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Georgia Southern's national youth conference reflects new, asset-based name

April 13, 2021



The National Youth Advocacy and Resilience Conference (NYAR) is the new moniker for Georgia Southern University's annual event that offers relevant training for professionals who help empower youth to overcome at-risk conditions.

Previously the National Youth-at-Risk Conference, the new name reflects the updated dialogue around youth advocacy.

"After a conversation with the youth we serve, it was brought to our attention that today's youth take offense with the at-risk label," said College of Education (COE) faculty member and conference coordinator Taylor Norman, Ph.D. "Recognizing their truth in the conference's language, we knew it was time to look for a name that represented our conference and the youth we serve from an asset-based perspective, rather than a deficit-based perspective."

The conference committee collected ideas from stakeholders and allowed past conference participants to vote during the fall. The new name was revealed at the 2021 conference, held in March.

"Since the decision to change the name came directly from the youth we serve, the name change has been received with open arms," said Alisa Leckie, Ph.D., COE assistant dean for partnerships and outreach and conference coordinator. "Many of our conference participants and stakeholders also recognized the deficit language in the conference's name and sent us messages to express their support for our choice."

The NYAR Conference was founded in 1990 by the COE at Georgia Southern and has grown from a regional conference of 150 participants to a national conference of approximately 1,200 participants from around the world. With more than 120 presentations made each year, participants learn about current research-based, educational programs and strategies, which empower young people to overcome at-risk conditions that may threaten their safety, health, emotional needs and academic achievement.

The NYAR conference is hosted by Georgia Southern's COE and the Division of Continuing Education. To learn more about the NYAR Conference, visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/NYAR.

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