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Georgia Southern anticipates largest enrollment in school history

AUGUST 8, 2007

Georgia Southern University will enter its second century of service with what is expected to be the largest enrollment in the history of the institution.

President Bruce Grube made the announcement during his ninth annual State of the University Address, which was part of the Fall Convocation Ceremony held on the morning of Wednesday, Aug. 8, in the Performing Arts Center.

Grube also revealed that the incoming freshman class is expected to have the highest average SAT score in Georgia Southern history, and that the University's retention rate is expected to reach its highest level ever.

"A Century of Progress, Pride and Promise" was the theme for the ceremony that marks the official beginning of a new academic year for faculty and staff at Georgia Southern.

The theme recognizes the University's Centennial celebration, which began last December and will continue through this October.

According to preliminary estimates, the University expects its final enrollment for Fall 2007 to exceed 17,000 students. That number would break the record of 16,646 students established in Fall 2005. In fact, it would mark the fifth time in six years that Georgia Southern has set a new record for enrollment.

In addition, preliminary figures indicate that the average SAT score of the incoming freshman class will increase over the previous fall for the 13th year in a row.

The freshman class of Fall 2006 had an average SAT score of 1104, which was the highest such figure ever at Georgia Southern.

The average SAT score of the incoming freshmen at Georgia Southern has increased by more than 110 points since Grube became the University's 11th president in 1999.

Also, the University's retention rate the percentage of first-time freshmen from one fall semester who return for the following fall semester is expected to exceed 80 percent for the first time in school history.

The final official enrollment number, average SAT score for incoming freshmen, and retention rate for Fall 2007 will be announced in October.

In addition to Grube's address, the convocation ceremony featured a showing of the University's official Centennial video, a 22-minute production in which campus and community leaders from the past and present tell the story of Georgia Southern's first 100 years.

The convocation ceremony also included the presentation of the President's Medal to Michal Braz, a professor in the Department of Music. The annual Faculty Awards of Excellence were presented, too.

Finally, the convocation ceremony included remarks from Linda Bleicken, the University's provost and vice president for Academic Affairs; Marc Cyr, the Faculty Senate moderator; Melanie Mosley, who represented the Personnel Advisory Council; Jon Simpson, the president of the Student Government Association; and W. Bede Mitchell, the dean of the Zach S. Henderson Library.

As it enters its second century, the University is continuing to update its physical facilities. During the previous academic year, for example, both the Henderson Library and the Recreation Activity Center (RAC) unveiled beautiful and functional new additions.

The first phase of the Henderson Library construction and renovation project is an 89,000 square foot addition to the east side of the original building. Featuring a striking three-story glass atrium and virtual waterfall, the new structure houses an automated retrieval system capable of storing more than 800,000 items in bins that are stacked 45 feet in the air.

Meanwhile, the RAC saw its size more than double to 215,000 square feet with an addition that features basketball courts, multiple swimming pools and a weight room.

The conversion of Veazey Hall from a residence hall into classrooms, offices and administrative space for the Communication Arts Department is expected to be completed in September. The revamped facility will also house the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies as well as the Office of Strategic Research and Analysis.

The Center for Art and Theatre is scheduled for completion in October. Covering almost 30,000 square feet, this brand-new facility will house galleries for displays by student and professional artists, an experimental Black Box theatre for student productions, and administrative offices.

The conversion of Cone Hall from a residence hall into administrative space and offices for the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health is scheduled to be finished in November. The Academic Success Center, the Regents Center for Learning Disorders, and the Student Disability Resource Center will also be housed in Cone Hall.

The second and final phase of the Henderson Library project remains on schedule. Occupying a total of 12,000 square feet, the four-story addition to the west side of the original building is expected to be completed in June 2008.

Finally, the makeover of Paulson Stadium is continuing. The previously plain concrete concourse between the press box and concession stands on the home side is being replaced with decorative brick pavers and enhanced with trees and other plants. In addition, the concession stands and restrooms on the home side are being renovated. The project is scheduled to be finished in time for the football team's season opener against West Georgia on Saturday, Sept. 8.

The convocation ceremony is the highlight of Fall Convocation Week, which began on Friday, Aug. 3, with a series of workshops and meetings for faculty and staff.

Convocation week will conclude on Friday, Aug. 10. That same day, some 3,800 students are scheduled to arrive on campus and move into the University's 10 residence halls. A series of Welcome Week activities for the students will begin on the evening of Aug. 10 with the annual cookout on Sweetheart Circle.

Classes will begin on Monday, Aug. 13.

Eagle Entertainment hosts "Eagles After Dark" this fall

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Eagle Entertainment will host seven 'Eagles After Dark' throughout the fall semester. Following are the dates and activities:

- Friday, Aug. 17 – Outdoor Laser Tag, RAC Pavilion, 9 p.m. to midnight. Suit up in real laser tag uniforms and guns.
- Friday, Aug. 25 – Inflatables, Russell Union Ballroom, 8 p.m. to midnight. Bounce around on a wide range of inflatable equipment. The attractions are designed for individuals of all ages and always provide great physical entertainment. The evening will include various games, free food and a live DJ.
- Friday, Sept. 7 – Demo, Dinner and a Movie, Russell Union Ballroom 9 p.m. to midnight. Get a taste of what professional chefs learn at the Culinary Institute of America. The hour-long cooking demonstration, tasting highlights and recipes reflect the theme of the featured movie, 'Shrek 3.'
- Friday, Sept. 21 – Free Miniature Golf at Hackers, 9 p.m. to midnight. Take a break and enjoy free rounds of miniature golf at Hackers Twin Falls Miniature Golf Course. Unlike your typical miniature golf course, Hackers features dog legs, rolling fairways, traps and water hazards that will challenge participants on every putt.

- Friday, Oct. 6 – Halo 3 Tournament, Russell Union Ballroom, 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Do you have what it takes to be crowned the best? Put your skills up to the test against the rest of Georgia Southern in Microsoft's highly anticipated third installation of the Halo Trilogy and win a \$200 grand prize.
- Friday, Oct. 26 – Fireworks & LaserTron. Kick off Homecoming weekend with a fireworks show in J.I. Clements Stadium at 9 p.m. followed by LaserTron in the Russell Union Ballroom at 9:30 p.m. LaserTron is a version of laser tag developed for indoor-arena play.
- Friday, Nov. 9 – Zane Williams: Story Tellers, Russell Union Ballroom 9 p.m. A recently signed, up and coming singer/songwriter plays his music and tells the stories behind his songs. With such diverse musical tastes, it's not surprising that finding his own voice as an artist has been a long journey for the Abilene, Texas, native.

These free activities are offered to students as an alternative to parties and other alcohol-related events.

'Eagles After Dark' is sponsored by the Office of Student Activities, Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement, University Housing and the Multicultural Student Center.