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[Georgia Southern University Secures Inclusive Excellence Grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute](#)

January 11, 2023



Georgia Southern University's College of Science and Mathematics has been awarded a six-year grant of \$493,065 from the [Howard Hughes Medical Institute \(HHMI\) Inclusive Excellence 3 \(IE3\) initiative](#). Georgia Southern is among a select group of 104 schools that have received an HHMI IE3 grant to support diversity, equity and inclusion.

"Science is about building, witnessing and collaborating with each other, which is why Georgia Southern is so proud to receive this grant," said Georgia Southern Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Carl Reiber, Ph.D. "Our inclusive initiatives are breaking down the walls that have separated science from interested students."

The [HHMI IE3 initiative](#) challenges U.S. colleges and universities to increase student participation in sciences, focusing especially on populations who have been historically underrepresented in the field.

The Georgia Southern IE3 leadership team includes: Karelle Aiken, Ph.D, (program director), Tricia Muldoon Brown, Ph.D., (co-director) Sara Gremillion, Ph.D., (co-director), Checo Colón-Gaud, Ph.D., Issac Taylor and Delana Schartner, Ph.D.

"The IE3 initiative is tapping into the transformative power of collaboration; the ability of a critical mass to drive cultural change. As such, an ingenious mandate of this grant is that its 104 institutional awardees work on their goals in teams of Learning Community Clusters (LCC)," said Aiken.

Georgia Southern's IE3 LCC hub, LCC4, includes 13 other institutions from across the U.S., all of whom are seeking to answer a specific challenge: How can an institution evaluate effective inclusive teaching, and then use the evaluation in the rewards system including faculty promotion and tenure?

The IE3 initiative has been rolled out in two phases. The most recent award marks the beginning of the second phase and so, the work of the Georgia Southern team and their LCC4 colleagues is ongoing. At Georgia Southern, over the next six years the IE3 initiative will support training for faculty and student-leaders centered on inclusive teaching strategies and the effective evaluation of those strategies; an annual COSM IE3 Spring Speaker Series (established in 2022); the continued development of a new faculty mentorship program piloted in 2022 by Inclusive Excellence Faculty Fellows; student- and faculty-led initiatives geared toward cultivating inclusive learning environments; and more.

[Georgia Southern Program to improve Soldiers' Physical and Combat Readiness to Expand Nationwide with \\$5.7 Million Federal Funding Boost](#)

January 11, 2023



What began in 2016 as a partnership between Georgia Southern University and the Third Infantry Division at Fort Stewart has become a nationally recognized educational and research program with \$5.68 million in federal funding to improve soldier health and performance to ensure force readiness.

Now called the Soldier Performance and Readiness (SPAR) program, this Georgia Southern project aligns with the U.S. Army's Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) initiative and represents a multifaceted partnership with the Army to provide onsite training that decreases musculoskeletal injuries; deliver an online certificate program in tactical fitness for college credit; collaborate with the Army's Research Institute for Environmental Medicine (USARIEM); and develop programs to enhance and assess cognitive performance in tactical situations.

The initial partnership program to prevent musculoskeletal injuries was delivered at first to small cohorts to implement new practices in the physical training of their squads and platoons in a train-the-trainer model. Results were so encouraging, the program expanded at Fort Stewart and to training brigades at Fort Benning last year with the assistance of \$1.5 million in Department of Defense funding.

Studies show significant preparedness and financial benefits from reducing musculoskeletal injuries to soldiers during drilling and training exercises. In April 2020, officials determined that 58,000 soldiers (the equivalent of 13 Brigade Combat Teams) had injuries that classified them as non-deployable. In 2019, more than half of soldiers experienced a new injury, resulting in 10 million limited-duty days. Musculoskeletal injuries account for nearly 25% of all military injuries and approximately \$557 million in acute patient care. Most of these injuries were associated with fitness training-related activities

Georgia Southern's online Tactical Athlete Certificate program was first offered in 2020 and is available exclusively to soldiers on active duty, in the National Guard or reserve. Through a series of three courses, the program teaches foundational exercise and biomechanical concepts, strength and conditioning principles, and rehabilitation. The coursework parallels the Army's Master Fitness Trainer curriculum, with additional rehabilitation principles, and teaches soldiers how to develop evidence-based and well-rounded physical training programs while minimizing risk of musculoskeletal injury. Certificate completion provides soldiers with nine

college credits with Georgia Southern, potential promotion opportunities in the Army, and preparation for the National Strength and Conditioning Association's TSAC-F exam.

"By sharing knowledge, expertise and experience between our faculty and doctoral students with soldiers, drill instructors, and brigade combat fitness teams to create aligned programs that improve tactical performance and force readiness, the SPAR program has become a national model of public-impact research," said Christopher Curtis, Ph.D., Georgia Southern's vice provost for research. "We are excited about the future of this partnership. We relish the significant support and encouragement we receive from the Army commands at Fort Stewart, Fort Benning, USARIEM, and the Training and

Doctrine command (TRADOC), and we are grateful to Congressman Carter and his fellow members of the Georgia Congressional delegation who have advocated for the value of the partnership on our behalf."

The progress and continued success of this program would not have been possible without several years of support from the Georgia Congressional Delegation and especially the leadership and support of Congressman Buddy Carter, who represents Fort Stewart and the Armstrong Campus of Georgia Southern in Savannah.

"Providing for our nation's defense is the number one responsibility of the federal government. Innovation and research, which is what these dollars will fund at Georgia Southern, will improve working conditions for our brave servicemen and women by providing them with top-of-the-line training and resources," said Rep. Buddy Carter (R-GA). "I am a proud supporter of Georgia's military community and am happy that the federal government is investing in these necessary programs."

SPAR programming allocated in the FY23 federal budget will enable Georgia Southern to:

Develop protocols and expand delivery of the onsite musculoskeletal injury prevention training and the Tactical Athlete Certificate to commands at Fort Gordon in Augusta and to the Georgia National Guard.

Develop and deploy similar online certificate programs for soldiers in Cognitive Performance and Nutrition to further support the Army's H2F program.

Host a national conference on "Charting Future Readiness Needs" in partnership with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command and U.S. Army Forces Command that will bring together other research universities who also work in partnership with the Army.

Work with the Army commands to develop specific academic degree programs to meet the specific H2F professional workforce needs at the brigade level. Army officials estimate approximately 3,000 personnel will need graduate degrees or advanced certifications in the next six years.

Develop a Tactical Performance Research Lab in Savannah to support the fundamental research and innovation activities of Georgia Southern's Tactical Performance Group that supports the Army's H2F program as well as translational research to apply the knowledge and practices broadly to law enforcement and other first responders.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers approximately 140 different degree programs serving nearly 26,000 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.

[‘Old Glory’ gets upgrade on Georgia Southern Statesboro Campus](#)

January 11, 2023



For more than 60 years, the American flag has been raised and lowered every day on the same flag pole on Sweetheart Circle. Mike Markovcic works on Georgia Southern University’s Statesboro Campus, and has been responsible for the flag for the past few of those years.

“You’re going up there every morning bringing the flag up and taking the flag down at nighttime, and trying to keep it off the dirt,” Markovcic said. “A lot of people died for that flag. That flag means a lot.”

This flag pole was first planted back in 1958. Aged over decades, the old pole was ready for retirement and replacement.

For nearly 10 years, Markovcic had been campaigning for a new flagpole for Sweetheart Circle. Just recently, when the proper materials for a suitable display were finally received, the new flagpole was installed.

While the pole is within a foot of the same height as the old one, there are new features to help the emblem stand out, including a spotlight.

“It looks good in the focal point of campus,” Markovcic said. “It just looks good at nighttime with a flag. Now you’re able to see the flag at nighttime when you go around Sweetheart Circle and it will catch your eye.”

According to federal guidelines, the American flag cannot be left on a flagpole at night. However, there is an exception: it can stay out and stay raised if there’s a light shining on it.

The American flag waving at the heart of campus will now be available for night photos, thanks to the new spotlight.



Georgia Southern University replaced an American flag pole dating back to the 1950's. The replacement comes at the recommendation of an employee responsible for raising and lowering the flag at Sweetheart Circle.