

Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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North American Studies consortium offers student exchange in Canada and Mexico

APRIL 5, 2007

Georgia Southern University and five other universities are developing a program in North American Studies that will result in new opportunities for students who want to study in Canada or Mexico. Because the new program is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, funds are available to assist with the costs involved in a semester of study abroad. As with all study abroad, tuition for the North American Studies program is paid to Georgia Southern and academic credit is received from Georgia Southern.

The six universities involved in the North American Studies consortium include Georgia Southern; Bowling Green State University (Ohio); the Universidad Veracruzana (Xalapa, Mexico); the Universidad de Sonora (Sonora, Mexico); Wilfrid Laurier University (Ontario, Canada); and Mount Allison University (New Brunswick, Canada).

“The consortium recently began developing the academic content of the North American Studies Program,” explained Nancy Shumaker, director of the Center for International Studies. “We are working together to develop a curriculum focused on six broad themes: culture; environmental issues; indigenous peoples; NAFTA and economics; nationalism and contested identities; and migration and mobility.” Shumaker pointed out that North American Studies are not extra classes; the courses taken will be courses that fit into each student’s degree program.

Named the North American Mobility Grant, this funding is designed to encourage students to move among the six institutions involved in the North American Studies program. The Center for International Studies is accepting applications now through September 2007 from students who want to study in Canada or Mexico.

For more information, contact Jeff Palis, Study Abroad Coordinator, at the Center for International Studies, 912-681-0332.

New opportunities available for faculty through North American Studies consortium

APRIL 5, 2007

Georgia Southern and five other universities in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. are developing a program in North American Studies that will lead to new international exchange opportunities for

both faculty and students. University President Bruce Grube recently signed a memorandum of understanding that affirms Georgia Southern's role in the consortium, which is funded by a \$1.07 million FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) grant.

The six universities involved in the North American Studies consortium include Georgia Southern; Bowling Green State University (Ohio); the Universidad Veracruzana (Xalapa, Mexico); the Universidad de Sonora (Sonora, Mexico); Wilfrid Laurier University (Ontario, Canada); and Mount Allison University (New Brunswick, Canada).

"The consortium recently began developing the academic content of the North American Studies Program," explained Nancy Shumaker, director of the Center for International Studies. "We have established a secure Web site that allows the six institutions to collaborate on developing teaching modules, and it allows us to upload resources for use by faculty who become involved in developing this curriculum."

The North American Studies program will focus on six broad themes: culture; environmental issues; indigenous peoples; NAFTA and economics; nationalism and contested identities; and migration and mobility. While all universities will contribute to each theme, Georgia Southern will take primary responsibility for issues of migration and mobility.

"Because we already have minors in Latin American Studies and American Studies, some of the resources we need are already available," said Shumaker. "We invite and encourage faculty with an interest in one or more of these six themes and an interest in faculty exchange in Canada or Mexico to become involved in developing this program. This grant is called the North American Mobility Grant because we want faculty and students to move among the six institutions involved. In this program, we are interested in faculty development as much as we are student development."

To learn more about the consortium and the faculty opportunities available, contact Shumaker at the Center for International Studies, 912-681-0332.

Kanzler takes top student awards at annual Honors Day Convocation

APRIL 5, 2007

Jennifer M. Kanzler captured both of the top student awards at the Georgia Southern University 2007 Honors Day Convocation held at the Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, April 4.

A senior early childhood education major from Roswell, Ga., Kanzler received the Georgia Southern University Alumni Association Award and the University System Academic Recognition Award.

The Alumni Association Award is presented annually to the graduating senior or seniors who have applied for graduation, completed all course work in residence and attained the highest grade point average.

The University System Academic Recognition Award is presented annually to a Georgia resident at each system institution on the basis of outstanding academic achievement.

Kanzler also received the Excellent Scholarship Graduating Senior award, which is presented annually to seniors who are graduating with a grade point average of 3.9 or higher at Georgia Southern.

More than 200 Georgia Southern students were recognized during the Honors Day Convocation. Inductees into a number of honor societies were also recognized.

Dittmer named professor of the year at 2007 Honors Day Convocation

APRIL 5, 2007

Jason Dittmer was presented with the Wells/Warren Professor of the Year Award at the Georgia Southern University 2007 Honors Day Convocation held at the Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, April 4.

Dittmer is an assistant professor of geography in the Department of Geology and Geography. He joined the University's faculty in 2003.

'This award means a lot to me because I know how many outstanding professors there are here at Georgia Southern,' Dittmer said. 'In particular, I appreciate that this comes from the students, and it's nice to know that they feel the same way about me that I feel about them.'

Dittmer has experience in teaching world regional geography, human geography, geography of Europe, urban geography, cultural geography, introduction to research methods, and political geography.

Dittmer is also very active in the University's Study Abroad program. He has taught in France and Russia, and he is scheduled to visit Italy this summer.

'When preparing to teach, I try to remember that the social connections that I teach in my geography classes are just as important at the scale of the classroom," Dittmer said. 'Getting students to connect to the material means opening yourself up as an instructor to the students, their concerns and their ideas.

'It's very gratifying to know that they feel that connection, too."

The winner of the Wells/Warren Professor of the Year Award is selected annually by the University's students. Members of the Gamma Beta Phi honor society interview the department heads of the finalists and look at student evaluations of the professors.

The group then conducts a blind interview of the finalists before selecting the winner of the award, which is endowed by former Gamma Beta Phi advisors J. Norman and Rosalyn Wells. The award is named in honor of their parents, Nolan and Audrey Wells and Hartwell and Lucile Warren.

A native of Jacksonville, Fla., Dittmer graduated from Jacksonville University with a B.A. in political science and international studies. He later earned an M.A. in international affairs and a Ph.D. in geography from Florida State University.

Dittmer's main area of research is political geography, especially the fields of popular geopolitics and regional identity construction. He has given invited lectures at the University of Georgia's Department of Geography, the Florida State University World Affairs Program, and the Claude Pepper Institute for Aging.

Dittmer is a member of the Allen E. Paulson College of Science and Technology Excellence in Research Committee. He has served on the Geology and Geography Scholarship Committee, the departmental curriculum committee, and a faculty search committee.

In addition, Dittmer is a member of the Association of American Geographers and the National Council for Geographic Education.

Paulson Student Research Award winners will present findings at April 11 symposium

APRIL 5, 2007

The 2006-2007 winners of the Paulson Student Research Awards at Georgia Southern University will present their findings at an on-campus symposium on Wednesday, April 11.

The 15 students were awarded a total of \$25,000 in research funding from the College Office of Undergraduate Research (COUR), which is part of the Allen E. Paulson College of Science and Technology (COST).

Free and open to the public, the symposium will begin at 4 p.m. in the Professional Development Center of the College of Information Technology Building.

“The faculty of COST has always put a great of emphasis on research, and the Paulson awards are a great way to encourage our students to get involved,” COUR Director Bruce Schulte said. “These funds will help deserving undergraduate students obtain hands-on knowledge of the research process, such as reading the literature, acquiring data, and writing and presenting their findings.”

The winners of the Paulson Student Research Awards are announced each spring. To be eligible for an award, a student must be enrolled as an undergraduate major in one of the units of COST, which includes the departments of biology; chemistry; construction management and civil engineering technology; geology and geography; mathematical sciences; mechanical and electrical engineering technology; and physics.

In addition, the student must be mentored by a member of the COST faculty. The student had to submit an application that included a description of the proposed research project, an explanation of how the experience would benefit both the student and the mentor’s research program, and a proposed budget of up to \$2,500.

All applicants were interviewed by the COUR committee, which is composed of one member from each department of COST. The committee also conferred with Schulte before determining the winners and the amounts of the awards.

“The students went through a very rigorous application process,” Schulte said. “The ones who emerged should be very proud of their accomplishments.”

The awards are divided into two categories: one for the math and science departments, and one for the technology departments.

The Math and Science awards were presented to the following students:

- Rebekah Baskin for her chemistry project titled “Bile Salt/Phospholipid Aggregation Below Critical Micelle Concentrations.” Her mentor is Associate Professor Laura Frost.
- Steven Crocker for his biology project titled “Echinoderm Development From Gamete to Juvenile: A Study on Ideal Growing Conditions and Gender Divergence.” His mentor is Associate Professor Sophie George.
- James Davis for his chemistry project titled “Synthesis of Hexa-substituted Cyclopropanes.” His mentor is Instructor W. Rucks Winkeljohn.

- Perry Hampton Harbin for his biology project titled 'Recruitment and Growth of Fishes Along a Mangrove Habitat Gradient.' His mentor is COST Dean Bret Danilowicz.
- Melissa B. Mobley for her biology project titled 'Characterization of Novel Spiroplasma Species Using the Transmission Electron Microscope.' Her mentor is Associate Professor Laura Regassa.
- Katalin Patonai for her biology project titled 'Morphometric Analysis of Periwinkles (Littoria irrorata) Driven by Predation Risk in the Salt Marshes of Coastal Georgia. George is her mentor.
- Kartik M. Reddy for his project titled 'Prevalence of the Q-fever Agent in Ticks Collected from Southeast Georgia.' His mentor is Associate Professor Quentin Fang.
- Michael A. Sapp for his biology project titled 'Differential Expression of the Antimicrobial Gene Attacin in Male and Female Houseflies.' His mentor is Assistant Professor Dana Nayduch.

The Technology awards were presented to following students:

- Ryan Bridges for his mechanical engineering technology project titled 'The Implementation of Feedback Control Systems.' His mentor is Assistant Professor Aniruddha Mitra.
- Parker Bussey for his mechanical engineering technology project titled 'The Design, Analysis, Production and Performance Testing of a Mini Baja Vehicle.' His mentor is Associate Professor Brian Vlcek.
- Dustin Gaddis for his mechanical engineering technology project titled 'The Design, Analysis and Fabrication of a Formula SAE Race Car.' Vlcek is his mentor.
- Heidi Glisson for her mechanical engineering technology project titled 'Experimental Determination of the Minimum Population or Sample Size to Characterize Fatigue Life.' Vlcek is her mentor.