

Dr. Brooke Conaway earns Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award

Innovative. Tough. Approachable. Passionate. In her nomination, these were the words students and colleagues used to describe Dr. Brooke Conaway, associate professor of economics, and 2022 recipient of the University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents Felton Jenkins Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award.

Conaway is the fourth Georgia College professor in five years and the second in her department to earn this award. At Georgia College for the last 12 years, she also received the Georgia College Excellence in Teaching Award in 2021.

"Teaching is my favorite thing, but the interaction you get with students, the lightbulb moments—that's wonderful," she said. "Working with amazing students and seeing them do something I don't think I could've done at their age, that's the best part of the job."

She doesn't stop at dedication to her profession. Conaway is working to reshape the typical perception of the field of economics, one student at a time.

Dr. Chris Clark, professor of economics and colleague of Conaway for the last 10 years, said those working in the field of economics are typically angry "jerks" and men.

"The fact that economics is viewed as a tough field where faculty and professors are not always interested in engaging students, she differentiates us in that way," he said. "And women are not common in economics, so to have a woman in the department that's not only in the field, but arguably the best teacher in the state is impressive."

"It means a lot to us to have somebody who can signal to everybody else that we are interested in teaching, and you can be a woman and come into the field of economics and get a Ph.D.," Clark said.

Conaway challenged that view of economics in her former student Julia Fox, '16. She previously considered economics as something she hated, but after attending Conaway's classes, Fox went on to minor in economics and uses what she learned in her career.



Dr. Brooke Conaway (right) innovates away from a "chalk and talk" style of teaching.

"I came in to her class with a lot of strong beliefs as an 18-year-old," Fox said. "She challenged those in a way that didn't make me feel bad. But she made me think critically about preconceived notions I had, and how to make better policy."

"It was also important to me to see a young, vibrant woman in economics," she said. "It can appear as a really inaccessible field, and she made it seem accessible."

Her students' anecdotes are supported by the numbers too. According to her nomination packet, Georgia College has increased its percentage of women earning undergraduate degrees in economics by five-to-10 points above the national average in the last three years.

But to earn this prestigious award, Conaway has reached beyond transforming student views of economics. She's changed their lives.

"I enjoyed the way Dr. Conaway seemed to value robust, in-class, back and forth with students," said David Hale, '20, a former student of Conaway. "She was not simply a 'lecture and go home' professor. One got the sense that

she truly cherished educating young minds and viewed those minds as capable of helping her grow, as well."

Another student and Conaway's current Supplemental Instructor (SI), junior economics and finance double major Matthew Meyer credits his path to Conaway.

"She makes me feel like I'm a part of the process, and I don't feel left out. It really makes me feel special," he said. "Even when I'm graduated, 50 years down the road, I will always remember Dr. Conaway as my favorite professor. She's the reason I got into doing what I love and found my passion."

But to Conaway, far from changing the path of students' lives, she just wants to be the best professor she can be.

"The fact that my research surrounds teaching is not an accident, because teaching is what I love best," Conaway said. "I guess I've just been trying to get better at it over the years. It's stuff I would've done anyway, not to win awards, but what I wanted to do to be a better professor."

Georgia College chemistry program approved by ACS

Georgia College's chemistry program has been added to the list of institutions approved by the American Chemical Society (ACS). This prestigious honor signifies excellence and rigor of education that provides students with the knowledge, experience and communication skills to be effective chemists.

"I am excited to share this news with you," said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. "The faculty did an excellent job, working closely with the American Chemical Society to pursue this approval. The ACS distinction also contributes to advancing the academic reputation of our university."

Currently, more than 690 universities are included on the ACS list. This spotlight can help attract top applicants from high schools, according to the ACS website. Institutions with ACS approval have a "modern and well-maintained infrastructure and provide a coherent chemistry curriculum." Employers often prefer graduates from approved programs, because they're better prepared for the workforce.

"This means a lot to Georgia College," said Dr. Peter Rosado, associate professor of chemistry. "It means students can graduate with a stamp, saying their program is ACS approved and part of an elite group of schools that have this designation. Lots of employers and graduate schools see this as a distinction. Some parents even ask about it when helping potential students choose their school."

The application for getting approval wasn't simple, Rosado said. Georgia College's program went through a rigorous, peer-reviewed, multi-step process, and it was a full department effort. To receive the ACS stamp of approval, a chemistry program must require 400 hours of traditional classwork, covering fundamental areas, and 500 hours of formal laboratory experience. Math and physics courses are also necessary.

Georgia College's chemistry students can now use the ACS badge on slides, posters and research papers. Graduating from an ACS-approved program is a boost into master's and professional programs. Certified graduates are also eligible to become members of the ACS.

"For years," Rosado said, "we have fostered and have seen growth in our undergraduate population. We've sent hundreds of students to professional conferences and presented original undergraduate-led research. Our new biochemistry and forensic chemistry concentrations also played a major role in the certification approval."

"The ACS saw our potential for growth beyond what we have achieved," he said. "The committee was very impressed."



Two music performances this week on campus

Georgia College's Department of Music hosts two special performances this week.

Guest artist Dr. Joe W. Moore III will perform a percussion recital "Finding Meaning: The Percussion Music of Joe W. Moore III" Thursday, Feb. 10 in the Max Noah Recital Hall.

The 7:30 p.m. concert will feature an array of percussion pieces with keyboard percussion, timpani and multi-percussion set-ups composed by Moore. He will be joined by Chair and Professor of Music Dr. Don N. Parker and the Georgia College Percussion Ensemble on several selections.

Moore leads the percussion program at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and is an assistant professor there. Active as both a soloist and chamber musician, he performs as a member of the Omojo Percussion Duo, the Ninkasi Percussion Group, 2x2 Percussion and Dead Resonance. He is also a composer and many of his works have been performed across the U.S.

Saturday, Feb. 12, Georgia College's Max Noah Singers will present "Valentine's Day Rendezvous" at 7:30 p.m. in Magnolia Ballroom at the Student Activity Center.

Music theatre favorites, such as songs from West Side Story and popular love songs like "Somewhere Out There" will be performed by the full ensemble, in addition to solos and duets from the group.

A \$5 donation is encouraged for each performance. Online donations can be made at alumni.gcsu.edu/music. All proceeds benefit music scholarships or the GC Department of Music through GCSU Foundation, Inc.

Both performances will be live-streamed at facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment. For more information, please email music@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8289.

What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/calendar

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8	9 5:15 p.m.- Draw from a live model in an academic setting from 5:15-7:15 p.m. in Ennis Hall 217. There is a suggested minimum donation of \$4 to pay the model. Model may be undraped or draped for creative purposes. All artistic skill levels are welcome. For more information, please email valerie.aranda@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-2431.	10 5:30 p.m.- Guest artist Dr. Joe W. Moore III will perform a percussion recital "Finding Meaning: The Percussion Music of Joe W. Moore III" at 7:30 p.m. in the Max Noah Recital Hall. For more information, please email music@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8289.	11	12 1 p.m.- GC Softball vs North Greenville. 3:30 p.m.- GC Men's Basketball vs. Georgia Southwestern. 5:30 p.m.- GC Women's Basketball vs. Georgia Southwestern. 7:30 p.m.- Georgia College's Max Noah Singers will present "Valentine's Day Rendezvous" at the Magnolia Ballroom, which is part of the Student Activity Center.