

# Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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# Georgia Southern students participate in Fort Stewart tactical athlete program

APRIL 5, 2019

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In a recent visit to Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia Southern University Department of Rehabilitation Sciences students participated in interactive soldier demonstrations in an effort to better understand soldiers' unique physical challenges and how they can help better prepare them for combat.

"The event provided our students with a much better insight as to the physical demands of soldiers at Fort Stewart," said Nancy Henderson, DPT, assistant professor of rehabilitation sciences. "This added knowledge will help them to better tailor their education while working with soldiers."

Understanding the physical regiment of the soldiers at Fort Stewart is the key to success for the department's Soldier Athlete Human Performance Optimization (SAHPO) program, a collaborative effort between Georgia Southern and the 3rd Infantry Division. The program allows students to work with soldiers on injury prevention in an effort to improve medical readiness.

Musculoskeletal disorders currently rank as the number one reason for soldier evacuation, accounting for almost 25 percent of all military injuries. In comparison, combat injuries account for 14 percent.

"This gave me a much better understanding of what the soldiers experience day to day, and what they will be faced with once they are sent on tours," said Morgan Taylor, a first-year student in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program. "I feel that this experience will help the SAHPO program as a whole better instruct the soldiers on how to plan exercises, along with being able to make our program specific and specialized for each soldier's job and the demands placed on them."



First-year doctoral student Alex Griffin also appreciated the one-on-one interaction with soldiers.

“Since I want to go into a physical therapy setting that focuses on advanced sport and tactical athletes, this opportunity allowed me to get my feet wet,” he said. “It was a great opportunity to work with the soldiers. It gave us insight on the physical demands their job requires of them. It motivates me to develop proper body mechanics to make their lives as pain free as possible.”

Participation in this event was possible thanks to a larger partnership that Georgia Southern has maintained with Fort Stewart for several years.

“We are excited to continue to grow our partnerships with Georgia Southern University and the United States Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine as we develop and implement tailored initiatives to improve readiness,” said Marji Freeze, community ready and resilient integrator for Fort Stewart.

Housed within the Waters College of Health Professions, the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences offers undergraduate and accredited graduate programs in rehabilitation sciences and communication sciences as well as a doctoral degree in physical therapy.

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.

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