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## Parker College of Business appoints new Associate Dean of Students and External Affairs

July 8, 2020



*Britton McKay, Ph.D.*

The Parker College of Business has appointed Britton McKay, Ph.D., professor of accounting, as the new associate dean of Students and External Affairs, effective July 1.

In her new position, McKay will focus on recruiting, introducing prospective students to the college's academic offerings, overseeing the college's academic advising center, overseeing undergraduate scholarships by serving as the committee chair and reviewing scholarship applicants for general scholarships, and coordinating accreditation efforts for AACSB and SACS.

"I want to increase efficiencies in reporting and assessment while continuing the tradition of excellence in student affairs," said McKay. "I want to help facilitate strong relationships between students, faculty and outside professionals while continuing to advocate for students, and be a helpful, approachable member of the administrative team."

Additionally, she will maintain each business discipline's proposed rotation of classes and review offerings each semester to ensure that classes are being offered on a variety of days and times. She will serve on the Parker College of Business Undergraduate Committee to provide input and guidance on the impact that proposed course and program changes may have on undergraduate students.

McKay began her career at Georgia Southern in August 2007 after earning a Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University. Most recently, she taught accounting courses, while she served as the Master of Accounting program coordinator.

# Finding his vocation: An education graduate works with special needs students

July 8, 2020



In May, Benjamin Mitchell graduated with a Master of Arts in Teaching in special education after enrolling in the fully online program while teaching, coaching and raising a family.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Georgia Southern University Double Eagle Benjamin Mitchell ('11,'20) has been teaching students with disabilities from home.

Mitchell is a special education teacher at Wacona Elementary School in Waycross, Georgia, where he has worked with fourth and fifth grade students for four years.

“The worry is of course that they don’t have the constant support they need,” said Mitchell. “But we continue to reinforce the basic concepts and reinforce fundamentals. At the end of the day, I care about their success, and I make sure they know that.”

Mitchell and his students check in at least once a week via Google or Zoom.

“With fourth and fifth grade students, they are really coming into their own personalities,” he said. “It’s important to get to know your students and show them that you will hold them accountable and celebrate their victories with them.”

Mitchell suffered a setback when he, his wife, Amber, and their 16-month-old son tested positive for COVID-19 mid-May, requiring them to be isolated from their friends and family. However, their symptoms were not severe and have since recovered.

“I am excited to return to school in the fall,” said Mitchell. “I know the students will be ready to see their teachers and peers. Wacona Elementary does a great job of providing a family atmosphere for our students.”

Special education wasn’t always in the cards for Mitchell, who completed an undergraduate degree in exercise science from the University and briefly pursued a career in that field.

“I was working in a physical therapy clinic, and I was good at it,” said Mitchell. “But my goals and outlook started changing, and I was no longer sure what direction to take.”

Amber is a special education coordinator who coaches basketball. After assisting her with practice several times, Mitchell quickly responded to her vocation and decided he wanted to coach. He began teaching special education as a pathway to coach and discovered that what he loved most was working with special needs students.

Focused, he enrolled in the fully online Master of Arts in Teaching program in special education at Georgia Southern to earn an initial teaching certificate, while teaching, raising an infant and coaching football, basketball and soccer at Ware County Middle.

“The program was flexible and the professors were very informative,” he said. “I knew if I needed anything that I could call, text or Zoom with my professors and they would be there.”

In May, Mitchell graduated with more than 4,300 students in Georgia Southern’s virtual commencement ceremony.

“I am so glad I decided to take this route,” he said. “Not everyone can work with students with disabilities, but I love it.”

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](https://www.GeorgiaSouthern.edu).

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