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OneGeorgia Authority Announces \$500,000 Grant for Business Incubation and Workforce Development

NOVEMBER 7, 2014



The OneGeorgia Authority, a financial partner for economic development in Georgia, has announced its decision to grant a \$500,000 OneGeorgia Equity Award for the advancement of workforce development in the Statesboro-Bulloch County region. The project, titled "Statesboro-Bulloch Regional Career and Workforce Initiative," is a collaboration among Georgia Southern University, the

Development Authority of Bulloch County and Ogeechee Technical College. The grant will assist with the purchase of equipment, software, and machinery necessary to support economic growth and a work ready labor force, leveraging the expertise of Georgia Southern University and Ogeechee Technical College by supporting business startups and workforce training.

"This grant will assist in positively affecting workforce training across the spectrum of workforce skills in the Southeast Georgia region connected to Georgia Southern, the Ogeechee Tech service delivery area and the Statesboro and Bulloch County community," said Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D., president of Georgia Southern University. "With the increased amount of growth happening in the state of Georgia right now, we couldn't be more excited about this opportunity."

"The Development Authority of Bulloch County is pleased to be in a position to facilitate this funding, which will add to the existing community-wide efforts to improve the skill levels of our workforce and increase job creation and capital investment here," stated Benjy Thompson, chief executive officer of the Authority. "Our success in securing these funds is in large part due to the community-wide support for these programs, which built on the tremendous efforts of the City of Statesboro and the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority in the initial stages of what later became this grant request."

Funding received from the OneGeorgia Authority Equity Fund will be used with other funds provided by Georgia Southern, to secure computers, software, 3-D printers and other rapid prototyping

equipment for the Innovation Incubator and Fabrication Laboratory (FabLab). The Innovation Incubator and FabLab is a joint venture between Georgia Southern University, the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority, City of Statesboro, Statesboro Arts Council, and the Economic Development Administration, and is associated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) established Global FabLab Network. The incubator is designed to create sustainable jobs, increase the number of local businesses, and improve and diversify the economic drivers in coastal Georgia.

Charles Patterson, Vice President of Research and Economic Development, says the new equipment will promote a functional environment for innovators to thrive. "The FabLab constitutes a multidisciplinary approach to innovation and business creation that is backed by areas of strength one would expect from a Comprehensive Doctoral University like Georgia Southern. Science, information technology, engineering, computer science, business and the arts converge to make this space a hub for knowledge sharing and business creation in the heart of Downtown Statesboro."

The programs in the City Campus are coordinated by Georgia Southern University's Business Innovation Group (BIG) located in downtown Statesboro and encompass departments of the College of Business Administration (COBA), including the Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development (BBRED), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Center for Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership (CELL).

The Grant will also provide funding to supporting career opportunities and advanced manufacturing training at Ogeechee Technical College through the Industrial Maintenance and Advanced Manufacturing Skills Training Program (IMAMS), a joint venture between Ogeechee Tech, the Development Authority of Bulloch County, The Development Authority of Screven County and several private for-profit companies. The IMAMS program will be housed on the main campus of Ogeechee Tech in the Natural Resources Building on Joe Kennedy Boulevard. The location is less than a mile from the Gateway Regional Industrial Park, making it a convenient training location for many of Bulloch County's existing manufacturers.

As an institution charged with workforce development, Ogeechee Technical College President Dawn H. Cartee, Ed.D., says this is the perfect project to enhance the synergy between the programs and maximize the delivery of services to local and regional businesses.

"As our workforce becomes more skilled, businesses considering locating or expanding into our region will be confident in their ability to secure a highly-trained workforce for their projects," said Cartee. "This project is a major step in establishing a prepared workforce in our region and Southeast Georgia."

Lori Durden, Vice President for Economic Development at Ogeechee Tech says maintenance supervisors are extremely difficult to find as these critical positions typically require a rare mix of

high-level technical skills and broader supervisory skills. She also stated a number of local companies have expressed an urgent need for skilled individuals to step into these roles.

"As many of the employees who provide technical support for industries reach retirement age, replacing those individuals becomes a challenge," said Durden. "Whether training someone who already works for one of the local manufacturers, or training those who will seek employment with an industry, the programs supported by this grant will help meet the industrial maintenance needs that exist," said Durden.

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.

University Announces Fall 2014 Commencement Speakers

NOVEMBER 7, 2014



Rob Anderson

Georgia Southern University will hold its 23rd Annual Fall Commencement with three graduation ceremonies at Hanner Fieldhouse on Friday, Dec. 12.

During the 9 a.m. graduation ceremony for the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies, College of Education, College of Business Administration and the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, Rob Anderson, University System of Georgia Vice Chancellor for Educational Access and Success will provide the commencement address. A native of Augusta, Georgia, Anderson holds degrees from The Citadel (B.A.) and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div.). He is currently completing his

doctoral dissertation at The University of Georgia's Institute of Higher Education. Anderson's scholarly focus is in the areas of student access and financial aid policy with a particular interest in merit aid programs and their impact on institutional and student outcomes.

Col. Thomas J. Tickner, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, will speak at the 11 a.m. ceremony for the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies, College of Science and Mathematics, Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology and College of Health and Human Sciences. Tickner was commissioned as a Distinguished Military Graduate in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) in 1989. He began his military career in the 326th Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne Division and has since served in numerous leadership roles achieving an array of military awards and decorations. Tickner is a native of Wayne, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Penn State with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. He earned his master's from the University of Colorado at Boulder.



Col. Thomas Tickner

Georgia Southern alumnus Vic Reynolds ('79), district attorney of Cobb County, will return to campus to serve as the commencement speaker at the 1 p.m. graduation ceremony for the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies, Center for International Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. A native of Rome, Georgia, Reynolds obtained a bachelor's degree from Georgia Southern and a law degree from the College of Law at Georgia State University. Reynolds is a former police officer, assistant district attorney, and chief magistrate judge. He serves as the Chairman of the Cobb Elder Abuse Task Force, is on the advisory board at Kennestone Hospital and is a member of the Marietta Kiwanis Club.



Vic Reynolds

The commencement ceremonies will be streamed live at GeorgiaSouthern.edu/commencement. Family members and friends of graduates are encouraged to join the conversation on social media using #GSGrad14.

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