The Georgia Board of Regents approved the merger between Georgia Southern University and Armstrong State University Wednesday. Jan. 11. Students were notified earlier this week on Jan. 17 of a website created by the University System of Georgia that aims to answer questions and address concerns regarding the impending merge.

According to the consolidation website, the merge process will take place over approximately 18 months, completing in the fall semester of 2018. But this date could change depending on the needs of the future institution.

Once the merger is complete, Armstrong will assume Georgia Southern’s title, their President, Dr. Janemie Hebert, as well as bring the total student population to approximately 27,000 — roughly 20,000 more students than Armstrong’s current student body.

The Board of Regents believes the schools ultimately serve many of the same students. Georgia Southern is already the number-one transfer choice for Armstrong students and both institutions are among top destinations for students seeking public higher education from Bryan, Chatham, Effingham and Liberty counties.

Combining the institutions also allows for a broader range of degree programs, such as engineering and health care.

Although the Board of Regents promises growth for the new combined institution, the consolidation brings fears and many unanswered questions for students and faculty. Armstrong students railed two protests on campus preceding the official vote. Student athletes conducted a protest, dating schools will be implemented.

Questions section of the consolidation website addresses that athletics is an aspect of the consolidation that has to be decided upon early in the process and that scholarships will be honored throughout the consolidation process.

“I think the news affected our team because everybody’s mind was focused on what’s going to happen with us,” junior liberal studies major and student athlete KJ James said. “We are still concerned because they haven’t really told us exactly when everything is going to take place as far as giving us another year or stopping athletics as a whole after this season.”

Athletes: Several student-athletes told The Inkwell that they have asked for their transfer release and permission to contact, enabling them to begin their search for a new university. Others, however, are still hopeful that separate athletics between the consolidating schools will be implemented.

Sophomore Armstrong soccer player Casey Coach participated in both protests and lead the making of the anti-merge video. “I came to Armstrong because of the small classroom size and to be able to connect with people on a personal level,” Coach said. “This is also seen in the athletic department. All of the coaches, staff, athletic trainers and directors know the athletes and support all of us. These people here only want the best for us and it’s completely unfair to watch it take away.”

The Frequently Asked Questions section of the consolidation website addresses that athletics is an aspect of the consolidation that has to be decided upon early in the process and that scholarships will be honored throughout the consolidation process.

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Faculty: The impact on Armstrong’s roughly 260 faculty members and 350 staff members is also unclear at this time. USG officials released a statement last week saying that a decrease in the number of professors will likely occur.

Certain administrative functions will be combined, resulting in the need for fewer positions over time.

Next steps: An institutional implementation committee will be formed, which will include representatives of faculty, staff and students. It is expected that decisions will be made at the institutional level subject to final approval by the Board.

University System of Georgia staff will provide overall leadership to the implementation effort, but the campus committee will be identifying and recommending the resolutions for key issues.

A Town Hall meeting will be held at Armstrong Thursday, Jan. 19, at 4:30 p.m. in the Fine Arts Auditorium in an effort to answer questions and concerns regarding the GAUSU merger. eamon will include Armstrong State University President Linda Bleicken, Georgia Southern President Janemie Hebert, University System of Georgia Vice Chancellor for Organizational Effectiveness and University System of Georgia Executive Vice Chancellor for Strategy and Fiscal Affairs Shelby Nickel.

For those who cannot attend, the meeting will be livestreamed online at consolidation.georgiasouthern.edu. Students, faculty, alumni and community members are all welcome and encouraged to attend.
After finding out about the merge, I was initially worried about my teammates, other athletes, and their futures. As a Student-athlete, I couldn’t imagine my life without sports, and the way this merge would dissolve Armstrong Athletics is absolutely crushing. This merge, however, is so much more than just about the athletics. The futures of staff and current students hang in the balance. From whether that staff member will have a job in a year or if that student’s major could be taken away, all hang up in the air. Being active in protesting the merge was definitely a priority for me. I was initially contacted by Casey Couch about a merge opposition video, and everything took off from there. Athletes, students and alumni were all contacted about the video, and that we were showing our opposition to the merger on campus. I edited and filmed the video as well as attended the protests on campus. So regardless of the outcome of the merge, no one can say Armstrong didn’t go without a struggle.

Savanna Gladue
Senior
Women’s Softball

As an athlete, I think that the merge is quite unfortunate. For the athletic depart- ment to have just reinstated Women’s Cross Country so it can be taken away so quickly is incredibly heartbreaking. We barely got a chance to prove ourselves and develop our program. I don’t want to transfer and I do not want to play sport more than anything and this giving me no choice but to consider trans- ferring due to the cut in ath- letics. I fell in love with Armstrong and strong the moment I visited, and I plan on doing it. It is my priority for me. I was initially contacted by Casey Couch about a merge opposition video, and every- thing took off from there. Athletes, students and alumni were all contacted about the video, and that we were showing our opposition to the merger on campus. I edited and filmed the video as well as attended the protests on campus. So regardless of the outcome of the merge, no one can say Armstrong didn’t go without a struggle.

Personally, this merge is not having a dramatic effect on me at this specific point in time, as I am graduating in May, however, I will never be able to come home to my Pirater ever again. Over the last four years I have made huge strides educationally and personally, been given so many incredible opportun- ities that has been placed upon all of this stress and uncertainty that has been placed upon all the athletics and faculty, we remain strong and ready to take on the spring season. If this is our last semester to prove ourselves, we are go- ing to show everyone exactly what we that will be missing when they cut our program. They may be able to take away the future of the Pirate athletics, but there is no way for them to take away every- thing we have accomplished while we were here. Once a Pirate, always a Pirate!

Molly Molyneaux
Senior
Women’s Golf

SPONSORS & Wellness

January 19, 2017
Student-Athletes’ thoughts on the merge

I think it makes sense as to why they went through with it as far as the money part, but for the athletics it sucks. I would say that it puts the most pressure on fresh- men and sophomores since they have to transfer if they want to keep playing, which is what I plan on doing. It is a little stressful that most pro- grams have already done their recruiting for next year, but I am looking at it as an oppor- tunity. Our team was already close before this happened but I think it actually brought us closer together so if this will be our last season together or not.

Spencer Ball
Freshman
Men’s Golf

I just am upset that all this is happening and we didn’t even have a say. I feel so bad for Coach Eric and Coach Kayle who have spent so much time and put so much work into this program to have it just taken from them and then all the younger girls have to leave if they want to continue a soccer career. I hate how this decision was made by a few people whom it’s not even affecting, and the people who’s lives are being changed by it don’t even have a voice in the matter.

Randi Schroeder
Junior
Women’s Soccer

As an athlete, I think that the merge is quite unfortu- nate. For the athletic depart- ment to have just reinstated Woman’s Cross Country so it can be taken away so quickly is incredibly heartbreaking. We barely got a chance to prove ourselves and develop our program. I don’t want to transfer but I don’t want to play sport more than anything and this giving me no choice but to consider trans- ferring due to the cut in ath- letics. I fell in love with Arm- strong and strong the moment I visited, and I plan on doing it. I am so far into my Cell Molecular Biol- ogy degree it is unrealistic for me to transfer and potentially lose credit hours when I come so close to graduation. From the talk among our team, I wouldn’t want our young- er players to hope for the best and stick around while knowing opportunities to further their education and athletic career are things that will be taken away. Our team has been so successful, and our individual talent does not deserve to be unseen by other college coaches. This is why all we ask for is answers regarding athletic futures. We are having to take chances and hope to have futures else- where with only uncertainty to back up our decisions. That is scary to anyone.

Madison Sox
Junior
Women’s Volleyball

Personally, this merge is not having a dramatic effect on me at this specific point in time, as I am graduating in May, however, I will never be able to come home to my Pirater ever again. Over the last four years I have made huge strides educationally and personally, been given so many incredible opportu- nities that has been placed upon all of this stress and uncertainty that has been placed upon all the athletics and faculty, we remain strong and ready to take on the spring season. If this is our last semester to prove ourselves, we are go- ing to show everyone exactly what they will be missing when they cut our program. They may be able to take away the future of the Pirate athletics, but there is no way for them to take away every- thing we have accomplished while we were here. Once a Pirate, always a Pirate!

Molly Molyneaux
Senior
Women’s Golf

I feel this merge is ex- tremely unfortunate. It is im- pacting far more students and Savannah residents than the Board of Regents are choos- ing to accept. Many student athletics and administrators have yet to be given infor- mation regarding our futures here at Armstrong. We are having to plan to lose our jobs, and many of my fellow ath- letes are also struggling with the lack of ability to know whether to start looking for other schools to further our education and athletic career - this itself is making this new year begin much more stress- ful than it should be for most. Personally, this ends my athletic career. I am so far into my Cell Molecular Biology degree it is unrealistic for me to transfer and potentially lose credit hours when I come so close to graduation. From the talk among our team, I wouldn’t want our young- er players to hope for the best and stick around while knowing opportunities to further their education and athletic career are things that will be taken away. Our team has been so successful, and our individual talent does not deserve to be unseen by other college coaches. This is why all we ask for is answers regarding athletic futures. We are having to take chances and hope to have futures else- where with only uncertainty to back up our decisions. That is scary to anyone.

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Madison Sox
Junior
Women’s Volleyball

Upcoming games

Basketball Mens: Sat. 21st at Lander @ 3:30pm
Wed. 25th at Augusta @ 7:30pm
Basketball Women: Sat. 21st at Lander @ 1:30pm
Wed. 25th at Augusta @ 5:30pm

Armstrong Rec. and Wellness Calendar

EVENT DeadLINE DATE TIME
Shuttleball Jan 19th Jan 23rd TBA
5 v 5 Basketball Jan 19th Jan 23rd TBA
Handball Jan 19th Jan 23rd TBA
Men’s Golf Jan 19th Jan 23rd TBA
Women’s Softball Jan 19th Jan 23rd TBA
Women’s Cross Country Jan 19th Jan 23rd TBA

SPORTS & Wellness
Still a possibility that we can preserve at least a fraction of the excellence that have made our university -- Armstrong -- a respected staple in Savannah's community since 1935.

Many of the things that will be fleshed out in the coming months, it will have to be considered which school has the better degree program in each field. Both schools' excellent health science and engineering departments may be a straightforward decision to combine. But many would not like to see other Armstrong programs, such as liberal studies and arts, compromised.

For example, the liberal and fine arts departments at Armstrong serve many who do not otherwise have the opportunity to attend Savannah College of Art and Design, a private institution. These programs in particular benefit from their location in Savannah, as they provide exposure to the fine arts scene in the region, and would not thrive as well in Statesboro. Our research opportunities this merger may also allow.

However, our reaction here at The Georgia Southern University System of Georgia Southern's 20,500 students to consider us share similar pride that we now know much about the future. How will this merger affect academic standards for both universities? Not to mention the jeopardized student-athletes may face when it comes time to start dealing out scholarships.

The transition is set to take place over the course of 18 months, let by a committee of individual students from both campuses, and as the process is just beginning, there are plenty of questions that have yet to be answered, even addressed in some cases. It's important to be patient and take into consideration that although we may know much about the exact details now, the transition team was formed specifically to solve these problems in a fair and effective manner, so although it may take time to see these issues resolved, hopefully in 18 months we'll have the answers to these questions and then some.

All that being said, the editorial board as a whole felt that most of our concerns spread from our uncertainty of the future. How will this merger affect academic standards for both schools? Are there going to be funding restraints? Logistically will how the university decide who attends Statesboro's campus and who attends Savannah's? There are a lot of questions that as things down and ahead while we may not be sure of all the ramifications this transition may bring, one thing is for certain. It's happening.
Savannah Stopover announces full lineup

LILA MILLER
A&E EDITOR

Nick Cave exhibits Soundsuits in installation at Telfair

Savannah Stopover announces full lineup

LILA MILLER
A&E EDITOR

Nick Cave exhibits Soundsuits in installation at Telfair

An exhibition for inter-
nationally-renowned artist and educator Nick cave will be available at the Jepson Center beginning Friday, Jan. 27. The event will showcase the largest body of Cave’s installation artwork in Georgia, some of which will be on display for the first time in the Southeast. The showing will run from Jan. 27 through April 23, 2017.

As a Chicago-based artist, Cave explores art and the role of identity within it through his own personal lens as an African-American. His experiments with a variety of work such as sculpting, visual and fine arts, installation, video, and performance art reflect this exploration.

His latest exhibition focuses primarily on his “Soundsuits” series. Cave creates sculptural “suits” called Soundsuits to the scale of his own body comprised of what he describes as “mat- terials that rattle with move- ment...like a coat of armor, they embellish the body while protecting the wearer from outside culture.”

The exhibition also features a recently-commissioned essay by Armstrong’s own Dr. Regina Bradley of the Languages, Literature and Philosophy department. Bradley is an assistant profes- sor of African American Lit- erature and recently made na- tional headlines for her new English course, “OutKast and the Rise of the Hip-Hop South.” Cave’s perspective as an African-American is portrayed vividly through his work in “Soundsuits.” Cave explores race and identity, particularly in America. His first Soundsuit was a direct reaction to the 1992 beating of Rodney King in Los Ange- les. Cave often uses his art to turn pain into a product. His Soundsuits are pri-
marily based on the inten- tional use of camouflage as a second skin devoid of gender, race, and class. In utilizing the idea of anonymity, Cave encourages the viewer to ob- serve the work without prejud- ice, bias or judgment.

Construction of the suits involves found objects like children’s toys, yarn, buttons, baskets, sequins, and occasionally human hair. He employs exquisite craftman- ship into each suit with strik- ing attention to detail. While the suits are intricate and ex- travagant in nature, the dep- ture meaning truly lies within understanding cultural identi-

The exhibition features a variety of Soundsuits made over the course of the last ten years. It also displays an installation of a seven-part Soundsuit, titled “Speak Louder” (2011). This last portion of the exhibit fea- tures two Tondos, which are large circular works evoca- tive of the night sky and cosmic use. Nick Cave lives and works in Chicago. He con- tinues to make art and is the director of the graduate fash- ion program at the Art Insti- tute of Chicago.

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OUT EVERY THURSDAY?