GEORGIA COLLEGE This Week

GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

Prepared by the Office of University Communications Oct. 11, 2022

Bobcat CALENDAR

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/events

Tuesday

11

6 to 8 p.m. GCSU Volleyball vs. USC Aiken live at Centennial Center.

7 to 8 p.m. Andalusia Institute will host a Virtual discussion with Dr. Alison Straudinger on "Flannery O'Connor and Fascism." Contact Tammie Burke at 478-445-2645 to reigster.

Wednesday

12

6 to 8 p.m. GCSU Soccer vs. Newberry live on Bobcat Field at West Campus.

Thursday

13

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Today's the final day for an exibit by three new art faculty members: photographer Seth Cook, mixed-media artist Holden Head and painter Megan McNaught. Located in Leland Gallery at Ennis Hall on W. Hancock Street, Milledgeville.

Friday

14

5 to 7 p.m. GCSU Volleyball vs. Young Harris live at Centennial Center.

Saturday

15

5 to 7 p.m. GCSU Soccer vs. North Georgia live on Bobcat Field at West Campus.

7:30 p.m. GCSU's three choral ensembles present a combined concert in First Baptist Church on Liberty Street, "We Sing."

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GCSU program + high schoolers = research lab experience

Georgia College & State University's Young Scientists Academy (YSA)—a six-week program that gives high school youth from disadvantaged, rural areas a crack at university-level research—returned this summer in a big way.

It was the first YSA since the pandemic and, because of COVID, its seven high school participants had little or no lab experience. They'd only taken chemistry online.

Their first real lab experience was in Georgia College's state-of-the-art Integrated Science Complex (ISC) with everything brand new, shiny and clean.

"Most of their chemistry experience was through a computer screen. Some of them never actually stepped into a chemistry laboratory," said Dr. Catrena Lisse, professor of chemistry and director of the university's Science Education Center.

"The Young Scientists Academy is a high school internship program for research. It's designed for rural communities to give youth an extra little boost," she said, "and get them interested in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)."

Georgia College's YSA started in 2007 and is highly competitive. Participants came from all over Central Georgia.

"Being able to give them this opportunity and see their faces when they walk into this lab—it's exciting," Lisse said.

The first week reinforced protocols like finding data sheets for various chemicals, using eye wash stations and picking up shattered glass or acid spills.

They moved on to break down, read and understand scientific literature. Participants researched various topics on sol gels—a chemistry process Lisse specializes in. The method is used to create solids like silicon from small molecules.

Each high school student chose a research topic that interested them involving sol gels. Projects ranged from color-changing chemicals that indicate the presence of explosive residue to ways glucose testing can be more cost effective.

"Every single one of them had to develop their own procedures by trial and error," Lisse said.

Every morning, the group analyzed problems they encountered the previous day and brainstormed about upcoming tasks. Lisse and two Georgia College chemistry majors worked one-on-one with participants, guiding and quizzing to ensure a smooth process.

Nathan Walsh is a senior at Eastside High School in Covington. He worked on research that could potentially help people with diabetes save money using non-disposable testing strips.

Alec Ortiz, a senior at Veterans High School in Warner Robins, synthesized his own explosives. His project could result in bomb detectors that react faster than anything used today.

Sol-gels used in research by Morgan Collins, a senior at Putnam County High.

Morgan Collins of Eatonton is a senior at Putnam County High School. He joined YSA with an interest in environmental science. He focused on ways to detect heavy metals that are harmful in water. Ultimately, his formula could be used on probes to test water.

"I found it all very interesting, because we can use sol gels, which I'd never even heard of until this program," Collins said. "I can test water and, by color change, know there's a problem."

"I never really had chemistry experience, because I had to take high school chemistry online," he said. "Being able to experience this allows me to see if I'm interested in it, so I can better prepare myself for what I want to do in the future."

Claire Buck of Sandersville created a catalyst to make chemical reactions work faster. Her sol gel particles looked like small, black see-through pearls. They served as the catalyst to speed up reactions. This could help industries with chemical processes save time and money.

"I've always wanted to do forensic science, which combines chemistry and biology," Buck said. "When I was told I got in, I was so excited. Everything here is so new and so clean."

"This is my first lab experience, so this is the standard

Teacher of the Year nurtures her students through math and life

Seticia Smith with a student.

Despite life's obstacles, Seticia Smith, a three-time alumna of Georgia College & State University, '10, '12, '17, has given 110% in the classroom. And the Baldwin County School District noticed.

She's the 2022 Baldwin County Teacher of the Year, a seventh-grade mathematics teacher, department chair and family engagement coordinator at Oak Hill Middle School. Smith is also a survivor of breast cancer and a heart attack. Yet, she puts her students first.

The Baldwin County School District nominated six teachers for Teacher of the Year. Smith won the honor. She is in her 10th year of teaching. Smith prefers teaching middle schoolers, because they are starting to change from children into young adults.

"I just love to help them figure out where they want to go and what they want to be in life," she said. "I'd like to be a part of that transition—finding out who they are."

Smith believes in making math fun for students. Whether it's solving scavenger-hunt problems or using their body shape to determine x- and y-axis coordinates or making videos that show kindergarteners how to solve math problems—students thrive in Smith's class.

Smith found her calling to become an educator when she started teaching Sunday School at her church and volunteering with Oak Hill Middle School's girls basketball team.

At Georgia College, Smith worked three jobs to help pay tuition. She was determined to get her degrees.

"I was happy that the library stayed open 24/7," Smith said. "I would get off of work and go to the library to study; get up and do it all over again the next day."

Her undergraduate degree is in psychology, which helps her understand young adolescents and their thought processes. She earned her master's in middle grades education, then completed a specialist in education degree.

Smith tries to emulate her Georgia College professors by encouraging students to find math solutions on their own.

"It's very difficult to do this with students," she said. "Sometimes middle schoolers just shut down when they can't get it. But I try to make learning fun for them."

Smith enjoys seeing the positive strides her students make in math throughout the school year.

"When students start school, about 75% to 80% of them hate math, because they didn't do well in it," she said. "I don't force a seventh-grade math curriculum on them, but just see where they are in math and what they can do to focus on their strengths and weaknesses."

Smith enjoys teachable moments where she can put students at ease with math.

"I have students tell me, 'You make math seem easier than what I thought,'" Smith said. "And I tell them, 'I'm glad you're starting to see that math is not so hard—it's not a monster.'"

Sometimes those teachable moments come full circle.

"My students keep me updated with what's going on in the world. We grow together and learn from each other."

Fall sees record-breaking number of intramural teams

It's going to be a competitive year!

Georgia College & State University (GCSU) Intramural Sports will field 430 teams competing in 9 different sports at the beginning of this semester.

That's a GCSU Intramural Sports record for the number of teams competing at one time.

With about 1,400 students signed up to play intramural sports heading into the first phase of the semester, roughly one out of every four GCSU students participates in an intramural sport.

"Our participation rate is one of the highest in the country," said Drew Bruton, associate director of Wellness and Recreation.

As many as 2,200 students will participate in intramural sports by the end of the academic year, Bruton said.

That's about 38% of GCSU's 5,500 undergraduate students. The national average is closer to 11%, down from 18% in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Intramural sports offer a social outlet that you're not going to find anyplace else on campus, Bruton said.

Bruton attributes the jump in participation to students looking for ways to meet people and find their niche.

"Intramural sports offer a social outlet that you're not going to find anyplace else on campus," Bruton said. "Students enjoy the programs they are in, and they let the freshman know about it."

The increased participation will have an effect on the level of play.

Bruton said the greater number of teams allows his office to set the schedule and pair teams based on competitiveness.

"Our goal is for players to have fun," Bruton said. "We want people to feel welcome."

"We Sing" concert is Saturday

On Saturday, Oct. 15, Georgia College's three choral ensembles will present a combined concert at 7:30 p.m. in First Baptist Church on Liberty Street. "We Sing" features pieces that were written to express the thoughts and feelings of humanity; these include arrangements of protest songs, folksongs, African American spirituals, sea shanties and more. Women's Ensemble, University Chorus and Max Noah Singers will perform settings from countries such as U.S., Kenya, Korea, Latvia, New Zealand and Singapore. Choral conductors include Dr. Jennifer Flory, Dr. Dana Gorzelany-Mostak and Allison Ryder. The choirs will be joined by Dr. Lev Ryabinin and Dr. Hue Jang on piano and other special guests. 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.

Did you know?

Georgia College & State University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies will host a fast-paced, conflict management course from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Oct. 14, in Chapell Hall, room 105. The course covers negotiation theory and managing interpersonal, business and organizational conflict.

Instructor Harold Tessendorf has created and delivered negotiation and mediation training courses in the United States, South Africa, Haiti and Sierra Leone. He holds a Master of Arts Degree in Politics with a specialization in Conflict Resolution from Nelson Mandela University in South Africa and a Master of Science Degree in Community Economic Development from Southern New Hampshire University. In addition, Harold received training from U.S. conflict management programs, including the famed Harvard Negotiation Project. To sign up call Nancy Finney for more information at 478-445-2762.