COE faculty Alma Stevenson and Scott Beck knew that students learn best when they can connect their home and school experiences. They also knew that the children of migrant workers are often ignored in school curricula. To address this, they wanted to see how migrant students would respond to migrancy-themed children's picture storybooks. Stevenson and Beck received a service grant from Georgia Southern to support a summer project in Candler County where children of migrant farm workers read and responded to migrancy-themed books. The children then built upon that reading experience to write their own stories. The final book contained three stories created by the children with composite characters, illustrations and new plotlines based upon their own life experiences. These were then compiled into a professionally printed book.

"The goal of the summer program was to remediate and enrich the English literacy skills of individual students by valuing their home languages and placing their shared experiences at the center of the curriculum. The program yielded significant quantitative and qualitative results," Stevenson said. The students were evaluated at the beginning and end of the program with a writing skills rubric and a reading comprehension test. There was an average 16 percent increase in their scores. Moreover, the researchers said the children's responses to the project were rewarding. The children participating in the project said they were energized by writing and illustrating their work. The resulting book is already being read in this region's schools, migrant homes and by COE students to help them understand the challenges faced by migrant learners in their classrooms.
Graduate Center Expands

The College of Education’s dedicated graduate advisement center, the Graduate Academic Services Center (GASC), is expanding to meet the growing needs of graduate students. GASC Director Lydia Cross and Advisor Theresa Duggar this month welcomed Benjamin D. Wentworth as a new academic advisor. Benjamin most recently comes from the University of North Georgia. He earned his master’s degree in college student affairs administration from the University of Georgia and while in the program, interned with the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. He also interned with Arkansas State University. He brings with him experience in admissions and recruitment, assessment of standards and student learning targeted programming. He will be assuming program of study advisement for the M.Ed. in Instructional Technology as well as planning and attending graduate recruitment events.

GASC has also been on the road, presenting at the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) conference. Their presentation, titled “Exploring Advising: Reaching Distance Learners Through Online Advisement Courses,” discussed the opportunities to incorporate learning management system technologies in their advisement of online teaching and learning students. The presentation was sponsored by the Advising Graduate and Professional Students Commission, an honor in which only two presentations from the category are sponsored.

Partnership Council Organized

COE’s Partnership Council is composed of COE faculty and administration and P-12 educators and leaders. Among other goals, the council is committed to the simultaneous renewal of schools and educator preparation programs, and works to enhance partnerships to ensure that they are mutually beneficial for all participants. Associate Professor Christine Draper is serving as the Partnership Council Coordinator.

Alumni News
did you buy a brick, who did you buy it for, what was the recipient's reaction. We'll publish "Brick Testimonies" in upcoming issues of Southern Educator. Send your stories here.

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Two COE alumnae have been honored by Georgia Southern as members of the 2014 class of "40 Under 40." This annual recognition of alumni honors graduates who have made an impact in "business, leadership, community, educational and/or philanthropic endeavors." Congratulations to our two COE members, Jemelleh Coes ('08 B.S.Ed., '10 M.Ed.) and Torri Mitchell Jackson ('99 B.S.Ed., '02 M.Ed.). Coes is the 2014 Georgia Teacher of the Year. Jackson is a Liberty County educator.

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Three recent graduates of the School Psychology Ed.S. program presented their culminating Action Research projects at the Georgia Association of School Psychologists fall conference. The three graduates are Felicia Harley, a school psychologist in Newton County, Alicia Meng, a school psychologist in Union County, and Rebecca Smith, a school psychologist in Cherokee County.

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COE Dean Thomas Koballa, Jr., and COE alumna Kelli Lariscy ('91 B.S.Ed. Spanish), are pictured here during the Georgia Southern vs. Appalachian State football game late last month. Lariscy is vice-president of the Georgia Southern Parent and Family Association. She has been teaching Spanish in Effingham County for 23 years. Her daughter, Michaela Lariscy Kennedy, will be graduating with a B.S.Ed. in December.

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Eric Guenther ('05 B.S.Ed. History) was named Teacher of the Year for the Richland School District 2, Columbia, South Carolina.
Alumni Survey today.