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Georgia Southern opens new Health Professions Academic Building, home to Waters College of Health Professions

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Save



(L-R) GS Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Reiber, GS Waters College of Health Professions Dean Barry Joyner, USG Chancellor Steve Wrigley, GS President Shelley C. Nickel, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, Regent Don Waters, Cindy Waters, Regent Laura Marsh, GS student Nancy Harrison.

Today, Georgia Southern University President Shelley C. Nickel, Gov. Nathan Deal, University System of Georgia Chancellor Steve Wrigley and Board of Regents Chair Don Waters cut the ribbon to open the University's new Health Professions Academic Building. All shared enthusiasm for the expansive new facility, which enables the University to provide exceptional education and training opportunities to help students succeed while addressing the healthcare needs of the region.

"This new Health Professions Academic Building is not just a representation of our physical expansion here on the Armstrong Campus, it represents our commitment to training healthcare professionals to enter an area of great need in our region, in our state – even in our nation," said Nickel. "This new 63,000 square-foot facility was built with a rapidly changing healthcare field in mind. It is designed to train healthcare providers in a state-of-the-art interprofessional environment that encourages a team-oriented approach to healthcare – an approach that has been shown to improve delivery of care and patient outcomes."

The facility, available to students for the Spring 2019 semester, will include a simulation suite, nursing skills and assessment labs, communication sciences and disorders labs, cardiovascular intervention sciences lab, medical laboratory sciences, radiation therapy, nuclear medicine, and sonography, and a variety of hands-on, team-oriented learning opportunities.

The Health Professions Academic Building is home to the Waters College of Health Professions, the largest undergraduate health sciences college in the state of Georgia. More than 10 programs are offered by the Waters College of Health Professions including nursing, physical therapy, communication sciences, radiologic sciences, respiratory therapy, kinesiology and medical laboratory sciences. Georgia Southern's allied healthcare programs represent almost one-fifth of all undergraduate healthcare degrees earned in Georgia.



Georgia's FY18 budget included \$22 million in construction funding to build a new health professions facility on Georgia Southern's Armstrong Campus. Project funding also included the renovation of Ashmore Hall, a 46,000 square-foot building that now houses office space for health professions faculty, as well as respiratory therapy and biodynamics labs.

"Georgia Southern is providing a much-needed pipeline of talent to area hospitals and healthcare providers," said Deal. "The Health Professions Academic Building we cut the ribbon on today will help to build that pipeline by encouraging a team-oriented approach to healthcare to better educate the next generation of healthcare leaders and meet the growing needs of the healthcare industry in Georgia. I appreciate Cindy and Don Waters' generous donation to this facility and the General Assembly's support for this important project to benefit the regional healthcare economy, as it will provide jobs and support wellness in coastal Georgia and beyond."

The college is named for Don and Cindy Waters, who donated \$2 million to the college in 2017.

Don Waters noted the importance of the new building, which is not simply made of brick, steel, mortar and glass.

"What you are really looking at is an 'opportunity machine,'" he said. "A place where students can pursue their dreams and build a better life for themselves, their families, their community and their state. This 'opportunity machine' also helps meet the need for excellently trained healthcare professionals in our community and state."

The facility will include the St. Joseph's/Candler Nursing Suite, an 8,193-square-foot area with advanced technologies that prepare students to meet patient needs in a changing healthcare delivery environment. The unique site is the result of a funding partnership between the Armstrong Foundation of Georgia Southern University, Inc. and St. Joseph's/Candler health system, which donated \$250,000 to the project.

At the heart of the building is the Memorial Health Active Learning Studio, a signature instructional space with two large expanses of glass and a sweeping ceiling. The area is outfitted for lectures and small-group settings for team-learning.

Also included is the Meredith Avery Conference Room, provided by Don and Fara Avery in memory of their daughter, who was a student at Armstrong State University.



Set among a wooded area on the southern edge of the Armstrong Campus, the environmentally rich site offered Atlanta-based architectural firm S/L/A/M Collaborative numerous advantages when drafting the design for the academic building. These included creating opportunities for compelling vistas and visual connections to adjacent buildings, as well as the outside environment. The facility is enriched with regional shiplap vernacular, Savannah's historical masonry textures and warm earth tones offset with pops of color.

The general contractor for the project is Holder Construction and the program manager is Hendessi & Associates.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving nearly 26,500 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 expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.

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