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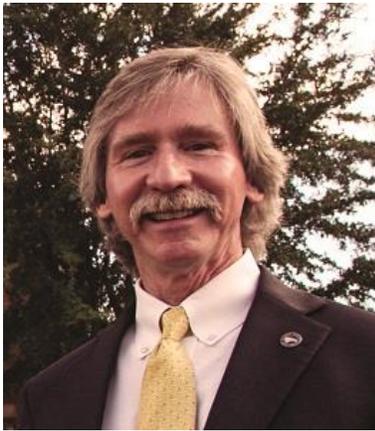
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# Thomas Koballa to Present Keynote at GERA Conference

OCTOBER 5, 2016



*Thomas Koballa, Ph.D., dean  
of the College of Education*

Thomas R. Koballa Jr., Ph.D., dean of the College of Education at Georgia Southern, will be the keynote speaker at the Georgia Educational Research Association (GERA) 2016 Annual Conference, which will take place Oct. 7 at the Marriott at the Convention Center in Augusta, Georgia.

Koballa believes the structure of a modern college of education is determined by the quality and impact of its research in concert with the exceptionality of its students.

Using the strategic plan as a guide, Koballa has worked with the faculty to reorient the College toward one in which a culture of inquiry, anchored in the synergistic relationship between research and practice, permeates more and more aspects of faculty and student activity.

"I look forward to discussing with conference participants characteristics of education research that lead to it having less impact than is desired, as well as strategies they believe can serve to increase the impact of their research," said Koballa. "In addition, the conference will allow me to renew friendships and learn firsthand about the work of other educational researchers from around the state."

GERA has approximately 150 members from universities and colleges, public and private schools, and state, local, public and private educational agencies and institutions, covering disciplines in education, psychology, statistics, sociology, history, economics, philosophy, anthropology and political science.

In concurrence with the [American Educational Research Association](#) (AERA), the theme of the conference is Public Scholarship to Educate Diverse Democracies.

[Register](#) for the conference today.

# Faculty and Alumni Present Research at 26th Annual EECERA Conference

OCTOBER 5, 2016



*Mikaela Shupp, Jerri Kropp, Nancy McBride Arrington and Mary Wallace-Noe presented research at the 26th Annual European Early Childhood Education Research Association Conference that was held in Dublin, Ireland*

Faculty and alumni from Georgia Southern University attended and presented research at the 26th Annual [European Early Childhood Education Research Association](#) (EECERA) Conference that was held in Dublin, Ireland, from Aug. 31 to Sept. 3.

Jerri Kropp, Ph.D., associate professor of child and family development (CHFD) in the School of Human Ecology, and CHFD alumna Mary Wallace-Noe ('11), presented their research, "How to Reduce Children's Fears of Doctors Visits Using Medical Play." Their research focused on the impact medical play has on young children and its usage in a childcare setting.

In addition, Kropp also presented research conducted with Georgia Southern alumna Mikaela Shupp ('15) titled, "Benefits of a Therapy Dog in the Classroom: A Review of Research."

The attendees networked with many presenters at the conference from all over the world including Alexander Muela, a professor from Spain. Muela works with therapy dogs to help children who have been abused, and he discussed future projects with Kropp.

"He and I have emailed back and forth and we talked about doing a project together," said Kropp. "I would collect data in the US and he would collect data in Spain, so I'm very excited. The whole experience was just amazing. Any time you get to meet people internationally is such a great opportunity."

Also presenting at the conference was Nancy McBride Arrington, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Georgia Southern. Her co-presenters in the symposium "Praxeological Learning: Social Justice and Social Capital" included Vickie Lake, Ph.D., professor at the University of Oklahoma, and June O'Sullivan, director of the London Early Years Foundation in the United Kingdom.

In the session, Arrington shared research from the chapter she wrote in the recently-published book, *Praxeological Learning: Service-Learning in Teacher Education* by Christian Winterbottom and Vickie E. Lake.

Arrington's chapter is titled "A Journey of Service-Learning: Three Different Professional Lenses."

"It was awesome to be able to meet, collaborate and form new professional relationships with other early childhood educators from around the globe," said Arrington. "One of the highlights for me personally was the lovely introduction to the culture of Irish music and dance provided at the conference's opening ceremony."

The conference, the largest childhood conference in Europe, consisted of 920 participants from six continents and 44 countries. It provides a framework that promotes networking for scholars, policy makers, researchers and practitioners.