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# Parker College of Business connects students with potential employers during virtual Meet the Firms event

September 21, 2020



*Mary Harrelson*

While her children napped, Georgia Southern University accounting student Mary Harrelson was meeting with potential employers from the comfort of her home with hopes of securing a job or internship.

Harrelson, along with nearly 80 of her peers from the Parker College of Business, met virtually with accounting firms looking to fill positions during the Meet the Firms event, the School of Accountancy's biggest recruiting event of the year.

"This was my first time attending any of the Meet the Firms events, and I was very nervous," she said. "I had never done this in person, so I wondered how I would be able to do it virtually. That went away almost immediately. As soon as I entered any of the chat rooms, someone was already there and talking to me either through text or a video call. The longer I talked the more comfortable I got with it."

Harrelson found the virtual format of the event a perfect fit for her busy lifestyle.

"Because I have kids, sometimes it can be hard to find time to do things, but because this Meet the Firms event was virtual, I was able to attend while my kids took their naps and still got to speak with all of the firms that I wanted," Harrelson said.

Meet the Firms allows students to meet with accounting firms and corporate recruiters to learn about internships, leadership programs and employment opportunities. Through working with accounting firms, the leaders in the School of Accountancy have found that the earlier the Meet the Firms event is held in the fall semester, the better it is for the firms and for accounting students.

Firms begin filling internship positions in the fall to ensure they have the help they need during tax season and often use their summer leadership programs, which are reserved for rising seniors during the summer before their final year, as a pipeline for the internship positions.

Harrelson, a junior, is ready for future opportunities.

"I was able to secure invitations to two different summer leadership programs with my top two firms," Harrelson said. "I know because of this, my future as an accountant is looking really good."

Meet the firms is just one of several recruiting and job fair events the Parker College of Business has moved to a virtual format since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The college also hosted a virtual Accounting Day career fair and a summer Meet the Firms event.

"The best thing about the virtual Meet the Firms is that in spite of the pandemic, Georgia Southern University made it possible for us, students, and the firms to meet online and continue with the event," said Emily Olsson, an accounting student set to graduate in December.

Olsson attended both Meet the Firms events hosted by the School of Accountancy and was able to land an internship for the spring and summer semesters.

“What made the biggest impact on me and my future career from the virtual Meet the Firms event was the invaluable experience at connecting with companies virtually, which will be vital once I am officially out of college and competing for employment in the job market,” Olsson said.

## [Georgia Southern students logged 48,457 hours of community service last year](#)

September 21, 2020



Serve912 offers Georgia Southern students opportunities for community service weekly on and off campus at places like the Union Mission in Savannah, shown above.



*Jordan Wilburn*

From July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, students at Georgia Southern University logged 48,457 hours of community service, a 4.4% increase compared to last year. According to the Federal Agency for Service and Volunteering, the hours are equal to a \$1,066,054 value.

Around 36% of the service hours logged were completed through the Georgia Southern Office of Leadership and Community Engagement (OLCE). Community Engagement Coordinator Jordan Wilburn said the hours logged helps both the students and organizations that receive the service.

“I feel excited when I see such a significant investment of time from both the community organizations that mentor our students and from the students themselves,” Wilburn said. “I think it speaks to the promise we all share to care for our communities and to learn from one another. When I look at the thousands of hours of service our students log each year, I feel confident that our future is bright.”

OLCE offers dozens of service opportunities each week that benefit both on- and off-campus communities. Senior finance major Iyanna Dandrea has volunteered for a variety of events through OLCE’s service initiative, Serve912, which provides students with access to weekly calls for volunteers.



*Iyanna Dandrea*

“In every aspect of OLCE, they strive to offer and implement different opportunities that cater to the needs of the community as well as the interest of the students,” Dandrea said. “My favorite part about service events was helping to meet a need. Whether that was spending quality time with residents at the nursing home or helping to tag clothes and sort toys at the thrift store, I was able to help and be a blessing to someone else.”

Wilburn said by doing community service, students gain confidence, soft skills and real-world experience, which help them grow personally and professionally. Senior biology major, Ashley Avila, said her perception of the community changed after doing volunteer work.



*Ashley Avila*

“My favorite part of volunteering was getting to know and serve the local community of Bulloch County,” Avila said. “Before volunteering, I associated Bulloch County only with Georgia Southern. Serve912 opened my perspective to the diverse local community. I think it is important to do community service because it allows you to become an active member of positive change.”

Part of the service hours logged last year were done during the COVID-19 pandemic. Wilburn said the pandemic has created obstacles to doing community service, but OLCE is working hard to circumvent them.

“We are getting creative in an effort to continue providing students with access to service opportunities and the community with the needed support,” she said. “We have bulked up our newsletter webpage here to

include virtual on-campus and off-campus volunteer opportunities, as well as opportunities that are

specifically needed in response to COVID-19. We're also offering small, daily, on-campus service activities that can be completed safely and independently and that benefit a local organization."

Dandrea said community service is especially important during times like these.

"Most non-profit organizations rely on volunteers in order to serve the community," she said. "Without the help of volunteers, many organizations would struggle tremendously to get the work that they need done."

To learn more about OLCE or to sign up for a community service event, visit <https://students.georgiasouthern.edu/LeadServe/>.

Tags: [COVID-19](#), [Office of Leadership and Community Engagement](#)