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Newsroom

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\$1 Million Grant Awarded to Expand City Campus

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Georgia Southern and the City of Statesboro have been awarded a grant of nearly \$1.1 million from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to expand the University's City Campus on E. Main St. to help entrepreneurs design, build and send their products into the marketplace while creating new jobs.

"This partnership will help these entrepreneurs breathe life into their ideas," explained University President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D., during the Thursday afternoon announcement at City Campus in downtown Statesboro. "This is a golden opportunity to help build new businesses in our community, generate new jobs and put more people to work. City Campus can be a catalyst for economic change in our region."

The \$1,097,360 investment from the EDA puts City Campus in position to become a central hub for business creation and economic development. "This is a great opportunity for Georgia Southern to continue its efforts to create an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship," said Vice President for Research and Economic Development Charles Patterson, Ph.D. "The grant will allow Georgia Southern in cooperation and partnership with the City of Statesboro to renovate two buildings downtown where we can create an innovation incubator with full business incubation capabilities and an eventual fabrication laboratory."

The state-of-the-art facility will include office space and support for companies planned space for a fabrication lab with 3D printing capabilities. "As an emerging research university, we find that many of our faculty and students are engaged in activities of an entrepreneurial nature creating technologies, devices and inventions that a university of our size and magnitude has the ability to license, patent and protect and to spin those technologies out into companies," said Patterson.

The \$1.1 million grant award could not have been possible without the City of Statesboro's nearly \$800,000 financial commitment to purchase the Yard and Haus building from Farmers and Merchants Bank and the City Campus building from the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority. "We feel the collaboration with Georgia Southern through the City Campus is important to the continued improvement of downtown Statesboro," said Mayor Joe Brannen. "These investments in our city will undoubtedly pay off many times over as we move forward." In addition, last June, the city council agreed to commit \$50,000 annually for three years to help cover ongoing operational expenses at the facility. "While it's important to try and attract industry and commercial business to our community, it is equally important to encourage local business growth," said Statesboro City Councilman Phil Boyum. "This grant is yet another example of how big things can get done when we come together as a community."

In making the grant announcement, U.S. Rep. John Barrow explained how the expansion project will provide great resources for entrepreneurs who need support and guidance to turn their ideas into successful products. "This is a tremendous opportunity for the small business owners who are going to find the resources here that they need to compete and to grow," said Barrow. "It's going to be a huge opportunity for Georgia Southern to break out and be a leader in business development. It's a huge opportunity for this community to show how you can come together to create the conditions to grow businesses."

The expansion, which has a projected total cost of \$1.8 million, will house the Bureau for Business Research and Economic Development (BBRED), the Statesboro office of the Small Business Development Center and the University's Center for Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership. "This grant will go a long way in helping us foster a culture of innovation and creation in Statesboro," said Dominique Halaby, D.P.A., director of BBRED. "Our residents have a lot of great ideas. With this funding, they will now have the infrastructure and support to develop those ideas and take them to market."

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers 125 degree programs serving more than 20,000 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 approach to education. Visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu.

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