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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2009). *Newsroom*. 490.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/490>

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Georgia Southern University Students Earn SMART Scholarships

MAY 18, 2009



**GEORGIA
SOUTHERN
UNIVERSITY**

Five Georgia Southern University students have received scholarships aimed at increasing the number of highly-qualified science and math teachers in secondary public schools.

Laura Bennett, Amy Campbell, Zac Gardner, Amber Johnson and Megan Molloy have received SMART (Science and Math Achievement through Research and Technology) scholarships from Georgia Southern's College of Education and College of Science and Technology.

The SMART scholarships are awarded through a National Science Foundation grant, with funding from the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program. The scholarships are available to math or science majors who will pursue a Master of Arts in Teaching degree. For each year the students receive the scholarship, they commit to teaching for two years in a high-need public secondary school.

"Our goal is to have 30 math and science teachers out in the field in the next five years," said chemistry professor Jim LoBue, who helped write the grant.

The recipients of Georgia Southern University's inaugural SMART scholarships are:

Laura Bennett (Math) – Brooklet, Ga. Bennett volunteers with Trinity Christian School's fifth- and sixth-grade math teams, recently helping the fifth-graders place second in ciphering and the sixth-graders place first in ciphering in the Penny Sikes Math Tournament at Southeast Bulloch High School.

Amy Campbell (Math) – Moultrie, Ga. An active member of the Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society and Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society, Campbell has been a dean's list student, a Governor's Honors Program participant and a tutor in the Upward Bound program.

Zac Gardner (Chemistry) – Newnan, Ga. Gardner has helped fellow students as a math and science tutor at Georgia Southern. Last month, he received an award at the Georgia Academy of Sciences meeting for the best undergraduate chemistry paper (in the area of photochemistry).

Amber Johnson (Biology) – Twin City, Ga. The salutatorian of her graduating class at Emanuel County Institute, Johnson earned her biology degree from Georgia Southern in December 2008 and will start the MAT program this fall.

Megan Molloy (Biology) – Peachtree City, Ga. Molloy has helped young people as the assistant youth group leader at Clito Baptist Church and as a summer camp counselor in Rome, Ga. She is committed to fitness, participating in triathlons and 5K races on weekends.

A team of five Georgia Southern faculty members wrote the scholarship grant and interviewed the candidates. The team was comprised of LoBue, biology professor Michelle Cawthorn, math professor Joy Darley, chemistry professor Brian Koehler and curriculum, foundations and reading professor Marlynn Griffin.

The grant is for five years, with more than \$600,000 in scholarships to be awarded over that period, LoBue said. SMART scholarship winners can receive up to \$10,000 per year, with the primary target being juniors who can have the scholarship for two years their senior year and a year of graduate work.

To be eligible for the SMART scholarship, a student must have completed the pre-professional block” a practicum that involves 50 hours of observation in a public school classroom.

“To teach secondary education, you need good content knowledge. All of our scholarship recipients were strong candidates with very good knowledge of their major subject area,” LoBue said.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers 115 degree programs serving nearly 18,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of Georgia’s largest, is a top choice of Georgia’s HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu.