

College of Education News

July 5, 2018

College of Education, Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern COE staff member helps African university learn to use new equipment

July 5, 2018



Pictured (l-r): Zipangani "Zipa" Vokhiwa, Ph.D., Kania Greer, Ed.D., and Kenneth Gentili in Malawi

Georgia Southern University's Kania Greer, Ed.D., traveled to southeastern Africa in June to assist in hosting a four-day workshop for faculty, administrators and staff of the University of Livingstonia in Livingstonia, Malawi.

Greer, who serves as the coordinator for the College of Education's (COE) Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education (i²STEM[®]), was invited to collaborate on the project by Zipangani "Zipa" Vokhiwa, Ph.D., professor of science at Mercer University. Vokhiwa serves on the University of Livingstonia Foundation Board and is a native of the country.

"The University reached out to Dr. Zipa for help in learning how to use Vernier science equipment," Greer said. "The University of Livingstonia's faculty had the equipment on-hand but were not sure how to use it and really wanted to start a research focus at their university."

The i²STEM[®] and science labs within the COE use Vernier equipment, which can be used to collect a wide range of data in the field that can then be taken back to the lab to be graphed, analyzed and interpreted. The workshop focused on activities relevant to temperature, blood pressure and health related measures as well as GPS systems.

"When crafting the professional development for these faculty members, we referenced Vernier recommendations and then tailored our instruction to what we thought the faculty would find most helpful in working with their students," Greer said.

The Livingstonia professors completed both lab and field experiments and began planning future research projects they could conduct alongside their students. Participants were asked to develop a plan-of-action for how they plan to use the equipment, which Greer and Vokhiwa recently reviewed and provided feedback.

"Their projects are very place-based and problem-based for the University of Livingstonia's culture and surroundings," Greer said. "Many of their projects look at water quality and public health concerns."

Greer and Vokhiwa hope to return in November when Livingstonia's faculty plan to host a research symposium to showcase the progress in their projects.

"Having this experience of seeing a truly different university culture and learning with their faculty was invaluable," Greer said. "The passion of the faculty to improve themselves and engage in research is inspiring. And Livingstonia and Malawi now have a picture of our university as trying to reach across borders and help globally."

Greer said she believes this opportunity has created an international partnership that is win-win for Georgia Southern and the College of Education in particular.

"There are future opportunities to support and engage in the work Livingstonia is doing and establish Georgia Southern as a partner in all levels of international education."



University of Livingstonia faculty are pictured working with Vernier equipment during workshop.

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Special education major receives state award

July 5, 2018

Bailey Waters, a senior majoring in special education, received the Outstanding Student Member award from the Georgia Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) during its annual IDEAS Conference, held June 5-8 on St. Simons Island.

“When my picture flashed up on the screen, I couldn’t believe it,” Waters said. “Everyone was so excited. It was great.”

Recognized as an undergraduate student who has made outstanding contributions in service to the CEC and to children with exceptionalities, Waters received a commemorative sculpture and will be a nominee for the CEC’s national student award.

Waters is the current president of the Georgia Southern University chapter of Student Council for Exceptional Children (SCEC).

“We advocate for people with special needs out in the community,” Waters said of the SCEC. “To be a leader in the organization helps me have a voice and make a difference for these students. It’s so much bigger than just the special olympics. It’s a national effort as well to pass laws that help these individuals have equal opportunities and affordances in life.”

Waters’ passion can also be seen in her volunteer work outside of the University and SCEC. Last spring, Waters taught dance to students with disabilities at Mattie Lively Elementary School. Serving 15 students each week, she worked with the students to teach motor skills and basic movements by dancing to “Can’t Stop the Feeling” by Justin Timberlake. She also worked with students individually to create solo and group numbers. The dance class ended with a recital in May where the students performed their choreographed numbers.

“It was so much fun to be a part of,” Waters said. “I took dance for 10 years and cheered for 10 years, but my knowledge and understanding of the students’ characteristics and how to work with them helped me the most.”

A native of Tattnall County, Waters said she knew she wanted to be a teacher from a young age.

“My high school was really inclusive, and I was involved with the special education students in my classes,” she said. “I am really passionate about it.”

Waters will graduate in spring 2019 and plans to return to Tattnall County to work with elementary school special education.

“So many students with disabilities are told that they are incapable or unable, but they aren’t,” Waters said. “Our job is to show them they can. I want to start working with the younger students and bring the fun to the classroom to show them their full capabilities.”



Bailey Waters

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