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Georgia Southern public administration students place first in simulation competition

MARCH 5, 2019

Save

Last week, Georgia Southern University Master of Public Administration (MPA) students Gina Pate, Austin Hinkley and Colin Karnes placed first in the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA)-Batten Global Student Simulation Competition at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.



The Georgia Southern/UNC-Chapel Hill NASPAA Batten Global Student Simulation Competition team.

“We are thrilled to be the Regional Winners,” Pate said. “Our team took a different approach than the other teams because we focused on humanitarian values and regional cooperation to guide our policy decisions.”

The simulation involved the growing global migration crisis and was structured to resemble a real-world scenario. During the competition, each team was assigned a simulated world and country. Individual team members were assigned a cabinet position in their governments, which controlled specific policy options that affected the migration crisis for each nation. In these roles, teams made specific policy decisions that had direct impacts on the number of migrants in the country, the rate of gross domestic product (GDP) growth, migrant employment rate, citizen favorability and the

country’s human rights index.

“Our team gave resources to other countries in need, and focused on providing high-level services to refugees, subsidiary protected migrants and humanitarian protected migrants in our country,” Karnes said.

The team, who was joined by two students from the University of North Carolina (UNC-Chapel Hill), also focused on human rights and ethical treatment of refugees as a key component to their strategy during the competition. Human rights were an essential portion of the simulation and weighed heavily for the judges. The team worked together to formulate policy to ensure that human rights were guaranteed and promoted throughout the region, while also focusing on the services in their own country.

The team’s data and presentation will now be sent for judging in the global NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation championship rounds against the regional winners from around the world.

This year’s competition involved 585 graduate students from 157 universities competing at 11 global sites. After several rounds of competition and an oral policy brief, the Georgia Southern/UNC-Chapel Hill team placed first out of 12 teams in the regional competition, beating out teams from Georgetown University, the University of Virginia, the University of Georgia, Georgia State University, the University of Maryland, the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, George Washington University, the University of Pittsburgh and Regent University.

Pate, a fourth semester MPA candidate, plans to graduate this semester and pursue a career in local government management, while Karnes and Hinkley are third semester MPA candidates who plan to graduate in fall 2019. They are both interested in pursuing doctoral degrees in public policy after graduation.

NASPAA is the global standard in public service education. It is the membership organization of graduate education programs in public policy, public affairs, public administration, and public and nonprofit management. NASPAA is the recognized global accreditor of master's degree programs in these fields, including Georgia Southern's MPA program. For more information visit the Department of Public and Nonprofit Studies at cbss.georgiasouthern.edu/publicadmin.

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Georgia Southern Biology professor participates in global study of river ecosystems

MARCH 5, 2019



Georgia Southern Associate Professor of Biology

Checo Colon-Gaud, Ph.D., is one of 153 researchers from 40 countries who has just published a groundbreaking study of ecosystem function in rivers around the world.

These scientists constructed a peer-sourced network of researchers to conduct a global-scale experiment on carbon cycling in rivers. The researchers sampled more than 1,000 sites from 500 rivers worldwide. Using a carefully standardized bioassay, the scientists measured the rate of carbon cycling in each river.

“Carbon cycling, including the rate at which organic matter decomposes, is an important measure of how river ecosystems are functioning,” said Colon-Gaud. “It affects the productivity of rivers at a local scale, and it has significance for climate at a global scale.”

Colon-Gaud, with the help of students from the Department of Biology, sampled four sites across southeastern Georgia. These sites were chosen to represent the “blackwater” rivers of our region, with their distinctive tea-colored water. Using the standardized methods, Colon-Gaud placed small cotton strips into the water at each site as a carbon source. He collected them after a period of time so that the rate at which organic matter decomposed could be measured.

Overall, the study found that factors such as temperature and moisture have a major influence on the rate of carbon cycling in river ecosystems. Due to ongoing climate change affecting temperature and rainfall at a global scale, the researchers warn that human activities will greatly affect ecosystem function in rivers.

“The information generated through this collaborative effort will help us predict how river ecosystems are likely to change in a warming climate,” said Colon-Gaud. “We now have a baseline we can use to detect anthropogenic changes in vital ecosystem processes such as the rate at which organic matter decomposes.” The results of this study, published in the journal *Science Advances*, can be found [here](#).

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