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## Newsroom

Georgia Southern University

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# Georgia Southern's William Irby, Ellen Murkison Honored by National Academic Advising Association

MAY 18, 2010

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A Georgia Southern University professor and a staff member have been honored with a national award for their commitment to helping students.

Biology professor William Irby and First-Year Experience program academic advisement coordinator Ellen Murkison have each received a 2010 Outstanding Advising Award from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).

For years, Irby has chaired the Department of Biology's Advising Committee. He holds advising workshops for faculty, gives advising updates during faculty meetings and volunteers to meet with prospective students who visit the department. Irby serves in the Allen E. Paulson College of Science and Technology Advising Center and represents the Biology Department during SOAR (Southern's Orientation, Advisement and Registration) sessions for new students held during the summer and between semesters.

"Dr. Irby is recognized as one of the biology department's best instructors, and he brings the same enthusiasm and level of engagement to the advising process. For years, he has been the department's go-to person for advising questions of all types. He is compassionate, understanding and truly interested in each student's success," said Stephen Vives, chair of the Biology Department.

Murkison came to Georgia Southern in 2006 to establish the University's first advisement center solely for undeclared students. Her contributions include implementing a major exploration exercise during summer orientation to guide students to earlier declaration of major, organizing FYE's inaugural Majors Fair and integrating peer academic advisors into the advisement and major exploration processes. Her colleagues from across the state elected her the Georgia representative to the NACADA Region IV steering committee, and she co-chaired an academic advising conference on the Georgia Southern campus that featured NACADA executive director Charlie Nutt.

"Ms. Murkison conveys patience, caring and empathy in the process of helping students discover their passions. She teaches students the importance of asking for help and creating an environment conducive for academic success. Students leave a meeting with her knowing that they are responsible for their success, but that they have a strong advocate in her," said Chris Caplinger, director of First-Year Experience.

Irby and Murkison will be honored along with this year's other recipients at an awards reception in October during the NACADA Annual Conference in Florida.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers 115 degree programs serving 19,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of

Georgia's largest, is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education.  
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"O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree..." 🎄🎵#TBT to circa 1964, when a tree in front of the Williams Center was decorated for the holidays.



  16h

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