Welcome

This issue marks my eighth spring on Armstrong’s lush arboretum campus, which is currently in full bloom. As many of you know, this is also my final year as Armstrong’s president, as I will retire from the University System of Georgia on June 30. It has been an incredible privilege to lead a university with a rich history and a powerful sense of family. Whatever an honor it has been to know so many hard-working students, devoted faculty, talented staff and proud alumni.

As I reflect upon my years at Armstrong, so many memories come to mind. Every spring and fall, I value my conversations with students at our Treasure Savannah day of service. I love learning about undergraduate research projects at the Student Scholarship Symposium and celebrating each student who crosses the stage at commencement. I am extremely proud of the work our students do both in the classroom and in the community and of the contributions our alumni make each and every day.

One of my favorite experiences at Armstrong has been cheering for our student-athletes from the sidelines, along with my husband Carl, at countless sporting events. For the past 50 years, Pirate athletic teams have earned 13 national championships, 96 Peach Belt Conference championships, 139 NCAA Championship appearances and 296 All-Americans. What a proud history—my heart will always remain maroon and gold.

In this issue of Armstrong magazine, we celebrate eight decades of Armstrong, from our early days in downtown Savannah to our current homes on the southside and in downtown Hinesville.

Through the years, Armstrong’s values of scholarship, leadership and stewardship have guided us. I am hopeful that our commitment to supporting student success will deepen and strengthen as we chart a brave new path for Armstrong.

Dorothy Kempson
Named Director of Armstrong Library Center

Dorothy “Dot” Kempson was named director of Armstrong Library Center. Kempson has worked at the Library Center for more than 15 years and served as interim director during the 2015-16 academic year. Overseeing the move to a state-of-the-art facility in downtown Hinesville, Kempson also drove a successful enrollment campaign, resulting in more than 20 percent growth for fall 2016. Her retirement efforts included an expansion of student support services and serving as advisor to the newly formed Library Center Student Council, which promotes student engagement and inclusion in activities, events and student government.

Kempson holds four degrees from Armstrong, including a M.Ed. in Adult Education, a M.A. in Professional Communication and Leadership, a B.A. in Criminal Justice and an Associate of Arts.

Professors Awarded $330,000 Math & Science Partnerships Grant

The U.S. Department of Education recently awarded a $330,000 grant to Armstrong Professor of Mathematics and Science Donna Mullena, Math Lecturer Janel Smith, Ph.D. and Childhood and Exceptional Student Education Lecturer Elizabeth Williams. The two-year grant is funded by the Mathematics and Science Partnerships federal program and supports STEM education in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPS).

Mullena, Smith and Williams are collaborating with SCCPSS personnel to provide professional development for elementary and middle school math and science teachers. Together, they will implement the Content and Instructional Practices Project, which focuses on content instruction and instructional training to strengthen the classroom experience for students.

Delana Gaydosik-Nivens Promoted
to Dean of College of Science & Technology

Delana Gaydosik-Nivens, Ph.D., was promoted to the position of dean of the College of Science and Technology and began her new role Jan. 1, 2017. She acted as interim dean during the second half of 2016. In her new role, Gaydosik-Nivens serves as the chief academic and fiscal officer for the College of Science and Technology. She also lends support to faculty in teaching, scholarship, service and professional development, in addition to maintaining productive partnerships with sister University System of Georgia institutions.

Gaydosik-Nivens holds a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry from the University of South Carolina and a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory’s Center for Biomolecular Science and Engineering in Washington, D.C.

Tom Cato Receives
Georgia Art Education
Distinguished Service Award

Art, Music and Theatre Department Head Tom L. Cato, Ed.D., received the Georgia Art Education Association (GAEA) Distinguished Service within the Profession Award. This award recognizes an outstanding GAEA member for exemplary contributions, service and achievement at the state level and was presented at the annual convention in Gainsville, Ga.

Cato, who has been a professor at Armstrong since 2003, earned an Ed.D. in Art Education from the University of Georgia, as well as a M.Ed. in Administration/Supervision and a B.F.A. in Art from Valdosta State University.

Kathleen Platt Promoted to Registrar

Kathleen “Kathy” Platt has been promoted to the position of registrar, overseeing the operations of the Office of the Registrar, including curriculum, registration, transcripts and degree completion. Platt has more than 12 years of experience having served in a variety of roles, including interim registrar during the 2015-16 academic year. During that time, she spearheaded a number of important process improvements, including the implementation of electronic transcripts and upgrades on student information systems. Prior to that, Platt served as assistant registrar and was responsible for organizing university commencement ceremonies and overseeing operational functions of the registrar’s office.

Platt earned a B.S. in Psychology from Armstrong and a M.Ed. in Adult Education and Community Leadership from Armstrong.
Otis S. Johnson to Speak at 2017 Spring Commencement
Former Savannah Mayor Otis S. Johnson, Ph.D., ’64 will serve as Armstrong’s 2017 Spring Commencement speaker. Johnson, the first African-American student admitted to Armstrong, became Savannah’s 64th mayor, serving two consecutive terms from 2004 to 2012. His newly released memoir, From the ‘N Word’ to Mr. Mayor: Experiencing the American Dream, recalls his life throughout the Civil Rights movement in Savannah and beyond.

Armstrong Holds Ribbon Cutting for New Student Success Center
In January, Armstrong hosted a ribbon cutting for the new Student Success Center, which is located on the main campus between the Pirate Athletic Center and Alumni Arena.

In development since August 2014, the center serves as a centralized location for academic advisement. The venue also houses the First-Year Experience Program, which helps first-year students successfully navigate the transition from high school to college.

Armstrong Ranks Fourth in the Nation in 2017 Military Times: Best for Vets
Military Times honored Armstrong, ranking the institution fourth in the nation on its Best for Vets: Four-Year Universities 2017 list. This year marks the third consecutive year Armstrong has been included on the prestigious list.

The ranking is a result of Military Times’ comprehensive school-by-school survey of veteran and military student offerings and rates of academic achievement. Colleges and universities are asked to document the array of services, special rules, accommodations and financial incentives offered to students with military ties and to describe aspects of veteran culture on campus. Awarded institutions were evaluated in several categories, with university culture and academic outcomes bearing the most weight.

College of Education Earns National Rankings
The College of Education received two national rankings in 2016. GradSource.com named Armstrong seventh in the nation for Best Online Master’s Program in Education. In addition, Teacher.org reviewed 425 colleges and ranked Armstrong’s Early Childhood Education degree program the 17th best in the country.

Both GradSource.com and Teacher.org based rankings on factors such as affordability, student success and flexibility.

Consul General of Mexico Provides Scholarships to HOLA
Consul General of Mexico Javier Díaz de Leó visited Armstrong State University to sign a memorandum of understanding with Armstrong President Linda M. Bloseckin. The Hispanic Outreach and Leadership at Armstrong program is a recipient of the Mexican Consulate’s 2016-2017 IME-Becas Scholarship Program, which benefits Mexican and Mexican-American students.

The scholarship program provides $10,000 and will be matched by the Armstrong Foundation, totaling $20,000. Since 2003, Armstrong has provided $2.6 million in support of scholarships and grants for Latino student success.

Armstrong Launches Childcare Tuition Assistance Program for Students
In partnership with Atlanta-based nonprofit Quality Care for Children, Armstrong recently launched a program called Boost, which provides financial assistance for quality childcare to parents who are pursuing a four-year college degree.

The Boost program enables four full-time Armstrong students to receive up to $125 weekly to pay tuition for a local Quality Rated childcare program, as designated by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. Participants must be in good academic standing with at least 60 credit hours and have at least one child between the ages of 0 and 4.

Great Dane’s Hammond for Hope Foundation Awards Two Scholarships
Armstrong received a three-year commitment from the Hammond for Hope Foundation—founded by Great Dane—to fund two scholarships, beginning in fall 2017. One $10,000 scholarship and one $5,000 scholarship will be awarded annually to students working toward graduate degrees in Armstrong’s Communication Sciences and Disorders program.

In addition to the scholarships, the foundation made a one-time $15,000 donation to Armstrong’s Communication Sciences and Disorders Department for a teaching-resources kit.
Online Criminal Justice Program Ranks #41 in U.S. News & World Report

Armstrong placed #41 on the U.S. News & World Report 2017 Best Online Criminal Justice Programs list. Armstrong is the only institution in Georgia to be included in the national rankings.

U.S. News analysed universities using five categories, including student engagement, faculty credentials, student services and technology, admissions selectivity and peer reputation.
1930s–’50s

- Armstrong’s Aviation Club prepared students for World War II deployment in 1940.
- Cheerleaders at the Armstrong House in 1948.

1960s–’70s

- 1973–74 All-American Ike Williams.
- An afternoon of campus athletics.
- Campus markers point to new Southside campus in 1965.
- Students cheering on Pirates.
- Students cheering on Pirates.
- Students cheering on Pirates.
- Students cheering on Pirates.
Art professor John Jensen mentors a student.

Residential life on campus

1980s–'90s

Ribbon cutting in Hinesville at Armstrong Liberty Center in 2016

Latino Heritage Month celebrating diversity on campus

2000s –’10s

Men’s and women’s tennis teams earn NCAA Division II national titles in 2012.

Armstrong Band

1985 Quiz Bowl Champs

Armstrong hosts its first Athletic Hall Of Fame Induction in 1995

Professor Wayne Johnson developing a biodynamic glove

Students march in Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade.

Treasure Savannah, Armstrong’s biannual community service event
The choice to study Physical Education at Armstrong was natural for Jacob Baxter, a rising senior who hails from a household of physical education teachers.

“Growing up, I wanted to be just like my parents,” he recalls. “I want to be around children in order to love and support them as much as my parents did for me.”

While Baxter’s affinity for fitness, health and competition grew into a lifelong goal of mentoring students, he has another milestone in sight first.

“I want to help educate students and serve our country at the same time,” he explains. “My goal is to become an officer in the Army and teach physical education after I complete my service.”

An active member of Armstrong’s Army Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, Baxter has learned how to be a strong leader and team player while fostering his love for fitness.

“I know that by completing the program here at Armstrong, I will build my dream of becoming a successful military officer while getting a quality education,” he notes.

Baxter is especially grateful for assistance from both the ROTC program and a Beverly and Josephus Thomas Jr. Scholarship fund for easing his financial burden.

“Armstrong has taught me how to become successful as a teacher, as a soldier and as a person,” he reveals. “There is no secret recipe. You must work hard.”

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When Ryland P. Fox was accepted to Armstrong, he wasn’t sure which major would be right for him. His passion for music was met with an equal desire to study business. He decided to double-major and pursue both goals. “I knew I wanted to play music for the remainder of my life and that a successful musician has to be business-savvy,” Fox notes. “After much consideration, I decided that I could take on the commitment and pursue both degrees.”

At Armstrong, Fox balances a full-course load, two part-time jobs and involvement in the Baptist Collegiate Ministry. He participates in five different bands and ensembles. “I have been playing drums and percussion for eight years,” he says. “After I finish practicing or performing, my mind feels refreshed and relaxed. I also enjoy the community and companionships that music delivers.”

His rigorous schedule isn’t easy to maintain, but with strong time management skills and financial assistance, Fox continues to make strides towards his goals as a L. Pauline Gooch Scholarship recipient. “This scholarship has made it possible for me to focus less on how to afford college and more on my studies,” Fox says. “I can now breathe a sigh of relief knowing that a large portion of tuition for the year has been covered.”

Fox also plans to attend graduate school and is still choosing which master’s degree to pursue. Whatever he decides, he’s confident Armstrong is the right place to prepare him for his future. “Armstrong has the perfect blend of well-trained professors and small class sizes,” he notes. “In my opinion, Armstrong inspires and motivates its students to learn and excel in their career choice.”

After earning an associate degree in dental hygiene and starting a career in health professions, Shelby Ogden decided to return to school to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. “I was drawn to nursing school to expand my abilities in helping people, which is my true passion,” she says. “I now have the opportunity to be a part of a career that impacts a person’s whole being. Bringing light into a person’s darkest day is my hope for my career in nursing.”

Armstrong’s stellar reputation in the medical field made the university an easy choice for Ogden. However, as a nontraditional student, the decision to return to school full-time presented financial challenges. As a recipient of a Bhatia Foundation Scholarship in Nursing, she can now focus on her studies and professional plans. “My future goals are to become a family nurse practitioner and help people from young to old get back to health,” she explains. “I also plan to volunteer my skills by doing mission work.”

Once Ogden walks across the stage at commencement this spring, she will pursue her dream of serving in a critical-care unit or emergency room before beginning graduate studies in nursing. “My nursing professors at Armstrong have taken the time to get to know me,” she explains. “I feel very honored to say I will have graduated from Armstrong State University, where professors truly do care and guide you to do your very best.”

SHELDY OGDEN ’17
Jesup, Georgia
NURSING
Recipient of a Bhatia Foundation Scholarship in Nursing

RYLAND P. FOX ’19
Savannah, Georgia
MUSIC
PERFORMANCE & BUSINESS ECONOMICS
Recipient of a L. Pauline Gooch Scholarship
IN THE FIELD
MOBILE APP-TITUDE: Armstrong Computer Science Students Collaborate with Gulfstream
BY JACKIE ZANTOW

During the fall 2016 semester, final projects in Handheld and Ubiquitous Computing, a class taught by Hong Zhang, Ph.D., were anything but ordinary.

In partnership with Gulfstream Aerospace, Zhang, who is Armstrong’s Computer Science and Information Technology department head, challenged his upper-level students to develop a mobile app for the world’s most technologically advanced business jet aircraft company.

“With a project like this, there’s a purpose,” says Zhang. “All of the elements that we learn in class are used in the project.”

Students broke into groups to develop competing handheld Apple iOS applications that would facilitate Gulfstream’s Agile Software development collaboration process, which would be used to corral information during multi-member meetings with clients.

“We saw this as an opportunity to engage with local students and to raise awareness about the types of careers that are possible at Gulfstream,” notes Drew Dixon, manager of Enterprise Mobile Solutions at Gulfstream. “With Armstrong being so close, it was an easy decision to move forward and see what we could accomplish.”

Prior to the partnership with Gulfstream, Zhang’s course focused on Android open-source methods of mobile app development, but the growing relevance of iOS development made the addition of Apple’s latest programming language, Swift, an invaluable learning tool for his students.

“We made sure that we followed all of the essential phases of the application development life cycle, like requirement gathering, development, integration, unit testing and integration testing,” notes Muthumeena Muthiah, a graduate Computer and Information Science student at Armstrong. “We planned and split our work, then iteratively developed, integrated and tested the app.”

Gulfstream is already brainstorming future projects with Armstrong, such as a potential IT course collaboration.

“It’s challenging to find a project that is a good candidate for this type of initiative each semester,” explains Dixon. “But I certainly want to stay engaged with Armstrong as we consider future initiatives.”

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— Drew Dixon, manager of Enterprise Mobile Solutions at Gulfstream
Jennifer Zettler, Ph.D.
Biology Professor and Entomology Curator
Teaching at Armstrong since: 2002

Best part of my job: “I love interaction with the students.”

Armstrong Biology professor and Entomology Curator Jennifer Zettler, Ph.D., loves insects. Touting the role the six-legged creatures play in the food chain, pollination and decomposition, as well as their impact on human and animal medical studies, she takes pride in making the world of insects more accessible—and interesting—to sometimes squeamish students.

“I like to turn a subject that might be considered dry and make it come alive,” notes Zettler. “A lot of students who’ve taken entomology were scared of insects, but they all come out of it really enjoying the experience.”

Armstrong’s size allows Zettler, who earned a B.S. in Entomology at the University of Florida and two graduate degrees at Clemson University, to interact with students in engaging ways.

“I enjoyed my experience at a larger university, but I really like the feel of the small campus,” she says. “When I was looking for a job, this was the type of school I was looking for.”

Access to year-round field sites in the coastal region is also an enormous plus for her coursework.

“Armstrong has an ideal location,” she says. “I can hop in a van and take a group of students down the road for field projects in the salt marsh. If you can get students outside and see what they’ve studied in textbooks, it’s a transformative experience.”

Zettler has also led students through the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest and Andes Mountains and co-hosts upper-level science class trips to the Florida Keys every other year.

This summer she’ll partner with Physics lecturer Donna Mullenax and Science Education professor Rebecca Wells to walk students through the North Georgia Mountains, coastal barrier islands and South Georgia’s Okefenokee Swamp.

“Some students have never left the Savannah area, so to sample for organisms in mountain streams and to actually see a waterfall, rather than just pictures of it, is important,” says Zettler. “We’ll look at all types of factors that might influence the different habitats we’re studying.”

However, nothing excites Zettler more than working with undergraduate research students. For years, she has taken students to South Florida’s Big Cypress eco-region to study invasive pests of rare orchids. Currently, students are classifying and organizing a teaching insect collection with the goal of creating permanent databases for public research use.

“Research is what students have to have in their pocket to go to graduate school,” she says. “Our department really encourages it. It’s a valuable resource.”

David Bringman, DPT
Rehabilitation Sciences Program Coordinator and Assistant Professor
Teaching at Armstrong since: 2009

Best part of my job: “I am fortunate to see in my students a moment of clarity when they encounter a patient and classroom content is solidified.”

Inspired since childhood to help those in need, Armstrong Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Sciences David Bringman finds joy in developing and guiding Armstrong’s budding physical therapists.

A proud Pirate alum, Bringman earned both a B.S. and M.S. in Physical Therapy from Armstrong, while working at St. Joseph’s/Candler for over eight years, where he provided acute care and in-patient rehabilitation. By then, returning to school to pursue teaching was a goal he thought was out of reach.

“I was a healthcare professional,” he says. “I didn’t really think about academia, but the faculty here knew that I had expressed an interest in wanting to teach at some point. I thought that ship had sailed, but a professor remembered and called one Saturday. That’s one of those awesome things about Armstrong. There are a lot of great professors on this campus.”

Bringman’s extensive field experience and familiarity with Armstrong made for a smooth transition from clinician to professor, which is a job he enjoys immensely.

“When students figure out that it’s better to understand the material and be able to use it, rather than just pass a test, that’s one of my favorite moments,” he explains.

“The idea that this program started on graduating the best clinician is, I think, paramount to what we do at Armstrong. You can graduate the smartest individual, but they might not be the best clinician. It’s refining those soft skills that’s important to me.”

A service-focused mantra helps Bringman shape passionate caregivers who emphasize the human side of healthcare, making graduates of Armstrong’s physical therapy program stand out next to their counterparts.

The ability to inspire different therapists who go on to do exemplary work is a big part of what makes teaching so rewarding for Bringman.

“I love every day of it,” he beams. “Just knowing that I can help create 36 or so physical therapists every year and that they can do a whole lot more to change people’s lives than I can just as one physical therapist is a neat way to look at it.”

Bringman is an enthusiastic advisor to a diverse body of students. He serves as the Rehabilitation Sciences program coordinator, is president-elect of Faculty Senate, volunteers with Armstrong’s orientation program, Navigate, and is a member of numerous committees in various departments.

“You can find your joy in everybody else’s successes,” he says with a smile. “And I think that happens a lot on Armstrong’s campus.”
Armstrong’s Collegiate 100 chapter, which is affiliated with 100 Black Men of Savannah, supports male African-American college students with social, emotional and educational development. Members also “pay it forward” by mentoring area youth in support of the next generation of college students.

“Since coming to Armstrong and working with Collegiate 100, I have become the individual that I have always wanted to be,” says Collegiate 100 President Terelle Norman. “I have confronted the stereotypes and statistics of the black man, challenging myself each day to be a better version of myself than the previous day. With that, I have decided to bring more young men with me.”

In 2009, a group of students created Armstrong’s Collegiate 100 chapter to address the lack of programming for African-American men on campus.

“We translate that message through acts of mentoring, and then we break mentoring down into components of education, economic empowerment and health and wellness,” says Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken.

“Students find resources and individuals who do not look like them, but who support them, such as Dr. Bleicken and senior leadership,” explains Kwame Phillips. “They always come to pageants and galas. When African-American men see that, they feel supported and stay to graduate.”

Named National Chapter of the Year in 2012, the Collegiate 100 today holds a strong presence across campus, participating in Navigate, Housing and Residential Life, the Student Government Association and the Campus Union Board, among others. In addition, the chapter hosts scholarship fundraisers and provides financial support to the Men of Vision and Excellence (M.O.V.E.) program they founded, which is aimed at supporting first-year African-American students with mentorships from upperclassmen.

Armstrong’s College of Health Professions got a recent boost from Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, who earmarked $22 million in his proposed 2018 fiscal budget for construction funding of the new healthcare education center. The vibrant complex will combine a renovated Armstrong Hall with a new state-of-the-art interprofessional center.

“The College of Health Professions facility will serve as the model for healthcare leadership training in the region,” notes Armstrong President Linda M. Bleicken. “The center will be designed to encourage collaboration and interdisciplinary learning, while addressing the community’s evolving health and wellness needs.”

The College of Health Professions, which graduates more undergraduate health professionals than any university in Georgia, offers a range of academic programs that prepare students for careers in nursing, public health, health administration and the allied health professions.

In the new center, students will make use of the latest technologies in the healthcare field through team learning, simulation, clinical practice, laboratories, research spaces and continuing professional education.

“This exciting new facility at Armstrong will serve to further advance the university’s commitment of improving the health and wellness of our communities,” says Paul Hinchey, president and CEO of St. Joseph’s/Candler. “Such an advanced training and educational facility will enhance the healthcare quality of our citizens both locally and throughout our state.”

Design and planning for the 75,000-square-foot structure was approved by the Board of Regents and the State legislature, as recommended by Governor Deal in 2015.

“As Georgia’s population continues to grow and age, Georgia hospital leaders are concerned that our state’s healthcare delivery system will not have enough nurses and allied health professionals to meet the needs of our patients and communities,” says Georgia Hospital Association President and CEO Earl V. Rogers. “Investing in Armstrong’s College of Health Professions’ building will place our state in a much better position to meet these demands.”
CONSOLIDATION UPDATE

Learn more about major changes and potential opportunities affecting the Armstrong community.

On January 11, 2017, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia voted to consolidate Armstrong State University and Georgia Southern University, ultimately creating a new Georgia Southern University with three campus locations in Savannah, Hinesville, and Statesboro. The consolidated university will be led by Georgia Southern President Jaimie L. Hebert.

The Consolidation Implementation Committee, Functional Area co-chairs and Operational Working Groups uniting Armstrong and Georgia Southern faculty and staff are currently in the process of examining and working through all aspects of the consolidation.

The timeline for a consolidation to be completed is usually 12 to 18 months. The prospectus for the new university will be submitted to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) in early fall 2017. If approved at the SACSCOC meeting in December 2017, the prospectus will be submitted for final Board of Regents’ review. Should the consolidation follow this timeline, the effective date will likely be January 2018. The tentative timeline for the first entering class of the new Georgia Southern University will be in fall of 2018.

Learn more at consolidation.georgiasouthern.edu

ABOUT GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 119 degree programs serving 20,673 students. Through eight colleges, the university offers bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

In November 2011, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) adopted six “Principles for Consolidation” that have been used by University System staff to assess the potential for campus consolidations.

Seven consolidations involving 14 USG institutions have been approved and completed to date. The USG’s consolidation of institutions has been focused on serving students better by expanding access, broadening programs and reinvesting savings into academics to improve student success.

Consolidating Armstrong and Georgia Southern will create one institution with expanded regional presence and tailored degree programs for the coastal region.

Creating a new Georgia Southern University will combine the best of both institutions, which are located an hour apart and serve many of the same students. Georgia Southern is already the #1 transfer choice for Armstrong students, and both institutions are among top destinations for students seeking public higher education from Bryan, Chatham, Effingham and Liberty counties. The principal goal is to create increased opportunities and expanded options for students, while increasing efficiency and boosting economic development in the region.

Which academic programs will be offered in Statesboro, Savannah and Hinesville?

A major responsibility of the Consolidation Implementation Committee is to determine the right mix of programs to best serve students and the region. However, all academic programs currently offered at campuses in Savannah, Hinesville and Statesboro will remain in place through the spring of 2022 at the earliest, allowing current students the opportunity to complete their degrees at the campus of their choice.

Will any faculty members at Armstrong lose their jobs? And what about staff layoffs?

Faculty members will be needed to provide quality instruction in Statesboro, Savannah and Hinesville. Certain administrative functions will be combined, resulting in the need for fewer positions over time.

Will students accepted to Armstrong have to reply to Georgia Southern?

No. Armstrong and Georgia Southern will be part of the new Georgia Southern. The acceptance status of students who have already applied to either institution will not change.

To what extent will programs and departments be involved in the decision-making process?

Programs and departments at both institutions are already involved in the decision-making process. A number of Operational Working Groups (OWG) pair Georgia Southern and Armstrong counterparts to determine the most strategic ways to combine strengths. All units will have the opportunity to offer input throughout the consolidation process. OWG recommendations are being submitted to the Consolidation Implementation Committee for review.

What happens to Armstrong students who are residents of Alabama, Florida and South Carolina receiving out-of-state tuition waivers?

A. Students from Alabama, Florida and South Carolina who are currently receiving out-of-state tuition waivers to attend Armstrong will continue to receive those waivers.

How will the consolidation affect tuition rates and fees? Will there be an increase in tuition for current Armstrong students?

A. The University System of Georgia is committed to college affordability. In previous consolidations, the University System has worked closely with both institutions to determine the appropriate tuition and fees for the new institution with an emphasis on affordability. In the development of the new university, the University System will maintain college affordability as a guiding principle in the development of the appropriate tuition and fee structure.

Will the consolidation and the loss of the name make Armstrong State University’s degrees meaningless?

Absolutely not. Armstrong degrees will retain their value throughout the consolidation process and beyond. As an accredited university, Armstrong grants degrees to students who have met high academic standards.

How much money is expected to be saved by this consolidation?

The exact amount of money to be saved by this consolidation is unknown at this time, but any funds saved will be reallocated to support student success within the new university.

How will the history of Armstrong be preserved for future students after the consolidation?

On March 3, the Consolidation Implementation Committee supported a recommendation to name the consolidation Armstrong Campus in Savannah and the Liberty Campus in Hinesville. Additional recommendations will be made by Operational Working Groups in the coming months.
Mill Lawson ’01
Systems Engineer at Georgia Ports Authority
B.S. in Computer Science

When Mill Lawson attended Armstrong State University in 1993, Computer Science held a minor presence in the Department of Mathematics, so he was happy to see the program expand during his time here. “It was exciting to be a part of it during those years and witness its growth first-hand,” remembers Lawson. “I’m proud to see that it is still a strong offering for today’s students.”

Lawson is now a systems engineer for Georgia Ports Authority, which operates all port facilities in the state. He also leads several efforts to design the technology components for expansion projects and new facilities. As a former student worker and programmer for Armstrong’s Department of Computer Information Systems, he credits Armstrong for paving the way to his success. “It was my first IT job, and it gave me an opportunity to see both sides of the work,” says Lawson. “I was a programmer, but as a student, I was also a user at the same time. It was a unique perspective.”

A part-time, nontraditional student, Lawson remembers that Armstrong’s tight-knit campus played an important role in his education. “Most of us knew each other,” he recalls. “I don’t have a favorite memory, but I remember the energy on campus. It always seemed like such a positive environment.”

Valued faculty members, like retired Armstrong Computer Science Professor Charles Shipley, Ph.D., who prepped Lawson for a competitive workforce, also contributed to his experience. “The Computer Science program at Armstrong was rigorous,” he says. “As the program grew, high standards remained and challenged us constantly.”

Frances Mercado ’13 ’16
Respiratory Therapist at Memorial University Medical Center
B.S. in Respiratory Therapy
M.Ed. in Adult Education and Community Leadership

As the child of a U.S. Air Force member, Frances Mercado grew up around the world. So when it came time to choose a university, her decision was not only well informed, but strategic. “I have friends who graduated from Armstrong and are successful,” says Mercado. “Armstrong has a proven track record.”

Once integrated on campus, Mercado greatly appreciated the university’s faculty members. Favorites included Douglas Masini, Ph.D., Rhonda Bevis, Ph.D., Christi Moore, Ph.D. and Patricia Holt, Ph.D. “These four individuals challenged me, respected me and supported my educational process, as well as my family’s well-being,” she says. “They were always accessible and made sure I felt comfortable reaching out to them. They truly wanted me to succeed.”

The hands-on training she received at Armstrong helps Mercado today in her career as a respiratory therapist at Memorial University Medical Center. She works in adult critical care and manages patients on life support who suffer from respiratory and heart conditions. As an English-Spanish bilingual, she frequently serves as a translator for patients from respiratory and heart conditions. As an English-Spanish bilingual, she frequently serves as a translator for patients who can speak both languages.

But Mercado’s success doesn’t come without sacrifice. From respiratory and heart conditions. As an English-Spanish bilingual, she frequently serves as a translator for patients who can speak both languages.
Bettye Anne Battiste Award for Excellence in Education Research

Armstrong’s former Early Childhood Education Department Head Bettye Anne Battiste, Ed.D., was known for her sharp mind, curiosity, quick wit and exceeding generosity. She also had the unique ability to bring people from different backgrounds together and inspire each of them. “She demanded excellence in faculty and friends,” notes Susan White, M.Ed., a retired Special Education professor who worked at Armstrong for almost four decades. “She always wanted you to be your best and she wasn’t afraid to debate about it. I think she mentored everyone she came into contact with. That’s what I most admired about her.”

Following a prolific career as a teacher, researcher, author and local leader in higher education and on the Savannah-Chatham County Public School Board, Battiste retired in 2007. Throughout her life, she was an active member of Leadership Georgia and the National Council of Negro Women, among many other groups. “Dr. Battiste believed in setting the bar high, but she was always fair and willing to work with students to ensure their academic success,” remembers Joyce Bergin, Ed.D., a retired Special Education professor and assistant dean for Armstrong’s College of Education. “She expected students to grow intellectually. Dr. Battiste demonstrated this aspect of personal growth by continued study to develop her own mind and spirit.”

When Battiste unexpectedly passed away in 2012 at the age of 64, White, Bergin and Donna Brooks, Ph.D., Armstrong’s associate provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies, established the Bettye Anne Battiste Award for Excellence in Education Research. “We wanted to honor her intellect and inspire students of the future,” says Bergin. “We thought this would be a wonderful way to keep her memory alive.”

The $500 scholarship is given to one student each academic year in the field of education research. As well, the professor whose student receives the award is honored with a letter of commendation from the dean of the College of Education. As a personal tribute, White, Bergin and Brooks meet for lunch once a month, just as they used to do with their dear friend. “Bettye Anne was the one who kept us together,” says Brooks. “Once she passed we continued to do that. So again, it goes back to her bringing people together and helping people find their commoraities.”

“My motivation is to help young people realize and pursue their dreams.”

Jason Salzer
Associate Director
Recreation and Wellness
Working at Armstrong since: 2013
Best part of my job: “I enjoy helping young people realize and pursue their dreams.”

Jason Salzer is an accomplished singer-songwriter who has released several albums and shared the stage with Lady Antebellum, Little Big Town and Steve Earle during a 15-year career in Nashville. To offset the chaos of the entertainment industry, he mentored underprivileged and special-needs youth at the YMCA. Unbeknownst to him, his time there would lead him down a different professional path. “That experience was very valuable,” says Salzer. “It’s an underserved population. You not only begin to understand the needs of the kids but of the parents too.”

One afternoon during rounds in the gym, he saw a wheelchair-bound boy shooting basketball hoops alone. Salzer joined in and later maneuvered into a wheelchair so that the two could play on even ground. The routine became a weekly one, and over time they invented their own passes, drills and games. This experience not only transformed the child, but Salzer as well.

“To see a kid who is underserved show up at a place just for this, it’s a magical feeling,” he remembers. “It’s one of the most satisfying things I’ve been a part of.”

YMCA Management took notice too. They approached Salzer and asked him to join as director of teen programming. Welcoming a break from the music scene, he accepted. Within two years, he was executive director of the Full Circle Program, which assists individuals with special needs, overseeing six YMCA centers throughout Middle Tennessee.

When his wife, Emily, was tapped to lead Savannah’s Whole Foods store in 2013, he looked to transfer within the YMCA family. However, after seeing an opening at Armstrong’s Recreation and Wellness Center, he visited the campus. “I’ve always liked college athletics and wellness,” he notes. “I quickly fell in love with Armstrong and saw growth potential.”

Salzer, who earned a B.A. in Mass Communication and a minor in Music at Western Kentucky University, was offered a job and jumped on board. Within six months he became assistant director. Last year he was promoted to associate director and completed a M.A. in Professional Leadership and Communication at Armstrong. An active member of Staff Council, Salzer also serves as the coordinator for Armstrong’s Emerging Leaders program.

But music has always stayed close to his heart. He’s passed the torch on to his three children and is a regular on the Savannah Songwriters Series circuit. And when prompted to whip up a jingle to promote the university’s fundraising campaign last year, he had a ball. “I wrote the song and recruited some fellow Pirate musicians to be in the video,” he says. “It was a lot of fun to work with so many talented Pirates.”
CLASS NOTES

1960s
Joseph Lane '64 retired in 2000 and is a Professor Emeritus of Armstrong's Department of Psychology. He is enjoying retirement and traveling in the United States, Europe, and South America.

1970s
Jim Daniel '70 was appointed director of Caribbean sales for Lanahan Lumber Company in 2016. He is also an associate broker with Carré Thomas Realty and Associates where he has worked for four years.

Louis Dix '74 earned a M.A. in 1979 and a Ph.D. in 1987 from the University of Alabama. He worked as an administrator and a licensed psychologist, specializing in intellectual and developmental disability most of his career. Dix retired in 2016, but continues to work part-time. He has been married to Donna Dix for 39 years; they have three adult children and two grandchildren.

Randall Erley '71 retired as the Auditor General of the U.S. Army Audit Agency in 2016, after serving as a civil servant for more than 45 years in various positions with the Department of the Army.

Georgia Rayner Gunn '79 retired from education in Texas. Currently, he is principal at a bilingual, Islamic school in Kuwait.

Norman Luten Jr. '78 M.Ed. '10 works in community outreach and nonprofits in Savannah.

Bob Tatum '75 taught science and English for Averey County Schools in North Carolina for 30 years until retirement. He also worked closely with Appalachian State University Middle Grades Program as a guest instructor and facilitator during much of his career. In 2010, Tatum and his wife Patricia Kunze Tatum formed Sound and Traveler Band. Together, they have performed more than 1,300 shows, including Armstrong's Alumni Gala in 2014 and a tour in Japan.

1980s
Diane Hall '80 is a bookkeeper with Stein Accounting in Savannah.

L louise Shannon Quigley '86 is a math specialist with Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools.

Howard Spiva '80 has been honored by the American Association for Justice as a Trial Lawyers Care Award 2016 Finalist.

Kevin Stafford '86 lives in Savannah. He is a territory account manager for Relypsa Inc., a Vifor Pharma Company. His territory includes Dublin, Ga., to St. Augustine, Fla., and markets to hospitals, nephrologists and cardiologists.

Stacy Armstrong '91 '94 was recently promoted from nurse to director of aesthetics and spa services at Coastal Empire Plastic Surgery. Her daughter, Lauren Armstrong, is a second-year student at Armstrong majoring in criminal justice.

Claudia de la Cruz '97 received a M.A. in Liberal Studies from Duke University in 2016. She has worked in higher education since graduating from Armstrong and has served in the VSA Services Office at Duke since 2009, advising international students and scholars for various departments.

Gregory Deese '93 is a systems engineer for Systems Technology Forum, Ltd., based in Fredericksburg, Va.

Justice Dewart '95 has worked in the renewable energy sector in California since 2007. Currently, he is employed with a company that assists homeowners with consumer loans to install solar power.

Joseph Paul Maggioni '90 is a senior project manager with LG2 Environmental Solutions, Inc., in Savannah.

Rita Gibbs Roose '99 lives in Vidalia and has worked for Darby Dental Services for over 17 years.

Terry Samuels '93 '94 earned a Master of Professional Counseling from Grand Canyon University and a Master of Public Administration from Georgia State University. A licensed counselor, he is one year away from receiving a Ph.D in Psychology with an emphasis in Performance Psychology. Samuels has four sons—Darril, Maurice, Erin and Joshua—and is married to Tabitha Samuels.

Shannon Spofford '92 '97 is a senior sex offender specialist with the Virginia Department of Corrections.

Sammy Strode '96 is a manager/agent with Carter Thompson Inc. He is a certified independent director, certified quality manager and certified quality auditor who received the Indiana Quality Award. He is a member of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society.

2000s
Jennifer Adams '04 is a human resources business partner with Phoebe Putney Health System in Albany, Ga. She is engaged to be married in Sept. 2017.

Marie Barney '07 is a senior consultant with Navin Haffty.

Dana Bostic '03 is named as one of the top five honorees on the American Society for Clinical Pathology's 40 Under 40 list in 2016. Based in Phoenix, she is a clinical coordinator for the Clinical Laboratory Science program at DeVry University.

Melinda Brooks '04 is a branch claim representative with Auto Owners Insurance in Macon.

Heather Cotton '04 is an account executive with H2O Creative Group in Brunswick.

Brian Dawsey '03 M.Ed. '05 has been promoted to director of admissions at Armstrong, has been appointed to a three-year term on the Greater Savannah International Alliance by the Savannah City Council.

Anita Taylor '02 is a teacher in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.

Charles Tyre '08 lives in Evans, Ga., and owns Bulldog Roofing.

Anna Mach Walker '09 has been appointed assistant director of development at Georgia Institute of Technology.

Robert White '02 is a senior systems administrator with Sporo in Savannah. He is also an information technology manager for Nurse Rosies Productions.

Christina Collins Dover '01 M.Ed. '05 is a media specialist at Midway Middle School in Midway, Ga.

Audrey Gregory '01 made the list of "10 Hospital CEOs with Rounded-Out Educations" in Becker Hospital Review.

Anita Harrison '01 is an educator at the Bryan County Board of Education.

Leslie Harrison '02 '07 M.Ed. '10 is a training manager for Partners HealthCare in Boston.

Regina Hoggan '00 works for Humana.

U.S. Army Col. Will Johnson MS '06 has been appointed executive director of Joining Forces, an initiative created by Michelle Obama and Jill Biden to assist service members, veterans and their families with education and employment opportunities.

Lauren Leasure '00 has been named to the public relations and marketing coordinator for Tebo Dental Group in Atlanta.

Lamida Love-Oakes '08 '16 completed her second Armstrong degree in December. She is currently studying for the GRE and applying to graduate schools.

Karla Sapp '04 is a drug treatment specialist with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. In spring 2017, she began as a part-time psychology faculty member at Armstrong's Liberty Center.

Anita Taylor '02 is a teacher in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.

Charles Tyre '08 lives in Evans, Ga., and owns Bulldog Roofing.

Anna Mach Walker '09 has been appointed assistant director of development at Georgia Institute of Technology.

Robert White '02 is a senior systems administrator with Sporo in Savannah. He is also an information technology manager for Nurse Rosies Productions.

Jennell Williams '07 is the house manager and disabilities development professional with Coastal Home Care in Savannah.

2010s
Destine Andrews '15 is in her second year at Savannah Law School, where she has been appointed a research assistant working in the area of Affirmative Action. She is also a law clerk with Beaufort County, S.C.

Lauren Bagnall '13 is a wellness coach at Provena Health Strategies in Marietta, Ga.

Ashley Brooks '16 is a store manager at Smoothie King in Pooler.

Terry Cannon '11 is a staff attorney with Legal Aid of the Bluegrass and will be sworn in as a member of the Kentucky Bar Association in October.

Mikki Chastain '15 was hired by Chatham Orthopaedics following graduation. She oversees quality assurance and quality control and recently re-enrolled at Armstrong to complete certification in Computed Tomography.

Zach Corliss '13 M.Ed. '15 was the full-time assistant men's basketball coach for Armstrong's 2016-17 season.

Jose Cruz M.H.S.A. '16 has been hired as an analyst at Meadow Regional Medical Center in Vidalia, Ga., where he previously completed an internship.

José de Arimatéia da Cruz MS '12 M.A. '15, a political science professor at Armstrong, has been appointed to a three-year term on the Greater Savannah International Alliance by the Savannah City Council.

Bryana Davis M.P.H. '16 has been appointed as the Visibility Committee chair for Healthy Savannah. She is also president of the career development section of the Georgia Public Health Association and works as a community engagement specialist with HealthMPowers.

Becky Davis '12 is currently enrolled in Armstrong's Master of Education program.

Stephen Davis '14 is an agent with State Farm in the Atlanta area.

Amber Doss '12 has joined the public relations and marketing team at The Borgen Project.

James Edga '16 is a buyer-in-training at Carfax in Savannah.

Matthew España '11 is a health and physical education teacher with Glynn County Schools.

Javis Evans '11 '13 has been appointed a human resource specialist at Liberty Regional Medical Center in Hinesville. He has worked in various positions there since 2010.

Thomas Gunn '15 began the M.S. in Computer Science program at Georgia Southwestern State University in January.

Kelsea Hampton '14 has been hired as a special education teacher with the Houston County Board of Education.

Kathleen Henry '12 has been promoted to manager of research and development at the World Trade Center Savannah.

DeAndre Hubbard '12 has been named company commander of the Headquarters Company, 4th Support Command of the U.S. Army.

Justin C. Jackson '11 is a special education teacher at The Matthew Reardon Center for Autism.

Ramsha Khalid '11 is a commercial sales account manager with Rogers Communications in Canada.

Terry Kaiser Jr. '11 M.A.T. '16 teaches American literature and international Baccalaureate Film at Johnson High School in Savannah.

Brittany Lumpkin '14 is in the M.S. for Marriage and Family Therapy program at Valdosta State University.
Lindsay Martin ’13 served three years in the U.S. Peace Corps in Zambia. She is now pursuing a Master of Public Health at the University of Glasgow.

Macy McNair ’15 is in her second year at Morehouse School of Medicine. She is the class president, co-director for the MSM Health Equity for All Lives student-run clinic, student ambassador for the Family Medicine Interest Group and the co-fundraising chair for the local chapter of Student National Medical Association.

Ciara Miller ’16 is a physical therapy aide at Upson Regional Medical Center in Thomaston, Ga.

Megan Minton ’16 and her husband Michael moved to England after she graduated in December.

Shivani Naik ’16 is a registered nurse at Memorial University Medical Center.

Trelanie Neville M.P.H. ’14 is a community educator representative with CareSource in Augusta, Ga.

Chiding Okoro M.P.H. ’16 is an HIV/HCV screening and research specialist with Memorial University Medical Center.

Deana Rausch ’14 will complete a master’s degree in Heritage Preservation from Georgia State University in May.

Sherril Rawlinson MPH ’15 has been assigned as postal platoon leader, 259th HR Company 25th Sustainment Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, and is currently deployed to Europe in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve.

Tirany Reeves ’16 was hired as a graphic designer with The Savannah Tribune in December.

Miguel Rodriguez ’16 is completing an internship with the Chatham County Juvenile Court.

DiAsia Rogers ’14 is a purchasing administrator with Caesarstone U.S. in Richmond Hill, Ga.

Janelle Thomas ’14 has been accepted into the primary pediatric Doctorate of Nursing Practice program at the University of South Alabama.

Kayla Benfield Weaver ’14 works for the University of Florida Disability Resource Center. She and husband Blair Weaver ’15 live in Gainesville, Fla.

Kenny Wilson ’16 has been hired as a Near Peer advisor at Groves High School by Savannah Graduates.

Latoriya Young ’16 has accepted a position as a financial aid assistant at Armstrong. In 2017, she will complete a M.Ed in Adult Education at Armstrong.

Ahna Zackery ’16 works as a Near Peer advisor with Savannah Graduates at Windsor Forest High School.

MARRIAGES

BIRTHS
Kaitlen Fulp Boaen ’08 DPT ’11 and husband, Joey, welcomed a son, Eli Joseph, on July 13.

Aaron Eubank ’09 and Whitney Eubank ’12 M.Ed. ’14 welcomed a son, Christopher Maxwell “Max” Eubank, on January 16.

Shallon Mims ’09 M.Ed. ’11 and Sheldon Mims ’09 welcomed a daughter, Edia Mae TePring Mims, on August 30.

IN MEMORIAM
John Frank Adkins Jr. ’77, November 12, 2016
Larry Carl Brewer ’92, October 20, 2016
David Walter Brogan ’75, October 4, 2016
Walton Ewing Burns ’73, October 29, 2016
Elizabeth Marie Deegan Cashen ’97, April 15, 2016
John Stephen DeLorme ’85, January 12, 2017
Amalia Aldrich Wootton Dresse ’39, December 29, 2016
Christopher Slade Ellington ’72, October 28, 2016
Mildred Creamer Hitch ’39, March 11, 2016
Jeanine W. Jones ’82, November 5, 2016
Doyle Devon Kelley ’70, September 30, 2016
John Patrick Lingenfelser ’70, October 7, 2016
Lois Mallory Livingston ’47, October 14, 2016
Amanda Lynn Wilkinson Lowery ’04, November 10, 2016
James Kenneth Lynn ’48 ’58, January 20, 2017
James H. Nolan ’86, January 26, 2016
Laura Metcalf Olsen ’78 ’89, August 23, 2016
Pamela Elizabeth Parker ’84, October 8, 2016
Katherine Blum Russell ’84, October 14, 2016
Leonard Michael Russell ’75, September 28, 2016
Charles William Schumann III ’78, October 14, 2016
Joey William Sikes ’81 ’92, December 16, 2016
Gary L. Smith ’85, November 28, 2016
Fred Doyle Standard ’59, October 3, 2016
Harley Durantek Tullis Jr. ’68, January 29, 2017
Amber Welch ’16, December 23, 2016

Armstrong cheerleaders enjoy an afternoon on the Savannah Riverfront, circa 1972.

Photo credit: Armstrong’s ‘Geechee’ yearbook
Savannah Wind Symphony Presents

Patriotic Concert

Saluting Current & Former Service Members

Sunday, July 2, 2017 ★ 3 p.m. ★ Armstrong Fine Arts Auditorium

Concert presented by Armstrong State University, Department of Art, Music & Theatre. Will feature American favorites by John Philip Sousa, Irving Berlin, Henry Fillmore, Lee Greenwood and others.

$12 – $20 ADMISSION
Discounts for senior/military/students/children

For more information, visit tickets.armstrong.edu or call the box office at 912-344-2801 (weekdays noon–3 p.m.)