

>> TAX TIME

# Georgia College to offer free tax assistance

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As tax season is right around the corner Georgia College & State University aims to make the experience less stressful. Beginning Feb. 5, GCSU will offer tax return assistance every Tuesday through Thursday in J. Whitney Bunting College of Business & Technology's Atkinson Hall room 110.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) provides free tax preparation service. The Vita program's goal is to help individuals file their taxes accurately and efficiently.

GCSU has offered this resource for the past three years and has seen a gradual rise in participants since the inaugural year in 2023. Victor Burns, a GCSU accounting professor and leader of the program, stated this increase is beneficial to the program and student success.

"When we first started in 2024, we only had two people but since then we've grown into so much more this year's class got all the way to 17 students," said Burns.

This program is split into three separate units. The course opens with an overall refresher of tax law and then students prepare to take the Volunteer Standard of Conduct Training and its exam. This ensures students understand

the responsibilities and conduct needed to assist taxpayers. Students must receive an 80 or better on the exam to pass.

The second unit of the course serves to prepare the students for the Quality Review Exam. The Quality Review Exam is a crucial point in the process as it illustrates that all tax returns completed by this individual are accurate and their actions are aligned with the IRS.

Once students have completed both programs and passed both exams, they begin preparation for the final component of the course. The prep for the Advanced Tax Law Exam final exam is split into three questions. Once the course is passed, they earn a certificate.

To become officially-VITA verified, students then complete a full tax return for a taxpayer to the best of their ability and Burns checks it over for them. Afterwards, once everything has been completed, GCSU will open its doors to assist the community and make tax season a little bit easier.

If you are interested in using this resource, schedule an appointment at (478) 388-1956. After an appointment, a license, all tax forms, social security card, and a copy of the tax return is required for the appointment. This offer will run through March and is available to most taxpayers with a household income less than \$75,000.

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