

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

NEWSLETTER



Editor's Note



The Spring 2022 newsletter is a celebration of the amazing work of all the people who comprise the College of Arts and Sciences. As we all continue to adapt and grow in the face of changing times, the exceptional programs at Georgia College are evolving as well. This

issue highlights our new directions, achievements and milestones for us all. Even more impressively, all of this happened alongside the backdrop of our ongoing commitment to student research and community engagement.

First, we begin by highlighting the Department of World Languages and Cultures and its dynamic, new curriculum. The faculty in the department are working to expand the impact of their programs, the range of their classes and their connection to other disciplines. They have also developed a new Language Resource Center and a mentoring program to help emphasize its focus on learning world cultures as a supplement to language. This change represents our effort to continuously improve and embrace new pedagogies and approaches, while remaining rooted in our liberal arts mission.

Next, you'll find exciting stories about innovative programs, people and scholarly impact. We have a new Aquatic Sciences Center, which will help support not only our faculty but our student research as well. We continue to have renowned scholars bring their work to our campus, and our faculty take their excellent work to the community. We also have a series of pieces highlighting the amazing work of our students, including the tremendous undergraduate research that continues to be an integral part of our work.

Finally, we have a milestone for the College of Arts and Sciences as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of our liberal arts mission. We hosted two events to commemorate this landmark with a tremendous group of alumni and faculty. It was wonderful to hear them share their stories of how the mission of Georgia College has shaped their personal and professional lives in so many ways. This was truly a remarkable semester for Georgia College and we hope you enjoy the newsletter.

DR. WINSTON TRIPP
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Dean's Message

Recently, I attended a presentation by one of our faculty members on an important topic. Dr. Bill Risch, professor of history, presented "The End of Europe as We Know It? Russia, the EU, and the War in Ukraine," as part of the University System of Georgia (USG) European Studies annual student conference held on our campus this year.

The presentation and stimulating discussion that followed caught the audience's attention as we struggled to understand the motivations behind this current devastating war in eastern Europe.

That we have one the world's top specialists on the history of Ukraine in the Department of History and Geography at Georgia College is a testament to the breadth and depth of the academic training that our faculty possess.

The conference, organized by Dr. Hank Edmondson, professor of political science, is one that actively involves our students in presenting papers on their original research, one of so many that involve our students in undergraduate research across the college and university.

Dr. Risch's excellent presentation encouraged me to think about how vital and valuable the liberal arts are in today's challenging world, especially in this case of understanding a war that could, as easily as not, involve the United States. History, a discipline of the humanities, and political science, a discipline of the social sciences, both provide understanding, context, necessary complexity and potential answers as we watch horrors unfold in Ukraine. Both are firmly ensconced within the liberal arts tradition here at Georgia College.

It is unfortunate that elected (and unelected) leaders around the world don't seem to understand that such conflicts are complex, messy and difficult to decipher. Perhaps they haven't had a positive liberal arts-infused college education. It is also unfortunate that in today's soundbite-sized, social media-dominated world, a growing number of people want easy answers, less complexity, less discussion and easy "gotcha" moments with which to batter political adversaries.

Of course, we know that complexity and discomfort are necessary for real learning, deep learning and life-long learning. You will see examples of such learning unfolding on the pages of this newsletter. We wholeheartedly believe that the liberal arts curriculum our students are receiving is necessary to help develop leaders who will be equipped to take on the challenges to come.

Remarkable things are happening in the hallways of the College of Arts and Sciences.



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DR. ERIC TENBUS
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences



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ARTS AND SCIENCES
SPRING 2022 **NEWS**LETTER

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COVER STORY

NEW CURRICULUM BRINGS GLOBAL CONNECTIONS TO MORE STUDENTS





With an average global literacy rate of 86.3%, it's safe to say most people can now read and write in their native language. But in this global century, a new challenge to literacy has emerged.

The challenge? Monolingualism, or only speaking one language.

With its new curriculum, the Department of World Languages and Cultures (WLC) hopes to change that for more students.

"If you walk into a place and people are communicating, and you have no idea what they're saying, you're missing out on something beautiful," said Dr. Audrey Ruark Redmond, Language Resource Center coordinator for the Department of World Languages and Cultures. "Here, we try to think of ways to make language really accessible and fun to students."

To expand that accessibility, the department is revising their major requirements in a few key ways.

Students will complete their major in fewer hours and will have only two required courses. All other courses will be offered as electives, making the major a "build your own" experience.

In addition to interdisciplinary coursework taught in the target language, majors or minors with global language, culture, society or skills components will count toward a student's World Language and Cultures major.

"There are so many majors that complement our language major," said Dr. Mariana Stoyanova, assistant professor of Spanish. "It helps for students to see that everything is interconnected. We're really trying to offer our students more high-impact practices. Not just upper levels, but minors too."

Dedication to student experience is what makes this department unique from others like it. As a smaller department within the university, their size has enabled them to build distinct courses of study for each student.

"It's really refreshing to walk into a class of maybe 10 people and have a discussion-based class," said junior mass communication and Spanish double-major Christopher Jackson. "At first that sounds intimidating, but it's nice to have roundtable conversations with professors and get to know your peers better in a small setting."

The department uses its size to its advantage, and focuses classes on experience and engagement between students. Each major is thoughtfully paired with a member of faculty, which typically leads to internship plans, undergraduate research opportunities and a better grasp on the language.

"The WLC Mentor Program provides a platform for our faculty to invest in their students and talk to them about their past failures or successes," Redmond said. "It's wonderful having somebody with that perspective right there to walk you through everything and cheer you on."

These priorities have created a "culture of kindness" in the department by holding classes less concerned about grammar, and more centered on immersing students in target language culture and supporting them in authentic, spontaneous discussion.

Senior Spanish and French major Tucker Skipper described a Spanish class in which the students weren't thriving. Getting through the lesson wasn't working. Instead of slogging through a mediocre day, Dr. Virginia Terán, lecturer of Spanish, spiced things up in the classroom.

Declaring it a "mental health day" for students, she played vibrant Spanish tunes for the class, and students were able to freely converse in Spanish. This made a mark on Skipper, who appreciated her energy and whose peers still talk about their experience.

That energy is matched by the department's detailed programs and a curated list of events. Dynamic and innovative, the list includes competitions like Duolingo challenges, conversational coffee hours and a popular Teletandem program that pairs students with like-minded peers from partner universities in Lille, France and Bogotá, Columbia.

The students work with their international conversation partners to develop their language skills further and learn more about youth cultures abroad.

"It was probably the best thing that I could have done to move my language skills forward," said Gabrielle Duchateau, senior mass communication major and French minor. "We got to talk about cultural stuff, like politics, and she asked me about prom. I thought it was random, but it's a high school thing that doesn't exist there."

The collaborative culture in the department centers on the Language Resource Center. A dynamic lounge for students, it features high-tech learning gadgets and study space, while also serving as a hub for tutoring and social gatherings.

"The Language Resource Center is unique because it's a very cultural experience," Jackson said. "Even if you're not studying a language, the ambience of being around other cultures, learning new things and learning from other people is a cool experience."

This exploration of cultures and global ideas is a common theme for those in the department. In fact, learning language basics is only a small fragment of what students will study.

"I'm confident in saying that I can do higher-level thinking in Spanish and French," Skipper said. "You're going to learn big ideas, and I know it sounds cliché, but you won't be the same when you finish, because your perspective will shift so much."

Often, courses of study within the department translate to novel experiences for students they once thought impossible.

Skipper and Jackson, both Middle Georgia natives, found the cultural immersion more vivid than

expected, and used the program as a way to experience the places they learned about from afar.

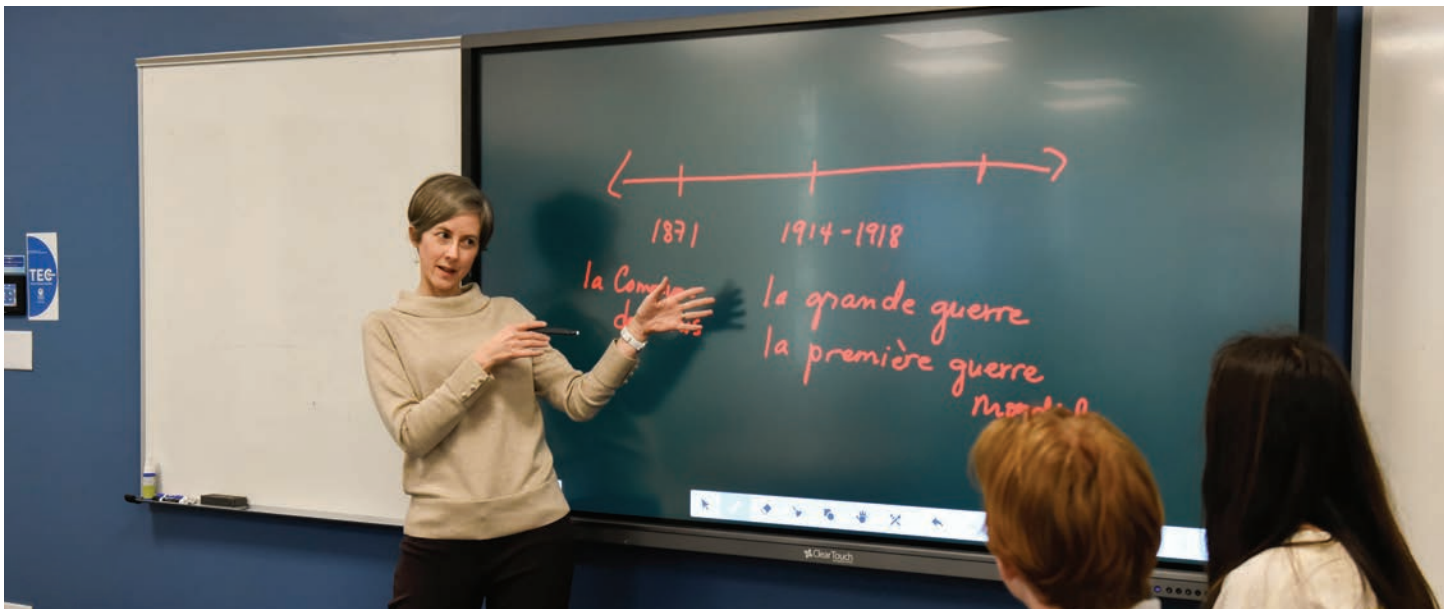
"I haven't always had the opportunity or resources to travel abroad or study abroad," Skipper said. "This has been a way for me to experience places all over the world in the classroom. Sometimes I go my whole day without speaking English, to the point that it feels like I'm no longer in America."

Because they recognize the part they play in the cultural literacy of the community, the department also offers services and programs to the surrounding Milledgeville area. One of these programs is bilingual storytelling.

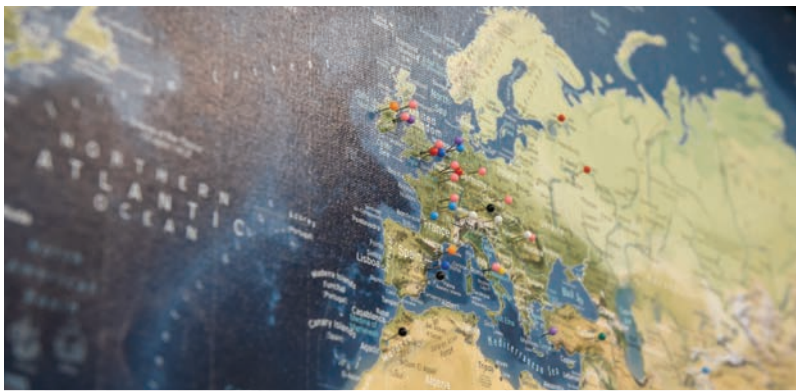
Through this initiative, students interested in teaching language are partnered with groups of children in local schools. The students then devise lesson plans and meet with young students in local schools and libraries to introduce them to global ideas and, typically, be their first contact with foreign language.

"Primary schools often do not have a language program," Stoyanova said. "It shows them the world is bigger than what they know, as many of them do not have the opportunity to go out of state. If we can nurture an interest in reading, it'll promote understanding and hopefully, keep them in school."

“YOU’RE GOING TO LEARN BIG IDEAS, AND I KNOW IT SOUNDS CLICHÉ, BUT YOU WON’T BE THE SAME WHEN YOU FINISH, BECAUSE YOUR PERSPECTIVE WILL SHIFT SO MUCH.”



Dr. Libby Murphy teaches both French history and society to complement the language.



A posting in the Language Resource Center.



Students use many interactive methods for language learning.



Christopher Jackson tutors in the Language Resource Center.



The Department of World Languages and Cultures. Dr. Libby Murphy, department chair, second from left in the back row.

From elementary school children to their college students, the department shows how they broaden exposure to global cultures and create effective communicators through intimate mentorship and experiential learning opportunities.

"Being part of the major has been a really rewarding experience," Jackson said. "If you would have told me I would be a World Languages and Cultures major, I would have thought you were crazy. It's work, but it's not as unreachable as you think." 🎧

A&S welcomes new associate dean

Dr. Winston Tripp has joined Georgia College as the new associate dean for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Most recently, Tripp served as associate dean for research and director of the Center for Research at the University of West Georgia (UWG) Office of Research and Sponsored Projects. This involved developing university-wide initiatives to support faculty, working with nonprofits and government, and assisting with strategic planning and needs assessments.

"Dr. Tripp comes to Georgia College with enthusiasm for working for a public liberal arts university," said Dr. Eric Tenbus, dean of Arts and Sciences.

"One particular strength that Dr. Tripp will contribute to our work in the college is his expertise in generating and analyzing data," Tenbus said. "He directed a research center at West Georgia, and this experience will be tremendously valuable in guiding future decision-making within the college."

Tripp was raised in Nevada and lived much of his life in the western United States. He got his bachelor's from the University of Oregon and Ph.D. at Pennsylvania State University, both in sociology.

Tripp got to know the Georgia College campus environment prior to applying for this role. He collaborated with Dr. Veronica Womack on a project a few years ago and met Dr. Cynthia Alby in the Governor's Teaching Fellows Program. He said Alby convinced him Georgia College "was the best place to work."

"I really love the mission of Georgia College and have been so impressed with everyone I've met here," Tripp said. "I like being part of a team, so I'm looking forward to contributing whatever I can to all the great programs at Georgia College. I also really enjoy working with data, and I'm hoping to be able to contribute some of my skills with data analysis and visualization."

Tripp founded UWG's Data Analysis and Visualization Lab and later became the director of the UWG Survey Research Center. In these positions he worked to build connections between the campus and the surrounding communities.

He served on the Board of Trustees for a regional nonprofit organization that administered programs such as a low-income home weatherization project and a Head Start program. He also led an initiative to build a collaborative network between the university, local nonprofit organizations, government agencies and businesses to share data on community factors affecting residents and stakeholders in the area.

"I've been so impressed with all of the programs in the College of Arts and Sciences since I arrived," Tripp said. "I'm definitely looking forward to adding my own passion and energy to the team at Georgia College, and figuring out ways to help the people here who are already doing really great things." 🎧



Dr. Winston Tripp

Panel discussions mark 25th anniversary of the public liberal arts

To celebrate the public liberal arts and the power it wields in education, two panels, with alumni and faculty, were held by the College of Arts and Sciences April 6 and 8.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Georgia College's public liberal arts mission. In 1996, the Georgia Board of Regents designated the institution "Georgia's public liberal arts university," and changed the college's name to Georgia College & State University.

The designation gave the university a unique distinction, one steeped in interdisciplinary study for undergraduates.

"It changed the history of Georgia College for the better," said Dean Eric Tenbus. "We, as the College of Arts and Sciences, are the heart of the liberal arts at Georgia College — it's in our DNA."

Panelists of the alumni event, prompted by Tenbus' questions, included alumni Sachen Pillay, '21, Kendyl Lewis, '21, Zach Brown, '14, Patrick Hamilton, '17 and Christopher Daniel Burt, '08.

They graduated with majors ranging from theater to philosophy to biology. The panelists explained why they chose Georgia College, their unique experiences and how the liberal arts focus shaped their education and post-graduate employment.

"The diversity of my experience, day in and day out, was something I took note of," Pillay said. "The diversity was built into the fabric of my education — it allowed me to have well-rounded knowledge and have a diversity of skills."

Dr. Lee Gillis, professor and chair of psychology; Dr. Sunita Manian, chair of philosophy, religion and liberal studies; Dr. Chavonda Mills, dean of the School of Science and Technology at Georgia Gwinnett College and former chair of chemistry, physics and astronomy at Georgia College; and Dr. Karen Berman, former chair of theatre and dance, comprised the faculty panel, with Professor Emeritus of creative writing, Martin Lammon, as emcee.

The panel discussion followed a tribute to the late Dr. Ralph Hemphill, who was instrumental in raising admissions standards and procuring the liberal arts designation for Georgia College.

The group shared fond memories they've curated over their years of service, what impact the liberal arts designation has had on Georgia College and invited the audience to share their thoughts and memories, as well.

"The semester I taught climate and chemistry, I had an education student, a business student, and chemistry majors — and the ideas we were able to bring to our discussions and projects were so rich," Mills said. "I know the students appreciated that because I appreciated it as the faculty mentor. We were allowed to do that."

From here, the college looks to another 25 years, in which the possibilities for students at Georgia College will continue to expand under the liberal arts umbrella. [📍](#)



From left to right: Dr. Eric Tenbus, Sachen Pillay, Kendyl Lewis, Zach Brown, Patrick Hamilton and Dr. Christopher "Daniel" Burt.



From left to right: Drs. Karen Berman, Chavonda Mills, Sunita Manian, Martin Lammon and Lee Gillis.

New Aquatics Sciences Center will provide water expertise

Careers in marine sciences are more important than ever — with oceans rising and the proliferation of toxic algae and pollutions. To ensure Georgia College students are prepared, and to take advantage of faculty knowledge and expertise in this field, the university will open a new Aquatics Sciences Center by fall 2022.

“We are seeing significant changes in our global climate that have been rapidly accelerating in the last decade,” said Dr. Indiren Pillay, chair of biological and environmental sciences.

“These changes are making significant differences in our marine environment,” he said, “from marine microorganisms to marine animals and the introduction of pollution, including temperature pollution where slight warming of the oceans is creating different ecosystems.”

Ecological changes like increasing incidences of red tides

and algal blooms are just some issues that could be studied at the new center. Microbiologists are concerned, Pillay said, because pathogens normally low in numbers are rapidly increasing and, in some cases, causing disease.

Out of 27 faculty in Georgia College’s Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, about a third are linked in some way to water-related topics — both marine and freshwater. Faculty include Drs. Dave Bachoon, Andrei Barkovskii, Christopher Burt, Melanie DeVore, Greg Glotzbecker, Kalina Manoylov, Matt Milnes, Christine Mutiti, Samuel Mutiti, Allison VandeVoort, David Weese and Kris White.

The new Aquatic Sciences Center will harness their knowledge and expertise under one umbrella. Existing strengths will be combined, and faculty will be encouraged to collaborate more fully, sharing equipment and ideas, Pillay remarked.





"Leveraging all this into a center will give us a unified mission and approach, where we can train students in real-life applications of what we're teaching in the classrooms and labs," he said.

The center will be functional by fall 2022 but without a physical presence at first. Eventually, Pillay hopes Herty Hall will be renovated to house the new Aquatics Sciences Center, along with the current Observatory, Planetarium and Natural History Museum.

A director will be selected to oversee the center, along with a research technician. With a centralized administration and structure, Pillay hopes the center will be a platform for more graduate and undergraduate research, additional grant writing, student training and community engagement. The new center will also allow for the creation of summer research programs for students.

In conjunction with this new project, the program is adding a new concentration in marine biology, as well.

"Any sort of center of research or excellence, such as the Aquatics Sciences Center, is unusual for a school our size," Pillay said. "But the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences has a significant footprint on campus — in terms of the number of faculty and the number of students we cater to."

"So, the center is a natural conclusion," he said. "It'll elevate the visibility of the work we're already doing and provide administrative support that will enable faculty to spend more time training and mentoring students in water-related research."

Ultimately, it all boils down to the students and training them to become "better stewards of our communities," Pillay said.

"This fits into everything we do at Georgia College," Pillay said. "Many faculty involved in this project are highly productive with large graduate and undergraduate labs. That's an indication of the type of productivity we have for water quality and water analysis. Therefore, this center is a natural transition." 🏠



NOVELIST WELCOMED AS 2022 Darugar Scholar in residence



From left to right: Dr. Marty Lammon, Professor Emeritus, Rabih Alameddine, Dr. Kerry Neville and Dr. Matthew Pangborn.

It was with great pleasure that the English Department welcomed novelist Rabih Alameddine as the Georgia College Darugar Scholar in Residence for spring 2022.


The Darugar Visiting Scholar program is intended to provide opportunities for students, faculty, staff and community members to engage with, learn from and work alongside nationally recognized writers.

Alameddine offered a public talk titled, "Concerning the Political in Art," a formal reading of his own work and a craft talk; he visited creative writing classes; and he offered one-on-one manuscript consultations with creative writing students.

Alameddine was born in Amman, Jordan to Lebanese parents, and grew up in Kuwait and Lebanon. He was educated in England and the United States, and has an engineering degree from UCLA and an MBA from the University of San Francisco.

He is the author of five novels and a collection of short stories – all critically acclaimed. "An Unnecessary Woman" was a finalist for the 2014 National Book Award, among other accolades, and "The Angel of History" won several awards, including the Arab American Book Award and the Lambda Literary Award, in 2017.

His recent novel, "The Wrong End of the Telescope," (published to great acclaim in September 2021 and named a 2021 American Library Association (ALA) Notable Book), is about an Arab-American trans-woman's journey among Syrian refugees on Lesbos Island, Greece. While on campus, Alameddine was informed that this novel is a finalist for the 2022 PEN/Faulkner Award. The department was thrilled to celebrate this news with him.

The Creative Writing Program and Department of English wish to thank Dr. and Mrs. Barry Darugar for their generous funding in support of the Darugar Distinguished Scholar in Residence. 





Abebe's completed mural.

Art professor creates mural in downtown Macon

For Abraham Abebe, creativity runs through his veins. With his skills, he can take a blank canvas and turn it into something both beautiful and meaningful.

From mid-December to mid-January, he worked most days from sun-up to sun-down installing a mural on Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority's Historic Terminal Station. Abebe braved the cold and wind working through both Christmas and New Years to complete "The Spirit of Macon."

"I started on Dec. 18. Then, from there, I just continued working every day — except two days in between there was rain, so I couldn't work," Abebe said. "I would go in the morning and finish when it got dark."

He scheduled the work between his semesters of teaching at Georgia College. Abebe is an associate professor of art and graphic design. This semester he's teaching Graphic Design, Studio II, Graphic Design Studio III and Special Topics in Design.

"This was a great opportunity for me to have this kind of experience so that I can teach the techniques, the process and the ups and the downs of creating a mural for my students," he said. "I hope they will be able to learn from my experience and also do things like this in the future when they get the opportunity."

Abebe created four murals — two indoors and two

outdoors — while living in Las Vegas. This is, however, the largest he's completed.

"I saw the announcement from the Macon-Bibb Transit Authority (MTA). Then I created and submitted two different proposals," Abebe said. "The committee selected one of my proposals, and that's how I was chosen to do this."

He based the design on the connection between the MTA and the community.

"I tried to develop the mural to magnify the significant service and contribution the MTA provides for the citizens and community in Macon," Abebe said. "At the same time, I tried to reflect the diversity within the community as well. I used the power of the color in the warm energy just to show the harmony and unity in the diverse community."

Along one side, the mural features an MTA bus with recognizable historical and modern buildings in Macon. It turns the corner to include several birds, a mosaic and sun.

"The MTA bus is a central element to bring the community together. I used it as a symbol to highlight its significant contribution," said Abebe. "I also used birds as a conceptual element to reflect service of excellence, progress and achievement."

"Macon is rich in history and culture. Therefore, the historical buildings were used to represent the

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It's a great feeling that I'm contributing something that's visual because thousands of people every year pass through that station.

Abraham Abebe

”



Abebe working to paint the massive mural.

historical significance of the city and the modern buildings were used to magnify the change and progress," he said.

MTA was awarded the funds for this project through a Downtown Challenge Grant, 2.0 from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Peyton Anderson Foundation.

"My exact words on the grant proposal were 'the goal is to inject the dreary corner of Fifth and Poplar Streets with a bold injection of art,'" said Jami Gaudet, public information officer for MTA. "It was one of the most depressing corners — just awful — and now it's alive with color."

Gaudet led the process to have the mural installed. From writing the original grant proposal to having a committee review the 12 applicants, she personally wanted something created that everyone could enjoy.

"These buses — every day we operate, multiple times a day — they all come past that corner," Gaudet said. "I thought, wouldn't it be amazing for our bus operators and for our riders to see something beautiful, electric and inspiring?"

Although he faced some challenges along the way, Gaudet said Abebe aced the design and execution. Now the MTA drivers, riders and the community have something beautiful to enjoy.

"One day it was wind, and one day it was rain. One day, it was ice that melted," Gaudet said. "Every day he's had a challenge, but he's unflappable. He never is cross about anything. He's just been delightful to work with."

Proud to bring color and hopefully happiness to those who pass it, Abebe is grateful for the opportunity to share his work.

"It's a great feeling that I'm contributing something that's visual because thousands of people every year pass through that station," Abebe said. "They will be able to see this work and appreciate it because the wall was empty. There wasn't any kind of attraction. Now there's something they can see and appreciate."

For more information on the mural and to see a day-by-day documentation of the process, visit <https://www.facebook.com/maconbibb.transit>. 📺



Abebe created a scene with iconic Macon buildings.

Newell Scholar

looks to impart an
appreciation of
indigenous
sacred dance



Walter with students in class.



The love of dance runs deep for Dr. Carla Walter. It's not only the aesthetic value of it she enjoys, but how it allows people to express their feelings and emotions and connects them to the surrounding world.

"I have always loved dance," Walter said. "From the time I was a young child, but also now, I love the spirituality of it."

"Students are going to learn to analyze a culture's sense of being as it's related to indigenous dance," Walter said. "We will look at locations from Egypt to Africa to Mesoamerica over to the Polynesian Islands and Australia, back up to India, Mongolia, Tibet, back over to Persia, and then the Andes. So, the students are going to get a worldview."

Her career journey includes different fields and opportunities, but the thread that ties it all together for her is dance.

"Initially, I spent a lot of time developing my career in business, economics and finance," Walter said. "At a certain point, the company I was working for was transitioning into a publicly-traded corporation. That's when I decided I wanted to go

deeper into dance. I applied and got accepted to the doctoral program in dance history and theory at the University of California, Riverside with full fellowship."

Just before completing her dissertation, she accepted a position as an assistant professor — but in the business department.

"My research started exploring the ways that dance can influence purchase behavior. I wrote and published books and articles in that area," she said.

"One example of what we found through research was television commercials with dance in them increased respondents' sense of connectedness and their sense of belonging; it stimulated their feelings of awe and wonderment," she said. "And these are important for impacting consumers through advertising."

This research, she says, led her back "to the spirituality of dance."

"Because when I was writing my book, 'Dance Consumerism and Spirituality,' I had the opportunity to review some of the emergent sources of biblical texts that were not included in some editions of the Bible," Walter said.

What she found was that dance was often eliminated during the early translations of the Bible.

All the while, she continued to take on new roles in higher education, but dance remained her passion, and her research continued.

"I started looking at different cultures, and I found that a lot of major religions — Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism — most of them did a systematic silencing of sacred dance at different points in time," Walter said

"The big religions have all tried, but dance is resurfacing because of the power that dance has for humanity, in terms of helping people with all kinds of human circumstances — transitioning and rituals, rites of passage and death and questions about living."

Recently serving as the Newell Scholar, she brought her research and experience to Georgia College students and the community.


She hosted several presentations for the campus and community. The first took place Tuesday, Jan. 25 and was titled "Indigenous Sacred Dance and Religious Histories." She presented some histories of indigenous sacred dance and religion from various points around

the globe, dating before the Common Era. Participants at the lecture were encouraged to join in simple choreography as they related to particular indigenous peoples.

Two other presentations featured the work of her students. Those were held April 5 and 26.

Walter received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Riverside in economics and a Master of Business Administration from California State University, San Bernardino. Her Doctor of Philosophy focuses on dance history and theory.

She has published several books including "Sacred Dance Meditations: 365 Globally Inspired Movement Practices Enhancing Awakening, Clarity, and Connection," "Arts Management: An Entrepreneurial Approach" and "Dance, Consumerism and Spirituality."

The Martha Daniel Newell Visiting Scholar program was established in 2011 with an endowment from Martha Daniel Newell, '42. The Newell Visiting Scholar program promotes the Georgia College liberal arts mission by bringing to campus eminent scholars from the arts, humanities, social sciences and physical sciences, the disciplines at the heart of our liberal arts mission. 

“THE BIG RELIGIONS HAVE ALL TRIED, BUT DANCE IS RESURFACING BECAUSE OF THE POWER THAT DANCE HAS FOR HUMANITY...”



Students in Walter's class practice a movement routine.



Dr. Carla Walter



English major

named Georgia College's
Academic Representative

Ellen Yeudall embodies what it means to be a stellar student. Her dedication, high scholastic achievement and devotion to service was noticed by the University System of Georgia (USG), which identified Yeudall as Georgia College's 2022 Academic Recognition Day representative.

The senior English major has a concentration in literature and minor in theatre. Graduating in May with a 4.0 GPA, she's a member of the Honors College; non-fiction editor of Georgia College's literary magazine, "The Peacock's Feet;" and secretary of Eta Sigma Alpha, the student honors association. In addition to being a Spanish tutor, Yeudall's done several literary papers and won multiple honors, including the Rising Star Award from the Department of World Languages and Cultures and the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival award.

"Ellen has presented her research at the MURACE conference, served as dramaturg for 'The Revolutionists' and crafted a dynamic senior thesis," said Dr. Brian Newsome, dean of the Honors College. "I would add that Ellen is also a warm and giving individual. At Honors Convocation in the fall, for example, she came early to set up and stayed late to clean up. This spirit of generosity is a hallmark of GC students, and Ellen exemplifies this spirit at its best."

Each year, the USG asks each member institution to select an Academic Recognition Day representative — the graduating senior who best exemplifies outstanding academic achievement. To make this selection, a committee "examines not only GPA but also academic awards, evidence of scholarship or creativity and diversity of intellectual pursuits," Newsome said.

Yeudall was a little overwhelmed to learn she'd been picked. She hadn't told anyone she put her name forth to be considered.

The Evans, Georgia, native chose Georgia College because larger schools felt overpowering and smaller ones "a bit suffocating." The campus was a perfect "in-between," and Yeudall felt at home here. She's been happy with her choice, which enabled her to make meaningful connections with professors and peers.

"My experience at Georgia College has definitely helped me grow as a person," Yeudall said. "I've been able to take a diverse array of classes that allow me to understand the world from new perspectives and still be able to fuel my creativity through my work."

"Especially since the majority of my college experience has been during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic," she said, "I'm able to adapt to situations much better than I ever thought I'd be. I think it's also made me more accepting, considerate and motivated among my friends, peers and the campus community."

Yeudall has volunteered as a Spanish tutor in the Language Resource Center since freshman year. She helps students with homework, learning grammar structures, practicing conversation skills and prepping for presentations. She's also been a member of the Honors College since freshman year and joined associations like Eta Sigma Alpha, the student honors association, and Alpha Psi Omega, the theatre fraternity.

Junior year, Yeudall dove deeper into research. She presented findings on "Chaucer's Wife of Bath" at the university's annual MURACE Research Conference. As dramaturg for theatre's production of "The Revolutionists," Yeudall investigated the French Revolution and Reign of Terror for character background information. In her "Jane Austen on Film" class, she adapted the author's work into a modern screenplay.

Yeudall's most challenging project was for her senior undergraduate thesis, "'Don't Tell Me What My Limits Are:' The Representation of the Female Detective and Emotional Bodies in Chris Chibnall's Broadchurch."

"With the amazing guidance of Dr. Jennifer Flaherty, I used feminist and affect theory to research and explore the relationship between gender and emotion in the British crime series and its main detective characters. It was a rewarding experience being able to complete it and present my work to my fellow peers," she said.


Yeudall will receive a letter of commendation from USG's Chancellor, along with signed resolutions from the Georgia House of Representatives. She was honored, along with other academic representatives, at a Board of Regents meeting and luncheon Feb. 8.

After graduation, Yeudall would like to take a year off before pursuing a masters. She hopes to find work that incorporates her analytical and creative sides — perhaps something in theatre, film or television. 🎬

“
My experience at Georgia College has definitely helped me grow as a person. I've been able to take a diverse array of classes that allow me to understand the world from new perspectives...
”



Yeudall with GC President Cathy Cox.



“THIS RESEARCH NOT ONLY PREPARED ME FOR ANY SITUATION I FIND MYSELF IN AS AN UNDERGRADUATE, BUT IT’S ALSO GIVEN ME A LOT OF HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE AS I PREPARE TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL. I WOULDN’T FEEL AS CONFIDENT IN MY OWN ABILITY AND EXPERIENCE WITHOUT IT.”

Georgia College hosts sixth annual European Studies Certificate student conference

The USG European Union Studies Program held its sixth annual European Studies Certificate Student Conference March 31 and April 1 at the Old Train Depot. This year's conference was titled "The European Union (EU) in a Time of Crisis."

Hosted on Georgia College's campus, the annual conference gives students the opportunity to present their research before their peers and faculty from around the state. Professor of Political Science Hank Edmondson said this year did not disappoint, as students presented excellent papers on topics ranging from the possibilities of the countries of Kosovo and Serbia joining the EU, minority rights in the European Union and Europe's response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Georgia College senior Emily Wyche won the \$250, first-place award for her paper on the application of the political philosophy of the late Harvard professor John Rawls to the question of the EU and democratic legitimacy.

This year's keynote speaker was Georgia College's own Professor Bill Risch from the Department of History and Geography, who has spent a total of six years in Ukraine. Risch was able to provide the audience with invaluable insight into the history and politics of the Central European war.

The conference is an excellent venue for students to present their research beyond the classroom, Edmondson said, speaking to University System of Georgia (USG) students and faculty.

The conference environment is designed for observations and extensive questions and answers on each presentation. This year's conference was funded by Georgia Tech University.

"The ramifications of the conference extend well beyond the campus," Edmondson said.

Two years ago, the first-place award went to Georgia College student Aaron Bellamy for a paper on the European Union's Parliament. Bellamy recently finished a master's in European studies at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands.

Two Georgia College students in the conference combined their research with university faculty from around the world. They became co-authors of the recent, prestigious publication titled, "Imagining Europe," which features essays from Syracuse University, the University of Strasburg (France), Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland) and beyond.

A Valdosta State University student wrote the day after the conference this year to say, "Thank you once again for allowing me to experience my first European Union conference, and for arranging accommodation to make us, the students, feel welcome. I heard very impressive presentations from some of the best students I have ever had the pleasure of meeting." 🏠

Five psychology students study impact of COVID ON GEORGIA COLLEGE PEERS

Classmates listen as Dr. Chiang explains data analysis.



Five psychology majors are finishing data analysis on several projects relating to coronavirus and worldwide lockdowns that left millions dealing with mental health issues.

The results showed students at Georgia College — like people everywhere — weren't immune to the fallout of isolation and loneliness.

"Our conclusions were that loneliness increased and the reported overall state of mental health decreased, which corresponds to a strong negative correlation between loneliness and mental health across all stages of the pandemic," said senior psychology major Emma Kraby of Athens, Georgia.

"We can only assume mental health will continue to improve," she said, "but it's not quite to the level it was before."

Kraby studied COVID-19 anxiety and mental health with fellow researcher Joseph Wenke, a senior psychology major from Roswell. From March 2020 to Oct. 2021, they surveyed 154 of their peers, learning the effects of quarantine, fear and isolation. As lockdowns continued, charts show loneliness going up and mental health coming down.

Wenke took the research further by examining how loneliness can be mediated by personality traits. He looked at screen time and other variables, like whether students had a pet. More screen time correlated with impaired mental health, while having a cat or dog to cuddle helped fight discouragement.

Upperclassmen, whose lives were interrupted by COVID-19,

were more negatively impacted than those entering college after the pandemic died down, Wenke discovered. Social distancing, wearing masks and other restrictions seem to be the new normal for younger students and more-easily accepted.

Contrary to what one would expect — introverts were more negatively impacted than extroverts by isolation.

Things have improved two years later but only a little. Kraby and Wenke were surprised to find loneliness continues to be present in college students.

"It could just be the habits from quarantine — maybe people got used to more screen time and less physical activity. Maybe they're staying inside more. Or maybe people have gotten used to not having contact with friends," Wenke said.

"There's a lot more to be done on that," he added. "Generally, the results that I've seen show introverts were more negatively impacted by quarantining than extroverts, and so were people who were in college before COVID."

These results follow similar patterns experienced by the rest of society and campus. Psychology Department Chair Dr. Lee Gillis said students and faculty in general are dealing with various levels of stress, anxiety and depression.

Psychology majors Maryelle Michael of Roswell, a senior, and Carson Beasley of Woodstock, a junior, are studying COVID-19 from a different angle. They're examining the role of exercise and how physical exertion improves anxiety levels.



Joseph Wenke, front, watches with classmates as Dr. Tsu Ming Chiang runs off a conference poster.

"Pre-pandemic, exercise data was pretty consistent," Michael said. "But come March 2020, there was a big halt of exercise among adolescents and adults, because we were all in shock. No one knew what to do, essentially, and you couldn't go to the gym."

Data suggests a reduction in exercise correlates to a reduction in mental health and increased feelings of loneliness. But people soon found creative ways to exercise. They joined online initiatives like TikTok and workout routines on YouTube or Zoom.

Nevertheless, exercise levels — like loneliness and mental health states — are not back up to pre-pandemic levels.

"That makes sense," Beasley said. "Some people are still scared to go out in public or go to the gym and join classes. I think a lot of people underestimate the positive effects physical activity has on mental health. Because COVID has impacted that, we weren't really shocked to see physical activities fall so low."

The COVID-19 research teams will present their findings at a regional conference at the end of March. Twenty-six psychology students will attend the Southeastern Psychological Association's annual conference, showcasing various topics in addition to COVID-19, such as:

- Microaggressions in the classroom
- Substance abuse in ADHD and bipolar disorders
- Belonging and wellness of minorities in predominately white institutions
- Self-injury and suicide among transgender and gender nonconforming college students

- Stereotypical gender beliefs and harsher disciplinary strategies for male children
- Effects of lying on memory

"Conducting quality research in undergraduate years is invaluable," said Dr. Tsu-Ming Chiang, professor of psychology.

Her research students often perform higher than peers in graduate school and jobs after graduation. They find themselves ahead in skills like generating ideas, formulating questions, data collection, analysis and communication.

Beasley said he learned to collaborate in groups, listen to other ideas and interpret information. He's soaking in as much experience as he can before graduation and hopes to get a job as a professional counselor.

Kraby's COVID-19 research helped her gain acceptance into the University of Denver's Master of Counseling Psychology program in Colorado.

"Undergraduate research makes you a competitive applicant for programs like that," she said, "especially in psychology, where most programs are research-based. Not only conducting the research — but having the opportunity to present it at conference is a really big opportunity."

"This research not only prepared me for any situation I find myself in as an undergraduate," she said, "but it's also given me a lot of hands-on experience as I prepare to go to graduate school. I wouldn't feel as confident in my own ability and experience without it." 🏠



Senior Maryelle Michael listens as Dr. Chiang explains data analysis.

Georgia College students present at SEPA conference

The Department of Psychological Science once again had an impressive showing at the Southeastern Psychological Association's (SEPA) annual conference, which returned to an in-person event this year in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

Georgia College contributed approximately 26 presentations, most of which featured students as first-authors and presenters at SEPA this year, which includes work from all areas of psychology. The large number of students who author and present original research at this conference, and others throughout each academic year, illustrates the psychology department's commitment to mentored, undergraduate research, one of the cornerstones of the GC Journeys experience.

Undergraduate psychology students gain many skills and insights through their conference experiences and through mentored undergraduate research more generally.

Approximately 10 years ago, the psychology department decided to focus the majority of their science dissemination efforts toward this regional, cost-effective, undergraduate-friendly conference; the results have been beneficial, creating a common goal and a sense of community across faculty and students.

The psychology department thanks the Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors (MURACE) office for their financial support of students to this conference, and the GC Journeys office for funding various mentored research-related efforts in the department over the last few years. 🏠

Biology student the first from Georgia College to receive Goldwater Scholarship

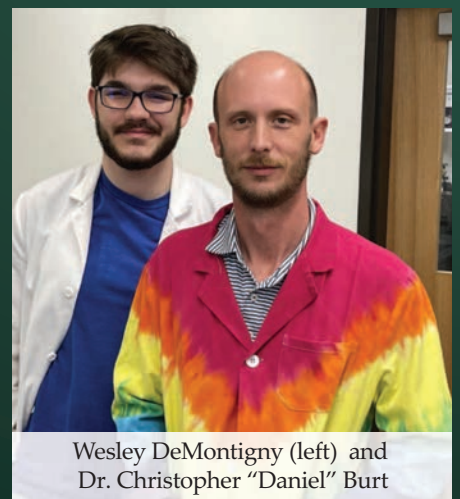
Wesley DeMontigny, a senior biology major graduating in December 2022, is the first Georgia College student to receive the Goldwater scholarship.

The award is recognized as the most prestigious undergraduate research scholarship in the natural sciences, mathematics and engineering subjects in America. It is meant to support undergraduate researchers who show exceptional promise of becoming the next generation of research leaders in their respective fields.

DeMontigny has had the opportunity to work in three different research labs — a soil microbiology lab, a molecular source tracking lab and a bioinformatics lab. He was primarily mentored by Dr. Christopher "Daniel" Burt, lecturer in the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, who researches soil microbiology.

Burt, '08 and '10, worked in Dr. Dave Bachoon's, professor of biological and environmental sciences, molecular source tracking lab during his master's research.

DeMontigny continued Burt's research and worked extensively with Dr. Bachoon to examine water quality issues in the southeast United States and Puerto Rico. Recently, DeMontigny began preliminary work on forward genetic simulations in Dr. Adam's bioinformatics lab. After graduation, Wesley plans on pursuing a Ph.D. in microbiology to teach and research at the university level. 🏠



Wesley DeMontigny (left) and Dr. Christopher "Daniel" Burt

Biology and environmental science students shine at the Georgia Academy of Sciences

Fifteen students and eight faculty from the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences attended the 99th meeting of the Georgia Academy of Sciences, hosted by Valdosta State University on March 25 and 26.

The students delivered 14 research presentations. Charleigh Stepp received the Outstanding Undergraduate Presentation Award in Biological Sciences; Christopher Horacek received the Outstanding Graduate Presentation Award in Biological Sciences and Jessy Everett received the Outstanding Graduate Presentation Award in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences.

Georgia College will host the 100th meeting of the Georgia Academy of Sciences in the spring of 2023. [!\[\]\(b5ee4f193e8572102e3090db2261a37f_img.jpg\)](#)



Georgia College students and faculty at the 99th Meeting of the Georgia Academy of Sciences in Valdosta on March 25th and 26th.

Pictured left to right, front row: Sydney Brown, Jessy Everett, Anna Tipton, Will Tillett; **second row:** Nadya Gutierrez, Allison Esmond, Elizabeth Durham, Kristen Wilder, Cyaira Vest, Sally Sir; **third row:** Morgan Thompson, Todd Bennett, Christopher Horacek; **fourth row:** Dr. Sam Mutiti, Dr. Allison VandeVoort, Dr. Al Mead, Dr. Christine Mutiti, Dr. Matt Milnes, Dr. Kristine White, Dr. Dominic DeSantis. **Not pictured:** Jadalynn Ginn, Charleigh Stepp, and Dr. Kasey Karen.

Math capstone: Using equations to solve real-life issues



Dr. Jebessa Mijena listens to capstone mathematician presentations.

What do COVID-19, taxicabs and mindsets have in common? The answer may surprise you: math.

Math is the abstract science of using calculations, shapes and quantity to solve a problem. But multiple steps, numbers and signs do more than complete mathematical equations.

They can be used to unravel everyday problems, as well.

That's exactly what three seniors did in November for their capstone projects. They used statistics and data to answer real-life challenges like discovering a direct taxicab distance between two coordinates, seeing if students develop the mindset they're not good at math and determining whether the COVID-19 shutdown affected grades at Georgia College.

"The purpose is to synthesize ideas learned in previous coursework to go beyond the prescribed curriculum in terms of content, depth and approach and help our students develop the ability to work independently on a project of their choosing," said Dr. Robert Blumenthal, chair of mathematics.

In the past four years, 62 math majors have presented capstone research. Each chose a topic of interest and a professor to mentor them. Students engage in a year of reading, research and working mathematical puzzles. It ends with the annual Capstone Day, where they present findings in front of faculty and family.

Senior Seth Rozelle of Warner Robins, Georgia, is working on a degree in math with a minor in computer science. He chose to do his undergraduate research on COVID-19 and whether online learning during lockdowns affected grades at Georgia College.

He thought it'd be a timely and popular topic. His research required rigorous data analysis, studying grade distribution in 19 areas of study across campus.

Overall, he learned students performed better in the spring months of the pandemic, than previously.

"We were observing whether the distribution of grades at Georgia College changed significantly in any way. The short answer is it did," Rozelle said. "In spring of 2020, there were significantly more A's, less failing grades and slightly more withdrawals in most categories. Then, in

spring 2021, grades seemed to come back to pre-COVID-19 numbers.”

Rozelle said his research is “immediately relevant” and can shed light on academic learning during a global pandemic. Going forward, it can be used to determine if hybrid learning is better in emergencies.

This project will also help Rozelle when he applies to graduate programs for statistics or biostatistics. In April, he presented his work at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR).

“I’ve always had a knack for numbers. I want to be a statistician. Georgia College was the university with the most opportunities, convenience and affordability for me,” Rozelle said.

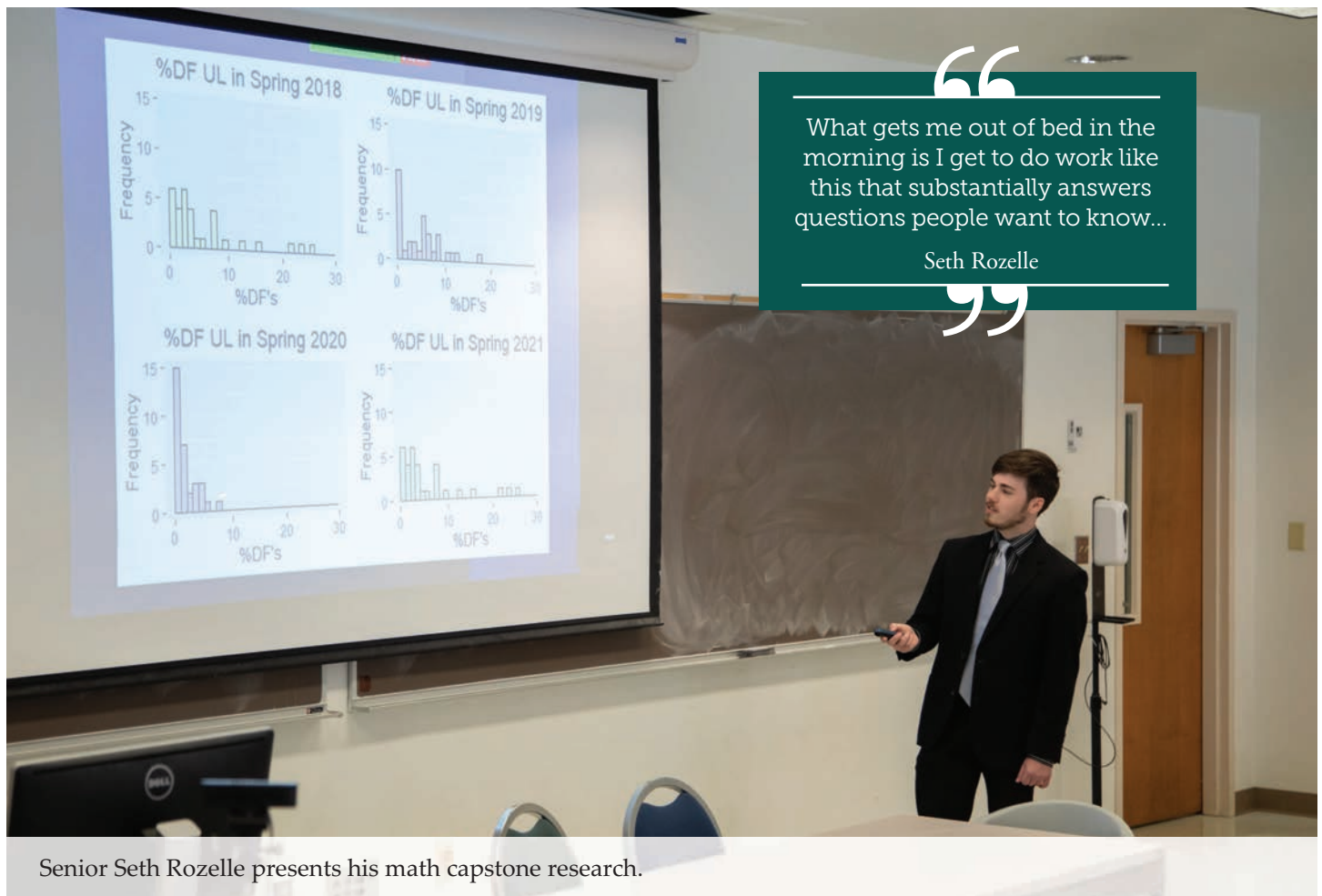
“What gets me out of bed in the morning is I get to do work like this that substantially answers questions people want to know,” he said. “This project gave me priceless experience and insight on the kind of work I want to do.”

His mentor, Dr. Jebessa Mijena, associate professor of mathematics, teaches courses in statistics, calculus sequences and differential equations. Capstone students interested in statistics, data science and machine learning generally come to him for direction.

It’s his job to offer suggestions and guidance but otherwise he steps back.

“These types of capstone projects teach our students about completing tasks independently without much help from the professors,” Mijena said.

Another senior math major, Natalie Taylor of Rossville, Georgia, did her capstone under the direction of Dr. Rodica Cazacu. Most people think the distance between two destinations is the mileage given by Google Maps — a direct line, what’s known in math as “Euclidean distance.” But traveling to another place often involves twists and turns. Taylor used horizontal and vertical distance between two points to find what’s called “taxicab distance.”



Senior Seth Rozelle presents his math capstone research.

“MATH CAN BE RIGOROUS AND CHALLENGING, BUT IT’S NOT IMPOSSIBLE. THAT’S WHAT IS SO EXCITING ABOUT IT. THE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN MATH CAN ALSO PREPARE US FOR ANY HARDSHIPS LIFE THROWS AT US, SO THAT WE CAN PERSEVERE.”

Morgan Grey

Senior math education major Morgan Grey of Dacula, Georgia, studied the stigma around math. She met several times a week with Dr. Doris Santarone, associate professor of mathematics education, for assistance. Grey was deeply interested in why some people believe their math abilities are predetermined and cannot change.

She collected data from hundreds of students in grades K-12 to determine their “mindsets.” She also looked at teaching methods to see if attitudes can be altered.

“From a young age, I wondered why some people called themselves a math person, meaning they could do math well, or why they weren’t a math person,” Grey said. “Contrary to this is a ‘growth mindset,’ when people believe they’re born with a set of basic qualities that can be changed and improved through hardwork and strategies that foster growth.”

Grey found most children start out with growth mindsets. As grade levels increase in math, however, this positive attitude declines. A significant decrease occurs between kindergarten and third grade, Grey learned, when multiplication and fractions are introduced and “students begin to doubt their abilities.”

She was surprised to find a similar problem with the mindsets of teachers. Teachers in higher grade levels are less convinced students can overcome difficulties in math.

This discovery could lead to finding out why and ways to fix it, Santarone said. Real-life problems are challenging to solve — and that’s why Santarone loves math. It’s also why so many students consider the math capstone to be the highlight of their college experience.

“When you’re given a problem and you don’t know how to solve it,” Santarone said, “you have to use problem solving skills, logic and critical thinking to apply what you know to find a solution.”

In his department, Blumenthal emphasizes critical thinking and making informed decisions based on evidence. Faculty focus on interdisciplinary work and making connections between disciplines.

The math capstone is the crowning glory.

“This is just one of the things that makes Georgia College such a great place for our students and faculty,” Blumenthal said. “It’s very rewarding to work with such talented and dedicated students.”

Grey hopes to take what’s she learned during her capstone experience and become a sixth-12th grade math teacher. She wants to show others they can tackle math and succeed.

“I 100% believe this capstone has been nothing but a positive experience for me at Georgia College,” Grey added. “It’s taught me proper research skills and time management techniques, plus it helped me become more professional. I’m very thankful to have had this opportunity.” 🎧

Senior Morgan Grey presents her capstone research.



Distinguished student, wiz mathematician, Georgia College alumna

A

published and award-winning mathematician, Emily Howe Belanger, '21, is already exemplifying the values of her Georgia College education.

While maintaining a 4.0 GPA, Belanger completed a graduate-level special topics course on her own time. In it she provided original results and conjectures, written under the supervision of Dr. Guy Biyogmam, associate professor of mathematics. Her results were published in the Rose-Hulman Undergraduate Mathematics Journal, which can be viewed here: <https://scholar.rose-hulman.edu/rhumj/vol22/iss2/5/>.

"This publication falls in the scope of advanced abstract and pure mathematics that surpasses the undergraduate level and is particularly impressive for a student with a strong primary career interest in K-12 education," Biyogmam said. "Emily is one of the best mathematics students to have graduated from Georgia College."

Further demonstrating her pursuit of excellence, Belanger presented her results in January 2021 at the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Mathematics.

She excels not only in academia, but responsibility to the community as well. In addition to serving as tutor leader, providing supplemental instruction in statistics and spending 30 hours supervising middle school classes, Belanger spent over 70 hours volunteering as a note-taker for the Georgia College Student Disability Resource Center.

For her dedication, Belanger is a recipient of several teaching fellowships and awards, including the Joanne Mayberry Award, an appointment by mathematics faculty to exceptional students.

After receiving her Bachelor's of Science in mathematics, Belanger enrolled in Duke University's Masters of Secondary Mathematics Education, where she studies now. She intends to become a high school math teacher. 📚

“EMILY IS ONE OF THE BEST MATHEMATICS STUDENTS TO HAVE GRADUATED FROM GEORGIA COLLEGE.”

Dr. Guy Biyogmam



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