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Message from the President

Georgia Southern University

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Dear Colleagues,

Nov. 9, 2021

November represents a month of Thanksgiving, appreciation, and time with family and friends. At Georgia Southern, we have much to be thankful for.

We are thankful to all the staff and faculty who helped usher in another record-breaking freshman class, which contributed to our second straight year of enrollment growth at Georgia Southern. The final figures came out last week – we welcomed 5,430 new freshmen in Fall 2021 and our official Fall 2021 enrollment was 27,091.

We are thankful that COVID-19 cases continue to be in decline with all of our service areas below 100 cases per 100,000 - and more and more people are taking advantage of our vaccine distribution on our campuses, including those now eligible for booster shots. Again, don't forget to get your flu shot this season!

We are thankful for a wonderful month of celebrations in October including incredibly successful and fun Homecoming events and the “Celebrate Together!” event on the Armstrong Campus. I want to thank all of our faculty, staff, and students who participated and who spent much time and effort to bring our communities together.

I am thankful for the opportunity to welcome Retired Lt. General Leslie C. Smith to Georgia Southern as the W.E. Carter Chair of Leadership in the University’s Parker College of Business.

Gen. Smith is a distinguished Georgia Southern alumnus who recently finished a 38-year career with the U.S. Army, most recently serving as the Army’s 66th Inspector General. As the Carter Chair, he will focus on leadership development and education for students as well as for civic leaders across the state and region. He will serve as an ambassador for the College and for leadership education and development, while working with faculty and staff across the University to launch a sustainable leadership program that will accelerate the positive impact of the Parker College and the University. What an honor it is for us to welcome him back to Eagle Nation!

I am thankful for our newest addition to Eagle Nation and Georgia Southern Athletics, our new head football coach, Clay Helton. Clay is a Florida native, coming back home to the South, after six seasons as Head Coach at the University of Southern California. Last week, we welcomed he and his family and I look forward the future as he leads our student-athletes and Georgia Southern to great heights.

Yesterday, Nov. 8 was National First-Generation College Student Day and marked the 56th anniversary of the signing of the 1965 Higher Education Act, which helped millions of disadvantaged students become the first members of their families to earn college degrees. Last week, Georgia Southern University celebrated the accomplishments of faculty, staff, students and alumni who are among the first to graduate in their families. I am thankful for our TRIO, Student Support Services, and Alumni Relations staff who helped us acknowledge and support our current First-Generation students.

This Thursday, Veterans Day, we will take time to honor those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Yesterday, yellow ribbons were placed on trees and entryways at the Statesboro, Armstrong, and Liberty campuses as a part of the Military and Veteran Services' Salute to Service activities. Activities this week will honor those who have served in all branches of our military and what it continues to mean to all of us.

Finally, I am thankful to be the President of Georgia Southern University. The diversity and vibrancy of our communities, the collegiality and commitment of our faculty and staff, the faithfulness of our alumni, and most importantly the inspiration of our students remind me every day of how blessed I am. We are all so fortunate to be in the business of transforming lives!

Thank you!
Kyle

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PEOPLE...PURPOSE...ACTION:
Growing ourselves to grow others.