Georgia Southern University is on record as being adamantly opposed to guns in the classroom. Our institution does not support the proposed campus carry legislation. Our position on people carrying firearms across campus and into classrooms has not changed. In 2010, the legislature modified the law which allowed concealed carry, licensed gun holders to keep their weapons in their vehicles in the parking lots of our campus. We believe the law in its current form is working and is the best and most effective way to protect and ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff.

We are proud and excited to have an elite sports shooting education center coming to Georgia Southern and Statesboro. A facility of this nature does not contradict the University's position on guns in the classroom. This center, which will be located on the outskirts of campus, is an opportunity to educate, teach and train people on responsible gun ownership and promote the growing popularity of recreational sports shooting.

The $7 million facility, funded in part by a $3.3 million federal grant through the Georgia Department of Natural Resources along with private and corporate donations, will be a state-of-the-art venue providing educational and recreation opportunities with its archery and indoor shooting ranges. This project will create a safe, educational environment where people can learn about firearms from trained professionals.

Questions:

1) Why does Georgia Southern University (GSU) appear as a “Sustaining Partner” of the pro-gun lobbying group Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation on the CSF webpage?

Georgia Southern University representatives - Dr. Vince Miller, associate vice president and Gene Sherry, exec. director of campus recreation - attended the Congressional Sportsman Foundation banquet in Washington, DC in December 2012 as an opportunity to meet industry executives for further cultivation as fundraising prospects. This event allowed access to top executives from such entities as UPS, Rayonnier, Honda Motors, Outdoor Channel, Bass Pro Shops, etc. which would be difficult to contact on an individual basis.

How long has the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation considered GSU a partner in their efforts?

To our knowledge, only after representatives attending this event did Georgia Southern’s name appear.

On an annual basis during the past 15 years, what forms and amounts of support (financial or otherwise) has GSU provided to the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation?

Just the December 2012 event attendance and costs associated with travel and participation in that one event.

2) Were the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and/or Lindsey Thomas Consulting in any way involved with the GSU Shooting Center initiative?

If so, how, when, under whose authority, and were they reimbursed in any way?
No additional relationship with the Congressional Sportsmen Foundation exists beyond what is stated in response to question 1. Hon. Lindsey Thomas is a Georgia Southern supporter who expressed his enthusiasm for the project once it was announced in early 2012. Lindsey Thomas Consulting has not and is not under contract with the University for services in support of this project. He has not been compensated in any way associated with this project.

3) Why did three GSU administrators attend the Shooting Sports Summit in June 2011 in Louisville, KY?

Attendance at this event was part of an industry fact finding process surrounding the early stages of this project. GSU administrators have also attended similar summit with the Archery Trade Association, conducted site visits of similar facilities in Michigan and Gainesville, Florida; and participated regional and statewide drive-ins with DNR.

Why was that forum chosen for the first public announcement of the GSU Shooting Center initiative and by whom?

Similar interests as to why a University was in attendance began to cascade across the Summit participants and we shared our project with those who asked. This generated excitement around this concept possibly led to the tweet by Chris Dolnac.

4) Does GSU and/or the Shooting Center initiative already have, in the works, underway, or being considered for the future, partnerships with the CSF, the NSSF, the NRA, USA Shooting, and/or any other pro-gun groups – lobbying, political action, non-profit, or otherwise?

If so, who initiated and consulted on such partnerships, when, and under whose authority?

CSF, NRA, and USA shooting have not provided financial support or partnership. Georgia Southern has received a $25,000 award from the NSSF Grant program. This is an unrestricted award to support administrative costs associated with constructing the facility. The award is part of the Collegiate Shooting Sports Initiative. Schools that have received CSSI grants include Harvard, Yale, Clemson, Colorado State, and The University of Vermont.

At this time, all possibilities are open for exploration. The NSSF, NRA, USA Shooting, in addition to Archery Trade Association, DNR, Easton Sports, Midway, and many others have programs which support recreation and shooting sports. Georgia Southern students and the community are already exposed to such programs in their high schools and recreation and have asked for expanded recreation in this area. Our partnerships will be strategic in support of the Mission of the facility and Georgia Southern and are not intended as political alliances or statements on behalf of the institution.

Rationale:
A short review of publicly available news, GSU, and internet sources reveals a number of potentially problematic entanglements and conflicts of interest in GSU’s relationships with politically active and highly-controversial pro-gun organizations. Many of these groups have actively opposed widely popular, common-sense gun violence control efforts such as requiring mandatory background checks at gun shows, making illegal gun sales a federal crime, and banning high capacity ammunition clips.

1) On their public website, the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation lists GSU as a “Sustaining Partner.” GSU is the only academic institution so listed. It appears highly inappropriate for a publicly-funded institution of higher education to support a controversial and politically active lobbying group.

2) Also listed as a Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation “Sustaining Partner” is Lindsay Thomas Consulting. Lindsay Thomas, former US Representative from Georgia, is also a member of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation Board of Directors. Mr. Thomas has connections with both GSU and Statesboro.

3) The Shooting Sports Summit is an event organized by the gun industry’s own lobbying organization, the National Shooting Sports Foundation. GSU Administrators in attendance at the June 2011 event were: Teresa Thompson, VP Student Affairs & Enrollment Mgt.; Vince Miller, Director, Special Projects; Gene Sherry, Director, Campus Recreation. During the event, National Shooting Sports Foundation’s Chief Marketing Officer Chris Dolnack tweeted: “Learned that Georgia Southern University is building a shooting sports center in the heart of their campus. #NSSFSummit.”

4) In April 2010, GSU President Keel and GSU Police Chief Russell both publicly stated their well-reasoned intention to continue to ban guns on our campus out of concern for the safety of our university community. Just over a year later, the GSU Shooting Center initiative was announced. According to GSU’s Shooting Center website, the center “will have the opportunity to forge partnerships with the NRA [and] USA Shooting.” In the wake of the recent December 2012 Newtown, CT school shootings, multiple pro-gun lobby groups, including some of the groups named here, have made provocative and disturbing announcements advocating for unregulated access to guns on educational campuses – contradicting the stated preferences of Keel and Russell.

As stated in all other discussions, GSU will continue to abide and uphold all regulations for guns not being allowed on campus except at the Shooting Sports Complex.
SOURCES:


http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-says-hell-offer-plans-to-stem-gun-violence-this-week/2013/01/14/b7ad8ea8-5e6c-11e2-90a0-73c8343c6d61_story.html?hpid=2 – No reference to Georgia Southern

1) http://www.sportsmenslink.org/about/partners/csf-partners – Georgia Southern University as sustaining partner

2) http://www.manta.com/c/mtpcr7y/lindsay-thomas-consulting-incorporated – No reference to Georgia Southern

http://www.sportsmenslink.org/about/board/ – No reference to Georgia Southern

http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/szm29b00/pdf;jsessionid=65DF19CE12D002CF61851F7C32F5C853_tobacco03 – No reference to Georgia Southern

3) http://nssf.org/Summit/attendees.cfm – Website page not found.

http://web.archive.org/web/20120408051527/http://nssf.org/Summit/attendees.cfm – Lists Vince Miller, Director of Special Projects; Gene Sherry, Director of Campus Recreation; Teresa Thompson, UP Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.

http://nssf.org/summit/summittwitter.cfm – Website page not found.


http://nssf.org/Summit/summittwitter.cfm – Website page not found.

http://www.nrahuntersrights.org/Article.aspx?id=5095 – Webpage shows a tweet during the conference that mentions Georgia Southern. “Learned that Georgia Southern University is building a shooting sports center in the heart of their campus.”

https://twitter.com/chrisdolnack – No reference to Georgia Southern
4) [http://services.georgiasouthern.edu/cri/facilities/shootingCenter](http://services.georgiasouthern.edu/cri/facilities/shootingCenter) - Georgia Southern CRI Website on Shooting Center

[http://www.gaclea.com/newsletters/GACLEA-PR2010-04.pdf](http://www.gaclea.com/newsletters/GACLEA-PR2010-04.pdf) – April 2010 media report where Dr. Keel is summarized as saying guns on campus is not a good idea.

[http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7297575/#.URXkx_LNmSo](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7297575/#.URXkx_LNmSo) - No reference to Georgia Southern


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