

# Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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# Double Eagle Donna Wiggins, Ph.D., receives Award for Excellence in Teaching

MAY 5, 2017



In March, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) alumna and Double Eagle, Donna Gwyn Wiggins, Ph.D., (79',85'), received Winston-Salem State University's (WSSU) 2017 University of North Carolina Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

The award was created by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors in 1994 to identify and reward teachers at each of its campuses every year. In addition to receiving the award at the WSSU commencement ceremony on May 19, Wiggins will also receive a \$12,500 stipend.

"I am extremely humbled to have been named a recipient of this prestigious award," said Wiggins. "I am grateful for the opportunity to engage with students both in and out of the classroom. This award is a reminder that the important work we do on the 17 constituent campuses of the UNC system does not go unnoticed."

Wiggins, an associate professor in the Department of Music at WSSU, earned her bachelor's degree in music theory and composition and her masters in music education from Georgia Southern. The Savannah, Georgia, native is also a graduate of Windsor Forest High School.

She is a member of the National Association for Music Education, the North Carolina Music Educators Association and the Winston-Salem Piano Teachers Association. Wiggins is a published author in several peer-reviewed journals and books and often presents at conferences across the nation with lectures on music and urban education and music education curriculum development.

The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) is the largest of the eight colleges that make up Georgia Southern University, and it plays a central role in every student's core of knowledge. CLASS, also described as the University's College of the Creative Mind, prepares students to achieve academic excellence, develop their analytical skills, enhance their creativity and embrace their responsibilities as citizens of their communities, their nations and the world. CLASS offers more than 20 undergraduate degrees and several interdisciplinary minors from its 11 departments and five

academic centers. CLASS offers eight master's degrees, two graduate certificates and one doctoral degree. For more information, visit [class.georgiasouthern.edu](http://class.georgiasouthern.edu).

# Appointment of Senior Leadership Team announced for the new Georgia Southern University

MAY 5, 2017



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## PRESS RELEASE

**Allison Hersh:** [allison.hersh@armstrong.edu](mailto:allison.hersh@armstrong.edu) | 912-344-2971 (office) | 912-441-1285 (mobile)

**Jennifer Wise:** [jwise@GeorgiaSouthern.edu](mailto:jwise@GeorgiaSouthern.edu) | 912-478-2301 (office) | 912-531-5963 (mobile)

Today, Georgia Southern University President Jaimie Hebert, Ph.D., announced the appointment of the senior leadership team for the new Georgia Southern University, contingent upon the Board of Regents' approval of the new consolidated university.

"A critical task in the consolidation of Armstrong State University and Georgia Southern University is the creation of a dynamic and forward-thinking leadership team who will partner with me on building the new Georgia Southern," said Hebert.

Effective January 1, 2018, contingent upon the Board of Regents' approval of the new, consolidated Georgia Southern University, the President's Cabinet members are as follows:

### **Trip Addison, Vice President for University Advancement and External Affairs**

A "Double Eagle" graduate of Georgia Southern, Trip Addison joined the University administration in 2015. Before returning to his alma mater, Addison served in various state government roles, including deputy budget director and policy advisor to Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal.

### **Georj Lewis, Ed.D., Vice President for Student Affairs**

Georj Lewis, Ed.D., is Armstrong State University's current Vice President for Student Affairs, having served since 2013. He previously worked at Indiana University Northwest and as dean of students at Georgia Southern for nine years.

### **Teresa Thompson, Vice President for Enrollment Management**

Teresa Thompson, Ph.D., joined Georgia Southern University in 2000. She previously served as the director of admissions at the University, and oversaw an enrollment increase of more than 1,500 students and an SAT average increase of 70 points. Her efforts moved Georgia Southern in state ranking for entering freshmen SATs from the bottom 25 percent to the top 25 percent.

### **Rob Whitaker, Vice President for Finance and Operations**

Robert L. Whitaker joined the Georgia Southern University administration in 2013. He brings more than 24 years of success in financial management positions and higher education positions within the University System of Georgia. In these roles, Whitaker was instrumental in providing leadership to the business and finance function and developing, constructing and managing more than \$326 million in privatized housing, food service and student center functions.

A national search for Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for the new Georgia Southern will be conducted. **Robert T. Smith, Ph.D.** will continue to serve as **Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Armstrong State University**, and effective July 1, 2017, **Diana Cone, Ph.D.** will serve as **Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs** at the current Georgia Southern through the consolidation process.

Appointments also include **Bill Kelso**, Vice President for Advancement at Armstrong State University, who has been appointed **Associate Vice President for University Advancement** under the Division of University Advancement and External Affairs at the new Georgia Southern.

The next steps in the shaping of the organizational structure for the new University will be the appointment of the additional direct reports to the President. The vice presidents will assist President Hebert in this selection over the next few weeks.

"These new developments are part of the ongoing progress that will lead to the stronger and better Georgia Southern University," Hebert added.

For full bios and updates regarding the consolidation between Georgia Southern University and Armstrong State University, please visit [consolidation.GeorgiaSouthern.edu](http://consolidation.GeorgiaSouthern.edu)

On Jan. 11, 2017, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia voted to consolidate Armstrong State University and Georgia Southern University, ultimately creating a new Georgia Southern University with three campus locations in Savannah, Hinesville and Statesboro. CIC members, Functional Area co-chairs and Operational Working Groups uniting Armstrong and Georgia Southern faculty and staff are currently examining and working through all aspects of the consolidation.

**ABOUT ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY:**

[Armstrong State University](http://ArmstrongStateUniversity.edu), part of the University System of Georgia, was founded in 1935. Today, the university offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate academic programs in the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science and Technology, the College of Education and the College of Health Professions. Armstrong serves approximately 7,100 students at its main campus in Savannah and at a regional center in Hinesville. The university's diverse student population comes from 43 states, the District of Columbia and 67 countries. Visit [Armstrong.edu](http://Armstrong.edu).

**ABOUT GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY:**

[Georgia Southern University](http://GeorgiaSouthernUniversity.edu), 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](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu).

## **19-Year-Old JPHCOPH student earns Bachelor of Science this May**

**MAY 5, 2017**



You can do anything you put your mind to.

A saying that may be cliché to some has become a life motto for Georgia Southern student Arianna Archer. She has spent her whole life putting her mind to excelling in her academic career, and Saturday she'll see her hard work come to fruition as she receives her Bachelor of Science in public health at age 19.

The Cuthbert, Georgia, native began her college career at just 17-years-old after having taken gifted and accelerated classes throughout her elementary, middle and high school years.

"My academic career has been a bit weird," she said. Archer's mother experienced numerous pregnancy and birthing complications, leading many doctors to believe Archer would be developmentally delayed.

"Then, when I was 5, my father was murdered, and it became a cold case," she said. "We moved away from that town, and when I went to a new school, the teachers realized that I was academically ahead of the students in my class, so I began taking gifted classes."

Archer continued on her gifted academic career, and once she was in high school she dual enrolled at Andrew College in Cuthbert. She took college classes in the morning and then high school classes in the afternoon, racking up 18 college credits she brought with her to Georgia Southern.

"The workload wasn't really hard," Archer said. "The challenges were more so social adjustments. I had friends and things like that, but when I came to college, all my friends could go and do stuff that I couldn't. It bothered me at first when I was younger, but now I just accept it."

Despite her challenges, Archer found a home in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (COPH), referring to the college as a "small family." Although she began her academic career at Georgia Southern as a nursing major, she quickly realized she enjoyed public health more and switched her major to health promotion and education.

"Once I started taking the science classes like chemistry and anatomy, I realized I didn't like the hands-on side of healthcare," she said. "So I changed my major to public health and fell in love with it. Even though you don't have to cure people and give medicine, there is another side of healthcare that you can still care for people."

Archer has applied for the Master of Healthcare Administration program at Georgia Southern, and hopes to complete her second degree here to become a Double Eagle. This summer, she'll intern with the Elder Rights Program in Georgia to help the elderly and underprivileged gain access to food stamps or assistance programs like WIC.

Eventually, Archer plans to go into hospital management, working her way up to being a hospital CEO.

"Public health is a way to help people that isn't the ideal route for healthcare," she said. "But it helps people in ways that others may not understand. As a healthcare administrator, you have the ability to put in place policies that could help thousands rather than just one.

"I could potentially implement something like a smoke-free campus that we have here at Georgia Southern, and helping a bigger population is what caught my attention — that I, by myself, could help thousands of people if I put my mind to it," she said.

Receiving her bachelor's degree is still a bit surreal for Archer, who said keeping her goals at the forefront of her mind has been a driving force in her educational career.

"Coming up to this point, it hasn't really clicked to me that I'm 19 and about to get a degree, but the closer I get to graduation, I do feel very accomplished," said Archer. "My thing is I tried to live life without regrets, and when mistakes happen, I try not to dwell on them or let them get me down. I use them as a building block or a lesson. I stay determined no matter what challenges I come across."

And Archer has the same advice for others who are pursuing their dreams.

"Do what you want to do. I've had a lot of people tell me I couldn't do things, that I wasn't old enough or ready or mature," she said. "But do what you want to do. Make sure your mindset is where it needs to be, make sure you stay focused, and you can do anything you put your mind to."

*Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers 119 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](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu).*