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### President's Newsletter

Brooks Keel

*Georgia Southern University*

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## President's Newsletter

Georgia Southern University

The start of the fall semester, like most, began with hope and optimism as the University welcomed more than 20,700 students to campus, with the traditional Day One celebration for incoming students and the beginning of what promised to be an exciting football season. But two recent tragedies have since given us all pause, and a solemn reminder of just how fragile and precious life truly is.

Today, our hearts remain heavy with the thoughts of Michael Gatto, an 18-year-old freshman who was killed off-campus on August 27, and Brooke Edwards, a sophomore who passed away on September 12 in her off-campus apartment. Nothing can mask the hurt that our students, faculty, staff and our entire community feel at the loss of these two young students – lives so full of energy, enthusiasm and promise. Our thoughts and prayers are with both families and their many friends during this difficult time. In true Eagle spirit, we came together to hold separate candlelight ceremonies in their honor. The outpouring of support from students was overwhelming and I am so grateful for the love that was shown to those still suffering from this terrible loss.

In memory of these students, our University will remain supportive and strong. We remain hopeful for a year filled with positive events, inspiring stories and continued success – hopeful for healing and building anew. We are all part of the Georgia Southern family. As we begin the healing process, we must also stay the course through these tragedies. We remain one of the safest universities in the south and continue to build a bright and successful Eagle Nation – one built on tradition, strength and sympathy.

Go Eagles!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Keel", written in a cursive style.

President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D.

Twitter: @PresKeel