

# College of Education News

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Georgia Southern University

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# Alma Stevenson receives 2017 Inspiring Leaders in STEM Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine

August 7, 2017



Alma Stevenson, Ph.D.

Georgia Southern University College of Education Associate Professor [Alma Stevenson, Ph.D.](#) has been named a recipient of the 2017 Inspiring Leaders in STEM Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the largest and oldest diversity and inclusion publication in higher education.

The Inspiring Leaders in STEM Award honors professionals from underrepresented groups who have made a difference in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Stevenson will be featured in the September 2017 issue of *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine as one of 40 recipients in the nation to receive this recognition.

“We know many of those working in STEM fields, especially those from underrepresented groups, are not always recognized for their success, dedication and mentorship to others,” said Lenore Pearlstein, owner and publisher of *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine. “We want to honor the many professionals who are inspirations to their colleagues, their community and to young people who may be interested in a future career in STEM. We are proud to honor these leaders as role models to all.”

Inspiring Leaders in STEM Award recipients were nominated by a colleague and selected by *INSIGHT Into Diversity* based on their efforts to inspire and encourage a new generation of young people to consider careers in STEM through mentoring, teaching, research and successful programs and initiatives.

“One of my main attributes as a person is my commitment to serve underrepresented and underserved populations,” explained Stevenson. “My current research looks at these populations and addresses STEM education issues.”

During her time spent as an elementary school educator in El Paso, TX, one of Stevenson's primary responsibilities was to make modifications for science and math instruction to be accessible for all students including students with exceptionalities and English as a Second Language (ESOL) learners.

Her dissertation research examined how bilingual students choose to use their linguistic resources in both science classrooms and lab settings. Since moving into higher education, Stevenson has focused much of her research on literacy and language development in science classrooms. She teaches undergraduate and graduate-level courses including: Literacy in the Content Areas; Approaches to Literacy; and Critical Issues in Literacy Education with Diverse Populations.

She has served on several STEM grant-funded projects since joining Georgia Southern University in 2011. Currently, Stevenson is working with College of Education colleagues Robert Mayes, Ph.D. and Lacey Huffling, Ph.D. on Georgia's GEAR UP! grant focusing on the professional development of 8th grade mathematics and physical science teachers.

"As a professor, my research, service and teaching all focus upon the goal of ensuring that challenging and empowering curricula is available for all students, regardless of their socio-economic, cultural, academic or linguistic backgrounds," said Stevenson.

A past recipient of the College's Jack Miller Award for Scholarly Activity, Stevenson serves in voluntary roles with Bulloch County Schools and the Georgia Department of Education's Migrant Education program, including presenting workshops for parents and teachers and participating in statewide assessment initiatives.

"Dr. Stevenson is a well deserving candidate for this award because of her hard work and dedication to the field of STEM education," said Thomas Koballa, Ph.D., dean of the College of Education. "She does superb job of linking her passion for research with her attention to the needs of students, particularly students whose potential for greatness may be overlooked. STEM fields serve as vehicles for Dr. Stevenson to satisfy her desire to bring out the best in people and to improve educational opportunities for all through her studies of student learning and motivation."

For more information about the 2017 Inspiring Leaders in STEM Award and *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, visit [insightintodiversity.com](http://insightintodiversity.com)

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# Georgia science teachers study wildlife on Sapelo and Jekyll Islands

August 7, 2017



Participants in the 2017 Blue Bloods and Red Knots of Sapelo Island workshop

College of Education faculty members [Heather Scott, Ed.D.](#) and Missy Bennett, Ed.D., led 12 Georgia science teachers this summer in activities centered on the interdependence of the Atlantic Horseshoe Crab and the migratory Red Knot Shorebird on Sapelo Island.



In collaboration with geology professor [Fred Rich, Ph.D.](#), Scott and Bennett coordinated the teacher development course including a spring preview class held April 28-30 on Jekyll Island, GA and a week-long class held May 28-June 2 on Sapelo Island, GA.

“Our goal was to use native Georgia species to help teachers incorporate inquiry into their science classrooms,” explained Bennett.

During the spring preview, participating teachers caught, collected data on, and tagged horseshoe crabs. When they reconvened in the summer for their week-long course on Sapelo Island, teachers conducted inquiry investigations and additional study of the horseshoe crab and shorebirds. The workshop included beach seining (net fishing) as well as investigations of the salt marsh, beach, maritime forest and tidal creek. Teachers also visited the Coastal Resources Office of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Jekyll Island Environmental Education Center.

“While on Sapelo Island, teachers worked to develop inquiry-based science projects in the role of students,” said Scott. “They also began developing ideas for using inquiry in their classroom next year.”

In fall, participants will come together again for the Georgia Association of Marine Educators (GAME) annual conference on St. Simon’s Island, GA, where they will share their ideas for classroom inquiry.

As a final component of the grant, Bennett and Scott will support the teachers by visiting their classrooms in the coming year to observe their lessons and implementation of the inquiry-based science projects they crafted this summer.



COE Instructor Heather Scott, Ed.D. (left) and Professor Missy Bennett, Ed.D. showcase wildlife caught on Sapelo Island during their workshop.

Additional collaborators for the grant workshop include Paul Medders, fisheries biologist with the Department of Natural Resources in Brunswick, GA, and Adam Mackinnon of the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve.

For the workshop, College of Education partnered with Emanuel County Schools and had four teacher participants from the county participate including Kelly Jarriel, Hayward Johnson, Gray Mendieta and Cindy Smith. Additional participants included: Brooke Bearden, Glynn Academy; Mallorie Blount, Arthur Williams Middle School; Dana Doss, Screven County High School; Greg Grimes, Ware County High School; Michael Herrin and Kimberly Holland, Chestatee High School; Kathryn Mullen, Meadowcreek High School; and Michael Riccio, Richmond Hill High School.

This workshop is funded by Georgia's Improving Teacher Quality Higher Education Program, with Title II funds from the United States Department of Education. Funds are used to enhance the teaching of science, mathematics, language arts, reading and social studies at the elementary, middle and high school levels in public and private schools.

This is the fifth consecutive year that College of Education has received funding from the Improving Teacher Quality program for this grant, and the fifteenth year that Bennett and Scott have had Improving Teacher Quality grants funded. COE Associate Professor, [Yasar Bodur, Ph.D.](#), has served as the grant evaluator since 2015.

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