

## GCSU's Class of 2028 Shows Bobcat Spirit

They are the second largest and most academically prepared class in Georgia College & State University history, but their involvement and interest is what really sets our newest bobcats apart.

From the start, these first-year students have been engaged. Attendance at preview days like Fallfest and Springfest increased, while summer orientations witnessed a spirited wave of blue and green, with many new bobcats sporting GCSU T-shirts and swag.

"The interest in Georgia College has never been greater," said Joel Robinson, senior associate vice president for Enrollment Management. "Students are looking for the unique experience we offer that you can't get anywhere else in Georgia."

Robinson credits the university's elite private school atmosphere that comes at a public university price and the small class sizes Georgia College offers as the driving factors for much of this interest.

New students also submitted an unparalleled number of

applications—about 8,300—for the 2024-25 academic year. That's an increase of 44% over the past two years. Despite being more selective, admitting 11% fewer students, Georgia College anticipates this class will be approximately 1,800, just shy of last year's record-breaking freshmen class of 1,816.

"We admitted 560 fewer students than we did in fall 2023, but a much higher percentage of admitted students chose Georgia College this year," Robinson said.

Students respond positively to our national rankings, high retention and graduation rates, as well as the curricular and co-curricular transformative experiences that we offer," he added. "We've also seen an increase in the academic preparedness of our incoming class. This is a group of exceptionally talented students."

One of the state's top three most-selective public universities, Georgia College has become a destination of choice for the best and brightest students from across the state and beyond. Many of these first-year students hail from 111 different counties across Georgia.

GCSU's class of 2028 also boasts a record number of high-achieving students—over 850. Their unweighted average high school GPA is 3.64. More than 150 students graduated high school with a perfect 4.0 GPA.



## GCSU Gives Day Generates \$120,000 in Donated Labor

While most students spend their first weekend in college relaxing, around 1,600 Georgia College & State University first-year students spent their first Saturday morning improving the community they're going to live in for the next four years.

They worked at 37 sites in the Greater Milledgeville area, benefitting the community with approximately \$120,000 worth of student-donated labor.

This volunteer experience will benefit the Greater Milledgeville area and Georgia College students now and for years to come.

Some work sites included Bike Walk Baldwin, Georgia War Veterans Home, Georgia's Old Capital Heritage Center at the Depot, Inc., Life Enrichment Center, Memory Hill Cemetery, Rocking A Farm, LLC and Stepping Stone Child Advocacy and Sexual Assault Center.

Georgia College President Cathy Cox read to children during the Kids Block Party at the Urban Arts Village. She also visited Memory Hill Cemetery to pay her respects to the famed author Flannery O'Connor, '45, along with some former Georgia College presidents buried there. Cox also visited Lockerly Arboretum.

Nearly two dozen students bathed and exercised dogs at the Animal Rescue Foundation of Milledgeville. They also cleaned kennels and comforted cats.

Henry Lewis is an undeclared Bachelor of Science major with a music minor from Macon, Georgia. He felt this experience will help him learn to work better with people and meet new friends. He cleaned the dog kennels.

"We need to realize that we're all part of one big community. We should help out where we can," he said while cleaning dog kennels.

Mass communication major Raegan Sims of Dacula, Georgia, volunteered in the room where the cats were kept, giving them attention and cleaning kennels and floors.

"I love cats," she said. "I think it's important for them to have human interaction. They will also thrive in a cleaner environment."

Sims knows the importance of volunteering. After graduation, she sees herself volunteering in an animal shelter or a food pantry. For now, Sims plans to help wherever a need exists in Milledgeville.

"If we see what needs work around the community, then we can continue to grow by volunteering for four years," she said.

That sentiment was echoed by the ARF President Allene Veazey.

"It's great for students to volunteer early on to give them a sense of accomplishment and belonging. It helps to know what we're doing is important," Veazey said.

Abandoned and neglected animals are a serious problem in Baldwin County and the Southeast. ARF gets calls daily to accept more animals, but it's a limited intake facility.

"Volunteering helps students, as well as the animals," she said. "There are different ways students can contribute

to help us out. We can't do it all by ourselves."

More than a dozen Georgia College students ventured to Project Linus. Cookie Noel, coordinator for the Milledgeville/Oconee Region Chapter of Project Linus, has volunteered since 2000. Since then, the chapter has handmade and distributed 18,000 blankets to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, abused or in need.

A few years ago, the chapter donated several handmade blankets for child victims of human trafficking. Volunteers also made blankets for siblings of a drowning victim, children whose parents were victims of homicides and children who are seriously ill or in need.

As a social service worker, Noel appreciates seeing young people making a difference.

"We're supposed to leave the community better than we found it," Noel said. "In a world where it's about, me, me, me, and I'll do what I want—I think volunteering to get us back to the mindset of caring about other people is good."

Tess Davidson, a theatre major from Rome, Georgia, especially enjoyed meeting and volunteering alongside other theatre majors. Making blankets for a cause, while making new friends, was a great way to spend the day.

"These blankets will provide a little light in the darkness for children, who've gone through something traumatic," Davidson said. "Many of us may not be familiar with Milledgeville, so GCSU Gives Day helps connect us with each other and with this town that'll be home for the next four years."



Henry Lewis cleans kennels during GCSU Gives Day.



Tess Davidson makes a blanket for Project Linus.