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Georgia Southern's new Advanced Processing Research Network launched with \$1 million gift from Crider, Inc.

March 30, 2022



Georgia Southern University President Kyle Marrero; Billy Crider Jr.; Bill Crider III; Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing Dean Mohammad Davoud; and Director of Industrial Relations, Assessment and Accreditation Reinhold Gerbsch.

Georgia Southern's Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing received a \$1 million gift to develop the Advanced Processing Research Network (APRN) from Crider, Inc. of Stillmore, Georgia, a global processor of shelf-stable and fully cooked protein products.

Father and son, Billy Crider Jr. and Bill Crider III ('96) made their gift announcement at the Engineering Research Building on the Statesboro Campus surrounded by robots and robotic imaging devices.

As the Criders have seen their business grow through automation technology, the need for talented engineers to program and maintain that technology is growing with it. They believe Georgia Southern holds a local opportunity to find the talent they need.

“We wanted to help develop a program that will produce more of the fantastic engineering talent we’ve already been getting from Georgia Southern and help the University become a source of engineering talent for the entire Southeast,” said Bill Crider III.

“When we saw the quality of the Georgia Southern graduates we were getting, we knew we had to get more from here to better enable us to compete all over the world,” added Billy Crider Jr.

The Criders’ donation will provide the foundation for APRN graduate and undergraduate scholarships, more faculty support, state-of-the-art equipment and software for the growing economic sector of process automation. The APRN will equip and create an industry-class research facility, housed in the Engineering and Research Building, using the latest technology in imaging, robotics, extended reality/gaming, and IT to solve industry-related problems while managing the underlying information systems.

“This gift will help apply and develop technology to solve problems due to labor shortages, processing inefficiencies and supply chain disruptions, while establishing an experienced high-tech workforce in southeast Georgia,” said Mohammad Davoud, Ph.D., P.E., dean of the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Computing.

Over the next four years, the APRN will build a first-class program through an investment in state-of-the-art technology, graduate research assistants and undergraduate scholarships, involving students and faculty from departments across the college.

Plans for the APRN also include the exchange of ideas between Crider, Inc. and the University regarding processing equipment and operations, student and faculty research at the Crider facility, internships/co-op opportunities and many more joint projects.

“This type of gift is transformational – impacting students, area businesses and our communities,” said Georgia Southern President Kyle Marrero. “This gift will also help solve the engineering talent needs of our region and provide outstanding engineering career opportunities locally.”

“But to me, this is more about Georgia Southern and what they’re doing,” said Bill Crider III. “We just happen to be able to be a part of it in a small way.”

Crider, Inc. is the family-owned market leader in canned chicken as well as a major producer of canned turkey, ham, pork, and beef. Their products are distributed globally as private label goods by companies such as Costco, Walmart and Publix. They serve customers in Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Peru, Chile, Columbia, Mexico and many more.

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Clay Target Team wins second consecutive national championship title

March 30, 2022



The two-time Association of College Unions International Collegiate Clay Target National Championship standing together. The team won four of the six categories they participated in.

The Georgia Southern Clay Target Team won the 2022 Association of College Unions International (ACUI) Collegiate Clay Target National Championship.

The team of 10 shooters competed in San Antonio, Texas, March 24-26, to reclaim the crown they won last year. The team won four of the six categories in which it participated. Georgia Southern conquered the American Skeet competition after a perfect display from Ross Wilson who hit 100 out of 100 targets, as well as the other four in the category hitting no less than 97.



The team was one point shy of winning a fifth category, which would have been the American Trap Team competition.

They also dominated the Division 3 overall rankings among 27 other schools. The team moved up from Division 4 after winning in that group last year.

The championship-winning team was led by alumnus Marty Fischer ('75), the volunteer head coach.

“These students are really talented,” Fischer said. “The team is a lot more impressive than people realize. We’ve got a very special group of kids.”

Fischer has seen the team explode with success in its short history. The team was formed in 2020 and is considered a club sport for the University. In their field of play, they compete among SEC and ACC schools. But even their scores don’t compare to the homegrown talent Georgia Southern recruits for their squad.

The team is made up of Douglas Williams (senior), Chet Thompson (junior), Andrew Cohen (sophomore), Neal Sellers (sophomore), Tate Skipper (sophomore), Andrew Weiche (sophomore), Landon DeLoach (freshman), Callen Walker (freshman), Ross Wilson (freshman) and Taylor Wray (freshman).

The ACUI has been governing this competition and other clay target competitions for more than 50 years and have seen the tournament grow to more than 100 universities participating every year.



Competitors lining up their shots. Many of Georgia Southern’s shooters only missed a few of the 100 targets they were given.

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Associate Director of Residence Education Ben Wicker receives Founders Award from the Southeastern Association of Housing Officers

March 30, 2022



Earlier this month, Georgia Southern University's Associate Director of Residence Education for University Housing Ben Wicker received the prestigious Founders Award from the Southeastern Association of Housing Officers' (SEAHQ) annual conference, held in Asheville, North Carolina.

“Receiving this award is incredibly humbling and makes me feel overwhelmingly honored,” said Wicker. “My colleagues and peers, many of whom have become close friends and like family to me over the years, nominated me for the Founders Award. Because of this I feel valued, seen and appreciated for my work within and on behalf of the Association.”

The Founders Award honors individuals who, through dedicated service and initiative to SEAHQ, epitomize the work and endeavors of the Association's founders. The nomination for the award must include at least three letters of support, which must come from housing officers within the 10-state region.

“The previous and historical recipients of the SEAHQ Founders Award are people who I consider to be role models and mentors,” continued Wicker. “In my role at Georgia Southern, I have attempted to bring a passion for being actively involved in contributing to our profession through participation and research for our staff in University Housing. I also hope that my accomplishments in SEAHQ bring Eagle Nation into the spotlight so that professionals across the region and country see the great things we are doing here, and that it might attract professionals to Georgia Southern.”

Wicker has been affiliated with SEAHQ since 2006, serving as a member of multiple host committees before becoming the first director of committees in 2015. As a member of the editorial board for the *SEAHQ Report*, he was the editor of the publication from 2013 to 2015. In recognition of his efforts for the Association, he received the Charles W. Beene Memorial Service Award in 2017. He also served as the coordinator for the organization's 2021 virtual conference and participated as a member of this year's conference host committee.

“No one can debate Ben’s love for SEAHO,” read one of Wicker’s support letters. “It’s contagious.”

SEAHO advances excellence in housing programs and staff by promoting best practices, networking, professional development and involvement opportunities. SEAHO is a regional affiliate of the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International. The association represents the dedicated professionals of higher education student housing in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. SEAHO is the leading resource for the higher education housing industry in the southeastern United States.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers approximately 140 different degree programs serving more than 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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Georgia Southern University receives ‘First-Gen Forward’ designation, a national honor for commitment to first-generation student success

March 30, 2022

Georgia Southern University has been named a “First-Gen Forward” institution for its commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students.

The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and The Suder Foundation, selected Georgia Southern for the designation.

“I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the team that has brought this prestigious honor to the University,” said Leslie Harris, director of Georgia Southern’s Student Support Services office. “Through the many services that are offered here, we have seen how successful students

can be when we can ensure our support is tailored specifically to their needs. It's great to have recognition from NASPA that we are being successful with our efforts.”

Approximately 37% of Georgia Southern's students are first-generation college students, meaning they are the first in their immediate family to attend college. These students often need additional support to aid them in being successful in their overall college experience.

Georgia Southern serves and supports first-generation students in many ways, including:

- Mentoring from Student Support Services and TRIO-Armstrong.
- Scheduling networking events as well as life- and college-skills workshops.
- Partnering with the Office of Alumni Relations to identify first-generation alumni and provide resources to first-gen students.
- Developing intentional partnerships with other offices on campus.

Georgia Southern celebrates National First-Generation College Celebration Week annually by highlighting first-generation faculty staff and students. Celebration activities are also shared with the University community via email and through a video featuring President Marrero that is housed on the University's First-Gen Celebration page. Staff also have created a listserv of approximately 150 first-generation faculty and staff across all its campuses that are used to market first-gen events and to address the needs of first-gen students.

As a First-gen Forward institution, interested faculty and staff will be afforded multiple opportunities to engage with peer institutions that are also creating environments that improve the experiences and outcomes of first-generation students. Selected institutions will send representatives to the First-gen Forward Workshop slated for early June and will participate in monthly calls, virtual professional development, goal setting, blog development, annual reporting and more. After two successful years in the program, institutions are eligible to apply for the advisory leadership designation.

“The Center is pleased to welcome Georgia Southern University into the 2022-23 First-gen Forward cohort,” said Dr. Sarah E. Whitley, assistant vice president, Center for First-generation Student Success. “Through the application process, it was evident that Georgia Southern is not only taking steps to serve first-generation students but is prepared to make a long-term commitment and employ strategies that foster an environment of success for this important population.”

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS

The Center is the premier source of evidence-based practices, professional development, and knowledge creation for the higher education community to advance the success of first-generation students. Based in Washington, DC, the Center aims to acknowledge the intersectional experiences of first-generation college students. It offers an outlet for sharing cutting-edge research and current media conversations, opportunities for engagement through online learning, conferences, and events, and access to a bevy of programs and services intended to improve first-generation initiatives across higher education.

ABOUT NASPA

NASPA is a member-centered association supporting a diverse and passionate network of 15,000 professionals and 1,200 institutions across the globe. It is the professional home for the field of student affairs and is dedicated to cultivating student success in collaboration with the missions of its institutional members—a network of colleges and universities representing every sector of higher education.

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