

# Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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# Georgia Southern child and family development major named student of the year by Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children

SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

Georgia Southern University senior child and family development major Julissa Ortiz is building her resume as she prepares to begin her career. Being named student of the year by the Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children (GAEYC) will certainly help.

Ortiz, who also has a Spanish minor, said receiving the award is a huge honor for her. She will be recognized at the GAEYC's annual conference on Oct. 5 in Alpharetta.



*Julissa Ortiz*

"There are so many people in the state of Georgia who are worthy of this award," she said. "I am very lucky. This will truly be a special day, being recognized by an organization I admire so much."

Ortiz was recommended for the award by her professor, Alice Hall, Ph.D. She said Hall has had a lasting effect on her time at Georgia Southern.

"I have had (Hall) for multiple classes including Parent Education and Guidance, Youth Development, Diversity in Human Development and Teaching Preschool," Ortiz said. "She has taught me so much about our field. I couldn't have received this award if it wasn't for her. When she told me she was nominating me, I felt all my hard work was being recognized."

Ortiz' passion for her major is not confined to the classroom. She has participated in multiple projects outside of class that contribute to her love of interacting with and helping people, which is something she is passionate about.

"Recently, I was able to attend a dance for children with special needs," Ortiz said. "The dance was hosted by the organization Parent to Parent, and it was so much fun. I remembered a lot of the children from when I volunteered at a summer camp for children with disabilities a few summers ago, and some even remembered me, which was really cool to know I had left an impact on them."

Although she's not sure exactly what career path she will take, Ortiz said she wants to work with either migrant families or an early intervention program, which is designed to help students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining their academic grade level.

"Winning the award reminds me that my ideas and what I do can impact other people," she said. "I can make a positive change in people's lives, and that is what I love about my major."

*Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving more than 27,000 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with*