2006 for 2006
Raising Funds for College of Education Scholarships

In Fall 2003, the College of Education’s Alumni Advisory Committee was considering various types of fund raising projects it could undertake to support the College and its activities. Victoria Zwald, then coordinator for media, public relations & development and serving as the Dean’s liaison to the alumni committee, suggested that commemorative bricks be sold to raise scholarship funds. That suggestion could not have come at a better time, because the University’s office of Physical Plant was needing to develop a small piece of land between the College of Education classroom building and the new College of Information Technology Building.

The two projects fit together perfectly. Chuck Taylor, Georgia Southern’s landscape architect and two-time merit award winner from the American Society of Landscape Architects, designed what would become Centennial Plaza and Memorial Grove. Construction of the plaza and grove began in September 2004, and by November the plaza was complete with trees, paths, and benches.

The sale of engraved commemorative bricks is now underway. The goal is to sell 2006 commemorative bricks by the year 2006, the University’s and the College of Education’s centennial year. 2006 bricks will fill the wedges in the center of the plaza.

The individual purchasing a brick determines the words to be engraved on his/her brick. In addition to a 4” x 8” engraved brick installed in the plaza, purchasers will receive a mini replica to keep as a memento. All brick purchases at $100 per brick, are 100% tax deductible. Commemorative bricks make great gifts for alumni, favorite teachers, an individual who has made a difference in your life, and loved ones including children and grandchildren. The possibilities are endless!

Another opportunity to honor a group or individual is the naming of one of the ten benches that sit in the plaza. A donation of $1000 or more is required for naming a bench. All funds for brick sales and donations for the naming of a bench go to the Georgia Southern University Foundation and will support College of Education undergraduate and graduate scholarships.

We hope you will help us reach 2006 for 2006. Information and order forms for this project are available online. See http://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/brickcampaign.html

PSC Awards Presented to Georgia Southern

At its 04/05 National Board Conference at Jekyll Island on November 13, 2004, the Professional Standards Commission recognized Georgia Southern’s work to promote and facilitate teachers seeking national certification through Georgia’s National Board Certified Teacher Program. Dean Cindi Chance was presented with the "Strategic Initiative Partnerships Award of Excellence" and Associate Dean Jennie Rakestraw received the "Exemplary Higher Education Pre-Candidate Support Provider, High Honor" award. National Board Certified Teachers who have served as facilitators for the College of Education’s PSC-approved pre-candidate courses are Pam Barnett, Kristi Randall, Susan Proctor, and Charlotte Wynn. During the past three years, 245 teachers have completed pre-candidate courses at Georgia Southern. The next course begins March 5. For details, see “The Knowledgeable Teacher” link at http://coe.georgiasouthern.edu.

Pictured (l-r) with the awards are Cindi Chance, Pam Barnett, Kristi Randall, and Jennie Rakestraw.
Salute the Past:

What are your fondest memories of your experiences at Georgia Southern University—community bathrooms, dorm curfews, beansie, the Carroll Building, tailgating, popcorn poppers, freshmen 10, sorority/fraternity parties and competitions, pizzas by the dozens, Marvin Pittman Lab School, and on and on and on? These words likely conjured up even lighter memories. We won’t go there. However, do think about the more serious side of your days at Southern. Focus on the faculty member who encouraged you when you were ready to go home—when you wondered, “Why did I ever think I wanted to teach anyway?” Remember when you said a quiet “thank you” so that Southern faculty who pushed you beyond your self-expectations to make sure you were ready for the first year of teaching, or to complete that dissertation, or to finish the program as a ‘working full time night-fighter.’ Some 3000+ currently enrolled students chose Georgia Southern for this reason—strong, committed expert faculty.

Capture the Present:

Your diploma from Georgia Southern is growing in value every year as we move toward national and international academic distinction. Our faculty and staff lead the way in nationally distinct programs in schools and educational service areas. We have opened the Georgia Center for Educational Renewal—a center focused on providing services to schools as we all struggle to raise education standards in Georgia. We host the nation’s largest Youth-at-Risk Conference each spring, bringing not only outstanding national speakers, but also faculty and administrators from ‘High Flying Schools’—schools with large numbers of low-socioeconomic students, English as a second language students, and other predictors of failure, yet the school test scores are in the top percentiles. These successful schools have beaten the odds. Their leaders are available for several days to share their success strategies with area teachers and school leaders. Georgia Southern, in partnership with Screven County Schools, has the first Professional Development District in the United States. This PDD focuses on systemic change and renewal. Other achievements can be viewed on the COE webpage at http://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/partnerships.html.

Ignite the Future:

These and many other accomplishments have positioned the College of Education to reach farther and aspire to even greater goals. The University has announced its Campaign for National Distinction. You can participate in the campaign and at the same time leave your mark. Commemorative bricks make great gifts and will support students through the College of Education’s undergraduate and graduate scholarships. Visit our website at http://coe.georgiasouthern.edu or call (912) 681-0671 for more information and an order form. Other opportunities for gifts for the College are available. This is an opportunity for you to enhance the value of your diploma even further.

I look forward to seeing and meeting each of you at alumni events, homecoming, or athletic events. Please introduce yourself to me. I am also available to speak to civic groups. I will be pleased to visit your area and share how Georgia Southern’s College of Education is becoming a leader in education in Georgia, the nation and the world.

Are You a 2003-2004 or 2004-2005 Graduate?

The College of Education will hold an Induction Drive-In Conference on Saturday, April 23, 2005, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All Fall 2003—Fall 2004 graduates from our teaching, educational leadership, counseling, and school psychology programs are encouraged to attend this one-day conference. Also, students expecting to graduate in Spring 2005 are welcome to attend. Program topics are based on results of a recent survey of COE graduates. Sessions will focus on successfully transitioning to the Georgia Performance Standards, customizing instruction for every student, using concept maps for science and math from kindergarten through 12th grade, behavior management, and other topics identified by specific program areas. This is the first of what we hope will become regular induction events in support of graduates.

To register, call Jessica Warnock in the Office of Undergraduate Teacher Education (912-681-5247).

Students Receive Scholarships

Our Georgia Southern University students received 2004 PAGE Foundation scholarships of $1000 each. They are: Georgette (Gigi) Mills, Ed.S. student in Teaching and Learning and 4th grade teacher at Screven County Elementary School; Advis Dell Wilkerson, Ed.D. student in Curriculum Studies and business education teacher at Creekside High School in Fulton County; Jenny Nell Tyre, pursuing a B.S.Ed. in Family and Consumer Sciences Education; and Anna Frances Griffin, pursuing a B.S.Ed. in Early Childhood Education. Information about this scholarship program is available at http://www.pagefoundation.org.

Students from Islands Elementary School visited Southern’s Art Extravaganza exhibit on January 13, 2005. Several of the fifth-grade student artists had Story Teller Dolls on display in the exhibit.

Artwork created by student artists in other regional public schools is on display through August in the hallway gallery on the second floor of the College of Education Classroom Building. The exhibit is open to the public Monday through Saturday weekly.

On October 11, 2004, COE faculty and staff, university students, and friends and relations of Miss Ollie Mae Jernigan gathered for the dedication of the Jernigan Children’s Literature Collection. Housed in the COE Instructional Resources Center, the collection was bequested to the College through a $60,000 endowment from Miss Jernigan. At the dedication, both Mr. and Mrs. Kemp Mahry gave remarks. Dr. Julian Ward sang, and Dr. Mary Sue Smith presented information from her research regarding rural boarding school teachers in the 1930s and 1940s, one of whom was Miss Jernigan.

A reception honoring recent retirees (l-r) Dixie Aubrey, Betty-Ware Wray, Elizabeth Brannen and Fred Page was held on January 26, 2005. Ms. Aubrey served 13 years in the Student Success Center (formerly named Education Advisement Center); Ms. Wray served 20 years in various capacities including Certification Coordinator and director of the Student Success Center; Ms. Brannen retired after 17 years in the office of Undergraduate Teacher Education working with student teacher placements; and after 33 years, Dr. Page retired as Professor of Educational Leadership. During his tenure, he had also served as the college’s Associate Dean for External Relations.

Dr. Cindi Chance, Dr. Jenny Nell Tyre, and Dr. Georgee (Gigi) Mills are the new deans and others along the way a ride.
COE Soaring Into Action

Unit News

T he 16th Annual National Youth-at-Risk Conference will take place on March 6-9, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Savannah. The theme of the conference is “Successful Programs for Empowering Youth: Overcoming Poverty, Violence, and Failure.” Two departmental faculty members, Dr. Dan Rea and Dr. Rosemarie Scalwith Clark, are conference co-chairs.

The Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading (CFR) is linking the disciplines represented in the department through the theme, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. This pedagogy is based on principles reflected in the COE conceptual framework and is the focus of CFR’s contribution to Georgia Southern’s goal of national distinction. Among many efforts toward this end, CFR faculty members have:

- Instructed students in best practices for example, literacy instruction in culturally diverse classroom settings);
- Included multicultural components in the content of pre-service and graduate courses;
- Developed specific courses aimed at fostering multicultural theory and practice;
- Mentored graduate students (for example, 16 students will present their programs of research at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, in a symposium entitled “Developing Culturally Relevant Inquiries to Study the Life in Schools, Families, and Communities in Georgia”);
- Conceptualized cultural contexts (for example, faculty have contributed to leading edge texts and journal articles on multicultural education, curriculum studies, popular culture, multiple contexts of literacy, narrative research in multicultural education, and community-school connections);
- Conducted research on teaching and learning in diverse instructional settings;
- Collaborated with educators of China, Mexico, Russia, and the UK through the International Learning Community; and
- Directed the Center for the Study of International Schooling.

At the invitation of Rosalynn Carter, Dr. Sandra Murray Nettles, Department Chair, attended the 20th anniversary of the Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy at The Carter Center in Atlanta on November 9 & 10, 2004. The symposium’s theme was “Transforming Children’s Mental Health in Light of the President’s New Freedom Commission.”

Mrs. Carter has Dr. Nettles’ book Crazy Visitation: A Chronicle of Illness and Recovery, published by The University of Georgia Press.

Unit News

T he Department of Teaching and Learning has been involved in partnerships with a number of area schools. Listed below are a few of these initiatives that reflect faculty commitment to student learning in the P-12 schools.

Dr. Missy Bennett, along with Dr. Jeffrey Orvis from the Department of Chemistry, is involved in a PRISM mini-grant at Southeast Bulloch High School. This collaborative involves the creation of a Learning Community composed of in-service and pre-service teachers for the purpose of identifying effective teaching strategies for the science classroom.

Dr. Greg Chamblee continues to work with the NSER Project. He also was elected to the national School Science and Mathematics Board of Directors. In addition, he and Dr. Marti Schriver are being funded for a Georgia Math-Science partnership with the Heart of Georgia RESA—a three-year grant.

Dr. Scott Beck and Dr. Kim Ruebel will be offering courses leading to the ESOL Endorsement—this summer as a result of its success last summer.

Dr. Diana Hammittre, Dr. Maggie LaMontrage, and Ms. Betty Nelson will be offering an education course this summer in Swainsboro as part of their efforts to provide outreach programs for paraprofessionals who will be working with special needs children.

Dr. Susan Timblin was accepted into the Middle School Journal entitled “Phases of Development in Teachers Using Data.” She co-authored the article with two teachers from Camden County Schools. One of the co-authors is a graduate from our Ed.S. program at Georgia Southern—Anne Gay.

A highlight of this spring is that over twenty-five undergraduate middle grades majors conducted presentations at the recent Georgia Middle School Conference in Savannah. A special recognition goes to the middle grades faculty for their efforts in organizing and sponsoring this event.

Dr. Kim Ruebel organized and received approval to begin a College Middle Level Association (CMLA) affiliated with the National Middle School Association. Our chapter is one of few in the country to promote professional growth and opportunities for education majors in middle grades education. A special thanks goes to our middle grades majors John Paul Hearn, Meredith Walker, Jennifer McClain, and Tina Clements—this year’s officers of our CMLA chapter.

Faculty in this department continue to devote their time to initiatives that recognize the need to serve as leaders in the state to ensure that all P-12 students receive the best instruction possible.

Office of Undergraduate Teacher Education

T he Office of Undergraduate Teacher Education is heavily involved in the activities of the International Learning Community this year. We have been fortunate to have existing participation by several faculty members in a variety of international exchanges.

In October, we hosted a group of nine UK visitors—three headteachers of primary schools in East London, each accompanied by two teachers from their school. They were conducting research on our mentoring of new teachers to help them reflect on their own teacher training model. Their interviewees included Clinical Supervisors (the teachers who host our students in a school), University Supervisors, and Georgia Southern Pre-service Teachers at Claxton Elementary-Screven County Elementary, Lyons Primary, and Julia P. Bryant Elementary schools.

In February, we hosted a group of four teachers from Hayfield School in Doncaster, England. They researched our training programs and partnerships with secondary and middle grades schools, spending the entire first week with Southeast Bulloch High families and in the school. In their second week, they visited Mercer Middle in Savannah and South Effingham Middle to develop the contrast in our middle and high school communities, school organizations not found in England. Hayfield School has students 11 to 18 all in one school, although teachers tend to work with only younger (11-14) or older (14-18) students in their daily teaching. The school has special recognition for their achievements as a math specialist school.

In March, Wendy Biskier from Depot Green School in London (which serves 11 to 18 year-olds) is here with her second group of five teachers—a group that will be participating in the 20th anniversary of the National Youth-At-Risk Conference in Savannah. After the conference, they spend four days between Screven County Middle and Screven County High. A group from Screven County will return the favor in June when they travel to England to visit several upper schools, including both Depot Green and Hayfield.

From February 18, 2005, five Georgia Southern student teachers are in London for our largest yet International Study Opportunity (ISO). The four early childhood majors are being hosted in the schools of our October visitors—Edinburgh Primary, Downsell Primary, and St. Joseph’s Junior. The fifth student teacher—an English secondary major—will be hosted at Depot Green. The International Study Opportunity has been available for the last three spring semesters, but starting Fall 2005, the opportunity is available to all student teachers in both fall and spring semesters. Each semester, ISO student teachers will be hosted in a different United Kingdom city.

Georgia Southern University is paired with four United Kingdom universities and their partner schools, for teacher research exchanges and ISO experiences. Four more UK universities (two in Ireland) have asked to join the International Learning Community, in which Georgia Southern is the only United States university. These developing partnerships offer our faculty members, students, and partner schools unique opportunities for professional development through cross-cultural reflection on educational practices.

Student Success Center

T he Student Success Center has only one way to describe our report this issue–TRANSITION! The founding coordinator, Dixie Avery, retired on December 31, 2004. Dixie founded the Education Advisement Center approximately 15 years ago and has watched many changes and challenges occur. We also had our most recent coordinator, Betty-Ware Wray, retire on September 30, 2004. Many of you remember Betty-Ware as the “certification lady.” She too saw our center grow and change. Christina Thompson has been named as the new Director of the Student Success Center and Certification Officer. We are moving toward hiring two new academic advisors. There is never a dull moment in our day-to-day operations and the challenge of meeting all of our students’ needs keeps us working hard.

“We the People” Summer Institute

M ore than 26 million students and 82,000 teachers have participated in the We the People program since its inception in 1987. Between May 28 and June 4, 2005, Georgia Southern University will host its first We the People summer institute for tertiary elementary, middle, and secondary teachers.

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution is an educational program developed by the Center for Civic Education. The program instructs students on the history and principles of American constitutional democracy, with the primary goal of promoting civic competence and responsibility among the nation’s elementary, middle, and secondary students. Additionally, the program is intended to enhance students’ understanding of the institutions of American constitutional democracy and reinforce the contemporary relevance of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The program utilizes highly acclaimed curricular materials developed by the center. The culminating activity is a simulated congressional hearing in which students role-play and testify before a panel of judges, thereby demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles. Students evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant historical and contemporary issues.

For additional information contact Dr. Robert Stevens at robsteve@georgiasouthern.edu.
I n December 2004, a Wall Street Journal headline stated: “Influx of Hispanics in South Creates School Crisis.” Nowhere in the Southeast is the challenge of the new and rapidly growing Latino student population more apparent than in Georgia. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, during the 1990s, Georgia’s Hispanic population grew by 300%—and since 2000, Georgia has been host to the fastest growing Latino population in the entire nation. In fact, the second most popular radio station in Atlanta is now a Spanish language station. Drawn by our growing economy and Georgia employers’ need for industrious workers, Hispanics—especially Mexican-heritage Latinos—have resettled here and brought their children to our public schools. However, without a history of immigration or an established pool of bilingual professionals, Georgia’s schools have struggled to meet the needs of their newest students.

In response to this situation, Georgia Southern’s College of Education has begun an initiative, the Veracruz Teacher Project, to bring bilingual and bicultural expertise from Mexico to Southeast Georgia to help in our local schools and in the education of teachers on campus.

The history of this project began a couple of years ago when a collaboration between Georgia Southern and Universidad Veracruzana in Xalapa, Mexico led to a conversation between Dean Cindi Chance, Nancy Shumaker (Director of Georgia Southern's International Studies Center), and the Rector of Universidad Veracruzana about the possibility of exchanging students, faculty and teachers to meet the needs of universities and schools on both sides of the border. Associate Dean Jennie Rakestraw, Julia P. Bryant Elementary School Principal Kelly Tharp, and Assistant Professor Scott Beck were charged with the task of making this vision a reality. With the support of the University of Veracruz's School for Foreign Students, the Veracruz State Ministry of Education, the Georgia Southern University Graduate School, Statesboro's Rotary Clubs, and especially the Bulloch County Schools, the first participant in the project, María Teresa “Mayte” de Jesús Mendoza arrived in Statesboro in early January 2005.

Ms. de Jesús is a certified teacher in Mexico with seven years of experience teaching English at the middle grades and university levels. She is originally from the big port city of Veracruz, but has studied and taught in the college town of Xalapa for the past decade. She has traveled and studied in the United States before, but this will be her longest stay in our country.

During the next 18 months, Ms. de Jesus will be serving our community and university in a number of roles: she will be teaching schoolchildren about the Spanish language and Mexican culture at Julia P. Bryant and Langston Chapel elementary schools; she will be helping to raise awareness in our local schools about Mexican educational norms and the needs and abilities of Latino schoolchildren; she will bring her unique perspective to graduate courses within Georgia Southern’s College of Education as she pursues a Master’s degree in Instructional Technology; and she will support our college’s efforts to prepare educators to address the needs of our diversifying school-age population by meeting, both formally and informally, with Georgia Southern students and supporting our other Latino outreach efforts.

It is hoped that Ms. de Jesus is just the first of many participants in this project who will share their knowledge with Georgia Southern faculty and students and our region’s teachers, administrators and school teachers. ‘Beinvenidos, Mayte!’

The Future is Looking Bright

The College of Education hosted approximately 300 high school students on November 10, 2004, for A Day on Campus with Teachers of Tomorrow. Each student participated in workshops to strengthen their understanding of the profession of teaching.
PRISM—Partnership for Reform in Science and Mathematics—is off to a New Start

Fredrick Rich, Professor of Geology, assumed the co-Principal Investigator position with the East Central Georgia PRISM region in October of 2004. He joins Penny Sikes, the P-12 Coordinator, in an effort to help teachers and students in the East Central Region develop a mathematics facility in science and math. Dr. Jennie Rakestraw, COE Associate Dean, and Dr. Brett Danilowicz, COST Associate Dean, are also part of the PRISM staff. Each of them has committed 25% of their time to addressing the PRISM goals. Dr. John Weaver, Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading, has assumed the task of gathering and assimilating PRISM’s abundant demographic and assessment data.

PRISM is one of scores of math-science initiatives that have been funded nationally by the National Science Foundation’s Math-Science Partnership program (MSP). Georgia’s MSP proposal was funded in September 2003, having been submitted as a comprehensive proposal administered through the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. Four PRISM Regions were defined in the proposal, one centered at Georgia State, one at the University of Georgia, one at Georgia Southern, and the fourth at Armstrong Atlantic. Georgia Southern’s region includes forty-six schools in seven systems: Bulloch, Evans, Screven, Effingham, Toombs, and Candler Counties, as well as Vidalia City. The number of teachers and students that will be affected by the enhanced science, math, and technology offerings we hope to develop is huge. With Georgia occupying a very low position in just about every assessment of students’ science and math competence in public schools, the effort expended through PRISM is timely, to say the least. Different means have been chosen to enhance both teacher and student comprehension of fundamental concepts in math, and the physical and biological sciences. Teachers and university faculty have, for example, taken advantage of grants offered through the local PRISM office to enhance classroom teaching. Nearly $105K was awarded late in the Fall Semester, and another Request for Proposals (RFP) is ready for distribution now. Public school teachers and administrators, and college faculty are welcome to apply for funding that will directly enhance science and/or math content knowledge among teachers. With an annual budget in excess of $1M, most of which is earmarked for teacher education and professional development, the East Central PRISM office can facilitate the implementation of many good ideas that otherwise lack funding. See http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/prism/ for RFP information.

Georgia’s residents have much at stake as they enter the 21st Century. We have the technological capability to continue occupying a role of world leadership; our intellectual ability to continue in a leadership position is much at risk, however, as other nations seize the initiative in creating a well-informed, scientifically and mathematically astute populace. PRISM strives to take its own leadership position in bringing Georgia’s public school students to the competitive edge in these fields. For more information please contact Fred Rich <frich@georgiasouthern.edu> or Penny Sikes <pennysikes@georgiasouthern.edu>.

Barrow County Student Teaching and Living Experience

Two Georgia Southern students spent Fall 2004 student teaching and living in Barrow County, midway between Athens and Atlanta. This program is one of only a handful in the country designed to recruit teachers in critical needs areas through a residential student teaching experience. Both of our students in Fall 2004 taught mathematics—one in a middle school and one in a high school—and lived with student teachers from other universities in a small dormitory run by the Barrow County Schools.

In this experience, Barrow County School supplies the lodging free and gives each student teacher $200 per month for groceries. The student teachers cook in the dormitory kitchen and enjoy the use of an on-site computer lab, two common rooms, and a laundry room. Supervising teachers are arranged by Barrow County Schools in one of their 14 schools. The Georgia Southern Department of Teaching and Learning screens students who apply for the experience, pays the honorarium for the Barrow County supervising teacher, and provides the University Supervisor. If a student teacher from the experience is hired as a full-time teacher at the end of their participation in the program, they receive a signing bonus.

On Loving and Leaving

When people ask when I came to Georgia Southern, I tell them I was born here. Actually, my first home was right across from the front gates of Georgia Teachers College. I was raised in my mother’s little beauty shop where the women faculty members of the college would come and bring me books. Much of my life has been centered in and around this university, and my ‘blood memories’ are Eagle Blue. But a part of loving is knowing when to let go. I will retire this year and continue my preparations for Unitarian Universalist ministry. Although Georgia Southern will no longer be my ‘work place,’ it will remain my alma mater and, like many of you, I will remain a faithful supporter. Thanks for the memories and let’s make some more!

Editors’ Note: In 2002, Jane provided the seed money for an annual Distinguished Lecture in Curriculum Studies. If you would like to honor Jane in her retirement, please send a check made out to the Georgia Southern Foundation for the Jane A. Page Distinguished Lecture Account. Georgia Southern University Foundation, P.O. Box 8053, Statesboro, GA 30460-8053.
Building Up Students to Succeed

The game, Connect Four, has simple rules. Try to build a row of four checkers while keeping your opponent from doing the same. Similarly, school counselors try to build up students to succeed against opponents such as poverty, domestic violence and drug related issues, peer pressure, and lack of motivation for an education. Thankfully, as a school counselor, Georgia Southern University equipped me with skills of diversity education, one-to-one counseling techniques in listening, group counseling know-how, and theorist ideology so that the game isn’t quite as challenging for me when working with my clients. Like Connect Four, winning the game sounds easy, but it’s not. The vertical strategy creates a unique challenge: you must think in a way to block your opponents’ moves. And our clients, the students, are never the opponents. We must advocate for the student at all costs. Professionally, a school counselor thinks of her students before her own co-workers (their teachers) and points out to the principal what is right and what is wrong. Having a “popular vote” is not an option for the school counselor. Being the student’s voice is what I was hired to be.

I remember my first day of work as an elementary school counselor, three years ago. It was a hectic start with crying, snotty nose kids wrapped around my waist. What was I thinking when I wanted to be a part of this? I was not equipped and ready to look a tear-y-eyed parent in the eye to assure them that little Johnny will be fine without you today. I had worked for ten years as a middle and high school classroom teacher and in no way was I ready. All the empowerment that my professors gave me at Georgia Southern just vanished in an instant. Then, before my eyes, successful breakthroughs in counseling came. I felt the wow, the high, and a feeling of success. And the fact that my favorite professor, Dr. Mary Jackson, was just a phone call away at Georgia Southern helped me go back to school each day.

I do not know what it would be like to counsel in a large, metropolitan area school system. I like the small, country school I work at in southeast Georgia. One may laugh, but sometimes parents bring me fresh greens from their field or a homemade loaf of bread as a thank you for helping their child. My counseling the child extends into the family system, and if I leave a good impression, maybe those who need counselors will seek further help due to the success their child experiences.

Daily I do not know my routine and that’s much different than being a classroom teacher I like the change of pace. Now, I don’t dwell on the first-day tears of students. That’s important, but it’s small stuff. Some problems of children overwhelm me. Their pain is incredible, and yet they survive and even smile sometimes. Nowadays, I tend to pay more attention to the tear-y-eyed parents and grandparents who are genuinely thankful for the help their child received in counseling.

Thank you, Georgia Southern University, for continuing to care about me in my career years beyond graduation.

Cindy Corbett
School Counselor
Tompkin County Schools

Barbara Brown Named 2005 Special Education Teacher of the Year

Barbara Brown—a College of Education part-time instructor, COE doctoral student in educational leadership, and special education teacher at Screven County Middle School—was recently named the Georgia Federation Council for Exceptional Children Special Education Teacher of the Year for 2005. Ms. Brown was selected from a pool of applicants taken from the estimated 17,000 members of the statewide organization. Applicants fill out an extensive questionnaire regarding their experience, and a selection committee for the organization chooses only one teacher to receive the award. “Teachers don’t teach for recognition,” said Brown. “But it’s always nice to get recognized by your peers.” Ms. Brown is a 27-year teaching veteran and has been working with special education students in Screven County her entire career.

Georgia Southern University Alumni Implement Innovative “Mobile Classroom” Concept to Increase Student Achievement in Screven County

School systems around the state are using a plethora of strategies to meet the academic goals outlined in Georgia’s accountability plan. This can be a very daunting task when school systems are continually asked to offer more services with fewer resources. This is the case in Screven County, but this school system has gotten very creative in meeting the academic needs of its students and working to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

In 2003, a school bus was removed from the transportation fleet. William Bland, Assistant Superintendent for Maintenance and Operations, and Carl Roberts, Director of School Improvement Services, worked collaboratively to secure the funding and personnel needed to transform this school bus into a fully equipped mobile computer lab. Since last summer, the results of their efforts have been seen in communities throughout Screven County.

What Screven County Elementary School (SCES) students refer to as “the computer bus” is a state-of-the-art twelve-station computer lab. Each afternoon, the lab is stationed in a neighborhood within the Screven system that has high concentrations of students who could benefit from additional academic services. During these afternoon sessions, a certified teacher and a paraprofessional assist students with technology based, hands-on activities, which reinforce the essential objectives being taught during the school day.

Dennis Carpenter, who received his B.S. in Early Childhood Education and Ed.S. in Educational Leadership from Georgia Southern University, is the administrator of this innovative program. Carpenter is an assistant principal at Screven County Elementary and is currently enrolled in the educational leadership doctoral program at Georgia Southern University. Shannon Sills, a 2000 Georgia Southern University graduate in early childhood education, is a kindergarten teacher at SCES and the primary instructor of this program. Both alumni have worked extensively to ensure that this program increases the quality of education received by elementary students throughout Screven County. Carpenter feels that of all the educational projects he has had an opportunity to be involved in, this is one of the most beneficial.

According to Carpenter, “The mobile lab provides the community with a tangible illustration of the school system’s commitment to ensuring that no student is left behind. We are already beginning to see increases in student achievement, community support, and parental involvement as a result of this initiative.”

Ms. Sills has been very pleased with the dedication of the students who have participated in this program. “I guess it does not seem like work to them,” said Sills. “Most afternoons they are lined up and ready to go before we get to the site. Using the Light Span curriculum, which is delivered using a Sony PlayStation game system, does not seem like work to the students.”

Carpenter says as few as one student can determine whether or not a school makes or misses its AYP targets. For this reason, he views the “computer bus” as an innovative means of making certain that SCES exceeds the academic requirements outlined in Georgia’s accountability plan.

For more information you can contact Dennis Carpenter via email at dcarpenter@screven.k12.ga.us.

Portal High Wins Governor’s Cup

On September 20, 2004, the town of Portal was treated to a visit, by helicopter, from Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue. The occasion was an honor Governor Perdue sees as equal to that of winning an athletic division championship. The Governor’s Cup is awarded to the high schools whose students show the greatest increase in their SAT scores for their athletic division, based on school size. For Portal High, that was an average increase of 90 points from the previous year, for which they received a large silver trophy, a $2,000 check from Turner Broadcasting, and tickets to a Braves game.

Dean Chance was asked by the Portal High principal, Dr. Charles Webb, to join the state party and processional because of Georgia Southern’s long collaboration with Portal Middle/High and Portal Elementary to improve academic achievement. Dr. Greg Chamblee and Dr. Stephanie Kenney have worked with the schools in math for three years under a National Network for Educational Renewal grant. Also, special education faculty have worked during that time at Portal Elementary. The current PRISM faculty and staff continue to work on math and science instruction at both schools. In addition, the children of Portal have profited from the large number of pre-service teachers who have field experiences in their schools, as well as professional development activities led by COE faculty for their inservice teachers.

Portal High had been on the State Needs Improvement List from 1997 through Spring 2002, but the school made Adequate Yearly Progress for the last two years, removing them from the list. In addition, the high school students posted Bulloch County’s highest passing percentages in three of the five categories of the Georgia High School Graduation Test and the middle school students equaled or exceeded state percentages in 10 of 15 Criterion Referenced Competency Test categories.
In Memory of Victoria B. Zwald
Georgia Southern University Faculty Member, 1994 - 2005

Victoria Zwald died on January 5, 2005, at Memorial Medical Center in Savannah. She was a Clinical Supervisor/Instructor in the College of Education’s Department of Teaching and Leadership. For the past two years, she also served as the College’s Coordinator for Alumni, Media, and Public Relations and was a valued co-editor of the Southern Educator. She will be greatly missed.

Before coming to Georgia Southern in 1994, Mrs. Zwald was Inclusion Specialist for Chapel Hill Carborro City Schools and School-Based Consultant in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina. She received her M.Ed. in Supervision of Special Education and her B.S. in Education (Summa Cum Laude) from Ohio University. Since 1994, her teaching and research focused on pedagogy. She was awarded a number of grants, and she published articles, book chapters, and manuals. She presented her research and worked as a consultant for sixty international, national, and regional conferences and supported over 200 student teachers. In addition, she mentored colleagues, chaired or was a member of seventy-five university, college, department or community committees, and was very active in the International Learning Community. Mrs. Zwald championed several endeavors including the Centennial Plaza and Memorial Grove, Southern’s Art Extravaganza, and the Ollie Mae Jernigan Children’s Literature Collection. In Fall 2004, she led the College of Education’s faculty and staff to provide the most contributions during A Day For Southern on Campus.  

During her career, Mrs. Zwald also taught special education in the public schools for eleven years, served as a resource and advocate for students with disabilities and their parents, and belonged to six professional organizations. Victoria earned fourteen international, national, state, and local honors/special recognition awards including Best Buddies International Community Outreach Award, American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education Best Practice Award, North Carolina American Federation of Teachers Reader’s Digest American Hero in Education Award, five Teacher of the Year Awards, and the Outstanding Undergraduate and Graduate Student Award.

Victoria and her husband, Drew, enjoyed being together, visiting their daughter and family, reading, traveling, spending time with friends, and relaxing at the coast.
The Transition Program at Harlem High School

On Monday, November 15, 2004, Jeromy (J.J.) Williams (B.S.Ed. ’95, M.Ed. ’99) brought eight of his students and paraprofessional Bernett Johnson to Georgia Southern to speak to two classes of future teachers in the College of Education’s Special Education Program. During the visit, Mr. Williams’ students presented the Transition Program that has been created at Harlem High School (HHS). The HHS Transition Program is for special education students working to earn a special education high school diploma. These students spend part of their school day working on functional English and math skills as well as developing personal budgeting and appropriate socialization skills. The other four hours of the students’ school day is spent out in the community learning valuable work skills. The HHS Transition Program is available to any junior or senior with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID).

The eight HHS students presented a fifty-slide PowerPoint presentation they had created which explained all of the elements of the job training program. It described the job responsibilities and duties of the program’s instructor, the job coach, and the paraprofessional. The slide show took the Georgia Southern students through the program’s class syllabus and requirements. HHS students took turns presenting the fifteen sections of the presentation which shows how the Transition Program impacts their lives.

P.C. Washington presented pictures of the students working at the various job sites in the Augusta area including Doctors Hospital, Sheraton, Kroger, The Home Depot, The Columbia County Transportation Office and twenty other business partners. Kyler Bennett presented the section on the Transition Program’s 2004 banquet. Various award programs are in place throughout the year and awards are presented at the end of the year. Channing Hale presented the level system which is used as a reward and consequence tool. Alana Neal discussed the importance of good hygiene on the job sites and displayed the student’s job training uniforms that they had selected and purchased to be worn on the job. Maurice Barkdole reviewed the Friday routine and demonstrated how the students cooked meals and prepared their uniforms for the upcoming week by washing and ironing them. Each phase of the presentation was met with signs of amazement on the part of the fifty Georgia Southern students and faculty present because of what these MID students were accomplishing. The Georgia Southern future teachers were particularly impressed by the ease with which the HHS students presented information to such a large group of individuals.

Augusta news stations have aired several in-depth stories about the HHS program. One of the news stories discussed the possibility of this program being cut to meet the No Child Left Behind standards. After viewing that video clip, the education students participated in a very intense discussion about the cohesiveness of No Child Left Behind and Special Education. Another video clip was shown which covered the recent election campaign the Transition Program students had participated in to elect their own class officers. This small class project eventually encompassed the entire HHS student body and made the local news when the MID students started going room to room giving self-written campaign speeches. All of the students were very well received when they presented their information.

Having been diagnosed with a learning disability in the third grade, Mr. Williams knows first-hand the struggle of obtaining an education, and he stresses self advocacy as part of his curriculum. "These students need to go out and show the world what they are capable of doing. With realistic goals, there is no reason why these students should not be able to achieve a life full of successes.” Mr. Williams believes in demonstrating this principle by actions not just deeds. His accomplishments include earning both a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in special education from Georgia Southern. He has been keynote speaker for Disabilities Awareness Week at Georgia Southern, and he has been a motivational speaker at graduate ceremonies and other meetings. Mr. Williams is also a two-time recipient of Teacher of the Year, in 1999 at Screven County Elementary and in 2004 at Harlem High School.

“it is our responsibility to educate others about our abilities as much as our disabilities.”

The Harlem High School group will be back for an encore when they present their program to a Master’s level weekend-college class in March 2005.

Individuals interested in hearing more about the HHS Transition Program can visit the HHS website or contact Mr. Williams at Jeromy.Williams@comcast.net.

ALUMNI: WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE YOU?

Name: ___________________________  First: __________  Middle: __________  Last: __________  Maiden: __________

Address: ___________________________  City: __________  State: __________  Zip: __________

Phone: ___________________________  E-mail address: ___________________________  Check if okay to publish: __________

Graduation Date: ___________________________  Degree/Major: ___________________________

What have you been doing since graduation? ___________________________________________________________

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