

GCSU hosts winter graduation, sheriff graduates with master's

By News Staff on Thursday, December 18, 2025

>> GEORGIA COLLEGE

Nearly 400 Bobcats donned graduation regalia and joined the ranks of Georgia College & State University alumni Saturday, Dec. 13, at a ceremony held in the university's Centennial Center.

While the majority of degree-earners are bachelor's grads, nearly one-third earned graduate degrees including master's, specialist, and doctoral degrees.

The commencement ceremony included graduates from all four of GCSU's academic colleges: Arts & Sciences, Business & Technology, Education and Health Sciences. The commencement keynote speaker was Dr. Laurie Peebles, associate professor of music therapy and winner of the 2025 GCSU Excellence in Teaching award.

Badge and Gown: Sheriff Bill Masee graduates

Seated among Saturday's graduating students was Bill Masee, a Milledgeville native and Georgia College alum ('70) who is serving his 10th term as Baldwin County sheriff.

The veteran lawman is anything but stuck in his ways, though. He constantly seeks out innovative ideas and new technologies to keep his community safe. More than half a century since earning his bachelor's in business administration, Masee was awarded a master's in criminal justice.

First full-scholarship nursing program graduates

Seniors Hannah Pelt and Madison Townsend traded their caps and gowns for scrubs as they put their nursing degrees to work. The duo are Georgia College's first graduates of the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation Nursing Scholars Program, which provides full four-year scholarships, housing, meal plan and books included, to qualified students.

"Saving that money has really opened a lot of doors for me post-graduation," said Townsend.

The Warner Robins native is moving to Atlanta to be a nurse in the Arthur M. Blank Hospital — Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's technology-dependent intensive care unit.

Meanwhile, Hannah Pelt is bound for St. Joseph's/Candler Hospital in Savannah, where she will join the intensive care stepdown unit, helping patients transition from the ICU to regular care.

While visiting the hospital during the interview process, Pelt said she got the same feeling as when she first stepped onto the Georgia College campus — it was where she belonged.

"The nursing program here is one of the top ones in Georgia for a reason," said Pelt. "It's given me peace of mind that I can do what comes next because it has prepared me so well. The teachers are really invested in how you're doing. If you need help, they will help you no matter what. They prepared me to think critically."