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Call for presenters for 2021 Trauma Informed Education Symposium

August 17, 2021

The second annual Trauma Informed Education Symposium (TIES) is accepting presentation proposals for the October 11, 8 a.m. – noon, virtual event.

The symposium will include over 200 Southeast Georgia teachers interested in learning about trauma informed practices and related issues of social emotional learning.

Presentations should be approximately 45 minutes (30 minutes of content and 15 minutes for Q&A) and address issues of: working with traumatized children, social-emotional learning, emotional well being of students/teachers; trauma informed instructional/classroom practices; supporting students/teachers dealing with anxiety amidst pandemic; other related issues.

The keynote address will be delivered by Stan Sonu, MD, physician and associate program director of internal medicine and pediatrics at Emory University School of Medicine. Dr. Sonu's research interests include adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma-informed care, and the integration of social determinants of health with clinical care. He is passionate about teaching about ACEs and training future clinicians on effective ways to address trauma in the primary care setting.

TIES is held annually to help the local school community through support of the wellbeing of students, teachers and staff. Co-sponsored by the Georgia Southern University College of Education, Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, and the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, TIES is centered on educating school professionals on trauma informed practices, which provide a structure or framework that helps adults to understand, recognize and respond to the effects of various forms of trauma that youth may be experiencing.

Please submit a proposal that includes: presentation title, a 30 word abstract of the presentation and how the presentation relates to trauma informed educational practices. Submit the proposal to: Regina Rahimi, Ed.D., at rrahimi@georgiasouthern.edu by September 1. Questions can also be directed to Rahimi at the above email address.

Posted in [COE Events](#), [COE Sponsored Events](#), [Community Outreach & Partnership](#)

Tags: [Amea Adkins](#), [Delores Liston](#), [Regina Rahimi](#), [SCCPSS](#), [TIES](#), [Trauma Informed Education Symposium](#)

Three faculty awarded research assistance in competitive selection process

August 17, 2021

Georgia Southern University College of Education hosted a competition in spring to award three faculty members research assistants for the 2021-2022 academic year.

The College recently announced the winners of the competition as Gregory Chamblee, Ph.D., professor of middle grades and secondary education; Cynthia Massey, Ph.D., assistant professor of special education; and David Owens, Ph.D., assistant professor of middle grades and secondary education.

Teacher Candidates' Numeracy Knowledge



Greg Chamblee, Ph.D.

Chamblee is currently leading a team of researchers that includes fellow College of Education (COE) colleagues Shelli Casler-Failing, Ph.D., Sam Rhodes, Ph.D., Janel Smith, Ed.D., and Montana Smithey, Ph.D., as well as College of Science and Mathematics (COSM) faculty members Tuyin An, Ph.D., Heidi Eisenreich, Ph.D., Eryn Maher, Ph.D., and Ha Nguyen, Ph.D. The team is examining numeracy knowledge at the college level by evaluating upperclassmen in the elementary and middle grades education programs at Georgia Southern. The research will determine the student teachers' understanding of both content knowledge in mathematics and pedagogical knowledge, or how to teach the content.

“The Georgia Department of Education recently developed an initiative titled GA Numeracy Project, based on a New Zealand numeracy initiative,” said Chamblee. “The GA Numeracy Project is currently being voluntarily implemented in many school districts across the state. The intent of this initiative is to identify elementary and middle school students at risk of not mastering grade-level mathematics numeracy standards and provide systematic and explicit response to intervention tasks to increase their ability to demonstrate grade-level standards.”

The help of a research assistant will increase the scope of the ongoing research for the Georgia Southern team to include assessing our teacher candidates' numeracy knowledge using the two GA Numeracy Project assessment instruments in several mathematics content courses and content methods courses. Data will be used to enhance course design and activities across the COE and COSM and develop joint grant proposals as well as presentations and publications.

Logan Delgado will serve as the RA for this collaborative COE-COSM project. Delgado is in his first semester of the master's of science in psychology program where he is studying personality/social psychology. The research assistant position is jointly funded with a COSM Faculty Incentive Grant.

Instructor Education at EmployAbility



Cynthia Massey, Ph.D.

Massey is working to educate instructors on the use of evidence-based teaching practices (EBPs) and conducting a single case research design study with the instructional staff at EmployAbility in Savannah, Georgia, an employment center for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). She, along with COE special education colleagues Stephanie Devine, Ph.D., and Kathryn Haughney, Ph.D., have been working with EmployAbility since January 2019 to provide professional development sessions on education-related practices.

The scope of this project includes instructing the staff at EmployAbility on effective EBPs, then analyzing the effectiveness of this instruction when implemented with fidelity. To accomplish this, professional development sessions are being held in which EmployAbility staff are taught EBPs, then monitored as they work with clients at the center to ensure the strategies are being implemented with fidelity. The monitored data is being collected, graphed, and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

“This research is needed because, outside of the K-12 realm, there are very few studies related to effective teaching strategies for adults with IDD.

Additionally, the staff who continue to support their transition into the community and prepare them for employment often do not have the education background that K-12 teachers possess,” said Massey.

Brianna Cooper will serve as the research assistant for this project. Cooper is studying school psychology and is currently completing her practicum in the program.

Gamification for the Enhancement of Elementary Science Teaching Self-Efficacy



David Owens, Ph.D.

Current research efforts of Owens include seeking to better understand the characteristics of learning contexts that motivate functional science literacy.

“One way I have approached this is through gamification—the inclusion of elements of game design in non-game settings,” he explained.

Owens has employed two elements that are common in game design—a leaderboard, to demonstrate participants’ progress, and repeat-testing, where participants are allowed unlimited, risk-free attempts at assessments with feedback.

“I found that both leaderboard and repeat-testing, situated within inquiry-based, active learning environments, significantly affected motivation to learn biology generally, and self-efficacy more specifically, among undergraduates in an introductory undergraduate biology course for science majors,” said Owens.

In the coming semesters, Owens plans to build on these findings and shift the gamified learning content to an integrated science course for pre-service elementary education majors. With the assistance of research assistant Kimberly Kirstein, a candidate in the Ed.D. Curriculum Studies program, Owens will be able to collect and

analyze data on approximately 60 students to explore the potential for gameful learning to enhance science teaching self-efficacy. Kirstein began the COE's Ed.D. Curriculum Studies program this summer.

Posted in [Faculty Highlights](#)

Tags: [Cynthia Massey](#), [David Owens](#), [Greg Chamblee](#)

College of Education 2021 Jack Miller Award winners announced

August 17, 2021

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 2021-2022 academic year, four COE faculty members received Jack Miller Awards including Katie Brkich, Ph.D., Kymberly Harris, Ph.D., Peggy Shannon-Baker, Ph.D., and Steven Tolman, Ed.D.



Professor of Elementary Education **Katie Brkich, Ph.D.**, was named the 2021 Jack Miller Educator of the Year, an accolade that is presented to the COE faculty member who demonstrates excellence in all three of the areas of the Jack Miller awards including teaching, scholarship and creative activity as well as service. Brkich, a 10-year veteran of the College, serves as the program director for the M.Ed. Elementary Education program as well as the interim director of the fully online MAT in Elementary Education degree program. Her 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. Most recently, Brkich published in the May edition of the *Journal of Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Higher Education*. Her article, “Managing My White Fragility (It’s Not About Me),” explores her own experiences in 2020 in trying to teach a course addressing culturally relevant pedagogy alongside a Black colleague who is an expert in social justice education.

Brkich is a member of the College’s Faculty Executive Committee and served as an elected board member of the Georgia Science Teachers Association (GSTA) for two terms from 2016-2020. She previously received the Jack Miller Award for Scholarship and Creative Activity in 2019 and served on a team of COE faculty members who received a Affordable Learning Georgia grant in 2020 for over \$25,000.



Kymberly Harris, Ph.D., associate professor of special education, received the 2021 Jack Miller Award for Service, making her a two-time recipient of this award after first winning the award in 2014. An over 10-year member of the Council for Undergraduate Research (CUR), where she also serves as an officer, Harris mentors special education majors at Georgia Southern completing educational research and assists in promoting and presenting student research at local, state and national conferences. Harris serves as the program director for the M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction–Accomplished Teaching program as well as the new fully online Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) endorsement. A member of the College faculty for over 15 years, Harris provides expertise to numerous organizations including CUR, the Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Professional Standards Commission, and the Georgia Association of Positive Behavior Supports.

Since 2008, Harris has collaborated with Meng Deng, Ph.D., and Beijing Normal University as well as additional schools and scholars in China to present information on differentiated instruction for diverse learners and PBIS initiatives to establish behavior supports and social culture needed for all students in a school to achieve social, emotional and academic success.



The 2021 recipient of the Jack Miller Award for Scholarship and Creative Activity is **Peggy Shannon-Baker, Ph.D.**, assistant professor of educational research. Since joining the COE in 2017, Shannon-Baker has published articles in eight academic journals, written five book chapters, and given numerous scholarly presentations both nationally and internationally. Their scholarship bridges two areas: the prevalence and impact of systems of oppression such as racism and heteronormativity on education and the development and use of culturally sustainable research methods. Shannon-Baker has been awarded two competitive College research support awards—one for a research assistant (2018-19) to work alongside them on the research projects related to multicultural education and mixed methods research. They also received a COE Research Support Award (2018) for a student collaboration on developing a theory of Critical Race Hermeneutics. Shannon-Baker has also worked on research funded by the National Institutes of Health and the National Youth Advocacy and Resilience Foundation.

Shannon-Baker is a departmental representative for the College’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, an affiliate faculty member for Georgia Southern’s Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program, and a Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Fellow for the Georgia Southern Office of Inclusive Excellence.



Steven Tolman, Ed.D., assistant professor of higher education administration, received the 2021 Jack Miller Award for Teaching. A faculty member with the College since 2017, Tolman serves as the program director for the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program and teaches graduate level courses on educational leadership and higher education administration. Tolman is a 2019 merit recipient of the Outstanding Faculty Advisor award for the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) where he was recognized for his efforts to communicate and mentor students. On top of in-person appointments, he also allows students to schedule through an online portal to have appointments via phone, Skype or face-to-face advising sessions in centralized areas such as Atlanta, since many of the graduate students he teaches are online. Tolman has served on 24 dissertation committees, of which he is currently chairing six. When working on his own scholarship centered on the profession of student affairs and the residential and co-curricular experience of college students, Tolman often collaborates with students to complete publications and presentations.

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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Georgia Southern education faculty receives 2021 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity

August 17, 2021



Students participating in the Ventaja Statesboro camp this summer visited the University's museum, which houses the actual remains of a 78-million year old, 26-foot long mosasaur creating opportunities for students' exploration of the geography and culture of Georgia. Beverly Miller, Ph.D. is pictured (center).

Georgia Southern University assistant professor of elementary education Beverly Miller, Ph.D., received the 2021 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the largest and oldest diversity and inclusion publication in higher education.

The Inspiring Programs in STEM Award honors members of colleges and universities that encourage and assist students from underrepresented groups to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Miller was recognized for her efforts in coordinating STEM camps for underrepresented populations. The first camp, Ventaja Panamá, began in 2017, offering STEM and literacy to underserved students in the country of Panama.

“Ventaja means advantage in Spanish,” Miller explained. “Ventaja Panama was designed with a social justice educational

framework that encompasses three focuses: STEM and literacy content with hands-on activities and learning, a local or regional field trip that supports community engagement and collaboration and nutritious meals — hungry children cannot learn.”

After running the camp successfully in Panama for years, Miller decided to expand the opportunity to rural students in Bulloch County, Georgia. The inaugural year of the camp was hosted in June of this year and included a field trip to the Georgia Southern Museum.

“The Ventaja Statesboro program operated from the Georgia Southern Statesboro Campus to target first-generation college and underrepresented students,” she said. “During the week of the camp, we were able to

expose them to a college campus environment through instruction with faculty, field trips that included the campus museum, interactions with athletic teams and eating at a university dining hall. At the end of the week, students made presentations on the Unsung Heroes of STEM to University faculty, staff and their supporters.”

Miller and her Ventaja Camps will be featured, along with the 78 other recipients from across the nation, in the September 2021 issue of *INSIGHT Into Diversity*.

“I was truly surprised by this nomination,” said Miller. “We are often busy doing the work and never consider that someone is watching and taking notice. As an Afro-Latina woman I came to the United States at the age of six. I had great teachers who pushed me and expected excellence regardless of my educational background and language skills. They saw my raw talent and potential. As they did for me, I too see the untapped talent of the students that I serve.”

Miller and the Ventaja Camps were selected because of her targeted efforts to provide a low-cost opportunity for students to attend camp with both enriched academic experiences in STEM and food to ensure their basic needs were met.

“We know that many STEM programs are not always recognized for their success, dedication and mentorship for underrepresented students,” says Lenore Pearlstein, owner and publisher of *INSIGHT Into Diversity*. “We want to honor the schools and organizations that have created programs that inspire and encourage young people who may currently be in or are interested in a future career in STEM. We are proud to honor these programs as role models to other institutions of higher education and beyond.”



First held in 2017, Ventaja Panama has assisted over 300 Panamanian youth by educating students and local teachers with place-based, hands-on STEM education while also ensuring that students’ basic needs are met.

Georgia Southern University faculty member Beverly Miller, Ph.D., was unable to host an in-person camp in 2020, but offered an online curriculum in 2021 to continue the progress that has been made in the last four years.

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Tags: [Beverly King Miller](#), [i2STEMed](#)