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**GEORGIA  
SOUTHERN  
UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**  
*Reflective Educators for Diverse Learners*

# Southern Educator

March 2015

Volume 4 Issue 3

## Upcoming Events

- March 23** ITEC Google Hangout
- March 25-27** 8th Annual "The SoTL Commons" Conference
- March 27** COE Visit Day
- March 27** COE Research Retreat
- March 28** COE Scholarship Luncheon
- March 28** COE Board of Advisors Meeting
- April 8** Phi Kappa Phi Research Symposium
- April 14** COE Brown Bag Lunch Series
- April 29** COE Partnership Council

[More announcements](#)



**STEM Conference Draws Educators, Industry from Across the State**

## COE Funds Seed Grants

The College of Education has awarded more than \$10,000 in seed grants for spring 2015. The announcement was made this month by Amelia Davis, assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading, and co-chair of COE's Research Committee.

Two grants were awarded. The first went to Assistant Professor Alisa Leckie, and Assistant Professor Amanda Wall, both in the Department of Teaching and Learning. The title of their project is



*L-R, Assistant Professors Alisa Leckie and Amanda Wall.*

"Bringing Language to the Forefront of Instruction: A Teacher Research Project." The project will involve undergraduate students in research processes they will be able to apply in their future classroom settings. It will also examine the impact of including academic language into units developed by pre-service teachers across programs (Special Education, Early Childhood, and Middle

Grades). The research design uses a Teacher Research approach and case study methods to critically examine instructional practice.

The second grant went to Assistant Professor Olufunke Adefope and Assistant Professor Melony Allen, also both in the Department of Teaching and Learning. The title of their project is "A

Mixed Methods Study: Exploring Student Teachers' Mathematical Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and Adaptive Teaching." This project will reveal student teachers' mathematical pedagogical content knowledge as measured by the Learning Mathematics for Teaching Instrument and how and why student teachers



*L-R, Assistant Professors Olufunke Adefope and Melony Allen.*

Educators and industry professionals from across the state had the opportunity to learn about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) initiatives for teaching and learning at a conference held this month at Georgia Southern University and sponsored by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. More than 240 participants attended from Georgia universities, and included STEM professors, K-12 STEM teachers and industry professionals interested in STEM education.

"As a result of this conference, key players in STEM education in Georgia are getting to know each other and are seeking ways to work together for common goals. As a result of this conference, there is a renewed sense of excitement surrounding STEM teaching and learning," said Department of Mathematical Sciences Associate Professor Joy Darley, who serves as the conference coordinator.



L-R, COE Dean Thomas Koballa stands with Shan Cooper, Lockheed Martin VP & General Manager-Marietta; Tim Howard, Director of the Math & Science Learning Center at Columbus State University; and Martha Abell, Dean, College of Science & Mathematics at Georgia Southern.



COE Dean Thomas Koballa with Bulloch County Superintendent Charles Wilson (center) and Bulloch County teachers attending the conference.

adapt their instruction to meet the needs of learners. The findings will provide insight about how to best meet the needs of our student teachers as they develop mathematical PCK and their capacity to engage in adaptive teaching. The ultimate goal of this study is to enhance the ways in which COE prepares teachers, particularly in mathematics education.

The Seed Grants are funded by COE. The purpose of the grants is to provide initial, or seed, funding for research proposals that support the institutional research agenda of COE, including the advancement of the college's mission and conceptual framework commitments, and have a significant impact on the college's outreach to P-12 and community constituents and enhance the College's capacity to conduct significant education research.

## COE Ranks in Top Online Graduate Program



**BestColleges.com**

COE's online graduate programs have once again earned a top ranking. BestColleges.com, whose student resources have been featured on a number of government and education websites, ranked COE's online graduate programs 9 out of the top 25. Using their own methodology, schools were ranked according to admissions, enrollment, graduation and retention rates. "Schools that made our rankings don't only outperform schools offering master's degrees in education, they also average higher graduation and retention rates than all accredited schools offering online master's degree in any subject," BestColleges said. COE offers 18 completely online programs and endorsements and a blended master's program in higher education administration.

## Board of Advisors Member Named COE Alumnus of the Year

Joseph Barrow, superintendent of Fayette County Schools, has been named the 2015-2016 COE Alumni of the Year. Barrow is also a member of COE's Board of Advisors.

Before becoming Superintendent in Fayette, Barrow served as Superintendent of Ware County Schools. He also served as Principal of Glynn Academy in Brunswick, GA.

His honors and awards include the State Senate Resolution for Excellence in Education 2003; Governor's Cup Award Winner for highest SAT scores in the region, 2004-2005; Outstanding Educator Award given by the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals; and National Association of Secondary School Principals Urban Round Table State Representative.

As a Superintendent of Ware County Schools, Barrow





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IS ACCREDITED AND APPROVED BY

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The Standard of Excellence  
in Teacher Preparation



successfully led the county's schools to increase its graduation rate more than 30% in just five years. Under his leadership, the system received its first AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) award from the state in 2011.

## Other News

COE Dean Thomas Koballa and faculty members Christine Draper, associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning and Partnership Council Coordinator, and



Alejandro Gallard, Goizueta Distinguished Chair of Education, have been visiting area schools before the school day begins bearing coffee and donuts. The visits are a great way to get to know teachers and administrators and build stronger relationships. In the past two months, COE has visited Islands High School, Johnson High School, Jenkins High School and Windsor Forest High School.

Kerry Coursey, principal of Islands High School in Savannah poses with COE Dean Thomas Koballa. Coursey's diplomas from Georgia Southern's College of Education are seen behind her.

In the past two months, COE has visited Islands High School, Johnson High School, Jenkins High School and Windsor Forest High School.



COE's Alejandro Gallard pours

We welcome your feedback. E-mail us at [atcollegeofed@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:atcollegeofed@georgiasouthern.edu)

coffee at Johnson High School.

## ALUMNI:

We want to hear from you! Please fill out our [Alumni Survey](#) today.

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L-R, Mallory Fannin, an early childhood education major, Associate Professor Christine Draper and Carly Hudelson, a middle grades education major visited with legislators at the Georgia State House during GACTE (Georgia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education) Day at the Capitol last month.



Camden Middle School and Sugar Mill Elementary students pose with their trophies during the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl, Division II, regional competition held at the College of Education last month.

## ALUMNI NEWS

### 1970-79

**Amanda (Bruner) McRee** ('71 B.S.Ed.) retired after 35 years teaching high school Spanish at the end of the 2013-14 school year. She taught at Deerfield-Windsor School in Albany, GA, for the last 21 years.

## 1980-89

**Karen (Bishop) Beard** ('81 B.S.Ed.) is now working as the Director of Special Programs for Lexington City Schools, Lexington, NC. Special Programs includes exceptional children; academically/intellectually gifted and pre-K services; 504 plans; and English as a second language services.

**Linda (Haynes) Herman** ('89 Ed.S. School Administration and Supervision, '71 B.S.Ed.) works with AdvancED's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as a lead evaluator for public and private schools. After retiring as a high school principal, Linda worked as Georgia Department of Education Leadership Facilitator and the Director of School Improvement in Lumpkin County before her current position.

**Bob Mackessy** ('85 B.S.Ed. Health and Kinesiology) retired from education in 2014. He is enjoying retirement and travels to Georgia Southern from Cartersville, GA, for Eagles football games.

**Twyla (Humphrey) Preising** ('88 Specialist Social Science Education, '84 M.A.T. Social Science) lives in Phoenix, AZ, where she works for the Scottsdale Unified School District. In 2014, her student, Anita Ramaswamy, won the national DAR Christopher Columbus essay contest.

## 1990-99

**Doug Dirst** ('95 M.Ed. Special Education, '92 B.S.Ed.) has been teaching at Screven County Middle School for 23 years. He has coached football, basketball and track for the last 17 years.

**Suzanne (Jones) Tyson** ('90 Ed.S., '82 M.Ed.) retired from teaching English at Metter High School in 2012. She now works as Assistant to the President of the Guido Evangelistic Association.

## 2000-09

**Leondria (Jackson) Gray** ('03 B.S.Ed.) has been teaching for 11 years, and plans to go into school leadership. She currently is an IEP teacher and works at Northcutt Elementary in Clayton County Public Schools. Leondria says, "I am thankful for my teaching experience from GSU!"

**Kristi (Lafferty) Kaiser** ('04 M.Ed. Educational Leadership, '97 B.S.Ed) was named principal of Glennville Elementary School in July 2013. Glennville Elementary was named a Title I High Progress Reward School in 2014.

**Michele (Taylor) Rice** ('07 Ed.D. Educational Administration) was named Director of Prior Learning Assessment at Penn State University in 2014.

**Lisa (Fordham) Ruffo** ('04 Ed.S., '85 B.S.Ed. Early Childhood) is Induction Coordinator/Professional Learning Coach with the Savannah Chatham County School System. Prior to this position, Lisa served 25 years in the classroom. One of her roles is working with new teachers, mentors and coordinators to ensure that new teachers are provided with as much support as necessary. Lisa says that "we employ over 300 new teachers each year so it can be challenging but exciting all the same!"

**Chrissy Terry** ('07 M.Ed. Higher Education Administration) is the Assistant Director of Career and Alumni Success at Savannah College of Art and Design's Building Arts and Liberal Arts.

## 2010-

**Kimberly (Denise) Brown** ('13 M.Ed. Counselor Education), will receive her Ed.S. Counselor Education in spring 2015. Kimberly works for the Beaufort County School District as a professional school counselor.

**Kayla Drew Christopher** ('13 B.S.Ed. Middle Grades) won the Palmetto Teacher of Excellence award in the area of social studies.

**Elizabeth Harris** ('14 M.Ed. Higher Education) is a scheduling administrator at Georgia Perimeter College.

**Jennifer Hypolite** ('14 M.Ed. Counselor Education) is a school counselor at Carroll County Schools, GA, working on a mentor program for students with behavioral issues as well as those with low attendance.

**Alison Lieblich** ('12 B.S.Ed.), is a first grade teacher at Roswell North Elementary School, where she was once a student. Alison was just awarded the Rookie Teacher of the Year, given by her peers.

**Cleave Bivins Miller, III** ('12 Ed.S. Educational Leadership, '10 M.Ed. Educational Leadership, '08 B.S.Ed. Special Education), has been serving as an assistant principal at Richmond Hill High School since January 2013. Prior to working at Richmond Hill High, he taught special education at Statesboro High School for 4 ½ years.