

Georgia Southern University

Digital Commons@Georgia Southern

Newsroom

University Communications and Marketing

1-9-2023

Newsroom

Georgia Southern University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom>

Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2023). *Newsroom*. 2130.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/2130>

This news article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Communications and Marketing at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Newsroom by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

Approximately 30 University Police officers recognized for mental health training

January 9, 2023



Lt. Charles Bowen, UPD training coordinator, addresses fellow officers during the ceremony.

Student mental health is a constant concern on a university campus.

It is not uncommon for someone in distress to call 9-1-1. A police officer could be the first person to interact with a person who needs specialized attention.

To help evaluate and properly handle such situations, every officer at Georgia Southern has completed Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), presented by the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in collaboration with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and the Georgia Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. The training ensures that people with mental illnesses and other brain disorders will receive treatment in lieu of incarceration in most cases.

On top of that training, the University System of Georgia offers two additional programs to law enforcement officers:

- QPR Suicide Prevention Training – QPR stands for Question, Persuade and Refer – the three simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade and refer someone to help.
- Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training – MHFA is a skills-based training course that teaches people how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorder. for police officers to help recognize and handle mental health issues and mental health disorders.



Mental Health Initiative pin

So far, almost 30 police officers at Georgia Southern University have completed the three different training programs, earning each officer a Mental Health Initiative pin.

“I am very proud of these officers, and appreciate them taking the time to better prepare for handling any situation they may encounter,” said [Laura McCullough](#), chief of police at Georgia Southern. “The pins they now wear are a symbol of the care they invest in our community.”

State and University officials lauded the officers’ achievements.

“This law enforcement mental health certification program could not come at a better time for our university communities, given the state of mental health in our country and on our campuses,” said [Jodi Caldwell](#), director of Georgia Southern’s Counseling Center.

“Law enforcement personnel are increasingly the first responders to individuals experiencing mental health emergencies. It comes as no surprise to the staff of the Counseling Center that Georgia Southern’s University police department is leading the way in Georgia for law enforcement interest and willingness to become trained in recognizing and responding to individuals in mental health distress.”

Caldwell spoke at a ceremony last month to present the pins and honor the officers. Also attending were Alexis Belvin, Georgia Southern’s SGA President and Chip Reese, Ed.D., former system project director for the University System of Georgia (USG) Mental Health Initiative.

“The USG Mental Health Initiative was launched during COVID to allow us to focus more intentionally on the needs of our students,” Reese said. “We have expanded clinical counseling services and supported mental health and wellness resources and programming across the state. I’m particularly proud of the QPR and MHFA training and hope it will better equip the officers who are already on the first ones we call whenever someone needs help.”

The following officers were awarded the Mental Health Initiative Pin:

Tim Alderman, Josh Barker, Richard Bashlor, Charles Bowen, Ian Craig, Laurence Croy, Steven Cushner, Sam Derr, Christian Doyle, Bailey Dyches, Jonathan Finley, Danny Garrigus, Kenneth

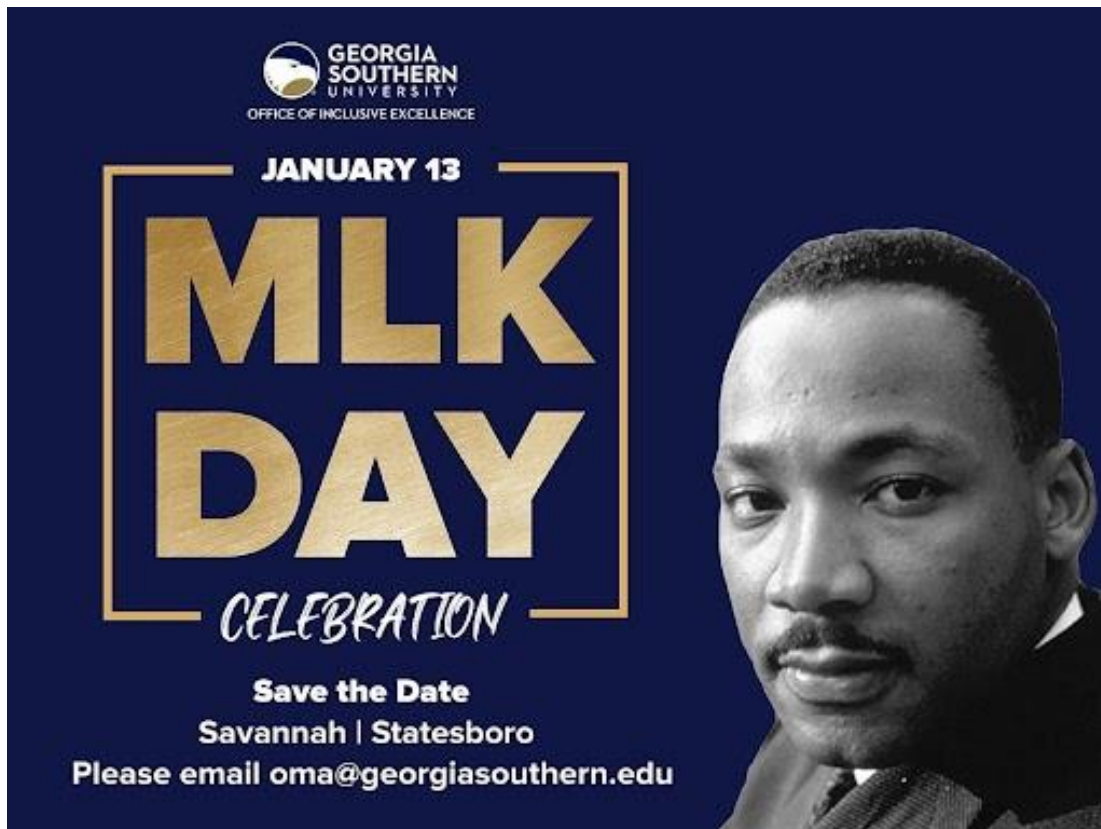
Glover, Clay Gracen, Sarah Grey, Lanier Griswold, Patrick Holloway, Tyrone McBride, Chris McBride, Erk McCurdy, BJ McKellar, Alex Morris, Todd Olsen, Kurt Purtee, Dexter Renfroe, Erick Riner, Lamar Stephens, and Crystal Thomas.

Posted in [Press Releases](#), [University Homepage](#)

Tags: [Office of Public Safety](#)

[Georj Lewis, Ed.D., to speak at annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration](#)

January 9, 2023



Georgia Southern University will celebrate the legacy of Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. with events including a keynote speaker, an educational trip to Atlanta and participation in both the Savannah and Statesboro MLK parades.

“Recognizing that we all have a role to play in the realization of Dr. King’s dream, this year’s celebration theme is ‘do small things in a great way,’” said Dominique A. Quarles, Ph.D., associate vice president for Inclusive Excellence and chief diversity officer. “Throughout the celebration, we will be speaking to the impact of using one’s sphere of influence to transform their community.”

Atlanta Metropolitan State College President [Georj Lewis, Ed.D.](#), will return to Georgia Southern as the special guest speaker for the University’s 2023 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Day on Jan. 13.



Georj Lewis, Ed.D.

Lewis, who formerly served as vice president for student affairs at Georgia Southern and Armstrong State University, will speak to students, faculty and staff on the University’s Armstrong Campus in Savannah and Statesboro Campus. A breakfast will take place at 8:30 a.m. in the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center ballroom in Statesboro followed by a lunch at 12:30 p.m. in the Armstrong Center Ballroom in Savannah.

“I am excited to come back to a place that has been so meaningful to me personally and professionally,” said Lewis. “Furthermore, I am more than honored to have a part in celebrating one of our greatest Americans, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.”

Lewis has nearly 30 years of experience in higher education and his career has centered around the development of educational partnerships, student advocacy and the development and implementation of programs that promote professional development.

He moved to Georgia in 2002 to lead student diversity programming efforts at Georgia Southern and went on to serve as the institution’s dean of students. Lewis has served in leadership and cabinet-level positions since 2012. In May of 2019, Lewis was tapped to serve as interim president and, in November of 2019, was officially named the fourth president of Atlanta Metropolitan State College. His early higher education experience included admissions and multicultural affairs roles at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania.

Lewis has received several awards, and most recently was recognized as a 2021 Pillar of the Profession by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). He is also a recipient of the Paragon Award for New Presidents by Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

He has recently collaborated on a book chapter in the “Handbook of Research on Black Males.”

Lewis is active in the Metro Atlanta community as a member of the board of directors of the ATL Airport Chamber, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Regional Educational Service Agency. He also serves as a subcommittee member of the Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance, Inc., and a Metro Atlanta Industry Partnerships Partner.

In addition to the events with Lewis, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Office of Leadership and Community Engagement will host Eagles in Action: MLK's Legacy Weekend by providing a day trip to Atlanta on Jan. 14. While in Atlanta, participants will learn, engage and explore the connections between service and social justice through visits to the National Center for Civil and Human Rights and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park.

On Jan. 16, the Georgia Southern community will participate in both the Savannah MLK parade at 10 a.m., hosted by the MLK Observance Day Association, and the Statesboro MLK parade at 2 p.m., hosted by the Bulloch County NAACP Branch.

[Limited in-person tickets](#) are available to students, faculty and staff for the MLK Celebration breakfast and lunch speaker presentations. Additionally, a limited number of parade participants are allowed to walk in each location. Please contact the Office of Inclusive Excellence at oiie@georgiasouthern.edu for more information or accommodation requests.

Posted in [Events](#), [Press Releases](#), [University Homepage](#)

Tags: [MLK Celebration](#), [Office of Inclusive Excellence](#), [Office of Leadership and Community Engagement](#), [Office of Multicultural Affairs](#)

[< PreviousNext >](#)