



Mobilized and Motivated: Record-breaking GCSU Class of 2027 gears up

They've moved in. They've done acts of community service around Milledgeville for GCSU Gives Day. Now, the Class of 2027 is in classrooms and making their mark on the Georgia College & State University campus.

They are Georgia College's biggest-sized class ever—a record-breaking group of about 1,800 first-year students. They join the university after a season of unprecedented demand. Georgia College received nearly 8,000 applications—about 2,000 more than the previous record.

In addition, the number of high-achieving students is up over 200% compared to last year, and this will be one of the most diverse incoming classes in the university's history.

"We are welcoming a historically high number of first-year students to Georgia College, while maintaining high academic standards and small-class sizes—the things that distinguish our institution," said Dr. Costas Spirou, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

"We have been intentional about increasing the number of classes we offer and have recruited highly qualified faculty," Spirou said. "We want to ensure that all of our students receive personalized attention."

Throughout the summer, orientations went smoothly with high anticipation and attendance. Georgia College President Cathy Cox joined every orientation—greeting many excited, smiling new faces, shaking hands and posing for selfies with students.

"Under Cathy Cox's innovative leadership, Georgia College & State University is experiencing great momentum," Spirou said. "We are excited that a larger number of students will benefit from our mission as the state's designated public liberal arts university."

Some interesting facts about this class: A record number of honors students, 149; average GPA is 3.62 with 144 students bringing a perfect 4.0; two international students from Vietnam and India; out-of-state students originate from Alabama, Florida, Illinois and Wisconsin; in-state students hail from 112 different counties across Georgia; the biggest numbers this year are from Gwinnett/Forsyth County (194), Cobb County (163), Fulton County (147) and Cherokee County (102); top majors for this class are nursing, business undeclared, biology, marketing and psychology.

Javier Francisco, executive director of Admissions, noted the geographic diversity of this class with some students coming from areas like South Georgia. This increase—as well as the jump in applications, class size and diversity—is likely due to several factors, he said.



Georgia College is a small university that offers big opportunities, like working side-by-side with professors doing original research as early as freshman year.

Francisco also pointed to recent national recognition.

One was an A+ grade given by the National Council on Teacher Quality for teaching the science of reading. The other: the prestigious 2023 American Association of State Colleges and Universities' Excellence & Innovation Award for Student Success and College Completion. It was given for the university's GC Journeys—a program that ensures all students participate in high-impact practices like undergraduate research, internships, career readiness, community service, study abroad and leadership.

These high-impact practices are touted at sessions with high schoolers in and outside of Georgia starting in their sophomore year. This intensive, regionwide push helped spread the word about the value and appeal of a liberal arts education.

"Our goal is always to bring the most-qualified, the most-diverse and the most-prepared students to Georgia College," Francisco said, "and this year we have all of those—the most-prepared, most-diverse and most-

qualified class we've recruited, since I joined the GCSU Admissions staff almost two decades ago." When asked why they chose Georgia College, students continue to mention the university's iconic campus, small class sizes, individualized attention and faculty mentorship.

These are all hallmark examples of what makes Georgia College unique among state universities, said Joel Robinson, senior associate vice president for Enrollment Management.

These qualities of a Georgia College education will continue to endure.

Despite rising numbers, Robinson said the university continues to be selective when admitting students. Applications were up 37% this year, coinciding with the increase in high-achieving applicants.

"Highly reliable, serious learners are most likely to get involved in life-changing opportunities, join extracurricular activities and bring fresh ideas to campus," Robinson said. "This is the greatest demand ever for Georgia College from students all across the state."

"It's not hard to see why students want to come here," he added. "Receiving an education that one would expect at an elite, private institution but at a public university price is a very compelling value proposition for our students and their families."

University and Sodexo roll out new Pizza Hut delivery system for students

We are not alone. Here comes Barnacle, Techno and Scrumptious... and they come in peace.

They're part of a fleet of 10—the cutest little robots you've ever seen, brought to Georgia College & State University by its dining company, Sodexo.

They deliver pizza to hungry students—5 p.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday on West Campus. And the media blitz it created? That's just the pepperoni on top.

The little boxes on wheels attracted attention from all three TV news stations in Macon, the Union Recorder, Baldwin Bulletin and Baldwin 2K. And, well, the students are eating it up. The perky delivery bots are winning both hearts and stomachs.

They're the size of a pet—on wheels. The robots maneuver sidewalks, back up and turn around. Their front screens show blue blinking eyes, white stars and red hearts. They wink at you and have multiple sounds. They bleep,



Kiwibot delivers Pizza Hut pizza to West Campus students. whistle and squeal with mechanical delight.

And, if you're missing your cat, they even purr.

Students use the Everyday APP on their phones to order pizza or snacks and drinks from a convenience store by Pizza Hut. An electrical engineer, employed by Sodexo, works behind the scenes to ensure bots are working correctly, turn-

ing corners and bypassing obstacles. Orders are placed inside the bots, which are then loaded, locked and ready to roll.

They enter apartment buildings and bring orders straight to a student's door. The lid then opens to reveal goodies inside.

One student told the media he was having a bunch of friends over the weekend but didn't want to leave his room to get food. Another said he had already ordered, and the bot arrived quickly with the pizza still hot.

"We are one of the first universities in Georgia to introduce A.I. delivery robots," said Sam Fernandez, general manager for Sodexo at GCSU. "Having good food is important to keep our students happy. Food reminds us of home, and having a brand-new dining hall enhances the experience even more."

But the new ideas don't stop there. If pizza bots prove to be popular—the plan is to expand their use to Main Campus in January.

So, eat pizza and be at peace.

Did you know?

Georgia College & State University's Master of Public Administration program was recently ranked in the top 10 in the nation in affordability. OnlineU recently rated the most affordable programs using manually researched online tuitions for 2022-23.

GCSU's MPA program develops a wide variety of skills needed by managers to implement policies, oversee projects and direct programs. MPA program alumni work in a variety of settings at all levels of government, as well as in nonprofit organizations: delivering services in health care, youth and human services, in housing and community development, in international development and in public service-related private businesses.

Our graduates have jobs in a variety of fields including federal, state and local government, as well as private and non-profit government.

Once accepted, GCSU faculty and staff who are TAP eligible can earn a degree entirely online. Please contact the Department of Government and Sociology if you have interest.

GCSU signed pharmacology program agreement with Mercer University

Georgia College & State University (GCSU) and Mercer University's College of Pharmacy are partnering for a healthier Georgia.

The two university presidents signed an articulation agreement in May at Georgia College. The three-year agreement gives GCSU pre-pharmacy graduates priority application status into Mercer's PharmD program.

"I am delighted for this partnership between Georgia College & State University and the Mercer University College of Pharmacy," said GCSU President Cathy Cox. "By strengthening our institutional relationship, we open a pathway for the success and personal fulfillment of our students while also enhancing the state's pipeline of future pharmacists."

The collaboration provides a clear and structured

pathway for Georgia College students who want to pursue a doctorate in pharmacology. Guidance and support will be provided by both institutions to help students prepare and meet criteria each step of the way.

Mercer President William D. Underwood stressed the importance of a high-quality education and the seamless transition from institution-to-institution this partnership creates.

The agreement gives Georgia College chemistry students priority status and a guaranteed interview for Mercer University's College of Pharmacy. The first year of pharmacy school will count as a student's fourth undergraduate year in chemistry and toward their first year in the PharmD program.

During undergraduate work, GCSU students will

be prepped to meet entry requirements into the Mercer program. Officials from both schools will work to ensure students complete the appropriate pre-requisite courses in sequence and take applicable standardized exams. Students will also have early interactions with Mercer through mentorship, shadowing and advising so they understand all options available to them.

Dr. Brian Crabtree, dean of Mercer's College of Pharmacy said this relationship between universities is important to increase opportunities for students.

"I think it's important for us to keep this relationship front and center at all times," Crabtree said. "It's great to be leading students, and the communities they will serve, where they will change lives."



Mercer University President William D. Underwood and GCSU President Cathy Cox (in middle).

What's going on in Bobcat Territory?

Visit frontpage.gcsu.edu/events

Tuesday

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6-8:30 p.m. - GCSU Soccer vs. University of W. Georgia at W. Campus Bobcat Soccer Field.

7-9 p.m. - Jazz Jam at Amici Cafe.

Wednesday

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2-3:30 - Welcome reception for GCSU's "Alex Gregory Leader in Residence" Jane Kidd in the Pat Peterson Museum Education Room at Ina Dillard Russell Library.

5-6:15 p.m. - "How to Think Like a Woman" author Regan Penaluna will give a talk in A&S 275.

Thursday

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10 a.m.-4 p.m. - The art exhibit "As a Revelation, Time Presents Itself..." by Sergio Suárez ends today at Leland Gallery in Ennis Hall.

Friday

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Saturday

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7:30 p.m. - GCSU's Fifth Annual "Jazz at the Magnolia" in Magnolia Ballroom.