GEORGIA COLLEGE
GEORGIA'S PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY
Center for Teaching and Learning

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News Update
Center for Teaching and Learning

Impact Your Teacher Effectiveness Ratings through the Objective Selection Form

The Objective Selection Form (OSF) opens October 15 for the Fall 2021 semester through December 6. The OSF allows faculty to identify targeted learning objectives to measure teaching effectiveness, and faculty response to the OSF drives summative results on the Student Rating of Instruction Survey (SRIS). The primary indicator of teaching effectiveness is how well students rate their progress on learning objectives that faculty mark as Important or Essential on the OSF. Since every course is different, this research-based instructor-driven model interprets teaching effectiveness based on indicators identified by the instructor. Most instructors who are familiar with their course objectives decide and mark the OSF in ten minutes or less per course. For assistance completing the OSF, please contact us at **ctl@gcsu.edu**. For technical concerns, contact **sris@gcsu.edu**.

Office Spotlight - Counseling Services

*The Center for Teaching and Learning is delighted to spotlight **Counseling Services** and their work through an interview with Dr. Steve Wilson on student anxiety. Read on to learn more about the support they offer to students and discover additional resources for faculty and staff. We are grateful to Dr. Wilson for his work supporting Georgia College students and faculty!*

Mental health issues faced by students of today are complicated by the fact that emerging adulthood is a period of development for their brains, lives, and plans. This period of change can be stressful, even when it is beneficial, especially since the freedom associated with college can be unsettling. When it comes to issues in mental health settings, anxiety is always at the top of the list. Anxiety is a blanket term that covers a broad array of issues that can be related to social situations, performance, health, and more. The cycle of anxiety is a vicious one: students worry about managing their competing responsibilities and increased anxiety leads to procrastination, avoidance, and sleep issues, compounding the problem.

Students may be having a great time on campus but their awareness of the future is simultaneously increasing, contributing to anxiety and leading to avoidance and procrastination. Avoidance is the most natural reaction in the world; we all stay away from situations and things that cause us discomfort. However, it can become an issue; faculty may see students not showing up to class, assignments not being turned in, failures to communicate or discussions of private problems. They may also observe emotional reactions from students, such as agitation, fidgeting, or looking like they're about to cry in class.

Students are often concerned about being in trouble when they speak to an instructor. To demonstrate compassion and help minimize their students' concern when approaching them or when they reach out to students, an instructor can say to a student, "Hey, I'm concerned about you – can I tell you why?," or "I've noticed this – do you need any support?." Referring students to resources, such as the Counseling Center and the 24/7 support line, as well as academic resources offered through the Learning Center and Academic Advising, can also be helpful, as students may not be aware. For students who may not be comfortable speaking to a counselor, there are some great self-help resources offered by **Therapy Assistance Online (TAO)** through the Counseling Services website. Georgia College also offers students free access to the **Headspace app**, which promotes mindfulness and wellbeing.

Dr. Wilson shared that student needs have been high this semester and that has been true not only at Georgia College but across all University System of Georgia (USG) institutions. In response, the USG made additional resources available to students through a **mental health initiative**. During the pandemic, the majority of campus activities were virtual, including counseling sessions through Counseling Services, with 100% of sessions through telehealth. Students seemed to react well initially, but after about a year, there was a level of fatigue that was associated with virtual interactions, and they began craving physical connection and interaction with others. While there is some pandemic-related student anxiety, the general student population is mostly concerned about isolation and missing important life events and milestones.

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It's important to remember that it's not just students that experience stress – faculty are doing tough jobs and have needs, too. They are so appreciated, and they are not alone in coping with these challenges. **TAO self-help resources** are also available to faculty as well as access to free counseling through the **Employee Assistance Program**. Counseling Services is part of the CARE Team which is an interdisciplinary gathering of campus offices that meets to assist anyone on campus who has a need. Anyone can **contact the CARE Team** to get assistance for Georgia College community members in distress and someone from the appropriate office will reach out.

The staff at Counseling Services is always available to consult with faculty and staff about students they're concerned about, whether that's a result of behavior or something concerning in an assignment. A new resource offered by the Counseling Center, in addition to training hosted by counselors on and off-campus, is **Kognito**, which is a self-paced conversation simulator that helps users identify signs of distress and become more comfortable with addressing them in conversation. **Kognito** only takes thirty minutes to an hour and a half to complete and can be helpful to faculty and staff who may feel inhibited in mental health conversations, worry that they'll offend, or are concerned that they'll make a situation worse by talking about it.

Dr. Wilson is a Licensed Professional Counselor and earned his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the Georgia School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University. He works with students experiencing a range of concerns, including ADHD, depression, anxiety, and stress and is the Director of Counseling Services at Georgia College. **Counseling Services** offers free counseling and psychiatric care for students, among **other resources**.

News from the CTL

Transformative Experiences and Essential Learning Outcomes Workshops

The Transformative Experiences and Essential Learning Outcomes workshops are paired together and will help you better understand the GC Journeys initiative and make decisions about how you might like to incorporate transformative experiences and essential skills into your courses or program. Start here, and we'll help you move forward in ways that work for you. Do try to register for both sessions, but if you can only come to one, you can pick up the other one later.

Transformative Experiences - October 25, 3:30 pm to 5 pm

Essential Learning Outcomes - November 1, 3:30 pm to 5 pm

If you're interested in taking both sessions at once, we are offering **Transformative Experiences and Essential Learning Outcomes together on December 16 from 9 am to 12 noon**.

These sessions will be hosted by Drs. Cynthia Alby and Simeco Vinson.

Peer Feedback on Teaching Request Period Now Open

The goal of Peer Feedback on Teaching (PFoT) is to provide support to instructors as they improve the quality of learning in their classroom. Deliberate, continuous improvement of one's teaching is a great joy of being a professor, and our trained observers utilize a strengths-based method to help you discover and build upon your skills in the classroom. For more information on PFoT, please visit **our website**.

For Fall semester, PFoTs are offered from **October 11 through October 29** for both in-person and synchronous online courses. If you are interested in scheduling a PFoT session for your class, please use **this form**.

Keep Up with the Center for Teaching and Learning on Social Media!

Request for Proposals - Affordable Learning Georgia Grants, Round 20

Affordable Learning Georgia is issuing a Request for Proposals for Affordable Materials Grants with applications due by Monday, November 1, 2021. There is a $30,000 maximum award per grant. All grant applications must be coordinated through the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects. For assistance, contact any member of Georgia College's ALG Champion Team: Faculty Champion, **Shaundra Walker**; Library Champion, **Jennifer Townes**; or Design Champion, **Jaclyn Queen**.

Save the Date - Open Education Resource (OER) Webinar with David Harris, Editor in Chief at OpenStax

As a part of Georgia College's participation in the AAC&U Open Education Resource Institute, David Harris, Editor in Chief at OpenStax, will lead a virtual webinar on October 19 at 2:00 pm. The webinar will be instructive for faculty who are interested in learning more about supporting student success through the provision of affordable textbook alternatives. Register for the OER Webinar! For more information, contact Shaundra Walker, Library Director, and OER Institute Team Lead for Georgia College, at **shaundra.walker@gcsu.edu** or 478-445-0987.

Announcing Respondus Pilot

Georgia College is pleased to announce its participation in Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor pilots. Both of these services are being provided at no cost for a limited time. Respondus Lockdown Browser is a tool that, when used during a quiz or exam, prevents the user from switching away from the exam to another tab, copying materials in the exam, printing the exam or its questions, etc. Instructors use the Lockdown Browser during online examinations to prevent students from accessing other sites or sources that could help them find answers to quiz questions. Respondus Monitor is an automated service that tracks where students are looking to ensure that they are not looking away from the monitor, perhaps at a book, their notes, or another computer/table. Respondus Monitor records users through their webcam during an exam allowing instructors to quickly identify where students are looking and if there is a concern about cheating.

Georgia College is currently in the pilot phase of these technologies and we encourage instructors to give it a try and let us know what they think. If there is enough support to pursue purchasing the software, we can take the proposal to the administration. For more information how to set up either the Lockdown Browser or Monitor for your next quiz, please read through the **instructions in D2L**.

Quality Matters Webinar: The True Impact of Digital Accessibility - October 20, 3 pm

Join NCVirtual's Dr. Chris Smith to experience what it would really be like to walk in someone else's shoes - to need alt text, captions, audio descriptions, and more. Participants will also discuss strategies for eliminating barriers, develop plans to address equity and access, and investigated digital tools and techniques. **Register to attend this free webinar**!

Turning Student Anxiety into Achievement

When it comes to helping students turn anxiety into achievement, it's important to realize it can never be one's goal in life to be free of discomfort - we'd never get anything done. It's a balancing act to find an optimal range of stress; just enough stress to improve performance, and not so much that it's disorganizing and overwhelming. When a person is stressed enough to want to overcome obstacles and do well, that's ideal.

Achievement comes down to mindset: when a person thinks a situation, such as college, is too much and they can't handle it, they get discouraged and don't try. But when they reassure themselves that they can figure it out and that college is supposed to be difficult, it gives them the right perspective.

Here are a couple of ways to help with perspective shifts:

Predicting success is more helpful than focusing on failure. We don't want students to think "I'm going to fail this test"; we want them to think "I'm going to be so proud of myself for passing this test."

When students flip the script and think about how lucky they are to have the opportunity to go to college when so many people will never get to, it shifts their perspective. This applies in so many different areas. For example, we don't have to do laundry; we get to have clean clothes.

CTL Workshops for the Fall Semester

Please check out our upcoming workshops through our **public calendar**. In the next month, we will be offering sessions on finding grant and award opportunities, grading for mid-terms, backward design & TILT, using digital tools in the classroom, and more. Register for any of these programs through our **Program Registration Form**!

GeorgiaVIEW Updates

- The September updates release for GeorgiaVIEW allows users to set and view **pronouns in the user profile**. To add/edit your pronouns, click on your name in the top right corner of GeorgiaVIEW and click on Account Settings. Check Allow others to see my pronouns. Click Use different pronouns, then type in your preferred pronouns. Click Save and Close.
- A **New Discussion Evaluation Experience** will now appear by default. Instructors will have the option to opt out for now. However, it is recommended to begin using the new evaluation, as the current discussion evaluation experience will be retired before the end of the year.
- To make the New Assignment Creation text more clear, the following **labels have been renamed**:

  Score out of is now Grade out of

  In Grades is now In Gradebook

  Choose in Grades is now Edit or Link to Existing

  Remove from Grades is now Not in Gradebook

- Instructors can now **specify the extensions of files** that learners can upload as assignment submissions. To restrict submissions to certain file types, locate the Allowable File Extensions drop-down menu under the Submission & Completion menu for the assignment.

News from IT

October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month, an annual campaign to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity. If you have not seen it, check out the video our talented communications folks created for us on **Vimeo** and **YouTube**. Special thanks to Stacey Lumley, Michael Gillett, Madison Rutledge, Chris Brown, Haley Nunn, Steve Barsby, Omar Odeh, Joshua Smith, and, of course, Thunder! We have also been posting daily tips on our **Instagram account**, so check those out to learn more about how you can keep yourself safe from hackers.

Finally, if you have not already done so, remember to complete the required Information Security Awareness training. We are using the new system adopted by the USG called KnowBe4, and we have received some great compliments on the training. You can find the **link to the training** here and in your e-mail. October 31, 2021, is the deadline for completing the training.

- Susan Kerr, CIO

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Upcoming CTL Workshops

Promoting Inclusive Teaching: Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Part I

October 20, 12 noon

Transformative Experiences

October 25, 3:30 pm to 5 pm

Essential Learning Outcomes

November 1, 3:30 pm to 5 pm

Promoting Inclusive Teaching: Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Part II

November 5, 12 noon

Recording Videos Using Video Recording Software (Kaltura)

November 11, 10 am

Responding to Your Audience: How to Improve Your SoTL and Grant Writing

November 12, 12 noon

Have Suggestions? Need Help?

Contact Us

Phone: 478-445-2520

Email: ctl@gcsu.edu

Location: Ina Dillard Russell Library, Room 375