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Georgia Southern University

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Laura Thomas Named Swimming & Diving Head Coach

Thomas returns to the Peach State after four years at Northern Arizona



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STATESBORO, GA. – Georgia Southern Director of Athletics [Tom Kleinlein](#) has named Laura Thomas as Head Coach of the Swimming and Diving Program. Thomas comes to Statesboro after four years at Northern Arizona. A two-time NCAA All-American swimmer at the University of Georgia, she has founded two aquatic clubs and been a head coach for three club teams and a high school team with more than 15 years of experience in the state of Georgia.

"We're excited to announce the hiring of Laura Thomas as the new head coach of our swimming and diving program," said Director of Athletics [Tom Kleinlein](#). "She has strong ties to swimming in the state of Georgia both as a coach and collegiate competitor and those connections will be valuable assets as she takes over. Laura will be a great addition to the Georgia Southern

Athletics Family and we're excited to welcome her to Statesboro."

In her four years at Northern Arizona, Thomas was a part of three-straight Western Athletic Conference Championships to close out her tenure with the Lumberjacks. In 2016, NAU took home a school record seven event wins including a program record points haul. Her sprinters recorded 10 All-WAC performances at the meet. Over her four years, Thomas has helped the Lumberjacks set 11 school records in the lanes.

"I am thrilled to return to Georgia and become part of the Georgia Southern family," said Thomas. "The program at Georgia Southern has an outstanding group of student-athletes that I am excited to work with."

Thomas earned her first coaching position in 1997 as the head coach for the Deer Run swim team in Conyers, Georgia, a position she held for more than 15 years during which time she led swimmers to six county championships. Thomas founded both the Cobia Aquatic Club in Conyers and the Swim Oconee Aquatic Club in Watkinsville, Georgia, and served as head coach, president and CEO of both organizations.

Thomas also has a wealth of experience in teaching, having taught at three different middle schools since 1997. She taught math and social studies to seventh and eighth graders at Oconee County Middle School in Watkinsville while also serving as the head coach of the Oconee County High School swimming & diving team for three seasons. In addition to those duties, she served as an assistant coach to Harvey Humphries, associate head coach at the University of Georgia, while also working for the Athens Bulldogs Swim Club.

Thomas put together a storied career both in the pool and in the classroom at Georgia where she was a two-time NCAA All-American. She was named All-SEC all four years of her career and was named team captain her senior year. Thomas participated in the 1984 US Olympic trials and was the UGA school record holder in the 200 butterfly at the time of her graduation. Academically, Thomas was a three-time Academic All-American, earned the NCAA Post Graduate scholarship, and was a Rhodes Scholar nominee.

Thomas graduated magna cum laude from the University of Georgia in 1988 with a bachelor's in marketing before earning a Master of Education in instructional technology from Troy University in 2005. A native of Northern California, Thomas has a daughter, Zoe.

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