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Georgia Southern students in ASCE competition

OCTOBER 16, 2006

Georgia Southern University students will go up against the likes of Auburn, the University of Alabama, Vanderbilt, and the University of Tennessee " but not on the playing field. A group of dedicated students in the Civil Engineering Technology program will take on those schools at the American Society of Civil Engineers' Regional Steel Bridge Design Competition, March 29-31, 2007.

Last year a team of civil engineering technology students from Georgia Southern took sixth place in competition. This year they'd like to do even better.

"The Steel Bridge Design Competition gives students an opportunity to acquire hands-on experience in cooperative group work, deadlines, and budgets, and at the same time strengthens their understanding of basic civil engineering design principles," said Marc Snyder, president of the ASCE student chapter at Georgia Southern.

"Last year's team showed a lot of spirit," said Rusty Windsor, this year's team captain. "This project is student-driven from beginning to end, and it requires innovation, testing, and team work."

If you'd like to assist Georgia Southern's student chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers by supporting the 2007 Steel Bridge Design Competition, contact chapter president Marc Snyder at 912-682-5957 or at msnyder1@email.georgiasouthern.edu.

Fulbright Scholar from China at Georgia Southern

OCTOBER 16, 2006

Georgia Southern University's ties to China were strengthened this year when Meng Deng, professor and associate dean of the College of Education at Central China Normal University, received a Fulbright grant to study and conduct research at Georgia Southern. Dr. Deng, along with his wife and son, will spend a year in Statesboro working with faculty in the College of Education and lecturing at universities throughout the United States.

"The focus of my research is inclusive special education," said Deng. "The momentum for inclusive special education is strongest right now in the United States, so this is a great opportunity for me to

learn." For his Fulbright year, Deng holds an appointment as an adjunct professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education.

This is Deng's third visit to the U.S., and he is comfortable in the culture and environment. Conditions for study are good, he says, and people are kind. He brought his wife and seven-year-old son along this time because he wanted them to have the intercultural experience of living outside of China.

"China is more open now, and many Chinese go for two-week tours to Europe and the U.S.," he said. "I have the privilege of traveling, and I enjoy each new place."

Deng pointed out that education in China has been strongly influenced by the United States, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when there was an "open door policy" that made China open to all countries. John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer, spent two years in China following World War I, and his visit resulted in a continuing influence of his ideas on modern Chinese education. Missionaries in the early 20th century created many schools in China, and even Deng's own institution, Central China Normal University, has historical evidence of being influenced by Yale University.

Prior to this Fulbright year, Deng's research focused on the adaptations necessary to bring special education into the regular classroom. For his Fulbright research project, "Meeting Special Education Needs in Mainstream Classrooms in the United States and China: A Cross-Cultural Study on Instructional Adaptations," he will visit a variety of Georgia classrooms to observe inclusive teaching practices, gathering classroom data to be compared with teaching techniques used in China. Working with him on the project is Kymberly Harris, assistant professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Georgia Southern.

As part of his Fulbright responsibilities, Deng will travel to other colleges and universities in the U.S. to share insights on his research and on life in China. He already has invitations from SUNY New Paltz and Rowan University, both near New York City, and he hopes to offer many seminars and talks during his year here.

"When I talk with Americans I can see they are keen to know about China," said Deng. "They don't know much about China's social and political system. In China it is the opposite. Chinese people know American culture and geography, and English is taught from grade three onward. Our cultures are combining fast."

One of Deng's goals is to develop strong ties between Central China Normal University and Georgia Southern, and he plans to host a visit by a group of Georgia Southern faculty once he returns to China.

International Festival brings world focus to southeast Georgia

OCTOBER 16, 2006

Southeast Georgia will take on a world-wide focus Saturday, Nov. 11, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. during the second annual International Festival. Held at Mill Creek Regional Park in Statesboro, the festival includes a Global Village featuring educational booths created by area middle school students, an international bazaar, international sports and games, international culinary delights, and the T-Mobile World Stage, this year highlighted by the spectacular dance troupe, The Legends of West Africa.

“The sponsors created this day to provide a positive, interactive environment that respects and values the cultural heritage of everyone who takes part,” said festival coordinator Angie Threatte, who represents Georgia Southern University’s Center for International Studies. “The festival promotes cross-cultural awareness by engaging the audience in international activities. We invite people of all nationalities and heritages throughout southeast Georgia to come and enjoy the food, the activities, and the fun!”

The International Festival is a collaborative effort among the Statesboro-Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Department, the Statesboro-Bulloch County Chamber of Commerce, the Statesboro Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Statesboro, Bulloch County Commissioners, the Bulloch County Board of Education, and Georgia Southern University.

Students from middle schools in Bulloch, Emanuel, and Screven Counties will join with Global Ambassador students from Georgia Southern to create country booths for this year’s Global Village, which will feature history, information, and artifacts from Brazil, Canada, China, Ecuador, Gabon, Germany, Hungary, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, and Russia.

The T-Mobile World Stage performances begin at 10:00 a.m. with a Thai dance group. At 10:30 the Magical Fires of Polynesia take the stage, followed by the Chinese Student and Scholars’ Association performing Tai Chi at 11:45 a.m. the Statesboro’s Mayor Pro Tem, Joe Brannen, will make opening remarks and lead off the Parade of Nations. The Inishfree Irish Dancers perform at noon, followed by French musicians and singers Jean-Paul and Dominique Carton at 1:00 p.m. At 1:30 p.m. Rosario Navarro, a member of the Awalim Dance Company, demonstrates the art of belly dancing, and at 2:00 p.m., the Mahour World Music Ensemble takes the stage.

At 3:00 p.m. The Legends of West Africa, an internationally renowned dance troupe, takes the stage to show traditional African costumes, ancient instruments and their modern relatives, and dancers

who flip, spin, and leap across the stage. The dancers will also share stories of traditional village life in West Africa.

Sponsors for this year's International Festival are T-Mobile, Target, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro-Bulloch Parks and Recreation, BB&T, Ranco Tents, Coca-Cola, Sea Island Bank, The Heritage Bank, Gailey Trophy, Trellis Garden Inn, Days Inn, Hackers Golf Park, Kiwanis Club, Downtown Rotary Club of Statesboro, Cleve White Nissan, Farmers and Merchants Bank, The Teaching Tree, and ConnectStatesboro.com.

For more information about the International Festival, visit the Festival Web site at <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/international/Festival/festival.htm> or contact Angie Threatte at 912-681-0570 or athreatte@georgiasouthern.edu.

FYE Success Series presents DUI programs Oct. 25

OCTOBER 16, 2006

The First Year Experience Success Series and Health Services are sponsoring the Save a Life Tour and a return visit from Chris Sandy.

On Wednesday, Oct. 25, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. the national Save a Life Tour will make a stop in the Russell Union Ballroom. The Tour includes simulators that give the participant the feeling of impaired driving with the simulated effects of alcohol gradually increasing.

Two additional large screen displays reveal what each driver sees, the face of the driver, a helicopter view of the driver's vehicle in traffic and an indicator level of the driver's impairment as it gradually worsens. True to real life, the drive usually ends in a serious accident.

Every driver will be served with a simulated citation as a powerful reminder of his or her driving under the influence.

At 7 p.m. in the Russell Union Theatre Chris Sandy will speak on 'From College Bar Life to Life Behind Bars.' Sandy is serving a mandatory 13-year sentence in a Georgia maximum security correctional institution for vehicular homicide involving the death of two people. He will speak about how your actions can impact the lives of others.

'We had a very impressive turnout when Chris Sandy spoke in the spring," said Paul Ferguson, director of Health Services. 'Chris talks about his experiences and makes no excuses, which is good for the students to hear. He definitely gets the student's attention.'

All presentations are free and orientation classes are strongly encouraged to attend.

For more information on the Save a Life Tour visit <http://www.savealifetour.net/index.html>.

For more information on each of these events, visit the First Year Experience Web site at <http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/fye/success.htm>.

These programs were made possible by a Georgia Office of Highway Safety Alcohol Grant.

Sculptor brings remarkable 18-piece show home to Georgia Southern

OCTOBER 16, 2006

More than twenty years after graduating from Georgia Southern University, internationally-known sculptor Eric Strauss will exhibit *Wild Ride: Artistic Lessons of Nature*, the largest body of his work assembled for an exhibition, at his alma mater. A traveling exhibition of eighteen sculptures made from stainless steel, bronze and found objects will be shown both in the lobby of the University's Performing Arts Center and at the Georgia Southern Botanical Garden from October to mid-January.

The public is invited to a reception for the artist on Friday evening, Oct. 27, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the lobby of the Performing Arts Center. James Burns from the Booth Western Museum will introduce Strauss at 7:30 p.m. and then the artist will lead an 'Artist's Talk' walking tour of his exhibition.

A 'Conversation with the Artist' will take place Saturday, Oct. 28, beginning at noon in the Georgia Southern Botanical Gardens during their 'Farm and Forest Festival,' which is being held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. He will be available to speak with the public about the horses and other sculptures in the outdoor venue.

As a business major in the 1980s, Strauss took an elective art course and unexpectedly discovered his calling. Working in the sculpture studio with sculptor Pat Steadman, an art professor (now emeritus), further inspired him to change his major and begin his life's work. Trained in both sculpture and ceramics at Georgia Southern, he also learned to cast bronze and carve marble during a Georgia Southern summer study abroad program in Cortona, Italy. After graduating, Strauss apprenticed with Atlanta sculptor Caroline Montague. Even though he had obtained a scholarship to

attend Washington University in St. Louis for graduate school, Strauss preferred the apprenticeship. With Montague he learned the art of assemblage, grinding and welding metals and attaching found objects.

Of his former student, Steadman writes, 'Eric is the most energetic and prolific sculptor I have ever known. Since graduating from Georgia Southern, Eric's creative need has driven him to produce a rich variety of sculptural forms, which are spread all over the country. I am extremely proud of Eric's success.'

Influences on Strauss's work have come from living on a dairy farm, a blueberry farm, in a cypress swamp and managing a horse farm for ten years while establishing his art career. His herd of six stainless steel horses, which will be stationed in the Botanical Garden, titled Roughstock: Chick, Angel, Dot, Dixie, Lightning and Sun, is obviously influenced by this period. Strauss is also affected by his love of the American West.

After several trips to southwestern states, he was inspired to create works influenced by the people, places and animals of the West.

From his studio on a mountaintop in Ellijay, Ga., at the southern end of the Great Smoky Mountains, Strauss combines industrial techniques with materials that inspire a connection to the earth. His outdoor pieces reflect light through textures and surfaces of twisted, turned and curved metals. Sculptures titled Southern Sunrise, Winds of Change, and Birds' World evoke the evolving world of nature.

The idea for a large traveling exhibition was conceived when James Burns, Director of Curatorial Services at the Booth Western Museum in Cartersville, Ga., visited Strauss at his home in Ellijay in 2005. Because of his fascination with the West, Strauss and the Booth Western Museum, which exhibits contemporary Western artwork, connected. The current exhibition was actually titled Wild Ride in reference to the journey of sculptor and curator as they conceived and executed the show. Opening first in April 2006 at the Booth Western Museum, then at Albany Museum of Art in Albany, Ga., it arrived at Georgia Southern in mid-October. After leaving Georgia Southern in early 2007 it will travel to the Georgia Museum of Art in Athens, Ga.

Strauss exhibits at Fay Gold Gallery and Lowe Gallery in Atlanta and has works in collections of museums, corporations and art lovers, including Sir Elton John. He is well known for his images of horses and other animals, celestial bodies and spiritual assemblages. Sculptures on view at the Performing Arts Center will include tabletop sunbursts, contemporary furniture and a modern interpretation of Our Lady of Guadalupe. As one views his work, Strauss says, 'I usually give the viewers enough realism to know where my starting point was and enough distortion to keep them interested in my piece.'

'We are so proud to present this unique and intriguing exhibition of sculpture by such a distinguished alumnus,' said Patricia Carter, Chair of the Betty Foy Sanders Art Department at Georgia Southern. 'We take great pride he takes in the education he received at Georgia Southern. Students and faculty are elated that he will be spending time on campus with art students currently enrolled in our sculpture program.'

Wild Ride: Artistic Lessons of Nature is sponsored at Georgia Southern by the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art Gallery Programming, which is supported by Student Activities Fees. Organized as a traveling exhibition by The Booth Western Museum in Cartersville, Ga., the exhibition is also generously supported by the Georgia Southern Performing Arts Center and the Georgia Southern Botanical Garden.

For more information, contact the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art at 912-871-1712.

All events are free and open to the public. The Performing Arts Center hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the Botanical Garden gates are open daily from 9 a.m. to dusk.