

# College of Business News

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Georgia Southern University

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# Georgia Southern students put classroom concepts into practice, help local high school students

November 12, 2018

A round of mock interviews with local high schoolers helped Georgia Southern University accounting students from the Parker College of Business put into practice concepts they learned in their forensic interview and interrogations class.

The accounting seniors conducted interviews with students at Southeast Bulloch High School in Brooklet, Georgia, based on applications and résumés the high school students created in the career development section of their English class.

Southeast Bulloch students were evaluated on their résumé and applications, appearance, confidence, comfort, attitude, expressiveness, and oral communication skills. Some examples of jobs the students interviewed for were welder, receptionist at a hospital and fast food manager, among others.

For the accounting students, this exercise was challenging. In their forensic interviews class they learn about verbal and nonverbal cues, preparing interview memoranda, and obtaining and preparing legally-admissible admission statements, but most had never been in the interviewer's seat before. They must also learn how to convince the interviewee to open up by gaining their trust and understanding their background.

"Being able to converse with the students and get them to open up to a complete stranger so that we could get to know them was the real learning opportunity," said Victoria Liggett, a senior accounting student. "This exercise was a good experience because it taught us how to handle sometimes awkward conversations and how to keep a conversation going when people don't want to talk."

While the high school students were not aware of the goals of this exercise for the accounting students, the mock interviews allowed for genuine and unbiased answers.

"By observing nonverbal behavior, I could tell when a student was not answering honestly, or when the student was simply answering with short answers that didn't give any real information," said Liggett.

For more than 10 years, the forensic interview and interrogations class taught by Don Berecz, director of the Center for Forensic Studies in Accounting and Business, has visited Southeast Bulloch High School to conduct mock interviews. Senior accounting students apply the concepts learned in the classroom and put them into practice, while also helping high school seniors become more comfortable with the interview process and interviewing in general.

This experiential learning activity recently expanded to include Statesboro High School and will expand to Portal High School in spring 2019.

"It's obviously a win-win for everyone involved," said Berecz. "We've gone full circle and have had at least one high school student who was interviewed end up in our course and go back to the high school to be the interviewer."

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Victoria Liggett, senior accounting student, interviews a high school student at Southeast Bulloch High School.