

New SIM Center opens for GCSU nursing students

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Sabrina Mosto, a senior nursing student at GCSU, acts as a patient while Caroline Cape, also a senior nursing student, checks the patient's vitals at the new Simulation, Translational Research Center in Milledgeville. (Billy W. Hobbs/Staff)

A new state-of-the-art Simulation and Translational Research Center officially opened its doors Thursday afternoon for nursing students at Georgia College & State University.

The new facility, located at 154 Roberson Mill Road in Milledgeville, is part of the College of Health Sciences at GCSU.

The 14,000 square-foot facility, known as The SIM Center, is accredited through the Society of Simulation in Healthcare. It is recognized as one of only two such facilities within the University System of Georgia with that distinction.

Several dignitaries toured the facility a few days before its grand opening, including former Gov. Sonny Perdue, who now serves as Chancellor of the University System of Georgia. He was accompanied by GCSU President Cathy Cox. Others joining them included Josie Doss, interim associate dean and chief nurse administrator of the College of Health Sciences; Sterling Roberts, executive director of the Center for Simulation and Translational Research and associate professor of nursing; Will Evans, dean of the College of Health Sciences; and Holley Roberts, provost and association vice president for academic affairs at GCSU.

The new facility replaces the former GCSU SIM Center that was located inside Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin hospital in Milledgeville.

State-of-the-art equipment was put into the new SIM Center by GCSU at a cost of \$633,000. Some of the health care simulation technology now being used by nursing students includes high fidelity manikins that mimic body responses, such as gastrointestinal sounds, heart and lung sounds, pulse points and reactive pupils.

The SIM Center also utilizes trained individuals as patients to give provide nursing students with real-life situations that include interacting directly with the patient and then diagnosing them.

During Thursday's grand opening, GCSU President Cox welcomed guests, which included local elected officials state Rep. Floyd L. Griffin Jr. (D-Milledgeville), District 149; Milledgeville Mayor Mary Parham-Copelan; and Baldwin County Commissioner Emily C. Davis.

"We are delighted to have all of you here today to celebrate this milestone and to look ahead to all of the research, training and experiential learning that will take place in this facility in the coming years," Cox told guests.

The GCSU president she and many others are deeply excited and grateful to have secured a space that could be thoughtfully retrofitted to support the expanding needs of the nursing program.

"This transition has enabled us to grow from a rather constrained 6,000-square-foot facility into a much needed 13,000-square-foot constructional environment, an essential step in advancing our academic mission," Cox said. "We are proud to be one of only two Society for Simulation and Health Care Accreditation Programs in the University System of Georgia. And we look forward to continuing to pursue our goal of producing well-versed and real world ready health care leaders for our state and beyond."

She pointed out that in the past year, nursing and health care students at GCSU have completed "an astounding" 27,000 hours of clinical and simulation experience through the nursing program.

Cox said that feat was an all-time record.

"Through all of the efforts you will hear about today, we have created this transformative space you're going to see in just a few minutes that can appropriately serve the needs of our students, faculty and the research initiatives that we have in store for years to come," Cox said. "This achievement would not be possible without the generous collaboration and support of our landlords, Derek and Dana Pettigrew."

The Pettigrews were joined at the opening by their son, Davis.

"Mr. Pettigrew was the catalyst for making this facility possible, listening carefully to our vision and working with us to bring it to life," Cox said. "His commitment to community partnership, his investment with us in this facility and his flexibility throughout the renovation process were all instrumental in helping us meet our goals. We are sincerely grateful for his dedication and shared vision. And thank you again, Derek and Dana."

Cox also thanked Josh Eddy, Jason Lattimore and their teams at SERVPRO of Milledgeville for ensuring that the facility was safe, clean and ready for students in record time.

"Their work behind the scenes turned this building into a vibrant learning environment," Cox said. "This project came together in a record five months. And we are very certain the project would never have come to fruition without their partnership. So, our deep, deep thanks to the entire team at SERVPRO of Milledgeville for making our dreams come true in this building."