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Message from the President

Georgia Southern University

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Dec. 7, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

The fall semester is quickly coming to a close...final exams are under way and we are preparing for our [fall commencement ceremonies](#) December 14 (Statesboro) and December 16 (Savannah). We will celebrate the accomplishments of more than 2,100 graduating students receiving baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, and specialist degrees. What I know at Georgia Southern is that our graduates are ready day one and will bring their knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities to impact the communities they serve. And a special thanks to our faculty and staff who have helped each of our students along their journey! Collectively, we are in the business of transforming lives!

I hope you will be able to attend or at least watch [our Eagles in the Myrtle Beach Bowl](#) at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 16, inside Conway's Brooks Stadium. The game will be televised nationally by ESPN. Making a post-season bowl game is a great accomplishment for our student-athletes and coaches. Also, congratulations to our volleyball team for a 20-win season and for being invited to post season play with the National Invitation Volleyball Tournament. We will host the University of South Florida in the Great Eight of the National Invitational Volleyball Championship (NIVC) this evening, December 7 at 6 p.m. inside Hanner Fieldhouse. [Tickets and more information are available online.](#)

Finally, tremendous accolades go out to [our women's rifle team](#), who reached a No. 3 national ranking in November. The squad will be looking to win its third straight Southern Conference title in March and to qualify for the NCAA Championship for the first time in the program's history.

Earlier this week, I sent an [email to campus](#) announcing several new appointments and reorganizations. With the departure of Dr. John Lester, Vice President for University Communication and Marketing, Dr. Annalee Ashley assumes the role of Vice President for External Affairs, Communications, and Strategic Initiatives; as well as Chief of Staff to the President. Dr. Dominique Quarles will expand his role effective January 1 to lead an integrated approach to organizational effectiveness, leadership and professional development, and inclusive excellence. And, after a national search, we welcome a new leader to Georgia Southern University, Dr. David Weindorf, who will assume the position of Vice President for Research and Economic Development effective April 1. I want to thank Dr. Chris Curtis for his current service as interim Vice President for Research and Economic Development. Dr. Curtis' work helped prepare and launch our current efforts to achieve Carnegie R1 Classification.

To that end, I want to highlight another one of our outstanding faculty and [their most recent research award](#) to provide an in-depth assessment of the conditions of Georgia's working waterfronts.

Georgia Southern and Jennifer Sweeney Tookes, Ph.D. recently was awarded a grant totaling more than \$254,000 so student researchers can provide both qualitative and quantitative data about the current conditions of Georgia's commercial fishing docks and associated infrastructure. Such information can assist the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division in identifying and prioritizing the most critical repairs and enhancements needed to help sustain its commercial fishing industry in the future. The goal is to address these needs, provide support to commercial fishers, and look for new, innovative ways to increase the future resilience of commercial fishing in Georgia. What a rich experience this project will provide for our students!

During this season of celebration and accomplishment, I want you all to know how truly thankful I am to be your President and colleague. My family (Jane and Lily) and I wish everyone a wonderful holiday break, and our hope for each of you is that this season is filled with joy and cheer! Go Eagles!!!

Sincerely,

Kyle

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