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5-11-2020

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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2020). *Newsroom*. 1846.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/1846>

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Georgia Southern and Ogeechee Tech create accelerated pathway for student success

May 13, 2020



Today, Georgia Southern University signed a memorandum of understanding with Ogeechee Technical College (OTC) to provide an automatic admission pathway for local students.

The agreement creates an Accelerated Transfer Program that allows students who have been denied admission to Georgia Southern to enter OTC with intent to transfer to Georgia Southern at a later date.

“Georgia Southern University is committed to providing opportunities for student success,” said Georgia Southern

President Kyle Marrero. “We are proud to partner with Ogeechee Tech to provide students with the tools and support they need to excel.”

The Accelerated Transfer Program will begin in the Fall 2020 semester. Georgia Southern advisors or admission counselors will work with Accelerated Transfer Program students in cooperation with OTC advisors to provide appropriate academic support and advising to help the students succeed at OTC and then transfer seamlessly to Georgia Southern. Application fees for students in the program will be waived at OTC.

“Ogeechee Tech and Georgia Southern have been partners in education for many years,” said Ogeechee Technical College President Lori Durden. “The Accelerated Transfer Program takes the partnership one step further by removing certain enrollment process friction points that may serve as barriers for students. This is another significant step in ensuring a smooth transition between our two institutions.”

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving more than 26,000 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.

Graduate ready to embrace next stage in his life

May 13, 2020



Armed with a dream, resilience and determination, graduate student Jadeon Carreker overcame formidable challenges in his pursuit of a master's degree from Georgia Southern University's Waters College of Health Professions. On Saturday, May 9, he was one of more than 4,300 students who were celebrated in the University's first-ever virtual graduation ceremonies.

The sports medicine graduate grew up in the small west Georgia town of Talbotton. He left home intending to earn a bachelor's in engineering through a dual-degree program

between Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus and Georgia Tech in Atlanta.

"I met someone who became like a brother to me," Carreker said. "His name was Donte' Bryant. He introduced me to fitness, which built my physical strength and my self-confidence. Spring semester of my sophomore year, he died in a drowning incident. The following semester, I changed my major to exercise science and vowed to walk this path not only because it's a passion of mine, but also to honor him."

Then, the month of his undergraduate commencement, Carreker faced the death of another influential figure in his life.

"I lost my granddad to cancer," he explained. "It felt like a huge piece had been ripped from not only me but also from my family. Honestly, I didn't even know if I was going to attend graduate school, but his death kind of lit a fire under me to get it done. He made do with an eighth grade education, conquered many feats to make sure that all eight kids were taken care of, and that they are well off today. Back then, my granddad didn't have a car. And if he couldn't get a ride to work, he had a 45-minute walk, sometimes in the pouring rain. So, when I really sat and thought about it, I decided I had no excuse. No excuse at all."

Carreker applied and was accepted into the Master of Science in Sports Medicine program on the Armstrong Campus. He and his fiancée, Brittany Mutcherson, moved to Savannah into their first apartment together.

"I was definitely nervous coming here," he said. "My graduating class in high school was 24 people. A lot of people around here see Savannah as a small town, but it is huge to me. Everything here was different."

Between classes, family and financial issues, Carreker soon found himself overwhelmed.

"I was unemployed, so I picked up a job at UPS to make ends meet," he said. "The schedule for this job was working from 1 a.m. to 9 a.m. five days a week. I then had classes from around 11 a.m. to around 3 p.m., not to mention other problems that I faced. My classes started to get hard and I couldn't think because I was so tired all the time. It was very, very overwhelming."

Kinesiology Professor Greg Grosicki, Ph.D., noticed the decline in his student's classroom performance.

"After one of my classes, Dr. Grosicki said, 'Hey, is everything okay with you?' And I just lost it and said, 'No, I am not okay.' Dr. Grosicki is one of the reasons that I stuck it out. He showed me that professors are human, too," Carreker said. "I always thought that I couldn't go to them because they wouldn't understand."

“From day one, Jadeon’s passion for learning, intelligence and diligent work separated him from his peers,” said Grosicki. “After a few weeks in the program however it became apparent that Jadeon was facing an uphill battle. The stressor of being an older brother, working an overnight job to pay for school, and doing well in the classroom was stretching him thin. Incredibly, the next week a graduate research assistant position in our program opened up and it was unanimous among the faculty which student should be given the opportunity.”

The graduate research assistant position allowed Carreker to quit his job at UPS and focus on his studies. In the lab, Carreker helped others perform research in the areas of strength and conditioning, exercise physiology and biomechanics. Grosicki said Carreker thrived in the role.

“Jadeon quickly mastered a wide array of technical skills that he put to use in his ambitious thesis project,” said Grosicki. “Furthermore, he is held in extremely high regard by his peers and was always the first one anyone would call for help with their thesis projects.”

“I absolutely loved my position,” Carreker said. “I loved it. I don’t even know if I would have liked it that much without the people who were there. They would go above and beyond. It felt like a family. It really did.”

Carreker is the first in his family to receive a master’s degree. He had a job lined up before the coronavirus pandemic hit but he is not sure if the position is still available. He plans a career in worksite health promotion or personal training and strength and conditioning, a career he said that is the right fit for him.

“It can be used to improve lives in a way that you would never think imaginable. Mentally, physically and emotionally, because it did for me,” he said.

Carreker acknowledged that graduation was bittersweet but thanked his mother, Laneshia Walker, for helping him persevere.

“Though life has given us our fair share of ups and downs, she’s always been the perfect model of strength and faith combined,” he said. “She’s been there for me for almost 25 years, and words could never explain how much I appreciate all that she’s sacrificed for me to be here.”

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