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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2021). *Newsroom*. 1966.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/1966>

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Georgia Southern immunology expert to give presentation, hold Q&A on Coronavirus vaccines for ‘Science on Tap’ series to build vaccine confidence

April 20, 2021

Georgia Southern University professor of biology and immunology expert, Traci Ness, Ph.D., will host a presentation and virtual Q&A session titled, “COVID Vaccines Unmasked: Questions and Answers from an Immunologist,” on the coronavirus vaccines. The virtual event is part of the College of Science and Mathematics “Science on Tap” series and is free and open to the public.



Traci Ness, Ph.D., professor of biology

Ness will address three of the largest concerns with the vaccines: the speed the vaccines were developed, their effectiveness and safety, and the steps they went through for approval.

“Every student at Georgia Southern, including all of our dual enrolled high school students, is eligible for vaccination,” Ness said. “There has been so much misinformation about the coronavirus and COVID-19 vaccines shared in social media. It is important that our students and the community make informed decisions based on reliable sources.”

Ness’ expertise in immunology stems from her time spent doing a research thesis on immunology of marine mammals while an undergraduate. She also focused her doctoral research on how viruses related to smallpox change the immune response to avoid getting killed by hosts. She also completed a postdoctoral research position in the Department of Pathology at the University of Michigan where she studied immune responses in animal models of disease. She currently teaches courses in immunology, virology and infectious diseases.

Ness said learning about how vaccines work is the only way people can make informed decisions about their well-being.

“The purpose of this talk is to build vaccine confidence and dispel some of the misinformation and refer students and other audience members to credible resources in which to make educated decisions about vaccination,” Ness said. “The only way to stop the pandemic and begin to return to normal, albeit a different normal, is to control the spread of the coronavirus. The only hope of a more lasting effect is to limit the number of individuals that can be infected by the virus and that can only be accomplished by vaccination.”

The virtual talk will be held on Zoom on April 22 at 6 p.m. To participate, visit <https://georgiasouthern.zoom.us/j/88939119220>.

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Georgia Southern's Master of Public Administration program to be offered in Savannah Fall 2021

April 20, 2021



The Master of Public Administration degree program will officially launch on the Armstrong Campus in Savannah beginning in Fall 2021.

The Georgia Southern University Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree program will officially launch on the Armstrong Campus in Savannah beginning in Fall 2021 as the program transitions to a hybrid format that combines the best of online and in-person instruction.

Georgia Southern has offered an MPA degree since 1973 in which world-class faculty have been training public servants to bring change to small towns and cities, to those at risk and those in need around the world. The development of the hybrid program centered around the idea of one program on two campuses, said Trent Davis, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Public and Nonprofit Studies.

“Everything from course delivery to program curriculum is the same across both campuses,” he said. “This also includes the time that program faculty will spend in the classroom on each campus. While 50% of each course will be online, 50% will also be in-person.”

For example, a typical 16-week hybrid MPA course divides up online (50%) and in-person (50%) instruction across the semester. In-person instruction takes place in one of the university's site-synchronous, technology-enhanced classrooms, where students have the option of attending on either the Statesboro or Armstrong Campus.

The MPA program is accredited by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration, the global standard in public service education, and a member of the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council. The program offers two specializations or areas of concentration: public management and nonprofit management, which are tailored for students in pre-service training or for mid-career professionals.

“Our goal was to develop a program that offers flexibility for working adults and nontraditional students, yet at the same time provides all of the benefits of traditional graduate education,” Davis said. “The hybrid model of course delivery accomplishes both goals and the site-synchronous classrooms bring students together from a much larger region than would otherwise be possible.”

Offering the program in Savannah is vital in filling a gap in professional and public nonprofit management education, Davis added.

“The Savannah region opens up many opportunities for program growth,” he said. “The Savannah region is home to a large municipal government employee population and members of the state and federal civil service. The presence of a significant military population (Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield), as well as a large number of nonprofit organizations, makes the MPA particularly well suited for Savannah.”

By the same token, Davis said, the MPA program benefits Statesboro and surrounding communities as well.

“Many of the individuals leading and working in our local governments and nonprofit organizations are alumni of the MPA program,” he said. “In short, the need for professionally and ethically trained public servants is great. By bringing the MPA program to Savannah, current and aspiring public and nonprofit managers will have access to a nationally accredited and respected program.”

The MPA program will host three drop-in virtual recruitment nights via Zoom for anyone interested in learning more about the program on May 12 and June 9, respectively. For more information on these sessions, please visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/publicadmin.

The MPA program at Georgia Southern boasts a wide network of alumni who work with organizations like the U.S. Department of Treasury, Federal Aviation Administration, the city of Savannah, and the Boys and Girls Club of America, among others.

The Department of Public and Nonprofit Studies also offers three, fully-online undergraduate minors: minor in public administration, minor in public policy and a minor in nonprofit management. These are open to students on any campus.

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