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Georgia Southern aquaponics farm on Armstrong Campus donating produce during COVID-19 pandemic

April 14, 2020



SARC curator Brigette Brinton loads up produce from the aquaponics farm with Cheryl Ciucevich, director of development for the College of Science and Mathematics, to be donated to America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia.

Sustainability is at the forefront of the FORAM Sustainable Aquaponics Research Center (SARC) on the Georgia Southern University Armstrong Campus, even during a pandemic. SARC recently donated produce grown at the aquaponics farm on campus to America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia. Donations like this, as well as other community service projects, are a large part of SARC's mission.

"SARC's mission has always included community outreach and education, which means knowing how we can support the community when it's in need," SARC curator Brigette Brinton said. "Right now we're just supplying food instead of information."

Brinton said it's also important to make sure the food grown at the aquaponics farm isn't wasted in order to be as sustainable as possible.

"We are donating produce that would otherwise be in excess or go bad before being consumed," she said. "We had a lot of lettuce ready to plant just after spring break that would normally have gone to the Southern Cafe, but they don't need it, and the heat is causing it to bolt and wilt quickly. So far, we've donated lettuce and kale, and soon it will be lettuce and chard."



Ciucevich donates produce from SARC to America's Second Harvest of Coastal Georgia.

Brinton, two student workers and SARC senior scientist Heather Joesting, Ph.D., have been working at the aquaponics farm during the period of social distancing to make sure the produce growing in the greenhouse remains usable.

In addition to donating produce to Second Harvest, the research center partners with the Nine Line Foundation to help show homeless veterans how to grow their own food. Also, they partner with Savannah State University to help integrate aquaponics into K-12 curriculum.

“In addition to conducting fundamental research on aquaponics, we value the importance of education and outreach to the community,” SARC director Brent Feske, Ph.D., said.

[Parker College of Business students gain real-world experience through networking events](#)

April 14, 2020



Steve Lopez, right, winner of the Parker Regional Sales Competition, stands with the other top competitors, Joe Armenta, center, from Georgia Southern and Luke Eyrich from Augusta University.

Georgia Southern University senior marketing major Steve Lopez was able to see his skills gained in the classroom come full circle when he placed first in the second annual Parker Regional Sales Competition (PRSC).

“This competition gave me so many new opportunities and skills that I don’t think I could have gained any other way,” Lopez said. “From learning how to prepare for these kinds of events with my team to executing them to the best of my ability, I got a chance to apply the sales strategies I learned in both of my sales classes, which I think is very important to do if you want to actually master these skills.”

The competition, hosted by the Parker College of Business’s Center for Sales Excellence, is a developmental event, providing sales students with the opportunity to demonstrate their selling skills through simulated sales role-play. It also gives students the chance to hone their skills prior to national competitions. The event drew sales teams from around the region including Augusta University, Georgia College and State University, Georgia Gwinnett College and University of South Carolina Beaufort.

“The skills I gained from competing made me realize the importance of everything our professors teach us,” Lopez said. “I benefited by getting some real practice and seeing what things I do great but also what things I need to work on. It also gave me a platform where I could show what kind of salesperson I am capable of being for all of the companies that attended.”

In addition to Lopez, Georgia Southern student Joe Armenta placed second, while Luke Eyrich from Augusta University placed third. As the top three finishers in the competition, they won prize money and clothing from custom suit company Tom James.

The Center for Sales Excellence also hosted its Eagle Sales Showcase Boot Camp (ESSBC), where employers and sales students participated in a speed networking event that allows students to hone their interviewing skills.

The PRSC and ESSBC also provide an opportunity for students to gain individual feedback from industry experts and network with sponsoring companies. The companies in attendance were able to observe students engaging in real-life, role-play scenarios and recruit them for current or future sales openings or internships. Both events were held in conjunction with the University’s Eagle Expo Career Fair.

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