

Three Georgia College students named Fulbright semi-finalists

Three Georgia College seniors majoring in early childhood education, communication and art have been named Fulbright semi-finalists.

They join a growing number of semi-finalists in recent years from Georgia College.

If selected as finalists, their travels will take them to South Korea, Greece and Argentina. Their applications are being sent to these proposed host countries for review. Roughly half to one-third of all semi-finalists are accepted as 'finalists,' the term used for Fulbright Scholarship recipients. Final status should be announced no later than June.

The university's 2022 Fulbright semi-finalists are: Annabelle Erb, a senior early childhood education major from Johns Creek; Anagha Ramakrishnan, a senior communication major and English minor from Marietta; and Maya Whipple, a studio art major with a minor in Spanish from Gordon.

"I am very proud of the hard work that not only these semi-finalists put into their application but all that our applicants demonstrated in applying to the Fulbright Scholarship Program," said Anna Whiteside, coordinator of Georgia College's National Scholarships Office.

"The Fulbright Scholarship provides wonderful opportunities for our alumni to learn more about the world and how to engage as respectful global citizens," she said.

Selection for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program is rigorous. About 12,000 apply each year. In the U.S., about 1,900 grants are awarded annually for all fields of study that take place in 160 countries. More than 400,000 Fulbright recipients have participated in the programs since its inception in 1946.

Prior to Whiteside's helmsmanship and the creation of a National Scholarships Office in 2015, the university had three Fulbrights. Since then, more than 30 Georgia College students have received Fulbrights and other illustrious scholarships or fellowships—such as the Marshall Scholarship, Truman Scholarship, Newman Civic Fellowship and National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship.

Numbers increased as students came to value and utilize advice and support from the scholarship office. Applying for national scholarships can be complicated and take more than a year. Whiteside navigates students through the myriad of different programs, keeping them informed of deadlines and webinars.

She also helps students improve their personal essays by reading multiple drafts and making suggestions for added details or striking the right tone. She and a group of professors conduct mock interviews to ready students, and these can be intense with difficult questions. Faculty interviews help students clarify their goals and present clear visions.



Erb, Ramakrishnan and Whipple

Applicants are selected based on statement of purpose, academic or professional record, personal qualifications, language preparation, engagement in host communities and the impact candidates could have promoting an understanding between nations.

"While our semi-finalists are each applying to different programs," Whiteside said, "the one unifying factor is that they each exhibited the ability to represent the U.S. well abroad and promote mutual understanding."

More details on each semi-finalist: Annabelle Erb applied for an English Teaching Assistantship (ETA) in South Korea. She hopes to use her early childhood education degree to teach English to children there. She believes this will "greatly benefit" her future teaching of phonics in the U.S.

At Georgia College, Erb enjoyed co-teaching in local schools. This structure is similar to what she expects as a teacher in South Korea. Getting integrated into a new culture will help her connect with future students from different backgrounds.

Erb's been interested in Fulbright since sophomore year when Whiteside suggested she apply. Her "vote of confidence" kept Erb going, and she was "pleasantly surprised" at achieving semi-finalist status.

"I feel so thankful to have been recognized as worthy of making it this far," Erb said. "Teaching English abroad through the Fulbright would allow me to grow as an educator and model lifelong learning to my future students."

Anagha Ramakrishnan applied for an English Teaching Assistantship in Greece. A communication major and English minor, she hopes to teach at Athens College, sightsee and get involved in a debate and English language theatre club.

Ramakrishnan worked on her application for a year, but to get a Fulbright U.S. Scholarship she needed to be an American citizen. Ramakrishnan took her oath of allegiance in September 2021, one month before the application deadline.

"I've always been fascinated by Greek culture, and I felt like my personal values aligned with Fulbright's," said Ramakrishnan, who plans to get a Master of Fine Arts in film and become a documentary filmmaker.

Maya Whipple applied for an English Teaching Assistantship in Argentina. She hopes to expand her education in studio art and Spanish while "immersed in the Argentine environment."

Becoming a semi-finalist was a little nerve-wracking, Whipple said, because she's never been outside the country for long.

"But it would be the experience of a lifetime," she said. "I'll continue to polish my Spanish-speaking skills and do everything necessary to ensure my best performance as a teacher's assistant in Argentina. Latin culture is filled with vibrant art, which is something I look forward to."

Future Georgia Educators Day aims to recruit high schoolers to teach



Georgia College's John H. Lounsbury College of Education along with the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) partnered to bring nearly 200 high school students to campus March 9 to see first-hand what a career in education could look like for them. These students from across the state came to participate in the Future Georgia Educators (FGE) Day.

"They are invited to come to a college for a day where we talk to them about a career in teaching," said Mary Ruth Ray, FGE coordinator for PAGE. "They hear a presentation from an award-winning educator, and they participate in interactive workshops presented by the host college about teaching topics, teaching strategies or college life in general."

Georgia's 2022 Teacher of the Year Cherie Bonder Goldman presented the keynote address recounting her journey from a career in advertising to education.

"When I stepped into the classroom, I stepped into my passion, and with each and every day, I believe in it more and more," said Goldman, who teaches in Savannah-Chatham County. "I can assure you that if you ultimately get into teaching, you are

getting into something that has a purpose. You are getting into something that makes a difference. You are getting into a job that you can believe in."

That sentiment echoed throughout the day as the high schoolers visited a College Fair and sat in on presentations from Georgia College students. Dozens of education majors and others from across campus volunteered to make presentations or assist with the day's events.

"I spoke in a session and walked them through cohort life in the education programs and the benefits of becoming a teacher," said senior Georgia Denny, special education major.

She was joined by other students from the early childhood and middle grades programs to help the high school students understand the paths in college to become a teacher.

"We're basically trying to recruit them and show them that, if you want to be a teacher, it is possible. It's not as scary as it seems," Denny said. "We want to plant that seed in their head that they can do it."

Like so many educators Denny felt called to the field. She "wants to make a difference," and has found she has an innate ability to connect with students with disabilities.

Ky-Amber Butts, a senior at Baldwin High, wanted to attend FGE Day to learn more about the profession she's wanted to pursue most of her life.

"I want to be a teacher because students like me—they need somebody to push them," she said. "I feel like I can find students that relate to me and help them."

Tapping into those passions and skills in high school students is one reason FGE Day exists.

"As the state's largest education association, part of our responsibility is to reach out and cultivate the next generation of teachers," Ray said. "We think bringing them to a college

campus is a key part."

"For a lot of these students, this might be the first time they've ever set foot on a college campus. If they go to college, they might be the first one in their family to ever attend college," Ray said. "By partnering with colleges, we're breaking down barriers that some students might have, so they might begin to envision themselves attending college for the first time."

Students from 11 high schools across the state participated, including those from Baldwin, Jones and Washington Counties.

"We were so grateful for the turnout and for the opportunity to host FGE Day for the first time," said Claire Garrett, GC College of Education's partnership and field placement director.

"Our goal in the College of Education is to highlight the positive aspects of being an educator and to let students know that it's not just an admirable profession, but it's a career in which you can make a positive difference in the lives of children as they learn and grow. There are not many professions where you can do that," said Garrett.

Did you know?



Did you know that students who attend other universities can attend Georgia College as transient students and transfer courses back to their home institutions? The application deadline to become a transient student for courses beginning in May is April 1 and for courses beginning in June or July is May 1. Registration for accepted transient students begins March 28, 2022. More information can be obtained by contacting the Office of Admissions at 478-445-1283.

What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/calendar

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>22</p> <p>9 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Bobcat Golf hosts Bobcat Invitational at Golf Club at Cuscowilla.</p> <p>7 p.m. - Enjoy the GC Jazz Jam Session at Amici Cafe. Hosted by faculty and student jazz musicians, the GC Jam Session is open to all members of the community interested in working on their jazz and improvisation skills.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>5:15 p.m. - Draw from a live model in an academic setting in Ennis Hall 217. There is a suggested minimum donation of \$4 to pay the model. All artistic skill levels are welcome. Bring your own materials. For more information, please email valerie.aranda@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-2431.</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>3-6 p.m. - Come see the Braves World Series Trophy at the Pavilion at West Campus. Please enter from the 441-bypass entrance. To include as many people as possible before the 6 p.m. cutoff, each group will have a limited amount of time to view the trophy.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>10 a.m. - 5 p.m. - The Georgia College Women's Center, Leadership Programs, Alumni Association and J. Whitney Bunting College of Business will host the 2022 Women's Leadership Conference at Peabody Auditorium. For more information, visit: gcsu.edu/leadership/womens-leadership-conference.</p> <p>10 a.m. - 4 p.m. - As a part of the celebration of Flannery O'Connor's 97th birthday Friday, March 25, Andalusia: the Home of Flannery O'Connor is hosting free tours.</p> <p>Several other events are as follows</p> <p>11 a.m. - Virtual Interpretive Center Talk</p> <p>Noon - Cake Cutting</p> <p>3 p.m. - Virtual Exhibit Talk</p>	<p>26</p>