

Newsroom

April 8, 2019

Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern Office of Leadership and Community Engagement staff members recognized

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Two members of the Georgia Southern University Office of Leadership and Community Engagement staff, Urkovia Andrews, Dr.P.H., assistant director for service-learning, and Jordan Wilburn, coordinator for community engagement, were recognized at the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority's (DSDA) annual meeting and Brick Awards.

Wilburn was acknowledged for providing the DSDA with Georgia Southern student volunteers who connect, serve and lead. Andrews was recognized for partnering with the DSDA with the Georgia Southern BUILD Program and Step Into Statesboro tours. She has also helped with the Downtown Dog Park, written grants and served on the Blue Mile Committee.

Destin Doe, a senior computer science major and community liaison for the DSDA, was also recognized with an Excellence in Service award.

Exercise is Medicine On Campus names Georgia Southern Gold Level Campus

APRIL 8, 2019

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For the second year in a row, Georgia Southern University has been recognized as a Gold Level Campus by Exercise is Medicine® on Campus (EIM®-OC) for the University's diligence to make physical activities a standard on campus.

The Waters College of Health Professions along with Health Services and Campus Recreation and Intramurals have teamed up to make a concerted effort to promote physical activity on campus by requiring participation in a wellness and physical activity program, having outstanding programming offered by the Grube Recreational Activity Center and using biomarkers as a processing checkpoint at Health Services, Bridget Melton, Ed.D., professor of kinesiology, said.

"Brian DeLoach, M.D., and the Health Services staff have been real champions of making sure every student who is seen at Health Services is asked about their physical activity and consulted if needed," Melton added.

In addition to the University's efforts, the Southern Exercise Science Club (SESC), open to exercise science majors on the Statesboro Campus, promotes physical activity by planning and implementing the campus-wide activity campaign, Get off the Bus Gus and Walk for Your Health. The campaign, which runs annually during Exercise is Medicine Week in October, encourages individuals to promote health and wellness by walking to their destination instead of riding the bus.

"It is great to see how involved our students get with this campaign," Assistant Professor of Kinesiology and faculty co-chair of SESC, Greg Ryan, Ph.D, said. "It takes a lot of planning on their part and last year, they were able to secure internal funding to help with the project."

On May 30 Georgia Southern will be honored at a special EIM®-OC recognition session during the 2019 American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida. EIM®-OC was launched in 2014 to honor campuses for their collaborative effort to promote physical activity.

Site-synchronous classrooms at Georgia Southern connecting students on all three campuses

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Georgia Southern University is showing that the distance between its three campuses is just a number for students by introducing the site-synchronous classrooms pilot program, which uses state-of-the-art cameras in classrooms to connect students in Statesboro, Savannah and Hinesville.

The classes taught in this new synchronous-learning environment still bring students together with either the instructor or a teaching assistant in the physical classroom on their primary campuses. In a traditional distance education class, professors would give out information to students who are dispersed. The pilot classes at Georgia Southern maintain a traditional face-to-face atmosphere with everything happening in real time, allowing for more natural discussion.



Dustin Anderson, Ph.D.

Faculty senate president and Associate Professor of Literature Dustin Anderson, Ph.D., said the discussion-based format, combined with the campuses coming together, affords him and the students new opportunities.

“My favorite part about the site-synchronous classroom is that I don’t have to say ‘My students in Statesboro, my students in Hinesville or my students at Armstrong;’ I just have my students,” he said. “Because the classes are synchronous in the way the students meet, they really are just students rather than students from a specific campus, and that’s something that I and the students in the class really appreciate.”

The idea for the interconnected site-synchronous environment came from the Georgia Southern faculty senate’s implementation of a similar system and from research and working with other higher education institutions.

Because the faculty senate represents the entire university, it was determined early on that senate members shouldn’t have to commute to attend meetings. As the newly elected president, Anderson was tasked with finding a way technologically to make the meetings cohesive. He worked with Information Technology Services (ITS) to create a virtual peer-to-peer environment by using cameras set up in the counterpart senate chambers.

“I call it the ‘I-16 portal,’” Anderson said. “In the Nessmith-Lane Building, we have our regular senate setup with a U-shaped table, and it’s facing a big screen with the same setup telecasted from Savannah. It feels like we have one big table that’s separated by the membrane of the screen.”

After seeing the system work well for senate meetings and finding out some of his students were driving from Hinesville to Statesboro for one of his classes, Anderson, worked alongside engineering faculty and ITS staff to try it out in a classroom setting. ITS and the Office of the Provost provided funds for the equipment, and ITS set it up to

ensure the interconnected classroom environment. The College of Engineering and Computing (CEC) was the first college to request the technology.

Anderson said the classes also give students more freedom when making their schedule, particularly nontraditional students who have responsibilities outside of going to school.

“Some students can’t take certain classes because they have a job, or they have kids whose daycare doesn’t start until a certain time,” he said. “As a university, we want to provide environments for our students to succeed in. Some students do phenomenally well in small, face-to-face classes, but others may thrive in online or large-class environments because they don’t feel like they’re being put on the spot as much.”

Right now the site-synchronous environment is being used in one of Anderson’s literature classes, “Liars, Guns, & Money,” as well as in a couple courses in the CEC, such as Comparative Languages taught by Daniel Liang, Ph.D. Anderson said he hopes there are more courses offered in this environment in the future.

“If the students like this format and push to have it be a part of their student technology fees, I could see these spaces growing exponentially,” he said. “The students are used to learning in so many different ways. Being separated by a screen isn’t a tremendous issue for them. My goal is to train more faculty to learn how to teach in this environment, so we can provide more learning opportunities. It’s a simple technology, but it does take some practice.”

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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