and play music and bring a little light to their lives. Combining music with helping people is what I was meant to do." ■

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***"We play songs from their adolescent years, and there's not a feeling like it. I've seen residents, who can't remember their names, but they can remember the words to songs we're playing from the '40s and '50s"***

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***— Reed Tanner, Jr.***

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# Max Noah Singers featured on CBS



The voices of Georgia College's Max Noah Singers were featured in a CBS Sunday Morning segment, performing an old political song called "Hayes is the Man!"

The performance, which CBS aired Oct. 25, 2020, was recorded during the 2018 Constitution Week celebration at Georgia College and a Trax on the Trail concert, "Trailblazing Tunes and Didactic Ditties." During that concert, the Max Noah Singers also sang "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too," a campaign song of William Henry Harrison in the 1840 presidential election, and two campaign songs from Rutherford B. Hayes' 1876 presidential campaign. Prior to that performance, Music Professor Jennifer Flory reached out to an old friend, Christie M. Weininger, the executive director of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums. Weininger later asked Flory if any political songs had been recorded. Flory sent her the Hayes recording, which was used in the CBS segment and later on YouTube with more than 124,340 views.

"While Georgia College and the Max Noah Singers were not identified on the recording," Flory said, "it was quite an honor to have our recording on national television. It's wonderful to bring presidential campaign music to life through study and performance. To be able to share this with our students, employees, and alumni at this time of historical significance in our country is very worthwhile."

The song can be heard early on in the segment at these two sites:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/voter-fraud-suppression-and-partisanship-a-look-at-the-1876-election/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWdqTR2YkAU&feature=youtu.be> ■





## **Second Annual Paul Coverdell Visiting Fellow brings economic history expertise to campus**

Dr. Robert Wright, the second annual Paul Coverdell Visiting Fellow, arrived at Georgia College as the first (hopefully only) Coverdell Fellow to visit during a pandemic. He came to Georgia College from Augustana University, where he served as the Nef Family Chair of Political Economy and the Director of the Thomas Willing Institute for the Study of Financial Markets, Institutions, and Regulations. Dr. Wright holds a Ph.D. in history, and while his primary area of expertise is economic history, his teaching and publications are interdisciplinary. His recent work explores the history and economics of slavery while considering its modern structures.

While at Georgia College, he taught a course on global slavery, focusing on its history and economics. He also facilitated a virtual lecture series on modern slavery which featured Dr. Elizabeth Swanson (Babson College Professor of African American Literature and Human Rights), who delivered a lecture on Pervis Payne, who is currently incarcerated on death row. His guests also included Dr. Robert Chase of Stony Brook University, author of the book, "We Are Not Slaves: State Violence, Coerced Labor, and Prisoners Rights in Postwar America." ■





# Bobcats Adopt-a-Stream



In December of 2020, Georgia College students were given the opportunity to participate in the Alternative Winter Break. The program, known as Bobcats Adopt-a-Stream, was a great way for students to complete a GC Journeys experience while making a meaningful contribution to their local community through the citizen science organization Adopt-a-Stream. Students of all majors were invited to participate. Participants received training in their choice of either chemical or visual assessment techniques, and from there they were able to collect meaningful data about the waterways in Georgia. This work helps monitoring agencies across the state ensure that safe and healthy water resources are available to the communities in Georgia.

Students who selected to conduct chemical assessments learned how to accurately measure the dissolved oxygen content and acidity level of a local stream. After they completed this training, they received an official Adopt-a-Stream certification — which is a great addition to any resume. Georgia College supplied participants with materials that were available to check out over the school break so that students could conduct these measurements in their own communities.

Students who chose to participate in visual assessment received training in observational techniques to identify visual indicators of stream health on local streams. Visual Assessments, an integral beginning step to assessing the quality of any stream, and the data collected were logged in the Adopt-a-Stream database.

In addition to their selected assessment path, participants had the opportunity to engage in directed readings and discussions, as well as web conferences with guest speakers. The themes for engagement opportunities centered on the topics of sustainability and civic engagement, which are important to future careers in all fields. ■







# Nothing About Us Without Us:

## Art Professor Matt Forrest's online exhibition and artist's talk



Matt Forrest, GC associate professor of art, was excited to share the first 2021 exhibition and artist's talk for Flatbed, entitled *Nothing About Us Without Us*, with the community. This was an exhibition of works by Forrest, who worked in collaboration with artists from Imagine Art during 2020. The timing of the exhibit is for PrintAustin 2021, and it celebrated the inclusive nature of printmaking and the power of collaboration. The title of the exhibition was taken from a centuries-old slogan asserting that no policy should be created without the full and direct participation of those it affects. It was adopted by the disability rights movement in the 1990s as a call to action around the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Forrest has over 12 years of fine art publishing and community outreach experience which he uses within his classes to connect community needs to in-class projects. He is driven to make printmaking more accessible for students with disabilities and has worked with a number of groups to advance art outreach within middle Georgia and beyond.

Over the course of six months, Forrest collaborated with Imagine Art, which is a creative incubator in Austin where artists with and without disabilities gather for artmaking and exhibitions. Forrest worked with a team of staff and students from both his college and Imagine to produce a limited run of screen-printed board games to help promote conversation, teamwork, and community, and to develop the core skills of peer support and self-advocacy within Imagine Art's program, Training 4Transformation (<https://www.imagineart.net/training-4-transformation>).

A highlight of the exhibition is the specially designed and printed board game and Forrest's own series of lithographs and screen-prints which reflect the art that has been shared with him during online meetings with artists who call Imagine Art home. Forrest states that he was honored to work with so many talented artists to achieve his own inspired works of art from the project, and more importantly, produce a game that will help serve as a lasting work of art that can be used weekly by the I.A. Peer Support Specialists in training.

<https://www.flatbedpress.com/event-calendar/nothing-for-us-without-us> ■







Matt Forrest, Background Memories, 22x30"  
Photo Lithography and Screen Print, 2020

# Aranda's "Caravan" Book Explores Diverse Paths in Finding Community

In March 2019, Professor of Art Valerie Aranda traveled to Guadalajara, México, to create a book under the guidance of friend José Clemente Orozco Farías (1960-2021) and Impronta Casa Editora. Impronta, an independent press and editorial house focused on the book and the sensory experience involved with reading, is part of a global resurgence of handmade printed books. With Clemente and the Impronta team, Aranda was able to imagine, design, and author a book under the artistic and specialized expertise of Impronta. The name of the book, "Caravan," explores the diverse paths one takes to find belonging and community. Through visual, English and Spanish languages, the story of communities and their journeys to find a place to plant their feet and root their families is at the core of the book. Carefully made of minimal words plus multiple images, "Caravan" was made using special antique machinery including an Intertype C-4 machine, a Heidelberg press and a Ludlow typographic machine. Included in the book were hand-carved linoleum block prints made with carving techniques that Aranda learned specifically for this book. She was able to realize her manuscript but only with the collaboration and guidance of her friends at Impronta and their expertise in design and specialized printing presses.

"Caravan" is inspired by a variety of experiences and observations. There were several motivations behind the book including Aranda's interest in experimenting with printmaking processes. Not only did she learn linocut carving, she also learned about other printmaking processes which she also used for "Caravan." For

example, colleague Matt Forrest, associate professor of art, assisted Aranda in turning some of her images into photo silkscreens which eventually became the polymer plate prints used to produce the images of the caravans of people in the book. There were additional motivations including a recent visit to Teotihuacan, a place Aranda identifies as the ancient home of her ancestors. In an earlier visit to Teotihuacan in 2018, she sketched the pyramid of the sun which became a motif used in the book to speak about Aranda's pride in her Mexican roots. And finally, she wanted her book to have a special hand-crafted quality that could only be created using the rare and antique letterpress and typeset machines housed at Impronta. Spending three weeks in Guadalajara and consulting with friend Clemente and Impronta's team was quite a unique experience and one that Aranda wanted to express through the creation of her book. Immersed in the repetitive sounds of the letterpress machines, and the daily rhythms of Guadalajara, as well as being in the presence of the workers and the machines were all a privilege and a dream for Aranda to experience as a Chicana artist.

Using few words and poetry Aranda examines the word caravan and the way it has been used by the previous administration under Trump during the early stages of his presidency. In his tweets and the media, his administration rallied conservatives and the far right by creating a sense of fear of the other as he warned of caravans of people coming to the border. The scapegoating of immigrants, and the negative



characterizations of Mexicans specifically, sparked a desire in Aranda to contrast these negative images and characterizations of immigrants and Latinos. Her main motivation of this book was to magnify humanity in this process of finding one's sense of place and belonging. Upon closer view, the individuals are people we know. Aranda drew from photos she had collected of her toddler niece as she ate a piece of her favorite candy, her nephew with his toddler son, and her elderly father walking with a cane. In the "Caravan" of people Aranda hopes we find empathy and see ourselves in others and acknowledge the lengths each of us go through in search of a sense of place and belonging.

There are publicly accessible links to the commentary video and the artist talk. The artist talk, held in October 2020, focused on a discussion between artist friends who used a variety of printing presses as the main source of production for this unique edition of books. The artist talk features Valerie Aranda and collaborator

Clemente Orozco Farías, on the piece "Caravan," which was part of the The Book As Art V.8 Infinity, 2020 Exhibition, sponsored by the Georgia Center for the Book and The Decatur Arts Alliance.

The artist talk can be accessed online by visiting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28PxOUhCzTU&feature=youtu.be>. Sadly, Clemente Orozco passed away on January 17, 2021.

The "Caravan" commentary video located online at <https://decaturartsalliance.org/book-as-art/>, describes the process of making the book "Caravan." It includes commentary on the ideas inspiring the book and techniques used. Included is a segment of Impronta Casa Editora showing the master printer team of Impronta at work on the antique presses. The link also features the entire series of short videos on books created by multiple artists in The Book As Art Vol. 8 Infinity, 2020. ■

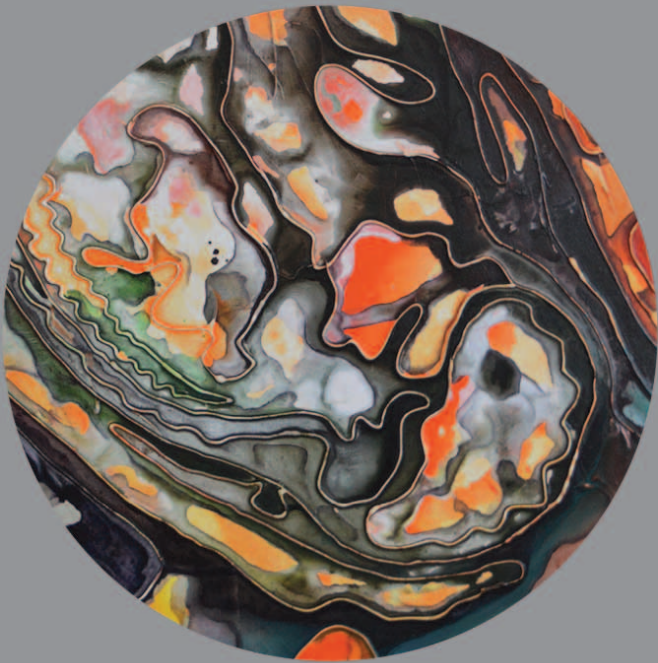


Photo of the Book, "Caravan"

# Abraham Abebe's exhibit

# "EMERGENCY"

## at Macon Arts Gallery



## EMERGENCY

ABRAHAM ABEBE

FEBRUARY 5 - 26, 2021  
OPENING RECEPTION FEBRUARY 5TH, 4 - 7 PM  
SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MASKS REQUIRED

maconartsalliance

Assistant Professor of Art Abraham Abebe oversees the Graphic Design Concentration at Georgia College. From Feb. 5-26, 2021, the Macon Arts Gallery exhibited his paintings in a solo exhibition, **EMERGENCY**. The show opened with a First Friday reception at the Macon Arts Alliance ([www.maconartsalliance.org](http://www.maconartsalliance.org)).

**EMERGENCY** explored the internal structure and function of the human body through composition, form, physical adaptation, and anatomy using paint as the medium of communication. In this series, medical imaging such as X-ray and ultrasound as a conceptual resource were used to further explore the complexity and mechanics of bodily systems and their significant impact on the healing process. Abebe sought to establish emotional and physical attachments to the work within the limits of its own environment, allowing viewers to closely observe and analyze the function and importance of maintaining good health and well-being. ■









## DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE CONTINUES COMPELLING PRODUCTION SCHEDULE ADMIST PANDEMIC

The pandemic has forced theatres and theatre departments across the country to eliminate much of their programming, but the Department of Theatre and Dance at Georgia College is not one of them. In a time when the majority of programs have suspended theatrical productions, GC has forged new territory and collaborated with alumni and production services to learn new ways to approach show sharing. The first such productions was initially called "Zoom [Out]: An Experiment in Production" and resulted in a theatrical film entitled "WE." Iona Holder, co-founder and artistic director of Birdhouse Theatre in Downtown Milledgeville (and graduate of GC - BA Theatre 1998,

MPA 2005, MFA Creative Writing 2016) was commissioned to write and direct a show for the department. "I accepted the challenge and began looking for a new approach," explained Holder. "I formulated the plan as an experiment so that we could begin by eliminating the fear of failure because you can't 'fail' an experiment," she explained. Eleven students were charged with reading and learning long monologues (some as long as twenty minutes) and then the editing team spent a week breaking the performances down into moments and reassembled the story through painstaking editing. The resulting film was well received and recently invited to be featured —



virtually — at the regional Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, a rare honor. GC students were privy to response sessions wherein theatre professionals commended their work and discussed themes within the show. Access to the final product and the entire 2020 virtual season is available at [gcgivingvoice.com](http://gcgivingvoice.com).

The Department of Theatre and Dance had this 2020 virtual production and others nominated for various awards at The Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF). The Respondent Coordinator of KCACTF's nine-state Region IV Division applauded the program's commitment to produce virtually in 2020, stating, "It's exciting that you are doing so many shows. So many programs have chosen not to produce." Respondents from the KCACTF viewed the live-streamed and pre-taped shows and nominated the following shows as indicated:

### **"Zoom [Out]," an existential look at what students are going through during COVID**

- Nominated for Best Director: Guest Artist Iona Holder
- Nominated for Best Actors: Students Izzy Lee, Claire Hemenway, Cole Hanlin
- Nominated for Lighting Design: Student Fran Smith
- Nominated for Sound Design: Student Natalie Cook
- Nominated for Stage Management: Student David Connel

### **"Conzoomed," being a freshman Bobcat during COVID**

- Nominated for Best Actors: Students Barbara Jefferson, Lina Williams, Natalie Cardona
- Nominated to present the live-stream show at the KCACTF Region IV Festival (a rare honor)

### **"Lions in Illyria," a children's version of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"**

- Nominated for Best Director: Student Director Julia Ann Willingham
- Nominated for Camera Direction: Student Amberly Wilkes
- Nominated for Best Actors: Students Rachael Blaske, Zachary Kingsley, Lillie Hoates
- Nominated for Stage Management: Student Skylar Lombardo
- Nominated for Technical Support: Bea Czogalla
- Nominated for Best Costumes/Masks: Cathleen O'Neal
- Nominated to present the live-stream show at the KCACTF Region IV Festival (a rare honor)

### **"Giving Voice," a Black Lives Matters Musical Event**

- Nominated for Scenic Art: Student Ashlyn Simmons
- Nominated for Dramaturgy: Student Stephanie Perez-Telon
- Nominated for Best Actors: Students Jelani Willacey, Izzy Lee, Sophia Clark
- Nominated for Stage Management: Students Emma Eisnaugle and Frankie Mastras ■







# Connecting Across Cultures Through Teletandem Virtual Exchange

Sweaty hands, nervous giggles, scrambled notes, computer and cellphone ready, and the inevitable question: "If s/he doesn't understand what I am saying, what should I do?"

Students in Spanish Conversation and Diction are ready to meet their Colombian partners for the first time. Anyone who walks into the Language Resource Center (LRC) can feel students' nervousness and excitement. For many, this is the first conversation they have ever had with a native speaker of Spanish. The conversation will last an hour, with students spending half of that time speaking in Spanish, and the other half in English. Students will help each other hone their language skills while discussing a set of films and the socio-cultural topics developed in them. It sounds daunting, but after the first five minutes, students put their nerves aside and engage in a vibrant conversation that fills the LRC with laughter, languages, and a barrage of questions and anecdotes. All fears and concerns are forgotten, and the main goal now is to enjoy the activity while time flies.

In the last ten years, students in the Department of World Languages and Cultures have interacted with native speakers of Spanish through the Teletandem Project. Dr. Aurora Castillo-Scott started the project to allow her students to use their language

skills in an authentic conversational context with real cultural exchange. Dr. Castillo-Scott has worked with universities in Chile and Colombia — the most recent being Universidad El Bosque in Bogotá.

During all these years, hundreds of students of Spanish have enjoyed the experience of weekly communication sessions with native speakers. Through these sessions, students reduce their fear of speaking the language in a real context, gain confidence in their speaking abilities, increase their intercultural competence, and learn to mentor their English-learning peers. 2013 World Languages and Cultures graduate Audrey Smith was one of the first students to participate in the project.

"This project helped me see that there was indeed a real-world application to what I was learning," Smith reflected. "So often, college students take courses thinking, 'I will never use this' or 'this is a waste of time.'"

In fact, this experience served as a springboard for Smith's eventual career. She is now a Kindergarten Dual Language Immersion Teacher with Gwinnett County Public Schools and uses her Spanish on a daily basis.

To extend this learning opportunity to more WLC students, other instructors have joined Castillo-Scott in the Teletandem Project. Dr. Virginia Terán and Mr. Juan Antonio Alcarria have integrated the project in some of their courses, partnering with Universidad El Bosque. They report an increase in students' motivation, engagement, and intercultural awareness. In Spring of 2021, the French program followed the Spanish program's lead, establishing a volunteer teletandem program with the University of Lille and planning another teletandem partnership with the University Hassan II in Casablanca. Other universities have approached the department with the possibility of creating teletandem projects in German and Italian. ■

## Spanish for Global Health Courses Diversify Curriculum and Promote Cultural Competence



Two courses in the Department of World Languages and Cultures curriculum, Spanish for Global Health I and II, are popular with language majors and minors and are actively attracting students from other disciplines. Dr. Daniel Holcombe designed SPAN 3620 and 4003 to be more inclusive of students from a variety of backgrounds and with a range of academic interests who see themselves working one day with the Spanish-speaking public. A significant outcome of these courses is the sharing of diverse student perspectives regarding their own life experiences within medical settings and U.S. biomedical culture. Both courses are designed around the theme of linguistic and cultural communicative challenges. Such challenges exist within various medical interactions involving English-speaking providers and Spanish-speaking clients.

The integration, in these courses, of linguistic and culturally-inclusive themes — such as healthcare law, medical interpretation

and translation, ethics, U.S. and Latin American global health definitions, traditional healing, and the distribution of COVID-19 information to limited English proficient (LEP) Spanish communities — appeals to students across the university. Pre-med students and students from nursing and public health are enrolling in these courses, as are pre-law students and students of Spanish, communications, and English. Holcombe drew upon his longtime expertise in Health and Human Services foreign language interpretation and national foreign language interpreter certification to develop these new courses, which he has been perfecting since 2018.

To underscore the value of exploring communicative disparities, Holcombe begins these courses by asking two questions: Have you ever visited another country and needed medical attention? How might it feel to try to communicate your situation, symptoms, and concerns to a medical provider in a language in which you have limited proficiency or which you do not speak at all? This is precisely what happens to LEP patients in the United States every time they visit a doctor, social worker, or school official without a trained interpreter or bilingual friend, family member, or co-worker at their side. Indeed, this is true for speakers of any language other than English. For the various Spanish-speaking communities living in the U.S., such interactions involve communicative challenges — oftentimes based in cultural misunderstandings — in situations that native English speakers consider routine.

In the first course of the two-course series, students identify cultural and communicative challenges faced by members of various Spanish-speaking communities throughout the U.S. and practice a wide array of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in Spanish. Students perfect oral presentations through Digital Humanities projects on a variety of health care issues. This course explores five distinct areas: conversational medical Spanish, COVID-19-related themes and terminology in Spanish and English, medical interpretation, healthcare laws, and global health perspectives.

In the second course of the series students compare and contrast primary healthcare with specialized medicine and further explore communicative challenges associated with obtaining accurate and complete patient medical histories. Students explore traditional healing (*curanderismo*) beliefs held by Spanish-speaking patients (including Native Americans and Afro-Latin Americans) and examine the ways in which practitioners and institutions of Western medicine frame *curanderismo*. Students likewise explore what it means to be labeled as “Hispanic” or “Latin American” in the U.S., especially when a Spanish speaker identifies as neither. All of the themes explored in these courses allow students to move beyond simple cultural awareness to develop cultural competence: the ability to use what they have learned in their careers. ■



# Staging Contagion:

Immunity and  
Community in  
a “Powerful  
Prescient”  
New Book



Long before anyone had heard of COVID-19, a professor of French and German in the Department of World Languages and Cultures had been thinking a lot about contagion. In Fall 2020, in the middle of a global pandemic, Dr. Hedwig Fraunhofer's monograph, "Biopolitics, Materiality, and Meaning in Modern European Drama," was published by Edinburgh University Press, one of the leading university presses in the United Kingdom. The book has received glowing reviews from eminent scholars in the field, who have described it as "powerfully prescient" and "a literary-critical breath of fresh air."

Fraunhofer's work engages with a number of disciplines — literary studies, philosophy, ethics, environmental studies, performance studies, and gender studies among them. The book should be particularly exciting for Georgia College students because it shows the kinds of connections across disciplines that a liberal arts education makes possible and the ways in which the big questions and challenges of our day draw for answers on multiple, interdisciplinary, humanistic modes of inquiry and analysis.

In the book, Fraunhofer takes us beyond (and before) our contemporary scientific understanding of contagion as the spreading of agents of disease from one individual body to another, to explore contagion as a biological as well as political phenomenon. The work views the politicization of biological life through the lens of modern drama, exploring the ways in which the defensive, immunitarian boundaries against contagion by difference were both established and confounded on the modern stage — from late nineteenth century naturalism in Sweden and France to the German and French avant-garde theatre of the early twentieth century. This is the era marked by the rise of totalitarianism in Europe and by the feminization and racialization of questions of contagion.

As Professor Fraunhofer writes, after the last plague epidemic in Europe in 1720, a new epidemic, smallpox, had crystallized the contemporary population's fears. Unlike the "black death," but like SARS-CoV 2, this highly infectious disease, smallpox, found its victims among all socio-economic classes, not just the poorest ones. The debates surrounding the effective prevention of smallpox that constituted the beginnings of modern medicine were therefore by necessity debates about the nature of community. As in the global pandemic today and as the etymology of the word "contagion" (from Latin *con*, together, and *tangere*, to touch) indicates, post-smallpox, the individual had to be considered as part of an infected and infectious collectivity. And yet, until the advent of bacteriology in the nineteenth century, illness would continue to be imagined as the result of an inherited biological (and moral) disposition, often overlapping with the "miasma" theory, which saw disease as the product of one's geographical environment. The racial, familial, or local community, rather than the individual, were thus thought to determine vulnerability to illness. Only between the 1860s and the 1880s did immunological "germ" theories discover the invasion of the individual body by microbacteria as the exact cause of infectious diseases.

Fraunhofer explains that in spite of this long dependence on community — or maybe because of the problematic nature of community — Western modernity is ideologically based on a concept of individual autonomy that works in opposition to *communitas* and is ultimately based on the fear of difference. Since modern individualism, however, cannot satisfy the fundamental desire for relation, it ultimately produces totalitarianism, which again provides belonging in the national-racial community. Helping us rethink the dualistic paradigm of exclusion and inclusion and the isolation that marks modernity, these plays ultimately compel us to transform our everyday relations in ways that value social and ontological diversity and heterogeneity, going beyond identitarian, biopolitical boundaries, to reimagine community.

Fraunhofer's new book can be found at Edinburgh University Press, and online through the Ina Dillard Russell Library. ■





# THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

wishes a fond farewell and happy retirement to

## Patricia Ann Portwood



**A**nn Portwood joined the dean's office in August 1997, and has effectively and graciously served our students, staff, and faculty over the course of her tenure at Georgia College. Her knowledge and tact are unmatched, and her kindness and laughter will be greatly missed. Ann worked closely with our College of Arts and Sciences department chairs, who also wanted to express their thanks and well wishes.

Thoughts on the occasion of the retirement of Ann Portwood,  
Administrative Assistant to the Dean

.....  
Robert Blumenthal  
February 22, 2021  
.....

I'd like to share what I believe to have been the Dean's thoughts upon learning of Ann's decision to retire. I know these would be my thoughts if I were losing someone like Ann.

In her role as Assistant to Dean,  
She's a godsend, you know what I mean.  
I just can't abide  
No Ann by my side.  
I'll be needing more beer and caffeine.

No doubt, she is one in a mill,  
Those shoes, an impossible fill.  
I can't bid adieu,  
How my sorrows accrue,  
So I'll add some more mash to the still.

To the chairs she provides great assistance,  
All her tasks she performs with persistence.  
When a chair's in a jam,  
It's to Ann that they scam,  
'Cause for all, she's the piece de resistance.

What she gave, it was always her best,  
On my honor I surely don't jest.  
I affirm and do swear,  
As a find she is rare,  
And I know I've been royally blessed.

“

“When I arrived just under three years ago and began drinking from the firehose, Ann was the one to keep me laughing at how soaked I was getting. That's just in her nature. Take the daily challenges in stride and have a big laugh about it at the end of the week. While the entire COAS family will miss that laugh and infectious smile, we wish Ann the happiest of retirements. And I have her cell number, just in case! Meanwhile, on her first day of retirement, I hope she goes out for lunch and gets a diablo sandwich and a Dr. Pepper.”

— Eric Tenbus, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

“I have found Ann to be invaluable to me in terms of her friendliness, helpfulness, and the wealth of institutional memory that she has. On a lighter note, Ann was one of my earliest links to Georgia College, when I first onboarded. It was also a relief to be receiving such friendly, gregarious, and humorous emails from her while I was still in the cold, dark confines of Finland in early 2020.” — Scott Buchanan, Chair of Government and Sociology

“It is hard to accept that A&S will soon be without the warm smiling voice and infinitely generous eyes of one of the finest people in the world. The successes of hundreds of instructors, chairs, and administrators, and thousands of students owe much to the work Ann has shouldered always for the benefit of others, and always with passion and grace. Thank you for everything, dear friend.”

— Bill Fisher, Chair of Art

“Words cannot express how much I will miss you, Ann Portwood. The depths of your ‘knowledge capital’ for COAS – especially for chairs is limitless and I cannot imagine the things that will fall through the cracks without your eagle eyes. I will miss our meetings in the “parking lot” to vent, commiserate, and launch things up in a metaphorical cloud of smoke”.

— Lee Gillis, Chair of Psychological Science

“Wishing you the happiest of retirements! Best wishes to your new adventure!”  
— Jamie Jones, Dean's Office, College of Arts and Sciences

“Since even before I arrived on campus, Ann has been a shining light for me and everyone who knows her. No matter what the challenge or sinking feeling of the day, she always offered a buoyant smile with words of encouragement and her boundless optimism was perfectly matched by her impeccable professionalism. Most of all though, she gave me the gift of friendship, and for that she will be forever appreciated.”

— Aran MacKinnon, Chair of History and Geography

“I will always appreciate the institutional knowledge that Ann has to offer when asked. I will miss our conversations on the state of affairs on everything Georgia College. Please visit us in the music department in your leisure time. Enjoy your well-deserved break!” — Don Parker, Chair of Music

“I will miss many things about Ann Portwood when she leaves, but the most important one that I will truly miss, is her sense of humor. Every conversation and interaction I have had with Ann has always left me with a smile.”

— Indiren Pillay, Chair of Biological and Environmental Sciences

“They say that no one is irreplaceable. They're plain wrong. No one can replace Ann.” — Ken Procter, Former College of Arts and Sciences Dean

”

Ann was phenomenal at her job and contributed greatly to the smooth operation of the College. Because of that, it is hard to say goodbye, but she is certainly well-deserving of some rest and relaxation. Ann, our very best wishes, and our never-ending thanks for all you did to help us over the years. ■



# Georgia College's new forensics program a first in Middle Georgia

Like their heroes on TV crime shows, Georgia College students will soon be able to do a little scientific sleuthing of their own.

They'll be able to detect explosive TNT residue, analyze DNA fingerprints, determine drug usage from a strand of hair, and identify signatures by the type of ink or pen used.

Demand for these kinds of skills is rising, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which projects a 14 percent growth in entry-level forensic science jobs through 2028.

In recent years, chemistry professors at Georgia College also noted increased student curiosity about criminal analysis. This prompted a new concentration in forensic chemistry, the first of its kind in Middle Georgia.

"Drawing on the strengths of Georgia College's liberal arts mission, our forensic chemistry concentration is designed as an interdisciplinary program bringing together chemistry, biology, and criminal justice to prepare students for the field of study," said Dr. Chavonda Mills, chair of chemistry, physics, and astronomy.

"Beyond the classroom, students will have the opportunity to engage in innovative forensic research in our new state-of-the-art Integrated Science Complex, as well as explore internship opportunities to apply what they've learned. This holistic approach will fully prepare students to enter a professional career immediately following graduation."

For the concentration, students will be required to take introduction to criminal justice and introduction to law, as well as biology courses. Two main forensic science courses may be offered next spring — trace evidence and material analysis; and drug and biomaterial analysis — in which students will learn about DNA analysis, serology, arson, explosives, and other important chemical investigation in forensic chemistry.

Additional teaching labs will cover hands-on training for topics covered in class, such as DNA fingerprinting, analysis of body fluids for drugs, hair analysis for metal poisoning and drug abuse, and detection of explosives. All lab work requires an understanding of sample collection, data analysis, and proper usage of scientific instruments and equipment.

"I think we all have that built-in detective in us. We want to know why and how. Forensic chemistry explains this at the molecular level," said Dr. Wathsala Medawala, assistant professor of chemistry.

"When forensic-themed courses are offered, students are very excited to take them. It gives them pleasure knowing they can understand the science and even catch mistakes in crime investigation dramas on TV," she said.

Six Georgia College students are busy producing lab experiments to go along with lessons. They develop available resources and procedures to be appropriate for a college-level lab.

Senior chemistry major Mia Popkin of Jesup, Georgia, and first-year chemistry major Madeline Teigen of Evans, Georgia, are working with Medawala to create step-by-step instructions for lab experiments that analyze and measure levels of amphetamine in urine. Popkin wants to work in a medical lab before going to graduate school, and Teigen is still deciding what area of forensics she might work in, such as ballistics, fingerprinting, or blood analysis.

"It's challenging," Popkin said, "but it's good to be challenged in this atmosphere where you have a professor or another student helping you and learning together."

Another student working with Medawala is senior chemistry major Lauren Lautzenhiser of Bonaire, Georgia. She's helping to create a lab protocol for DNA fingerprinting. First-year chemistry major Carson Kleider of Dacula, Georgia, works with Dr. Ronald Fietkau to develop experiments in ink analysis and type of pen used in signatures.

Junior chemistry major Emily Pitts of Griffin, Georgia, works with Fietkau too, combining blood and drug samples into one experiment that'll test blood-splatter patterns and drug or iron levels in the body. Someday, Pitts would like to work for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) or Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).



"It's a good feeling knowing I'm helping to build coursework that's going to be here even after I graduate, and I had a piece in that," Pitts said.

"I've been thinking about forensics since about 12. I was obsessed with (the TV show) NCIS as a child. I still am," she said. "Then, I did a forensics summer camp one year, and I absolutely fell in love with it even more. I was like, 'This is what I'm doing with my life.'"

Junior chemistry major Aubrey Reynolds of Augusta, Georgia wants to work for the FBI before moving on to graduate school. She was offered an internship at the FBI in Atlanta last summer, but it got derailed due to COVID-19.

Under the supervision of Dr. Catrena Lisse, Reynolds did some of the original research leading to development of the concentration. First, she tallied how many university chemistry programs nationwide offer forensics. She found a limited number. Then, with Lisse as her mentor, Reynolds helped develop a method for detecting explosive TNT residue, using

sol-gel chemistry. Currently, they're developing a hair analysis experiment to check for abuse and mis-use of pharmaceuticals.

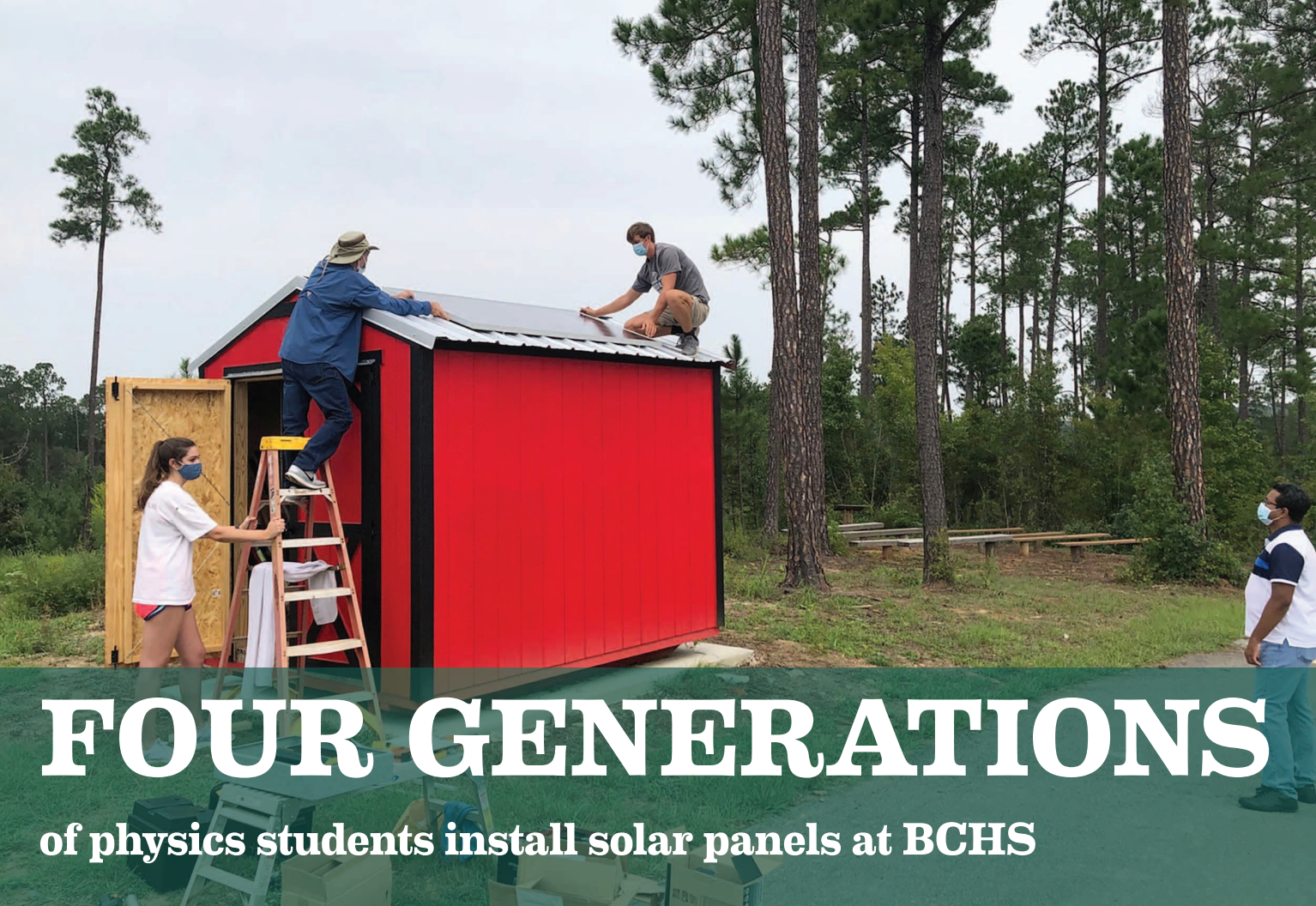
"It's great experience for me," Reynolds said, "because these are exactly the kinds of things I'm going to be doing if I get a forensics science job."

Reynolds is glad she learned these concepts at a small university, where she says it's hard to "get lost." By the end of her first semester, she knew all her professors, and they knew her by name. She feels lucky professors responded to her needs by starting a new concentration in forensics.

Now, she's being exposed to things she didn't expect at the undergraduate level.

"Research can really give you a step up in grad school," Reynolds said, "especially when you have a professor who knows you on a personal level and can testify to what you've done." ■





# FOUR GENERATIONS

## of physics students install solar panels at BCHS

A group of Georgia College physics majors recently installed a solar panel at Baldwin County High School (BCHS). They represented all four years of college — from freshman to a senior who graduated last May. It was the university's first off-campus solar project — delayed slightly from the spring, due to COVID-19.

"This was the most exciting part for me, seeing the transfer of knowledge from my physics scholar, Bo, on down to Evan, our freshman," said Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge, assistant professor of physics.

Every year, Mahabaduge gives a seminar on physics to honors students, who have that "little extra something" about them. The seminars are a recruitment tool for Mahabaduge. Inevitably, after each, a student will email him looking to do more.

In 2019, BCHS officials approached Georgia College's Office of Sustainability for help installing a solar panel they received as a donation. They wanted to bring power to a small shed used for gardening projects at the school.

Having to "think on their feet" and solve unexpected problems is

part of the learning process, Mahabaduge said. It reflects what students will experience in the real workplace.

In the end, the panel was mounted with nuts and bolts at the right angle to catch the sun. It connects to two batteries, which will generate up to 300 watts of energy — giving the BCHS shed enough "off-the-grid" electricity to power tools and a light for several hours a day.

"This collaborative effort with BCHS "provides a lasting economic impact and will hopefully inspire local students to pursue careers in science," said Dr. Chavonda Mills, chair of physics, chemistry, and astronomy. ■



# Georgia College collaborates with three universities for students to pursue pharmacy school

**W**ith demand expected to increase for pharmacists in Southern healthcare settings like hospitals and clinics — Georgia College is pleased to announce a new accelerated Pathways Program for chemistry majors to transfer to one of three Doctor of Pharmacy schools in the United States.

Agreements were recently signed with the University of Georgia (UGA), Auburn University, and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM). Students who meet criteria can utilize these pathways — giving them an early start, streamlined admission, and guided route into the field of pharmacy.

“Georgia College is committed to providing our students with an outstanding education as well as opportunities to expand their careers,” said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “Our new Pharm.D. partnerships are just some of the ways we can provide more opportunities for our students to be successful.”

These new Pathways give chemistry students a chance to earn their Bachelor of Science (B.S.) from Georgia College and a Doctorate of Pharmacy degree from UGA, Auburn, or PCOM. Students admitted into pharmacy school under a “3+4” agreement complete three years of chemistry at Georgia College, then four years at pharmacy school. In their first or second year of pharmacy, students receive their B.S. from Georgia College with transferred credits earned in the Pharm.D. program.

This helps students save on tuition, while beginning their careers early — completing both degrees in seven years, instead of eight.

“I’m very pleased that the chemistry program has taken the initiative to develop these innovative Pharm.D. Pathways,” said Dr. Eric Tenbus, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Georgia College.

“This means our chemistry majors will have even greater options ahead of them,” he said, “including the ability to earn a Doctorate of Pharmacy degree in less time in what is a high-demand field. In addition, this is a positive recruitment, retention, and graduation initiative for our university.”

Planning for these Pathways began more than a year ago. Administrators hope this effort attracts a diverse group of aspiring pharmacists to respond to market demand. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook handbook,

employment of pharmacists is projected to decline three percent from 2019 to 2029. However, demand for pharmacists in hospitals and clinics is projected to increase, particularly in rural areas such as those found in Georgia, Alabama, and other neighboring states.

About 21 percent of Georgia College chemistry majors declare a concentration in pre-pharmacy.

This year, Georgia College is experiencing a three-year peak at 24 percent, said Dr. Chavonda Mills, chair of the department of chemistry, physics, and astronomy.

“We’re excited to introduce these accelerated Pathways for our students,” she said. “By reducing the total time required for the B.S. and Pharm.D. degrees, our students will be able to save both time and tuition dollars and begin their careers earlier.”

UGA, Auburn, and PCOM were “strategically” identified to help attract a broad audience of prospective students to Georgia College, Mills said, while ensuring chemistry students multiple pathways to pharmacy school. The three programs represent a varied choice for students, giving them a wide selection of curriculum, reputation of school, location, and cost.

Freshman year, chemistry majors declaring a pre-pharmacy concentration will receive structured guidance from their pre-pharmacy coordinator at Georgia College and a representative from their Pharm.D. program of interest. They’ll discuss the admission process and requirements for pre-requisite courses, grade point average, and the PCAT (Pharmacy College Admissions Test).

Junior year, students apply for admissions to their chosen Pharm.D. program. Following completion of their first or second year pharmacy school, their credits transfer back to Georgia College for a B.S. in Chemistry. Students then complete their Pharm.D. degree.

“Georgia College’s liberal arts curriculum teaches students to think critically, become skilled communicators, and mature into service-orientated professional dedicated to excellence,” Mills said.

“It is my hope that the partnering of a liberal arts education with professional pharmacy schools will produce 21<sup>st</sup>-century pharmacists,” she said, “dedicated to serving all members of the community and that some of these students will return to rural Georgia to practice pharmacy.” ■



# Georgia College creates program to stem shortage of physics teachers

Competence in physics is consistently ranked as the highest need in U.S. school districts, according to the American Association for Employment in Education. Only 35 percent of new physics teachers in middle or high school, however, hold a degree in physics or physics education.

More alarming: Nearly one-third of secondary physics teachers take fewer than three college courses in physics. As result, most middle and high school students are taught physics and physical science by teachers who lack certification in the subject.

Georgia College is the first university in Central Georgia to tackle this problem.

Beginning this fall, a new concentration in physics is being offered for students who want to teach in that field. Students following this track for a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree are expected to complete a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) after graduation.

"Physics is the gateway to many STEM disciplines, and students who take high school physics are better prepared for college," said Dr. Chavonda Mills, chair of chemistry, physics, and astronomy.

"Addressing the critical shortage of qualified high school physics teachers should not only lead to an increased number of college physics majors," she said, "but also to improved success and degree completion in all STEM majors. It's a win-win situation."

Physics is one of the oldest academic disciplines. Its exploration of matter and motion through space and time, along with force and energy, is critical for advancements in technology. Physics students learn important quantitative, analytical, and reasoning skills. The subject is often a prerequisite for anyone looking for careers in engineering, chemistry, biology, environmental science, and medical/veterinary fields.

Without qualified physics teachers in middle and high school, however, few students emerge with the confidence and skill to pursue that science in college, according to Cornell University's Physics Teacher Education Coalition. To make the U.S. economically competitive with other countries, it reported, the number of qualified physics teachers needs to increase fivefold.

Georgia College Physics Lecturer Dr. Laura Whitlock raised the idea for a physics education pathway in 2019. She previously taught high school physics and knows firsthand the "obvious need" for well-trained teachers in the field. When researching the problem, she noted a high number of jobs going unfilled because of a lack of qualified candidates.

"The standards just about everywhere these days require you to have a bachelor's degree or higher in physics to teach at the high school level. But there are just not enough graduates to go around,"

Whitlock said. "Our department felt like the need is so big that we needed to give it a try. Even if we graduate only one or two per year, that's a significant increase for our state."

A few years ago, Georgia College's Department of Chemistry, Physics, and Astronomy added a number of upper-level physics courses to the curriculum, designed to prepare students for graduate school. But these courses weren't geared towards the needs of students heading into secondary teaching and even prevented such students from succeeding or considering a degree in physics, remarked Dr. Ralph France, professor of physics.

The new program allows incoming students to choose a physics education pathway. They'll take more courses in the College of Education designed for the preparation of teaching. These include secondary teaching and math education, along with a broader set of introductory science classes outside of physics and fewer graduate school prep courses.

"It's important to note that this is still a rigorous B.S. degree in physics," France said. "A physics teacher needs to understand physics and mathematics at a level significantly higher than that which they are teaching."

A new internship course for the concentration was also added to give students experience in Whitlock's astronomy lab or Dr. Sharon Careccia's physics lab. This provides teaching experience early on, while giving students valuable moments with mentors.

Groundwork for the program is being laid through recruitment. The department's working closely with Admissions to connect with school districts that require all high school students to complete physics. Students in these districts are often inspired by their high school physics teacher and more likely to consider a career in physics education, Mills said.

The university is looking for students with this kind of passion. Along with a good dose of practice, these students can become great educators. Whitlock hopes to instill in them "a sense of curiosity and wonder," creating teachers who can turn failed experiments or demonstrations into teaching moments.

She's certain Georgia College will soon develop a reputation for producing enthusiastic, qualified physics teachers and become a vital source for secondary school districts.

"The future of our country could be at stake. Not having a good physics course in high school puts our citizens at a deficit in the global community," Whitlock said. "Physics is a love it or not field. Few who love it consider high school education as their goal. We need to change that." ■



Landscape and Grounds Supervisor, Aaron Seay, assists Professor Hammack's family in placing and planting the tree. Clockwise from the left is Natasha Hammack (sister-in-law), Eric Luca (spouse), and Russell Hammack (brother).

## Government and Sociology sponsors Tree Planting to Honor the Memory of Professor Jennifer Hammack

The Department of Government and Sociology partnered with the Office of Sustainability and the Department of Landscaping and Grounds to plant a tree in memory of Professor Jennifer Hammack, J.D. on Friday, Feb. 26, 2021.

Hammack, an associate professor of justice studies, joined the Department of Government and Sociology in 2001. She received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Alabama and taught criminal justice and political science courses, working closely with students in the pre-law discipline. She started the Georgia College Mock Trial team in 2011. Ten years later, the Georgia College Mock Trial team continues a winning streak against prestigious programs in the American Mock Trial Association. In her time working with Mock Trial, she was awarded several Bobcat awards for her mentoring of the group. She also published on the value of mentoring undergraduate students. Hammack and her daughter, Ellie, were tragically killed in a car accident in 2018. An annual scholarship fund was started in her honor and for the benefit of Georgia College students.

The tree, a sugar maple, is planted at the southeastern corner of the Arts and Sciences building. Event attendees included faculty, staff, and current and former students. ■



# Georgia College Mock Trial Team

## Impresses at the American Mock Trial Association's Regional Tournament

**Georgia College's Mock Trial team is on its way to becoming one of the best mock trial teams in the United States.**

Indeed, Georgia College's two Mock Trial teams made history at the American Mock Trial Association's regional tournament, receiving prestigious awards and obtaining victories over the region's top mock trial teams. The competition was held via Zoom on Feb. 20-21 and featured forty-one teams, including from schools such as Wellesley, Boston College, Tufts, the University of Georgia, and Georgia Tech.



Outstanding attorney winners, Seniors  
Lillian Renaud and Daria Brown

Seniors Lillian Renaud and Daria Brown won Outstanding Attorney awards, and Georgia College was among the few schools that had two attorneys win an Outstanding Attorney award. "I am so proud of Lilly and Daria," coach and Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice Adam Lamparello stated. "They worked so hard and were among the best, if not the best, attorneys at the competition."

As Renaud stated, "winning an Outstanding Attorney Award is considered one of the greatest accomplishments for any college Mock Trial member," and "being on this team has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life." Likewise, Brown stated that "when I think about my college career, Mock Trial will always hold a special place in my heart," and that "seeing all of our hard work come to fruition was incredibly fulfilling, and it was an experience I will never forget."

Georgia College's mock trial teams proved that they could compete — and defeat — some of the best teams in the region.

In Round One, Team A defeated Boston College, and in Round Three Team A defeated the University of Mississippi. In their own Round Three, Team B, which was led by co-captain Jordan Bell, defeated Boston College. Never in its history has Georgia College achieved this many victories at the tournament, and never in its history has it defeated such high-quality teams.



Sophomore Jordan Bell, who is pictured to the left with coach Adam Lamparello, stated that “it has been an absolute pleasure working with every single one of my teammates,” as “they are the ones that made the team and allowed us to be the best Mock Trial team this school has ever had.”

The mock trial team’s impressive achievements resulted from intense preparation, unwavering dedication, and unyielding motivation. Specifically, the nineteen members spent six months – and countless hours – preparing for the competition. These preparations included learning how to argue effectively, mastering the rules of evidence, developing first-rate oral advocacy and public speaking skills, and conducting over fifteen three-hour scrimmages, four of which occurred over the holiday break.

Ultimately, the awards received and victories obtained demonstrated that the future for Georgia College’s Mock Trial Team is very bright. As coach Adam Lamparello stated, “at the beginning of the competition, a captain on the opposing team asked where Milledgeville, Georgia, was. Well, after being defeated, he certainly knows where it is now.” Lamparello also stated that “our goal is to be the best mock trial team in the United States,” and that “we are well on our way to achieving that goal and establishing Georgia College as among the most prestigious mock trial teams in the nation.”

Congratulations to everyone on the team for representing themselves and Georgia College so well. The future is indeed bright. ■



Mock trial team photo on front campus after victories



# Political Science faculty dominate local media coverage during election



Georgia College's government faculty seemed to be everywhere this electoral season as they helped the media and public navigate political jargon, rumored illegality, swinging states, and possible voter fraud.

On election night, faculty gave live commentary at multiple locations. As results trickled in, they guided viewers through messy partisan confusion and helped a perplexed nation come to grips with polarizing political divide.

Presidential elections always stimulate great interest, attracting more attention and higher voter turnout. This year, however, it was "record breaking," according to Senior Political Lecturer Claire Sanders. In Georgia alone, half of registered voters cast early ballots and large numbers voted on election day, as well.

Prior to the election, Sanders appeared in a national video in The Telegraph by McClatchy news group about Georgia moving from red to blue and becoming a purple state. Professor Dr. Hank Edmonson spoke with WGXA News about families on the campaign trail. And Professor Dr. Scott E. Buchanan, new chair of the Department of Government and Sociology, spoke to WGXA News about the Electoral College.

On election night, three faculty helped the media sort through incoming results.

Sanders provided legal context for viewers at WGXA News. Buchanan was on Zoom, giving political commentary for WRBL News Channel 3, a CBS affiliate in Columbus. And

Assistant Professor W. Clif Wilkinson, Jr. answered questions via Zoom for 13WMAZ, a CBS affiliate in Macon.

In the election aftermath — Sanders gave numerous interviews to media outlets. This included two articles in Norway's largest newspaper, VG (Verdens Gang). Norwegian reporter Nora Thorp Bjørnstad came to campus to interview Sanders about the Georgia recount and how partisanship in Congress could affect President-Elect Joe Biden's ability to enact his legislative agenda.



Sanders also spoke to 13WMAZ about legal challenges and what a recount would look like in Georgia. She was interviewed at WGXA News on poll workers, the state's political leanings, and what's next in the election.

"This was my first time conducting a live interview on television, which was an exciting yet nerve-wracking experience," Sanders said. "The frequency of the interviews definitely contributed to my professional growth. These interviews allowed me to take my experience in election law and administration and share it outside the comfort zone of my classroom." ■

# Spotlight

The College of Arts and Sciences Students  
Compete for National Scholarships



Kendyl Lewis



Kelly Bousquette



Juniper Guthrie



Maegan Stephens



Molly Bullington



Savannah Taylor



Nadya Gutierrez





**Kendyl Lewis**, Economics and Psychology, was selected as a finalist for the 2020 Truman Scholarship. Kendyl has been committed to fighting food insecurity in her community by founding GC's chapter of Swipe Out Hunger and also serving as a Zero Hunger Intern with the Congressional Hunger Center.

**Kelly Bousquette**, Psychology and Sociology, was selected as a 2020 Newman Civic Fellow. Kelly has worked to connect her campus community to the greater Milledgeville community through the organization she founded, Georgia College Students for Change, which enables Georgia College students to assist with projects related to the Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority (CSHLRA).

Two students in the College of Arts and Sciences have been selected as semi-finalists for the Fulbright Scholarship competition. **Juniper Guthrie**, a senior History and Liberal Studies student, has been selected as a semi-finalist for the English Teaching Assistantship in Thailand. **Maegan Stephens**, a 2020 graduate and World Languages and Cultures and Liberal Studies student, has been selected as a semi-finalist for the English Teaching Assistantship in Spain.

**Molly Bullington**, a junior Biology major, has been selected as a semi-finalist for the Fulbright Canada MITACS Globalink undergraduate summer research program. This is a special initiative organized through the Fulbright Canada Commission that brings undergraduates from the United States to Canada to perform advanced research alongside a faculty mentor.

**Savannah Taylor**, an Economics and World Languages junior, has been submitted by Georgia College as both a 2021 Truman Scholar nominee and received a Newman Civic Fellowship nominee. Both awards are given on the basis of civic engagement and leadership. Savannah was nominated based on her leadership with campus sustainability initiatives including grant writing she did for the Office of Sustainability and her transformative leadership of the Gardening Club.

**Nadya Gutierrez**, a junior Biology major, has been submitted by Georgia College as a Goldwater Scholarship nominee. The Goldwater Scholarship is the nation's premier scholarship for STEM research. Nadya is also the recent recipient of a Hollings Scholarship from NOAA — the first ever for Georgia College.

Congratulations to all students and their mentors on these distinguished recognitions. ■

# Fulbright and MITACS Globalink

## Summer Research Internship Participants



**Molly Bullington**



**Catherine Boyd**

Catherine Boyd (Junior, Physics) and Molly Bullington (Junior, Biology) have been selected to participate in summer research internships funded through a partnership by Fulbright Canada and MITACS Globalink. Catherine and Molly will undertake advanced research projects for 10 to 12 weeks under the supervision of faculty at Canadian institutions. Catherine will be performing research on nanostructured thin film devices with faculty from the University of Victoria, and Molly will be studying the neural circuit for courtship behavior in drosophila with faculty from the University of Saskatchewan – Saskatoon. This year's Globalink Research Internship will be carried out virtually. ■





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