Georgia Southern University ecohydrology professor John Van Stan, Ph.D., recently published an article in *Nature Geoscience* titled “Significant Contribution of Non-vascular Vegetation to Global Rainfall Interception.”

Van Stan, along with Philipp Porada, Ph.D., from the University of Potsdam in Potsdam, Germany, and Axel Kleidon, Ph.D., from the Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry in Jena, Germany, studied the effects of nonvascular vegetation, such as lichens and mosses, on precipitation and the water cycle.

The article details how the researchers used a numerical computer simulation model to find that lichens and mosses are responsible for a large share of the global interception of rainfall. Due to the effects of lichens and mosses, simulated interception increased by 60 percent.

This contribution has so far not been considered in global land surface models, which simulate the water cycle and temperature at the land surface.

“While our attention has been on more charismatic vegetation like forests, the little guys, like lichens and mosses, have been doing some heavy lifting in the global water cycle,” Van Stan said.

Lichens and mosses can be found around the world as the dominant form of vegetation in deserts and as epiphytes, a non-parasitic plant that grows on another plant, on trees in forests. These organisms can absorb a lot of water and...
thereby, capture rainfall before it reaches the ground, then evaporate it away before it can infiltrate the soil.

“If the global biomass of lichens and mosses changes as a result of climate change or land use change, this will have consequences for the global water cycle and the land surface temperature,” Porada said.

Van Stan is not finished with his research on lichens, mosses, and other epiphytes, like Spanish moss and resurrection fern. Next spring, he will begin collecting data for a project with the Savannah Tree Foundation and Georgia Conservancy to estimate the monetary value of the ecoservices provided by Savannah’s epiphytes.

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Tags: College of Science and Mathematics, Department of Geology and Geography
Georgia Southern Betty Foy Sanders
Department of Art presents 2018 Faculty Exhibition

JULY 31, 2018

The Georgia Southern University Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art will open its 2018-19 exhibition season with its biennial Faculty Exhibition. The exhibition will run concurrently at the Statesboro and Armstrong campuses in August.

The 2018 Faculty Exhibition will feature a range of interdisciplinary works of art, design and research, created by the art and design faculty on each campus.

“This is always one of my favorite exhibitions to put together,” said Jason Hoelscher, gallery director of the Center for Art and Theatre on the Statesboro campus. “The Georgia Southern faculty has such a wide range of ideas, approaches and expertise that it’s always exciting to see the end result. The fact that this year, for the first time, we will have an intermingling of work by the faculty from both campuses on both campuses, should make for a dynamite exhibition.”

Raymond Gaddy, gallery director for the Fine Arts Gallery on the Armstrong Campus, said the exhibition is exciting because of the collaboration.

“Any exhibition that involves numerous artists who come from a variety of disciplines and perspectives is fun and challenging to put together,” Gaddy said. “This years’ faculty exhibition will be all the more exciting as we’ll be bringing two talented groups together. It promises to be a vibrant collaboration and a stimulating start to the new year and new partnership.”

In Statesboro, the exhibition will last from Aug. 13 to Sept. 14 at the Center for Art and Theatre’s Contemporary and University galleries. A reception will be held on Wednesday, September 5 from 5 to 7 p.m.

In Savannah, the exhibition will be on view from Aug. 13 to 31 in the Fine Arts Gallery inside the Fine Arts Hall. A reception will be held Wednesday, August 29 from noon to 1:30 p.m.

All events are free and open to the public.

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Southern Leaders, a Georgia Southern University undergraduate leadership program, received national recognition as a recipient of the 2018 Association of Leadership Educators (ALE) Outstanding Program Award. The award recognizes outstanding leadership programs implemented by leadership educators that can have substantial impact on individuals, organizations, institutions and/or communities through data.

Georj Lewis, Ed.D., vice president for Student Affairs, announced the award recognition to staff members at the division’s summer workshop.

“We are fortunate at Georgia Southern to have programs that truly advance our division’s mission to engage students in experiences that transform lives and support the realization of their potential,” Lewis said.

Southern Leaders, a program directed by the Office of Leadership and Community Engagement (OLCE) in the Division of Student Affairs, is a co-curricular leadership program that currently engages more than 300 undergraduate students in an interactive leadership experience throughout their college career. Students participate in three non-credit leadership courses and additional elements associated with high-quality leadership development programs.

In recent program evaluations, students affirmed they are better leaders and have an increased knowledge of exemplary leadership practices because of the program.

In addition to the program award, OLCE staff members John Banter and John Egan were recognized at the 2018 ALE national conference in Chicago as the conference’s Distinguished Educator Workshop for their presentation titled, “Escape Rooms: A Student-Centered Approach to Animating Leadership Learning.” The workshop displayed their work utilizing escape games as an innovative leadership teaching strategy and provided a framework for other educators to further engage students in their courses.