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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2015). *Newsroom*. 688.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/688>

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Botanic Garden's science education program receives grant to help teachers

NOVEMBER 10, 2015

The Botanic Garden at Georgia Southern University has received a three-year grant from the Institute of Museum of Library Services' Museums for America program to help regional educators teach science more effectively. The grant, totaling more than \$110,000, supports the ASTERS (Adventures in Science, Teaching, Exploration and Resourceful Stewardship) program.

In development since 2009, the program uses movement and hands-on outdoor activities to engage teachers and students with the content and skills they will need to solve scientific challenges. The project will help to build significantly on a successful partnership between the Botanic Garden, the University's biology department, the College of Education and area schools.

The ASTERS program employs purposeful movement, problem-solving simulations and hands-on grade specific curricula to provide new ways for teachers to effectively teach biology and environmental sciences. After attending three-day trainings at the Garden, where they will learn concepts, curricula and activities, teachers will return to the classroom to work with students on a chosen project. Over an extended time period, students might work together on a variety of activities culminating in the design of a national park or the rescue of an endangered species, for example. The students will then visit the Garden as a class to enjoy a game of pollination tag, track deer through the Garden and many other active, outdoor activities designed to give students hands-on experience with important concepts.

"We believe children learn best when they are having fun and actively exploring a concept," said Kathy Tucker, education coordinator for the Garden and ASTERS mastermind.

Tucker, who engaged students in active learning simulations as a middle school teacher in Bulloch County Schools' gifted student Quest program, spent long hours developing curriculum that meets state science standards and also will be fun for the students.

"We have curriculum for each grade level from kindergarten through sixth grade," added Tucker.

"Teachers can implement it in the classroom, then bring their classes to the Garden for a fully funded field trip so the children can apply concepts out in the Garden. Everyone, including me, has a wonderful time, and we learn by doing."

Garden Director Carolyn Altman is pleased that the Garden will have three years to focus on ASTERS.

"We're looking forward to reaching out to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) community," said Altman. "STEM tends to focus on engineering, but as the recent weather-related events have demonstrated, many of our challenges will be prompted by biological issues, which affect our way of life — clean air, clean water, climate and agriculture. The solutions to these challenges, whether they are engineering or otherwise, will require a strong biological understanding."

Teachers interested in participating in the ASTERS program should contact the Garden at 912-871-1149.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services



The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement.

Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow IMLS on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Georgia Southern's College of Business Online Master in Economics program ranked in top five

NOVEMBER 10, 2015

The Georgia Southern University Master of Science in Applied Economics degree has been named in the five best online masters in economics degree programs by TheBestSchools.org.

TheBestSchools.org provides in-depth rankings of degree programs and colleges and universities. When ranking degree programs or colleges and universities, TheBestSchools.org balances academic excellence, return on investment and indirect or secondary benefits.

A master's degree in economics provides a solid foundation of the fundamental tools needed to perform evaluations of economic issues and policies. The degree requires strong analytical and

quantitative skills, which makes graduates of such programs valuable employees in many industries. The Georgia Southern Online Master in Applied Economics program is fully online, featuring small class sizes and a flexible schedule. Students complete the 30-hour program in two years and exit the program with concrete analytical skills in financial economics, regulatory issues and economic development. The AACSB—International program prepares its graduates for careers in government, financial institutions and industry, and helps students analyze profit maximization strategies, as well as consumers' choices.

To view "The Five Best Online Master in Economics Degree Programs," visit TheBestSchools.org.

For more information on the Georgia Southern Online Master of Science in Applied Economics program and other business graduate programs within the Georgia Southern College of Business, go to GeorgiaSouthern.edu/BusinessGraduate.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125 degree programs serving more than 20,500 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