

GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY

# CONNECTION

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS  
FALL 2022



CATHY COX REFLECTS ON HER FIRST YEAR AS PRESIDENT

# CONNECTION

Fall 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

Kristen Maddox, '21

Daniel McDonald, '19

Cindy O'Donnell

Al Weston

## Design

Brooks Hinton

Bailey Wilson, '12

## Photography

Anna Gay Leavitt

Michael Gillett, '15, '20

Kristen Maddox, '21

Kaitlyn Ortiz

## Please send

**change of address  
and class notes to:**

Campus Box 96

Milledgeville, GA 31061

connection@gcsu.edu

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# From the President

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Alumni and Friends,

Last fall, when I began my tenure here as the 12th President of Georgia College & State University, I devoted time to listening sessions—formal as well as many informal meetings and conversations—to hear from alumni and friends and learn how our campus became the special place it is today. Thank you again for sharing your perspectives on the university's history—and your hopes for its future.

As we embark on an ambitious strategic planning process, I will be asking our campus community, alumni, and friends to use their imagination and to envision what is possible for Georgia College. We will be reimagining ways to capitalize on our unique mission as the state's designated public liberal arts university and bringing innovation and institutional renewal to the academic curriculum and co-curricular experiences.

The feedback you provided as part of my listening sessions helps inform our strategic planning. But we are not through seeking your input. Visit [gcsu.edu/imagine2030](https://gcsu.edu/imagine2030) to learn more about how you can contribute to the strategic planning process and discover where we are headed. With new Vice President for University Advancement Dr. Shelley Strickland joining my Cabinet, I look forward to increased engagement of our alumni and friends. Dr. Strickland has also been actively listening and meeting with our greater campus community since she started July 1.

Staying connected goes beyond being on campus because Georgia College is truly about its people. Our students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and community partners all make us the vibrant institution we are today. Your support is vital to all we do, and I look forward to what our collectively reimagined possibilities will bring for the future of our university. Can you imagine?

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Cox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names clearly legible.

**Cathy Cox, J.D.**

President

Georgia College & State University





## Inaugural Leadership Tour takes business students across Georgia

In a five-day tour, 10 business students representing six majors applied their education in travels across Georgia, visiting businesses, business leaders, and Georgia College alumni in May.

“On the first day, I told students I hoped, through their visits and travels, that they would gain a greater appreciation for the state of Georgia, including its economic and physiographic diversity,” said Jehan El-Jourbagy, assistant professor of business law and engineer of the tour.

“Milledgeville to Monticello to Atlanta and beyond, I wanted to show them the love, time, and energy citizens put into their communities. From small family businesses to multinational manufacturing, I wanted to give students a behind-the-scenes look at the economic engines of our state.”

El-Jourbagy arranged the tour alongside J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology (COBT) Outreach

Coordinator Kari Brown, '08, '20 with support from GC Journeys and COBT Dean Micheal Stratton. The pair led students to places like the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce, the Georgia Bioscience Training Center at Stanton Springs, Chick-fil-A Support Center, and Amicalola Falls State Park.

From day one, their trip was packed with tours of manufacturing facilities, small businesses, networking events, and alumni meetups. At Amicalola Falls State Park in Dawsonville, Georgia, students hiked five miles to their off-the-grid lodging.

“Students got to see leaders in action and listen to their words of wisdom,” El-Jourbagy said. “They got to meet professionals over meals and walk factory floors with corporate leaders. They practiced their own leadership skills through building connections, entering professional conversations, public speaking, and expressing gratitude.”



Colette McCarty, '22, is a graduate student of accounting and attended the tour. She's interested in public accounting and started an internship with certified public accounting firm, Aprio, in June.

During the tour, she shared meals with certified public accountants (CPAs), tax commissioners and bankers. Toward the end of the trip, she got to meet Cal Brantley, partner of Nichols, Cauley & Associates, LLC, an accounting firm.

“I don't think I've had an experience like this,” McCarty said. “It was very transformational, and I can't compare it to anything else I've done. Establishing relationships with people is a really beautiful thing, and it's great to have connections like that.”

# New College of Business name emphasizes role of technology and career readiness

As technology changes, so does business education—and Georgia College & State University's J. Whitney Bunting College of Business is changing with it.

The school is now the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology.

The new name acknowledges the rapidly advancing role of technology in the business environment. In the future, nine out of 10 jobs will require digital skills, according to the World Economic Forum.

"Technology drives so many changes we witness around us — in business, society, and in our personal lives," President Cathy Cox said. "Georgia College understands the immense importance of these changes and is committed to offering a curriculum that completely embraces technology."

Cox pointed to the university's public liberal arts mission as a dynamic and career-focused approach to provide students with cutting-edge skills and adaptability.

"A liberal arts education equips students with the critical thinking necessary to navigate the complexities of life and become 21st-century leaders," she said.

Other changes in the business college include:

- A new name for Georgia College's Accounting Department, now called the department of accounting and business law. The department already housed faculty who teach business law and ethics, a core requirement for a business degree. The new name reflects that.
- The introduction of a new Bachelor of Science degree in data science. Employers say they want workers who can interpret and understand data, do quantitative analysis, and use predictive modeling.
- A new Bachelor of Science degree in finance that provides an optional concentration in financial technology. This will include courses in financial management and programming, financial forecasting, and payment processing.
- The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship's launch in the fall. This initiative provides students, faculty, and community members with opportunities to collaborate and advance regional economic development.



"In today's rapidly changing society, it is more important than ever to ensure that the liberal arts curriculum at Georgia College will continue to evolve in order to meet employer needs," said Dr. Micheal Stratton, dean of the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology.

"Technology is embedded into the fabric of all our teaching and learning experiences," he said. "These experiences will differentiate our students in the marketplace and help them stand out to employers."

## GCSU generates \$285 million impact on local economy

The impact on the regional economy by Georgia College & State University reached more than \$285 million in 2021—an increase of \$2.7 million from the previous fiscal year.

For each job created on campus, two off-campus jobs exist due to university-related spending.

"With more than 1,100 people working on our campus every day, and thousands of our students spending money in the local area, Georgia College clearly has a significant impact on our local economy," said President Cathy Cox. "Our annual payroll alone was nearly \$65 million this year. In addition, we bring substantial intellectual capital to our region, and I hope our greater community recognizes the

tremendous benefit of having a state university in its midst."

The numbers are from an annual study commissioned by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG). They show the economic benefits Georgia College imparts on both the private and public sectors which extend to Baldwin, Bibb, Hancock, Jones, Putnam, Wilkinson, and Washington counties.

Businesses in Milledgeville benefit from student and faculty spending. In 2021, Georgia College created 1,013 jobs on campus for community members and supported another 1,778 jobs off campus through products and services its employees and students purchased.

Overall, USG schools had a \$19.3 billion impact on the state's economy. That's a 3.8% increase since 2020. This included \$13.1 billion in initial spending by students and USG's 26 public colleges and universities on personnel and operating expenses. More than 152,620 full and part-time jobs were generated by USG schools.

The report highlights the vital contribution colleges and universities make toward a healthy state economy. They promote jobs, higher incomes, and greater production of goods and services, according to a study conducted by the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business.

Benefits for each institution were divided into several categories of related expenditures for colleges and universities. Those include spending by institutions for salaries and fringe benefits, operating supplies and expenses, and other budgeted expenditures; spending by students who attend the institutions; and spending by institutions for capital projects.

Economic impact was measured by the initial spending of an institution for operations and personnel, as well as student spending. Total economic impact includes the effect of initial spending and secondary or indirect and induced spending that occurs when initial expenditures are re-spent.





## GC Gives Day promotes service as important part of 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 introducing the many community organizations, local nonprofits, and volunteer opportunities they 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."

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 remarked 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, and have that relationship building going on so that we don't lose that," 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 understand GC Gives Day as the beginning of his college experience.

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

# Nursing and teaching programs highly rated in new “Best Colleges” rankings

Georgia College & State University continues acquiring accolades as a top-ranked institution in the region and nationwide.

The 2023 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges list designated Georgia College’s School of Nursing as the top public undergraduate nursing program in Georgia.

“Media organizations like U.S. News & World Report consistently reaffirm what Georgia College students, parents, and alumni already know: our institution offers an exceptional and contemporary public liberal arts education and prepares our students for successful careers,” said President Cathy Cox. “Georgia College’s reputation for academic excellence and transformative experiences ranks with the best in higher education and will continue to attract top students who want the unique, challenging learning environment we offer.”

Additional insight from the “Best Colleges” report includes Georgia College ranking

seventh on the list of top public schools in the South—rising two spots from last year’s ranking. This is the fourth year in a row Georgia College has led all other Georgia institutions in this category.

The guidebook lists Georgia College 22nd in the Best Regional Universities in the South, leading all other public, Georgia universities in this criterion. 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 ranked 12th in the category for undergraduate teaching universities in the South, earning top honors for University System of Georgia institutions in that segment.

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 “2023 Best Colleges: Region by Region” list for the 16th 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. The university is one in only 23% of national four-year colleges to be featured on their website.



# Intramural sports fields record-breaking number of teams this fall

Georgia College & State University Intramural Sports fielded 430 teams competing in 9 different sports at the beginning of this semester.

That’s a GCSU 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.

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 any place else on campus,” Bruton said. “Students enjoy the programs they are in, and they let the freshmen know about it.”

And 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 and have a good time, even if they’re not the most competitive person.”

“Intramural sports are something that make Georgia College special and different from other University System of Georgia schools,” Bruton said. “It’s something unique because of our participation rate, the level of competition, and the number of teams that compete at Georgia College.”





## Kendall Stiles honored with the Giving Tree award

You may have read the book “The Giving Tree” by Shel Silverstein as a child. It follows the life of a tree and a boy. As the boy grows, he takes more and more from the tree, yet the tree continues to willingly give.

The book has a much deeper meaning than just helping young children learn to read. It highlights the lasting impact those willing to “give” can have on others.

This book inspired an award at Georgia College & State University by the same name. Since 1997, it’s been given by the GIVE Center to a person who has left a lasting legacy of service at the university. A tree is also planted in their honor.

This year, the honoree’s impact on Georgia College and the Milledgeville community can hardly be quantified.

“To me, the Giving Tree Award is one of the best awards we do,” said Kendall Stiles. “It’s a neat thing to have one now in honor of me.”

Stiles founded the GIVE Center, which serves to connect students with service opportunities on campus and in the community. She’s worked with thousands of students over the years and left a mark in each person’s heart. This year she was recognized with the Giving Tree.

“Her support and encouragement have meant so much to me—as it has to so many of us through the years. Yet, Kendall’s story of mentorship and friendship is not unique to me. It’s just how Kendall is,” Dr. Jennifer Graham, director of the Women’s Center and interim chief diversity officer, said at the ceremony.

“Kendall really showed me how to give back to the people who pour into you,” said Bianca Diaz, ’17. “She also taught me how much impact a small act can make and how that can motivate others around you to continue to make that impact.”



“Students who may never have the privilege of meeting Kendall will continue to benefit from her vision, her passion and her incredible spirit,” Emily Jarvis, executive director of student engagement, said. “She has made an indelible impact on Georgia College. She has shepherded 1000s of students through their journeys of service and servant leadership. She established the culture of giving back that distinguishes the Georgia College experience.”

The tree planted was a Ginkgo, which was the same species as the one planted for the first Giving Tree ceremony. As the tree grows, so will the culture of giving at Georgia College—thanks to the strong foundation Stiles set in place.



# Goldwater Scholarship awarded to Georgia College student for the first time

Junior biology major Wesley DeMontigny was awarded the Goldwater Scholarship in March—a first for Georgia College & State University.

For general research in the natural sciences, mathematics and engineering, the scholarship identifies future researchers and is the most prestigious of its kind.

“To earn this award, recipients must have an extensive research experience in addition to an excellent academic record. Wesley worked very hard on putting this application together, and we are so proud of him,” said Anna Whiteside, assistant director of the Honors College and coordinator for the National Scholarships Office.

The scholarship will provide DeMontigny with \$7,500 toward his senior year and hold tremendous power on his curriculum vitae. His research centers on environmental microbiology. DeMontigny secured the

scholarship with an essay about a project he did. It explored bacteria that engulf themselves in crystals and the potential applications of that ability.

“I’m interested in using genetic engineering for potential environmental remediation for industrial uses,” he said. “Microbes are fascinating in that they are everywhere, they’ve been around for an extremely long time, and they are the reason we have almost every resource we need to survive.”

Georgia College’s liberal arts approach made his journey possible, he said. If DeMontigny hadn’t been required to take biology, he may not be where he is today.

“If I was in a class of 100 people, getting the professor’s time would be more difficult,” DeMontigny said. “Easily communicating with my professors has been a big deal for both the scholarship and my development as a student.”



Getting the scholarship doesn’t mean DeMontigny is finished. The relief that came with securing the award only lasted four days. After he graduates in the fall, DeMontigny will take an eight-month hiatus, before applying straight into a Ph.D. program.

After that, he plans to go where the graduate experience takes him.

# Sophomore double-major Vivian Cassaniti wins Newman Civic Fellowship

Should you register to vote in your college town, or remain registered in your hometown? That’s a question that Student Ambassador and Georgia College & State University tour guide Vivian Cassaniti hears often from students and parents during her tours, and it’s one that Cassaniti is uniquely qualified to answer.

Cassaniti grew up with the news always on in her home, so she had a keen interest in how the news influenced and affected those around her. By the time she got to Georgia College, she’d gathered more course credits than most and, rather than graduate early,

Cassaniti decided to round out her pre-law degree with a second major in philosophy.

As a Student Ambassador and member of the mock trial team, her stellar performance soon brought her to the attention of Student Leadership Director, Dr. Harold Mock, ’06. He nominated her for the 2022 Newman Civic Fellowship, a yearlong program that partners student leaders across the nation for both virtual and in-person networking.

“We appoint a Newman Civic Fellow every year,” Mock said, “Vivian represents the best of Georgia College’s commitment to leadership for the public good. She has delved deeply into the abiding questions of the humanities and social sciences and is using that knowledge to create good on behalf of others and to inform public discourse.”

Cassaniti’s passion for working with local communities to understand different perspectives led her to winning the Newman Civic Fellowship, which selects leaders from Campus Compact member institutions who demonstrate new ways of solving civic issues.

As part of the Fellowship, Cassaniti will receive national recognition on the Campus Compact as well as special scholarship opportunities.

“I strive to educate people,” Cassaniti said, “I think it’s important that we encourage community engagement and make sure that our leadership and our representatives are, in fact, a representation of the community that they intend to serve.”

Cassaniti sees her receiving of the Newman Fellowship as a time to act.

“I have a real opportunity here to encourage people to get involved in their community, whether that’s their college town or their community at home, to familiarize yourself with your local leadership and those municipal governments and understand that you can really make an impact.”

The Newman Civic Fellowship is named for renowned educator Frank Newman, who founded the Campus Compact to help create civically responsible agents of change. The issues that Campus Compact were created to address, at-risk youth and the impact of market forces on education, are uniquely aligned with Cassaniti’s own ambitions.











# MAKING GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY A BETTER PLACE

CATHY COX REFLECTS ON HER  
FIRST YEAR AS PRESIDENT

**I**n August, the sound of bells signaled the beginning of a new chapter in Georgia College & State University's 133-year history.

Accompanied by "Fanfare for a Special Occasion," and following closely behind the institutional mace, Cathy Cox—dressed in Georgia College green academic regalia emblazoned with four navy blue stripes signifying the authority of the presidency—led a procession that included dignitaries from 31 Georgia colleges and universities, Georgia College's faculty corps, and students representing every aspect of the campus community.

President Cox's ceremonial investiture into Georgia College's chief leadership position came amidst the hustle and bustle of the new academic year, which included several opportunities to reflect on her first year leading Georgia College and to project a vision of how she's preparing Georgia's public liberal arts university to meet the demands of an evolving society and workplace.

At each turn, President Cox is proving that she can bring the Georgia College community together to move the institution's liberal arts mission forward in a way that empowers students to positively impact the world into which they graduate.

As University System of Georgia Chancellor Sonny Perdue proclaimed when bestowing the presidential medallion upon her shoulders:

"President Cox, leading this university must be for the benefit of the students, the community [and] the state," Chancellor Perdue said. "By accepting this responsibility, you're making a commitment to this college's mission of the liberal arts and to preparing students to make a difference in this world."



**“Personal relationships are the bedrock part of who we are and why students are drawn to this kind of environment.”**

From a young age, Cathy Cox has brought people together for a common cause.

A childhood story Cox shared during a panel discussion entitled Women in Politics describes her involvement in the political life of her father, Walter Cox. During election season, President Cox’s mother, Mary Barber Cox, would take Cox and her three sisters around Bainbridge to go door-to-door distributing campaign materials and talking with neighbors about their father’s candidacy for mayor and for the state House of Representatives.

These kinds of interactions distinguish Cox’s leadership approach. They informed her campaigns for the state legislature, her two

terms as Georgia Secretary of State and her decade-and-a-half in higher education administration. And they have been a hallmark of her first year at Georgia College.

“It is important to me because I want this campus to know that I am accessible,” Cox said. “I have a beautiful office up here on the third floor of Parks Hall—I can look out on Front Campus and see what’s going on—but there is no substitute for being out on the campus, talking to people and hearing from students, faculty, and staff.”

In remarks at Cox’s inauguration ceremony, Dr. Jennifer Morgan Flory, professor of Music and presiding officer of the GCSU University Senate, praised Cox for introducing herself to the campus community through the act of listening.

Throughout her first months on campus, Cox convened a series of listening sessions

with student groups, academic and service departments and community organizations to hear their evaluations of Georgia College’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

“You began your tenure in earnest by listening to stakeholders assessing current situations and trends and navigating the intricate realities of leading a public liberal arts university,” Flory said. “We appreciate your forethought in the creation of task forces, especially the Academic Innovation Task Force, which cultivates a space where we can reflect upon the value of a liberal arts education in the 21st century and envision how we can position Georgia College to be a leading force.”

But Cox’s efforts to bring people together are not all aspirational conversations and committee assignments. Sometimes they’re just plain fun.





Cox has invited the campus community to show off their tackiest holiday sweater, “Taco ‘bout 02/22/22,” celebrate the Atlanta Braves’ World Championship, “Beat the Heat” with an ice cream social and “Flamingo” on Front Campus.

Each event helped bring the campus back together after two years of isolation and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. But the focus on the social environment at Georgia College helped Cox emphasize something she saw in the institution right away.

“I have loved seeing how much this campus likes each other—how much it’s a family here,” Cox said. “We’ve had lots of fun gatherings that serve the purpose of bringing the campus back together, and I want to build on those gatherings to bring people back together in support of our common mission, to serve the students.”

And students have been receptive to President Cox and the ease with which she interacts with them. In remarks during the inauguration ceremony, Student Government Association President Kaitley Congdon noted Cox’s popularity among students and praised her for how she reflects that appreciation back through her interactions with students.

“As president of a university, there is always some important task on the agenda that must be taken care of, but even with her busy schedule, President Cox always goes out of her way to make sure she is where the students are,” Congdon said. “This means a lot to students.”

**“One of the hallmarks of any top-quality liberal arts university is not just what you teach... it’s in how you teach it. And that is part and parcel of who we are.”**

As the 12th President of Georgia College—the fourth since the university gained the public liberal arts designation—Cox faces the challenge of defining the liberal arts against a backdrop of unpredictability in higher education and an ever-evolving economy and society.

Cox is quick to dispel the notion that a liberal arts education has anything to do with political partisanship, but she understands that when you’re explaining, you’re on defense. And she prefers the strong offense of highlighting the ways Georgia College has developed a liberal arts education that distinguishes it from its peers.

In her inaugural address, Cox quoted Dartmouth College History Professor Cecilia Gaposchkin, who likened the liberal arts to brain training that develops the mind's ability to apply knowledge creatively. A liberal arts education is not the simple accumulation of facts, Cox said, channeling Albert Einstein, it is the inspired synthesis of complimentary and competing facts in the generation of new knowledge.

Georgia College is not the classrooms, laboratories, athletics facilities, or even the curriculum. It's not the expert faculty corps or services provided by dedicated staff. It's the cumulation of these into an experience that accentuates the talent and determination each student brings to Georgia College in preparation for a life of meaningful engagement.

"Personal relationships are the bedrock part of who we are and why students are drawn to this kind of environment," Cox said. "They come here and find out that this is a different learning experience. They talk to some of their high school classmates who are at larger universities, sitting in a room with 100, 200, and 300 other students, where they never even get to ask a question, much less spend an hour one-on-one with a faculty member like they often do here."

In the years since the USG bestowed the public liberal arts designation, Georgia College has become an institution of choice for the state's top students. First-year students enrolling for the 2022-2023 school year have an average GPA of 3.66—with 11% maintaining a 4.0. Their average standardized test scores are 1167 for the SAT and 25 on the ACT. The challenge is no longer recruiting the best and brightest, it is channeling their creative energy in a way that develops their native talents and abilities to tackle the difficulties they'll encounter during their lifetime.

"Georgia College has taken the best parts of a classical liberal arts education and woven them into a curriculum that is directly relevant to the needs of students and their employers in the 21st century," Cox said. "The Georgia College version of the liberal arts uses the tools of undergraduate research, throwing students into areas of uncertainty, so they must analyze data and learn to solve problems. We send students abroad and to study in the United States to take them out of their comfort zones and let them experience life and cultures that enlarge their understanding of people and problems in the world."







**“I expect the next year to involve a lot of dreaming big.”**

Gazing out from the inauguration platform at the rows of student representatives, faculty, staff, delegates, family, friends, colleagues, community members, and well-wishers, Cox challenged everyone to not rest on their laurels, but to join her in applying “the creative genius of our campus to create the new Georgia College & State University.”

The United States has recorded declining birth rates in the years following the Great Recession. COVID-19 accelerated this pattern, signaling the end of increasing enrollment numbers across higher education.

As the public liberal arts designation prescribes smaller class sizes, the maintenance of student-to-faculty ratios, and the intimacy of a small liberal arts college experience, Cox believes Georgia College is uniquely positioned to face these challenges.

In the second year of her administration, Cox is spearheading a strategic planning initiative to reinvigorate the institution and prepare it to better serve the students of tomorrow.

“We are not serving our students if we’re not looking ahead well beyond the graduation dates of our entering classes to prepare students for the world that awaits them,” Cox said about first-year students in the Class of 2026 and prospective students who’ve yet to apply to Georgia College.

Cox is asking the entire Georgia College community to come together to “Imagine 2030.” This yearlong strategic planning process will center the changing ways students learn the skills essential to a quality liberal arts education; anticipate the expectations of employers, now and in the future; and amplify the key components of the campus experience.

Some shifts are already underway, as exhibited in the elevated focus reflected in the new name of the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology and its new degrees in finance and data sciences.

This fall, delegates from across the campus are visiting peer institutions that may offer inspiration and best practices for Georgia College to emulate in its development as a university of choice for students from the state, nation, and across the globe.

To attract students who will continue this institution’s progress toward preeminence, Cox knows Georgia College cannot just select novel ideas that have proven successful elsewhere.

“We as a campus have got to look at the recruitment and retention of students as a campus wide responsibility,” Cox said. “But not just a campus wide responsibility, we’ve got to engage our alumni to be out talking about the experience they had at Georgia College to their friends, neighbors, families, coworkers, Sunday school classmates, and everybody they know to help us get more people and their children interested in Georgia College.”

Cox convincingly delivers the charge to reimagine Georgia College, because she truly believes the value the liberal arts education Georgia College provides is critical at this juncture in world history.

“Our graduates will make the world a better place armed with superior abilities to analyze issues, apply innovative solutions, and build teams and communities that sustain a better way forward,” Cox said in closing her inaugural address. “They won’t be satisfied with the status quo, and neither are we.

“The future looks better because we at Georgia College & State University will make it so.”

**THE FUTURE LOOKS BETTER  
BECAUSE WE AT GEORGIA  
COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY  
WILL MAKE IT SO.**

- PRESIDENT CATHY COX



# Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

## Unprecedented opportunities to collaborate

**S**tudents with a mind toward entrepreneurial spirit will now have a dedicated place on campus to explore their innovative ideas.

To broaden collaboration on campus and drive targeted societal impact, the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology has opened The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.



**Dr. Nicolas Creel**  
Assistant Professor  
of Business Law  
Director of  
The Center for  
Innovation and  
Entrepreneurship

“We envision this center as a cross-college endeavor—something all students from all majors, all faculty, no matter the department, can get involved in,” said Dr. Nicolas Creel, assistant professor of business law and director of The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. “We look for expertise, regardless of where it lies, and ideas from students, regardless of where they’re at.”

Housed in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education building, the center will work in tandem with the Makerspace located there. The center will bring additional resources to the partnership, like space for formal pitch decks, an annual pitch competition, access to interdisciplinary experts, and more.

Modeled after the University of Georgia’s (UGA) Innovation Gateway, students will have the opportunity to pitch their ideas for businesses and innovations to expert panelists in pitch decks—a short presentation to convey their business plan or idea.

The center will serve as a library for the business-facing needs of students and the community. It will be the site of an

incubator for student and community businesses with low-cost resources and expert guidance.

Students will also have the opportunity to serve community members as part of a business consulting team for strategy, marketing, human resources, finance, and technology.

The center will host Bobcat Business Builder Bootcamps, or “B-Quads,” which will be two-day crash courses in basic business building. Once a year, the center will also facilitate a business pitch competition with contestants judged by industry professionals. The winner of the competition will receive seed money and oversight for the growth and development of their ideas.

The center is also working with local economic development agencies, like the Central State Hospital Redevelopment Authority, to develop a community-centric business incubator.



**Dr. Micheal Stratton**  
Dean  
J. Whitney Bunting  
College of Business  
and Technology

College of Business and Technology Dean Dr. Micheal Stratton’s 2022-2027 strategic plan developed plans for the center. It’s a part of his plan for contributing a positive social impact to the surrounding community.

“A comprehensive and formalized center has the potential to further capitalize on our commitment to both high-impact practices and engagement with and service to local and regional organizations,” Stratton said in his plan. “The center is a space for organizations to engage our students and faculty experts on emergent technologies and critical policy issues.”

In 2021, Georgia College & State University (GCSU) reached an economic impact of more than \$285 million on Baldwin County and Milledgeville, Georgia. Creel wants to grow that number in a strategic way that positively impacts local society.

“We’re a purpose-built administrative arm of the university that looks to maximize economic impact, whether it be through students building community or outreach to the community,” Creel said. “We can be the arm that helps connect people in the community to grants and other resources to stir up as much economic activity as we can.”

The center isn’t all about business though.

“The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship will provide the mechanism to bring together businesses, our students, and our faculty,” said Dr. Joseph Peters, dean of the College of Education. “We will be promoting these mutually beneficial partnerships that will produce groundbreaking research, solve complex problems, and create innovations to drive economic growth.”

“We will create a more skilled workforce,” he said, “while helping faculty and students gain skills.”

Because of its interdisciplinary nature and access to funding, undergraduate research opportunities will also abound.

“When we talk economic impact, it’s not always through starting a business,” Creel said, “Practice-based research is something we want to shore up in the center too. If there’s a way we can connect researchers to grants, we can really help any practical-facing research.”

For students, this means an outlet for what may be untapped potential. Their goal is to be an economic engine for all and provide a platform of collaboration for students across the university.

“We’re really going to grow that impact by monitoring, measuring, and increasing activity through the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship,” Creel said. “The university already generates all this economic impact—let’s make it purpose-driven, and not just happenstance.”

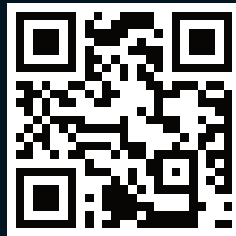




# HOME<sup>20</sup><sub>23</sub> COMING

*Save the Date*

FEB. 17-18, 2023



More information on the schedule of events and registration information will be released in the coming weeks to your inbox on eConnection and online at [gcsu.edu/homecoming](https://gcsu.edu/homecoming).

*We look forward to welcoming you home to campus!*

# MEETING THE NEED

## Pressing need for nurses spurs third nursing cohort at Georgia College & State University

Through the receipt of additional state funding, Georgia College & State University's School of Nursing (SON) has added a third cohort to their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree.

There are only 1,329 nurses per 100,000 residents in Georgia, according to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce (GBHCW) Nursing Workforce Data dashboard.

"It is estimated that an additional 175,900 registered nurses (RNs) will exit the workforce each year for personal reasons or through retirement, and the field is expected to grow by 7%," said Josie Doss, interim director and associate professor of the SON. "Though Georgia has around 100,000 RNs, we still have one of the lowest densities in the nation. We're preparing nurses to fill that need."







The inaugural cohort was admitted in the summer 2022 term and included 40 students. These students will attend classes for four continuous semesters, allowing them to graduate in just 15 months. Traditional nursing students typically do not take courses during the summer and graduate in two years.

Though they are increasing the number of nurses trained at Georgia College, the SON isn't sacrificing quality to meet Georgia healthcare needs.

"We're giving the students the tools they need in their undergraduate years so they're prepared for the workforce," said Morgan Fordham, lecturer of nursing.

"I'm teaching them high-pressure situation skills and stress management techniques to help them after they graduate, because it's not enough to have warm bodies in healthcare," she said. "A good quality nurse is going to save a life."

Summer classes were Monday through Thursday in the new cohort, with clinicals Mondays and Wednesdays. Students had lecture courses Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Following their initial summer semester, students in the cohort will have a schedule typical of fall and spring cohorts. The following summer, the students will graduate ahead of their peers because of their rigorous summer semesters.

"Seeing how impactful and important nurses are means a lot, so I am excited to fill those gaps," said junior nursing major Kerry Kidwell. "When it gets challenging or I'm tired, it's nice to have everyone in the cohort that I can relate to."

Nurse burnout is a major factor in the shortage. So, the faculty teaching foundation courses—Fordham; Joyce Norris-Taylor, assistant professor of nursing; and Tormechi Chambliss, lecturer of nursing—are focusing on stress and time management in addition to technical skills.

"I already see how awesome and dedicated our professors are to teaching and helping us learn and understand these concepts, so we'll be better prepared when we go into the workforce," said junior nursing major Rebecca Fausett. "Because there is such a shortage, we're going to be able to step up and help nurses and help patients."



"I feel called to nursing, I'm excited about it and I'll make personal connections with patients and everyone I work with," Fausett said.

Their professors say this cohort has a theme: hardworking and enthusiastic.

"The cohort is fast-paced and one of the hardest things I've had to do so far," said junior nursing major Rachel Najjar. "They care about us learning, not making mistakes

in the future, and really preparing us for whatever can happen in the nursing world and real life."

"They're there for us: emotionally and physically," she said. "They keep us accountable for everything."

The 2023 U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges list designated Georgia College's School of Nursing as the top public undergraduate nursing program in Georgia.





**SEEING HOW IMPACTFUL AND  
IMPORTANT NURSES ARE MEANS  
A LOT, SO I AM EXCITED TO FILL  
THOSE GAPS.** - KERRY KIDWELL,  
JUNIOR NURSING MAJOR

”



## A FEW NEW FACES

Bobcat Athletics had a pair of head coaching vacancies to fill this summer, one in men's basketball and another in women's soccer. Director of Athletics Wendell Staton went two different routes to fill those openings, one coach is a familiar face, and the other brings someone new to Bobcat Nation.

Long-time Georgia College & State University assistant coach Ryan Aquino took the reigns of Bobcat Men's Basketball at a press conference in June. Bobcat Women's Soccer Coach Jack Marchant is a newcomer, owning a decorated résumé at many different levels of collegiate soccer.

Aquino is the 8th head coach in program history, and the first Bobcat alumnus to lead GCSU's Men's Basketball program. He has a pair of degrees from GCSU, adding a Master's in Instructional Technology in 2015.

"I am thrilled that Ryan Aquino will be leading our men's basketball program," Staton said. "Ryan rose to the top of an outstanding candidate pool. Ryan has a clear and outstanding record of recruiting holistically successful student-athletes to Georgia College. Ryan's impact is felt throughout our program as he knows, lives, and exudes the Georgia College culture."



Coach Aquino led Bobcat Men's Basketball in an exhibition game at the University of Georgia on Nov. 1— check out photos from the Alumni Reception and the big game!







**THE CHANCE TO STAY HERE AND CONTINUE OFF OF THE SUCCESS THAT WE'VE HAD ON AND OFF THE COURT IS SPECIAL TO ME. I AM TRULY BLESSED AND EXCITED ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY. I THINK WE CAN DO A LOT OF SPECIAL THINGS BECAUSE THIS IS A SPECIAL PLACE. - RYAN AQUINO**

”

Serving as assistant coach and head recruiting coordinator for eight seasons at GCSU, he helped guide the team to a 115-99 record during that timeframe, including an appearance in the 2021-22 NCAA Tournament.

“We found the right fit, right here in Ryan Aquino,” said President Cathy Cox at the press conference. “Ryan stepped up and showed us things during the interview process that made us absolutely confident that we had the right person for the job... I wanted to thank especially alumni and friends that spoke up and told me how much confidence they had in Ryan's ability to lead this team.”

Aquino helped coach Bobcat student-athletes to 10 All-Peach Belt Conference (PBC) honors in his career, including All-Region status for both Jordan Thomas and Terrell Harris. Harris was also an All-American and PBC Player of the Year in 2016-17.



Consistent with the well-rounded nature of Georgia College students, Aquino has been assistant coach for all three of the program's Elite 16 Awards, including Brandon Thomas winning his second-straight this past year. The team has also won the PBC Team Sportsmanship Award four times in Aquino's eight seasons, and once when he was on the roster in 2008-09.

Aquino has a special connection to GCSU.

“This has been the only place I would call home since 2008. The chance to stay here and continue off of the success that we've had on and off the court is special to me,” he said. “I am truly blessed and excited about this opportunity. I think we can do a lot of special things because this is a special place.”

Marchant describes what makes the GCSU Athletic Department special.

“The thing that really hit home for me was how much this place already felt like home for me,” he said. “I can't wait to dive into this place with two feet; not only the soccer, but the university and community as well.”

Marchant is the fifth coach in GCSU Soccer history and joins Bobcat Nation after three seasons as assistant coach at Division I Georgia State University.

Over his three seasons in Atlanta the Panthers enjoyed a successful turnaround, compiling

28 victories, including berths in the Sun Belt Conference Semifinals all three seasons. He helped guide Panther players to 10 All-Sun Belt honors in those three seasons.

At his welcome press conference in July, President Cox showed her excitement for the hire.

“We were looking for someone who was the best fit for our campus. Someone who really understands the culture of Georgia College. And we really found it today in a special way.”

Prior to his work on the Panthers' coaching staff, Marchant spent two seasons as an assistant at another Division I program in The Citadel. Marchant also spent one season at Division II Anderson University and was also involved in the Clemson Anderson Soccer Alliance, overseeing the development of the club's goalkeepers.

“We are thrilled that Jack Marchant will be leading our Soccer program,” Staton said. “Jack aligns perfectly with Georgia College and will provide an outstanding student-athlete experience centered around academic, community, and athletic excellence. Throughout the process it was consistently clear that he is of the highest ethical fiber, is a team player, and cares deeply about student-athletes. Jack is a perfect fit for Georgia College, and it feels like he has been here for many years.”

SGA President Kaitley Congdon:

# ALL SMILES *and* SERVICE





A woman of many interests, Student Government Association (SGA) President Kaitley Congdon, didn't anticipate becoming a leader of her peers in college.

The Gainesville, Georgia, native's venture into collegiate government was by chance.

As a freshman, Congdon discovered the power given to student government senators to hear the complaints of fellow students, enact constitutional changes, and improve student life across the university.

As a senator, she helped launch the student complaint portal, advertised for SGA, and was chair of the student emergency fund—money students in need can apply for.

"I like when I get to see and hear how our changes are benefitting other people," Congdon said. "Even though it can take time to accomplish our goals, in the end we get it done, and it makes life easier for people."

"You really need a connection between faculty, staff, and students," she said. "SGA is the bridge that connects them."

Congdon is fascinated by many subjects, from criminal justice to chemistry to training service dogs, but one value connects them all—service.

Shaped by her family's passion for volunteerism, the senior criminal justice major and chemistry minor has a dedication to enriching the lives of others.

"One of my biggest passions is service for anything," she said. "I always think of things that will help people. It's my first priority, because there's a lot of times people are struggling. There's always something you can do."

"Even if it just helps one person—and it makes them smile—that's the goal."

From the times she played CSI: Beetle in her backyard until now, Congdon's



always enjoyed chemistry and its importance to nearly everything. But, she zeroed in on forensics and investigation because the career would empower her to provide families closure and impact lives in a positive way.

She works with Georgia College Miracle, the largest student-led fundraiser on campus to raise money for childhood cancer. She enjoys working with children, volunteers at the Special Olympics and has assisted children with special needs.

"I always volunteer for everything," Congdon said, "because I thought that's just what you're supposed to do. Previous SGA presidents and other members told me that's not something everyone does, and I realized how I could do good things."

Also the president of GCSU's Delta Gamma chapter, Congdon champions its philanthropy Service for Sight. As part of that philanthropy, she trains puppies to be service dogs. Right now, she's raising a dog to, hopefully, be a seeing eye dog.

Congdon said that despite her busy schedule, she's excited to be president of SGA. This side of student government affords her the opportunity to view the inner workings of the university and form close relationships with more faculty.

She has big goals for campus too. After hearing student feedback, she's established a nighttime bus route, working to get more students involved on campus, and making SGA approachable for more students.

Now, she said, students can contact their SGA representative through Instagram.

"Maybe we need more trash cans by the dorms, something attainable, but we don't know because no one is telling us," she said. "I'm not perfect, but I'm going to try to help students out and make things better for them. I've always tried out everything, and I think that's something more people should do."



WEEK OF WELCOME  
FALL 2022 AT GEORGIA COLLEGE









ALUMNUS' LONG BUT REWARDING  
JOURNEY AIDING VICTIMS GETS

# Ultimate Honor

For over 30 years, **Derek Marchman, '88**, has worked with law enforcement, elected officials, and community leaders to increase the quality of life for crime victims.

Photo credit: Solia Digital Media



The culmination of his efforts caught the attention of the Office of U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland, who awarded Derek Marchman the 2022 National Crime Victims' Rights Award from the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Justice Programs and the Office for Victims of Crime.

"When the U.S. Attorney General presented the award to me, he remembered my work with victims of the Centennial Olympic Park bombing," Marchman said. "There I stood at the National Mall, receiving an award under the shadow of the Washington Monument. That was pretty cool."

Rockdale County Superior Court Judge Nancy Bills nominated him for the national award, which was created in 1981 by former President Ronald Reagan. The award has been presented each year during National Crime Victims' Rights Week to

individuals who make momentous strides in helping victims and survivors nationwide.

Marchman began his law enforcement career as a probation officer and rose quickly through the ranks when he discovered he had an aptitude for building community programs. He later served as a staff member on the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) for former Georgia Governor Zell Miller, where he developed programming and educated officials on victims' rights.

Through CJCC, Marchman played an integral role in lobbying state legislators to enhance the Georgia Crime Victims Bill of Rights and Family Violence Act. His advocacy work at the state level soon went national when he assisted former United States Senators Max Cleland and Paul Coverdell and then-Senator Joe Biden on the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Marchman sees this award as recognition of his work on every level of government

and with non-profit organizations.

"Receiving this award was a tremendous honor," he said. "It's so sad that so many of the individuals who influenced me have passed away. I hate that Martha Gilland, past director of CJCC, Governor Miller, the senators, and others didn't see me get this award."

Marchman began this work when he started to identify gaps in services for crime victims. He spoke to many community and agency boards on how they could expand services for victims. That includes working with the Board of Pardons and Paroles to allocate fees from parolees to crime victims' programs and services.

While at CJCC, Marchman served as director of the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Program where he helped educate legislators and develop programming to enhance services and provide more



**I HAVE SEVEN RULES, AND THEY'RE ALL BASED ON THAT GEORGIA COLLEGE EXPERIENCE. I'VE TAUGHT THESE ALL OVER THE WORLD.** - DEREK MARCHMAN, '88

”



Photo credit: Solia Digital Media

funding for crime victims through the Georgia Crime Victims Compensation Fund. The first year, under his direction, it allocated around \$40,000. In 2019, the program provided \$20 million to aid crime victims.

Marchman also served as CJCC's deputy director for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and VAWA programs, which awarded over \$30 million toward crime victims' programs and services throughout Georgia annually.

He championed and wrote the victims' rights training program for the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council. For several years, he taught these principles to law enforcement at various academies across the state.

Marchman's work with victims of the Centennial Olympic Park and Oklahoma City bombings inspired him to get his

master's degree and begin a Ph.D. program in psychology, because he wanted to learn how victims think and respond to trauma-based issues.

When getting his undergraduate degree at Georgia College & State University, Marchman recalls wanting to be president of the Kappa Sigma Chapter. He found out his grade point average might not be good enough to be an officer. Marchman said conversations with his academic advisor provided some keen advice that helped him improve his grades and make the most of his academic experience.

"I learned how to develop a process for studying, learning, and building relationships," he said. "I can never thank that academic advisor enough. I have seven rules, and they're all based on that Georgia College experience. I've taught these all over the world."

Now, Marchman is reciprocating the positive impact of that advisor by dedicating this part of his career to teaching and instilling the love of learning in others. He has been able to do this as an adjunct instructor at Gordon State College and as a past international president of Kappa Sigma.

As the founder of Marchman Consulting, he teaches students and meets with legislators on advocacy issues—most recently testifying on the anti-hazing bill. Overall, Marchman has written grant proposals for an array of programs across the U.S., generating nearly \$500 million toward this effort.

"More people need to learn critical thinking—looking at problems in a holistic manner, and coming together to address them," he said. "When you do that, it makes hard choices a little easier."

NEW DEPARTMENT CHAIR BELIEVES

# *every student can learn*

To get a chemical reaction, a catalyst is sometimes needed to stir things up and get things moving.

Dr. Sayo Fakayode should know.

Since being appointed head of Georgia College & State University's Department of Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy in July, he has acted as a catalyst, bringing a burst of fresh air and energy to campus.

Fakayode prefers to be called "Fakay." His office door, like his heart, is always open. Watch him walk down a corridor, spreading smiles as he goes.

His style is more cheerleader than leader. Fakay's charm and ready smile draw people to him like a magnet. His good nature and positive attitude are contagious. His genuine interest in others—faculty and student alike—acts to break down barriers, instill hope, and build trust.

"If you don't like people, if you don't like students," Fakay said, "then you should not be a professor. If you don't truly like what you do, it makes teaching a toxic environment and you can easily kill student aspiration."

"The goal of good teachers is not just about the grade," he said. "It's about total development. Develop them, look at them, talk to them. If they're not ready, make them ready. If they are not prepared, prepare them. Give them options. It's our job to provide the environment and the opportunity for students."

Fakay understands firsthand the impact a good teacher can make.

Growing up in western Nigeria, he was first in his family to complete high school and attend college. Fakay was on the path to become a medical doctor—despite his fear of blood and needles—when he heard a professor speak about the diversity of other jobs chemists can do. Another professor suggested he go to the United States to get his Ph.D. Later, a colleague told him he had leadership skills.

**BEING A TEACHER PUTS US IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE, TO FORM KNOWLEDGE, TO ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE.** - DR. SAYO FAKAYODE



Having the right people steer him along made all the difference in Fakay's life.

Now, he wants to open doors widely for others. He stops students in halls and strikes up conversations in grocery stores. He asks youth about their goals in life, gently maneuvering them in the right direction.

Many times, the obstacle to student success is financial. That's why Fakay became proficient in writing grants. As department head of physical sciences at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith, he secured and managed nearly \$3.5 million in grants to support low-income students, faculty development, and community outreach.

At Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina, Fakay had a student who didn't show up for class or came late and

left early. She did poorly on quizzes and often slept through instruction. She was failing and on probation.

He discovered the young woman worked 75 hours a week to afford college and take care of her family. He made a deal with her. If she committed herself to study, he'd pay her to come to class and assist him in the lab. That year, she became the best and most-improved student at the university.

Fakay has many heartwarming stories like this.

He's honest with students. Chemistry is hard, he tells them. It's hard for a reason. An aircraft must be perfect. Buildings and bridges must be perfect. Chemicals in cleaning solutions or medicines leave no room for error.

But Fakay assures students they are already ahead of the game by majoring in science. All that's needed is the right teacher at all levels to get them to their destination.

"We have a lot of responsibility in what we say, when we say it, and how we say it," Fakay said. "Being a teacher puts us in a unique position to share knowledge, to form knowledge, to advance knowledge."

In the next few years, Fakay's goal is to increase student enrollment in chemistry and physics; partner with other schools for an engineering degree; and create more community outreach programs.

He's excited about the caliber of talent in his department. He tells faculty and students alike: "See yourself through me. You can do it."

"Students want to go where they feel at home, where they feel valued, confident, and where they know they can trust you," Fakay said. "My goal isn't to help just the top of the class. They will always be successful. What about the medium or low ones? It's our job to unburden them and raise them to where they need to be."







# CLASS NOTES

## 1960s

**William “Bill” Casey, ’78**, is a litigation partner at Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers in Atlanta.



**Marilyn Sawyer Stephenson, ’08**, graduated from Bryan College of Health Sciences in Lincoln, Nebraska, with her Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice Degree May 6, 2022.



**Sarah Lines Kay, ’09**, graduated with a doctorate of jurisprudence degree from Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law May 14, 2022.

Sarah is the daughter of **Stanley Lines, ’72**, and Susan Lines of Eatonton. Her brother, **Josh Lines, ’06, ’07**, was her bone marrow transplant donor when she battled leukemia. Sarah lives in Indiana with her husband, David, and their son, Preston.



**Deitrah Taylor, ’09**, public historian, served as a historian for Ours Studios LLC on the documentary “As If We Were Ghosts,” which premiered on Georgia Public Broadcasting June 13 and 19, 2022.

**Benjamin Browning, ’11**, graduated with a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2020. A modified form of his Ph.D. dissertation called “Facing the Mob: Rome, the Crowd, and the New Testament,” was published by Pickwick Publications in February 2022.

**Mike Murphy, ’11, ’14**, and **Kaitlyn Dietz Murphy, ’12**, are excited to introduce Theodore Kelley Murphy born Aug. 24, 2022, at 10:41 a.m., measuring 7 pounds, 3 ounces, and 19 inches long.



**Laurel Smith Rinaudo, ’15**, and **Alex Rinaudo, ’14**, welcomed their first child May 19, 2022. Milledge McDaniel Rinaudo was named after Milledgeville — the special city where his parents met. They can’t wait to take him on his first visit to campus to show him where they met.





**Lena Thompson Smith, '15, and Austin Smith, '15**, of Decatur, Georgia, married in November 2017. The couple welcomed their third son, McCauley Nix Smith, in December 2021. The couple has two other children: James (3) and Felix (2).



**Meghan Pittman, J.D. '19**, recently graduated cum laude from Mercer University School of Law, passed the bar exam, and started a position as an associate attorney at Jones Cork, LLP.



**Keiley Bagwell, '20**, married **Josh Brennan, '18**, June 11, 2022, in Dawsonville, Georgia. The wedding party included **Emily Parker, '21**, **Clare Williams, '20**, **Caitlin Pickering, '20**, **Joseph "Logan" Partenza, '18**, **Jerald "Jake" Landress, '15**, and Matron of Honor **Josie Bagwell Morris, '17**.

**Megan King, '19**, published her first book July 13, 2022, titled "Designing the Modern World Language Classroom" after being inspired by working with the Schlechty Center. King works as a Spanish teacher. To learn more, visit [mwllclassroombydesign.com](http://mwllclassroombydesign.com).



**Rachel Murphy, J.D. '19**, graduated from Mercer University School of Law May 14, 2022, with a Juris Doctor Degree. Murphy passed the Georgia Bar Exam in July 2022, after which she began working for the Cherokee County District Attorney's Office in Canton, Georgia.



**Philip "Josh" Tanner, '19**, married Michelle Cailor at a ceremony in Auburn, Georgia, July 1, 2022.

Please submit your news for Class Notes at:  
[gcsu.edu/alumniclassnotes](https://gcsu.edu/alumniclassnotes)



# *In Memoriam*

Margarette Bass Taylors*	Mary Davis Lee, '70
Louise Morgan Thompson, '37	Marjo Shepherd Baisden, '71
Mary Rudolph Cummings, '38	Glynn Deaver, '71
Anne Armour Mosley, '39	Kathleen Ezzell Prussner, '71
Virginia Tomberlin Porter, '39	Olaf Bergwall, '72
Harriet Banks Marsh, '41*	Charles Edmonds, '72
Mary Melton Melson, '42	Timothy Henebry, '72
Doris Lane Perry, '42	Norma Clarke Larson, '73
Helen Matthews Lewis, '46	Jimmy Johns, '73
Lurline Harris, '47	Ellestine Williams, '76
Nella Screws Willis, '48	William Flury, '78
Anne Smith Carr, '49*	Sharon Saucier Williams, '78
Joan Claxton Peterman, '50	Fred Fletcher, '81
Carolyn Chappell Navarro, '51	Daniel Phillips, '84
Frances Britt, '52	Joseph Kitchens, '85
Sara Whatley Skinner, '52	Elizabeth Clark Meier, '92
Joyce Ford Givhan, '53	Alan Hawkins, '95
Zunilda Gonzalez, '53	Doris Tappen Donaldson, '96
Helen Reynolds, '53	Julia Amman Schuchs, '96
Frances Freeman Harris, '53	Brian Everett, '97
Lucille McKinney Smith, '53	Steven Fulbright, '06
Una Dillard Smith, '53	Marilyn Smith Wiggins, '08
Barbara Chambers Clearman, '56	Ashley Harris, '10
Lillian Martin Beck, '58	Christopher Cash, '13
Emilie Sandra Dunagan Deal, '63, '66	Christopher Oglesby Evans, '17
Katy Newton Cochran, '64	Lauren Hovey, '18
Victoria Culppepper Jenkins, '64	Stephanie Endy Lodde, '18
Janelle Greene Bridges, '66	Zachary Leffler, '21

**\*Denotes alumni of Peabody School.**

**This list recognizes deceased alumni that the university has been made aware of since Sept. 16, 2022.**



# REMEMBERING SANDRA DUNAGAN DEAL

## 1942–2022

As First Lady of Georgia, Sandra Dunagan Deal, '63, '66, made it an imperative to set the state's youngest residents on a path to develop the reading skills necessary for success in school and in life.

By her eighth year in the Governor's Mansion, Deal had touched the lives of countless children—sharing story time with students in more than 1,000 schools and pre-K programs in all of Georgia's 181 school districts and each of the state's 159 counties.

"Learning to read and having a love of learning just opens the doors and makes life possible and great," Deal told the Milledgeville Union-Recorder at the unveiling of the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy in 2017. "Education to me is the key, and that takes people one-on-one just getting out there and doing what they can to try to help."

The child of educators, Deal attended GCSU, known at the time as the Women's College of Georgia, so that she could continue the calling of making an impact in the lives of young people.

"Mrs. Sandra Dunagan Deal was a tireless champion for literacy and dedicated her life to bringing the gift of reading to the children of Georgia—she often said, 'If you can read, you can do anything,'" said Dr. Theresa Magpuri-Lavell, executive director of the Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy. "Mrs. Deal also had a servant's heart. She expressed gratitude for the labor and contributions from those who believed that reading begins at home by talking to your babies and continues to preschool, grade school and throughout life."

As the wife of former Governor Nathan Deal, Sandra Deal used her public platform to champion the issues of education and literacy and model the civic virtues of volunteerism and community service.

Each step of the way, Deal exemplified the values of GCSU.

"Mrs. Deal embodied the highest aspirations of Georgia College & State University," President Cathy Cox said. "As a former language arts teacher, Mrs. Deal understood the impact education has on the lives of her fellow Georgians and worked tirelessly to promote reading as the pathway to student achievement and lifelong success."

In 2017, the Georgia General Assembly provided funding to open the Sandra

Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy at GCSU, continuing Mrs. Deal's commitment to advancing childhood literacy programs across the state of Georgia.

GCSU is honored to carry on her legacy by serving future generations of Georgians with the same servant's heart Mrs. Deal so eloquently modeled for GCSU faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

Deal passed away on August 23, 2022, following a recurrence of breast cancer.





**University Communications**  
Campus Box 97  
Milledgeville, GA 31061  
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UPDATE YOUR  
CONTACT  
INFORMATION

# Save the Date or Make Your Gift Early

GCSU's third annual Athletics Week of Giving Campaign



## MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY

Join us December 5-9 to help your Bobcat athletic teams reach their goals during our third annual Athletics Week of Giving Campaign! This five-day giving challenge will take place among GCSU's 11 NCAA DII varsity sports. Our goal is to reach 300 donors by the end of the week.

Every dollar of every gift, regardless of the amount, goes directly to the team of your choice to enhance their program. Your generosity provides our student-athletes with extraordinary educational and athletic opportunities, and we greatly appreciate your support.

Please consider making a gift early and help your favorite GCSU athletic team get a head start. Scan the QR code to make your gift today!



If you would like to give by mail, please indicate "Athletics Week of Giving" in the memo line and mail it to:

**University Advancement**  
CBX 96  
Milledgeville, GA 31061

If you are interested in offering a matching gift or have any questions, please contact

**Caroline Attaway**  
[caroline.attaway@gcsu.edu](mailto:caroline.attaway@gcsu.edu)  
478-445-1186