Taking Flight

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Georgia Southern University

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Message from the Dean

Join the Journey. Since our move to the FBS and the Sunbelt Conference, this has been the clarion call of our athletic association. But, for thousands of our students, that slogan now has a very new and different meaning.

During commencement weekend, I had the honor and pleasure of handing diplomas to nearly 600 College of Business graduates. In two ceremonies, we recognized the Class of 2015, awarding them with bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. It was the highlight of the academic year and a great day for our college and university. It was also a great day for those students, who are now alumni. For them, it marked the end of one journey and the beginning of another. They will now embark on exciting new careers in fields like finance, logistics, marketing, and accounting. Some will become academics, having been trained as professional scholars and teachers. Others will start new businesses, primed with their new understanding of entrepreneurship and innovation. These young graduates will be problem solvers in areas like information systems, economics, and management. And, they will work in every industry, from hospitality to healthcare, from retail to banking. Despite their differences, though, they will have some things in common.

First, they will share a strong work ethic. I say that only because it’s true. Our graduates are recognized for their ability to work harder and move faster than others. This group has no sense of entitlement; they will roll up their sleeves and go to work, and they will succeed where others might not. Second, they will be well trained and competent. Our faculty consists of experts from all of the functional disciplines, and our curriculum is both comprehensive and rigorous. I am confident that these new graduates will impress, both with their knowledge and with their ability to think and apply that knowledge. Finally, these graduates will all be Georgia Southern Eagles. They will make good on the promise of their potential; they will invest in themselves and in the future. And, they will honor the legacy of this great institution by making a positive difference in the world.

So, to the Class of 2015, I say, “Well done! We salute you, and we welcome you into the family of alumni who are ambitious, accomplished, and proud to be True Blue!”
Alumni Spotlight: Michelle Glaze

Michelle Glaze (ACCT, 2001) began her career as a financial systems analyst. In order to automate the Excel reports she was required to run, Michelle taught herself Visual Basic for Applications (VBA), a Microsoft proprietary programming language. As a result, she became an advanced VBA user. After holding various finance positions at the Georgia Department of Audits, The Walt Disney Company, Humana, and Baptist Health, Michelle left the world of finance in December 2013 to become a VBA programmer.

While at Georgia Southern, Michelle served as vice president for the Accounting Association, tutored accounting for the School of Accountancy and the Georgia Southern football team, and was a volunteer teacher’s assistant for the line dancing class. She was inducted into Beta Alpha Psi and was a member of Alpha Phi Omega, a service fraternity through which she made life-long friends. From group projects, simulations, and mock interviews and internship opportunities, Michelle was able to experience real-life examples of the workplace while still in school, making for an easy transition to the workplace after graduation. She says that she would definitely not be where she is today had she not attended Georgia Southern.

Michelle feels that her education and experience prepared her well for her career. Her biggest challenge, however, has been learning to slow her mind enough to allow others to assist. Although she practices being a more active listener, this is a daily challenge.

Currently, Michelle serves as a clinical quality programmer analyst at Baptist Health in Jacksonville. She builds programs that pull data from outside sources, manipulates that data to build graphs and dashboards, and automate the conversion of those data elements into PowerPoint presentations that are shared across the organization. She also maintains a data warehouse she built for the hospital system that contains all the data from the accounts receivable system and allows easier access to those data to create faster reports and saving thousands of man-hours for Baptist. This data warehouse, which Michelle built entirely on her own, is her proudest accomplishment. Learning the complexities of the healthcare industry to integrate that knowledge into her work allows Michelle to provide meaningful reports and results. Michelle says, “Being able to make a difference and help others to do their jobs with ease is my favorite part of my job.”

Eventually, Michelle would like to earn a doctorate in accounting information systems and become part of the Georgia Southern faculty. In the meantime, she enjoys going to church, volunteering in the Jacksonville area, and doing home improvement projects.
Logistics Students Receive $10,000 in Scholarships

On April 14, the Savannah Traffic Club (STC) presented five $2,000 scholarships to Georgia Southern logistics and intermodal transportation students. These students were competitively selected by STC from a pool of students from five universities.

The scholarships were presented at the STC annual meeting at which each student made a short presentation explaining “Why I Chose Logistics” as a major and a career. Ben Skipper, PhD, assistant professor of logistics, was also asked to provide an update on the logistics program at Georgia Southern. All presentations were enthusiastically received by the STC membership.

The Savannah Traffic Club, Inc. was formed in March 1995 as the result of the merger of the Savannah Women’s Transportation Association and the Transportation Club of Savannah. These clubs’ roots went back more than 20 and 50 years, respectively.

The Savannah Traffic Club is a non-profit organization open to people in the transportation and logistics industries and related fields. Currently, more than 50 companies in manufacturing, shipping, and allied industries and Georgia Southern University are represented by the Club’s membership.

STC promotes education in the field of transportation and logistics in partnership with Georgia Southern by awarding scholarships to deserving college students seeking a degree in transportation and logistics. A golf tournament is held yearly to fund this worthy cause. This year, STC awarded five scholarships totaling $10,000 to junior and senior students at Georgia Southern seeking logistics and intermodal transportation degrees.

STC also provides financial assistance in the area of continuing education in the field of transportation and logistics to its members. The club invites speakers to present topics of interest of the community to its membership. For more information, go to http://www.savannahtrafficclub.org/?p=pages/mission-statement.

Senior Logistics Student Presents at Research Symposium

On Friday, April 24, Thomas Hamilton, a senior logistics and intermodal transportation student, represented the College of Business during the Student Research Competition portion of the Georgia Southern University 2015 Research Symposium, which was held at the
Nessmith-Lane Conference Center. During the event, Thomas showcased the results of his honors thesis, which investigated logistics performance metrics and included analysis of more than 6,400 survey responses collected from practicing managers over the past 10 years. After an evaluation of his research proposal and poster presentation, a group of faculty judges awarded Thomas first prize for which he will receive a certificate and a $100 gift card.

Thomas's faculty mentors, logistics faculty members, Chris Boone, PhD, and Ben Skipper, PhD, both applauded his insatiable desire to learn and natural research ability. They also highlighted that Thomas's research paper was well received outside of the university as well as evidenced by its selection for presentation at the 45th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Decision Sciences Institute in Savannah earlier this year.

Two of our PhD in logistics and supply chain management candidates also presented their research at the symposium, earning first and second place. Cesar Ayala presented, “The Effects of Bullwhip on Item Level Performance,” placing first; and Willis Mwangola presented, “Performance Outcomes of Volume Flexibility and Inventory Strategies: The Contingent Role of Environmental Uncertainty,” earning second place.

**Ninth Annual Georgia Southeastern Regional Community Bank Symposium**

On April 23, the College of Business and Georgia Bankers Association (GBA) co-sponsored the Ninth Annual Georgia Southeastern Regional Community Bank Symposium at SpringHill Suites in Statesboro. This year’s event brought speakers in from all over the state. During the symposium, Georgia Bankers Association president and CEO, Joe Brannen gave an update on the GBA and its current initiatives, while Roger Tutterow, professor of economics at Kennesaw State University, presented an economic outlook and loan demand for Southeastern Georgia; and Ron Mitchell, partner at Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC, Albany, spoke about the major changes on the regulatory and accounting front for 2015. For the panel discussion, Kevin Hagler, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Banking and Finance; John Henrie, deputy regional director of the FDIC; and Trey Wheeler, assistant vice president in the Supervision and Regulation Division of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta answered industry questions presented by Edward H. Sibbald, director of the Center for Excellence in Financial Services and senior lecturer of finance.
Eagle Executive Society Senior Social

On April 23, the Eagle Executive Society–Student Chapter held the Second Annual Eagle Executive Society Senior Social at 6 p.m. in the Information Technology Building Atrium. The event was catered by LongHorn Steakhouse and included presentations by Dean Allen Amason and Mrs. Samantha Deal, information systems and accounting alumna. Dean Amason spoke to the seniors about being alumni for life, constantly representing the college, and having the ability to change the world. He also had the students repeat after him, “We are Eagles!” Mrs. Deal welcomed the students to the alumni club and explained how giving back not only helps the College of Business, but the university as a whole. Mrs. Deal hopes she is an inspiration to upcoming alumni as she is the youngest alum in the history of the university to endow a scholarship.

Save the Date: Macon Eagle Executive Exchange

On Thursday, June 4, the College of Business will host an Eagle Executive Exchange in Macon from 5:30–7:30 p.m. at State Bank & Trust Company (4885 Riverside Drive, Macon). Please mark your calendar now and join us in the heart of Georgia for networking. Please RSVP.
National Association of Black Accountants Recognized

The Georgia Southern National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) has received official recognition and charter status from the NABA national office. In addition to this great honor, D’Andre Sanders, president of the Georgia Southern chapter, was awarded the FY 2015 NABA Student of the Year, and Errol Stewart, PhD, assistant professor of accounting, was selected the 2015 NABA Faculty Advisor on April 24 in Atlanta.

Georgia Southern University WebMAcc Program Ranked Seventh

The Georgia Southern University WebMAcc program has been ranked seventh by topaccountingdegrees.org in its Top 20 Master of Accounting Online Degree Programs 2015 (http://www.topaccountingdegrees.org/master-of-accounting-online).

According to topaccountingdegrees.org, the Top 20 Master of Accounting Online Degree Programs 2015 rankings were based upon average tuition (weighted 10%), AACSB accreditation (weighted 30%), CPA exam pass rate (weighted 20%), employment rate (weighted 20%), and salary projections (weighted 20%). Information regarding each criterion came from College Navigator, AACSB International, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and U.S. News, respectively. Each school was then given a final score out of 100, and those with the top 20 scores were included in the ranking.

“The Georgia Southern College of Business is unique in that it is accredited by the AACSB for both business and accounting. Their no frills, 100 percent accounting program is one of the best ways to start a career in finance today, with rigorous coursework and a team-based learning approach that ensures success. The support students receive from classmates and professors is just one factor in the high CPA exam pass rate they see after graduation. Coursework featuring accounting, auditing and information technology seminars, legal issues, and income tax provide a robust framework for negotiating the financial arena professionally,” states topaccountingdegrees.org. In-state tuition is $6,468 per year and out-of-state tuition is $25,846 per year.

For more information on the 30-credit hour, fully-online Georgia Southern WebMAcc program, visit Georgiasouthern.edu/BusinessGraduate or email soa@georgiasouthern.edu.
28th Annual Faculty/Staff Awards Banquet

The 28th Annual Faculty/Staff Awards Banquet was held on Friday, April 24 at The Hall by 40 East Grill in downtown Statesboro. During the evening, faculty and staff received awards for promotion and tenure, and service, teaching, and research to the college for the past year. Jackie Eastman, PhD, professor of marketing, took the William A. Freeman Award for Outstanding Professor, while Chris Brunt, PhD, assistant professor of finance, won the Gary M. Davis Excellence in Research Award, Constance Campbell, PhD, distinguished chair and professor of management, won the W.A. & Emma Lou Crider Award for Excellence in Teaching, and Trey Denton, PhD, professor of marketing, received the Martin NeSmith Faculty Award for Distinguished Service.

Congrats to all of the faculty and staff who took home awards this year!

Entrepreneur Lecture Series Featured Digital Cobbler Lucy Beard

On Tuesday, April 28, at 5:30 p.m. in the College of Engineering and Information Technology, Room 1004, the Georgia Southern College of Business Business Innovation Group (BIG) hosted the Entrepreneur Lecture Series speaker, Lucy Beard, as she discussed her adventures in starting Feetz, a company that is touted as the digital cobbler for the new era.

After becoming frustrated trying on several pairs of ill-fitting shoes, Beard pondered the idea of custom-fit shoes using 3D printer technology. She and her team spent a year developing the unique SizeMe™ technology with guidance from experts in footwear and 3D printing.

Customers use the Feetz mobile app to take three pictures of each of their feet. Then, the customer designs and personalizes Feetz shoes to fit his/her own personal style. The shoes are then 3D printed and shipped to the customer.

Feetz relocated from San Diego into The TENN Master Accelerator Program at Launch Tennessee in Chattanooga. The company has since developed patent-protected algorithms and customized software that create the 3D printable shoes from models of customers’ feet. The company has also been working on novel material compositions and material designs to extend the durability and
flexibility of the 3D printable materials available. Beard has raised $1.3 million in seed funding from Khosla Ventures and The JumpFund.

BIG was excited to have Lucy Beard share her story and amazing technology with the Georgia Southern community as it awaits the much-anticipated construction of the digital fabrication laboratory (FabLab) slated to open at City Campus. Growth of the City Campus, with the FabLab and Innovation Incubator, will bring similar opportunities to entrepreneurs and innovators in the region.

The Entrepreneur Lecture Series was developed by the Center for Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership (CELL) as a way to showcase the entrepreneurial spirit. This lecture series plays a great role in helping to harness and grow an innovative culture in the region. For more information or further inquiries, please email Suzanne Hallman, BIG business advisor, at shallman@georgiasouthern.edu.

**Student Perspective – Athletics Was a Way of Life**

by Emma Collins, senior marketing student from Lincolnton, GA

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On May 9, I will head to Paulson Stadium one last time as a student of Georgia Southern University. This time, though, I won’t be wearing my finest game-day dress. I won’t be going to an Eagles’ football game. Instead, I’ll don a cap and gown and walk out onto that field to receive my diploma.

I hate to get all sappy and mushy, but attending Georgia Southern was, without a doubt, the best decision I’ve made so far in my life. Of every choice I have ever made, I know that this one has benefitted me the most. Being a citizen of the Eagle Nation is something that I will always be proud of. Becoming an alumna is something that I will consider an honor.

Much of the joy and excitement that college has provided for me has been a result of football, soccer, basketball, and baseball games. Without Eagle Athletics, I think the time that I’ve been at Georgia Southern would have been really boring. I can’t imagine fall semesters without Freedom flying over the stadium, without the team charging onto the field, or without the excitement of screaming fans.

Amazingly enough, I didn’t really like to watch sports when I first arrived at Georgia Southern. To me, football was something my dad watched on the weekends. Since we only had a TV in our family room, my mom and I couldn’t watch anything else but what my dad chose to watch. So, to us, football was a form of torture—something neither one of us understood.
But when I came to Georgia Southern, I found that football was a way of life. It was a sport that an entire school seemed to understand, so I asked lots of questions and eventually learned the rules of the game. Understanding the game helped me figure out that it was actually an enjoyable sport to watch, and I've been hooked since Fall 2012, when I attended my first Georgia Southern football game at Paulson Stadium. Eventually, I learned the rules of basketball and soccer, and now I enjoy being a spectator of those sports, too.

Being able to write about different sports and athletes has been a pleasure and a privilege for the past two semesters. I've had the opportunity to meet many of the coaches, and they have always been so willing to sit down and talk with me. Men’s Soccer Coach Keven Kennedy is one of the friendliest people I've met at this school. He always remembers me and asks questions about what’s going on in my life, even if we're out on the soccer field during one of the team’s practices. I want to thank him for always being so gracious and friendly when we meet.

I also want to thank all the athletes that I’ve interviewed. Many of them spoke to me when they had just finished playing a physically and mentally demanding game, when they were sweaty and would probably rather have headed to the locker rooms, and they were always polite and talkative.

So, in just over a week, I’ll walk out onto that field, holding my head high and trying not to let my heels sink into the grass. I’m beyond proud to be an Eagle, and when I walk across that stage and shake President Keel’s hand, I’ll feel as proud as I’m sure the football team does when they walk off the field after a victory. Except, I’ll probably be shedding a few tears. Farewell, Georgia Southern University. Thanks for all the great memories. These have been the most amazing years of my life. I wish it wasn’t time to leave.

25th Annual Accounting Day

The Zeta Delta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi and the Georgia Southern University Accounting Association sponsored the School of Accountancy’s 25th Annual Accounting Day Awards Banquet on Wednesday, April 29. The evening’s events began with a career fair for accounting majors that included twenty-five accounting firms and professional organizations with more than 60 industry representatives who met with students to discuss full-time positions and internships. The evening ended with the annual awards banquet at which the school awarded scholarships. In honor of the 25th Anniversary of the Accounting Day Awards Banquet, former and retired faculty spoke about the history of the event during the banquet. Special guests included Horace Harrell and Paula Mooney. The following awards and scholarships were presented.
• Beta Alpha Psi President Daniel Schmit recognized several members for their active participation in Beta Alpha Psi, the accounting honor society, and presented scholarships to Brittany Casey and Eric Rimes.

• Professor of the Year Award- Don Berecz.

• Academic Achievement awards are jointly sponsored by the Educational Foundation of the Georgia Society of CPAs and area chapters including Heart of Georgia, Coastal Georgia, Savannah, and Southeast Georgia- Emily Hall, Linette Rousseau, Stephanie Simpson, Jeb Lavender, Matthew Flynn, Jarrett Prince, Jacquelynne Bailey, Brittany Ross, Catherine McCranie, Haley Chambley, Jennifer Richard, Ryan Chancey, Austin Bennett, and Morgan Brock

• The Savannah Chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants Academic Distinction Award- Faiza Newaz

• The Coastal Georgia Chapter of the Institute of Internal Auditors Academic Distinction Award- Christian Woodberry

• The Savannah CFO Council- Christian Woodberry

• The Educational Foundation of the Georgia Society of CPAs Academic Excellence Award for being the School of Accountancy’s top graduating senior- Laura Henry

• Becker CPA Professional Education Full CPA Review package- Stephanie Gratto

• Becker CPA Professional Education Half CPA Review Package- Rogette Sands, Emily Hall, and Misty Williamson

• The Southeast Georgia and Savannah Chapters of the Georgia Society of CPAs, jointly with the Georgia Society’s Educational Foundation, co-sponsored the Georgia Accountants’ Team Effort (GATE) Scholarships awarded to students enrolled in the Master of Accounting program- Melanie Blair, Ashley Burrows, Linette Rousseau, and Ashley Secord

• The Paul G. LaGrone Scholarships, established by former business Dean Paul G. LaGrone- Stephanie Simpson and Christian Woodberry

• The D. Greg Morgan Family Scholarship sponsored by Greg and Ruth Morgan of Atlanta, Georgia- Cera Weaver

• The Billy and JoAnn Hickman award- Jordie Thompson

• The Sharon Jester Ponder award- Faith Buchanan

• The School of Accountancy International Student scholarship- Qianting Yao

• The Federation of Schools of Accountancy award- Danielle Kinkella

• Draffin and Tucker, LLP scholarships- Maggie Couey and Eric Rimes

• Elliott Davis Decosimo, LLC scholarship- Ashley Usry

• Habif, Arogeti & Wynne, LLP scholarships- Olivia Rigdon and Daniel Yancey

• Holland, Henry, and Bromley, LLP scholarship- Morgan Crowley

• Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC scholarships- Rebecca Henderson and Daniel Jenkins

• Moore Stephens Tiller, LLC scholarship- Laura Wiggins

• Nichols, Cauley and Associates, LLC scholarship- Jarrett Prince

• Porter Keadle Moore, LLC scholarship- Austin Glover, Elizabeth Willimon, and Jacob Anderson
• Warren Averett Co., LLC scholarship in Forensic Accounting—Chase Gibbon.

Accounting Day is made possible through the generosity of many organizations that have supported Georgia Southern’s accounting program for several years. Many thanks go to the following corporate sponsors: Becker Professional Review; Bennett Thrasher, LLP; CFO Council; CRI; Dabbs Hickman Hill and Cannon, LLP; Draffin and Tucker, LLP; Elliott Davis, LLC; the Georgia Society of CPAs; Habif Arogeti and Wynne, LLP; Hancock Askew & Co., LLP; William T. Herring; Holland, Henry & Bromley, LLP; the Institute of Management Accountants; Mauldin and Jenkins, LLC; Moore Stephens Tiller, LLC; Nichols Cauley & Associates, LLC; Porter Keadle Moore, LLC; PWC Jacksonville; Robinson, Grimes, & Co.; Serotta, Maddocks, & Evans; Smith & Howard; TJS Deemer Dana, LLP; Warren Averett Co., LLC; and Webster Rogers.

Eagle Sales Showcase

The Center for Sales Excellence presented the first Eagle Sales Showcase for its sales students on April 29–May 1, 2015. Designed to allow graduating sales and sales management students an opportunity to learn through workshops and interactions with sales professionals, the three-day event celebrated the sales profession and included all-access opportunities with sponsors Aerotek, CH Robinson, Enterprise, Graybar, Nolan Transportation, and Tom James Company.

The educational workshops lasted between 50 and 65 minutes and included topics such as résumés, interviewing tips, and professional dress. Mock interviews were held for those who desired them. Sponsors also had access to taped role plays previously prepared by students.

The résumés of students seeking employment were made available to representatives prior to the event, enabling sponsors to pre-schedule interview sessions. Later, sponsors were able to dine with students for more face-to-face time leading to several students being offered employment.

Sponsors and students alike agreed the best part of this event was that companies looking for sales students and students interested in sales were able to come together at the same time and place.

Spring 2015 Graduate Brunch & Graduation

On Friday, May 8, the College of Business hosted graduate students, along with their families and friends, at the 2015 Spring Commencement Graduate Brunch. The Graduate Brunch event began in Fall 2013 and is held
each semester on graduate commencement day as a way to recognize our graduate students and wish them the very best in their future endeavors.

The 2015 Spring Commencement speaker was Pamela McMichael, director of Highlander Research and Education Center. In Ms. McMichael’s address, she spoke about history and that history was being made today and tomorrow by the actions taken today. “Always hone a spirit of inquiry in life and work,” stated McMichael. “Live consciously with purpose, and do the next right thing, and you’ll make history.” During the graduate commencement, the College of Business graduated approximately 120 students representing the PhD, MBA, and MAcc programs.

On Saturday, May 9, all undergraduate students were addressed by Judge Dean Bucci during the 87th Annual Spring Commencement at Allen E. Paulson Stadium.

22nd Annual College of Business Golf Tournament

On Friday, May 15, the College of Business held its 22nd Annual Golf Tournament at Forest Heights Country Club in Statesboro. With 13 teams teeing off in the morning and 31 teams teeing off in the afternoon, this year’s golf tournament was the largest to date. We welcomed 170 golfers, with Mike Hopp, College of Business alum, traveling the farthest from New Jersey. Chick-fil-A provided breakfast, while Papa John’s and Domino’s provided pizza at the end of the day. Overall, we had 30 sponsors and 132 prizes donated from businesses in Bulloch and surrounding counties. At the end of the day, everyone had a great day on the golf course.

This year’s first place net winners were Michael Connolly, Al Lawson, Randy Johnson, and Riley Johnson, from the morning round, and first place gross winners were Jeff Deal, Robert Pence, Matt Purvis, and Tess Fordham, from the afternoon round. Second place gross came from the afternoon round and includes Brian Phillips, Marty Phillips, Gerard Vining, and Jason Panch; and second place net, also from the afternoon round, were Kevin Harrison, Kasey Harrison, Kevin Rackleff, and Jeff Hood. Many thanks to our sponsors and to the College of Business staff who volunteered to help make this tournament a success.

Music City & the College of Business

Dean Amason hosted a small dinner party with business alums at Table 3 Restaurant in Nashville in April. Everyone enjoyed meeting other alums in the Nashville area and encouraged us to hold an Eagle Executive Exchange in the area to engage more of the local College of Business alumni.
Plans are under way to 'Connect the Eagle Executive Network' in Nashville on Thursday, July 16, 2015. Please stay tuned for more details about this event.

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