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## Journalist, Georgia Southern alumna Laura Harris to speak at Fall 2019 commencement ceremonies

November 12, 2019



*Laura Harris*

Award-winning journalist Laura Harris ('08) will help to commend the academic accomplishments of students as the speaker for Georgia Southern University's Fall 2019 commencement ceremonies on Dec. 13 and 14.

Harris, an alumna from the university's School of Health and Kinesiology, has been a rising star in broadcast news since leaving Georgia Southern with a bachelor's in sport management. The Atlanta native co-anchors the morning and midday newscasts at NBC5 in Dallas/Fort Worth. She previously worked with the ABC affiliates in Tampa, Florida, and Charleston, South Carolina. Before her time in Charleston, she worked for WNEG-TV in Athens, Georgia, CNN Sports and TNT Sports in Atlanta.

As a journalist, Harris garnered an Emmy Award for her breaking news coverage of a massive sinkhole that opened up in the Tampa community. She has been recognized with an award for her work by the Associated Press.

Harris covered historic news stories including Pope Francis' and President Barack Obama's historic visits to Cuba in 2015 and 2016, respectively. She also has extensive political reporting experience covering both the Republican National Convention from Cleveland, Ohio, and the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia in 2016.

While at Georgia Southern, she played Division I soccer for four years. She graduated summa cum laude and as an Honors Program Scholar, with a thesis in Sport Management, in 2008.

Georgia Southern University will hold two commencement ceremonies to include both graduate and undergraduate students from each of the university's nine colleges. Graduating students will walk across the stage and receive their degrees at their preferred ceremony location.

The commencement ceremony on Dec. 13 will be held at the Savannah Civic Center in Savannah at 1 p.m. The commencement ceremony on Dec. 14 will be held at Allen E. Paulson Stadium in Statesboro at 1 p.m.

For more information on Georgia Southern's Fall 2019 commencement ceremonies visit:

[GeorgiaSouthern.edu/commencement](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/commencement).

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](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu).

Tags: [Fall Commencement](#)

## [Fall 2019 enrollment numbers finalized for Georgia Southern, University System of Georgia](#)

November 12, 2019

Official figures released today show that a growth in dual-enrollment students, new transfer, fully online and overall graduate students helped Georgia Southern University begin to reverse its latest enrollment trend.

Georgia Southern's official enrollment for Fall 2019 is 26,054, which is just 1.3 percent down from Fall 2018. In terms of overall enrollment, Georgia Southern remains the 5th-largest university in Georgia, and the largest institution south of Interstate 20.

Enrollment increased at 11 institutions, while 13 had a decline and 2 were relatively flat. The headcount enrollment for the 26 institutions of the University System of Georgia (USG) in Fall 2019 was 333,507, representing an increase of 1.5 percent (4,795 students) over the Fall 2018 enrollment of 328,712, according to USG's Fall 2019 Semester Enrollment Report. Enrollment patterns varied by institution across the USG. Headcount enrollment grew by 3.8 percent in research universities and 1.8 percent in comprehensive universities. Enrollment declined by 1.2 percent at state universities and 2.5 percent at state colleges.

“Enrollment is, and will continue to be, our No. 1 priority,” said President Kyle Marrero. “I’m pleased with the work we have done in the last six months to mediate any decline, and I’m more excited than ever about our future.”

Here’s a comparison of Fall 2018 to Fall 2019:

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
Total	26,408	26,054
Dual Enrollment	583	721
Freshmen	5,674	5,440
Sophomore	5,232	5,095
Junior	5,003	4,907
Senior	5,931	5,869
Graduate	3,278	3,339

Marrero said there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic. As officials implement a detailed strategic enrollment plan and combine it with a brand refresh and expanded marketing campaign, he expects Georgia Southern to be able to better tell its story in a very competitive marketplace. He also said the university is enhancing its academic programs aligned with the region’s market needs. As examples, he noted new degree programs in hospitality, coastal sustainability, education, and expanded offerings in health sciences and logistics.

“It’s important for everyone to understand the role we all play in marketing our university and ensuring enrollment success, Marrero said. “From our alumni to our faculty and staff, to our community members and partners, to our students – these relationships and interactions tell the Georgia Southern story and will ensure future relevance and growth. Our greatest times are ahead of us as we write the story of the new Georgia Southern.”

The enrollment numbers were released in the USG’s “Fall 2019 Semester Enrollment Report,” which breaks down enrollment by institution, class, race and ethnicity, in-state, out-of-state and international students, as well as gender and age. The full enrollment report is available [here](#).

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# Student success at the heart of Georgia Southern five-year plan

November 12, 2019



After a yearlong effort, with multi-stakeholder collaboration across three campuses and various communities, Georgia Southern University has fully implemented a new strategic plan focusing on impact and culture. The plan articulates the university's mission and vision, defines its core values, and establishes clear, measurable goals to meet its objectives.

Officials are embedding the plan into everyday Georgia Southern operations by tying it to university priorities, budgeting, leadership scorecards, personnel evaluations and even meeting agendas.

The Strategic Plan for 2019-2024 centers around five main pillars: student success; teaching and research; inclusive excellence; operational efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability; and community engagement.

Included in this plan is a new vision statement for the institution: "People. Purpose. Action: Growing ourselves to grow others!" The statement calls for investment in the university's people – its faculty and staff – to create a culture where each employee is focused on performance excellence and understands the critical role they play in achieving the goals set forth in this plan – all to have the greatest impact on Georgia Southern's students and the communities it serves.

"This is an exceptional time to be part of the Georgia Southern University community, as we collectively envision the future with optimism, passion and determination," said Georgia Southern President Kyle Marrero. "Our new Strategic Plan offers a bold, comprehensive road map designed to unite students, faculty, staff, alumni and community as one Eagle Nation as we work toward a shared set of goals and elevate our sense of common purpose."

Throughout the 2018-2019 academic year, the University Strategic Planning Committee met with and engaged members of the University community, both internal and external stakeholders, in the strategic planning process. The Strategic Plan aims to align academic programs with the talent and economic development needs of southeast Georgia.

“Student success is more than just the first ‘strategic pillar’ in the plan – it is the very foundation of our institution,” Marrero said. “And one indicator of success is for students, post-graduation, to be able to find a job and live in southeast Georgia.”

Supporting high-quality instruction and research continues to be a major focus for the University, which has earned national accolades for many of its academic programs. Georgia Southern was recently designated as an “R2” high research institution by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, placing it in the top 6% of institutions nationwide.

The plan also places an additional focus on expanding partnerships such as the existing collaboration with the Department of Defense, regional military installations and area businesses and industries.

In addition to its academic and research goals, the Strategic Plan strives to create an even more inclusive community, deepen the University’s impact across the region and create a culture of operational efficiency and effectiveness.

During the academic year, the University Strategic Planning Committee will continue its second year of work, monitoring and modifying plan elements while tracking progress in achieving the goals outlined in the plan.

“The real power of a strategic plan lies in its successful execution, so it is critical that we use key performance indicators to hold ourselves accountable and monitor goal attainment over the next five years,” added Marrero. “We invite our stakeholders to view our progress through the leadership team’s balanced scorecards posted on the Performance Excellence webpage.”

The plan is available online [here](#). Printed copies of the plan are available for community members to pick up on days the University’s administrative offices are open, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., at Bishop Alumni Center on the Statesboro Campus, the Alumni Center in Burnett Hall on the Armstrong Campus and the Liberty Campus.

Learn more at [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/StrategicPlan](https://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/StrategicPlan).

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Tags: [Strategic Plan](#)

# Georgia Southern hosts Science on Tap in Savannah on Nov. 14

November 12, 2019



**SCIENCE**  
*ON TAP*  
POURING SCIENCE INTO OUR COMMUNITY

**SPEAKER:**  
Dr. Richard Wallace,  
Professor, Department of  
Chemistry and Biochemistry

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY'S  
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS  
presents:

**THE CONNECTION  
BETWEEN RUBBER,  
GOLDENROD, PAINT  
& SOYBEANS:**  
*Two Stories from Agricultural Chemistry*

6 P.M. • THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14  
Savannah Coffee Roasters in Downtown Savannah

Chemistry will be the topic of the next Science on Tap lecture, which will be held at Savannah Coffee Roasters in Savannah on Nov. 14 at 6 p.m. Richard Wallace, Ph.D., a chemistry professor on the Georgia Southern University Armstrong Campus, will present, “The Connection Between Rubber, Goldenrod, Paint, & Soybeans: Two Stories from Agricultural Chemistry.”

The lecture would be of interest to anyone who is curious about chemical manufacturing, agricultural products and history, said Wallace.

“Science on Tap is a good venue for people to attend because the talks are given from a broad, general perspective,” Wallace said. “You don’t need a degree in chemistry to get something useful from the talk.”

Science on Tap is a monthly lecture series on various scientific subjects, hosted in both Savannah and Statesboro. The series is sponsored by the College of Science and Mathematics, as well as the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education on the Statesboro Campus. Lectures are free and community attendance is encouraged.

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For questions, call Dr. Brent Feske at 912-344-3210

