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# COE staff member mentors creation of rural high school robotics team

June 15, 2021



*1Metter High School Robotics Competition Team*

Last summer, staff members of the Georgia Southern University [Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education \(i<sup>2</sup>STEM<sup>e</sup>\)](#) participated in the summer MATE ROV Workshop with hopes of helping guide local schools in underwater robotics and encourage participation in MATE ROV Competitions.

Following the summer training, i<sup>2</sup>STEM<sup>e</sup>'s Mary Thaler paired with Metter High School (MHS) to launch their first

Robotics Club in August 2020. The club met every Monday after school to learn circuitry, electrical and mechanical processes, and construction techniques building up to the creation of their own underwater robot.

The regional MATE ROV competition is held each spring in Savannah, giving the MHS students just eight months to start from scratch to learn the basics of underwater robotics all the way to creating their own robot for competition on May 1.

“Our members ranged in age from freshmen to juniors, and they worked well together,” explained Thaler. “Many of them were amazed when they realized what they were capable of doing—from wiring their own circuit boards to crafting and adjusting the control box for the robot.”

Six of the club members participated in the competition team, creating “Terry the Tiger,” their custom ROV complete with tiger stripes. With Thaler’s guidance, the team placed second in the regional competition.

“This is a brand new team that has been together less than a year, and they placed second behind a team that has historically won this competition several years running,” said Thaler. “Their scores were close to the first place team, and I was really proud of the students and their hard work.”



*Mary Thaler (pictured right) observes student working on a circuit board.*

Thanks to Thaler’s efforts at MHS, the school is implementing robotics into their science curriculum, adding a research component that can deepen the exploration of the STEM efforts.

“This is an opportunity for students to have hands-on, place-based education and research opportunities that specifically examine our coastal ecosystems and marine life,” said Thaler. “I am excited to have been a part of the creation of this team and to mentor the first group of students during this experience. I hope we can continue to see schools in the region express an interest in expanding opportunities for their students with

underwater robotics.”

For more information on how to partner with the College of Education’s i<sup>2</sup>STEM<sup>e</sup>, visit <https://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/stem/>

Posted in [Community Outreach & Partnership](#), [Staff Highlights](#)

Tags: [i<sup>2</sup>STEMe](#), [Mary Thaler](#)

# Project GAME brings teachers to Statesboro Campus, prepares for classroom integration

June 15, 2021



*Mete Akcaoglu, Ph.D., associate professor of instructional technology, leads local teachers in development of coding and game design skills.*

Since September 2020, Georgia Southern University's Mete Akcaoglu, Ph.D., associate professor of instructional technology, and a team of faculty members have been working virtually with regional teachers to develop their knowledge and skills in computer sciences and game design.

Their efforts are a part of a \$300,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) funded grant called Project GAME, which aims to create and implement middle school computer science curriculum through teacher professional development, co-development of curriculum, and evaluation of outcomes.

With the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, the Project GAME team and participants were able to meet

in person for the first time in May for a four day professional development on the Statesboro Campus of Georgia Southern.

“Although we covered computer science and game-design related content during the past few months, it was during our in-person time together we were able delve into the flow of the curriculum, as well as issues related to pedagogy or how these topics will be taught to the students in the classroom,” said Akcaoglu.

Akcaoglu said that the teachers, ranging in experience with computer science and game design, are doing great work and are ready to start phase two of the grant project.

“In our two-year project, our purpose was to provide professional development and design the curriculum during the first year, and implement the curriculum at the schools during the second year,” he explained. ” We successfully finished the year one activities, meaning the big part of the teacher professional development is now complete. We are planning for another professional development in January to review the curriculum and regroup.”

With the fall starting year two of Project GAME, teachers will begin implementing the game design curriculum into their middle school classrooms at DeRenne, Metter, and Screven Middle Schools as well as the STEAM Academy in Bulloch County. Through the efforts of Project GAME, Akcaoglu and the team are hoping to offer the curriculum to more than 300 students in its first year.

The Project GAME team includes College of Education’s Selçuk Doğan, Ph.D., assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, Charles Hodges, Ph.D., professor of instructional technology, and College of Engineering and Computing’s Andrew Allen, assistant professor of computer science. You can learn more about Project Game and it’s activities and updates at <https://projectgame.org>

Posted in [Faculty Highlights](#)

Tags: [Charles Hodges](#), [Mete Akcaoglu](#), [Selçuk Doğan](#)

## [COE recognizes six retirees in 2021](#)

June 15, 2021

The College of Education at Georgia Southern University recognizes the dedication and service of six faculty retirees in 2021.

“Each of these individuals served a vital role in the success of the College of Education for many years,” said Interim Dean of the College Amy Heaston, Ed.D. “While we will miss these faculty members on our campuses, we wish them the best in their retirement.”

**Wendy Chambers, Ph.D.**, professor of developmental psychology on the Statesboro Campus is retiring at the end of in June with Emerita status. Chambers, a 28-year veteran of the University, is a previous College and University award winner, earning the Jack Miller Outstanding Educator Award (‘98) and the University’s Award for Excellence in Contributions to Instruction (‘17-18).

**Beth Childress, M.A.**, assistant professor of elementary and special education reading on the Armstrong Campus retires in June after 34 years at Georgia Southern. Childress began at Armstrong State as a composition instructor and transitioned to reading skills and remediation. She also served as the coordinator of the Regents' Reading Program from 1998-2007 before settling into the College of Education.

**Lisa Davis, Ed.S.**, instructor of elementary education on the Statesboro Campus retired in May after 11 years of service to the College of Education. Prior to joining Georgia Southern, she was an elementary classroom teacher at Sallie Zetterower Elementary School for 23 years where she was named the school and district's teacher of the year ('92).

**Stephanie Jones, Ph.D.**, associate professor of instructional technology on the Statesboro Campus retired in January. Jones brought to the University over 14 years of experience as a library media specialist in the Clayton County Schools. She served the COE for 11 years and retired with associate professor Emerita status.

**Linda Ann McCall, Ed.D.**, professor of elementary education on the Armstrong Campus, will retire from the University in July. McCall served as a TEENS FOR LITERACY® liaison for Isle of Hope K-8 School for several years. She joined the faculty at Armstrong State in 2000 after a 27-year career teaching elementary school in the Savannah area. Prior to teaching in Savannah classrooms, McCall co-owned and taught at Islands Pre-school.

**Glenda Ogletree, Ph.D.**, professor of elementary education on the Armstrong Campus and 2018 Armstrong Leadership Awards recipient, retired in May. A 13-year veteran at Georgia Southern, Ogletree served as a classroom teacher for over 30 years prior to joining Armstrong State. Ogletree also served as the counselor for the Nu Zeta Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi on the Armstrong Campus.

Posted in [Faculty Highlights](#)

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