

GC Gives Day promotes service as important GCSU experience

For incoming Georgia College & State University freshmen, the Saturday before classes start is not the last opportunity to get some rest - it's their first chance to give back.

GC Gives Day is an annual right-of-passage, in which new students team up with their hall mates and fan out across Baldwin County to engage in community service projects and learn more about the community that will host their college experience.

This year, roughly 1,360 first-year students participated in 35 different projects that introduce the many community organizations, local non-profits and volunteer opportunities students can partake in throughout their time at Georgia College.

Residents on Foundation Hall's third floor packed into Baldwin County school buses to travel to Walter B. Williams Park, where they helped clean up trash and debris, beautify flower beds and improve the area around playgrounds.

Baldwin County Recreation Department Director Traci Bowden said the work student volunteers contribute during GC Gives Day matters a lot more than they realize. Recreation department workers divide their time between three parks and multiple athletics facilities. After maintaining the grounds and playing fields, there's a lot of important work that can fall through the cracks.

"We stay busy cutting the grass and weed eating," she said. "Some of the little things that matter a lot don't get done—so when organizations like Georgia College come out, it's a huge help."

Loading mulch onto the back of all-terrain vehicles headed to the playgrounds, first-year student Ty Watson recalled all the time he spent on playgrounds and ballfields growing up in Macon.

Watson said he was happy to spend the first Saturday of his college experience helping the Milledgeville-Baldwin County community.

"It's nice to give back and make sure the kids have a good place to hang out and play, just like I did," he said.

Watson's hall mate and fellow volunteer Georgia Barham-Taylor said the service project was a welcome break from meetings that familiarize incoming students to Georgia College and what they can expect during their first weeks on campus. They agreed that volunteering is a good way to introduce new students to the community.

They didn't have to wait long to see an impact.

Milledgeville native Bonnie Bell brought her grandsons Cullen Hamm and Kaleb Hughes to the Walter B. Williams playground. Before volunteers finished leveling out the new layers of mulch they'd applied, Cullen and Kaleb were flying high on the swing set.

"It's always great seeing young people out cleaning up the community so it's a safer place for kids," Bell said. "It helps get them familiar with the area, and they get the opportunity to come

back and enjoy what they have done."

That kind of reciprocity was on Blakely Queen's mind too.

As a community advisor for Foundation Hall, Queen was excited to volunteer at a park because it brought back memories of her family.

"My grandparents used to take us to parks all the time; and they would always help clean up when we were there, whether they were asked to or not," Queen said. "So, it reminds me of them, and I feel like I'm also doing a service for them, as well."

Georgia College staff members Cassie and John Napier volunteered to help lead the GC Gives Day project at Walter B. Williams Park.

For them, it was an opportunity to give back to a place that holds a lot of memories for their family. The Napier's three children grew up on the playgrounds and ball fields at Walter B. Williams.

After two years of restricted gatherings and fewer volunteer opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cassie Napier said it is a relief to get back to activities that bind Georgia College students to their host community.

"It's great to build those ties again," she said. "It's one of the most integral parts of what makes Georgia College unique and the GCSU experience special for our students."

It's that spirit of cooperation that helped freshman Jacob Hall appreciate GC Gives Day as the beginning of his college experience.

Giving back was a perfect starting point.

"We are all in this situation together," Hall said. "We are here for each other, and we should all be willing to help whenever there is a need."



Students do garden work in Baldwin County on GC Gives Day.

Class of 2026 arrives on campus to chart its course



From a record number of out-of-staters to historically-high grade point averages (GPAs), the class of 2026 promises to be a collection of smart, impassioned young adults who'll amaze and surprise everyone—even themselves—in the next four years.

"To know they're going to have that special experience here is satisfying," said Joel Robinson, senior associate vice president for Enrollment Management. "Very seldom do students get a private-school education at a public-university price. We're special in that way."

With the conclusion of six orientations, the Georgia College & State University campus was excited to welcome nearly 1400 excited and slightly nervous freshmen. What are the characteristics of the class embarking on a journey of knowledge and self-discovery?

Here are some preliminary stats:

About 11% of the incoming class arrived with a high school GPA of 4.0. The average GPA for this class is 3.65—up from 3.58 last year. Georgia College continues to be a top choice for in-state students. They come from 214 towns and cities and 106 counties in Georgia. The number of out-of-state students rose 75% over last year to about 14. They come from eight states: Alabama, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Washington and Virginia. The average SAT score is 1,167 and ACT is 25 for incoming freshmen. International students traveled from six countries: Australia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Vietnam and United Arab Emirates. Top majors for this class include business undecided, nursing, undeclared, biology, psychology, exercise science, marketing, education, mass communication and accounting.

"We recruit some great students," said Javier Francisco, interim executive director of Admissions. "Seeing them excited about their potential, their future at Georgia College as they start their journey with us—that's always the exciting part."

Did you know?

In August, Georgia College & State University formally inaugurated Cathy Cox as its 12th president. During the investiture ceremony, Cox donned the university regalia and accepted the presidential medallion, symbolically conferring leadership of the institution.

The inauguration ceremony was an opportunity to rally the campus community around Cox as president, reaffirm what Georgia College has accomplished in the past and mark a new chapter in the university's history. The USG Board of Regents appointed Cox in August 2021. She assumed the role of President the following October.



GCSU Music season opens soon

Georgia College & State University (GCSU) kicks off its 2022-23 musical season Thursday, Sept. 8, at 7:30 p.m. in Max Noah Recital Hall with "Begged, Borrowed (and Stolen): Collaborations for Oboe and Piano." The concert features guest artist and oboist Christa Garvey and GCSU faculty collaborator and pianist Owen Lovell. Pieces include the elegant Maurice Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin" and the soulful "Incantation and Dance" by William Grant Still. A modern twist is added by Dorothy Rudd Moore's quirky "Baroque Suite," as well as more substantial works by Edvard Grieg and Francis Poulenc. This concert will also be livestreamed at www.facebook.com/GCMusicDepartment. 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 music@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8289.



Music resonates in newly-expanded Macon mural

The Spirit of Macon is renewed with the visual representation of music in the streets.

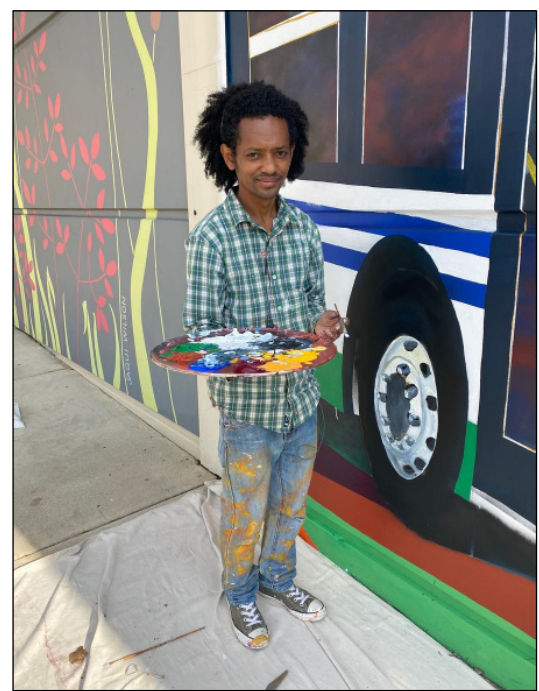
In August, the Macon Transit Authority formally presented the expansion of a public art installation that has enlivened a drab corner of downtown with vibrant colors, dynamic images of native wildlife and graphic renderings of Macon's iconic city skyline.

(Photo from MTA) Georgia College Associate Professor of Art and Graphic Design Abraham Abebe updated his Spirit of Macon mural to feature the musicality of the city that launched the careers of Little Richard, Otis Redding, the Allman Brothers Band, Robert McDuffie and Jason Aldean.

In his new artist statement, Abebe writes: "Public art is very important for the city, for the community. We need to continue bringing artists into public art [so we can] serve the community by bringing the visual arts to the public."

The Spirit of Macon mural is located at the corner of Poplar and Fifth streets in downtown Macon.

The Spirit of Macon II mural is the beneficiary of a grant from the Linda Harriet Lane Fund administered by the Community Foundation of Central Georgia. It is a joint venture between the MTA and the Community Foundation.



What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/events/

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6	7	8 Georgia College & State University kicks off its 2022-23 musical season at 7:30 p.m. in Max Noah Recital Hall with "Begged, Borrowed (and Stolen): Collaborations for Oboe and Piano." For more information, please email music@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-8289.	9	10 The Georgia College & State University Men's Basketball program and head coach Ryan Aquino will hold a Prospect Camp Saturday, Sept. 10. The camp is open to any boys in grades 9. To register, visit https://tinyurl.com/y7wresbm . For more information, call (478) 445-4289.