

>> HIGHER EDUCATION

Georgia College & State University confers 1,425 degrees

On May 9 and 10, Georgia College & State University conferred 1,425 degrees on both undergraduate and graduate students in the class of 2025. There were four spring commencement ceremonies held in the Centennial Center on the Georgia College campus.

The class of 2025 included students earning bachelor's, master's, specialist and doctoral degrees. Members of the class hail from 16 different states, as well as several countries internationally.

There were 12 valedictorians in the class of 2025, each having earned a perfect 4.0 final grade point average while completing their undergraduate degree.

Georgia College President Cathy Cox welcomed the graduates and their guests, and the university faculty, staff and students at the beginning of each ceremony.

"Georgia College & State University empowers students to think independently, lead creatively and advance professionally," Cox said. "With 34 undergraduate majors and 32 graduate programs, including two doctoral programs,



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The class of 2025 celebrates as their graduation ceremonies come to a close.

that meet the needs of scholars, professionals and the dynamic workforce of our state, Georgia College & State University prepares students to make a difference in the real world, regardless of the major they choose, or the opportunities and challenges they may face."

The commencement keynote address for the College of Health Sciences commencement ceremony was given by Dr. Joy L. King, a three-time Georgia College alumna and healthcare advocate.

The student speaker was Maggie Glover, an exercise science major from Gray. Glover was a standout player on the

Georgia College & State University championship women's and co-ed flag football teams, placing in the top three at the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association Championship for two consecutive years.

The keynote speaker for the John H. Lounsbury College of Education commencement ceremony was the Hon. Nathan Deal, former Georgia Gov. Deal's late wife Sandra is an alumna, having earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Georgia College. GCSU is home to The Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy.

For his address, Deal quoted Aristotle, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."

"By virtue of the diplomas that are going to be conferred upon you today, you have evidence that your minds have been educated," Deal said. "But what about your hearts? Have they been educated as well?"

"I can assure you that that is a question that you

will be continuing to ask yourself for the rest of your career," Deal said.

The student speaker was Mark Higginbotham, Jr., who earned his specialist degree in educational leadership. Higginbotham is the assistant principal of Mattie Wells Elementary in Jones County.

The keynote address for the J. Whitney Bunting College of Business & Technology ceremony was given by Cade Joiner, founder of Shred-X Corporation and member of the University System of Georgia Board of Regents.

Management information systems major Emily Chambers, from Cumming, was the student speaker. Chambers completed undergraduate research in

artificial intelligence and served on the executive council of GC WIT Club. She encouraged her fellow Bobcats to embrace change.

"The real magic of Georgia College wasn't just what we learned from our textbooks or lectures, it was what we learned about ourselves," Chambers said.

For the final commencement ceremony, the College of Arts & Sciences welcomed alumna Christopher Eby as keynote speaker. Eby earned his law degree from the University of Chicago and is deeply committed to pro bono work, securing asylum for clients and advocating in criminal appeals and wrongful conviction cases.

The student speaker

was Axel Hawkins, a first-generation college student from McDonough, who served as president of the Student Government Association. Hawkins double majored in history and political science. She participated in the GC in DC program and interned with Sen. Raphael Warnock in 2024. Hawkins is also Georgia College's second-ever Truman Scholar.

Both Eby and Hawkins brought messages of unity and shared experiences into their commencement speeches.

"From here on out, when you run into your fellow Bobcats in Georgia - around the Southeast and across the country - the fact that you have a common bond with them as an alum will allow you to connect and appreciate each other, despite having a multitude of different interests and experiences," Eby said.

"Collectively, the class of 2025 represents all corners of Georgia, all regions of the United States and nations as far away as India. Yet what brings us together is the education that we have received at this unique institution in the heartland of Georgia, an education centered in the liberal arts," Hawkins said.

—Courtney of University Communications

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To claim funds, you must contact Tri-County EMC by October 27, 2025.



Smoke spotted at GCSU's Atkinson Hall; no injuries or damage reported

News Staff

Students could be seen observing smoke coming from Atkinson Hall at approximately noon May 14 at Georgia College & State University.

"The Milledgeville Fire Department responded

RUSSELL W. WALL | ATTORNEY AT LAW
122 North Main St. Ste. B, Gresham, GA
Office: 706-453-0889 Fax: 706-453-0894
Email: russ@rwalllaw.com

to a fire alarm located in Atkinson Hall, where smoke was detected in the basement level. Officials from Georgia College's Department of Public Safety were on scene with members of the Milledgeville Fire Department, investigating the source of the smoke," said Amanda Respass, GCSU director of public affairs.

The source of smoke in Atkinson Hall was an overheated fan coil motor in an air conditioning unit located on the

basement level, according to the Milledgeville Fire Department.

"When the threat passed, the smell of smoke was likely to linger in the building throughout the afternoon. Therefore, J. Whitney Bunting College of Business & Technology employees were advised to work the remainder of the day in an alternate location," said Respass.

There were no active flames during the incident and no injuries or damage to the building.

NURSES

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addition to nurses."

to discuss proposed increases or changes. Dependent on what was decided during those two meetings, the budget may be announced during the