It’s obvious that mechanical engineering student Evan Duffield likes things that go. Not only is he the president of the Society of Automotive Engineers Eagle Motorsports organization for campus, he’s also an avid longboarder. He took up the hobby a few years ago when he became a student at Georgia Southern.

“Longboarding was more than a passion for me. It became an emotional refuge during times of turmoil,” said Duffield. “No matter what happened in my personal life, school curriculum and professional life, I could always grab my board and some earbuds and go for a ride.”

Duffield and his boarding friends decided to develop their own longboard company this summer. Displacement Board Company began as a solution to a breakage problem. Sometimes longboards get away from their riders and get run over by cars, trucks or even university buses. After having a couple of boards destroyed by bigger wheels, Duffield started researching boards made from different materials.

He and the team got to work designing iterations of a longboard that would be suitable for downhill, freestyle, cruising, and even dancing.

“Coming from a background of automotive racing and advanced materials research at Georgia Southern, I submitted the idea that we could manufacture these longboards out of waste composite materials,” said Duffield. “So, I set to work e-mailing nearly every composite company in the world asking for donations of waste materials or material that wouldn’t get utilized.”

Things got really interesting when Duffield received a call from a delivery driver in an 18-wheeler delivering nearly 1,000 pounds of donated carbon fiber and kevlar to his small duplex. The guys were ready to start manufacturing with the beginning of the fall semester at Georgia Southern, but where would they start?

Duffield remembers, “I had heard of the Georgia Southern University Fab Lab before, and decided that they might have some tools that I could use to get the longboard business up and running. After a brief tour of the Fab Lab, I had met a variety of people from the Business Innovation Group that were all extremely kind and willing to help.”

Displacement Board Company joined the FabLab and started fabricating molds with varied layups for making boards. Several iterations later, they are nearing the launch of their first official longboard deck from Displacement Board Company. Their goal is to be adaptable to riders needs. Duffield does not believe that they’re just making longboards for people who enjoy riding. He believes Displacement Board Company gives riders an escape from trials of everyday life with a lasting creative outlet.

“The Business Innovation Group is helping me immensely to meet my goals by providing a space to work in, connections to further develop my company, knowledgeable advice from outstanding faculty, and various opportunities to present my ideas among other innovators,” said Duffield. “I am extremely grateful for the Business Innovation Group, and their desire to assist me in my company in our journey towards success!”

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