Messages from the Provost

Georgia Southern University

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October, 18, 2021: New Academic Programs and New Investment in Research

Dear Faculty,

Mid-terms are complete and cooler temperatures have arrived. It’s a nice time of year to walk around our beautiful campuses. Thankfully, COVID-19 cases are way down. Thank you for all you have done to mitigate the spread of the virus. We are still being cautious, but we can focus on what we’re here to do, which is pursuing our scholarship and providing a world-class education to our students.

New Academic Programs

You have no doubt noticed how long it’s been taking to get new academic programs approved. Some time ago, prior to my arrival here, Georgia Southern University was placed into probationary status by the U.S. Department of Education. Under the terms of the probation, any new programs had to be reviewed by the DOE. The DOE review could take a year or more, which greatly stifled our ability to innovate our curriculum. This probation is now over.

Moving forward, in cooperation with SACSCOC and our colleges and departments, we will act quicker in modernizing our curriculum. This will better position us to attract new students. We are already working on developing a few new programs. They include:

- M.S. in Environmental Science
- Ph.D. in Environmental Science
- M.S. in Athletic Training
- M.S. in Supply Chain Logistics
- B.S. in Coastal Plains Sciences

There are several more programs that we are working on, but these are the closest to fruition.

These kinds of innovations to our curriculum are vital for us to meet the needs of future students. Additionally, we need to expand our graduate programs in both numbers and in needed areas, as well as expand our services for "adult" learners.

New Investment in Research

I’m excited to tell you about a new investment we are making in our research enterprise. Just before the pandemic started, Georgia Southern acquired the old Georgia Bureau of Investigation crime laboratory in Savannah. It is just across the street from our Armstrong campus. The GBI laboratory encompasses five buildings that we envision using for offices, conference rooms, classrooms, and labs.

The first phase of the renovation will focus on the administration building, which will house approximately eight to nine offices and two conference rooms. Expected completion is Spring of 2022. The second phase will be a biosafety laboratory to conduct water quality analysis and testing. This lab will be home to Georgia Southern’s Institute of Water and Health. We are also putting in an analytical chemistry lab to support the biosafety lab. Phase III of the renovation will be converting the morgue into a saltwater lab. Phase IV will focus on turning the rest of the space into classrooms for lectures and presentations.

We believe this coastal research laboratory will be a transformational addition for the university. It will provide us with much needed high-quality lab space and space for equipment of faculty members who are conducting research in the field. Our newly approved graduate programs in environmental science will also be housed here. More importantly, this laboratory will further our capacity to conduct public impact research and provide us with an opportunity to give our Armstrong campus a stronger identity.

Congratulations

Congratulations to the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) for their recent federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. The award focuses on public health informatics and technology workforce development with the
specific purpose of providing Public Health Information and Technology (PHIT) training to approximately 140 students over a 4-year project period. Congratulations to Dr. Gulzar Shah, Chair for the Department of Health Policy and Community Health, who will be serving as the Principal Investigator, Dr. Nandi Marshall, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who will be serving as a Co-Investigator, and the other JPHCOPH faculty members who will be playing a significant role: Drs. Hani Samawi, Jeff Jones, Linda Kimsey, Joanne Chopak-Foss, Katie Mercer, and Mrs. BJ Newell.

Finally, it was a pleasure seeing some of you at our recent Conversations with the Provost. We held one on each of the Statesboro and Armstrong campuses, and we are holding another one on the Liberty campus tomorrow. I hope to hold more of these events next semester. Thank you again for all your hard work and dedication.

Sincerely,

Carl

Carl L. Reiber

Provost and Vice President Academic Affairs

Last updated: 12/17/2021