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Health and physical education major makes calls on his future as a coach with support from National Guard and Army ROTC

November 16, 2021



Carson McClellan

When Carson McClellan graduated high school, he knew two things for certain. He wanted to coach football, and he needed to find a way to cover the costs of college.

“I knew when I played my last down of high school football that I wanted to coach college or high school football,” said McClellan. “My head football coach, Lee Chomskis, had a huge impact on me when I was in high school. I still talk to him every week. I want to impact people’s lives like he did mine. I think that played a big part in why I wanted to take the next step to work with young men in the athletic arena.”

To assist with college tuition, McClellan joined the Georgia Army National Guard. After graduating from high school, he completed basic training before enrolling as an education major at East Georgia State College. While this is his first semester as a health and physical education student at Georgia Southern University, McClellan said that he already loves it and feels like he’s been here longer. And in some ways, he has.

As a guardsman enrolled in college, McClellan is able to report to Georgia Southern’s National Guard Detachment, allowing him to complete drill weekends on the Statesboro Campus rather than travel to an assigned unit in the state.

McClellan also found a home on the Georgia Southern Eagles football coaching staff. As an intern working with the tight ends, McClellan has served more than a year with the team. On game days, you can find him making play calls on the sidelines.

“I signal in our offensive signals,” he explained. “I get the play from the offensive coordinator, and I signal it to the quarterback. It’s a pretty big deal. At other schools they have their backup quarterbacks do it, but here, we let our student assistants do it. The first time I did it I was nervous, but after the first couple of calls you settle in.”

The internship fulfills a passion, but is also giving McClellan valuable work experience for his career ahead, none of which would be possible without his scholarship and support from the National Guard and Army ROTC.



McClellan on the sidelines for the Georgia Southern Football team.

“When they say they will pay for all of your college expenses, they absolutely mean it,” he said. “If I wasn’t both in the Guard and ROTC, I would probably have to work, which wouldn’t allow me to be a student assistant for the football team. It has all worked out so well, and both the Guard and ROTC work with me on my schedule for classes and my internship.”

An average day for McClellan is nothing short of a full schedule. Starting at 6 a.m, McClellan leads a company of cadets in physical training before heading to Nevils Elementary School for field experience in health and physical education from 8 to 11:30 a.m. He then attends classes on the Statesboro Campus, followed by meetings with the football coaching staff on the practice fields until 8:30 p.m.

“That’s just on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays,” he said, laughing. “But I wouldn’t change a thing. I love what I do. I love being in the Army. I love the path that I took. Coming into it, I had not even planned on joining the military. But my path has altered, and I love where it’s brought me. I love Georgia Southern and the health and physical education program, and I look forward to whatever the future holds for me.”

Posted in [Student Highlights](#)

Tags: [Carson McClellan](#), [National Guard](#), [RTOC](#)

Teacher development program on Georgia Southern's Armstrong Campus offers mentorships for male students from diverse backgrounds

November 16, 2021

Georgia Southern University is enhancing its commitment to diversifying the teacher workforce with the addition of the Call Me MISTER® program on the Armstrong Campus in Savannah.

Call Me MISTER®, an acronym that stands for Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models, is a program that originated at Clemson University to increase the pool of available teachers from a broader and more diverse background, particularly focusing on the recruitment and mentoring of Black males in teacher education programs.

According to national figures, only 2% of all teachers in the U.S. are Black males.

Georgia Southern is now one of only three higher education institutions in Georgia, and the only in Southeast Georgia, that offers the mentorship program. Calvin Walton, Ph.D., lecturer in the College of Education (COE), has been named the program director.

“Our goal is to have a major impact on Savannah-Chatham County Schools,” said Walton. “We have to do a better job in the area, the state and the nation to recruit and properly develop African American males to become teachers. Black students with Black teachers perform better. Research shows that. So we need to do what we can to allow diverse students to see themselves reflected in their teachers and have the opportunity to perform at the highest levels.”

Participants in the program will be accepted in cohorts each fall and receive financial support from the College. Each MISTER participant will have a mentor within the University or Savannah-area community to provide additional support outside of their academic performances.

“The program is co-curricular,” explained Walton. “While these young men will be studying to become elementary school educators, they will also receive additional experiences to support them for college success as well as their future careers as African American males teaching in Chatham County. It is our goal that the MISTERS will remain in Savannah to teach, and therefore we want to provide them with all the tools and understanding necessary to perform their very best in the classrooms in Chatham County.”

Georgia Southern has also uniquely partnered with the Georgia Army National Guard in efforts to support the program through a joint opportunity for students to participate in Call Me MISTER® and enlist in the National Guard. Sergeant First Class Todd Friedel of the Georgia

Army National Guard and University's Director of Military and Veterans Services Col. George Fredrick played an integral role in assisting to bring the program to Georgia Southern.

“Having a partnership with the College of Education makes our recruiters more aware of what a full-time career in education for the state of Georgia and a part-time state of Georgia National Guard career can look like,” explained Sgt. 1st Class Todd Friedel of the Georgia Army National Guard. “As recruiters, we touch the lives of many Black males in the state, and this allows us to share with them the opportunity to serve your community both as a soldier and educator.”

COE Associate Dean for Administration and Faculty Affairs Tracy Linderholm, Ph.D., spearheaded the initiative to bring Call Me MISTER® to Georgia Southern after she was approached by Sgt. Friedel and Col. Fredrick with the idea.

Sharon Subreenduth, Ph.D., dean of the College of Education, commended the hard work of Linderholm and the team that worked to bring the Call Me MISTER® program to the University.

“It is exciting to see this all come to fruition,” said Subreenduth. “Dr. Linderholm has worked tirelessly with the program representatives at Clemson University, as well Sgt. Friedel and Col. Fredrick to ensure that Georgia Southern and the Call Me MISTER® program were a good fit. As a College, it is one of our goals to assist in diversifying the teacher workforce, and this program is a tangible step in that direction.”

The first cohort of Call Me MISTER® program participants will be accepted by the University for attendance in fall 2022. Anyone who is interested in supporting the program can contact Walton at calvinwalton@georgiasouthern.edu or Linderholm at tlinderholm@georgiasouthern.edu.

Posted in [COE Sponsored Events](#), [Degree Programs](#), [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#)

Tags: [Call Me MISTER](#), [Calvin Walton](#), [Sharon Subreenduth](#), [Tracy Linderholm](#)

Georgia Southern joins Girl Scouts in STEM education

November 16, 2021

Each year, thousands of Girl Scouts from across the world visit Savannah, Georgia, the birthplace of Girl Scouts founder Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Lowe.

Gordon Lowe’s home is a museum that has been operated by the Girl Scouts of the USA for more than 60 years in historic downtown Savannah. In 2020, the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia saw an opportunity to provide local and visiting troops the opportunity to engage in experiences with STEM and opened the doors to the GIRL Center only a few miles from the historic Gordon Lowe house. The GIRL (Go-Getter, Innovator, Risk Taker and Leader) Center offers hands-on, self-paced activities in a variety of STEM fields.

Georgia Southern University’s College of Science and Mathematics (COSM) signed a memorandum of understanding with Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia in 2020 to assist with consultation of scientific displays and programming, as well as exposure to Georgia Southern’s Statesboro Campus and Armstrong Campus in Savannah. This year, COSM brought in the College of Education’s Center for STEM Education (i²STEM^{ed}) to assist with creating STEM activity kits that can be provided either on-site at the GIRL Center or checked out for local troop use.

“COSM values our partnerships with the College of Education and the Center for STEM Education, as well as our partnership with the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia,” said COSM Dean Delana Gajdosik-Nivens, Ph.D. “As a team, we hope to build the love of STEM in girls from across the county and do everything we can to be that positive influence in their lives, which in turn will hopefully lead them to pursue a major and a career in STEM. COSM is proud to do our part to bring more girls into STEM.”

Designed to inspire the Girl Scout ideals of self-motivation and independence, i²STEM^{ed} created kits on secret coding (cyber security), basic computer coding (binary beads), tree identification (biology) and forensic science (chemistry). There are plans to develop additional activities in engineering, drawing, ornithology, space science and environmental science.

Girl Scouts that complete activities at the Center will be offered a brand new badge representing the Georgia Southern and Girl Scout partnership. The badge features GUS, the University’s official mascot, holding the Girl Scout trefoil and will be available at the GIRL Center in 2022.



1 New Georgia Southern and Girl Scout co-branded badge available at the GIRL Center in spring 2022.

“The work has truly been interdisciplinary in nature, with faculty collaborations to create these kits in order to inspire our future generations in STEM,” said Kania Greer, i²STEM^{ed} coordinator. “We were excited to become a part of the team working with the Girl Scouts as this partnership provides us opportunities to reach both local girls and girls from all over the country as they come to Savannah, broadening the reach of STEM and Georgia Southern.”

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