

College of Education News

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Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern COE professor represents Georgia at national summit on special education

August 7, 2019



Karin Fisher, Ph.D., in Washington, D.C.

Karin Fisher, Ph.D., assistant professor at Georgia Southern University College of Education, was one of 10 college professors in the United States to be selected to participate in the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Special Education Legislative Summit held in Washington D.C., in July.

Participants were selected to represent regions from all over the country and received a \$1,000 stipend to assist in registration and travel expenditures for the summit.

Fisher was assigned to a team of individuals representing the state of Georgia and provided a higher education and teacher preparation perspective. Team members also included special education teachers, school administrators and nonprofit agency representatives. Topics encompassed the issues that impact youth with disabilities, their families and the professionals who work on their behalf.

“As an assistant professor of special education and a parent of a student with autism, I am dedicated to improving educational and developmental outcomes for children with disabilities and special

gifts and talents,” said Fisher. “This summit made me feel like I am making a difference for everyone — teachers, professors, parents and most importantly, the lives of the students.”

One of the courses that Fisher teaches at Georgia Southern is Special Education Law and Procedures, a graduate-level course that provides knowledge about legislative requirements and procedures associated with children with special needs.

Fisher found that the summit helped to provide a deeper understanding of federal and state policies and processes. Specifically, Georgia's shortage of more than 3,000 special education teachers was addressed.

One possible resolution discussed at the summit, Fisher said, is to invest more money in programs sponsored under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), federal legislation that ensures students with disabilities are provided with free and appropriate public education that is tailored to meet their needs.

“Investing more money in IDEA programs and special education research to provide the tools to be an effective professor and researcher would help improve outcomes for these children,” said Fisher. “I also think it is important to improve the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant and public service loan forgiveness programs. At Georgia Southern, as of May 2019, 50 students used the TEACH grant, and of those, 44 percent were in special education teacher preparation programs.”

The CEC's Special Education Legislative Summit is hosted annually, providing educators with information about the legislative process and forthcoming policies that could affect students with disabilities. Participants are also given the opportunity to meet with state and regional legislators and/or members of their team.

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Bodur leads elementary and special education at Georgia Southern

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Yasar Bodur, Ph.D.

As of July 1, Yasar Bodur, Ph.D., began service to the College of Education as interim chair of the Department of Elementary and Special Education at Georgia Southern University.

Bodur has served as a faculty member in the College for 13 years, earning tenure in 2011. He served as program director for Ed.S. in Elementary Education as well as the faculty assessment coordinator for the College. Bodur has chaired over 35 Ed.S. and Ed.D. committees for thesis and dissertation work.

Bodur was also recognized for his excellence in scholarship, service and teaching with the College's Jack Miller Educator of the Year Award in 2012.

"Dr. Bodur is an exemplary member of our team in the College of Education, and I feel confident in his abilities to unite and lead the Department of Elementary and Special Education," said Heaston. "His strong record of service, scholarship and

teaching not only during his career at Georgia Southern, but in his over 25 years of experience as an educator as both an elementary classroom teacher and a professor in the University setting provide Dr. Bodur with a strong background and understanding to lead the Department."

Bodur was appointed after former department chair John Hobe, Ed.D., returned to rejoin faculty. Hobe served as a professor of elementary and special education at Armstrong State University from 1991 until the consolidation, when he was named chair of the newly formed Department of Elementary and Special Education.

"I want to recognize John and the work that he has done in leading the Department of Elementary and Special Education," said Heaston. "I thank him for his commitment and service to the College and for taking on a leadership responsibility in the Department during a time of transition and change for the University."

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[Leckie named Interim Assistant Dean for College of Education](#)

August 7, 2019



Alisa Leckie, Ph.D.

Georgia Southern University College of Education recently announced the appointment of Alisa Leckie, Ph.D., as the Interim Assistant Dean for Partnerships and Outreach, official August 1.

The position of assistant dean was created to focus on the College's relationships with schools as well as outreach in the communities including units such as the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education (i²STEM^e) as well as the Teaching as a Professional Pathway program in high schools across the state.

"Dr. Leckie has a strong track record of collaborations with schools including her long-standing relationship with both the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System and Effingham County Schools where she provides teachers with content and professional development to better support English Language Learners (ELLs)," said Associate Dean for Administration and Faculty Affairs Tracy Linderholm, Ph.D. "She has recently agreed to collaborate with Bulloch County

Schools to conduct a feasibility study for new student services."

Leckie serves on the Advisory Board for the Hesse K-8 Professional Development School and has served as program evaluator on a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant through a collaboration with the College's i²STEM^e and the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT). Presently, she co-chairs Georgia Southern's largest and oldest conference, the National Youth-At-Risk Conference hosted in Savannah each spring.

"Alisa's leadership skills are impressive as well," added Linderholm. "She lead a pilot-test for our new prior learning assessment (PLA) policy for graduate students, co-developed and grew enrollment in a new M.Ed. program, co-developed a new endorsement program, and chaired the University's undergraduate curriculum committee during consolidation."

Leckie joined the College of Education in 2013 and serves as an associate professor of English Learner Education. She was named a 2018-2019 recipient of the Jack Miller Award for Teaching.

"This is just a short list of her accomplishments in the area of partnerships and leadership," said Linderholm. "We congratulate Dr. Leckie and wish her success in the coming year."

Leckie will serve as interim assistant dean for approximately a year, during which time the College will complete an internal search for the permanent position.

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