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[Home](#) > [Press Releases](#) > Georgia Southern University Students and Faculty to Study and Serve in Botswana

Georgia Southern University Students and Faculty to Study and Serve in Botswana

MAY 25, 2010

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Ten students and three faculty members will leave Wednesday for Georgia Southern University's first study abroad experience in the African country of Botswana.

The students will help address global issues such as poverty and environmental sustainability through courses taught by Georgia Southern University faculty on the University of Botswana campus and by working with the African non-profit organization Somarelang Tikologo.

"Our students will be learning various aspects of environmental health and economic development as they work alongside a local organization and the communities it serves, to develop or enhance community-based programs for health and sustainable development. It will enable them to view issues related to these fields of study through a global lens and understand how these issues unfold in a different nation," said professor Simone Charles of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health.

"The Botswana trip is unique because most study abroad trips don't have this service-learning component," said Janna Pennington, Georgia Southern's service-learning coordinator. The Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement and the Center for International Studies worked together to coordinate the trip, and the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management contributed travel stipends to help defray the students' cost of the trip.

The students will also take excursions to learn more about the people, culture and terrain of southern Africa. The outings will include visits to neighboring communities, a safari at the Buffalo Ridge Safari Lodge in South Africa and a soccer game at the World Cup.

"Study abroad offers students an enriching experience that will stay with them the rest of their lives. They come back with an appreciation for the opportunities available in the U.S., but more importantly they develop more tolerance and understanding of diverse cultures. I wish all students could participate in an international experience as a part of their college education," said Donna Fisher, a professor in the School of Economic Development in the College of Business Administration.

Botswana was selected as the site for Georgia Southern University's first African study abroad program because the country is considered a model of peace and stability. Once among the poorest nations in the world, Botswana has created one of the most dynamic economies in Africa through more than four decades of uninterrupted civilian leadership, progressive social policies and significant capital investment. However, the country still faces challenges, such as having one of the world's highest known rates of HIV/AIDS infection. The group will return to Statesboro on June 17.

For more information about the Botswana study abroad trip, visit <http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/abroad/index.php>. During the trip, the Georgia Southern students will post updates and photos at www.eaglesinafrica.blogspot.com.

Note to media: The group will depart tomorrow at noon from the C-lot behind the Performing Arts Center. Media interested in doing interviews should be there no later than 11:45.

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.



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