Georgia Southern University Counseling Center wins Media Award

November 1, 2021

The Georgia Southern University Counseling Center won an Award for Excellence in Media by the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors. The award recognized the Counseling Center’s efforts to bring attention to the intersection of identities for individuals through their live Instagram series “Speak Fire,” which ran earlier this year.

“When we created the series we were trying to find innovative ways to reach out to students, particularly when there was so much fatigue from being online all day in the midst of COVID,” said Jodi Caldwell, Ph.D., executive director of the Counseling Center. “So we were trying to find ways to be therapeutic and helpful, but that were different from your typical webinar or Zoom meeting.”

The “Speak Fire” program was designed to create a safe place for students to ask questions and find support while meeting students in a familiar space — social media. By using the Instagram Live format, students were able to engage in real time with the individuals leading the sessions while in the comfort of a less formal setting.

“Jamal Hailey and Raven De La Cruz decided to focus on the intersecting identities of gender, sexual orientation and race, and how those can combine to create a unique set of influences on individuals,” Caldwell said. “The hope was to give individuals a safe place to really come explore the intersection of their identities, to provide a place for students to ask questions that they may not have another place to ask and to get support for their own experiences that they didn’t have another avenue to find support for.”

To be eligible for the award, the work presented had to have significance to student mental health and be relevant to current issues in the work of campus counseling centers, among other standards. Caldwell is proud of the team who came together to build the program.
“The way our field progresses is by nurturing the creativity and the energies of new mental health professionals,” Caldwell said. “This is recognition of some of the creativity and innovation of the clinicians here and the hard work that they’ve been doing through COVID. Hopefully, having this award communicates to all of our students that the Counseling Center is a place where people can receive support and explore any of the issues that they’re facing, and find support for that exploration.”

Two of the “Speak Fire” sessions are still available for viewing on the Instagram Video section of the Counseling Center’s Instagram profile, @georgiasoutherncounseling.

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**Another record freshman class leads to Georgia Southern’s fall enrollment increase**

November 1, 2021

New numbers just released by the University System of Georgia (USG) show another record-breaking class of newly enrolled first-year students for fall of 2021, helping lead to a second year in a row overall enrollment increase for Georgia Southern University. Georgia Southern was just one of five institutions to record an enrollment increase this year within the USG.

Georgia Southern’s official fall 2021 enrollment was 27,091, a 0.5% increase over fall 2020’s final enrollment figure of 26,949. Georgia Southern is also outpacing national trends, which indicate undergraduate enrollment is down 3.2% nationwide from a year ago and down 6.5% as a total from two years ago, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

Numbers show 5,430 new beginning freshmen started with Georgia Southern in August 2021, a 3.5% increase over the University’s previous largest freshman class in 2020 of 5,247 students.

“I am proud of our strategic enrollment strategies supported by marketing and communication that are reflected in these enrollment increases and the transformational work being done by our faculty and staff,” said Georgia Southern University President Kyle Marrero. “Georgia Southern is taking that next step in regional impact and national prominence.”

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<tr>
<th>Georgia Southern Freshman Classes (New Student Enrollment)</th>
<th>Georgia Southern Total Enrollment</th>
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<td>Fall 2021: 5,430</td>
<td>Fall 2021: 27,091</td>
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Out-of-state, dual enrollment and fully online numbers also rose to record levels in fall 2021. Buoyed by in-state tuition offered to residents of states that border Georgia, the out-of-state enrollment at Georgia Southern in fall 2021 was 2,646, up from 2,443 last year, and significantly up from the fall 2018 figure of 1,974.

Dually enrolled students (those in high school taking college courses) rose to 982 this fall, up from 953 last year, and also significantly up from the fall 2018 figure of 583.

Those students enrolled in fully online classes rose to 2,584 this year.

“Especially in light of national trends and the COVID-19 pandemic, I am proud of our team and these final enrollment figures,” said Scot Lingrell, vice president of enrollment management. “We are anticipating a drop in the total number of high school students in future years, so we are redoubling our efforts to attract adults, transfers, dual enrollment students, military-connected, graduate and international residents.”

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