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Georgia Southern launches new online IT degree

August 22, 2019

To meet a projected demand for computer science and information technology occupations, Georgia Southern University is launching a new, completely online, information technology degree.

Affordably priced, the Bachelor of Information Technology (BIT) online degree is a 124-credit hour program designed to provide a solid foundation in Information Technology including infrastructure and infrastructure management, networking, operating systems, cyber Security, programming, and data science.

“Georgia Southern’s new online Bachelor of Information Technology degree is ideal for anyone looking to advance within an already established career in the IT industry or to break into this growing field on the ground level,” said Mohammad Davoud, dean of Georgia Southern’s Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing. “This degree meets a growing need in Georgia, and the country. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employment of computer and information technology occupations to grow 13 percent from 2016 to 2026, faster than the average for all occupations.”

The new degree will be offered through eMajor, a University System of Georgia (USG) program supported by the system’s eCampus, which works with USG institutions across the state to provide quality, affordable, high-demand post-secondary degrees and credentials that address the workplace needs of Georgia and beyond. eMajor programs are ideal not only for traditional students who wish to take advantage of online course delivery, but also for working professionals, military members, transfer students and others seeking alternative routes to degree completion.

As an eMajor program, tuition for the new online IT degree is set at an affordable \$199 per credit hour, and students will have access to a wealth of additional support services such as free online tutoring and student success coaches.

Applications are being accepted now. the first classes in the program will begin in January.

“We are excited to have the first Georgia Southern degree to be offered through eMajor,” said Reinhold Gerbsch, director of Industrial Relations for the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing. “Graduates will be able to choose from jobs such as computer network architects, cybersecurity experts, computer systems analysts, or database administrators. Statistics show the median annual wage for computer and information technology is more than \$86,000 a year.”

For more information about the new degree, visit <https://emajor.usg.edu/degrees/bachelor-of-information-technology-online/>

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125 degree programs serving approximately 20,500 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. GeorgiaSouthern.edu.

Tags: [College of Engineering and Computing](#), [Department of Information Technology](#)

Georgia Southern graduate student conducts research as snake specialist in Honduras

August 22, 2019

Lauren Wilson, a graduate student in the Georgia Southern University Department of Biology, spent the summer working as a snake specialist in Central America. Wilson joined a research team tasked with quantifying and protecting biodiversity in the forests of Cusuco National Park, Honduras. The team was organized by the conservation research organization, Operation Wallacea.



Georgia Southern graduate student Lauren Wilson helps guide a snake into a tube to be studied.

Wilson was invited to apply her herpetology skills to an ongoing project that monitors plant and animal diversity at Cusuco National Park in the Merendon Mountains of northwest Honduras. These mountains support globally significant biodiversity, including a remarkable variety of amphibians and reptiles found nowhere else in the world.

Wilson's specific responsibility was handling snakes that were encountered in a safe way, including venomous species.

"I coax the snake into a long plastic tube of an appropriate diameter," Wilson said. "Once it's in the tube, the snake can't bite or turn around. At that point, it is safe for me to handle the snake, take the necessary data, such as a DNA sample, and then release the snake unharmed."

She was also responsible for conducting surveys to identify and count other amphibians and reptiles, as well as collecting research data from each animal that was encountered.

To survey amphibians and reptiles, Wilson and others searched predetermined routes through the forest. By repeating these surveys over time, biologists can assess whether populations are increasing or decreasing. Measurements and weight were recorded for each animal, as well as any other critical data, such as swabbing the skin of frogs in order to test for the presence of a deadly fungus.

Part of Wilson's work as a snake specialist included carrying out her own research on the evolution of color patterns in snakes. Many snake species in Central America mimic the color patterns of venomous coral snakes, with varying degrees of accuracy. To find out how successful the mimicry is and to see if the presence or absence of a coral snake model affects the evolution of mimicry, Wilson created life-size clay models with different color patterns and placed them into sites with and without coral snakes.

"I retrieved the models a few days later," Wilson said. "By looking for teeth or beak marks in the clay, I can quantify which color patterns are most effective at deterring predators at different sites."

Assistant professor of biology, Christian Cox, Ph.D., who is Wilson's major advisor and a collaborator in the Honduran research, said Wilson's research is an important study of the evolution of snake color patterns.

"Lauren's research is important because she is quantifying how sharing habitat with coral snakes affects the evolution of mimicry," Cox said. "Her research is some of the first to study predation and coral snake mimicry

in the montane tropics, where sites with and without coral snakes are in close physical proximity due to abrupt elevational changes.”

This is the second consecutive year that Georgia Southern graduate students have played a significant role in research work at Cusuco National Park. The Department of Biology hopes to continue this productive relationship in the future.

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.

Tags: [College of Graduate Studies](#)

[Georgia Southern school psychology students work with special needs children in Ecuador, experience is life-changing](#)

August 22, 2019



College of Education students Raven Patterson, Brittany Fahey and Shanice Murphy worked with special needs children in the 2019 summer Ecuador Professional Preparation Program.

Over the summer, three Georgia Southern University students traveled to Quito, Ecuador, to participate in the Ecuador Professional Preparation Program (EPPP), an 18-day cultural immersion program for psychology graduate students and mental health professionals. Brittany Fahey, Shanice Murphy and Raven Patterson, all students in the College of Education’s Education Specialist (Ed.S.) in School Psychology program were three of 30 students from around the world selected to participate in the experience that they described as nothing short of life-changing.

EPPP invites participants to contribute to the organization’s mission of advancing the fields of psychology and mental health in Ecuador while gaining knowledge of the country’s psychological and educational practices, as well its culture.

“This experience helped me to develop both personally and professionally,” said Murphy. “I was able to receive first-hand experience immersed in the culture of Ecuador that I could not have received from just reading a textbook or completing an internet search.”

However, she admitted, the trip was not always easy.

“There were times when I became frustrated due to the language barrier and adjusting to cultural norms,” Murphy said. “In return, these challenges opened my eyes to the lives English-Language Learner students live every single day in the United States.”

Each participant in the program was housed with a local host family, mentored in an educational or mental health work environment and received one-on-one Spanish tutoring.

“I experienced what it was like to be an adult in a foreign country and struggled tremendously,” said Fahey. “I have a newfound respect for children and their families living in the United States whose second language is English.”

Murphy and Fahey volunteered at El Jardín, a preschool with children ranging in age from six months to five years old.

“Special education is not a common service offered in most Ecuadorian cities,” Murphy explained. “Most children with disabilities are placed in classrooms with the general population and have little to no services offered for them. There are a few schools for children with disabilities available in some areas that offer such services, but for some families, it can be hard to enroll their children depending on where they are located and if there is space available.”

Patterson was placed at NeuroLogic International, a treatment center for neurological and mental diseases, where she was able to learn about the history of mental health in Ecuador and the plans to improve mental health stigma in the country.

“NeuroLogic International plans to expand and educate their communities on mental health practices and therapies to treat mental illnesses,” said Patterson. “Many of the Ecuadorian citizens are hesitant to use mental health services because of the stigma in their communities, and the country faces a lack of resources for mental health.”

All three students agreed that the program enhanced their understanding of culturally diverse students and will impact their future roles as school psychologists.

“Cultural competence is a necessary component when communicating needs and wants in an educational setting,” said Patterson. “As a graduate student in the school psychology program, I want to remain competent and empathetic to the unique individual needs of students.”

Fahey walked away with a new outlook on life.

“I’ve gotten something out of this that I will carry with me forever as a school psychologist,” Fahey said. “The experience was not fun. It was challenging. It was frustrating and scary at times, but it pushed me in ways I would never have been pushed if I was not there.”

The Ed.S. in School Psychology at Georgia Southern requires students to complete field experiences in a school setting under the supervision of a certified school psychologist in their practicum course and in professional internship experiences. Fahey, Murphy and Patterson completed this program as an additional experience to shape and inform their studies while at the University and as future school psychologists.

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[Georgia Southern's annual economic impact continues to grow, topping more than \\$1 billion](#)

August 22, 2019



A new report shows Georgia Southern University has increased its annual economic impact of more than \$1 billion on the region it serves. The report, released by the University System of Georgia (USG), says Georgia Southern is a significant part of the system's \$17.7 billion economic impact on the state of Georgia in FY 2018.

The report found these economic impacts demonstrate that continued emphasis on colleges and universities as a pillar of the state's economy translates into jobs, higher incomes and greater production of goods and services.

For Georgia Southern, the report said 11,639 jobs can be tied to the University, contributing to an annual economic impact measured at \$1.04 billion, an increase from \$1.02 billion in FY 2017.

"With an impact of more than \$1 billion, we are proud to contribute to our region's economic growth," said Georgia Southern President Kyle Marrero. "I expect that number to only increase as we develop more academic and university programs, informed by our regional academic plan and university strategic plan, that are directly aligned with regional needs."

The report indicates an overall increase in full- and part-time jobs throughout the state, either at USG institutions or because of them. Of the 168,284 full- and part-time jobs noted in the report across Georgia, 50,597, or 30%, are on the campuses while 117,687, or 70%, are off-campus. For every person employed at the USG or a member institution, 2.3 people have jobs that support the presence of the institution in the local community.

This is the first report on Georgia Southern's economic impact after its consolidation. The report found that in southeast Georgia:

There are 3,523 jobs on Georgia Southern's campuses in Statesboro, Savannah and Hinesville. Because of institution-related spending 8,116 jobs exist off-campus.

Georgia Southern's "initial spending" is \$789,775,232. That breaks down in three areas:

- \$240,536,163 is spent on personal services
- \$145,588,460 is spent on operations
- \$403,650,609 is spent by Georgia Southern's students

The annual study is conducted on behalf of the Board of Regents by Jeffrey M. Humphreys, Ph.D., director of the Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business.

The full report is available at https://www.usg.edu/assets/usg/docs/news_files/USG_Impact_2018.pdf.

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Tags: [Economic Impact](#)