

Georgia College's 25th Annual Student Research Conference sports diversity of topics

As the state's public liberal arts university, Georgia College is in the unique position to showcase a diversity of topics when it comes to undergraduate research.

More than 60 students from all disciplines participated in the university's 25th Annual Student Research Conference at the end of March. In addition to oral presentations, there were virtual and in-person poster sessions outside Arts and Sciences and in Peabody Auditorium. New this year, there were also special sessions on "Digital Humanities" and "Community-Based Engaged Learning."

Georgia College's Undergraduate Research Conference is one of the oldest in the country. It has run non-stop, even during the recent pandemic.

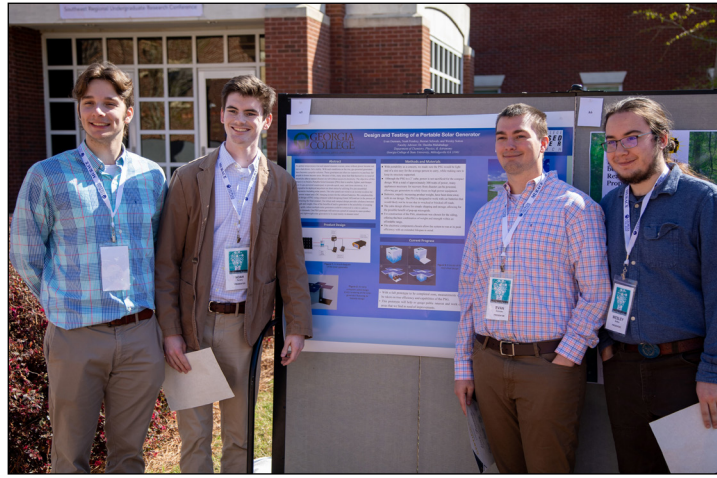
"Despite COVID, we've had dedicated faculty who are finding ways to continue mentoring our undergraduate research students. It's both amazing and inspiring, and our undergraduate research students continue to find success at GC and beyond," said Dr. Jordan Cofer, associate provost for Transformative Learning Experiences.

Plenty of research-based subjects, like biology and physics, were featured. Reflecting the university's liberal arts mission, there were also a slew of other topics like graphic art design, psychology, math and history. Far-reaching themes—like use of free libraries in Baldwin County, the effect of COVID on student grades, port industries in Savannah and ways terrorists engage in warfare—were also prevalent, as well as, community-based service projects about mothers in the workforce and how women's self-care has changed since Civil War days.

"We had students sharing their work on a diverse range of topics—from the hyperlocal to the global, showing undergraduate research at Georgia College is going strong. Despite the difficulties brought on by the pandemic, our students have persevered and continue to tackle big questions in their research with their amazing faculty mentors," said Dr. Stefanie Sevcik, lecturer of English and co-organizer of the conference along with Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge, associate professor of physics, and Dr. Doreen Sams, who played a huge role in undergraduate research through MURACE (Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors) over the years.

During the 2020-'21 academic year, 1,737 students participated in research at Georgia College—about 31.3% of the student population. During their four years here, 65% of all students engage in creative endeavors and faculty-mentored undergraduate research.

This year, four students are also attending Posters at the Capitol, a research event started a few years ago by Georgia College. During the event, undergraduates display their work to legislative representatives, lobbyists and the general public. In addition, Georgia College published the only national book on mentoring



Wesley Sutton (right) stands with his research group.

students and launched a national journal on undergraduate research—the first of its kind—in 2021.

This intense focus on undergraduate research caught the attention of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) in 2021. It awarded Georgia College its Campus-wide Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments (AURA).

Some students presenting research at the conference were:

- Sophomore physics major Wesley Sutton of Johns Creek: His group worked on a portable solar energy pack that could help people during natural disasters and blackouts.
- Sophomore biology major and Spanish minor Alexandra Furney of Alpharetta: Her research was to develop an understanding of "internal ribosome entry sites" and how they control genes. This work could one day help prevent cancer growths and other diseases.
- Senior biology major Maung V. Tlung of St. Simons: He looked for toxic algae at Lake Sinclair that cause diarrhea, nausea and fever. Levels were safe, but he stressed the need for more awareness about toxins produced by fertilizer runoff.
- Senior psychology major and marketing minor Avery Smith of Johns Creek: She planned a survey project to gauge self-control. Smith's looking to see whether students spend extra money on necessities or splurge on luxury items.
- Senior graphic arts major Logan Maiola of Atlanta: She created graphic designs for an imaginary hotel. These included branding items and brochures. She used color theory and crafted signs for transportation vehicles as well as labels for body wash, soap boxes and shampoos found in hotel bathrooms.
- And first-year nursing major Jocelyn Taylor: Her group did a community-based engaged learning project, planning a campus event on mothers who work. Their objective is to raise awareness of microaggressions that take place in the

workplace and social issues facing women.

All students expressed gratitude for the exposure to undergraduate research that Georgia College offers.

"It was definitely a lot of work," said Maiola about graphic design. "Something like this would take several years to do. I had to squish it down into a couple of months. But it's definitely worth it. I'm learning a lot of real-world skills."

Tlung said his algae work at Lake Sinclair has been "eye-opening." Georgia College "does a really great job" giving undergraduates opportunity for research, he said.

Biology majors get a lot of exposure to lab work at Georgia College, Furney said. This helps when applying to graduate schools or entering the workforce.

The experience made Smith realize she's interested in marketing research.

That's the point of undergraduate research and Georgia College's on-campus conference. It allows students to showcase work in the "safest and most comfortable place," according to Mahabaduge.

Undergraduates practice before familiar faculty and peers—before going to regional, national and international conferences. Among friends, Mahabaduge said, students can make mistakes without fear. They learn how to submit abstracts, create polished posters and explain their work in simple terms to viewers.

Getting into the conference is still competitive, however. At least two faculty members review submitted abstracts before students are accepted.

"The reviews provide a great example of how faculty members genuinely care about the success of our undergraduate researchers," Mahabaduge said.

"Holding our students to the highest standards within our conference makes them well-prepared for conferences elsewhere," he added. "Continuing this tradition for over two decades and never compromising quality over quantity is what helped us be nationally recognized as a leader in undergraduate research."



Anna Boughton explains her meditation research.

GC Music Therapy Program and The Life Enrichment Center perform

Creative Expressions, Georgia College's Music Therapy program in partnership with the Life Enrichment Center (LEC), is presenting a concert Monday, April 18 at 6 p.m. at New City Church at the Mill, 224 E. Walton Street in Milledgeville.

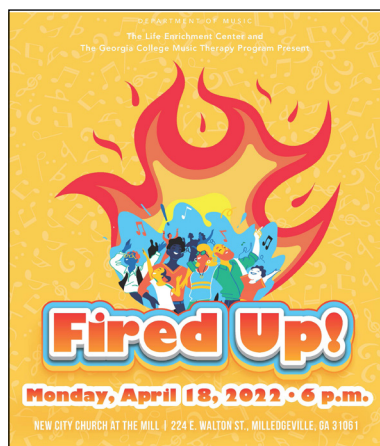
"Fired Up!" showcases seven ensembles that make up the Creative Expressions Performance Groups—Good Vibrations led by Charles Pepper and Chloe McDargh; Bell Tones led by Laura Fennell and Jillian Truchan; Harmonettes Vocal Choir led by Kelsey Foster and Taylor Luiz; MVPs led by Oliver Sanchez Torres and Sawyer Kitchens; Music Makers led by Moriah Treadwell and Zoe Reddick; Step in Time led by Jamie Puckett and Ashley Burkhalter; The Jungle Royales led by Noya Levy and Cedric Evans; and Music in Motion led by Emily Kirkland, Helen Whitacre and Lina Williams.

These groups feature performers with intellectual disabilities from the LEC alongside students from the university's music therapy program.

The upbeat and inspiring music is meant to motivate all and serve as a reminder that people are more alike than different. Together, we are "fired up."

A \$5 donation is encouraged. All proceeds benefit music scholarships or the GC Department of Music through GCSU Foundation, Inc.

For more information, please email jwarren@baldwinlec.org or email music@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8289.



Art students present capstone exhibition: ABUNDANCE

The Georgia College Department of Art presents the ABUNDANCE Exhibition: March 28 - April 22, 2022. This capstone exhibition showcases students' outstanding research over the past year and includes work in a variety of media.

This year, the exhibition is displayed in two venues: Leland Gallery in Ennis Hall and at the Museum of Fine Arts in the Underwood House.

It can also be viewed online at <https://www.gcsu-art.com>.

The Capstone Reception takes place Thursday, April 14 in the Leland Gallery and is followed by a Gallery Talk.



ABUNDANCE
Senior Capstone Exhibition

Olivia Berke - Dixie Blanton - Logan Broach - Ashlyn Corkery - Katherine Dean - Jessie Deyo
Katie DiBlasi - Emma Dietz - Mary Douberly - Holly Duffy - Brittany Green - Gabrielle Haynes
Hayley Johnson - Shawn Leary - Caroline Lohn - Logan Maiolo - Tucker Massey - Jordan Prinsen
Aaron Ringer - Sarah Sander - Morgan Smith - Kelsey Thomas - Maya Whipple

ONLINE EXHIBITION: Opens March 31st
EXHIBITION DATES: March 28th - April 22nd
RECEPTION DATE: April 14th, 5:00-7:00pm

WWW.GCSU-ART.COM

What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/calendar

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>12</p> <p>7 p.m. - Phi Kappa Phi and the Sustainability Council present a film screening of "Mossville: When Great Trees Fall" in Peabody Auditorium (Kilpatrick 216).</p> <p>7:30 p.m. - Georgia College presents its annual Music Theatre Scenes concert in Russell Auditorium. This year's theme, "Women on Fire," is directed by Dr. Dana Gorzelany-Mostak with Lev Ryabinin accompanying on piano. Eighteen students will perform uplifting, energetic tunes from favorite shows like "The Spitfire Grill," "Little Women," "Mean Girls" and "Six." For more information, please email music@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8289.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>2 p.m. - GC Women's Tennis hosts Flagler.</p> <p>6 p.m. - Andalusia: The Home of Planchy O'Connor hosts the second Front Porch Lecture Series with Nick Norwood from Columbus State University's Carson McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians. A professor of creative writing at Columbus State University since 2002, Norwood has served as the director of CSU's Carson McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians since 2015. His poems have appeared in over 50 journals and anthologies, and he has published four volumes and two limited edition books of poetry.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>5 p.m. - Capstone reception and gallery talk for the art exhibit ABUNDANCE in Leland Gallery of Ennis Hall.</p> <p>6 p.m. - Phi Kappa Phi and the Sustainability Council present a film screening of "Atomic Homefront" in Peabody Auditorium (Kilpatrick 216).</p> <p>7:30 p.m. Join us in Max Noah Recital Hall or on facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment for a Junior Recital featuring pianist Jacob Hammock. He will be joined by Elizabeth Galloway on acoustic bass for one piece. His selections include pieces by Paul Smadbeck, Ricky Tagawa, Benjamin Holmes, Elliot Carter and Ralph Rainger.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>6 p.m. - GC Softball vs Flagler.</p> <p>6 p.m. - GC Baseball vs Claffin.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Noon - GC Softball doubleheader vs Flagler.</p> <p>1 p.m. - GC Baseball Doubleheader vs Claffin.</p> <p>3 p.m. - Join us in Max Noah Recital Hall or on facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment for a Senior Recital, "Lost in Love," featuring Torrianna Harris, mezzo-soprano. She will be accompanied by pianist Conner Garmon. Jared Bryant will join her playing the English horn on one piece. Her selections include songs by Georges Bizet, Hector Berlioz, Mozart, Schubert, Saint-Saens, Enrique Granados, Verdi, Samuel Barber and Moses Hogan.</p>