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Students compete in the fourth annual 3 Day Startup on campus

MARCH 10, 2017



Student entrepreneurs at Georgia Southern University brought their business ideas to life during the Business Innovation Group's (BIG) fourth annual 3 Day Startup (3DS) program, held Feb. 24-26 in the Information Technology

Building.

3DS is a world-renowned program that creates a living entrepreneurship laboratory that brings together individuals from various backgrounds and provides students with the tools they need to start successful companies.

This year's 3DS facilitator from the Austin, Texas, program was Georgia native, Ellyson Glance. Glance helped students from all majors across the University prepare for the weekend as they gathered to create business ideas to develop. Six ideas were presented during final pitches, ranging from hair care products to digital shopping, and students worked with and received guidance from mentors throughout the weekend.

"This is by far my favorite event to organize for the students," said Program Manager Suzanne Hallman. "It requires a lot of preparation, but the payoff is worth it. Every year we hear great ideas and see huge strides our students make over the weekend. I enjoy working with fellow Eagles and look forward to helping them launch their dreams right here at Georgia Southern."

Ultimately, panelists chose “Whipp,” natural hair care products consisting of base cream and oils customized to each individual’s needs and “whipped” together by consultants, and “Easy Bustle,” a simple solution to complicated wedding dress bustling issues, as the most viable products to move on to participate in the FastPitch event in Savannah in April. FastPitch allows entrepreneurs to make a three minute pitch of their innovative venture and be assessed as to the viability of the ventures by local community leaders, academics, and investors. Coaching and feedback is provided before, during and after to better prepare presenters, their ideas and their presentations of that idea. Other business ideas worked on throughout the weekend included:

- FlashBack – glasses that record what “just happened” by using a cache so users can live in the moment and relive unforgettable moments
- My Kid – a device that helps parents stay in range of kids to prevent losing them in crowded family theme parks and venues
- Varsity – an ecosystem for student entrepreneurs to connect with each other and the community to offer goods and services
- Digital Shopper – groceries from the store delivered to the customer’s door via a fast and reliable service

This intensive weekend event was filled with activities including workshops, business idea generation, customer engagement sessions and pitching the ideas to the judges. 3DS is a collaborative event that encourages students to cross-pollinate, learning from each other.

“The Business Innovation Group creates this great opportunity for our students to get real experience with the development of ideas into business models, and the students love it,” said Steve Stewart, Ph.D., an assistant professor of management who teaches in the Entrepreneurship program. “It’s great when students get excited about seeing all their education come to life in real-world circumstance, and to have that validated by other mentors and judges...that’s always an important moment in the educational process, and ultimately will lead to students starting companies that create jobs.”

The Georgia Southern University BIG prides itself on its commitment to empower and equip entrepreneurs. 3DS is an example of the commitments BIG makes to create more businesses and jobs in order to sustain the economy. For more information, contact Suzanne Hallman, business advisor, at shallman@georgiasouthern.edu, or visit georgiasouthern.3daystartup.org.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125 degree programs serving 20,673 students. Through eight colleges, the University

offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.

University study shows number of obese adults trying to lose weight is decreasing

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A new Georgia Southern study shows that even though obesity in the U.S. has reached historic highs and nationwide public awareness campaigns have outlined the associated health risks, the number of overweight and obese adults trying to lose weight has steadily fallen.

The research brief, titled "Change in percentages of adults with overweight or obesity trying to lose weight, 1988 to 2014," was a student-led research effort by Cassandra Snook, Carmen Duke and Kathryn Finch, all 2016 graduates in the Master of Public Health program at Georgia Southern. The brief was published in the March 7, 2017 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), the most widely circulated medical journal in the world.

"We observed a rising percentage of overweight people who believed that their body weight was just fine," said Dr. Jian Zhang, associate professor of epidemiology in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, who supervised the study. "Surprisingly, my students found that no scientific effort had been made to verify this hypothesis, and we were not sure Americans were truly translating the elevated awareness about the obesity crisis into action."

The students used data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), an ongoing survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to examine the theory. They reviewed survey data from 1988-1994, 1999-2004 and 2009-2014, which revealed an

alarming divergent trend: the prevalence of overweight and obesity increased, and the number of overweight and obese adults trying to lose weight decreased.

“You would hope that as being overweight and/or obese become more well-known risk factors for a variety of conditions and diseases, more people would attempt to avoid that risk,” said Snook, lead author of the brief. “I think the results of this research are very significant in showing that the obesity epidemic is continuing, and will continue to worsen as long as no weight loss attempts are made.”

Zhang, who has worked with the CDC in both the U.S. and China, says the study is all the more alarming due to the significant resources that have been invested in the obesity problem worldwide.

“Substantial effort, including research funding, has been invested to support biological research in obesity, clinical trials, development of new drugs and devices, and community-based programs to stem the tide of the obesity epidemic,” he said. “Our study, taken together with the most recent reports in JAMA, does not suggest much success — neither in decreasing prevalence of obesity nor motivating people to lose weight.”

Andrew Hansen, Dr.P.H., assistant professor of community health behavior and education in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH), and one of the brief’s co-authors and supervisors of the study, says the discussion of obesity isn’t a discussion about external looks. It’s a discussion about health. And with health care being one of the most relevant topics in the country right now, it’s even more important to discuss the health of our citizens.

“Why is it important that everybody in the population is healthy? Well, because if they’re not, it’s going to cost us all more money,” he said.

And obesity’s costs are far-reaching. According to a 2012 article in the Journal of Health Economics, obesity-related illnesses account for a staggering \$190.2 billion annually — nearly 21 percent of all medical spending in the U.S. A 2007 study in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine found that obesity-related job absenteeism is costing American businesses \$4.3 billion annually. And these costs will continue to rise.

The research brief doesn’t identify potential solutions to the epidemic itself, and only points to individual body weight misperceptions and failed weight loss efforts as possible culprits in its findings. However, Hansen says that health care access, and inexpensive screenings such as the

body mass index (BMI) metric, which is available online at the CDC website, can at least help people make the small corrections necessary to steer toward a better outcome.

"I remember a pilot once telling me, 'You have to make small corrections early to avoid huge problems later,'" he said. "And that is so true to this aspect of health as well. Screen it. Find it early. Make the small corrections early to avoid expensive problems later."

Students take the lead

JAMA is one of the most highly respected medical journals in the world, and is highly selective in its content. For co-authors and mentors Hansen, Zhang and Amy Hackney, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Georgia Southern, the publication of this research brief is a career highlight. For the three recent public health graduates, one of which was lead author of the brief, the publication is a career launch.

"It is absolutely amazing to have my name on a JAMA article, especially considering that this was a project completed as a student," said Snook.

Greg Evans, Ph.D., dean of the JPHCOPH, says both undergraduate and graduate research opportunities are just an extension of the University's emphasis of hands-on experiences for its students.

"Public Health education focuses on applying the skills taught in the classroom to real-life experiences," he said. "Our students learn volumes from research projects such as this, and to have their efforts recognized in such a renowned publication is a great achievement."

Hansen says he and his colleagues value students and their progress, and give them opportunities to prove themselves and highlight their abilities. He says Snook, Finch and Duke have proven themselves in abundance.

"I really look forward to seeing where these students are in five or 10 years, because I can tell you right now, it's going to be somewhere big," he said.

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Graduate student's folk pottery exhibit on display through March 31

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Graduate student Annamarie Kistler has worked meticulously to convey the stories of folk potters in the region through her historical exhibit "Common Clay."

The dual exhibit, on display through March 31 at both the Southern Folk Art Gallery in the University's Center for Art & Theatre as well as the Averitt Center for the Art's Legends Gallery, serves as a tribute to the folk potters' long, unbroken devotion to the craft. A closing reception will take place March 31 at the Center for Art & Theatre.

"Southern folk pottery owes its survival to the potters' desire to preserve a traditional way of life in which pottery making was fully integrated," Kistler said. "It's unique contribution to the economic and cultural history of the South makes folk pottery a story worth sharing."

To tell the story, Kistler carefully selected pieces from the University's Smith Callaway Banks Southern Folk Art Collection. Her exhibit will feature work from renowned folk potters from Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina to explore the historical importance and the changing role of folk pottery in the south.

"In 2006, Banks donated a large portion of his collection to the University. Today, the collection consists of 250 different folk pottery pieces and nearly 230 two-dimensional paintings and drawings," she said. "When I was working as the collections manager at the Center for Art & Theatre, the folk pottery collection always stood out to me because the pieces are so different from any other art form that I have studied."

Each of the featured pieces tell the stories of potter families who adapted to the economic and social developments of the 20th century, shaping their work from once-essential household items to highly valued and collected folk art.

Although she plans to graduate in May with a master's in history, Kistler says that art history has always been her true passion.

"I was thrilled to have my graduate assistantship with the art department because I really wanted the opportunity to learn more about folk pottery and I wanted to help the art department learn more about the significance of this large collection of work they own," she said.

For more information about the University's Center for Art & Theatre, visit <http://class.georgiasouthern.edu/cat/>.

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