Honors @ Georgia Southern

Spring 2013

University Honors Program Students and Staff

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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 at 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, families, friends and students who convened 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. A 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 and to become engaged learners.

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 knowing and an openness to intellectual discussion and challenge.

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 experiences, and co-curricular experiences.

HONORS @ Georgia Southern

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Honors Program Year Round

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Honors in Action

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).

(40) 30 Years of Honors

Connect with the University Honors Program on Facebook to keep up with news and events about the Honors Program throughout the year.

Facebook.com/GaSouHonors

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33 Honors in Action

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To learn more about the University Honors Program, visit our website:

georgiasouthern.edu/honors

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

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 Collegiate 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 Plain 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 ecology 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 an 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.”

**Beth Martin**

**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.**

### Methods

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### Results

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Joshua Bloodworth's thesis research focused on the evolution of the pitcher plant mosquito, specifically "looking at the potential effects of climate change as a selection pressure favoring evolutionary change," he said.

According to Bloodworth, the earth has seen a variety of results from recent climate changes. There has been an increase in temperatures, longer summers, an average decrease in rainfall, and an increased observation of blood-feeding in the pitcher plant mosquito, *Wyeomyia smithii*. Bloodworth extensively investigated population genetics in *Wyeomyia smithii*. Bloodworth traveled to three separate populations in North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia to collect larvae. He ran an isozyme analysis for a specific enzyme, Isocitrate Dehydrogenase, that is required for *Wyeomyia* to perform the Krebs Cycle. Based on allelic frequencies, Bloodworth determined the extent of genetic variability existing in the population and among different populations. This research helps qualify the risk of extinction in the insect populations.

His mentor, Dr. William Irby, described Bloodworth's work on this project as "a different way of becoming educated. It allows students to learn in ways that are more memorable and permanent." 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.

Most students just don’t have the time to conduct multiple interviews." Because Vadera wanted to interview several subject groups, she devoted an extensive amount of time to her efforts, working for two and a half years. Vadera worked with Dr. Williams-Johnson in developing the project’s research methodology, specifically to strategically structure interview questions. The education professor helped Vadera identify which methods could be used to most effectively find the information she needed. “It’s amazing to see students find the information she needed. It allows students to learn in ways that are more memorable and permanent.” 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.

"I’d like to include jobs schools and compare data between them," she said. "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."

Vadera 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.
Ashton Green

By HEMCHAND GOSSAI

Dr. Hemchand Gossai to promote “Southern Sustainability.” Georgia Southern’s campus in an effort students’ thoughts on best practices for sustainibility led her to study the issue and Christina Beslin. Beslin’s passion for trash they have made. Waste has an twenty-four hour time period, they of waste they accumulated throughout accurately be considered an emotion. Which senior Ashton Green suggests might struggle to define definitively and one term meaning to “thoroughly hand over.” It is a term many scholars field on betrayal as an emotion, she began previous work in the philosophical important theme—Plato’s works as well was the play Dirty Hands by Jean-Paul Sartre became key textual components in ancient philosophy, the humanities to sciences and engineering,” Dr. Maldonado said. “It is not only very responsible, mature and hardworking, but also extremely curious, intelligent, and an avid reader. Efad’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 Efad to study, learn, and perform undergraduate research.”

Efadul Huq

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 specimens 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 alumnus 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 19,169 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. “If you ask 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 responsible, mature and hardworking, but also extremely curious, intelligent, and an avid reader. Efad’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 Efad to study, learn, and perform undergraduate research.”
When senior pre-medicine 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. The color out for graduate school interviews, he casually mentions that he is growing the color out for graduate school interviews.

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. For research hiring best practices and evaluating the financial cost for hiring the_chance to meet Dr. Michael McDonald, said McDonald helped to “fill in the blanks.” Gregg Vickers’ research, however, has prepared him for a career in accounting and management; he is fully prepared to take the Certified Public Accountant exam and continue his academic career at the University of Mississippi to earn a Master’s degree in Taxation this fall. Upon entering Georgia Southern, Vickers took a Dance Crystals Scholarship from the College of Business Administration. This award is given to freshmen based on academic record, relevant extracurricular activities, and potential for success. Beyond the scholarship money, the award gave Vickers the chance to meet Dr. Michael McDonald, who has been extremely influential in the title. Gregg Vickers’ research, however, has prepared him for a career in accounting and management; he is fully prepared to take the Certified Public Accountant exam and continue his academic career at the University of Mississippi to earn a Master’s degree in Taxation this fall. Upon entering Georgia Southern, Vickers took a Dance Crystals Scholarship from the College of Business Administration. This award is given to freshmen based on academic record, relevant extracurricular activities, and potential for success. Beyond the scholarship money, the award gave Vickers the chance to meet Dr. Michael McDonald, who has been extremely influential.

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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.

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 help people who she is going to work with” said Dr. Wolfe. She 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.

As an intern, Curry will have the opportunity to help build foundations within their region of study.”

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 said, “Even the dye recipes online are never right. Everyone keeps secrets.” Serlin shared it was a time consuming process that needed to be repeated over and over.

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

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 spending 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.
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. L. Shannon Davis. "It provided insights into what working in my field over a long period of time can be like, because no one has ever done what you could never learn in the classroom," 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. Every student, 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 to do once their time at GSU is over." Through her research, Pressley has had the opportunity to share her project's findings with at three different American Chemical Society conferences. Her time in the lab also helped the senior chemistry major gain a Research experiences 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." - Laura Smith

Denmark is often cited as having the happiest population in the world. This status intrigued nursing major Anna McGaughey when she travelled to Denmark on a semester-long study abroad trip. During her time in Denmark, she noticed the preventative healthcare programs and admired the measures taken to educate patients. McGaughey believes it is important for patients who are faced with chronic diseases to be knowledgeable of the disease in order to live a healthy lifestyle and effectively battle the symptoms of the disease. For a year and a half, McGaughey has been working to increase patients educational awareness of diabetes in the Bullock County area. McGaughey became passionate about educating patients about diabetes after learning of the lack of patient diabetes education in the region through nursing clinical trials and receiving information from volunteers at local clinics. However, instead of providing a typical classroom session to teach patients about diabetes, McGaughey is working to create a video that uses both visual and auditory techniques to deliver the message about the effects of diabetes. McGaughey will work to place the video into local waiting rooms of area hospitals and clinics. McGaughey said that hospitals and clinics will be able to "play [the video] in their waiting rooms or they can hand it out to patients," in order to promote a mass education program that can be spread to both the patients and their family and friends. McGaughey credits her 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. - Yontaria Ryan

Christina Belge
Public Relations

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

Politics often accuse opposing sides of resorting to “rhetoric” during their debates, but the way an issue is framed has always been about semantics. Christina Belge has found herself in the middle of framing issues whether as a member of the Student Government Association or as a proponent behind the recently approved Green Fee. Now Belge has written about the framing of issues in policy making for her thesis. “My project is all about how a problem is framed and how it is put on the agenda,” Belge said. Belge studied in-depth environmental public policies and the importance of language in discourse. She discovered that if the language of a piece makes the topic seem unapproachable or unrelated, it will never get addressed. If it’s labeled a tax instead of a fee, people will reject it even if it is for a good cause,” Belge said. “Christina is a bright young woman with a deep interest in environmental justice. She has taken the time to educate herself in semantics and policy alternatives,” Dr. Kevin Ward said. Belge’s research grew out of her interests and actions in environmental issues. While at Georgia Southern, she has been president of Student Government Association for a Green Earth and a member of the Student Government Association. She also travelled to Botswana and Thailand for study abroad trips, sponsored partially by the University Honors Program. While she loved being overseas, the explorations helped her reaffirm her desire for a career working in American policy. Following graduation, Belge will serve as an AmeriCorps volunteer in Knoxville, Tennessee, working with the city’s Community Development office on sustainability issues. “I’m really happy with what I’ve done. I’ve had the ability to work with great professors on topics close to my heart,” Belge said. Belge credits the University Honors Program with giving her invaluable relationships and helping set herself apart from other students. She said the ability to work with a mentor gave her a new focus on structure for her capstone project. A thesis can aid in writing, research design, developing an argument, and thinking critically,” said Ward. “Every undergraduate student should do one.” Christina offered advice for future GSU students: “You are never stuck in a box. Go with the challenges you’ll face.” - Sarah Bassler
Devin Cifu
English Depictions of Hell in Literature: And Why 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 student, I can’t say I expected to enjoy reading anything that was required, but

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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 Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*. 

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Cifu was excited to go home and re-read *Inferno* and other works in future research. “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. Through her research, Cifu came to understand that the underworld in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil’s *Aeneid* is a place of punishment. She also saw how the idea of after-death retribution became more pronounced in Virgil’s writings. As he was heavily influenced by Virgil, Dante incorporated the concept of an underworld as punishment for misdeeds into his writing. After Dante, the vision of Hell in literature became much more frightening than before, with the idea of punishment for sins taking on a heightened prevalence.

Cifu worked closely on her research with Dr. Hemchand Gossai, who encouraged her to study *Inferno* because it was her passion. He also suggested she might consider *Inferno* in a historical context to examine its broad impacts on literature. Dr. Gossai also critically reviewed drafts of Cifu’s work, spending copious amounts of time with Cifu on the editing process to produce a flawless paper.

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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 Georgia Southern spirit into both his coursework and his research. “I chose sport management as my major because I absolutely love sports, that’s simple,” Onks said. “It’s 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, and monitored throughout the school 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.

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Capitalize on the dream of every young boy after a good rainstorm, Elijah O’Cain’s research keeps the biology major traipsing 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.

“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 on the project, O’Cain plans to remain at Georgia Southern to pursue a Master of Arts in Teaching. The graduating senior also has definite plans to incorporate Dante’s work in future research. “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.

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Leader, she contacted Dr. Rose Mary Gee, of more extensive research. Following also discovered that it was an area in want of laughing as an alternative therapy, but been completed concerning the effectiveness Fite later learned that studies have topic encouraged her to pursue the project. As “laughing therapy,” her interest in the year at Georgia Southern. While she first considered the topic of use of humor in the nursing field. specifically yearned to more fully understand phenomenon. As a nursing major, Fite own love of laughter sparked her interest in information technology classes. 

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 multiuser 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.

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 nurses’ 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 nursing professor 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. This was apparent to the student as she examined, 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 solve, maneuver 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 Humor and Laughter. 

"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 technology information classes.

"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. Dept. of Theatre at Georgia Southern to be involved in stage management, 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."

"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. 

Dr. S. Camille Broadway

The Use of Twitter in Sports Journalism Sourcing

Danielle Smith

Homosexual Community in Defining Society

Angelika Foucher

International Studies

Every day, new technological advances change the world a little bit more—especially in the way information is moved. Senior journalism student Natalie Demarko is endeavoring to understand the amount and effects of this information and has turned her focus to the use of Twitter in reporting.

"I was watching 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 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.

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.

Demarko is planning to incorporate her capstone work in future graduate studies. "I feel like I am ahead of many others," Demarko said. "The breadth and depth of the capstone project is excellent preparation for graduate school. Not only will this make Natalie more attractive to schools, but it will put her ahead of other students inside the program because she will be used to the research aspect already," Broadway said.

In the fall, Demarko will begin her time at Ball State University in the public relations graduate program. Journalism is a crazy profession but it is so much fun, I can’t wait to see its future," she said.

Laura Smith

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 Richardia spp. and ant species brachymyrmex patagonicus, both native to South America. Corbin also implemented a control environment consisting of both Richardia 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 Corbin, the research experience will be beneficial as she pursues her future goals, as she gained much more than language and cultural knowledge.

"Through her research, she’s clearly proven the ability to think analytically about complex theories and subjects, work independently, communicate with diverse groups, and see a long-term project through from beginning to end," Smith said. "These are invaluable skills that employers can’t teach, but are certainly highly valued in any workforce setting."

Corbin’s time in France studying the language, culture, and people helped her decide to continue working with the French people. She has applied to teach English in France, and hopes to pursue a Master’s degree at the University of Nantes, where she studied for a semester during her undergraduate program because she will be used to the language, culture, and people helped her decide to continue working with the French people.

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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.

When asked how his research and his time in the Honors Program will influence his career in the medical field, Corbin said, “I feel that my research experience through the Honors Program better equipped me for my future in medical practice. Having a basis to start with this project has given me the necessary tools to pursue medical research in the future.”

Emily Dadd

Bradley Corbin

Biology

Undergraduate Research

Imagine Species Interactions in New Environments: Richenda spp. (Rovers or rover ants) Possible Symbiotic Relationship in North America

Dr. Alan Harvey

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Emily Dadd
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. When rubberized asphalt 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.”

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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. When rubberized asphalt 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.”

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Amy Bryan

An Elemental Exploration of the Ceramic Arts

Jeff Schmuki

The Empty Bowl Project puts the ceramic arts into action. Students in the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art create beautiful pottery bowls to fill with delicious food and sell at events to raise money for the local Statesboro Food Bank. Amy Bryan has put her passion for ceramics to work with 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 the glazes that make each piece unique.

Bryan experiments with glazes using periodic elements to find new and interesting pottery glaze colors in her capstone project entitled, “Elemental Exploration of Ceramic Arts.” “Some elements can change color, 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. It’s about expanding my color palette,” Bryan explained.

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Anni Rainio
Graduating Early in Environmental Themed Advertisements in Retail Advertising
Dr. Trey Denton

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

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 environmental practice. It is a combination that highlights her passion for the environment and builds on her fascination with the environmental practice. It is a combination that she hopes to pursue in her future after college.

Dr. Trey Denton explains even further: “this project looks at how much emphasis is put on using environmental themes in their advertising in good economic times and bad. In other words, is corporate environmental concern only present when economic times are good? Is there a focus on the environment seen as a frivolous expense when times are tough?”

Even after Rainio graduates, Dr. Denton and Dr. Lindsey plan to continue the project and hope to publish a report on it. For Rainio, her future includes becoming an executive team leader at Target. Because of her passion for the environment, Rainio hopes to assist Target in expanding their sustainability plan.

Throughout the undergraduate experience, students are bombarded with study abroad brochures filled with images of exotic places and tiny imprints of foreign languages. However, students are not always aware of the positive effects of research abroad. Dr. Jamie Scalera said, “The office of student leadership and civic engagement has created an opportunity to do research on how people perceive interracial relationships, and the views people have on the subject. Being a part of an interracial family himself, this has been a close subject for him. His capstone project gave him the perfect opportunity to conduct research on how people perceive interracial relationships, and where those viewpoints come from.”

Hughes met his mentor, Dr. Sun-A Lee and Dr. Van Tassell. When Hughes presented his capstone project. He also found the research process itself a tremendous learning opportunity. “This project is not like anything I have ever worked on before, and it is one of the biggest challenges I have faced as an undergraduate.” Hughes said. “I have enjoyed the collaboration process with Dr. Lee and meeting every other week with my other adviser, Dr. Van Tassell. When I feared I would fall off, they have kept me on track and offered good counsel.”

Neatus Anton Hughes
International Studies and Spanish
Complementary Colors: Perceptions of College Students Towards Interracial Dating
Dr. Sun-A Lee and Dr. Darin Van Tassell

Anton Hughes has always been fascinated with the relationship dynamic of interracial dating, and the views people have on the subject. Being a part of an interracial family himself, this has been a close subject for him. His capstone project gave him the perfect opportunity to conduct research on how people perceive interracial relationships, and where those viewpoints come from.

Hughes found that an individual’s perception of interracial couples was based largely on where they had grown up. There was a correlation that participants who had grown up in urban and suburban areas were more accepting of various relationship dynamics than students who were raised in rural settings. He also found that participants believed that their parents would not be supportive if they were in an interracial relationship, though the participants themselves were open to the relationships, showing the change in generational viewpoints over time.

The findings were not the only rewarding part of Hughes’s experience with his capstone project. He also found the research process itself a tremendous learning opportunity. “This project is not like anything I have ever worked on before, and it is one of the biggest challenges I have faced as an undergraduate.” Hughes said. “I have enjoyed the collaboration process with Dr. Lee and meeting every other week with my other adviser, Dr. Van Tassell. When I feared I would fall off, they have kept me on track and offered good counsel.”

Hughes met his mentor, Dr. Sun-A Lee, when he was first proposing and developing his thesis at the Phi Kappa Phi Conference on campus in spring of 2012. Hughes and Dr. Lee hope to get his work published in an academic journal in the near future since his research adds a new perspective to the topic and studies that have been done on interracial relationships.

After his experience with his study, Hughes hopes that his future after college will benefit from what he has learned. “Gauging how students on this campus view ocean lifeline relationships, and the views people have on the subject. Being a part of an interracial family himself, this has been a close subject for him. His capstone project gave him the perfect opportunity to conduct research on how people perceive interracial relationships, and where those viewpoints come from.”

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Dunn was deeply inspired by a class during her Capstone research inspired the application of theory in real classrooms. Luther Boyd-Buchanan School in Chattanooga, Tennessee. After graduation Dunn will begin her time as a mathematics teacher at Boyd-Buchanan School in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

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 capable 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 and has had her research in 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.”

Beth Martin

Janessa Dunn

Chemistry

Analogies in Organic Chemistry courses" 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 Shanon Hines, Dr. Shainaz Landge, and Nazim Ali.

Dunn received support from the Honors Undergraduate Research Fund, as well as financial 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.

David Greenberg

Psychological Science

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

People often moan about how American school children are falling behind the rest of the developed world when it comes to mathematics scores. Senior Rachel Dunn aims to develop and implement teaching styles that will encourage strong mathematical performance in American classrooms.

Dunn conducted her capstone research at a local elementary school in the last weeks before summer vacation. She started by using mathematical manipulatives—physical objects such as pizzas and candy bars meant to represent abstract mathematical concepts such as fractions.

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 teaching fractions but also the main fraction line is her time as a mathematics teacher at Boyd-Buchanan School in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Beth Martin
Anna-Marie Thompson
Management and Marketing
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 of the concept of business. Marketing would allow me to be creative and know 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 item 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 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 down the road.

Genevieve 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

Each year thousands of undergraduate students submit admissions applications to Physical Therapy (P.T.) Doctoral Programs, but never is an application sent without uncertainty. Questions swirl through students’ mind as they worry: What will the admissions offices think of the application? Did I volunteer enough? Is my grade point average high enough? Exercise science major Genevieve Lyke was determined to answer these questions once and for all.

Lyke interviewed ten Physical Therapy Doctoral Program Admission Officers from public universities across the country in order to conclude the characteristics of optimal candidates for P.T. programs. She believes that this project “will help me comprehend what admissions officers look for. I also think that the analysis will aid other students when filling out their applications.”

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.

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.

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

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 as open source. With the code publicly available Kotut says that “it can be easily modified to custom fit any group of CPS to a better gauge of efficiency of these algorithms can be determined.”

Since graduating Kotut has worked full time as a web developer with the marketing department at Georgia Southern while she continues to fine tune her algorithm. In the fall the GSU grad will begin study at Virginia Tech’s Computer Science graduate program.

Sea turtle conservation is something that has always been close to heart for Georgia Southern senior Michael Samiratedu. His father was one of the very first sea turtle interns while satisfying his intellectual curiosity. He was able to conduct research and work on this project during a couple of the summer breaks.

He monitored the thermal environment of loggerhead sea turtle nests in various sites located on St. Catherine’s Island, Georgia. His study included analysis of original and relocated sites as well as a control site. He used HOBO Pro V2 data loggers that were placed at the bottom, top, middle, and sides of the sites’ egg chambers. The data collected by the loggers helped determine the change of the temperature of the egg chamber over the course of the incubation process that typically lasted fifty to sixty days.

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speaking to himself in third person. As I Lay Dying Faulkner’s character Darl Bundren in experiencing hallucinations to having progression of schizophrenia in McGee also studied the characteristics of Jason Compson III. In Faulkner’s Fury, 1990’s, but Faulkner was writing about the mind,” McGee said. “For instance, the character’s point of view by presenting written in the stream of consciousness each of the three novels was their thoughts and feelings as they occur. Each of the 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 1990’s, 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 treatment of his family first led McGee to identify Compson as a psychopath.

Interestingly, it appears that McGee is the first scholar to suggest this identification 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 experiencing hallucinations to having a complete psychotic breakdown, speaking to himself in third person.

In addition, McGee researched the portrayal of schizophrenia in Woolf’s character Septimus Warren Smith in Mrs. Dalloway. A World War I veteran who suffers from “shell shock,” Smith often mixes up his hallucinations with literature, and after being forcibly committed to mental “check-ups,” he commits suicide. As Woolf has been thought to be a victim of schizophrenia herself, McGee found Smith’s mental disorder particularly illuminating as he researched the impact that Woolf’s disease had on her portrayal of Smith. 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 worked with Dr. Hemchand Gossai to discuss interpretations of the novels and practical research and writing strategies.

“Mc Gee’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 literature with psychoanalysis. His research could become a platform for something more expansive.”

Kurt McGee

Kurt 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 As I Lay Dying and in 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.

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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 schedule 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
- 7,225 Hours of Service and Leadership
- 144 Faculty Teaching Honors Courses or Mentoring Honors Students

Honors Students by Academic College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic College</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts and Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science and Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Human Sciences</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Studies</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undeclared</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 Freshman Retention Rates

- Fall 2005: 90%
- Fall 2006: 90%
- Fall 2007: 90%
- Fall 2008: 94%
- Fall 2009: 91%
- Fall 2010: 91%
- Fall 2011: 92%
- Fall 2012: 91%
- Fall 2013: 90%

Program Applicants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
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<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>762</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>801</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2013 Incoming Freshman Class Projections

- 117 New Freshmen
- 104 Georgia Residents (89%)
- 7 States Represented
- 1,254 Average SAT
- 28.1 Average ACT
- 3.74 Average GPA (unweighted)
University Honors Program Alumna
Melanie Barron (UHP, Geography, 2010) is working on a Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Christina Larson (UHP, Accounting and Information Systems, 2010) is an accountant with Dabb’s, 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 Hearts and Hands Clinic in Statesboro, Georgia.

Rachel Rozier (UHP, Political Science, 2011) is attending the Walter F. George School of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.

Mary Wallace (UHP, Child and Family Development, 2011) is a Child Life Council-certified child life specialist at Hoops Family Children’s Hospital at Cabell Huntington Hospital in Huntington, West Virginia.

Ashley Boyer (UHP, International Studies, 2012) is currently serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Colombia.

2010s

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

Cassie Dierolf (UHP, International Studies, 2012) has been accepted (with funding) to University of Southern 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.

Alumni Updates
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.

You can invest in the outstanding students of the University Honors Program by visiting our website and clicking “Invest in Honors.”

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.

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.

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

gi.southern.edu/honors