

GEORGIA COLLEGE

CONNECTION

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS | WINTER 2022



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President

Cathy Cox

Associate Vice President for Strategic Communications

Omar Odeh

Editor/Director of Marketing and Publications

Victoria Fowler, '12

Writers

Margaret Brown, '19

Eric Jones

Brittany Johnson, '15

Kristen Maddox, '21

Cindy O'Donnell

Al Weston

Design

Brooks Hinton

Bailey Wilson, '12

Photography

Michael Gillett, '15, '20

Eric Jones

Anna Gay Leavitt

Evan Leavitt

Aubrie L. Sofala, '12, '16

Joshua Smith, '12, '16

Please send

change of address

and class notes to:

University Advancement

Campus Box 96

Milledgeville, GA 31061

connection@gcsu.edu

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Students win numerous awards at Model of African Union Conference

Georgia College students won awards in practically every category when the university hosted the 24th Annual SEMAU (Southeast Model of the African Union) conference in November.

SEMAU is like a mock trial or Model UN (United Nations), where students act as real delegates and heads-of-state to debate issues that affect African nations. The exercise demands lots of preliminary research, quick thinking on their feet, a readiness to compromise and work with others, and the drive to take the lead and solve conflicts.

The event is a real-world simulation based on the national Model of the African Union, held every year in Washington, D.C. Student delegates sit on committees for social matters; peace and security; democracy, governance, and human rights; Pan Africanism and continental unity; and economic matters. They discuss matters of finance, food security, disease, immigration, and war.

Each school comes to SEMAU with resolutions that are pulled apart and remade through two days of debates. On the final day, student heads-of-state vote to adopt or reject final resolutions.

Dr. Charles Ubah, professor of criminal justice, co-directed this year's conference with retired English professor Dr. Eustace Palmer, who chaired the university system's African Council for four years.

Five university system schools participated with Georgia College: University of Georgia, Georgia State University, Albany State University, Savannah State University, and Middle Georgia State University. Advisors from Kennesaw State University and Fort Valley State University were in attendance, as well.

Senior criminal justice major Carson Shuler won an award for his role as Nigerian president on the executive council. He also won honorable mention for chairing the committee on peace and security. In addition to Schuler's awards, other Georgia College students won delegate awards for Ethiopia and Nigeria in economic matters; Pan Africanism; and democracy, governance, and human rights. Honorable mentions were also awarded to GC students for leadership in committees.

Georgia College welcomes Coverdell Scholar for Fall 2021

The 2021 Paul D. Coverdell Visiting Scholar Dr. Amir Moheet's research focuses on refugee and migrant populations — a topic he knows about first-hand.

"I was born in Iran, and my family left when I was about five months old," said Moheet. "My parents were politically active, and that didn't sit well with certain people over there. We were refugees and received asylum in the United States."

Although he admits he grew up "privileged" compared to many other refugees, his family's experience shaped his life in many ways.

It led him to study political science and research democratization, authoritarianism, and global migration. While working on his Ph.D., he received a highly-competitive David L. Boren Overseas Doctoral Fieldwork and Critical Language Fellowship in Ankara and Istanbul, Turkey. He then worked at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate.



He left DHS to pursue his passion in academia and to use his skills to dive into areas like human rights and social justice for refugees.

In Fall 2021, he taught Global Migration, where students were exposed to all aspects of international migration and human mobility.

The Paul D. Coverdell Chair in Policy Studies was established in 2008 and occupied by Dr. Roger Coate, professor of political science and public administration, for its first decade. In 2018, the endowed position was transitioned into a visiting scholar program.



U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges report lists Georgia College as a 'Top Public School'

The 2022 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges list designated Georgia College as ninth in the South — the highest-ranked Georgia

institution in this category for the third year in a row.

Georgia College's undergraduate nursing program appeared in a newly-established rankings list for 2022 and was the fourth-highest ranking program in Georgia to be featured.

The guidebook lists Georgia College 21st out of the Best Regional Universities in the South. "Best Regional Universities" are not ranked nationally, but rather against their peer group in one of four geographic regions — North, South, Midwest, and West.

Georgia College was also named a top undergraduate

teaching institution in the South and ranked sixth in Georgia for undergraduate computer science programs. The "Best Colleges" guidebook is made up of a wide variety of data on assessments by peers and counselors, retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, graduation rate performance, and the alumni giving rate.

The Princeton Review also recognized Georgia College on its "2022 Best Colleges: Region by Region" list for the 15th consecutive year. The university is a member of the elite group classified as the "Best Southeastern" colleges and universities.

Georgia College was distinguished by The Princeton Review for its "excellent academics" and student reports on their campus experience. Only 23 percent of national four-year colleges are featured on their website.

Students use behavioral economics to ‘nudge’ changes

Nudges come in many forms. From using smaller plates to control portion size to adding basketball hoops over recycling cans encouraging participation, nudges seek to alter people’s behaviors with minimal effort.

Georgia College economics and psychology students have come together to combine their knowledge and use the nudge theory to help improve local businesses and campus departments.

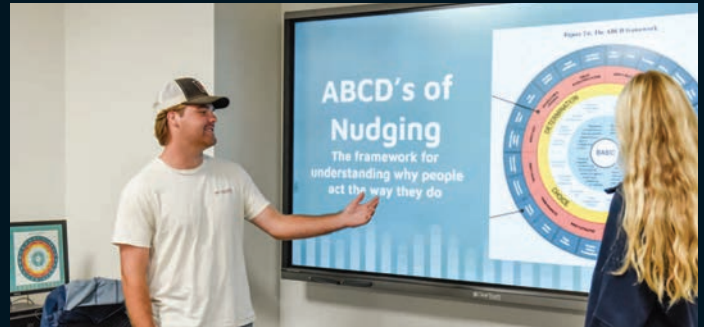
It’s called the GC Nudge Unit.

“It’s specifically based off of the nudge theory of behavioral economics, which is the idea that you can do a small thing — like implement a nudge — and it can impact people’s decision-making or help them make the desired decision,” said Kaitlyn Black, senior economics major.

During the Fall 2021 semester, Black and her fellow students worked on two projects for campus partners.

“We worked with University Housing. They’ve had a problem for the past few years, but especially since COVID, with people not staying on the weekends — specifically freshmen,” she said.

The Nudge Unit looked at data, talked with the client about



concerns, assessed the problem, and worked to create solutions, or nudges, they could propose to University Housing to allow them to better foster a sense of community for the residents.

The second project focused on the Learning Center and the effectiveness of the services offered. The Learning Center provides academic support for core classes like math and sciences.

“The coordinators of the Learning Center have a theory that the earlier in the semester students start utilizing their services, the bigger the impact is for them,” said Dr. Chris Clark, professor of economics. “What we’re partially doing is trying to find out if it’s effective, and then if we can, we’d like to find out if they’re right about that.”

Clark and Dr. Diana Young, professor of psychology, serve as faculty advisors for the group.

Georgia College introduces new restorative justice process on campus



It’s a growing movement worldwide — restorative justice. Primarily used in the criminal justice system, the restorative

justice model has increasingly been used on college campuses to build community and offer an alternative to traditional student conduct hearings and discipline.

“There’s some really good research around it being a good educational tool that still holds people accountable for their actions,” said Dr. Jennifer Graham, director of the Women’s Center, who is leading the effort on campus. “It can also lower recidivism rates.”

Some colleges have moved from their traditional student

judicial process completely to restorative justice. At Georgia College, we now have a blended model. This new model is a different way to handle conduct violations.

“Restorative Justice is a constructive method for dealing with harms caused to a community by an individual or a group,” said Dr. Tom Miles, dean of students. “It is not solely a student conduct tool, but a way of addressing issues that may or may not violate The Bobcat Code.”

The restorative justice approach at Georgia College is multi-tiered. Its foundation is built on fostering a sense of community across campus while providing a positive way to address issues and concerns. Those are community building circles.

The second layer of restorative justice is an alternative to the student conduct process.

It’s different from a traditional student conduct process in

that it brings together the person or persons who have been harmed by some actions and the person or persons who did that harm. At the conference, both parties are present and structured questions are asked by facilitators.

"The typical judicial process doesn't offer people who've been impacted by someone's actions the opportunity to ask questions like, 'Why me?' A restorative justice conference does," Graham said. "It explicitly asks people who caused harm why they did the thing they did. So, victims and impacted parties get answers to their questions."

After the open discussion, the conference moves on to the agreements phase. The person who caused harm must commit to do certain things to make right their wrong.

"These could range from writing an apology letter, community service, doing some kind of advocacy or awareness project on campus, research, or paying restitution," said Graham. "It's not just sticking somebody with a fine and putting them on probation. They must be an active participant in making it right again, which I think is a really powerful thing for people."

The final tier focuses on what's called reentry and support circles.

"Sometimes a student has been separated from the institution — they've gone out on a medical withdrawal, or they have been suspended because of something that they've done — and now they're coming back to campus," said Graham. "We want to help support them as they transition back to campus life."

Graduate award recipients take studies overseas

In 2020, Georgia College graduates Amara Tennessee and Cain Gantt each received awards for post-graduate study that would take them out of the country during a time of tightening travel regulations at the beginning of the global pandemic.

Both have since carried on their studies as COVID continues to create obstacles to overcome, as well as new opportunities to learn.

"Obviously, the pandemic put a pause on the program and has thrust Fulbright into a new format of teaching, but I wouldn't trade this opportunity for anything," said Tennessee.

Tennessee received a Fulbright scholarship to teach English in Columbia at la Universidad de Boyacá through May of 2022.

"Many of the courses at my university are still online due to the pandemic," she said. "The situation is teaching me to be adaptable and patient as we navigate this online learning platform together."

Gantt is in a similar situation at the Universität Hamburg in Germany, having been awarded a Study Scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) award (Germany's equivalent to the Fulbright).

"It has been a unique set of challenges to adapt from in-person undergraduate studies at the relatively small GC to online graduate-level courses at the very large Universität Hamburg," Gantt said.

He's currently working on getting his master's in mathematical physics and will be in Germany throughout the duration of his graduate work.

However, despite the disruption that the pandemic has caused to overseas learning, it has done little to dissuade his enthusiasm for learning the culture.

"I have no experience with the German education system outside of the pandemic," he said. "My classes over the winter of '20 and '21 and summer '21 semesters were taught entirely online, which has been a challenge to adapt. However, this winter semester (mid-October through end of January) we will have in-person and hybrid classes for the first time, and I am excited to meet my colleagues."

Both Tennessee and Gantt say that studying abroad continues to be a tremendous and worthwhile investment in their future despite the impediments of COVID.

"I cannot overstate how influential my time abroad has been on helping me expand my perspective on the world," Gantt said.

Tennessee agreed, "traveling provides the opportunity to see and enjoy so many other places, feel the fear, and do it anyway," she said.



Georgia College's new Global Foodways Studies certificate a recipe for success

Georgia College's new Global Foodways Studies certificate program blends history, culture, and tradition with cooking encounters and fieldtrips sprinkled in. Add internships, study away, and study abroad to the mix — and the mouthwatering result is a bona fide, multi-disciplinary program that combines facts with fun and thrills the palette.

It's also the first certificate program of its kind in the state university system.

Based on Professor of History Dr. Craig Pascoe's "Southern Foodways and Traditions" course, the program opens the door to a global fiesta of food. It also gives faculty new ways to teach history, sociology, anthropology, and pretty much any subject you can think of — even beer.

An updated cooking kitchen in Chappell Hall is being used for culinary demonstrations and presentations from guest speakers and chefs. New courses explore the history of American and Meso-American cuisine. In the future, classes will also include East Asian and Jewish foods, BBQ pit masters, and how race and barbecue shaped the American South. There'll be courses on Mexican foodways, celebration meals of the Nuevo South, and nutrition.

Pascoe's first class of the Fall 2021 semester served up country ham and biscuits. This fascinated junior history major Elijah



Lopez, who's from Manhattan, New York. He decided to take two foodways classes this semester after learning about the certificate program from his advisor.

"I'm enjoying this class and, of course, we get to eat," Lopez said. "I never thought of food as bonding people through history. Wings used to be eaten by relatively low-income families, and now they're revolutionizing the South. Everyone adores them."

"Food is instilled in the American mind. It stirs public excitement," Pascoe said. "We're teaching people about culture, about histories of peoples around the world, and we're using food to cement that in people's minds."

Georgia College Music Therapy enriches lives of adults with disabilities

Barbara Coleman, executive director of the Life Enrichment Center (LEC) in Milledgeville, Georgia, created a partnership with Georgia College called Creative Expressions. Every week, this program brings adults with disabilities together with music therapy students.

"We saw the opportunity to make a global impact, because every one of these students will go back to their own community with a different mindset," said Coleman. "Hopefully, one day, we'll change a generation of mindsets."

Bringing adults with disabilities together with students accentuates the center's motto that "we are more alike than different." It gives LEC participants a chance to engage musically with the community, share their unique talents, and enhance skills.

On campus, they become artists, guitarists, singers, and dancers. They get to be like college students.



In return, students learn to work with others, accept differences, and lead groups in therapy. It's a relationship like few others, according to LEC Activity Director and Music Therapist Jay Warren, who earned a master's in music therapy at Georgia College in 2020.

"It's rare to find a community that's willing to engage with adults who have disabilities. We all know, having grown up in the United States in the last 60 years," Warren said, "there's stigma attached to people based on their looks, speech patterns, and things like that."

"I've lived in a lot of places, and I've never seen this anywhere," he added. "It's astounding. As a student, it changed my life. I wasn't planning on working here. I wasn't planning on staying in this town. It completely changed the direction of where I was going."

Georgia College is one of two state universities with a music therapy major. It's the only Georgia school offering a master's in music therapy. The program started in 1977 and services Baldwin County Schools, in addition to LEC. There are 78 K-12 students with disabilities served at the music therapy

clinic on campus. Music helps with social skills, sharing, impulse control, and attention span.

Georgia College's Creative Expressions program with LEC began more than 20 years ago. Around 55 undergraduates majoring in music therapy get their clinical hours through eight Creative Expressions groups that meet each week on campus. These include Men's Vocal Percussion, Jungle Royales, Bell Tones, Harmonettes Vocal Choir, Good Vibrations, and Music in Motion.

Future teachers experience what it's like to have dyslexia, learn specialized reading techniques

Defined as a language-based learning disability, dyslexia can take on many forms. Traditionally, it's thought of as flipping similar letters like b and d. Georgia College junior early childhood majors recently learned it's much more than that.

In small groups, they filtered through stations presenting different challenges associated with dyslexia.

In one scenario, students had to cover their non-dominant hand and use the reflection from a mirror to write certain things. At another station, they were asked to follow verbal directions while background noise and side conversations muffled what was said.

Through all six of the 10-minute sessions, the students facilitating — who acted as teachers — hurried the participants and said things like, "If you can't do this, you won't move on to third grade."

"It was an eye-opening experience because I didn't know how common dyslexia is," said junior Rilie Edenfield. "I did get really frustrated. I understand why kids want to quit, and why they act out in class."

Connecting those dots is exactly why this training is important.

"My number one goal is they would realize that students are not lazy or incompetent, but instead that they look and dive deeper into the whole child," said Stephanie Starr, '09, who is a structured literacy, dyslexia interventionist.

Starr worked with Dr. Stacy Schwartz, professor of early childhood education, to secure two rounds of grant funding from the International Dyslexia Association — Georgia Branch to



support the simulations and equipment to use in classrooms to help struggling children.

"The first year of the grant we bought materials to help with the tactile nature of learning — tools children can write with and touch, like writing on the bumpy board or in sand," said Schwartz. "We also bought the kit that allows us to do the dyslexia simulation."

The grants also funded REAP (Reading is Essential for All People) training for all early childhood majors over the last three years. A nonprofit organization dedicated to improving reading proficiency in Georgia public school students, REAP provides public school teachers with specialized training in reading instruction called structured literacy. Early childhood majors will graduate with approximately 50 hours in structured literacy training.

"This makes our students very marketable because they're going to counties where they may not have had the time yet to get all their teachers trained," said Schwartz. "When applying for jobs, our students are able to talk about the fact that they are trained in structured literacy and have been trained through REAP."

Two initiatives, two celebrations, one day at Georgia College



Georgia College celebrated two new state-of-the-art construction projects — one just breaking ground and the other finishing up — on Wednesday, Sept. 29, 2021. A groundbreaking ceremony was held for Georgia College's new \$3.4 million Andalusia Interpretive Center at 2628 N. Columbia Street in Milledgeville.

Shovels of dirt were turned to commemorate the start of construction for Andalusia's new Interpretive Center. The 4,860 sq. ft. building is designed to blend in with the historic architectural aesthetics of the site. Alumna and author Flannery O'Connor spent her last years at the Andalusia farmhouse, composing many of her short stories, articles, and letters.

The center will be used as a point-of-entry for public tours at Andalusia. There will be an exhibition room, research area, gift shop, offices, and rental facilities. Outside, there will be a story-telling courtyard and walkway connecting to the rest of the property.

"I'm excited about the opportunities this new center will bring," said Matt Davis, director of historic museums. "From a state-of-the-art exhibition and collection storage facility to research rooms and event spaces, this facility will allow us to better meet our mission and tell a more complete story about the history of Andalusia, Flannery O'Connor, her writing, family, and life on the farm."



Later that day, a ribbon-cutting was held for the \$22.1 million Integrated Science Complex (ISC) at 141 W. Montgomery Street. It fits in with other buildings on campus with its rocking chair front porch and brickwork. But the new 43,000 sq. ft. structure is also notable for its modern array of floor-to-ceiling glass windows. Inside, there are walls of windows. Visitors are welcome any time of the day to walk the perimeter halls and see students and faculty working in laboratories.

"This building was designed to be science on display," said Dr. Indiren Pillay, chair of biological and environmental sciences. "The building epitomizes a sea-of-change in the way we think as scientists at Georgia College. This building is a monument to that."

Not only will science be on display in the new building; art will be featured as well. The building will contain the family art collection donated by Jim and Karen Fleece.

"With the art that will hang on the walls, and the science activity that'll be on display, the ISC is the perfect embodiment of our mission, scope, and collaborative spirit," said Dr. Eric Tenbus, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.



Georgia College students make silkscreen prints with Jones County youth

In the fall, students in Matt Forrest's printmaking class made screen prints of ravens and blackout poetry with youth at the Jones County Public Library.

The community outreach was part of a national celebration, TeenTober, through the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). Activities were hosted at libraries in October to promote services like WiFi availability and tutoring. The event encourages youth to read, while giving them an opportunity to adopt new skills.

"The idea was to highlight the library in a rural community and the notion that teens should be in the library," said Forrest, associate professor of art. "For many, carving out a time to read is becoming less of a priority due to competing technologies. We wanted to create something to show teenagers there are resources available for them."

Participants created one- and two-colored screen prints. One project involved blackout poetry — where the bulk of text on a page is blacked out with ink, revealing only a

few select words. Remaining words comprise an original poem or prose. A poem by Edgar Allen Poe was used, along with a page from the teen fiction novel, "Robot Visions," by Isaac Asmiov.

Prior to TeenTober, Georgia College students created computer images of a raven and leafy border. These were printed on acetate film, then coated in a photographic emulsion and exposed to produce stencils.

Students demonstrated silkscreen pulling at the library. The method involves scraping a wooden paddle across a stenciled, ink-filled screen. Thermographic toner interacted with the warmth of artists' hands, turning black to pink or black to blue.

Forrest connects students with community events like this to allow them to take knowledge from the classroom and share it with others. Students pick up valuable communication and leadership skills, while experiencing what it's like to organize a public, nonprofit event.



Georgia College welcomes Cathy Cox as the 12th president

Her name is familiar to most Georgians. Cathy Cox is a former two-term Secretary of State and state legislator. She also made a run for governor.

She recalls not winning that primary for governor in 2006 as “one of the best things to ever happen to me.”

“That opened the door to a call from a trustee at Young Harris College who asked me to apply for the president's job there,” she said. “I will forever be grateful that I got that opportunity to do something that I have absolutely loved and might never have pursued if I hadn't lost that election.”

She served as president of Young Harris College for 10 years. Most recently, she went back to her roots to lead as dean of Mercer University School of Law — where she received her law degree in 1986.

Georgia College welcomed Cox as the new president Oct. 1, 2021.

“I gave a lot of thought as to whether I wanted to go back into a presidency. Whether this would be the right fit, and whether I could add any value to the campus here,” said Cox. “As I dug into what was going on at Georgia College, I got very excited about the opportunity to be back on campus and be around undergraduate students in a residential setting.”

She looks forward to using her experience to build on the strong liberal arts foundation already in place at the university.

“I am deeply honored to be entrusted with the leadership of this vibrant and supportive campus community,” Cox said. “I have been extremely impressed with the ‘path to preeminence’ the university has been pursuing and the momentum that Georgia College currently enjoys. I am committed to joining you in the innovative efforts that will further advance this trajectory.”

Her candid and warm personality radiates in every conversation. She spent the last few months getting to know employees and students on campus through her listening tour.

“These listening sessions have been wonderful,” Cox said. “I’ve had a couple of dozen of them and each one took on a different tone or topic, it seemed.”

“I appreciate the candor of our faculty and staff in sharing what they loved about Georgia College while also telling me what could help them serve our students, our community, and our larger world in a better way,” she added. “I’ve gained a much greater understanding of what makes GC ‘tick,’ and what makes GC a special place through these sessions.”

She knows first-hand the value of a liberal arts education and appreciates how it comes to life through the Georgia College student experience.

“Our liberal arts-focused brand of education prepares students for tasks of today’s workplace — complex problem-solving, critical thinking, advanced levels of communication, and more,” said Cox. “And underlying every major here is a broad understanding of and appreciation for humankind — for people — as we prepare our students to work, to lead, to create, and to serve.”

Whether in law, politics, or higher education, her work has always focused on people. She’s a firm believer that by working together, we can make the world a better place.

“You know, I really enjoy people. I like getting to know them, I like to understand what motivates them, and I like to find common ground with them when I can,” Cox said. “It’s the same with working around students. I get very excited about what we can do, and occasionally what I can do individually, to help open doors for students to pursue their dreams.”

She admits that “requires knowing the students as people first” and believes Georgia College is the perfect size to be able to do that “with resources and gifted faculty and staff who can help launch students toward their goals.”

She and her husband Mark Dehler, who is also an attorney, have enjoyed connecting with the campus and the local community. They, along with their Labrador Retriever, Ellie, are proud to call Milledgeville home.

“““

We have found it refreshing to be back in a community like Milledgeville and Baldwin County where people know and care about each other.

“We have found it refreshing to be back in a community like Milledgeville and Baldwin County where people know and care about each other,” she reflected.

“Everyone has been so welcoming,” Cox said. “I also want to make sure that Georgia College is seen as a welcoming enterprise to our community, and that we use our resources as a state institution to serve as a good neighbor here.”

A native of Bainbridge, Georgia, Cox’s distinguished career in law, education, politics, and journalism truly embodies what it means to have a liberal arts background.

She is excited to take over the helm as president of the state’s designated liberal arts institution and is confident in a bright future for Georgia College.







New Aquatics Sciences Center will provide water expertise

Careers in marine sciences are more important than ever — with oceans rising and the proliferation of toxic algae and pollutions. To ensure Georgia College students are prepared, and to take advantage of faculty knowledge and expertise in this field, the university will open a new Aquatics Sciences Center by fall 2022.

“We are seeing significant changes in our global climate that’s been rapidly accelerating in the last decade,” said Dr. Indiren Pillay, chair of biological and environmental sciences.

“These changes are making significant differences in our marine environment,” he said, “from marine microorganisms to marine animals and the introduction of pollution, including temperature pollution where slight warming of the oceans is creating different ecosystems.”

Ecological changes like increasing incidences of red tides and algal blooms are just some issues that could be studied at the new center. Microbiologists are concerned, Pillay noted, because pathogens normally low in numbers are rapidly increasing and, in some cases, causing disease.

Out of 27 faculty in Georgia College’s Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, about a third are linked in some way to water-related topics — both marine and freshwater. Faculty include Drs. Dave Bachoon, Andrei Barkovskii, Christopher Burt, Melanie DeVore, Greg Glotzbecker, Kalina Manoylov, Matt Milnes, Christine Mutiti, Samuel Mutiti, Allison VandeVoort, David Weese, and Kristine White.

The new Aquatic Sciences Center will harness their knowledge and expertise under one umbrella. Existing strengths will be combined, and faculty will be encouraged to collaborate more fully, sharing equipment and ideas, Pillay remarked.

“Leveraging all this into a center will give us a unified mission and a unified approach, where we can train students in real-life applications of what we’re teaching in the classrooms and labs,” he said.

The center will be functional by fall 2022 but without a physical presence at first. Eventually, Pillay hopes Herty Hall will be renovated to house the new Aquatics Sciences Center, along with the current Observatory, Planetarium, and Natural History Museum.

A director will be selected to oversee the center, along with a research technician. With a centralized administration and structure, Pillay hopes the center will be a platform for more graduate and undergraduate research, additional grant writing, student training, and community engagement. The new center will also allow for the creation of summer research programs for students.

In conjunction with this project, a new concentration in marine biology is being added to the curriculum, as well.

"Any sort of center of research or excellence, such as the Aquatics Sciences Center, is unusual for a school our size," Pillay said. "But the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences has a significant footprint on campus — in terms of the number of faculty and the number of students we cater to."

"So, the center is a natural conclusion," he said. "It'll elevate the visibility of the work we're already doing and provide administrative support that will enable faculty to spend more time training and mentoring students in water-related research."

Some faculty who will contribute:

Dr. Dave Bachoon has worked more than 20 years on numerous projects related to water quality, both marine and freshwater. He trains his students to determine if a water body is polluted, if it contains harmful bacteria, and how to identify the source of pollution. He's published over 25 research papers on fecal pollution and pathogenic bacteria like *Leptospira*, *E. coli*, and *H. pylori* in Georgia and the Caribbean.

Dr. Andrei Barkovskii works on fish and shellfish bacteria that are harmful to humans and marine organisms. Previously, his students surveyed sources of bacteria in water, sediment, and oysters. They developed a method to remove harmful bacteria from water using kaolin products. Next, Barkovskii and his students will research emerging shellfish and fish pathogens in Georgia waters, and how climate change strengthens and spreads pathogens.

For nearly 20 years, Dr. Melanie DeVore has taken students to the Bahamas to study its unique ecosystem of beaches, coral reefs, marshes, and mangrove swamps. Students participate in an educational outreach sea camp for Bahamian children. DeVore also does extensive outreach in schools and for the public, talking about climate change. Her students are currently working with Stonerose Interpretive Center in California, which has a collection of 48-million-year-old fossils from the Eocene period.

Dr. Kalina Manoylov is an aquatic ecologist studying water quality with algae. She researches diverse, plant-like organisms that are important for the health of all water systems. Her students use algal taxonomy and community traits to determine effects of a wastewater treatment plant near the Oconee River Greenway in Milledgeville. Two other sites associated with the Savannah River have been studied long term — the tidal portion of the river at Port Wentworth, Georgia, and Three Runs Creek, a blackwater tributary and a hot spot of biodiversity on the border of South Carolina. These areas are being studied to understand the effects of dredging in the Savannah River estuary and changes in biodiversity at different grades.

Dr. Samuel Mutiti's research focuses on hydrology and water quality. His students work to find contaminants that affect water quality and aquatic organisms. They look for ways to remediate and treat contaminated water. They also study saltwater intrusions in coastal areas and the potential threat on macroinvertebrates. Students work with contaminants like microplastics, lead, selenium, bacteria, sediments, and salt. Field sites include local water bodies and coastal island areas like Sapelo, St. Simons, Tybee, and Hilton Head. Student research also takes place at Lake Lanier in the Atlanta area and international sites in Zambia and Kenya. His undergraduates are currently working on a water filtration system to remove lead and other heavy metals from drinking water. They're also identifying the prevalence and abundance of microplastics in Georgia aquatic environments.





Dr. David Weese's lab uses molecular tools, like DNA, to answer ecological questions about aquatic organisms.

In the past, his students used DNA sequences to identify invasive species of tilapia in Hawaii and screened natural populations of Hawaiian tilapia for bacterial infections. Currently, they're investigating the population genetics of several species of local crayfish in the Oconee River Basin and utilizing environmental DNA to identify rare, endangered, and invasive species in the Oconee River. Weese is excited the center will be used to "train the next generation of aquatic scientists."

Dr. Kris White identifies and describes marine amphipod crustaceans, a shrimplike organism. By studying their number, interactions, and wellbeing, her students can use amphipods to monitor the health of aquatic environments. Students are currently describing marine amphipod diversity in Panama and identifying the diversity of aquatic macroinvertebrates in freshwater lakes around Milledgeville. White's excited the new center will have space for an aquarium and a wet table for live organisms.

These are examples of the exciting research that will be done at the Aquatics Sciences Center, along with new initiatives. The center will "provide more student opportunities for high-quality transformative research experiences and foster collaboration with outside organizations," according to faculty.

Ultimately, it all boils down to the students and training them to become "better stewards of our communities," Pillay said.

"This fits into everything we do at Georgia College," Pillay said. "Many faculty involved in this project are highly productive with large graduate and undergraduate labs. That's an indication of the type of productivity we have for water quality and water analysis. Therefore, this center is a natural transition."

ATHLETICS

GC STUDIOS TEAM

WE WATCH THE ENGAGEMENT AND
IT'S GRATIFYING BECAUSE WE PUT
SO MUCH WORK INTO THE VIDEOS.





↳ uke Winstel, Bailey Clark, and Joel White make up the current version of GC Studios. The team of mass communication upperclassmen joined the Georgia College Athletics student work staff in different ways, and now come together to manage athletics' social pages, boost excitement for student-athletes, and produce original content.

This season, administration in athletics has given them room to grow with a converted office space and major equipment upgrades.

"Once they invested in us, I knew they wanted us to execute," Winstel said. "And we're going to prove them right."

Each student assists with idea creation, footage, and production, but they each have a niche. Winstel is often the voice of GC Athletics but helps with editing. Clark conducts interviews, and White is their producer. All three come together to brainstorm creative promotional ideas. Recently, they hit their biggest viewership mark when a single Instagram video featuring a GC Volleyball player mic'd up during practice surpassed 15,000 views.

White joined the athletic communications office as a mass communication practicum student and stayed on after, adding more and more responsibility as his time continued. He now serves as the lead producer for live streaming all home athletic events and is in charge of the look and feel of all broadcasts, from camera setup and angles to graphics work and broadcast format.

"You don't really think about it when you're watching TV, but there's a lot of background stuff going on in making sure every camera angle cuts correctly, all graphics look good, and everything runs smoothly," White said.

Winstel came to Georgia College with great experience as a broadcaster, leading the live game productions at St. Pius X Catholic High School in Atlanta, Georgia, as well as multiple high school championship tournaments. He stepped into a similar role on day one with the athletic department as the main Student Voice of the Bobcats, working as on-air talent for home broadcasts in all sports. Since then, he's gradually added a role in social media, now playing a key role in content generation and production while continuing his on-air role.

"Now we're about bringing it to you, more than it being on our YouTube page, and you can check it out if you want," Winstel said. "We're embracing a more modern social media strategy, and I would say, more creative."

Clark's first experience with Bobcat Athletics dates to before she was a student. A high-achieving softball player, she attended a GC Softball Prospect Camp and enjoyed the campus. Originally a biology major, she switched to mass communication and now has a goal of working in collegiate athletics communications. She still satisfies her love of softball as a member of the club team at Georgia College.

"Every time we get more than 2,000 views on a video, we're like 'this is awesome,'" Clark said. "We watch the engagement and it's gratifying because we put so much work into the videos. I don't think we could have ever imagined that we'd have this much of a blow-up on social media."

Through the students' work, GC Studios has brought student-athletes and the wider GC community closer together.

"These students care so much, and I appreciate their hard work," said Al Weston, assistant athletic director for communications. "It's going to pay off for them professionally, and it's exciting to work with them and see what they come up with on a day-to-day basis."

The trio continues to give Bobcat Athletics a strong digital presence and works closely with other student workers in the department with the hopes of passing along their roles after graduation.



ALUMNI WEEK 2021







Dr. Susan Stewart

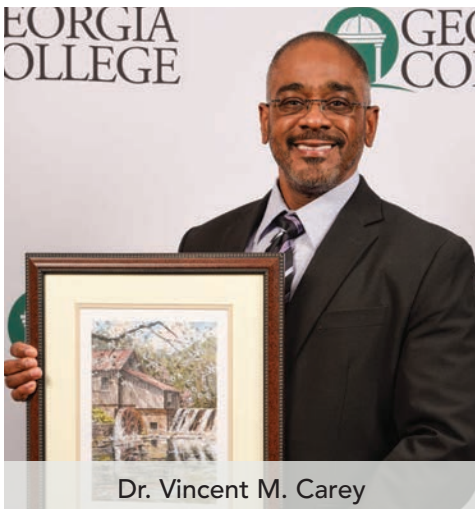


Pamela D. Trawick



Dr. Sean B. Dolan

Six award-winning alumni were honored during Alumni Week



Dr. Vincent M. Carey



Mary Rob Plunkett



Martin Dewald

In addition to two new inductees to the Athletics Hall of Fame, Georgia College salutes four alumni whose perseverance in exemplifying Georgia College, acts of kindness, dedication to their profession, and tireless commitment to volunteerism sets the bar for alumni achievement. The awards were presented to them during Alumni Week.

Dr. Susan Stewart, '70

Dr. Susan Stewart, '70, is the recipient of the Alumni Heritage Award. This honor is bestowed to an alumna who, in four or more decades of service, has demonstrated in her life those ideals that best exemplify the traditions and heritage of the university.

Georgia College means a lot to Stewart. She served on the Alumni Board, as well as the Foundation Board of Trustees for ten years, two of which she served as chair.

"This was a wonderful experience," she said. "It was such a great opportunity to not only meet the people who are on the board, but also the faculty and students. This experience also allowed me to keep apprised on what Georgia College was doing. And each year it gets better."

"My calling in life is to help youth and families maximize their resources and live their best

lives," Stewart said. "My home economics degree from Georgia College prepared me for a rewarding career in public schools and with the University of Georgia Extension Service following my calling."

"At Georgia College I had the opportunity of being a junior advisor," Stewart said. "Junior advisors were in the dorm with students including those who'd transferred. I got to work with a French student who had studied abroad. It was very rewarding."

What she enjoys most are the relationships she's formed while being involved with Georgia College. Her class has since started holding periodic mini reunions each year.

Stewart is president of S. Stewart and Associates, Inc., where she's a conference planner. Stewart feels her Georgia College experience gave her the confidence to contact the heads of organizations.

"I've had to deal with business executives, United States presidents, vice presidents, and community leaders," she said. "Whether you're having a conversation with former Presidents Jimmy Carter or Bill Clinton, how you relate to them is important."

"I just am so appreciative to Georgia College for allowing me to be involved," she said. "It has been one of the joys of my life. I could never give back what it has given to me, but I've loved trying."

Pamela Trawick, '91

Pamela Trawick, '91, is the recipient of the Alumni Service Award, which recognizes graduates who've rendered the greatest service in recent years to both the university and the Alumni Association.

While attending Georgia College, Trawick considered herself an introvert, but that all changed once she graduated. Trawick served a

two-year term as the first event coordinator for the African American Alumni Council (AAAC) and was instrumental as being one of its six founders.

“During my tenure, my position allowed me to be creative, serve in purpose, and create platforms to recognize several alumni, allies, and friends who have made a significant and positive impact in and for the lives of African American students at GC,” she said. “The AAAC’s role and importance gives hope to so many students.”

Being on the AAAC Executive Committee was the springboard for her involvement with Georgia College. This experience enabled her the opportunity to serve on the Foundation Board of Trustees, which she serves on today.

“I am grateful for everything at Georgia College, but most of all I love the students — all of them,” she said. “You never know the struggles students encounter in college. I never came to GC to only stand for African American students, I came to stand for all students.”

Trawick is an African American alumna with a biological family consisting of people of different races, religion, age, disabilities, sexuality, and gender.

“GC students have a sense of community. When they see a wrong, they have no problem addressing it with civility and poise, and I love each of them for this,” she said. “We need more of this in the world and on college campuses.”

Trawick thinks it’s important to serve others. She learned this from her mother and grandmother.

“This is what drives me to serve,” she said. “I want to make sure the values and morals of my upbringing were always on display and in action for others to see.”

Trawick learned so many lessons at Georgia College that she uses in her profession as president, owner, and operator of ICD Monitoring Services, LLC and in her everyday life encounters.

“I learned to reach back and pull forward,” Trawick said. “Be a fisherman of men. When you cast your rod, pole, or net, you want to catch as many as you can and bring them with you to the next level of the journey, and then you can release them back into the water, the world, so they can go forth and do more.”

Dr. Sean B. Dolan, '12

Dr. Sean B. Dolan, '12, is the recipient of the Outstanding Recent Alumni Award. This honor recognizes Georgia College alumni who graduated within the past 10 years and who have made notable achievements in a profession with promise for continued success. He’s worked as a pharmacologist at the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) over a year-and-a-half. Before that, he was a postdoctoral research fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where his focus was behavioral pharmacology and behavioral economics research related to substance abuse and addiction.

“At all stages of my career, I’ve found the most joy in discovery,” he said. “Whether it’s making my own discoveries through my experiments or learning of others’ discoveries by staying on top of the scientific literature in my field, it’s truly a privilege to have learning new things as a core feature of my job.”

Dolan chose this career so he could make a direct impact on public health.

“Although academic research provides more freedom and diversity in research topics, it can take a long time for your findings to have any impact outside of a particular field of academic research,” he said. “At FDA, the research can be used directly to influence policy and make a large positive public and individual health impact.”

Dolan knows perseverance is the key to success. Day-after-day, he is driven by a passion for what he does.

“Any rewarding career is likely to require hard work, both at the job itself and in the prerequisite steps necessary to achieve it,” he said. “Continuing to work hard through the challenges one may face is essential for success in any career.”

Dr. Vincent Carey, '87

Vincent Carey, '87, DMD, is the recipient of the Ethel Rae Mozo-Stewart Community Service Award. This distinction is in memory of an alumna from the class of '46, to honor the spirit of volunteerism among graduates. Recipients are characterized by a history of exemplary service that result in visible improvements within his/her community.

At Georgia College, Carey helped charter the Black Student Alliance and the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. He was also a resident assistant (R.A.) for two years, which provided him great real-world experience in working with people.

“As an R.A., I got a chance to interact with every personality type you can think of,” he said.

Carey and his friends also started a small social interest group called “Rated PG.” They networked with local elementary schools to do good things in the community, especially during the holidays. Samples of his good deeds catered to local youth. They hosted a Halloween carnival at a nearby church with games and treats. They also hosted Spring Fling filled with fun activities for children, like bobbing for apples.

“We wanted to provide some sort of outdoor activities for the kids,” he said. “In doing so, we gave them some idea of mentorship. That was very important to me.”

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, his dental office hosted “Dentist for a Day.” Carey rented a charter bus for elementary school students. They came to the office where he and his staff taught the kids how to do dental exams and other activities associated with dentistry. After that, the team treated the children to lunch at the Galleria Mall in Centerville, Georgia.

Carey also hosts Fort Valley State University students at his office once a year to advise them about dental school and help prepare them for college.

“We all have a responsibility to share our education with someone younger than us,” he said. “Because in my mind, it’s the only way you’re going to build a community, maintain that community, and keep the bloodline of the community flowing.”

Carey’s also sponsored two scholarships at the Medical College of Georgia — one for students in dental school and one for students in medical school.

He continues to help young individuals by sharing his experiences with them, so they can better navigate through life.

“What it all boils down to is taking your life experiences and making every last one of them positive,” Carey said. “Young people don’t understand this concept and think that everything that happened to them is for a purpose. They look at a situation as if, ‘Oh no. This will defeat me.’ But really, it won’t. It’s just preparing them for the future.”

He feels mentorship is important, because he learned so much from the people before him.

“Mentoring is not our responsibility; it’s an obligation,” he said. “The students that we’re mentoring are the ones that’ll keep the fire lit for generations.”

Athletics Hall of Fame Inductees

Mary Rob Plunkett, '10

Mary Rob Plunkett, '10, (Soccer) is the first All-American in Georgia College Women’s Soccer history after making the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Third Team in 2009. The most decorated goalkeeper in Bobcat Soccer history, Plunkett was an All-Region and All-Peach Belt Conference (PBC) First Team selection that season, as well. She owns two of the four NSCAA All-Nation Scholar awards in school history, picking those up in 2009 and 2010. Plunkett is the school’s career record-holder in goals against average (0.74), saves percentage (.854), and shutouts (19). She also ranks second in career saves with 275 and wins with 33.

Martin Dewald, '10

Martin Dewald, '10, (Baseball) played two seasons with the Bobcats as a junior-college transfer. He was an Honorable Mention All-American his first season as a relief pitcher and a consensus All-American as a starting pitcher in 2010. Dewald helped lead the Bobcats to an appearance in the NCAA Division II World Series in 2010, taking spots on the 2010 NCAA World Series and as the NCAA Southeast Regional All-Tournaments teams. In the 2010 Southeast Regional title game, he threw a six-hit, eight-strikeout shutout, not walking a single batter against Francis Marion. The win was his second at that region tournament. At the World Series, he threw two complete games, including a 3-0 win over Southern Indiana on five hits and eight more strikeouts.



Maker Space gives future educators the tools to get creative

Virtual reality sets. 3D printers. Drones, robotics, and an engraving machine. This isn't your typical technology classroom. It's for future educators.

Georgia College's John H. Lounsbury College of Education recently opened a new Maker Space. It brings multiple new technologies into the hands of teacher candidates to help them educate their students.

"A Maker Space is a place where people can come together and create things and learn different

technologies," said Dr. Joseph Peters, dean of the College of Education.

"The idea for the Maker Space really came from me visiting some of the schools in Georgia that had a similar space set up," he said.

Knowing schools across the state were already bringing technology into the hands of students in such a way, Peters proposed creating a Maker Space in Kilpatrick Hall. The space allows students to create, innovate, and

find new ways to engage students in their lessons.

"We had some things to help our teacher candidates like bulletin board papers, tools to cut, and a laminating machine," said Diedra Monroe, administrative assistant in the Department of Professional Learning and Innovation. "But Dr. Peters wanted to go to the next level."

At the same time, faculty members Dr. Joanne Previts and Dr. Nancy Mizelle were writing a GREAT (Georgia Residency for Educating Amazing Teachers) Grant proposal. In the end, Georgia College and the Southern Regional Education Board were awarded the funds by the Department of Education.

"We're very fortunate to get a Department of Education Teacher Partnership Grant," Peters said. "There was a \$5.2 million grant that we were awarded to prepare middle grades teachers, and because of that, we were able to buy everything in the space."

From there, Monroe worked to purchase the equipment, get it set up, and train graduate assistants on how to use the technology.

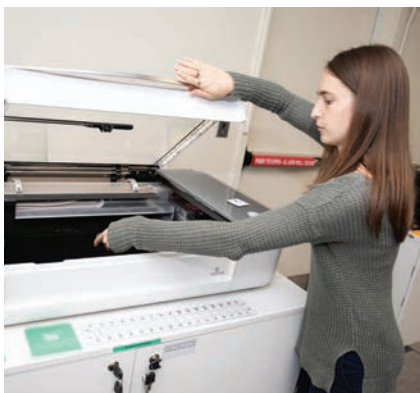
"The Glowforge will engrave things. For example, we have been engraving on wood, and we made a sign for the Maker Space with this," said Micaela Davis, middle grades master of education student.

Davis is one of three graduate students who helped Monroe set up the space. Together, they learned how to use the tools.

The key is tying what's created back to using the technologies to the Georgia Standards for Excellence — the framework used to prepare elementary, middle, and high school students for success. Graduate students worked to link each piece of

equipment to state standards and developed lesson plans student-teachers can use.

"We can use the Glowforge to create different lessons and visuals that go along with it," said Davis. "For example, you could print out an engraving of different planets. That's one of the sixth-grade science standards."



Another tool available in the Maker Space is the Cricut machine, which cuts anything from paper to vinyl or fabric.

"The thing about the Cricut is that it really can play into any standard. Any kind of presentation we're doing,

from posters to anything that we're trying to make a visual of — the Cricut can be a part of that," said Savannah Rawdin, early childhood education master of education student.

For some, it's about being able to physically hold things. That can help younger students better understand concepts like counting, addition, and subtraction.

"I have used the Cricut for creating manipulatives, so sometimes we just need counters really quickly for our kindergarten students or other things when we talk about cardinality," said Rawdin.

Even as students grow and the concepts they learn get more intensive, the act of holding and touching can help with comprehension.

"With these 3D printers, we can make different tools to use in the classroom," said Bryce Bowen, master of health and human performance student. "I've made things like a heart that can be used to teach anatomy. You can give students a handheld version of something that they normally would not be able to put their hands-on, and it can help them understand it better."

Hands-on learning for future teachers is important as well. Peters said he hopes students take their experience in the new Maker Space to the schools where they teach.

"Our Maker Space is a little more on the high-end side, because our students are graduating to a 30- to 40-year career," said Peters.

"Schools will start to use more technology in the future, and we want our students to be ahead of the curve on what's going to be next."



REMEMBERING HER PAST:

DIVERSITY CHIEF BRINGS PEOPLE
TOGETHER OVER DINNER

As a child, the first thing she heard upon waking from Sunday afternoon naps was the clanking of spoons and tingling of glassware. It was a comforting sound.

Coming into her grandmother's dining room, she'd rejoin family and friends still gathered around the table after a noontime meal, dressed in their Sunday best, enjoying each other's company.

"I grew up in a small town in Mississippi. My grandfather was the senior minister at a popular Methodist church. My grandmother prepared Sunday dinner for other ministers who visited our church and for people who drove far and stopped at the parsonage for a meal. My grandmother took great pride in that. She always made sure it was special and prepared a beautiful table for her guests," said Dr. Carolyn Denard, recently retired Chief Diversity Officer at Georgia College.

"One of the many ways we nurtured friendships and cultivated our own distinct culture in the Jim Crow South was Sunday dinner. When you couldn't go to a restaurant — Sunday dinner was done by entertaining at home. That happened around your own dining table," she said. "I've seen so many pictures for evening events, holidays, of my family and friends dressed up for formal dinner around my grandmother's table."





These memories gave Denard a “sense of home” in the world, and they reminded her how a homemade dinner can sustain relationships. Friends who gathered around her grandmother’s table maintained their relationships for years. Those Sunday dinners became an important ritual in their lives.

Denard used this knowledge to bring together people of all ages, academic disciplines, races, nationalities, and genders for something that’s become rare in the age of cell phones, video games, and social media — a slow, enjoyable meal with real dishes and glassware, flowers and place cards, cloth napkins and silverware.

“What turned out to be my good fortune was my love of dishes to really make it an upscale, at-home experience,” Denard said. “Over the years, I’ve collected blue and green glasses, lovely plates, and flower vases that are blue.”

It’s this attention to detail that makes each person feel special. It reduces the stress of arriving unknown. After ice breakers, people introduce the person sitting next to them. Then — after opening and closing toasts, conversation, and laughter — the group shares other ways they think Georgia College can become more welcoming. Each guest leaves knowing more faces around campus.

One of the many ways we nurtured friendships and cultivated our own distinct culture in the Jim Crow South was Sunday dinner.

It’s called “Dinner with 12 Strangers.” Other schools use events like this to introduce first-year students to faculty or bring alumni together with potential donors. Denard launched “Dinner with 12 Strangers” this fall at Georgia College as a pilot activity for the university’s new Diversity Action Plan. Three gatherings were held — outside on the porch of Atkinson Hall, in the Cultural Center, and the last, a special Thanksgiving meal, at Mayfair Hall.

It was wildly successful.

“Everybody can identify with dinner,” Denard said. “It’s the timeless gathering over a meal, and I think that’s why it appealed to me. You could’ve had ‘Bingo with 12 Strangers’ and I wouldn’t have been interested. But ‘Dinner with 12 Strangers’ really caught my eye — largely because I like the joy and personal engagement of dinner parties.”

Catered food offered plenty of choices for meat, vegetables, and side dishes, as well as options for vegans. There was always fruit and a wide variety of desserts. But an important detail for

Denard was recreating a setting like her grandmother’s — using real china, silver utensils, tablecloths, and special glassware. Denard added a parting gift for each guest.

The dinners brought together 36 people who didn’t know each other previously. A diverse collection of students, faculty, and staff attended. Each had a different background and reason for coming. Some were new to campus. Others felt isolated socially because of COVID. There were international and transfer students, as well as people who grew up in Milledgeville, Georgia.


One woman with a disability just started working as a staffer. She came to the dinner nervous, but left realizing she made the right choice in coming to Georgia College. Another woman wrote to Denard to say it was the best dinner party she’s ever attended. Many people sent thank you cards and notes.

This has meant so much to Denard, who retired at the end of December.

“I’ve been really pleased about how this turned out. In fact,” Denard said, “it’s been the happiest thing for me this whole semester. I think we need to draw on those human behaviors that have sustained us forever. And, certainly, breaking bread together is one of those.”

“Sharing a meal is real Americana,” she added. “You’re sitting down. You’re comfortable. You’re gathered around the table, and by the end of the evening you feel like a unit. The thing we toast to at the end is ‘We came as strangers, and we leave as friends.’”





Business law professor's innovative teaching style eliminates textbooks

By eliminating textbooks, offering skeleton slide notes, and teaching students to discover the why of their opinions, Dr. Nicolas Creel, assistant professor of business law, is exploring innovative teaching techniques at Georgia College.

A faculty member at Georgia College since 2018, Creel is already making waves in his department. Motivated by personal experience and a desire to remedy prohibitive costs to college and low student engagement, he developed an approach centered on current events and discussion.

"Whenever I see a student who really makes connections, in a way that I wasn't expecting but made sense, that is one of the most rewarding things I can possibly get," Creel said. "There's no way I could have taught them that answer, but I taught them the process."

Creel began his educational journey in Lake Jackson, Texas, outside of Houston.

He originally set out with a plan — and the expectation — to become a banker. But when he graduated from University of Dayton School of Law amidst the 2008 financial crisis, he was forced to consider what he was truly passionate about.

"I was going to classes with my friends before law classes started, and I was reading the books," Creel said. "I got to the point where I thought 'that is odd,' and figured I clearly had a passion for this subject. I liked helping them study for finals and tests, too. That was just something I did in my free time."

A jack of all trades, he has six degrees. They include a bachelor's of business administration in economics, two master's degrees in international relations and political

science, a juris doctor degree in law, a master of laws (LLM) in international comparative law, and a doctorate in political science.

His first official full-time job was at Texas A&M University, San Antonio. The university had just been given the green light to become a four-year institution, and Creel had the opportunity to assist in creating the political science department and develop the degree program.

This presented him with a unique occasion to completely reinvent how the courses were taught. The experience, Creel said, led to his department evaluating traditional methods like textbooks — which were prohibitively expensive to their student body — and replacing them.

To Creel and his peers, along with a growing number of educators, textbooks are typically inadequate to explain the application of a subject, underutilized by and disengaging to students, and expensive.

"As a subject matter expert, myself, I see that textbooks are trying to go a mile wide and can only go an inch deep," he said. "If we know or suspect we can do better, I think we should try. Given what we know, trying something different doesn't seem like it could be worse than using something everybody dislikes."

In place of traditional methods, Creel searches for news stories that relate to topics taught in his classes and catalogs them. Those links are then embedded in skeletal, shorthand slides given to students at the start of a course. The news stories act as class readings.

"I always promise that no question on the exam cannot be answered by the slides," he said. "You're not going to get an A-level response off the slides, unless you fill it in. Since I've given them the skeleton, it's easier to fill out and pay attention in class."

He remarked, "Professors show ourselves as having value by showing students they can rely on what we're saying; it matters, and it'll help them with their knowledge of the subject."

Creel also practices what he teaches. He avidly provides commentary and his expert opinion to media outlets on a variety of topics. He's written for publications like the

Savannah Morning News, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, San Antonio Express News, and the Washington Post. He's also contributed to articles for

Forbes Magazine, Healthline, and Realtor.com.

However, the environment at Georgia College, he noted, lends its faculty the capability to focus on matters other than media contributions and academic publishing.

"I'm not going to be publishing in the top four journals of political science, but I publish in solid journals with a respectable research track," Creel said. "I put in so much more time in the development and implementation of my classes compared to larger university peers. At the end of the day, I'm really servicing the education of our students."

A dedicated learner himself, Creel hopes he can instill the same love of learning, critical thinking, and knowledge for a lifetime to his students.

"My method really enforces to students the applicability of what they're studying," he said. "The value in my way of teaching is seeing students who otherwise would never have cared, now going to vote because they understand the issues, and they see the relevance in it."

“AS A SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT, MYSELF, I SEE THAT TEXTBOOKS ARE TRYING TO GO A MILE WIDE AND CAN ONLY GO AN INCH DEEP. IF WE KNOW OR SUSPECT WE CAN DO BETTER, I THINK WE SHOULD TRY.”





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Class Notes

1950s

The "Big Eight of '58" friends returned to Milledgeville Nov. 4 through 6, 2021, for a campus visit. Classmates who attended the Saturday picnic included: **Virgie Sellers Heffernan, '58**, and **Dr. Elizabeth Traylar Baarda, '58**. The five "Big Eight" attendees were **Myra Brown McGuinty, '58**, **Mindy McGuinty Stewart, '13**, **Helen Cook Boruff, '58**, **Suzanne Blount Thomas, '58**, **Beverly Hunt Hardin, '58**, and **Martha Cleland Gregory, '58**.

1970s



J. Michael "Mike" Allen, '78, '82, serves as an executive vice president and area credit executive at Cadence Bank in Gainesville, Georgia, providing credit support to the company's Georgia and Florida regions. He is also a partner in the bank consulting firm, Accello Advisors, specializing in credit management, asset and liability management/funds transfer pricing reviews, technology implementations, succession planning, and leadership training. His varied banking experience spans 42 years.

Allen was recently appointed as president of the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University (LSU), where he's also an executive committee member and a faculty member. Allen received LSU's 2017 T. Eugene Spragens President's Award, presented to an outstanding faculty member. In addition, he's an instructor, board member, and credit committee member of the Georgia Bankers Association, director of the Georgia Bankers Association Graduate Banking School, and faculty member at the University of Georgia Banking School.

1990s

Amat Gaye, '96, is married with three children. Gaye lives in New Jersey from where he commutes to his job at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, New York.

2000s



Scott Malone, '04, was recently promoted to senior director of Customer Operations with Figure, a leading Fintech company. In his new role, Malone is responsible for leading all operations for consumer lending and

customer experience across multiple sites. He resides in Reno, Nevada, with his wife, Melissa, and son, James "JW."



Ralph Staffins, III, '06, '08, president and CEO of the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce, has been selected by Georgia Trend Magazine as one of the "Top 40 Under 40" for 2021. In 2020, he served as chair of the Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and is serving an additional year due to the pandemic. Passionate about workforce education, Staffins serves on the boards of directors at the Coastal Pines Technical College, Golden Isles College, and Career Academy Foundation.

Zach Taylor, '07, was named Georgia Cycling Association Coach of the Year.

2010s



Sydney McRee Solomon, '11, was elected as partner at the law firm of Jones Cork, LLP in Macon, Georgia, effective Jan. 1, 2022. After graduating from Georgia College, Solomon attended Mercer Law School.



Joshua Smith, '12, '16, and his wife, Krista, welcomed Kendall Kaye Smith into the world Aug. 26, 2021. The family resides in Milledgeville, Georgia. Joshua received his Bachelor of Business Administration in 2012 and Master of Business Administration in 2016 from Georgia College. He works for Georgia College in University Communications. Krista is a fifth-grade teacher at Gray Elementary School in Jones County.



Leah Gillett, '16, and Michael Gillett, '15, '20, welcomed their little Bobkitten, Sadie Alden, Aug. 24, 2021. She's a beautiful and healthy baby girl who loves to snuggle.

Rachel Lord Elizondo, '18, and her husband, Ronald, are expecting their first child, Elizabeth Jean Elizondo, in January 2022.

In January 2022, Elizondo began serving as vice president of the Board of Directors for Ruth's Cottage and The Patticake House, which is comprised of a domestic violence shelter, sexual assault advocacy program, domestic violence legal advocacy program, and Child Advocacy Center. She's served on the board since October 2020.

Jordan Thomas, '18, was recently promoted to leading the Global Banking CX Program at NCR as a program manager.



Ansley Harper, '19, married **Christian Pontalti, '19,** Nov. 6, 2021 in Charleston, South Carolina. The wedding party included several Georgia College alumni, including **Amir Abdallah, '19, Hannah Cronauer, '19, Jake Cronauer, '19, Brandon Flynt, '19, Morgan Mayfield, '19, Lindsey Pitts, '19, Parker Robertson, '19, and Kayla Wilson, '19.** Ansley and Christian met at GC and are thankful for all the lasting friendships made during their

time there. Ansley graduated with a degree in public health and is employed by the Task Force for Global Health. Christian has a degree in literature with a minor in marketing and is employed by NCR. The couple lives in Atlanta, Georgia.



Robert Abbott, '19, and Raasha Gutierrez, '20, were married Nov. 14, 2021. After teaching at the middle- and high-school level for two years, Robert began a master's program in literary studies at Georgia State University. He works at Georgia State University's Writing Studio as a writing tutor. Raasha entered the healthcare profession as a COVID-19 tester and now works at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta as a behavioral and mental health tech. She hopes to pursue a graduate program in art therapy in the near future.

2020s



Sara Kathryn Boyles, '20, married **Peyton Singletary, '19,** in Savannah, Georgia, April 17, 2021. Many members of Kappa Sigma, Alpha Delta Pi, and other Georgia College alumni attended. The reception was held at the Savannah Yacht Club. Sara Kathryn is a nurse in the pediatric unit at Candler Hospital, and Peyton works at South State Bank.



Michelle Gibson, '20, married Tate LaPorte July 17, 2021 at White Fox Cottage in Commerce, Georgia.

"I am very blessed to have met three of my wonderful bridesmaids at GC: **Kaylyn Scanlon '19, Mary Beth Lees Burton, '18, and Emily Embry, '19.**" Michelle said. "Tate and I met during my sophomore year at GC while he was stationed with the U.S. Coast Guard in St. Mary's, Georgia. After years of long-distance dating and a short move to Charleston, South Carolina, we are

stationed in downtown St. Petersburg, Florida, and absolutely loving Florida and married life."

Tom Swinson, '21, was promoted in Oct. 2021, to serve as the senior director of Industry and Education Services for SMC3. He was also recently appointed to serve on the Georgia College J. Whitney Bunting College of Business Advisory Committee responsible for developing the college's five-year strategic business plan. In addition, Swinson serves as an industry advisor to the Georgia College Logistics Association under the direction of faculty member Dr. Scott Cox. Swinson was recognized as the Outstanding Master of Logistics and Supply Chain Management student in May 2021.

Please submit your news for Class Notes at:
gcsu.edu/alumniclassnotes

In Memoriam

Louise Foster Pursley*	Harriett Braddy, '57
Elizabeth Hayes Harwell, '39	Billie West Lawing, '57
Alice Langford Sisk, '42	Elizabeth Royal Patton, '57
Dorothy Beckum Burnett, '43	Tracy Smith Coyle, '60
Norma Stephens Godowns, '44	Barbara Worsham McAlister, '62
Virginia Henson Tower, '44	Peggy Ann Wicks Patterson, '62
Katie Penland Bucilla, '46	William Fogarty, '70
Vivian Dantzler Broome, '49	William Caye, '71
Helen Dowls Brown, '49	Patricia Bass Riner, '73*
Margaret Perry Fletcher, '49	Julian Alexander, '75
Mary Alice Lewis Paddack, '49*	Glyniss Allen Logan, '77
Helen Long Bass, '50*	Otto Jenson, '78
Celeste Smith, '50	William Kenmore, '82
Anna McMillian Wesley, '50	Alexis Brown, '87
Jean Muns Smith, '51	Junyth Hanson Meeks, '87
Mary Deariso Thompson, '51	Lori Adolphus, '90
Suzie Porter Upton, '51	Gail Miller-Smith-Davis, '90
Constance Barrow Krueger, '52	Rebecca Bagwell Sears, '00
Martha Belch Hulsey, '55	Jordan Wells, '06
Betty Ann Burge Southerland, '55	Michelle Smith, '07
Edna Giles Snyder, '56	Daniel Simpson, '08
Davelle Lyon Sweet, '56	Deedra Grier Jackson, '12

*Denotes alumni of Peabody School.

This list recognizes deceased alumni that the university has been made aware of since Nov. 23, 2021.



University Communications

Campus Box 97
Milledgeville, GA 31061

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Alumni create a lasting legacy to support first-generation students



Lee Snelling, '01, '03, and Holly Snelling, '04, '14, were first-generation students at Georgia College. They knew what it was like to worry about studying for exams and finances at the same time. It made their trek through college often difficult.

Lee recalls one semester where he was supposed to prepare for final exams. Instead, he worried how he would pay tuition after receiving his bill for the next semester.

"Holly and I never want cost to be the reason why a student can't pursue their dreams," Lee said. "That's a real challenge for first-generation students, who are going to have to navigate this themselves to a great extent. Finances are going to be an issue."

Lessons learned at Georgia College benefit Lee in his role as senior director of Development and Alumni Relations at the University of Georgia's (UGA) College of Pharmacy. He applies the communication skills he learned at Georgia College every day.

"I have the ability to connect and engage with people because of the incredible faculty at Georgia College," Lee said. "Small class sizes made it easy for me to communicate with faculty. We were encouraged to engage and learn through dialogue. I have the likes of Drs. Larry Elowitz, Jan Mabie, Mike Digby, Martha Keber, and Derek Alderman

to thank for this. This authentic engagement to build relationships is something I've carried over into my career."

Although Holly had many great professors, her favorite was Dr. Mary Jean Land, professor emerita of mass communication.

"I really feel she did a great job preparing us for the next steps in terms of portfolios, interviews, and how to dress — she covered it all," Holly said. "I apply the concepts that Dr. Land taught me in my senior capstone class in my role today as an office manager for a tree service and in my former position at UGA in the Finance Division as the communications lead for the OneSource project."

Lee and Holly are so thankful for their education at Georgia College that they've created a scholarship for first-generation honors students. To fund their scholarship, the couple has named Georgia College as a beneficiary of their life insurance. In addition, they have pledged to begin funding the scholarship in their lifetime as part of Distinguished Professor Emeritus Dr. Ken Saladin's matching gift program. They hope students who receive their scholarship will pay it forward to help other students who are in the same situation.

"Georgia College is just a place that makes us want to give back because of the impact it's made on our lives," Lee said. "My hope is that someone else will read this and think, 'If they've done it, perhaps it's something we should do, as well, because when we look back on our time at Georgia College, we wouldn't be where we are without the mentors and experiences we gained along the way.'"

To learn more about how you can build a legacy at Georgia College, contact Dan Lavery at dan.lavery@gcsu.edu or 478-445-1236.