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Don McLemore Named Acting Vice President for the Division of Research & Economic Development

DECEMBER 9, 2014



Don McLemore, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Chemistry and director of the Office of Industry Relations and Economic Development, has been appointed acting vice president for the Division of Research & Economic Development.

"It is critical that responsibilities of the Division of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development and the Georgia Southern University Research and Service Foundation, Inc., continue uninterrupted in Dr. Charles Patterson's absence," said President Brooks Keel. "Please join me in supporting Dr. McLemore in this new role."

Patterson, who is currently Georgia Southern University's vice president for the Division of Research & Economic Development, will serve as the interim president of Georgia Southwestern State University from Jan. 1 through June 30, 2015.

Prior to joining Georgia Southern in 2011, McLemore served as chief operating officer for Herty Advanced Materials Development Center in Savannah, Georgia, where he launched new programs in biofuels development and restructured and expanded toll-manufacturing programs. Before joining Herty, he served as director of Polymer Industry Relations at Georgia Tech.

McLemore earned his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and polymer science, a Master of Science in polymer science and physics and a doctorate in polymer science from the University of Southern Mississippi. He is also a graduate of the American Graduate School of International Management, Executive Education Program in Business Management.

The [Office of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development](#) promotes research and scholarship efforts of the University's faculty, staff and students. The Division provides startup funding, support of undergraduate research, intellectual property and technology transfer, economic development outreach and oversight of research integrity and research compliance.

McLemore will also serve as the acting chair of the Research & Service Foundation.

Georgia Southern Dedicated to Educating Students on Sexual Violence, Resources Available

DECEMBER 9, 2014



"It's On Us," that's the initiative President Barack Obama and other leaders in Washington, D.C., have taken to encourage both men and women to become a part of the effort to stop sexual violence on college campuses throughout the nation.

While the initiative was made official by the White House in September, and recent media attention on college students and student athletes being accused of sexual violence has shed more light on the topic, Jodi Caldwell, Ph.D., director of Georgia Southern's Counseling Center, believes this has always been a very important subject on college campuses.

One in four college-aged women are sexually assaulted while they are attending college, she said. "Statistics go up if you look at sexual victimization more broadly than rape in and of itself. The statistics go as high as 50 percent of women experience some type of sexual victimization." Sexual victimization is defined as attempted rape, sexual harassment, unwanted sexual contact, etc.

At Georgia Southern University, officials are dedicated to educating students about sexual violence, and officials strive to be an ally for those affected by such incidents.

"Georgia Southern is passionate about keeping all of our students safe in every capacity, so anything we can do to remedy, prevent and educate our students concerning sexual assault or sexual violence, that is what we're passionate about doing," said Patrice Buckner Jackson, dean of students.

Incoming freshmen at Georgia Southern are first introduced to the topic during SOAR, the University's orientation program for new students. When the semester begins, new students—freshmen and transfer—are then required to attend "Sex Signals," a play that explores social pressures, gender stereotypes, unrealistic fantasies and false preconceptions that contribute to tensions often found in dating.

Other educational efforts are hosted throughout the year for all students, ranging from educational programs and campus events such as Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, the Take Back the Night March, The Clothesline Project and Sexual Assault Awareness Week each spring, among others, Caldwell said.

"The approach we take has always been what we call a 'bystander intervention' approach," she said, which is more than how to protect oneself from being sexually assaulted. "We emphasize that sexual assault is an issue that impacts everyone, whether you're a victim yourself or not, you will be impacted by it. Just given the statistics, everybody on this campus—whether they realize it or not—knows at least one survivor of sexual violence."

This method of education also encourages men to join together with women to be aware of the issue, "Because we don't want it to seem like men are bad and they're sexual assailants," Caldwell said. "The vast majority of men would never sexually violate someone, so we want that majority of men to really work with us in the education and risk reduction methods."

The Georgia Southern University Office of Public Safety also offers crime prevention classes, one of those being the Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.) Women's Self Defense Classes.

"We offer and include sexual violence prevention and awareness information in almost every crime prevention session we conduct, whether it's a SOAR session, a general crime prevention class or a First-Year Experience (FYE) class," said Georgia Southern University Police Chief Michael Russell.

In addition, faculty and staff are trained to contact University officials if they receive information concerning an act of sexual violence or other crisis situation, Jackson said.

Student Government Association President Azell Francis added the SGA is also involved in helping educate fellow Eagles about the seriousness of sexual violence.

"As SGA President, I sit on the University System of Georgia's Campus Safety Committee and the subcommittee focuses on Title IX which also addresses sexual assault," Francis said. "SGA has worked with the National Campus Leadership Council to interact with other SGAs across the country to exchange ideas and tips on how to raise awareness."

Francis said the SGA is participating in the It's On Us campaign and encouraging other students to take the pledge and take responsibility to help prevent sexual violence on campus.

"Sexual assault prevention is the responsibility of every member of Eagle Nation," she said. "We must hold ourselves accountable to stand up, speak out and take action to prevent sexual assault. I encourage students to sign the pledge at itsonus.org because it's on us, Eagle Nation, to prevent sexual assault at our house."

In the student code of conduct, sexual assaults and acts of sexual violence are clearly outlined, in addition to resources for victims of sexual assaults or violence. Caldwell recommends that any student who has been a victim of sexual violence seek immediate medical attention, whether it's at University Health Services or local medical facilities.

The University employs three full-time forensic nurse examiners in the University Health Services Center. These specially trained nurses provide examinations and treatment for free to students who have experienced a sexual assault.

"The forensic exam serves two purposes. It allows for collection of any evidence that might be present, and it also allows victims access to medications to prevent the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, and for females, a medication to prevent contraception," Caldwell said. "Most universities do not have forensic nurse examiners, and I don't know of any others that have three on staff."

In addition to a forensic exam, victims are offered a victim's advocate, which is someone the victim can call on any time of day. Advocates are specially trained and are essentially a "lifeline" for victims, Caldwell said. The University also has a peer education team that speaks to other students on campus to provide a similar perspective.

If student victims are still uneasy about contacting campus officials or visiting the University Health Services Center, they may also contact the Statesboro Regional Sexual Assault Center, which provides the same services.

Legislation in Georgia allows for victims to have a forensic exam done without having to decide immediately whether they want to press charges, Caldwell added. Victims are allowed up to one year to decide if they want to take legal action.

"That takes the pressure off during that immediate time following the trauma, and the victim is not having to decide if they want to press charges because that is not a time when you're making the most informed decisions," she said.

Russell believes the term "report" is not the best way to explain why it is important to seek help after an act of sexual violence.

"To most people, this means an 'official' police report and this is not the case," he said. "Law enforcement is only one aspect of the response and it can range from an anonymous report where the victim is never identified, up to and including a criminal prosecution. It's important that the victim seek help and be able to benefit from the medical assistance and the many other support functions that are made available."

If a victim chooses to contact the Office of Public Safety, they can expect assistance in receiving medical, legal and emotional advice and support.

"We use a victim centered response that includes medical professionals, counselors, law enforcement, prosecutors and other social services professionals all who have been specifically trained to deal with sexual assaults," Russell said.

It is not uncommon for victims not to report an act of sexual violence, Caldwell said. Some reasons being the stigma associated with the topic, fear of repercussions and fear of what loved ones would think.

"I think the nature of the crime survives because as a culture, we aren't comfortable talking about sexual activity, even the best sexual activity," she said. "So we really aren't comfortable talking about traumatic and inappropriate sexual activity. I think that keeps a lot of folks from wanting to come forward."

Should someone confide in you, however, Caldwell said, it is always important to not re-victimize the victim. Believe the person, listen, encourage the person to seek help and offer to help.

"There is a myth that's out there about people crying rape, or that it's regretted sex or getting back at someone," she said. "But the Department of Justice reports that less than 2 percent of reports of

sexual violence are false. So if someone is able to come to you and confide in you, all you have to do is believe them.”

Caldwell also said it is important not to show anger. “Human nature of reaction, especially when it’s someone we care for, is to get angry for that person. But it’s hard to remember that person has already experienced violence, and anger—even well-intentioned anger—is going to be retraumatizing.”

The University also offers counseling services to victims when they are ready, and for as long as they need to get through the aftermath of the trauma, Caldwell said.

Jackson added any student who is accused of sexual assault is also provided with a conduct advocate who serves as a resource for them. They can be present during any meetings or hearings that may result from the accusation to explain the process and the person’s rights. They’re also there to provide academic resources in case the accused isn’t allowed back in class, and counseling is also available for them as well, she said.

How does Georgia Southern compare with other universities around the state when it comes to being prepared for sexual violence on campus? “Georgia Southern is not one of those universities scrambling on how to respond and how to help our students or what to do,” Jackson said. “This is something we’ve been doing for a long time now so we find ourselves in leadership roles making recommendations to our colleagues around the state on how they should respond and what remedies they should have in place to support their students. In fact, Dr. Caldwell was recently appointed to the Board of Regents Violence Against Women Steering Committee, specifically tasked with reviewing how Georgia universities are responding to sexual violence on their campuses.

“We always pay attention to new regulations and guidance, but I feel very comfortable we are in a good position to offer support and to respond appropriately to sexual assault situations on this campus.”

If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual violence, contact the [University Counseling Center](#) or [University Health Services](#) for further assistance. Victims may also contact the Statesboro Regional Sexual Assault Center at 912-486-6060 or srsac.org.

To learn more about how sexual violence is handled at Georgia Southern University, reference the [Student Code of Conduct](#).