Honors @ Georgia Southern

University Honors Program Students and Staff, Georgia Southern University

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Honors @ Georgia Southern

Spring 2013 Issue

Undergraduate RESEARCH
From The Director

From our start, Honors at Georgia Southern has been synonymous with excellence. Our students take on challenging work in the classroom, in the lab, and in the field. They spend hours in the library and dedicate their energies to making the world a better place. This issue of Honors @ Georgia Southern features the creative and scholarly accomplishments of the graduates of this academic year. Since the beginning of the University Honors Program, students have been asked to develop an Honors Thesis or Capstone project. As you will read in these pages, these projects engage a variety of interesting issues and forge creative solutions to both scholarly and practical problems. With the assistance and support of a caring team of faculty mentors, students are demonstrating their expertise in their fields. This kind of effort builds on the tradition of excellence forged thirty years ago by the initial class of Bell Honors Program students and their caring professors. During this past fall, we celebrated this anniversary with dozens of alumni, family, friends and students who convene on campus to commemorate the occasion. For those who could not attend, this magazine is a snapshot of Honors at Georgia Southern today. There is no replacement, however, for a trip to campus. I hope to see you soon.

Sincerely yours,
Steven Engel

Mission Statement

The University Honors Program provides a small college atmosphere in the context of a large comprehensive university. The program is designed to foster the development of a critical sense of inquiry, a spirit of creativity, a global perspective, and an ethic of civic responsibility. The hallmark of the program is the emphasis on bringing ideas to life through undergraduate research, experiential learning, and service-learning opportunities. The University Honors Program at Georgia Southern University rests on a foundation of the following ideals that are inspired by the institution’s emphasis on engaged learning.

Critical Sense of Inquiry

Honors students will explore a variety of approaches to research designed to foster the pursuit of knowledge. Students will develop the ability to question with a healthy skepticism toward accepted opinion. The culmination of the undergraduate experience is an independent research or creative project designed to exemplify a critical approach to inquiry.

Spirit of Creativity

Honors students will embrace the idea that creativity is a virtue that should be experienced by all students, regardless of discipline. This spirit involves a respect for different ways of knowing and an openness to intellectual discussion and challenge.

Civic Responsibility

Honors students will demonstrate an ethic of civic responsibility and exemplify the motto of the program, “Humility before Honor.” Students will be challenged to use their abilities and talents for the advancement of humanity and the pursuit of a greater good. The primary vehicle for the expression of civic responsibility is through service both to the university and the community.

Global Perspective

Honors students will develop a perspective which allows them to approach their chosen discipline from an international point of view. This outlook involves the critical exploration of global concerns and generation of proposed solutions to international problems. Honors education provides this worldwide perspective through academic courses, study abroad opportunities, and co-curricular experiences.

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HONORS @ Georgia Southern

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Facebook.com/GaSouHonors

Visit the Honors playlist on the Georgia Southern University YouTube channel to see professional videos of honors in action. Filmed and edited by Tim Hunt (2013) with music composed and performed by Sydney Sewell (2014) and Ben Ratliff (2014).

(Be sure to click on the University Honors playlist)

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To learn more about the University Honors Program, visit our website:
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FROM OUR START, HONORS AT GEORGIA SOUTHERN HAS BEEN SYNONYMOUS WITH EXCELLENCE. OUR STUDENTS TAKE ON CHALLENGING WORK IN THE CLASSROOM, IN THE LAB, AND IN THE FIELD. THEY SPEND HOURS IN THE LIBRARY AND DEDICATE THEIR ENERGIES TO MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE. THIS ISSUE OF HONORS @ GEORGIA SOUTHERN FEATURES THE CREATIVE AND SCHOLARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE GRADUATES OF THIS ACADEMIC YEAR. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM, STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO DEVELOP AN HONORS THESIS OR CAPSTONE PROJECT. AS YOU WILL READ IN THESE PAGES, THESE PROJECTS ENGAGE A VARIETY OF INTERESTING ISSUES AND FORGE CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO BOTH SCHOLARLY AND PRACTICAL PROBLEMS. WITH THE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT OF A CARING TEAM OF FACULTY MENTORS, STUDENTS ARE DEMONSTRATING THEIR EXPERTISE IN THEIR FIELDS. THIS KIND OF EFFORT BUILD ON THE TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE FORGED THIRTY YEARS AGO BY THE INITIAL CLASS OF BELL HONORS PROGRAM STUDENTS AND THEIR CARING PROFESSORS. DURING THIS PAST FALL, WE CELEBRATED THIS ANNIVERSARY WITH DOZENS OF ALUMNI, FAMILY, FRIENDS AND STUDENTS WHO CONVENE ON CAMPUS TO COMMEMORATE THE OCCASION. FOR THOSE WHO COULD NOT ATTEND, THIS MAGAZINE IS A SNAPSHOT OF HONORS AT GEORGIA SOUTHERN TODAY. THERE IS NO REPLACEMENT, HOWEVER, FOR A TRIP TO CAMPUS. I HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON.

SINCERELY YOURS,
STEVEN ENGEL
DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

Thank you to all of our volunteer writers and photographers who helped make this year’s magazine a success.

FEATURE STORIES

4 Undergraduate Research

3 Undergraduate Research

33 Honors in Action

33 Honors in Action

36 Honors Annual Report

36 Honors Annual Report

38 Alumni Updates

38 Alumni Updates

40 30 Years of Honors

40 30 Years of Honors

43 Invest in Honors

43 Invest in Honors

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4 Undergraduate Research

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33 Honors in Action

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36 Honors Annual Report

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38 Alumni Updates

40 30 Years of Honors

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43 Invest in Honors

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Undergraduate Research

The University Honors Program provides students with the challenge and support necessary to develop high-level research and creative projects. The senior students profiled here span the academic colleges at Georgia Southern University. While their projects do not exhaust the extent of honors research, they exemplify the range of meaningful work completed by honors students.

Kylie Hall
Psychology
The Relationship between Stigma Consciousness and Empathy
Dr. Amy Hackney

Stereotypes are ever present in the modern world and affect how people are able to empathize with one another. For the past two years Kylie Hall has researched the effect of stigma consciousness—the awareness of negative stereotypes—on empathy. Hypothesizing that those with high stigma consciousness would have higher levels of empathy, Hall sought empirical proof through her original study. The psychology major began the research process by enrolling in Honors Research Methods taught by Dr. Amy Hackney. During the course, the team designed a study which required subjects to complete Pinel’s Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire as well as Davis’ Interpersonal Reactivity Index.

The results of this initial test were later determined to be imperfect: the sample failed to represent the desired diversity of subjects and the small sample size left Hall without definitive answers. With Dr. Hackney’s assistance, Hall took her study to the internet, hoping that its anonymity would contribute to higher participation and better sample distribution. With 300 participants and a wider distribution, the second study was a success and illustrated strong results. The results of the second study clearly illuminated the variations of stigma consciousness’ effects on empathy based on demographic group. This was likely due to the type of stigma being experienced by these differing groups. A general trend in the data showed that at the intersection of high gender stigma consciousness and racial stigma consciousness, there are corresponding high levels of empathy. Because this is the first study to look at the relationship between the constructs of stigma consciousness and empathy, future research will be needed to definitively determine why these trends exist.

Hall recently received the Psychology department’s Georgelle Thomas Honors Award for contributions to research in the field of psychology. Along with presenting her research at the Georgia College Honors Council Conference, she also presented at the Georgia Southern Honors Psychology conference last spring.

Of her honors experience Hall shares, “The Honors Program at Georgia Southern has provided me the best opportunities to grow as a student and a researcher, along with enriching experiences that have expanded my learning outside the classroom.”

Don Vickers
Biology
Aquatic Macroinvertebrates Associated with Beaver Dams in a Southeastern Coastal Plan River System
Dr. Checo Colon-Gaud

While beaver dams provide homes and food for the small mammals, they also disrupt the surrounding environment. One repercussion of this disruption, particularly the biodiversity of aquatic invertebrates in relation to beaver dams, became the focus of Don Vickers’ research. Vickers wanted to investigate the effects of beaver activity on aquatic invertebrates which are an important food source to other organisms such as fish and amphibians. He first discovered his interest in aquatic ecology when taking an honors biology class and found himself wanting to apply what he learned. Vickers picked up this project from a previous student and continued the research for two years. He first gathered benthic core samples from the very bottom of the Ohoopee River located in the Southeastern Coastal Plain river system in Georgia. He then picked through the invertebrates found in these samples and compared the amount of biodiversity within the organisms he found in samples gathered from above beaver dams to samples gathered from below beaver dams.

Vickers presented his research at the Georgia Water Resources Convention in Athens, Georgia, in April. He also presented at the National Convention of the Freshwater Society in Jacksonville, Florida in May. Vickers received funding from both the Honors Program at Georgia Southern as well as travel money from the College Office of Undergraduate Research. He plans to attend Medical College of Georgia in Athens in the fall, and said, “My research definitely helped me get in the door in medical school.” His project also helped him build a quality relationship with his faculty mentor, Dr. Checo Colon-Gaud.

“Working with Don has been refreshing because he’s always shown a added sense of curiosity as an avid outdoorsman. From a mentoring standpoint, working with Don has also been enjoyable because he’s a quick learner and someone who welcomes a challenge,” said Dr. Colon-Gaud. “He’s already accomplished so much academically at such a young age that it’s impressive to see him serve as a mentor to other students and take a leadership role in class and lab activities.”
gearing evolutionary change,” he said. Climate change as a selection pressure the pitcher plant mosquito, specifically research focused on the evolution of in rainfall, and an increased observation longer summers, an average decrease has been an increase in temperatures, earth has seen a variety of results According to Bloodworth, the Joshua Bloodworth’s thesis and among different populations. variability existing in the population Based on allelic frequencies, Bloodworth isozyme analysis for a specific enzyme, for Isocitrate Dehydrogenase, that is required populations in North Carolina, Florida, Wyeomyia smithii to perform the Krebs Cycle. Wyeomyia smithii. Assessing Genetic Variation Within and between Populations of the Pitcher Plant Mosquito

Matthew Campbell has been working in the chemistry lab with molecules similar to those used in chemotherapy. These molecules, however, have toxic effects when a light is shined upon them. Therefore when a light is shined on a specific area with those molecules, it kills the tissue solely in that area, a process known as photodynamic therapy. This new approach to determine which particular poriferan molecules, molecules derived from sea sponges used to fight cancer, are best paired with different wavelengths of light. The effectiveness of the poriferan molecules was directly related to the wavelength of light. The reddest light, the light with the longest wavelength, proved to be the most effective.

Undergraduate Research

Katrina Vader Middle Grades Education and Spanish Characteristics of a Good Middle Grades Teacher Dr. Michelle Reidel Dr. Meca Williams-Johnson

What does it take to be a good middle-grade teacher? Middle Grades Education and Modern Languages major Katrina Vader framed her thesis research around this question after several of her friends had difficulty finding teaching jobs. “I wanted to see what it takes to get through a day in middle school,” she said. Collecting large quantities of data through interviews, focus groups, and surveys, the senior sought to discover what teachers, students, and parents each believe makes an exemplary teacher. Ultimately she aimed to identify a concise and comprehensive set of characteristics which all groups would agree constitutes a great teacher.

According to the results, there is not one comprehensive list of characteristics which can fully satisfy the expectations of the subject groups. “There is no one set [of qualifications] that teachers, parents, and students all agree on,” Vader said. “Teachers just have to appease everyone as well as they can.”

As an education major, Vader was privileged to work with two advisors for her project Dr. Michelle Reidel and Dr. Meca Williams-Johnson. Dr. Reidel assisted Vader in conceptualizing and narrowing the vision for her research.

“Katrina knew what she wanted to do,” Dr. Reidel said. “But her project was going to take a lot more time and work than she first thought.”

Bloodworth views his participation in this research project as excellent preparation for attending medical school as he has improved and varied his lab techniques and gained information in human genetics.

Yavaria Ryan

Most students just don’t have the time to conduct multiple interviews.” Because Vader wanted to interview several subject groups, she devoted an extensive amount of time to her efforts, working for two and a half years.

Vader worked with Dr. Williams-Johnson in developing the project’s research methodology, specifically to strategically structure interview questions. The education professor helped Vader identify which methods could be used to most effectively find the information she needed.

“It’s amazing to see students move from what they originally thought would work to what actually works,” Dr. Williams-Johnson said.

Vader hopes her research will have a lasting effect on the education of middle-grade students—revealing what ideas teachers, parents, and students share and do not share about effective teaching.

“Sometimes teachers forget to think about the perspectives of parents and students and how their teaching methods will appear to them,” Dr. Reidel said. “Katrina’s work will help her and other teachers reflect on the differences in these groups’ views and how they communicate.”

Vader went on to present her findings at the Georgia Educational Research Association conference in Savannah last year. She also intends to expand on her project after graduation. “I’d like to include jobs schools and compare data between them,” she said.

Alicia Burrus

In New Orleans in 2010; Richmond, Virginia in fall of 2011; San Diego in spring of 2012; and New Orleans again in 2013.

After graduation Campbell will attend University of North Carolina to obtain his Ph.D. in chemistry. He shares that he would not have been able to be where he is now without his research experience and his experiential learning. “My experiential learning has challenged me. I’ve been able to do so much with it that I wouldn’t have been able to do otherwise.”

Emily Dodd
On Betrayal
Philosophy
Ashton Green

To promote “Southern Sustainability,” Georgia Southern’s campus in an effort students’ thoughts on best practices for sustainability led her to study the issue and “impact on everybody’s life,” said.

In her view it is Georgia Southern’s “responsibility to do more,” she said.

As the assistant to the Director of the Center for Sustainability, Beslin makes displays for events, coordinates volunteers, and helps facilitate the Center’s activities. As an active student in the Center, Beslin says she enjoys “being able to inform students and others about the Center for Sustainability and the sustainable aspects of Georgia Southern University.”

In her junior year, Beslin will intern at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. this summer, and she is planning to attend graduate school at Georgia Southern where she will study public and environmental health.

“Georgia Southern does a great job of being sustainable, but we can always do more,” she said.

if people were to gather every piece of waste they accumulated throughout a twenty-four hour time period, they may be shocked to discover how much trash they have made. Waste has an “impact on everybody’s life,” said Christina Beslin. Beslin’s passion for sustainability led her to study the issue and students’ thoughts on best practices for Georgia Southern’s campus in an effort to promote “Southern Sustainability.”

Ashton Green

To betray, according to its roots, is a special focus in ancient philosophy. The term meaning to “thoroughly hand over.” While the word’s denotation may suggest a simplicity of concept, in reality betrayal is much more than the act of handing over:

Betrayal is listed in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “to commit a breach of trust” or to “act dishonestly or treacherously.” As the play Dirty Hands by Jean-Paul Sartre became important theme—Plato’s works as well as the play Dirty Hands by Jean-Paul Sartre became key textual components of Green’s attempt to form a working philosophical definition of betrayal. Ultimately Green’s research led her to divide the concept of ‘betrayal’ into several subcategories which can all be arranged hierarchically. The first, most important, kind of betrayal is betrayal of self. Truth and knowledge are invested in the self; to betray oneself would be to simultaneously betray those ideals. Next in Green’s hierarchy is the betrayal of another person, and third is the betrayal of society as society is the culmination of others. According to this ranking system, it is more morally sound to betray the society than it is to betray the self—an idea that manifested within the context of Sartre’s Dirty Hands. Green will be attending the University of St. Andrews in Scotland this fall to earn her Master’s degree in Philosophy, with a special focus in ancient philosophy.

civil engineering major Efadul Huq set out to do something that has never been attempted before at Georgia Southern: to produce ultra-high-performance concrete (UHPC) using everyday kitchen equipment.

While the compressive strength of traditional concrete is typically 2,500 to 5,000 pounds per square inch (psi), UHPC can be up to 22,000 psi without special pressure and temperature treatments. The material is often used in skyscrapers and blast-resistant structures, such as nuclear plants. However, UHPC normally requires extreme pressure, temperatures, and advanced equipment to make. Based on existing research work, Huq’s goal was to produce concrete as strong as possible with rudimentary equipment without using special treatments.

Huq used simple objects to create his concrete, such as kitchen utensils, food mixers, and a small weighing scale. Other materials were more difficult to acquire: Huq waited over an entire semester to obtain silica powder from China. Huq’s initial results were not promising, reaching strengths of only 3,000 psi or even less. Nevertheless, after several rounds of trial-and-error and empirically learning relevant techniques, his concrete specimen began to show higher strengths.

He received financial support from a Georgia Southern Undergraduate Research grant as well as from the University Honors Program. An alumni of the Construction Management Program, Matt Harvell, also generously provided assistance in acquiring needed materials.

Finally, on March 31, one of Huq’s specimens reached a strength of 19,569 psi. While this number is not in itself a world record, it is more than impressive, as it was achieved using rudimentary equipment.

Dr. Gustavo Maldonado who was closely involved with Huq’s efforts, worked with Huq to design the mixes and analyze results. He also contacted donors and took care of necessary paperwork. Dr. Maldonado often came to the lab to work side-by-side with Huq to mix the concrete. “What would normally take me several hours to do would take less with him there,” Huq said.

“Ifad is an outstanding student able to excel in a wide variety of subjects, ranging from the humanities to sciences and engineering,” Dr. Maldonado said. “He is not only very knowledgeable, initiative, resourcefulness and an avid reader. Efadul’s continuous appetite for knowledge, initiative, resourcefulness and perseverance also contributed to achieve a remarkable completion of his research project. Definitively, our Civil Engineering program was fortunate to be selected by Efadul to study, learn, and perform undergraduate research.”

Civil Engineering major Efadul Huq

Making Ultra-High Performance Concrete without Extreme Treatments and with Rudimentary Equipment

Dr. Gustavo Maldonado

Dr. Maldonado said. “Undoubtedly, his perseverance, deductive reasoning, decision making, endurance, sense of accomplishment and joy associated with these activities,” Dr. Maldonado said. “It is my impression that Efadul Huq’s research experiences exposed him to typical difficulties, moments of frustration, needed perseverance, deductive reasoning, decision making, endurance, sense of accomplishment and joy associated with these activities.”

Efadul’s work has provided us with needed confidence and competitiveness in researching and producing ultra-high strength concrete that could be used in the high-performance applications required by modern civil infrastructure,” Dr. Maldonado said.

Huq has been accepted into the Match Corps Program in Boston, where he will have the opportunity of tutoring minority students for a year. His eventual goal is to continue working with engineering research at the graduate level. “Concrete is such an ordinary material, but it’s fascinating what you can learn when you do research with it,” Huq said. “It’s clear to me that research is what I want to pursue in my life.”

“Concrete is such an ordinary material, but it’s fascinating what you can learn when you do research with it,” Huq said. “It’s clear to me that research is what I want to pursue in my life.”

“In my opinion that Efadul Huq’s research experiences exposed him to typical difficulties, moments of frustration, needed perseverance, deductive reasoning, decision making, endurance, sense of accomplishment and joy associated with these activities,” Dr. Maldonado said. “Undoubtedly, his involvement in undergraduate research places him in an advantageous position to initiate and successfully complete graduate studies and research tasks in engineering or any other field.”

Alicia Bierms
When senior pre-medication biology student Jordan Logue walks into a room, two things stand out: his eccentric hair and his eclectic personality. Currently, his hair is a mix of bright purple, streaks of bleached yellow and a natural brown; he casually mentions that he is growing the color out for graduate school interviews, which will revolve around Logue’s intensive research and his unique academic experiences.

Interested in behavioral psychology, he joined a research project studying the Ecsa pugilator, or sand tiger catfish, species’ behavioral breeding patterns over lunar cycles with biology professor Dr. McLain.

“Research is tedious and Jordan is smart enough to ask questions on his own. He is extremely careful and conscious, and he never complains,” Dr. McLain said.

For the last two summers, Logue has spent time in St. Augustine, Florida, researching the fiddler crabs’ behavioral patterns. His research has been completely funded by the Undergraduate Research Fund and Continuing Honors Scholarships.

The University Honors Program paid for research, food, and lodging money, the award gave Vickers the chance to meet Dr. Michael McDonald, a designated Dixie Crystals professor in the Department of Management and ultimately advisor to Vickers’ Thesis work.

To research hiring best practices and evaluate the financial cost for hiring the wrong person, Vickers compiled a literature analysis of eight different articles, which were cross-referenced to find universal themes. Vickers said he was able to come to McDonald with questions when stumped. When Vickers found a description of something or noticed trends in an article but did not know the actual term or label to use, he said McDonald helped to “fill in the blanks.”

Vickers also credits the variety of experiential learning projects he completed annually through the University Honors Program which unexpectedly related well to his research. Throughout his college experience, it was more than enough funding to cover my expenses,” Logue said.

His research concerning fiddler crabs has also led the ambitious sophomore to present his findings at several different conferences across the nation. Logue has presented at the Georgia Collegiate Honors Council in Dahlonega, Georgia, Southern Regional Honors Council in Tampa, Florida, and again in Louisville, Kentucky, and the National Collegiate Honors Council in Boston, Massachusetts, overall, he has attended conferences around the nation, and he presented his research at the Graduate School symposium during the spring semester.

“It’s nice to get these opportunities to present. You get to talk to scientific researchers in your field, but also to the general public,” Logue said of these experiences.

While Logue is an exceptional student, he is also extremely involved in on-campus activities. He is part of several organizations that promote freedom of speech and independent identities, such as The Southern Praxis, an alternative news source, the Georgia Southern University radio show, Speak Up! on 91.9 FM, and a student-organized committee devoted to promoting human rights.

“These organizations have prepared me for public speaking,” said Logue.

Vickers is in a management position and organizing new ideas, which will help her to succeed in graduate school.

Logue hopes to use her research to help in her future career of becoming a counselor at a local church where she will help develop the relationships between parents, children, and couples.

Javaryia Ryan

Krystina Johnson

Health Education and Promotion

Correlates of Physical Activity with Health Risk Behaviors and Academic Achievement in College Students

Dr. Ashley Walker

Kristyna Johnson began her time at Georgia Southern as a history major, but an experimental learning opportunity opened her eyes to the field of health education and promotion.

During the summer after her first year, Johnson completed an internship with the Vocational Rehabilitation Program within the Department of Labor. She worked with individuals who have mental and physical disabilities, and the experience, she said, “piqued her interest in preventative medicine, such as what public health addresses.”

Johnson changed her major to Health Education and Promotion upon returning to campus and began an ambitious program of undergraduate research within her new field. Typically, undergraduate students take the challenge to work as research assistants, but health education major Kristyna Johnson’s initiative spurred her to develop and conduct her own original research.

How people develop their relationship to God is often a line of research left to religious studies scholars and theologians. Leslie Fouraker, however, took a different route through psychology.

“I have a better understanding of how we organize God psychologically,” said Fouraker. She began examining the “God relationship in comparison to the adult relationship” during her sophomore honors research class.

Fouraker based her comparison on “the three Abrahamic faiths which consider God a present, accessible force in the world.” This basis allowed Fouraker to compare the “personal relationship between individual and God” with the relationship between two individuals.

Two considerations that Fouraker made in her research are “the organization of the romantic relationship in comparison to the organization of the God relationship and the constructs of anxiety and avoidance” in both relationships.

To complete her research, Fouraker conducted surveys and had participants view secure and insecure images of people so she could review their response to the images. According to Fouraker, security is “characterized by feelings of trust and openness,” and insecurity is “characterized by feelings of anxiety and avoidance.”

Fouraker then reviewed her data in hopes of discovering a correlation between people’s relationship with God and their relationship with other people. According to Fouraker, “as a person has higher anxiety, they are more likely to have high avoidance.”

Fouraker’s advisor, Dr. Michael Nielsen, Chair of Psychology and Co-Editor of the Archive for the Psychology of Religion, said that Fouraker’s “natural curiosity and her careful approach to research are good combinations in a researcher. By engaging in research now, she will have the skills that will help her to succeed in graduate school.”

Fouraker hopes to use her research to help in her future career of becoming a counselor at a local church where she will help develop the relationships between parents, children, and couples, and God.
An incident during the Honors alternative break trip to Camp Twin Lakes inspired recreation major Sara Curry’s research. At camp, she worked with developmentally disabled and witnessed one of her campers suffer a seizure while on the climbing wall. This experience sparked Curry’s interest, making her wonder how a person can gain the courage to participate in activities when the threat of an episode resides in each moment. Camp Twin Lakes partners with Camp Blue Skies, a camp for adults with cognitive disabilities, during Georgia Southern’s spring break week, and they have welcomed Georgia Southern students on this alternative break trip since 2011. This incredible trip inspired her to inquire further into research surrounding competitive sports and disabilities.

Curry began her research in the summer of 2012, traveling across the state of Georgia to interview fourteen physically disabled athletes. Many of these athletes participate in the Atlantic Lawn Tennis Association while others play on one of the eleven sports teams within the Shepherd Center in Atlanta. Curry recognizes that she could not have completed this massive project without Dr. Wolfe. She explains that Dr. Wolfe was “very flexible and reliable,” helping her on each step of the way. Curry desires to be “a recreation therapist, which involves using recreation and activity interventions to help improve people with disabilities or diseases overall functioning.”

Curry recently received news of her acceptance to an internship position at Atlanta’s Shepherd Center, one of the top ten rehabilitation centers in the nation. As an intern she will shadow recreational therapists who work specifically with the recreation department. The internship along with her thesis experience will give her “an insight to the kind of people she is going to work with” said Dr. Wolfe. He shares that Curry is “very driven and is very passionate about the people that she is interviewing.” She yearns for the “motivational themes that arise from the research to be used to provide the most opportunities for adults with physical disabilities,” wanting them “to have success and to participate in competitive sports.”

In Dr. Wolfe’s opinion, the capstone project gives students two major opportunities: to build working relationships with a faculty mentor and to fully immerse them into the specific topic. Curry and Dr. Wolfe designed the research process to be similar to the writing process for a journal article. Their goal is to submit the thesis for publication.

Curry is grateful for all the support she received from Dr. Wolfe and from the Honors Program. “I would tell students to make the capstone project fit their interests and to try to extend beyond normal research topics,” she said.

Vincent Dattilo
Economics

The BCS Effect: Analyzing Differences among Spending Patterns by Universities in Collegiate Athletic Conferences

Dr. Anthony G. Barilla

Could spending more on the athletics budget really help a college move up in the Bowl Championship Series (BCS)? Economics major Vincent Dattilo wondered this very question as Georgia Southern positioned itself to elevate its football status during his senior year. “I wanted to see if money would keep them back,” he said.

To determine the effect of budget outlays on a school’s success in the conference, Dattilo gathered information on universities in the BCS from the past eight years. He then averaged and totaled the schools’ performance scores in both basketball and football, comparing them to the schools’ expenditures on athletic programs. Through his collected data, Dattilo ultimately determined that spending more money does impact a college’s performance level in the BCS, but this impact of spending eventually levels off.

“There is a correlation, but not as substantial as I expected,” he said.

Dattilo worked closely on the project with Dr. Anthony Barilla, who provided expense data for his research along with a framework for the data set. “He [Dattilo] has been able to show with a limited data set that schools that spend a lot of money on their budgets don’t make the big success leaps that schools lower in the BCS make—there’s a diminishing return in budget outlays,” Dr. Barilla said. “He did a great job. Vince has completed the primary work for a future publication.”

After graduation, Dattilo plans to attend law school at the University of Georgia starting in the fall. He aims to ultimately work as an agent representing for either athletes or organizations such as labor unions. Dattilo believes that his research may help him as an athletic representative specifically, as he will understand the effect of expenditures on athletic success.

While her interest in recycling can directly relate to her passion for reusing materials in her design, Serlin’s passion for the environment is not solely contained to her capstone project. She has been involved with the Center for Sustainability and its efforts on campus. “I fell into this project myself. I’ve had a couple of different mentors through the process, but it has been my own experience,” Serlin said.

One of the hardest parts about using all natural dyes is finding the right recipe for the color. Serlin shared it was a time consuming process that needed to be repeated over and over. “Even the dye recipes online are never right. Everyone keeps secrets,” Serlin said.

Serlin plans to continue her work in natural dyes after she graduates and will seek work with a sustainable textile design company.

Alexandra Serlin
Fashion Merchandising and Apparel Design

Natural Dyes: The Art of Experimenting with Nature

Dr. Lisa Lege

Accidental spills often leave clothing hopelessly ruined, but Fashion design major Alexandra Serlin took an accidental cherry spill as inspiration for research that has changed her future. Serlin has worked to combine disparate organic ingredients like cabbage, coffee, and berries to create a natural fabric dye. The results of her two-year experiments in dye revealed the right colors for the all-natural dress she made as her capstone project. “I want to show how these dyes can be all natural. We don’t have to use harmful chemicals, and these dyes don’t wash out,” Serlin said.
Students are not able to complete such demonstrations, chemistry major Amy Pressley’s project is the compilation of manganese amino acid complexes within faujasite type zeolite compounds. Dr. L. Shannon Davis

The condition of the environment is a pressing and a widely discussed topic which draws the attention of both mainstream news coverage as well as academic research. While many students choose to raise awareness about environmental issues through educational handouts and demonstrations, chemistry major Amy Pressley chose to pursue lab research as an opportunity to help make a difference.

Pressley began her research experience as a freshman at Georgia Southern, working with her mentor Dr. Shannon Davis and other students in an effort to learn more about the environmental commitment. The research aimed to specifically identify an enzyme that would act as a natural catalyst and reduce greenhouse gases emitted into the environment during the commercial production of nylon.

Dr. Davis was Pressley’s first chemistry professor at Georgia Southern, and Pressley’s project is the culmination of the discoveries they made together during her five semesters in lab. Aware that many undergraduate students are not able to complete such expensive research, Pressley is grateful for what she has been able to learn from these first-hand experiences. “Doing research greatly affected my life, because it taught me to be consistent, reliable, and independent,” Pressley said. “You learn things about chemistry in a research lab that you could never learn in the classroom. You must determine your own conclusions—there is no answer book because no one has ever done what you are doing before. It teaches you a whole new way to approach the unknown.”

Pressley’s mentor Dr. Davis agrees that undergraduate research is invaluable for students as they prepare for their future careers. “Even students being able to carry out a research project in their field over a long period of time provides insights into what working in this field may actually be like,” Dr. Davis said. “This is an extraordinarily valuable experience as students begin to think about what they would be doing once their time at GSU is over.”

Through her research, Pressley has had the opportunity to share her project’s findings at three different American Chemical Society conferences. Her time in the lab also helped the senior chemistry major gain a Research Experience for Undergraduates opportunity with the Advanced Materials Research Institute at the University of New Orleans during the summer of 2012.

Following graduation Pressley plans to attend pharmacy school, driven by the desire to use her knowledge and experience to help others through medicine. She credits her successful undergraduate career not only to the opportunities she received through the Chemistry department and professors, but also to the connections she gained through the Honors Program.

“What I enjoy most about being in the Honors Program are the connections I have made with people in all majors, both students and teachers who I would have not otherwise had the chance to meet. The Honors Program is full of wonderful, ambitious people who I can connect and relate to. I know there are always people who I can go to for some solid advice and some fresh motivation.”

Christina Belge

Public Relations

Problem Definition & General Semantics in Environmental Tax Reform: Assessing Language in Policy Dr. Kevin Ward

The Honors Program is full of wonderful, dedicated students. Whether it’s Colin Davis or Yavaria Ryan; Anna McGaughey or Giglora Belge; the student-faculty relationship has helped many students shine. Christina Belge is one of these students.

Belge’s research grew out of her personal experience with chronic illness. While many students choose to tackle focused topics, Belge’s project was aimed at understanding how to make the complex topic of environmental tax reform more approachable for patients. 

“Every undergraduate student should do one,” Dr. Kevin Ward suggested. “It is for a good cause,” Belge said. “What I enjoy most about being in the Honors Program is the support of a knowledgeable faculty advisor. Dr. Rose Mary Gee, for supplying “great advice” when she needs it. This close student-faculty relationship has helped McGaughey stay encouraged throughout her project because she has the constant support of a knowledgeable faculty advisor.

McGaughey says her project will help her nursing career because a “big part of nursing is educating people.” She has learned how to take a big topic, like diabetes, and compress it into a more understandable and relatable format for patients. Eventually, McGaughey hopes to obtain her Doctorate in nursing practice where she will continue to both help and educate patients about chronic illnesses and prevention.
Devin Cifu
English Depictions of Hell in Literature: and Dante
Dr. Hemchand Gossai

Most people would find Hell a depressing topic, but not English major Devin Cifu. Since reading Dante’s epic poem *Inferno*, Cifu has been so fascinated by the mysteries of the underworld that she chose to thoroughly research the depictions of Hell throughout classic literature. Cifu was first introduced to Dante’s *Inferno* during her sophomore year of high school. “As a high school student, I can’t say I expected to enjoy reading anything that was required, but I found that I could not put the book down,” she said. “Dante’s detailed, vivid descriptions are just incredible to read and kept me wanting to read more.”

When considering topics for her thesis project, Cifu knew from the start that she wanted to incorporate *Inferno* and its place in the world of literature. As the main motif of *Inferno* is Hell, she chose to examine how the concept of an underworld has manifested itself in literature over time. To develop comparisons, Cifu began researching literature from various time periods that also portrayed the underworld. She would ultimately choose to include several Greek and Roman epic poems, such as Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil’s *Aeneid*, to examine their influence on the *Inferno*. She would also include writings after Dante, including John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and *No Exit* by Jean Paul Sartre, to observe how Dante’s work influenced later literature.

“I want to compare the descriptions of Hell before and after the *Inferno*, and show just how *Inferno* has shaped the depictions of Hell that follow,” Cifu said. Devin’s work so intrigued Cifu that she made sure to visit his house in Florence, Italy, in July of 2011 during a study abroad experience in the region. “Being in Florence where there is so much history, and thinking about how many statues and paintings were inspired by Dante and his works, made me even more excited to go home and re-read *Inferno* and to dedicate myself to researching its influence on other literature,” she said.

Through her research, Cifu came to understand that the underworld in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is very different from Dante’s depiction. When considering topics for her thesis, she wanted to incorporate Dante’s influence on other literature, “The more I work on this project, the more places I see his influence popping up in what I’m reading or watching on television,” she said. “His vision of Hell is so clear and so defined.”

Inferno

Stephen Onks
Sport Management
An Analysis of Social Media in Collegiate Athletics
Dr. Todd Hall

Stephen Onks found a way to incorporate his True Blue enthusiasm for Southern sports into both his coursework and his research. “I chose sport management as my major because I absolutely love sports. It’s that simple,” Onks said. His passion for sports also inspired him to further pursue the topic through his honors thesis in which he demonstrates the effects of social media on a collegiate program to determine if programs utilize social media effectively.

Onks decided to use GSU athletic marketing for the case study of his research. Over the course of the project he has looked to specifically identify the effectiveness of Georgia Southern’s athletic marketing programs compared to those of other schools. Data was gathered on the number of followers on the school’s social media sites, Facebook, and Twitter. “With our school changing athletic divisions, I think this information is relevant to understanding our school’s presence in another conference,” he explains.

With the hours of field experience he gained while also having a great deal of avid interest in his field, and his determination, Onks hopes to one day manage an arena or stadium. Of his time at Georgia Southern with the Honors Program, Onks shares, “I’ve met a lot of interesting people, my major is interesting, and my professors are fantastic.”

Capitalizing on the dream of every young boy after a good rainstorm, Elijah O’Cain’s research keeps the biology major tripping through the mud in search of empirical data. Studying the impacts of human development on marsh ecosystems, O’Cain focuses his attention on living organisms traditionally ignored during the construction of docks. Having grown up on St. Simon’s Island with his family’s private dock right out the back door, O’Cain was especially interested in studying the local ecosystems. His passion for the environment also played a large role in his research initiative. “It’s important for people to realize their impact on their environment,” he said.

A study abroad trip to Switzerland with the Biology Department gave him another set of tools to use in his analysis and interpretation of results back home. O’Cain first began collecting data for his thesis during the summer of 2011 and finished the process during the following spring semester. He found that processing samples and interpreting the collected data proved a much more time-consuming effort. He finished sifting through the samples last September, approximately eighteen months after beginning the project.

Conducting research throughout Glynn County’s coastal region, including Brunswick and St. Simon’s Island, O’Cain collected core samples of mud from under boat docks. These initial samples were then compared to samples collected from corresponding areas without boat docks. O’Cain hoped comparisons of the sample sets would exhibit differences in the quantity or diversity of organisms.

The difference was not as dramatic as he had originally expected; however, his research did show there to be more of an effect on organisms in the spring time in comparison to the other times of the year. The number of organisms collected in marsh areas directly surrounding private docks was also significantly lower in samples collected in areas without docks. In particular, there was a greater impact on the nematode population because of the docks. O’Cain received funding from both the University Honors Program and the Biology Department to support the costs of research. He recently presented his research at the Benthic Ecology Meeting during spring break.

Hoping to become a marine biologist, O’Cain feels this project has given him critical experience in the collection of data, identification of organisms, and the completion of thorough academic research.
The clients would not provide enough feedback to construct a site and groups had a hard time completing work.

This is also a problem he would later face while working on his capstone project: “I was actually trying to make a website for a client who wanted a multi-user blog. I would use Adobe Photoshop and plan out certain web interfaces; she would tell me she liked it and did not like in the different designs,” he says.

Hunt’s interactions with his client really fueled his research. Hunt’s work for the website helped him realize that the most effective method in web design was difficult for him to actually constitute as data: “Most of my research is qualitative and not quantitative; my advisor, Dr. John O’Malley, helped me in how I could make my project a data based research project.”

In February, Hunt presented his findings at the Southeastern Decision Sciences Institute Conference in Charleston, South Carolina with Dr. O’Malley. Hunt will soon begin work in video production at North Point Ministries in Alpharetta, Georgia. “Having a web site will help small organizations network with others and become well-rounded,” Hunt said.

Small businesses understand the purpose of a website,” Hunt explains, “However, they do not always understand what a website needs. The client knows what they do not want before they know what they do want. Website design includes repeated steps of feedback and changing something, feedback and changing something, and it keeps going until the client is happy.”

Hunt recognized this inefficient strategy while working on group projects in information technology classes.

Today many therapeutic options are available to assist patient recovery; however, senior Christine Fite decided to take a look at an alternative therapy many overlook: laughing. Fite shares that her own love of laughter sparked her interest in researching others’ perception of the phenomenon. As a nursing major, Fite specifically yearned to more fully understand the use of humor in the nursing field.

Fite first considered the topic of laughter and therapy during her freshman year at Georgia Southern. While she admits that at the time of her first proposal she did not know if there was such a thing as “laughing therapy,” her interest in the topic encouraged her to pursue the project.

Fite later learned that studies have been completed concerning the effectiveness of laughing as an alternative therapy, but also discovered that it was an area in want of more extensive research. Following the recommendation of her Honors Peer Leader, she contacted Dr. Rose Mary Gee, a nurse Practitioner who has worked with Fite throughout the course of her research. To gain balanced feedback, Fite distributed 180 surveys to nurses working in a hospital environment, hoping to analyze the role humor plays in their treatment of patients.

“Christine has had to work with multiple committees and agencies to complete her project allowing her to further enhance her communication, writing, and management skills,” Dr. Gee said.

Fite knows her research experience will be a great asset to her future career in the nursing field. Her work gave her insight and different perspectives on the many ways nurses can help their patients. And of course, she has a stronger understanding of the power of laughter for her future patients.

“Christine is tenacious and when she commits to a project she works to finish the project. The role of the student experience is to allow the student to examine, explore, or investigate and participate in an individualized project or learning experience more in depth in an area of personal interest. Her research has facilitated her development of critical thinking and problem solving skills and has offered her the experience to successfully manage around and through, or manage ‘real-life’ problems,” said Dr. Gee.

Fite plans to spend time working as a nurse before continuing her education to attain a doctorate degree in the field of nursing.

Theatre and Spanish double major Zoë Campbell has been involved with theatrical performances on campus since her freshman year at Georgia Southern. Her interest in set design grew as she took classes in theatre and began working in the scene shop during the 2010 fall semester. This interest in design inspired her capstone project, in which she designed the entire set for a theatre department production.

The set for The Triangle Factory Fire Project was a challenging design project. Campbell knew that her work needed to set the tone for the thought provoking play, which told the story of the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire that killed 146 women factory workers and the resulting court trials of the factory owners.

Inspired by Ming Cho Lee’s set designs and the architecture of Spain, she had observed while studying abroad in Sagowia, Campbell proposed that the theatre department consider a style of set they had never implemented before. She mapped out a set structure that would be made completely out of metal, with detachable parts which would fall to represent the building collapsing as the play progressed.

The theatre program decided to try this innovative set design style. “We have used some metal for framing and other aspects of design, but never an entire set,” Campbell said. “The students and professors had to learn all new skills to accomplish this.” Those skills included learning how to safely weld metal and successfully convey the scene from the skeletal set. A look at her set design as a theatre professor, Kelly Berry, helped her throughout the process. Mr. Berry has been Campbell’s advisor and one of her professors since she arrived on campus as a freshman; he also taught her course in set design work, mentored her in several productions, and helped guide her in the areas of theatre and design which have increasingly become her passion.

Berry enjoyed the time he spent mentoring and teaching Campbell this craft, and believes that Campbell’s experience will help her excel in her future career goals.

“Zoë’s design for The Triangle Factory Fire Project is just one more skill set she is graduating with. What made this design work is that Zoë brought a complete understanding of theatre production to this project,” Berry said. “She embodies exactly what we are trying to do in the theatre program and that is to produce a theatre practitioner, who can function in not just one position, but in multiple positions in theatre.

Once Campbell graduates, she hopes to continue pursuing her love of theatre. She would like to not only work in set design but also to use the skills she has learned at Georgia Southern to be involved in stage management, lighting, and audio for theatre productions.

She is grateful for the experience she gained while working on her capstone project and believes it will prove beneficial in her chosen field. “I am now a better carpenter because I understand the thought process of a designer, and it helped me in stage managing because I am able to better understand ground plans,” Campbell said. “I also learned how to weld and how to work with different metals, and all of these aspects have helped expand on my resume as I enter the career field.”

Laura Smith  
Theatre and Spanish Major  
The Skull Remains of an Unused Hotel: Designing the Scenery for The Triangle Factory Fire Project  
Kelly Berry
The Use of Twitter in Sports Journalism Sourcing
Danielle Smith

When Cultural Narratives Collide: The Role of the International Studies Major
Natalie Demarko

Invasive species—should they be considered the bullies of the natural world? How do they truly affect the environment? Biology major, Bradley Corbin, has set out to begin answering these questions in his thesis research while also satisfying his undying interest in invasive species and their effect on local environments.

Through his experiment, Corbin hoped to determine what effects, if any, a weevil has on plant seeds that are ordinarily protected by a symbiotic relationship with ants. The weevils were placed in a testing environment consisting of plant species Richardisia spp. and ant species brachyrhmyrmex patagonicus, both native to South America. Corbin also implemented a control environment consisting of both Richardisia spp. and the weevil species, comparing the results to the treatment environment which contained all three species.

Since the ants are not typically aggressive towards North American weevil species, Corbin’s research aims to identify the effect of the ants’ presence on the seeds when faced with the new invader species. For the necessary data, he checked the plant seeds extensively for any damage that may have been caused by the weevils.

According to Dr. Alan Harvey, his mentor, Corbin’s project required that he individually assess over 50,000 seeds. Harvey also shared that there are inevitable reality checks and complications that can occur when implementing simple experiments in the field that one would typically find in the lab, which just shows how dedicated and ambitious Corbin has been, despite the large sample sizes. As the large sample size required a lengthy testing period, Corbin first began working on this project in January of last year. He also received funding from the Honors Undergraduate Research Fund.

Bradley Corbin
Biology

Working on a long term project has taught her responsibility, and it has been a completely different experience from anything she has ever done, she said. Natalie is conscientious and smart, and so easy to work with. She exemplifies an honors student,” her mentor Dr. Camille Broadway said. “Natalie is hardworking and driven. She is very focused on the use of Twitter in reporting.

“Jerry is going ESPN one day, and they just kept quoting Twitter. I’d never heard them do that before. They even have Twitter Awards. I wanted to examine this shift in journalism,” Demarko said.

Demarko narrowed her thesis project down to content analysis of two journalistic sources: The Los Angeles Times newspaper and Sports Illustrated magazine. She sorted through these sources to find references to Twitter, the social media site that was launched in 2006. In her research, Demarko has found that Twitter references have increased exponentially since the site’s launch.

“It is not just writing anymore. It is mass media and photography; everything at the same time,” Demarko said. “The push in journalism at Georgia Southern is to really incorporate multimedia.” Demarko has worked on campus for Student Media as a special publications editor for Our House and The Lantern Walk and was the assistant sports editor for The George-Anne.

Undergraduate Research

Invasive Species Interactions in New Environments: Richardisia spp., (clover) and Brachyrhmyrmex patagonicus, (rover ants) Possible Symbiotic Relationship in North America
Dr. Alan Harvey

In the field, Demarko will begin her time at Ball State University in the public relations graduate program.

“Journalism is a crazy profession. I am in love with it. I can’t wait to see its future,” she said.

Emily Dodd
Biology
Improved roadways have been a focus of research since the first routes connecting cities and towns were developed in ancient times. Our modern highways are no different, and new materials are being developed. Civil engineering major Matthew Earnest has been busy at work on one such new paving material—crumb rubber modified asphalt.

Earnest has been investigating the optimization of crumb rubber modified asphalt under the guidance of Dr. Junan Shen, who had a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). According to Earnest, the Department of Transportation started paving with rubberized asphalt prior to the implementation of his phase of the research in which he tested the optimization of rubberized asphalt binders with TOR. The asphalt makes use of crumb rubber that has been processed from scrap tires.

To collect data, Earnest traveled to a section of Interstate-75 in Valdosta, a section of Interstate-20 in Augusta, and another section of Interstate-20 in Perry, all of which have one side of the interstate paved with rubberized asphalt and the other not. At the sites Earnest gathered samples of the road to test the differences.

Crumb rubber-modified asphalt contains an additive called TOR, which creates a reaction within the asphalt to help bind it and keep it stable. In southern Georgia, TOR is used to help prevent some of the common problems that normally occur when asphalt and crumb rubber are combined, particularly a settling of the crumb rubber that makes the asphalt, in Earnest’s words, “thick and hard to work with.”

Normally, in order to lay rubberized asphalt, people must use “special equipment to pump it because it is thick and viscous,” said Earnest. “The new additive, TOR, combines asphalt and crumb in a way that makes the asphalt less viscous and easier to work with.”

Earnest evaluated the durability to determine if it remained the same with or without the additive because no prior research of the durability existed.

“As an advisor,” said Dr. Shen, “I show him where to go, but I do not tell him how to go. He needs to figure out the way step by step and then to discuss with me the reason and the possibility.”

Earnest evaluated the addition of rubberized asphalt and crumb rubber in a way that makes the asphalt less viscous and easier to work with. He tested the optimization of asphalt durability under the guidance of Dr. Shen’s guidance.

Matthew Earnest
Civil Engineering
Evaluation of Crumb Rubber Modified Asphalt with Vastenamer TOR
Dr. Junan Shen

Hayley Spencer
Mathematics
Making Connections: How Trigonometric Concepts are Connected to Geometry and Arithmetic
Dr. Joy Darley

“Math is hard!” is still too common a refrain from a number of high school and college students. Why this should be, despite the requirement to take math every year in school, is perplexing. Math major Hayley Spencer also noticed how many high school and college students struggled with math, and she decided to examine the cause of the difficulty and to identify what specific area in math gives students the most difficulty.

Spencer designed a unique test which she hoped would point directly to the concepts which gave students the most challenge. The questions were organized into seven families with three sections each: the first section contained trigonometric problems, the second was comprised of algebraic equations, and the last focused on only simple math problems. Spencer’s test was designed to determine at which specific point a student struggled on the exam. She hoped this knowledge would point to the exact concept the student was struggling to fully comprehend.

Spencer procured the test in two trigonometry classes at Georgia Southern, both times during the fall 2012 semester. Spencer made sure to conduct both tests directly before finals to ensure the students had already studied the concepts covered on the test.

Ultimately, the results varied dramatically. Some students were able to solve the trigonometric equations, some stumbled on the problems in algebra, and some struggled to complete even the most simple math equations. “There doesn’t seem to be a common area,” Spencer said. “Each student had a different problem.”

Spencer can see the implications her research will have on teaching methods in the classroom. “It’s all about teaching, so it will help to understand what students need,” Spencer said. “If someone is struggling on a problem, what have they missed? This project has helped me to figure that out.”

Spencer plans to intern with Kohl Business Solutions as a Benefits Analyst after graduation.

Hayley Spencer

Garrett Litton
History
The Evolution of Governance and Policy in Tudor England
Dr. Robert Batchelor

Queen Elizabeth of the Tudor dynasty first discovered she was royalty beneath the monumental oak tree in the gardens of Hatfield House. Two years ago history major Garrett Litton stood in England under this same tree and realized her keen interest in writing about the dynasty that reigned over Europe four hundred years ago.

Litton’s Honors Thesis on the topic, “The Evolution of Governance and Policy in Tudor England,” was an amazing task,” Litton said. “It’s all been all-nighters, long study sessions, and the hardest I’ve ever worked. But when it comes down to it, the project is better than anything I’ve ever done before.”

Litton credits her advancement to her mentor, Dr. Robert Batchelor.

In the fall, Litton will return to Georgia Southern to work on her Master of Arts degree in History. “I want to bring history to the public. I’m really happy I stuck with the honors program. I prepared me for graduate school.”

Garrett Litton

Casey Wesselman
Biology
Comparative Morphology of Antennal Sensilla of Three Disjunct Populations of Wyeomyia smithii (Gyranhes Culicidae)
Dr. William Irby

Pitcher-plants are carnivorous plants that live in swampy areas where the soil and substrate, Wesselman said, “don’t have enough nutrients, especially nitrogen, something that is relatively abundant in different insects.”

Pitcher plant mosquitoes are considered either commensal, meaning that they live within the pitcher plants, or they can also be symbiotic. “They live with the pitcher plant, and larave and hatch with the pitcher plant and Policy in Tudor, England,” examined historic Tudor documents to understand how the Monarchs’ advisers lived, worked, and counseled.

Litton traveled to London, England, on a study abroad program primarily funded by the University Honors Program and the Continuing Honors Scholarship. She spent time working on an auxiliary project in National Archives of the United Kingdom in Kew, and soon her curiosity caught flame.

“Everything became more real overseas. Nothing in these documents was standardized. Nothing was spelled the same. Defining the complex evolutionary path the Tudor family traveled on was an amazing task,” Litton said. This year, Litton presented her work at CURIO, the undergraduate research symposium hosted by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLASS) at Georgia Southern. Her work is being applied to a poster advertising and encouraging the undergraduate research opportunities for students in CLASS.

With all the work, time, and effort I put into this project, I’m really proud of my accomplishments. He’ll be my undergraduate mentor, I meet that they should take on a capstone project as well,” Litton encouraged.

Litton is also part of Sigma Alpha Iota, a music fraternity for women, and participated in marching band for three years. She is currently a part of Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honors Society.

“It’s always been my motto to immerse myself in my classes, but doing this thesis project has taken my work to the next level,” Litton said. “It’s been all-nighters, long study sessions, and the hardest I’ve ever worked. But when it comes down to it, the project is better than anything I’ve ever done before.”

Litton credits her advancement to her mentor, Dr. Robert Batchelor.

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Casey Wesselman

Sarah Ryniker

Undergraduate Research
Glow in the dark, or appear differently in various environments. It’s about expanding my color palette,” Bryan explained.

After creating her own glazes, Bryan molds her pottery into molecular representations of the elements she has used, and her results are anything but ordinary. The finished projects range all over the color palette from lime green to pale pink and shift from blue to purple. The substances Bryan uses in her various environments.

Khatib recognizes that if not for Honors Program funding, he may not have been able to attend the conference where initial interest in his research topic was first sparked. He has traveled to two major psychology conferences with the assistance of the Honors Program and both in the form of travel grants. He also recently presented his research at the Honors Psychology Conference held at Georgia Southern University. Khatib notes, “Joining the Honors Program has been one of the best decisions I’ve made as an undergrad.”

Khatib intends to directly pursue his Ph.D. in Community Psychology at Georgia State University. He knows his thesis proves that he is capable of doing meaningful scholarship on his own initiative. He hopes that his extensive experience in the research field will give him an edge over the competition.

Zachary Riddle
Finance
Riddle Technology Solutions Providing Innovative Technology Solutions to Residential & Commercial Clientele
Dr. John Hatem

securely established as a leading IT consultant in the Southeast long before his graduation from Georgia Southern, Zach Riddle personally describes his story as the journey from neighborhood geek to technology entrepreneur.

“When I was only ten, neighbors would ask me for assistance with their computers, phones, remotes—anything that required electricity,” shares the Finance major.

This initial childhood interest in all things electronic quickly developed into a full-fledged business plan, and by the time Riddle was only seventeen, Riddle Technology Solutions was officially established. Equipped with business cards, a website, and standardized operating procedures, the high school student set out to try his hand in the small business sector.

During the first year of operation, Riddle Technology Solutions’ gross revenue provided approximately five hundred dollars per month in personal income. Between Riddle’s junior year of high school and his graduation from Georgia Southern University, it transformed from a one-man operation into a successful small business with multiple specialized employees, with company revenue averaging between $12,000 and $15,000 per month.

Originally offering only basic computer repairs, the company now offers extensive IT services and advice as well as counsel for commercial enterprises. In the process of expansion, Riddle Technology Solutions became the first Apple Certified Consultants in Southeast Georgia.

Riddle’s capstone research conducted a best business practices analysis of his own business operations in order to determine what Riddle Technology Solutions could do to stand apart from the competition. Detailing the company’s high level of professionalism, emphasis on confidentiality and innovation, the project was a quick sales pitch with his unwavering dedication to provide clients with this exceptionally high level of service and the work ethic that Riddle himself knew only at midnight has been crucial in his success.

Riddle explains, “Many technology firms become comfortable with implementing the same technology platforms and systems over and over again. They learn the little tricks and become hard pressed to change. Riddle Technology Solutions believes in the constant need to review every practice and procedure to find new technologies to fill any previous void and streamline systems.”

Following graduation, Riddle plans to continue his success in the world of business with Riddle Technology Solutions to begin a career as a research analyst with The Fiduciary Group in his hometown of Savannah, Georgia. His work at The Fiduciary Group will involve supporting the team in the Commercial Clientele, where he will help advise clients on estate planning and financial management strategies.

Undergraduate Research

Women make up only a fraction of those holding political office, yet they are statistically more likely to engage in activism and community service. This disparity has interested Nadim Khatib since his sophomores year when he saw a presentation on political advocacy and gender differences at a psychology conference in Montreal.

He became further interested in the topic when he took his first honors class. During the course his professor suggested Khatib specifically research stereotyping and its effects on people’s choices. Khatib began with a fairly basic premise: how do negative gender stereotypes of female politicians and public leaders affect the aspirations of women inclined toward leadership positions?

With the assistance of his advisor, Dr. Amy Hackney, he formulated an experiment. He asked young women to read a randomized mock article about a female politician—one article was neutral, one sexualized the woman, and one called the woman overly aggressive. The women were then asked whether or not they would prefer to be the leader in an exercise.

Since that first iteration, the experiment has been modified to gather more comprehensive results. The testing now includes both male and female subjects and uses the Implicit Positive and Negative Affect Test (IPNAT) as the diagnostic tool. So far his findings have proved interesting but not definitive. Still, Khatib is eager to continue down this avenue of research to see what other areas of the field can be explored.

Khatib has put his passion for ceramic arts to work through this annual service project as both organizer and artist. Her involvement in the project, which originally began as her Honors experiential learning project, helped Bryan realize her curiosity in ceramic arts and its effects on people’s choices.

Bryan presented her work at the National Council on Education for the Arts in Seattle, Washington as a junior. She also presented at the Ceramic Arts in Seattle, Washington National Council on Education for the Arts John F. Nolen Scholarship Program has definitely pushed my abilities along through college,” Bryan said.

“An Elemental Exploration of the Ceramic Arts”

Jeff Schmuki

The Empty Bowl Project puts the focus on community service. This disparity has interested Nadim Khatib since his sophomore year when he saw a presentation on political advocacy and gender differences at a psychology conference in Montreal.

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Passion for environmental concerns drove Anni Rainio (pictured right) to switch majors from biology to marketing. This bold and seemingly contrary move came after a variety of experiential learning opportunities with non-profit environmental organizations. Studying both marketing and environmental concerns may be a unique mix; however, Rainio wants to bring marketing expertise to the Sierra Club. These experiences, on top of all of her other work with environmental organizations on campus, helped her bridge her scholarly interest with her actions.

Through her original research, Rainio analyzes how the economy affects environmental advertisements. While teaming up with Dr. Denton and Dr. Lindsey, two business professors, Rainio examines how tenacity for completing her project, and her self-discipline are all super admirable traits,” Dr. Denton comments. “She is going to be a force for this world. Of that I have no doubt.”

Sydney Robinson
Political Science
The Role of Sovereignty in the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions by the United States and the European Union
Dr. Jamie Scalera

Throughout the undergraduate experience, students are bombarded with study abroad brochures filled with images of exotic places and tiny imprints of foreign languages. They are told to study abroad and to become a “global citizen,” but for Sydney Robinson, study abroad truly changed her life and set her on the pathway for her Honors Capstone project. Robinson went to Austria in the spring of 2012 and received a new outlook on sovereignty and the inner workings of the United Nations. Robinson has decided to investigate international law and foreign relations. In her thesis, she examines how foreign sovereignty can alter a country’s reaction towards the United Nations’ policies. “I’m so glad the Honors Program encouraged me to go abroad because I know I never would have understood exactly how different the United States is from Europe without my time in Austria. I really had the ability to see how another culture works and totally immerse myself in it,” Robinson said.

Robinson finds the clear contrasting images portrayed by the American government and the European Union to be a particularly intriguing topic. “Essentially, there are drastic differences in how the European Union and the United States look at the Security Council Resolution,” she said. “I never would have taken on this project without my trip to Austria.”

Dr. Jamie Scalera

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Sarah Ryniker

Undergraduate Research

In her time overseas, Robinson took two classes that were significant to her thesis project because she was the only American and often times the discussion-based classes tend to conversations over United Nations law, Robinson said.

Robinson noted that the U.S. has a greater fear of losing sovereignty, but also said that the European Union was the only organization comfortable with sharing authority. “They take the United Nations more seriously overseas. People just don’t notice the United Nations over here,” she adds.

Robinson received funding for her trip abroad through the University Honors Program. She also expressed extensive praise of her mentor and said, “Dr. Scalera has been vital to the process of developing my paper and my content. I could not have done it without her.”

“Sydney has shown a great deal of enthusiasm for her capstone project. Her interests in this topic, and her specialized knowledge of the European Union, have resulted in a unique approach to a very important topic for world politics,” Dr. Scalera said.

After graduation, Robinson will attend Georgetown University to work toward an LL.M. in International Law, in Washington, D.C., in order to pursue international law. Dr. Scalera said, “The Honors Program is truly offering students an opportunity to become student-researchers. By conducting original research under the guidance of a faculty mentor, our student-researchers are engaging in a truly special educational experience.”

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Sarah Ryniker
David Greenberg

**Political Science**

*Empathy’s Role in Creating Citizens: An Analysis of Aristotelian Themes in Ridley Scott’s Blade Runner*

Dr. Robert Pirro

Some people are naturally slaves while others are naturally citizens. Reading such a cold statement may make a person cringe; however, the argument belongs to Aristotle, and David Greenberg has spent the past two years grappling with its ethical quandary. In a time where citizenship and legal status of immigrants are hotly contested, the topic of who qualifies as a full citizen becomes particularly salient.

Greenberg chose to tackle Aristotle’s contentious views through a case study of the “replicants” of the 1982 dystopian film *Blade Runner*. The replicants of the film were slaves initially created to serve a single purpose; yet, they have become sentient to their slavery and seek freedom through citizenship. Greenberg believes their struggle to gain freedom is fertile ground to test Aristotle’s theories of slavery. As an example, despite escaping their physical bonds, the replicants continue to act in a manner typical of slaves. Greenberg posits that it is not physical constraints that make a slave, but rather fear and ignorance, and holds that this hypothesis is proven through the progression of the film. In the culminating moments of the movie (spoiler alert!), one replicant is given the honor of a free citizen upon his death, having overcome his fear and his confining self-image as a slave.

Greenberg hopes that his research will prove applicable in several ways, particularly in the education concerning what it means to be a true citizen. Living in fear or choosing to cling to ignorance is not the mindset before summer vacation. She started by using mathematical manipulatives—physical objects such as pizzas and candy bars meant to represent abstract mathematical concepts in fraction problems. The Early Childhood Education major then took the project a step further by creating a “fraction number line”: a three foot long sheet of laminated paper numbered from zero to three, with each unit broken further into fractions. She had fraction number lines broken into thirds, fourths, and fifths. Like a more intellectually challenging game of hopscotch, the children were given word problems and straight math problems that they solved by hopping down the line.

In the post-assessment testing and interview, many of the children noted that they really liked using the fraction number line. Dunn further noted that, “Getting students moving in the mathematics classroom yields improved student achievement.” Using the concept of fraction number lines and mathematical manipulatives in mathematics and sciences that the effective style of teaching justifies any extra work it may require of educators.

Dunn has presented her work at the Georgia Collegiate Honors Council and the Young Americans for Liberty Foundation in Washington, D.C., as one of only three undergraduates in residence at the conservative think tank. Along with her internship experience, Greenberg has also served as the Fundraising Manager of the Young Americans for Liberty at Georgia Southern as well as the President of Phi Sigma Tau, an honors student organization in philosophy.

His Thesis has already proved to be an asset in the world beyond Georgia Southern, and he will attend Mercer University’s Walter F. George School of Law.

Greenberg notes, “The Honors Program takes the passive learning experience of academia in a post-No Child Left Behind world and makes it active. Instead of being taught, I learned. The difference is significant; its effect is intellectual, physical, and spiritual.” Greenberg has himself achieved a greater degree of Aristotelian freedom through his time at Georgia Southern.

Beth Martin

Janessa Dunn

**Chemistry**

*Microwave-Assisted Synthesis of Biologically Active Heterocycles*

Dr. Shainaz Landge

It is clear that Georgia Southern senior Janessa Dunn is a determined, hardworking student with a clear commitment to the world of chemistry. Not only did she complete an experiment exploring the sustainability of product creation, in a separate project she also examined effective styles of teaching chemistry.

“When I’m able to apply the things I learn in class in a more real-life setting, it definitely makes it more worthwhile,” stated the senior concerning the overall experience. During Dunn’s sustainability experiment, she incorporated two different compounds using a method known as microwave synthesis. She conducted seven experiments with different starting temperatures in hopes of determining which temperature would optimize the production process while also producing a consistent result. Dunn’s final results illustrated the feasibility of producing an equivalent product using a very low production temperature that not only saves energy but saves time as well.

Dunn presented her experiment regarding microwave synthesis at the National American Chemical Society Meeting in April of 2013 in New Orleans. She was able to attend the National Youth at Risk Conference in part because of the aid offered by the Honors Program. She recently submitted an article to Columbus State University’s undergraduate research journal *Monomom.*

Dunn has been an active chemistry student throughout all four years of her time as a mathematics teacher at Boyd-Buchanan School in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Janessa Dunn collaborated with researchers at the University of Massachusetts in a survey of approximately fifty chemistry students to observe the students’ prioritization methods and thought process. In the survey, the students were asked what compound they would choose as a refrigerant: a toxic but effective compound or a relatively safe compound still undergoing testing.

Dunn began working on her projects in June of 2012, and has had her research concerning chemistry education published through the University of Massachusetts. She presented her chemistry education project at the Southeastern Regional Meeting for American Chemical Society (SERMACS) in November of 2012 in Raleigh, North Carolina in an undergraduate poster session, presenting with other researchers: Stephen Culipher, Dr. Hannah Sevian, and mentor Dr. Shainaz Landge.

In addition to the SERMACS presentation, she has also presented work entitled “Implementing Elaborate Visual Analogies in Organic Chemistry courses” at the Second Annual Scholarship of STEM Teaching and Learning Conference in March of 2013 with researchers Sharon Hines, Dr. Shainaz Landge, and Naznim Ali.

Dunn received support from the Georgia Southern Student Government Association, SERMACS, and the National American Chemical Society Meeting in support of her projects. The research has opened many doors to Dunn who enjoyed the opportunities to present with professors and to network with fellow scholars during the professional conferences. Dunn’s research within the field of chemistry education also helped her decide to pursue the field professionally after graduate school. Dunn also enjoyed a close relationship with her mentor Dr. Landge who shares, “Janessa joined my research group in the summer of 2012 and has been a valuable member since. Her significant contribution in two projects has resulted in four presentations at national and local conferences. I was impressed by her diligent attitude towards her academic performance. When I started recruiting students to assist with my research, I was confident she would be a good fit.”

Landge continues, “It has been a rewarding experience working with Janessa. I believe, more than a mentor-student relationship, we share a platform where we discuss ideas freely and work towards accomplishing them. Overall, she has shown great promise as a student and I foresee her as a future leader in the career path she pursues.”

Emily Dadd
The Showrooming Effect and the New Look of Retail for Consumers
Dr. Kathleen Gruben

Participation in an intercollegiate competition called aspire2retail, hosted by the National Retail Federation Foundation and American Express, provided just the spark Anna-Marie Thompson needed to find her research topic. Anna-Marie Thompson always knew she wanted a career in management and marketing, with an emphasis on retail management, and the aspire2retail event introduced her to the effects of showrooming in major retail stores. “I was attracted to business because of the practical applications of the things I was learning. There was nothing that I did not find irrelevant to my future. Everything that I learned is valuable. Management gave me an overall understanding on how to focus more on customers.”

“Showrooming” is a recent development in the retail industry where consumers enter a brick-and-mortar store, try out a product, and then use their smartphones to price compare the product online, Thompson explains. “My project is looking into the consumers’ viewpoint of why they showroom, how consumers are preferring to shop, what companies are doing or have done to combat its effects, and also take a look into emerging technologies that will change the way people shop in a retail store,” she said.

Her passion for leadership, intrigue with consumer behavior, and hobby of shopping have each helped Thompson develop her research project. Her mentor, Dr. Kathleen Gruben, said, “Undergraduates do not usually have the opportunity to receive these opportunities. It is a chance for students to intensify their work ethic and utilize their knowledge.”

Through her participation in the Honors Program, Thompson said her thesis project has “given me a better understanding of different retail companies and the challenges that I will be faced with as a store manager.”

This knowledge of different companies and potential challenges will aid Thompson’s work as a Retail Management Intern with Walt Disney World. Although she is going to begin work right after graduation, Thompson says she is still planning to help her Master’s degree’s research.

Each year thousands of undergraduate students submit admissions applications to Physical Therapy (P.T.) Doctoral Programs, but never is an application sent without the applicants first looking into the program. Genevieve Lyke, a Physical Therapy student at Florida International, and this project will assist her with her own application process. “I was attracted to business because of my love for shopping and my hobby of shopping have each helped me comprehend what admissions officers think of the application,” said Daniel Czech, Lyke’s mentor.

“It’s an experience that will allow students to work on one on one with faculty to achieve an academic goal,” said Czech. “Whomever you can have that experience, it is invaluable for both student and faculty.”

Lyke said that Dr. Czech was always available to help her with the project, and his assistance helped her overcome the initial intimidation of facing such a large scale project. Dr. Czech points out that professors also learn during the process as well. He said “there were many times when I was learning and teaching with Genevieve. That makes it special.”

This experience may have furthered Lyke’s research skills, but it also opened up additional doors to opportunities, like presentation experiences at conferences across the United States, including participation at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in Boston in November of 2012.

Kotut was mentored by Dr. Wenjia Li. She speaks to Dr. Li’s investment in the project’s success: “that he was just as interested in the outcome of the research as I was, aided in my confidence that my research was worthwhile—a good mindset to have, it turned out, for those days when nothing seemed to work.”

Speaking to the importance of the honors Capstone experience, Kotut says, “I had not realized just how competitive a student and researcher I had become until I began my graduate school search. My GRE and GPA were both glanced over, but the Capstone was reviewed. Thoroughly.”

Kotut hopes that the program she designed to test her results will prove invaluable in the research field. The honors student aims to make her program an open source. With the code publicly available Kotut says that

Anna-Marie Thompson
Management and Marketing
The Showrooming Effect and the New Look of Retail for Consumers
Dr. Kathleen Gruben

Genieve Lyke
Exercise Science
A Qualitative Analysis of what Admission Departments of Doctor of Physical Therapy Programs Consider the Ideal Physical Therapy Student
Dr. Daniel Czech

Lindah Kotut
Computer Science
Abnormal Data Detection in Cyber Physical Systems (CPS)
Dr. Wenjia Li

Michael Samiratedu
Chemistry
Investigation of Beach Sand Temperature on St. Catherines Island to Predict Loggerhead Sea Turtle Hatchlings
Dr. Robert K. Vance

Emily Dodd

Undergraduate Research

Kotut was interested in the synergy between programs across Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) and was exposed to this opportunity as an Undergraduate Researcher. “I was attracted to business because of my love for shopping and my hobby of shopping have each helped me comprehend what admissions officers think of the application,” said Daniel Czech, Lyke’s mentor. “It’s an experience that will allow students to work on one on one with faculty to achieve an academic goal,” said Czech. “Whenever you can have that experience, it is invaluable for both student and faculty.”

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Lyke aims to become a physical therapist herself and has applied to over six graduate schools, including North Georgia College, Temple University, and Florida International, and this project will assist her with her own application process. “I was attracted to business because of my love for shopping and my hobby of shopping have each helped me comprehend what admissions officers think of the application,” said Daniel Czech, Lyke’s mentor. “It’s an experience that will allow students to work on one on one with faculty to achieve an academic goal,” said Czech. “Whenever you can have that experience, it is invaluable for both student and faculty.”

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However, as Thompson moved forward in her research, she realized that there was still something missing. “I was attracted to business because of my love for shopping and my hobby of shopping have each helped me comprehend what admissions officers think of the application,” said Daniel Czech, Lyke’s mentor. “It’s an experience that will allow students to work on one on one with faculty to achieve an academic goal,” said Czech. “Whenever you can have that experience, it is invaluable for both student and faculty.”

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McGee explored the subconscious minds of literary characters in works by William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. In particular, McGee examined the presence of mental disorders in Faulkner’s “The Sound and the Fury” and Woolf’s “Mrs. Dalloway.” Each of the three novels was written in the stream of consciousness form, a narrative mode that portrays a character’s point of view by presenting their thoughts and feelings as they occur.

“There’s a Freudian trend in modernists to explore the experiences of the mind,” McGee said. “For instance, the term ‘psychopath’ only came about in the mid-1900s, but Faulkner was writing about its symptoms seventy years earlier.”

In Faulkner’s “The Sound and the Fury,” McGee examined the mental characteristics of Jason Compson III. Compson’s lack of emotion and inhuman characteristics of Jason Compson III made him think about mental disease, Dr. Hemchand Gossai said. “There is not much information out there comparing literary – it affects how people think about mental disease.”

McGee worked with Dr. Hemchand Gossai to discuss interpretations of the novels and practical research and writing strategies. “McGee’s research is not only literary – it affects how people think about mental disease,” Dr. Gossai said. “There is not much information out there comparing literary with psychoanalysis. His research could become a platform for something more expansive.”

McGee believes his research has vast implications. “There are estimates that a large percentage of violent crimes committed in America are committed by psychopaths,” he said. “We walk by a few psychopaths on any given day.” McGee hopes his research will increase awareness of mental disease in the general public.

McGee researched the portrayal of schizophrenia in Woolf’s “Mrs. Dalloway.” A World War I veteran and Virginia Wolfe committed by psychopaths, he commits suicide. As Woolf has been thought to be a victim of schizophrenia herself, McGee found Smith’s mental disorder particularly interesting as he researched the impact that Woolf’s disease had on her portrayal of Smith.

In addition, McGee researched the symptoms of psychopathy, as he could not find any source to support his findings. McGee also studied the progression of schizophrenia in Faulkner’s character Darl Bundren in “As I Lay Dying,” as Bundren moves from a complete psychotic breakdown, speaking to himself in third person.

Contemplating the destructive force hidden within the core of every human being, sophisticated writing and linguistics major Taylor Tyson crafted his award-winning essay “35 Pounds.”

The lyrical prose was inspired by the image of a hammer, a constructive tool with destructive potential, and aimed to examine this base belligerency. This piece was recently awarded the Powell Award for creative nonfiction. Judge of the fiction submissions, Dr. Theresa Welford shared with CLASS news that “the strong voice, the vivid descriptions, and the startling yet oddly plausible leaps of the imagination made this essay stand out.”

Tyson tells of the inspiring influence of such writers as Douglass Adams and Terry Pratchett and says that he genuinely hopes to continue pursuing the art of writing throughout both his academic and professional careers. Efadul Huq thinks deeply about materials and construction. In the Civil Engineering lab he has worked tirelessly to develop new types of concrete. Outside of the lab, he has worked tirelessly on his writing, bringing the same rigor and discipline he holds in the lab. His story entitled “Ghosts” was recognized by the Powell Award for fiction and spoke of the inspiring women’s influences on the character and consciousness of the protagonist. Huq shares that the piece itself was inspired by the women who have shaped his life, specifically his grandmother, mother, and friends. Judge of the creative fiction submissions Dr. Laura Valeri spoke with CLASS news sharing that “the thoughtful and poetic voice of this narrator swept me into a world full of wonders and passions, and I was so deeply and sweetly immersed in it that I did not want to come out.”

As recipients of the Powell Award for Creative Writing, Tyson and Huq were each awarded a one hundred dollar prize along with a framed award certificate. Both students were also recognized during the 2013 Honors Day. Look for “35 Pounds” and “Ghosts” to be published in the upcoming edition of Miscellany, the campus literary arts magazine of Georgia Southern University.
Several students, faculty, and administrators from the University Honors Program travelled to the National Collegiate Honors Conference in Boston, Massachusetts in November. Caroline Greene, Genevieve Lyke, Claire Goodwin, Kelsey Keane, Jack St. Jean, and Jordan Logue traveled with Dr. Engel, Dr. Desiderio, honors advisor Erin Martin, Dr. Brent Wolfe, and Dr. Jerri Kropp to spend five days in Boston, touring the city and participating in conference events. After seeing Harvard, Back Bay, Chinatown, Boston Harbor, and Cambridge through the City as Text program, students also participated in a discussion of the role of markets in society with Harvard professor Dr. Michael Sandel, enjoyed the student dances and musical acts, and spent time getting to know students from other honors programs from across of the country. Lyke, St. Jean, and Logue each presented posters on their research, while Dr. Wolfe, Dr. Kropp, Dr. Desiderio, Goodwin, and Greene presented on the Honors Alternative Break Trip with Camp Blue Skies at Camp Twin Lakes. The presentations at the conference encompassed the full range of academics from caribou migrations to the idea of dystopia in literature and film to particle physics to the education reform. The 2013 conference is scheduled for November in New Orleans, Louisiana.
Honors 2012-2013 Data

423 Honors Students
40% Men, 60% Women, 80% Caucasian, 20% Non-white
377 Georgia Residents (88%)
11 States Represented (including Georgia)
13 Countries Represented
92% Freshman Retention Rate
98 Honors Courses Offered
7225 Hours of Service and Leadership
144 Faculty Teaching Honors Courses or Mentoring Honors Students

Honors Students by Academic College

Liberal Arts and Social Sciences 122
Science and Mathematics 97
Health and Human Sciences 67
Engineering & Information Technology 57
Business Administration 43
International Studies 15
Education 14
Undeclared 8

Number of Honors Students

Fall 2005 265
Fall 2006 295
Fall 2007 306
Fall 2008 343
Fall 2009 406
Fall 2010 451
Fall 2011 456
Fall 2012 423

Honors by the Numbers

2013 Incoming Freshman Class Projections

117 New Freshmen
104 Georgia Residents (89%)
7 States Represented
1254 Average SAT
28.1 Average ACT
3.74 Average GPA (unweighted)

Honors Freshman Retention Rates

90% 90% 90% 94% 91% 91% 92%

Program Applicants

2005-2006 374
2006-2007 419
2007-2008 607
2008-2009 713
2009-2010 709
2010-2011 733
2011-2012 762
2012-2013 801
University Honors Program Alumnus Charles Minshew Part of Pulitzer Prize-Winning Team

University Honors Program Alumnus Charles Minshew can add Pulitzer Prize to his list of accomplishments. Minshew (Political Science, 2011) is on the team of the Denver Post reporters recognized by the Pulitzer Prize jury for their coverage of the Aurora, Colorado movie theater shootings on July 20, 2012. The Denver Post team won in the category of “Breaking News Reporting.” Particularly noted was the way the Denver Post “used” journalistic techniques, from Twitter and Facebook to video and written reports, both to capture a breaking story and provide context.”

Minshew’s work at the Denver Post was as a Dow Jones News Fund summer intern, a competitive opportunity for students in journalism. Minshew’s contribution to the award-winning coverage of the Aurora shootings included his work as web producer to update the story online, using social media and interactive tools and developing the online timeline that provided context and updates as the story unfolded.

Minshew, currently enrolled in the Master’s program at the Missouri School of Journalism, said about the experience working on the story, “We spent every day making sure we were well informed about the theater shooting. That summer showed me what teamwork was all about. Everyone gave it their all.”

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University Honors Program Alumni

Todd Deal (BHP, Chemistry, 1986) is professor of chemistry and director of the Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement at Georgia Southern University. He is married to Karen (Budack) Deal and they live in Statesboro with their two daughters, Abbie and Anna.

Sandy (Smith) Gillis (BHP, Communications, 1986) is the Vice President for Advertising at the Island Packet news in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina where she lives with her husband Bubba Gillis (1985). They have two daughters, Alanna and Alyssa, who are graduating from college this year.

Leslie (Lawton) Fuller (BHP, French, 1990) is a branch manager with Northwest Georgia Credit Union in Rome Georgia. 1990) is a branch manager with Northwest Georgia Credit Union in Rome Georgia. Where she lives with her husband Bubba Gillis (1985). They have two daughters, Alanna and Alyssa, who are graduating from college this year.

Kelli (Morgan) Lariscy (BHP, Chemistry, 1991) is a Spanish teacher at Colleton County High School in Statesboro, Georgia where she lives with her husband Bubba Gillis (1985). They have two daughters, Alanna and Alyssa, who are graduating from college this year.

Shannon (Raule) Colvin (BHP, Education, 1992) and Randy Colvin (BHP, Biology, 1991) live in Evans, Georgia where Shannon is an art teacher with Columbia County Schools (and has been twice selected as teacher of the year). Randy is a primary care physician. They have two children, Maggie and Bryce.

Michelle (Taylor) Rice (BHP, English, 1993) is dean for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. She lives in Ebensburg, PA with her husband LTC Philip Rice, US Army (Ret.) and daughter Lauren.

Amy (Shaw) Jefferies (BHP, Biology, 1995) is a Doctor of Optometry in private practice in Newnan, Georgia where she lives with her husband Scott Jeffries and son Jake.

Desa Overstreet (BHP, Mathematics, 1995) is senior director of analytics at Equifax and lives in Norcross, Georgia.

Derek Lewis (BHP, English, 1997) is executive director of Greenville First Steps, a non-profit in Greenville SC that works to help children enter school, ready to learn. He is also a Governors appointee to the South Carolina Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children. He lives in Greenville, South Carolina where he lives with his wife and daughters Ruby, Vega, and Lily.

Amy D. Smith (UHP, English, 2002) recently won her partner of over ten years, Julie Doubler (UHP, English, 2002) in New York City. Amy works in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Julie is an instructor in the Department of Writing and Linguistics, both at Georgia Southern University.

Melanie (Atkinson) Lee (UHP, Education, 2003) is an exceptional student services teacher in Junction City, Kansas where she lives with her husband.

Melanie Satterwittewe (BHP, French Education, 2000) is the student life supervisor at the Paris campus of New York University (NYU Paris) where she also earned an MA in French Language and Civilization in 2007. She also has an MA from the Université de Paris in Gender Studies. She happily lives in her small apartment the 17th arrondissement with her husband Aymen.

Jacin (Kaylor) Donovan (BHP, Sports Medicine, 2000) is the Director of Athletics at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia where she lives with her husband Jack Donovan.

Juan Lacao (BHP, Biology, 2000) is a neurologist in Walton County, Georgia where he lives with his wife Abbie and daughters Ruby, Vega, and Lily.

Amelia Smith (CH, English, 2002) recently won her partner of over ten years, Julie Doubler (UHP, English, 2002) in New York City. Amy works in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and Julie is an instructor in the Department of Writing and Linguistics, both at Georgia Southern University.

Melanie Barron (UHP, Geography, 2010) is working on a Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Kentucky, Lexington.

Christina Larson (UHP, Accounting and Information Systems, 2010) is an accountant with Dabbs, Hickman, Hill and Cannon LLP in Statesboro, Georgia.

Andres Montes (UHP, Philosophy, 2011) is attending Mercer University School of Medicine, Savannah Campus. He recently helped successfully secure a grant from Alpha Omega Alpha to develop a leadership program. He continues to serve as chairman and CEO of Hands and Hearts Clinic in Statesboro, Georgia.

Rachel Rozier (UHP, Political Science, 2011) is teaching English in Budapest, Hungary.

Jessica Cain (UHP, Biology, 2012) is working on a Masters Degree in Environmental Science at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.

Cassy Dierolf (UHP, International Studies, 2012) has been accepted (with funding) to University of California’s East Asian Area Studies graduate program.

Cate Faulkner (UHP, International Studies and Spanish, 2012) will begin her studies in Social Services Administration at the University of Chicago in the fall. Since her graduation she has been working at the Community Clinic in Springfield, Arkansas, working with clients, developing programming, and writing grants.

Jennifer Williams (UHP, Anthropology, 2012) is teaching English in Budapest, Hungary.

Bob Frigo (UHP, former Assistant Director) has been named Associate Director of the Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement at Elon University.
In October of 2012 over 125 guests gathered to celebrate the 30th anniversary of honors education at Georgia Southern University. Alumni of both the Bell Honors Program and the University Honors Program convened on campus to join current students and staff in commemorating a strong tradition of excellence.

Saturday evening events included a formal dinner with remarks from Dr. Hew Joiner, Founding Director of the Bell Honors Program, and Dr. Fred Richter, Founding Director of the University Honors Program. The meal provided an opportunity for alumni to reconnect with peers and for current students to meet the professors and alumni who set the cornerstone for the Program’s continued accomplishments. Dr. Michael Braz provided entertainment for all attending with an engaging piano performance. Dinner was followed by more socializing during the “Honors After Hours” event at the Statesboro Holiday Inn with entertainment by Ryan and Patti Kelly.

Sunday’s events included breakfast as well as a rededication ceremony for the Bell Memorial Oak. While the ceremony looked back on the past thirty years, it also looked forward to the bright future of the University Honors Program.

The entire University Honors Program staff looks forward to welcoming you to campus soon.
The Bell Memorial Oak was dedicated in the memory of Orell Bernard “Red” Bell in February 1997. At the time, the tree was the largest and believed to be the oldest on the campus of Georgia Southern University. Mr. Bell was the long-time friend and benefactor of the O.B. “Red” Bell and Sue Floyd Bell Honors Program (1982-2007), a national model in honors education and the academic home for many honors students over its 25 years of existence. Mr. Bell was president of First Bulloch Bank during the 1970s and served as president of the Statesboro Rotary Club and the Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber of Commerce. He and his wife Suzy were enthusiastic supporters of the Bell Honors Program. The original Bell Oak was felled by wind on January 24, 2010. This newly planted Savannah Holly is dedicated in recognition of “Red” Bell’s lasting contribution to Georgia Southern University. Furthermore, the tree and this monument will remind all current and future honors students of the contributions and accomplishments of the faculty and students of the Bell Honors Program. The Savannah Holly as a species to replace the former oak was recommended by Dr. Hew Joiner and his wife Martha, noted native plant enthusiasts and protectors. This Holly diversifies the flora on campus representing the diverse preparation provided to Bell Honors students. As a native plant, particularly with the name “Savannah Holly,” it represents the deep local roots of honors education at Georgia Southern. And, every fall and winter as the red berries emerge, we will be reminded of “Red” Bell’s contributions. Its location close to Eidson House, home of the University Honors Program will insure that we keep this memory close to those who value it most.

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Sarah Simpson
Honors Study Abroad Scholarship

Exercise Science junior Sarah Simpson went to Italy last summer funded on an honors study abroad scholarship. This summer, she will return to Italy to conduct research for her Honors Thesis examining cultural approaches to exercise and nutrition. Continued investments in honors study abroad scholarships will enable more students to engage the global dimensions of pressing issues as they develop their own scholarly projects.

Biology senior Jack St. Jean is preparing himself for medical school by conducting research for his Honors Thesis in the lab of Dr. Quentin Fang in an effort to work toward new approaches for controlling tick-borne diseases. The Honors Undergraduate Research Fund has enabled him to present his research on a national stage at several professional conferences. Investments in this fund are critical to offer more students these experiences.

Caroline Greene
1906 Scholarship

Child and Family Development senior Caroline Greene was recruited to Georgia Southern with a 1906 Scholarship. She has attended the Honors Alternative Break program at Camp Twin Lakes working with adults with cognitive disabilities. Next year, she will write her Honors Thesis on perceptions of disabilities based on her work at this camp. Your investment helps us continue to offer talented students the opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others.
Apply to Honors at Georgia Southern

georgiasouthern.edu/honors