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Georgia Southern professor receives national Evolution Education Award

DECEMBER 11, 2018

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Amanda Glaze, Ph.D., assistant professor of science education at Georgia Southern University, recently received the national Evolution Education Award at the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT) National Conference in San Diego.

Sponsored by the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) center and the BEACON Center for the Study of Evolution in Action, the Evolution Education Award recognizes classroom teaching and community education efforts to promote the accurate understanding of biological evolution. The award is rotated between a K-12 teacher and undergraduate educator and includes a cash award, recognition plaque and a

complimentary membership to NABT.

"Beacon and BSCS are huge names in science education and are dedicated heavily to the promotion of scientific literacy as well as accurate and meaningful teaching of science in classrooms across levels," Glaze said. "Being selected at the national level and recognized for my work in evolution education is a huge honor because I am highly aware of the phenomenal community of researchers in this field and the incredible work that is being done to impact science teaching and learning as it relates to evolution."

Glaze focuses her research on evolution education and the intersections of science and society that come into play with acceptance and rejection in the U.S. When speaking about her research, she always informs the audience of her religious upbringing in rural Alabama, laying the groundwork for how she finds passion in both her faith and the sciences.

"The idea that we must choose one or the other is a false dichotomy," Glaze said. "What is necessary, however, is an understanding of both science and religion as distinct from each other, a sort of cognitive segregation, if you will."

Glaze has been invited to speak at numerous conferences and engagements including the Smithsonian Institution's Broader Social Impacts Committee annual meeting and a guest speaker at the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology.

Colleagues and current students contributed to Glaze's nomination. They highlighted her passion for science education, specifically evolution understanding, and recognized her unique position as a common ground for a controversial topic.

"In a field where many of us have worked on the front lines we have seen the teaching of evolution as an us-versus-them battle, Dr. Glaze arrived on the scene and has helped to fundamentally transform how evolution education is

approached, especially in the southern United States,” a colleague wrote. “By having a genuine understanding of both sides, she is uniquely positioned to become the bridge builder that the evolution education community in the southern U.S. (and beyond) desperately needs.”

A student of Glaze’s wrote, “The way she talks to people, how she is able to have meaningful and powerful conversations with anyone, regardless of where they stand on evolution, is her superpower.”

Glaze added that it is an honor to work with organizations such as NABT whose support and investment in science provide a “ripple effect,” helping to amplify the research and message of an individual such as herself to the broader community.

“My research is centered around empowering teachers to teach evolution and students to have access to learning opportunities surrounding evolution,” Glaze noted. “Since evolution is such a touchy topic and is highly politicized due to the conflict perceived by the public, this directly impacts teacher effectiveness, accuracy in teaching of science and ultimately science literacy. All of these areas are part of the mission and vision of NABT. The support of organizations such as NABT brings together active minds that share in the vision for improving science literacy for all students.”

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Georgia Southern alumnus helps land major grant, puts Apple technology in hands of Brock Elementary 2nd, 3rd graders

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Joseph Johnson ('08,'16) started his career at an internet company in Atlanta where he worked his way up to management over five years. His work sparked a passion but not to continue working in the private sector. Instead, Johnson wanted to take his experience and skills in technology and apply it in public schools.

After moving to Savannah, Johnson completed a bachelor's in elementary education from Armstrong State University and taught for seven years at Robert W. Gadsden Elementary School.

"My hopes were to become a teacher-librarian," Johnson said. "The librarian at my childhood elementary and middle school really shaped my love for reading and learning."

While teaching, Johnson pursued his master's degree in instructional technology from Georgia Southern University. Completing his library media certification and master's degree in 2016, Johnson says he was finally able to achieve his dream. Receiving the position of librarian and instructional technology specialist at Otis J. Brock, III Elementary School, Johnson says he now gets to educate students and teachers on technology and the love of reading.

Utilizing the grant writing skills he developed in an instructional technology course during his master's program, Johnson recently served as the lead on a grant received by Brock Elementary that will put Apple technology in the hands of every second and third grader at the school. Valued at over \$700,000, the Technology Tools for Teachers grant was given to only 13 schools in four counties in the state by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement.

Within the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS), Brock Elementary along with Haven and Hodge Elementary Schools were awarded the grant.

"Though we had to write three grants, one for each of our schools, we were able to work together as a team," Johnson said. "Thanks to learning the proper elements to put into the grant that I learned at Georgia Southern, I was able to understand the exact information that was needed and how to convey that information utilizing data and school resources to show a true need for our school and our district."

While writing the grant, data showed clear learning gaps were present in both math and reading, demonstrating a need for technology integration in a school that is at 98 percent free and reduced lunch and breakfast service.

The grant will provide not only Apple technology, but also DreamBox and Lexia software that will assist with math and reading comprehension as well as extensive professional development to support teachers in effectively

implementing personalized, blended learning using these tools.

"This will transform how our students have been learning, allowing more rigor, differentiation, and engagement to be introduced to the curriculum already being taught," Johnson said. "We need to close this gap and help our students be successful."

Johnson, named 2020 Teacher of the Year at Brock Elementary and one of five finalists for the SCCPSS title, will complete a specialist's degree in instructional technology in spring 2019 from Georgia Southern, and says he cannot praise Georgia Southern and his education enough for helping him obtain so much success in his education career.

"My M.Ed. and soon to be Ed.S. in instructional technology has opened so many doors with teaching and training others in the educational field," Johnson said. "It has allowed me to move into the position I have always dreamed of having, while preparing me for how to be effective with what I have learned in my school."

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Georgia CEO Q3 2018 results show business confidence could be shifting

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Georgia business leaders' confidence levels are still strong, according to the 2018 third-quarter (Q3) survey results by Georgia CEO, a news source that shares the state's most important features, videos and newswires with Georgia's top business leaders.

The purpose of the survey is to understand how general business conditions impact and influence Georgia CEO subscribers on a quarterly basis. The survey asks participants to reflect on the business conditions of the current quarter (Q3), while looking forward to the next quarter (Q4), with their expectations for business conditions. The news outlet partners with Georgia Southern University Center for Business Analytics and Economic Research (CBAER) to prepare, distribute and analyze the survey.

In Q3 of 2018, survey participant's views of business volume and sales were slightly below 50 percent. These views were most commonly influenced by increasing demand, government policy or changing levels of competition. Participants noted it was more difficult to find qualified employees in the labor market. This could pose a challenge for future growth at some firms.

"At this point of the business cycle, it is normal to find that some firms are having trouble finding employees," said Ben McKay, CBAER assistant director.

When asked about general business conditions for Q4, 46 percent of respondents see conditions improving, while 44 percent believe conditions will remain the same. Overall, optimism about the future remains strong despite general business confidence slowing going into the fourth quarter.

A convenience sampling technique was used for this study, and the questionnaires were emailed to subscribers of each of the 12 Georgia CEO daily newsletters. Georgia CEO publishes newsletters in Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Gainesville, Middle Georgia, Newnan, Rome, Savannah, Tifton and Valdosta. The survey was open from Oct. 2 to 26, with 158 valid responses recorded.

Georgia Southern named No. 1 on master's in educational leadership rankings

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Georgia Southern University has the best Online Master's in Educational Leadership Program in the country, according to OnlineMasters.com.

Of the top 50 programs identified across the nation, the University's M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, housed in the Department of Leadership, Technology and Human Development in the College of Education (COE), received the No. 1 spot. Georgia Southern's program was also the only master's in educational leadership in the state of Georgia to be recognized.

"Over the last three years, we have seen a significant increase in individuals seeking to attain leadership credentials to advance in the educational setting to positions such as Pre-K-12 teacher leaders or

assistant principals," said M.Ed. Educational Leadership program coordinator, Juliann Sergi McBrayer, Ed.D. "We have worked hard to ensure that our program meets the needs of individuals seeking to gain educational leadership certification, regardless of whether they are seeking certification-only or a master's degree with certification embedded in the curriculum. Our online setting of the program is conducive to learning for working professionals and provides extensive support to students both collectively and individually."

OnlineMasters.com highlighted that Georgia Southern's educational leadership program provides the best student support with interactive and responsive faculty. The COE also offers support from the Graduate Academic Services Center, a graduate academic unit at Georgia Southern that provides admissions and course assistance for COE graduate students through the guidance of full-time graduate academic advisors.

"U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show the career opportunities for leadership roles in education will continue to grow at a rate of 10 percent, which is faster than average," said Barbara Montgomery, OnlineMasters.com program recognition manager. "This is just one of the many reasons OnlineMasters.com researched, analyzed and ranked the top master's in education administration."

Methodology for the ranking incorporated the most recent data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and statistical data from the National Center for Education Statistics. Research was also conducted through interviews and surveys of current students and alumni, as well as human resource professionals.

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Savannah-based artist brings landscape exhibit to Armstrong Campus Fine Arts Gallery

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"Avanguardia," an exhibition by Savannah-based artist Lisa D. Watson, invites viewers to slow down and take note of the landscapes that often seem mundane when viewed through the windows of a moving car.

The works explore the moments of intersection between the infrastructure of highways, bridges and suburban sprawl with the surrounding natural environment. These points of contact express the dichotomies of life: permanence and change, and stillness and movement.



"Visiting artist programs are a vital component of any art program, serving as a means to expand and foster the artistic community, which our students and the greater public participate in," Gallery Director Raymond Gaddy said. "Through demonstration, lecture and engaging in student discourse, a visiting artist exposes students and the public to a range of artistic approaches and fosters discussion about contemporary art and ideas."

While the exhibition celebrates the human ingenuity that built sweeping structures and thriving cities, it also cautions against modern conveniences demanded by a growing human population that can lead to the destruction of indigenous wildlife and ecological habitats. Ultimately, the show expresses a desire to see humanity strike a balance between the vigor of a burgeoning city and the energy of its natural surroundings.

As part of the environmentally-conscious considerations for the exhibition, all of the works were made with 95 percent reclaimed materials such as industrial waste, junk mail and product packaging in order to keep the ecological footprint small.

The exhibition will run weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 10 through Friday, Jan. 18 at the Georgia Southern Armstrong Campus Fine Arts Gallery. A reception will be held Wednesday, Jan. 16 from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the gallery. The exhibition and reception are free.

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