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Georgia Southern celebrates new park recognizing National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations

August 18, 2021



Georgia Southern University will hold a “soft” ribbon-cutting event on Aug. 18 marking the establishment of a new park dedicated to the fraternities and sororities who make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) on the Statesboro Campus and recognizing the rich history and traditions they have brought to the University.

The NPHC Park plots symbolically and physically represent each organization’s presence on campus and give alumni and current members a location for reflection and celebration. The park unites all Georgia Southern stakeholders through mutual respect, education and celebration. Additionally, installation of these plots upholds the institutional values of openness and inclusion by physically embedding a diverse cultural presence into the institution’s aesthetic and history.

NPHC affiliate organizations are historically Black fraternities and sororities founded to address societal challenges including racism, exclusions, and educational and socioeconomic disparities. These organizations have enhanced a sense of camaraderie and cooperation of underrepresented college students who also formed these groups to build community.

“I am deeply honored to be part of our community that recognizes the long tradition of student leadership and engagement from our NPHC organizations,” said Vice President for Student Affairs Shay Little, Ph.D. “My hope is that these plots will serve as a reminder of this history while also propel the engagement of these student leaders and these organizations forward for years to come.”

The park will be situated next to the Carruth Building in front of Lake Wells on the Statesboro Campus.

“It makes me feel proud that we now have this new space on campus. This process has been years in the making and it’s not only an achievement for the NPHC, but for all of the black students here at Georgia Southern University,” said National Pan-Hellenic Council President Tyree Pryor. “On a national level, historically our fraternities and sororities fought for equality and recognition in a collegiate space such as this one. This project shows that those efforts were not in vain.”

Wednesday’s ribbon-cutting event will take place at 6 p.m. during the first NPHC mass meeting and a full dedication for the park is planned for Georgia Southern’s homecoming week in October so that the entire NPHC community can celebrate the park’s opening.

Individual chapter members of each of the NPHC organizations chartered on the Statesboro Campus will have the opportunity to become a part of Georgia Southern history through [personalized brick or benches at the park](#), creating a permanent and lasting legacy. Funds raised from the sale of the bricks and benches will be designated to the NPHC Scholarship Fund, which funds scholarships for active undergraduate members of the NPHC Council on the Statesboro Campus. Community members may contribute to the NPHC Scholarship fund; however, bricks and benches are reserved for recognition of individual chapter members of the NPHC organizations on the Statesboro Campus.

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[Georgia Southern education faculty receives 2021 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity](#)

August 18, 2021



Beverly Miller, Ph.D., assistant professor of elementary education, with students at the inaugural Ventaja Statesboro program in June.

Georgia Southern University assistant professor of elementary education Beverly Miller, Ph.D., received the 2021 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the largest and oldest diversity and inclusion publication in higher education.

The Inspiring Programs in STEM Award honors members of colleges and universities that encourage and assist students from underrepresented groups to enter the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Miller was recognized for her efforts in coordinating STEM camps for underrepresented populations. The first camp, Ventaja Panamá, began in 2017, offering STEM and literacy to underserved students in the country of Panama.

“Ventaja means advantage in Spanish,” Miller explained. “Ventaja Panama was designed with a

social justice educational framework that encompasses three focal points: STEM and literacy content with hands-on activities and learning, a local or regional field trip that supports community engagement and collaboration and nutritious meals — hungry children cannot learn.”

After running the camp successfully in Panama for years, Miller decided to expand the opportunity to rural students in Bulloch County, Georgia. The inaugural year of the camp was hosted in June of this year and included a field trip to the Georgia Southern Museum.

“The Ventaja Statesboro program operated from the Georgia Southern Statesboro Campus to target first-generation college and underrepresented students,” she said. “During the week of the camp, we were able to expose them to a college campus environment through instruction with faculty, field trips that included the campus museum, interactions with athletic teams and eating at a university dining hall. At the end of the week, students made presentations on the Unsung Heroes of STEM to University faculty, staff and their supporters.”

Miller and her Ventaja Camps will be featured, along with the 78 other recipients from across the nation, in the September 2021 issue of *INSIGHT Into Diversity*.

“I was truly surprised by this nomination,” said Miller. “We are often busy doing the work and never consider that someone is watching and taking notice. As an Afro-Latina woman I came to the United States at the age of six. I had great teachers who pushed me and expected excellence regardless of my educational background and language skills. They saw my raw talent and potential. As they did for me, I too see the untapped talent of the students that I serve.”

Miller and the Ventaja Camps were selected because of her targeted efforts to provide a low-cost opportunity for students to attend camp with both enriched academic experiences in STEM and food to ensure their basic needs were met.

“We know that many STEM programs are not always recognized for their success, dedication and mentorship for underrepresented students,” says Lenore Pearlstein, owner and publisher of *INSIGHT Into Diversity*. “We want to honor the schools and organizations that have created programs that inspire and encourage young people who may currently be in or are interested in a future career in STEM. We are proud to honor these programs as role models to other institutions of higher education and beyond.”

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers approximately 140 different degree programs serving almost 27,000 students through 10 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.

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