

OPINIONS

All letters to the editor must be signed and include a phone number for verification purposes.
Send letters to bb@bbnews.today by 1 p.m. Monday.

When in-laws attack



Dick Yarbrough
Columnist

I have warned my two kids that if they ever contemplated divorcing their spouse, I was keeping the one they brought. My son-in-law is a retired public schoolteacher with a PhD, a coach, and was named Georgia's Teacher of the Year. He can build anything, including the house they have occupied for the past 35 years. He is kind and thoughtful and smart as a whip.

My daughter-in-law is a nurse who spent most of her career in hospital nursing and retired as a hospice care nurse, one of the toughest jobs I can imagine. As I have stated on previous occasions, she is credited with having saved my life (that, according to the doctors) when she saw how pale I looked one evening and got me to an emergency clinic and then into the hospital. It was sepsis. She remains my go-to regarding matters of my health.

It's a shame I'm not running for the U.S. Senate in Georgia. I could talk about the real issues facing our nation and not have to worry about dealing with the next harangue coming from an in-law. I'm afraid that's not the case for Republican candidate, Congressman Mike Collins, though. His race-ranting, anti-Semitic, misogynistic son-in-law doesn't seem to have an off-switch or much interest in helping his father-in-law focus on the issues instead of having to talk about him.

David Alan Scheer II is identified as a social media influencer which is said to be "someone who uses their trust and credibility online to shape attitudes, behaviors, and decisions."

According to various sources, Scheer has some 1.5 million followers on TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram and other channels. His misbegotten efforts to shape attitudes, behaviors, and decisions are only serving to make his father-in-law's campaign a lot more difficult than it already is where polls show him running behind incumbent Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff.

On his Telegram channel, Scheer wrote, "We're going to retake America for Christian White men!" I have a feeling God is going to zap whatever brains this guy may have (which can't be a lot)

MORE ATTACK >> A7



Liberal arts still matter to students and are valuable for Georgia's workforce picture

Georgia College & State University President Cathy Cox explores how the institution's current period of record-breaking enrollment growth illustrates the enduring value of a high-quality liberal arts education to current students and employers alike, in a guest essay originally published in the Atlanta Journal Constitution and provided below.

Georgia College & State University adopted its current liberal arts mission 30 years ago and continues to innovate in the AI era.

Thirty years after Georgia made a landmark commitment to public liberal arts education, students are affirming the wisdom of that decision in record numbers.

This fall, Georgia College & State University welcomed its largest-ever incoming class of 1,849 students from a record pool of 10,060 applicants, some 95% of whom are Georgia residents. That will bring GCSU's overall enrollment this fall to an all-time high of nearly 7,500 undergraduate and graduate students. Our fourth consecutive year of unprecedented demand, this growth serves as powerful evidence that, as markets move and student expectations rise, a high-quality liberal arts education remains more relevant than ever. The reason is adaptability.

Regardless of field, mastering the skills central to the liberal arts — critical thinking, communication, teamwork, problem-solving — serves graduates well. Those competencies adjust to emerging technologies and roll with the tides of industry shifts.

Workforce data reinforces the point.

According to the American Association of Colleges and Universities, employers are up to 81% more likely to hire graduates who have participated in experiences such as undergraduate

research, internships, study abroad, leadership programs and community-engaged learning because it is through experiences like these that students learn broader analytical and interpersonal skills. At Georgia College, 93% of students report taking part in experiences like these — beginning in their first year.

Opportunities to learn by doing as a freshman or sophomore are not typical at larger universities. By keeping classes small, though — 75% of courses at Georgia College have fewer than 30 students — scholars get unparalleled access to their professors and to hands-on learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom.

Our recent Research Day offered a snapshot of these benefits. The largest event of its kind in GCSU history, this event showcased nearly 300 student-researchers who, guided by faculty mentors, learned through their work how to investigate, collaborate, test ideas, respond to feedback and explain their conclusions. Those are liberal arts — and workforce-ready — skills.

The emphasis on experiential learning is also reflected in the GCSU curriculum, which is offered exclusively in-person during the regular fall and spring semesters. Our students want to be face-to-face with their professors and classmates for robust discussions on course topics.

Our new Master of Science in AI Strategy degree makes a similar case.

It's not a degree that teaches students how to develop AI programs. Pairing software fluency with ethical decision-making and responsible AI practices, the program takes a holistic view of a technology that is fundamentally changing the way we work. And again, demand has been staggering.

Only two months after announcing the program, we enrolled more than 400% of our first-term goal — a target of eight



Cathy Cox
GCSU President

students set by the University System of Georgia. By combining broad liberal arts perspectives with AI tools, this degree will empower graduates to leverage AI effectively in any sector.

Before the Board of Regents designated Georgia College as the state's public liberal arts university in 1996, Georgia had no public institution dedicated to this learning model, which meant that students seeking such an education often had to leave the state — if they could afford to do so. The Regents saw a public need and entrusted Georgia College to meet it.

Three decades later, that trust has yielded remarkable results.

The student profile at GCSU has strengthened significantly as it became one of the three selective admission universities in the state (along with UGA and Georgia Tech). The economic impact the university generates in Middle Georgia has more than doubled, exceeding \$360 million today. We also now rank among the top five public colleges and universities in the 12-state South region by U.S. News & World Report.

The state's decision 30 years ago to entrust Georgia College with this noble mission created an affordable pathway to an education tailored to an ever-changing world. Here at GCSU, we like to say that "it's different here" — because a liberal arts education is different. Here, students learn to be leaders. They develop the skills they need to do more, learn more and seize more opportunities to make a positive difference in their communities.

Georgia students have responded enthusiastically, and we look forward to carrying out this mission for decades to come, while providing the launching pad needed to propel future generations toward passionate and purposeful lives.

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