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Four faculty members recognized with Jack Miller Awards

September 10, 2019



Pictured l-r: Katie Brkich, Ph.D., Kelly Brooksher, Ed.D., Juliann Sergi McBrayer, Ed.D., and Alma Stevenson, Ph.D.

The Jack Miller Faculty Awards are given annually to recognize Georgia Southern University College of Education (COE) faculty for demonstrated excellence in the areas of teaching, service and/or scholarship. Awards can be given in each area along with an additional Educator of the Year Award, which recognizes scholarship in all three of the considered areas.

For the 2019-2020 academic year, four COE faculty members received Jack Miller Awards including Katie Brkich, Ph.D., Kelly Brooksher, Ed.D., Juliann Sergi McBrayer, Ed.D., and Alma Stevenson, Ph.D.

Katie Brkich, Ph.D., received the **Jack Miller Award for Scholarship and Creative Activity**. An associate professor elementary science education, Brkich's research interests include place-based, inquiry science teaching and learning, science for social justice, as well as race and socioeconomic bias in science. Since joining the College in 2011, Brkich has received a competitive research grant from the College (2017), a College program innovation award (2015), and the Georgia Board of Regent's Affordable Learning Georgia Initiative award (2015). Brkich is the program director of the M.Ed. Elementary Education degree program and was also instrumental in the development of the College's fully-online M.A.T. in Elementary Education program.

Since 2016, Brkich has completed an ongoing professional development and collaborative research efforts with Mattie Lively Elementary and Langston Chapel Elementary Schools, specifically working with fifth grade

science teachers to develop effective elementary instructional practices. Brkich completed a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction (Elementary Science Education) from the University of Florida, where she also completed a master's in education. Her undergraduate degree was completed at the University of South Florida in environmental science and policy.

Katie Brkich, Ph.D., received the **Jack Miller Award for Scholarship and Creative Activity**. An associate professor in elementary science education, Brkich's research interests include place-based and inquiry elementary science teaching and learning, science for social justice, as well as contextually-mitigating factors in science education. Since joining the College in 2011, Brkich has received a competitive research grant from the College (2017), a College program innovation award (2015), and the Georgia Board of Regent's Affordable Learning Georgia Initiative award (2015). She has also authored or co-authored 12 peer reviewed publications since 2011. Brkich is the program director of the M.Ed. Elementary Education degree program and was also instrumental in the development of the College's fully-online M.A.T. in Elementary Education program.

Since 2016, Brkich has completed an ongoing professional development and collaborative research efforts with local elementary schools, specifically working with fifth grade science teachers to develop effective elementary instructional practices. Brkich completed a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction (Elementary Science Education) from the University of Florida, where she also completed an M.Ed. in Elementary Education. Her undergraduate degree was completed at the University of South Florida in Environmental Science and Policy.

Kelly Brooksher, Ed.D., recipient of the **Jack Miller Award for Service**, is an assistant professor of special education who began her higher education career at Armstrong State University in 2012. Prior to joining the College of Education, Brooksher taught in elementary and middle school classrooms Gwinnett County Public Schools and finished her public school career as an assistant principal. Brooksher was the former program coordinator of the B.S.Ed. and M.A.T. Special Education degrees on the Armstrong Campus (2018-2019), where she planned and assisted with the transition of programs to unite curriculums between Armstrong State and Georgia Southern. She provides professional development training to area teachers in schools within Chatham and Bryan Counties on topics including interviewing new teacher candidates, homework, dyslexia and support for struggling readers, and inclusive classrooms.

Brooksher sits on the Technology and Teacher Education Committee for the Association of Teacher Educators, and she serves as a reviewer for the Action in Teacher Education, the journal of the Association of Teacher Educators as well as the Georgia Educational Researcher. She earned an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Samford University where she completed research on teacher perceptions regarding grading practices, assessment practices and professional learning needs.

The **Jack Miller Award for Teaching** was awarded to **Juliann Sergi McBrayer, Ed.D.**, associate professor of educational leadership. McBrayer is a double eagle alumna, having earned both an Ed.S. and Ed.D. in Education Administration from Georgia Southern University. She also completed an M.Ed. in Secondary Science Education from Ohio University and a bachelor's in biology from the State University of New York College at Buffalo. McBrayer joined the College as a faculty member in 2015 and serves as a co-program director for the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership as well as the program coordinator for the M.Ed. and Tier 1 Certificate in Educational Leadership and endorsement in teacher leadership. McBrayer currently chairs seven dissertation committees for students completing their doctoral studies, and serves on the committee of six additional candidates. An additional 46 doctoral and specialist candidates have received guidance and mentorship from McBrayer to complete their action-research and dissertation work during her tenure.

McBrayer was recently awarded a Research Assistantship from Georgia Southern to assist in her current scholarly practitioner research efforts that include ensuring the effectiveness and accountability of educational leadership and teacher preparation programs. This research is focused on purposeful, collaborative, and sustainable professional learning, specifically professional learning communities.

Alma Stevenson, Ph.D., was named the winner of the **Jack Miller Educator of the Year**. An associate professor of literacy, Stevenson teaches undergraduate and graduate students in reading education in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading. During her years in the College, Stevenson has developed and co-developed five of the reading and English Language Learner (ELL) courses taught to students at the graduate level.

The recipient of *Insight into Diversity* magazine's Inspiring Leaders in STEM Award (2017), Stevenson has been recognized for her work on several STEM grant-funded projects including Georgia's GEAR UP! Grant, focusing on the professional development of eighth, ninth, and tenth grade mathematics and science teachers. This year, Stevenson has also worked alongside COE colleagues at the Boys and Girls Club of Statesboro, offering STEM literacy camps and education. Her current research focuses on creating culturally relevant science stories that connect students' lives to classroom curricula.

A past recipient of the College's Jack Miller Award for Scholarly Activity (2015), 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.

About Jack Miller

Jack Miller was the former Dean of the College of Education at Georgia Southern. He endowed the Jack Miller Faculty Awards in 1994 after leaving to accept the position of Dean of the College of Education at Florida State University. Miller retired in 2016 from his position as the President of Central Connecticut State University. Miller passed away in April 2018, leaving behind a legacy as a passionate and dedicated leader in higher education across the nation.

For more information about the Jack Miller Awards or to view past recipients, visit <https://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/awards/>

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Tags: [Alma Stevenson](#), [Juliann Sergi McBrayer](#), [Katie Brkich](#), [Kelly Brooksher](#)

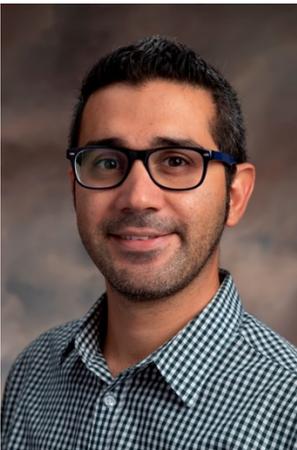
COE welcomes new faculty and staff for 2019

September 10, 2019

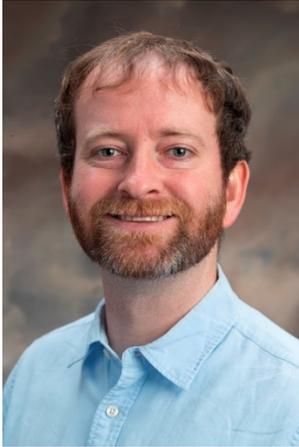
Georgia Southern University's College of Education (COE) is excited to welcome new members to the College team this semester including seven faculty and a staff member. New faculty members for fall 2019 include:



Elise Cain, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of higher education in the Department of Leadership, Technology and Human Development. Cain earned a Ph.D. in Community and Public Affairs from Binghamton University as well as a master's in adolescence education and bachelor's in biology from St. Bonaventure University. Her research interests include college students from rural areas, rural education and leadership development. Prior to earning her doctorate, Cain was a student affairs professional for almost a decade working in areas such as leadership programs, campus activities, residence life and orientation



Selçuk Doğan, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Elementary and Special Education. Doğan earned a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from the University of Florida with a minor in research and evaluation methodology where he also served as an instructional designer and researcher. His research interests focus on teachers' professional development, online learning, instructional design, effective instruction, learning analytics, social network analysis and structural equation modeling. During his master's research of curriculum and instruction at Yıldız Technical University, Doğan completed a thesis on teachers' views on the effectiveness of curriculum mapping. Prior to joining higher education, Doğan taught science, technology and mathematics in private schools in Turkey. He completed a bachelor's degree in mathematics education from Boğaziçi University.



Abraham Flanigan, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of educational psychology for the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading. Flanigan joins the College from Ohio University where he completed his postdoctoral work. Earning a Ph.D. in Psychological Studies in Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Flanigan specialized in developmental and learning sciences. His doctoral research focused on instructional design, academic motivation and self-regulated learning. During his master's studies in educational psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Flanigan researched the relationship between technological alternatives and motivational interference.



Eric Hogan, Ph.D., is a visiting professor of educational psychology in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading. Hogan served previously as an adjunct professor at Auburn University where he earned a doctorate in educational psychology as well as a program evaluation certificate. He also holds a bachelor's in psychology from James Madison University. Hogan brings to the College over seven years of experience teaching in a variety of settings and subjects including PK-8 food systems teacher, a high school career perspectives teacher and an educational director for a nonprofit organization. Hogan's research interests include social capital of students, social justice and employability.



Cynthia Massey, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of special education in the Department of Elementary and Special Education. Massey previously taught classroom diversity courses at Auburn University where she earned a Ph.D. in Special Education. Her research interests include excellence in instruction and research, specifically in reading and mathematics, and the impacts on students with special needs. Prior to entering higher education, Massey taught special education in both Alabama and Florida for 22 years. She also has experience as a case manager in mental health facilities. Massey earned an Ed.S. in Special Education from Jacksonville State University and a master's in varying exceptionalities from the University of Central Florida. She also holds a bachelor's in psychology from Auburn.



Nancy Remler, Ph.D., joined the College as an associate professor of English education in the Department of Middle Grades and Secondary Education. With 27 years of experience in higher education, 26 of which were at Armstrong State University, Remler held several administrative and faculty roles at Armstrong including director of Faculty Development and Online/Blended Learning, director of the Center for Teaching Excellence, and associate professor of English. She earned a doctorate in English education from the University of Georgia, where she focused her dissertation work on the scholarship of teaching college English courses. Remler also holds a master's in English from Georgia Southern and a B.S.Ed. in English Education from the University of Georgia. Current research interests for Remler include scaffolded writing approaches as well as Complete College Georgia and state education standards pertaining to literacy and English.



Leslie Roberts, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of reading in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading. Roberts is a new faculty member, having just received her doctorate in Literacy, Language, and Culture from Clemson University. Prior to her appointment at Georgia Southern University, Roberts served as director of the America Reads program at Clemson University, which provided tutoring assistance and equitable access to literacy for more than 150 K-5 elementary students in the upstate area of South Carolina. Her research interests include reading motivation with middle and elementary students, the motivation of male students through the use of literacy, and the integration of social justice education in the classroom. Roberts' dissertation work focused on reading motivation in the middle grades through the use of face-to-face and virtual book clubs; for this, she was awarded the Graduate Student Award of Excellence in Research through the College of Education at Clemson University.

Two faculty members are returning to the COE in new positions including Kitty Crawford, Ed.D., and Tonya Cooper, M.Ed.



A triple eagle alumna of Georgia Southern, **Kitty Crawford** previously served as a clinical instructor and has been with the College for over 14 years supervising teacher candidates in their year-long residencies and coordinating the implementation of edTPA in the elementary education program. She is now an assistant professor of elementary literacy education in the Department of Elementary and Special Education. Crawford's research interests include preparing teachers for literacy instruction and assessment in elementary classrooms and supporting the social emotional learning of teacher candidates and beginning teachers. Prior to joining the faculty at Georgia Southern, Crawford served as a fourth and fifth grade teacher and literacy coach in Jacksonville, Fl., where she mentored beginning and veteran teachers.



Tonya Cooper, M.Ed., is now an instructor of special education in the Department of Elementary and Special Education. A double eagle alumna, Cooper has a master's in early childhood education and bachelor's in special education from Georgia Southern. Cooper previously worked as a special education teacher in Bulloch County Schools and has collaborated with the College of Education in supervising pre-service teacher candidates for over 19 years. .

The COE also had a new staff member to join the team in July 2019.



Michelle Nurse is the College's undergraduate recruiter and an academic advisor. Nurse earned a bachelor's in interdisciplinary studies with concentrations in education, culture and society from Georgia Southern and is now pursuing a master's in higher education administration. Nurse has experience working with students at Georgia Southern, as she served previously as a graduate assistant in the Office of Admissions, a SOAR (orientation) leader, and Peer Leader for the Office of First Year Experience.

Posted in [Faculty Highlights](#), [Staff Highlights](#)

Tags: [Abraham Flanigan](#), [Cynthia Massey](#), [Elise Cain](#), [Eric Hogan](#), [Kitty Crawford](#), [Leslie Roberts](#), [Michelle Nurse](#), [Nancy Remler](#), [Selçuk Doğan](#), [Tonya Cooper](#)

[Call for proposals open for 19th annual National Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education Conference for Research, Action and Change](#)

September 10, 2019

Proposals are being accepted for the 19th annual National Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education Conference for Research, Action and Change, hosted by Georgia Southern University's College of Education. Proposals must be submitted by Sept. 30.

The two-day event includes six education strands: ethical issues in professional counseling; social change, leadership and advocacy; practice, strategies, techniques and interventions; research and theory; teaching, training and supervision; and identity formation.

The conference focuses on identity development throughout life and how this development affects multi-ethnic and multiracial group dynamics in the United States. Attendees engage in meaningful discussions centered on topics including race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity development. The conference is appropriate for professionals in the fields of education, counseling, psychology, social justice, women and gender studies, volunteer service, and social work.

The conference will take place Feb. 7 and 8 at the Embassy Suites and Hampton Inn & Suites in downtown Savannah.

The registration fee for the conference includes two days of instruction and conference materials. The conference is eligible for up to 10 contact hours of continuing education credit through the National Board for Certified Counselors and the Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia. Registration and proposal submission information can be found at GeorgiaSouthern.edu/conted/nccec.

For additional information, please call Georgia Southern Division of Continuing Education conference specialist, Bonnie Overstreet, at 912-478-5852.

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[Harris to serve in leadership roles for GaPBS and CUR](#)

September 10, 2019



Kymberly Harris, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Elementary and Special Education, has been recently elected to serve in multiple leadership roles within professional education organizations. Named the president-elect of the [Georgia Association of Positive Behavior Supports](#) (GaPBS), Harris will serve in this role for two years assisting the president with monthly meetings, managing outreach events, serving as the administrator of conference proposals and assisting with conference logistics.

Harris was also elected to a three-year term on the [Council on Undergraduate Research](#) (CUR) Executive Board, a group of dedicated professionals with extensive expertise in higher education and undergraduate research who are tasked with leading the organization and shaping its strategic plan. Harris was also selected to serve as the CUR Education Division chair, also a three-year term, in which she will host monthly division meetings and contribute to ongoing scholarship on undergraduate research in education. The CUR Education Division consisting of over 400 members from across the nation.

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