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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2015). *Newsroom*. 797.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/797>

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Georgia Southern University's Second Annual Day at the Capitol

FEBRUARY 4, 2015



President Brooks A. Keel, Gov. Nathan Deal and Provost Jean Bartels were joined by some of the many Georgia Southern alumni who work at the Capitol during the second annual Georgia Southern Day at the Capitol event in Atlanta on Feb. 3

Georgia Southern University hosted its second annual "Day at the Capitol" event on Tuesday, Feb. 3 in Atlanta. Representatives from the University's academic, research and athletics divisions, and from student organizations were on hand to speak to state lawmakers and showcase the many programs, initiatives and achievements happening at the University.

The day included appearances by Georgia Southern's bald eagle Freedom, mascot GUS and a University jazz trio. The University also provided updates on its Military Science programs, its groundbreaking concussion research, FabLab construction, STEM activities and the new Manufacturing Engineering program in the College of Engineering and Information Technology. Georgia Southern Athletics was represented and the football team's Sun Belt Championship trophy was on display, as well. Breakfast was provided by Eagle Dining Services.

Georgia Southern University President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D., along with Provost Jean Bartels, Ph.D., and other University representatives were invited to the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate sessions as they presented Georgia Southern with invite resolutions for the “Day at the Capitol” event.

After spending time with many of the attendees, Gov. Nathan Deal commended Georgia Southern on its continued achievements both on the field and in the classroom.

“With a century-old record of academic and athletics achievement, Georgia Southern University is a model for success in our university system,” Deal said. “The school has launched the careers of countless young professionals, including several members of my own staff, and athletes who so greatly represent Georgia across the country and around the world. I’m confident that there are only greater things to come from Georgia Southern in the future.”

While visiting with students and other representatives from Georgia Southern, state Sen. Jack Hill said, “Georgia Southern continues to play a critical role in the success of the state of Georgia. This University is preparing our students to be future leaders and valuable members of the Georgia workforce.”

College of Education Undergraduates Get Hands-On at Georgia Southern University

FEBRUARY 4, 2015



Special Education faculty members at Georgia Southern University’s [College of Education](#) (COE) are embedding research within the student teaching experience at the undergraduate level. The program, “Research to Practice: COE Undergraduate Research Initiative,” is a first of its kind within the College. Research, normally reserved for graduate or honors students, has transcended to undergraduate, non-

honors students, in an effort to prepare pre-service teachers for the workforce; a [growing need](#) within the state of Georgia.

"Field-based experience is perceived by early career teachers to be the most valuable experience within teacher preparation programs. While some feel this experience is critical to their preparation, rarely are pre-service teachers using these experiences to conduct valuable research to support them in their development," says Meca Williams-Johnson, Ph.D., assistant professor in the College of Education. "Pre-service teachers are more equipped to discuss issues that impact the classroom and schools within the area of the student teaching placement. These pre-service teachers have developed skills in exploring the cultural and sociological aspects that are a part of the school environment."

The undergraduate research project began in 2012 with a pilot of six students in their senior year. The yearlong project sought to partner with school districts and local schools to focus on in-depth data collection, annotate special education barriers in the classroom, work with faculty and school officials to develop research goals, and to connect school improvement plans with a specific issue that the student teachers would use research to solve.

"What we've found is that the knowledge gained in their student teaching semesters prepares them to use research in future classrooms," says Kymberly Harris Drawdy, Ph.D., assistant professor. "The data and data analysis obtained during the research experience helped our pre-service teachers to address specific questions related to building relationships with students on the statewide performance assessment more than other pre-service teachers who didn't have this experience."

Through research and observation, the student teachers were able to collect quantifiable data that revealed connections between the school improvement plan and special education teaching methods. They also worked to introduce assistive technology to teachers in the field as a way to explore other learning techniques, and to collect data for their classrooms.

Student teachers at Georgia Southern are now leading the discussion on how undergraduate research has provided insight into real world special education data collection and application. Drawdy says the increase in teaching skills, confidence and decision-making skills has been worth introducing undergraduates, or pre-service teachers, to research and quantitative data collection.

"Students are now able to speak to how this particular experience has increased their writing, public speaking, and teaching skills and how it's preparing them for the workforce," said Drawdy. "They're presenting their findings to teachers, administrators, principals and other researchers at state-wide conferences, national conferences and the Georgia Department of Education. We've also received interest from other universities wanting to start an undergraduate Special Education research program of their own, and there has been an increase in teachers requesting researchers to observe their classes."

The College of Education will introduce the program to students beginning in their junior year and will start this year's program with 18 students in the spring.

"Our hope is that by exposing undergraduate students to hands-on research we will increase special education teacher retention throughout the state and open the door for advanced education here at Georgia Southern," says Tracy Linderholm, Ph.D., professor and associate dean of Graduate Education and Research.

For more information on the College of Education, or special education undergraduate research, visit coe.georgiasouthern.edu.

Football Adds 22 to Roster on National Signing Day

FEBRUARY 4, 2015



The Georgia Southern football team added 22 student-athletes in the 2015 signing day class as announced by Head Coach Willie Fritz.

The Eagles added 20 student-athletes from the high school ranks along with two previously announced transfers in Max Magana and Roscoe Byrd to bolster the 2015 football roster.

"I am very excited about this class. I feel good about these guys. Not only are they going to

be very good football players, they are going to be good students and good people off the field," Fritz said.

Georgia Southern signed 15 players from the state of Georgia, six from Florida, one from South Carolina and one from Nevada.

The Eagles added five offensive linemen, four safeties, three wide receivers, three cornerbacks, two tight ends, two running backs, two defensive ends and a quarterback.

"I appreciate my coaches. They have done a sensational job recruiting these guys," Fritz said. "I think our television exposure really helped our brand and our facilities helped us."

The 2015 football season will open on Sept. 5 at West Virginia and will host Western Michigan and The Citadel along with a four-game Sun Belt Conference schedule.

Georgia Southern Athletics provides up-to-date information on all its sports through its official website, GSEagles.com, through social media channels facebook.com/GSAthletics and twitter.com/GSAthletics, and its "Eagles GATA" mobile app. Eagle Football fans can follow Coach Willie Fritz on twitter @CoachWEFritz.

For bios on each of the new players, visit gseagles.com.