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## [NYAR conference hosts over 1,200 attendees in March](#)

April 10, 2017



Keynote Speaker Alan Sitomer, California teacher of the year, presented “Bringing Rigorous Learning to Life: Having Your Academic Cake and Eating It, Too!” during the NYAR 2017 Conference.

The 28th annual National Youth-At-Risk Conference (NYAR), hosted by Georgia Southern University’s College of Education (COE) and the Division of Continuing Education, was held March 5-8 in Savannah, GA. The largest conference hosted by the University, NYAR attracted over 1,200 attendees this year. The conference was co-chaired by Dan Rea, Ed.D., professor of educational psychology, and [Cordelia Zinskie, Ed.D.](#), professor of educational research, both faculty members in the COE’s Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading.

The keynote speakers for this year’s event included Manny Scott, Original Freedom Writer; Alan Sitomer, California Teacher of the Year; and Joanne Billingsley, an award-winning teacher and author.

Several COE faculty members presented at the 2017 conference including: Zinskie and Rea, “ESSA Meets EARL: Preparing Educators of Students at Risk for the Every Student Succeeds Act”; Zinskie and Rea, “National Youth-At-Risk Journal: A Review of Year Two Goals and Accomplishments”; [Sabrina Ross, Ph.D.](#) and [Robert Lake, Ed.D.](#), “Social Justice and Diversity Certification for Educators”; and [Karin Fisher, Ph.D.](#), “Engaging Students at Risk Through Robotics.” [Eric Landers, Ph.D.](#), moderated a panel on bullying, and Lake served as the moderator for the “Meeting the Challenges of Rural Education” panel.

In addition, COE's [Tracy Linderholm, Ph.D.](#), associate dean for graduate education and research, conferred the National High Flying School Awards.

A number of the College's students participated in the conference. Kasey Bozeman, Ed.D. Curriculum Studies candidate, gave a presentation on "Using Color, Comics, and Creativity to Cultivate Comfort for Military-Connected Kids." She also served as a member of the "Meeting the Challenges of Rural Education" panel. In addition, COE students served as conference volunteers. These volunteers, coordinated by Merissa Maynard, National Youth-At-Risk Conference graduate assistant and school psychology graduate student, included the following graduate students: Ivy Brannen, curriculum studies; Katherine Bruce, school psychology; Tracy Colebrooke, educational leadership; Brandi Gooden, special education; Karen Liranzo, counseling; Taylor Thomas, school psychology; and Gabrielle Whisenton, higher education. Undergraduate early childhood education major Laura McCarter was also a conference volunteer.

The 29th annual meeting of the National Youth-At-Risk Conference will be held March 4-7, 2018 in Savannah, GA. Proposals are now being accepted for next year's conference at [http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar\\_savannah/](http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/nyar_savannah/); the submission deadline is August 14, 2017.

## Retirees recognized at ceremony

April 10, 2017



Missy Bennett, Ed.D.

On Wednesday, March 29, Georgia Southern University President Jaimie Hebert, Ph.D. recognized retirees during the 2017 Retirees Recognition Ceremony.

Held at Georgia Southern's Builders of the University Terrace, retirees received a glass keepsake to take home as well as a plaque that is placed on the wall of the terrace to commemorate their years of service to the University.

In attendance was College of Education's Missy Bennett, Ed.D., professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning. Bennett, a Quadruple Eagle Alumna, earned a bachelor's of biology, masters and specialist of education in science, and doctorate of curriculum studies all from Georgia Southern. She served as a high school science teacher before joining the faculty at the College, where she has served for 20 years.

Recognized but not in attendance for the ceremony were College faculty Beverly McKenna, Ronnie Sheppard, Ed.D, Beverly Strauser, and staff member Patricia H. Collins.

McKenna, assistant professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning, joined the College in 1989. Prior to joining Georgia Southern, McKenna elementary school educator in Missouri and Kansas.

Sheppard, a professor of middle grades education, has dedicated over 27 years to the College. He previously served as Chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning, as well as the coordinator of the middle grades education program.

Strauser was as instructor in early childhood education for the Department of Teaching and Learning for 17 years. Prior to joining Georgia Southern, Strauser taught at Armstrong Atlantic State University.

Collins, a 23-year veteran at Georgia Southern, served as the senior administrative assistant for the Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading.