

# Georgia Southern University Awarded Race to the Top Innovation Fund Grant by Georgia Governor Nathan Deal

SEPTEMBER 5, 2012



Georgia Southern University has been named the recipient of an Innovation Fund Grant by Georgia Governor Nathan Deal. The science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) grant, which is estimated at approximately \$700,000 during two years, will fund a unique partnership between the University, seven area research institutes and six school districts covering 27 counties in southern Georgia.

Georgia Southern will utilize the grant to fund the partnership known as "Real STEM." The project, which will be run through the University's new Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education, will develop hands-on STEM learning modules related to the environmental concerns of Georgia's coastal region. This is the first Innovation Fund Grant that has been awarded to the University.

The Real STEM service region of the lower coastal plain is a rural geographic region which includes low social economic status counties in southeast Georgia with a high number of minorities. The population served includes 44 high schools, of which 26 are classified as "needs improvement" by the Georgia Department of Education's 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress Detailed School Reports.

The partnership will develop problem-based modules for high school career pathways courses mandated by State House Bill 186. The 150 students in the first year of the project and 300 in the second year will apply STEM to real-world, place-based problems arising from research conducted on the coastal plain. The students will be mentored by scientists and taught by teachers working in professional learning communities in collaboration with scientists.

As part of the grant, the team will work with research partners at Georgia Southern, the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, the UGA Marine Institute at Sapelo Island, Gray's Reef Marine Sanctuary, Marine Education Center and Aquarium, Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy and the Ossabaw Island Education Alliance. The team will also work with the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Additionally, the team will work with six school districts including Bulloch County, Burke County, Camden County, Jenkins County, Treutlen County and Ware County.

"Our goal is to reignite the interest of students in science, technology, engineering and math by engaging them in applied learning through real-world challenges of environment and energy that

are impacting their local communities," said Robert Mayes, Ph.D., director of the Interdisciplinary Stem Institute at Georgia Southern. "Ultimately, we hope to improve STEM achievement in Georgia and encourage students to pursue careers in STEM."

#### About the Race to the Top Innovation Fund Grant

On Sept. 4, 2012, Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal announced nine winners of Innovation Fund grants, a \$19.4 million competitive grant program created through Georgia's Race to the Top (RT3) plan. Through the Innovation Fund, the state awards grants to partnerships between local education authorities or charter schools, institutions of higher education, businesses and nonprofit organizations that develop or implement innovative and high-impact programs aimed at producing positive outcomes for students.

Administered by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), the Innovation Fund provides competitive grants for proposals that creatively leverage members' financial, human and intellectual resources to address one or more of the following priorities:

Raising student achievement through the development and delivery of applied learning opportunities and experiences directly tied to a subject matter, especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Raising teacher effectiveness through support for innovative induction programs to bridge the gap between pre-service and career teaching, focusing on providing structured and intensive support to new teachers and leaders.

Increasing the pipeline of effective educators by developing local capacity through Grow Your Own Teacher programs in rural regions to increase the workforce, especially in high-need subject areas.

Developing or expanding charter schools with special characteristics and that leverage nontraditional partnerships with industry partners and/or post-secondary institutions throughout the state to provide students with unique learning opportunities.

The grant is the latest for the growing University who has continued to grow its focus on STEM education. In August, Georgia Southern announced the creation of the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education ([www.georgiasouthern.edu/STEM](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/STEM)), one of the first-of-its-kind in the country. The goal of the Institute is to not only inspire Georgia's best and brightest K-12 students to pursue STEM careers, but to create an environment where Georgia citizens are more STEM literate and can make informed decisions about complex issues. The Institute is already working to create a broad range of partnerships across academia, business, education and research centers in southeast Georgia.

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University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. In 2012, the University was named one of the Top 10 most popular universities in the country by U.S. News & World Report and is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered approach to education.

Visit: [www.georgiasouthern.edu](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu).

# Georgia Southern University Student Christopher Combs to Receive Scholarship for 'Moving' Work

AUGUST 29, 2012



Georgia Southern University senior Christopher Combs, of Fayetteville, N.C., will receive this year's Brittany "Ally" Harbuck Scholarship during a reading and reception Thursday, Sept. 6. Award-winning novelist Tina Whittle served as this year's scholarship judge and will present the award at 7 p.m. in Room 1005 of the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology building. The event is free and open to the public.

Combs and nine other nominees will read their entries during the ceremony, and members of the Harbuck family will participate in the award presentation. A catered reception will follow the ceremony.

Combs' winning submission was a collection of 10 poems he wrote in professor Eric Nelson's poetry writing class in spring 2012. The poems reflect a range of subjects, from serious to playful, including "What the Night Dreams," "Fifty-two Card Pick-up the Family Pieces" and "Blank Page Phobia."

"Every time I returned to the pages, I discovered some new facet," Whittle said of Combs' poems. "The exquisite tension they held was never diminished by an easy resolution; indeed this writer possessed Keats' negative capability in spades — to hold irreconcilable ideas in the palm of the hand and not seek to reconcile them. Moving and beautiful and profound."

The Sept. 6 ceremony will also include readings by Harbuck Scholarship finalists Chad Sanderson and Jackson Sharpe, and award nominees Jennifer Coate, Jennifer Curington, Ryan Evans, Beth Martin, Jamie Morton, Naima Ozier and Jared Sharpe.

Combs is the fourth recipient of the scholarship endowed by David and Debi Harbuck of Savannah to honor their daughter, who died in a traffic accident in April 2005. The Harbuck Scholarship supports sophomore, junior and senior writing majors with at least a 3.0 GPA in their writing courses. To be considered for the scholarship, students must be nominated by faculty in the Department of Writing and Linguistics and must submit 10 to 15 pages of fiction, nonfiction or poetry to the Harbuck Scholarship Committee. The committee narrows the list of applicants to three finalists for judging by an outside author.

Whittle has published two novels: *The Dangerous Edge of Things* and *Darker Than Any Shadow*. Her fiction has appeared in Alfred Hitchcock's *Mystery Magazine*, *The Savannah Literary Journal* and *Gulf Stream*. As part of the Harbuck award celebration, Whittle will hold a reading Friday, Sept. 7, at 7p.m. in Room 1005 of the College of Information Technology.

For more information, contact the Department of Writing and Linguistics at 912-478-0739.

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# Georgia Southern University Appoints Athletic Director Search Committee, Hires Search Firm

AUGUST 27, 2012



Georgia Southern University President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D. has named a 10-member search committee to recommend candidates to become the next director of athletics.

Members of the search committee include individuals from the University's faculty and staff, the Statesboro community, alumni of the University and a student athlete.

"The search committee includes individuals that represent a wide range of perspectives and I am confident that they will help the University identify and recommend the best candidates to lead Georgia Southern Athletics," said Keel.

Search committee members include:

- Ron Core, Ph.D., Georgia Southern University Vice President for Business and Finance (Committee Chair)
- Phillip Moore ('82), Chair, Georgia Southern Athletic Foundation, Inc.
- Cathy Beene, Associate Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator
- Chris Geyerman, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Faculty Athletic Representative
- Michelle Reidel, Ph.D., Associate Professor, College of Education, Member of University Athletics Committee
- Patrice Buckner, Dean of Students
- Chris Riley ('92), Chief of Staff, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal
- Bruce Yawn, Community Member, Statesboro, Ga.
- Morgan Springer, Student Athlete, Georgia Southern Women's Soccer
- Rodney Hennon, Head Coach, Georgia Southern Baseball

Georgia Southern has also selected Parker Executive Search based in Atlanta, Ga. to assist the University as a consultant. Parker Search is the world's leading executive search firm in collegiate athletics and has an outstanding record of identifying talented athletic directors.

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Tags: [Athletics](#)

# Three Georgia Southern University Faculty Named 2012 Governor Teaching Fellows

SEPTEMBER 6, 2012



Three Georgia Southern University faculty members have been named Governor's Teaching Fellows. Sabrina Ross, assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum, Foundations and Reading and June Joyner, an instructor in the Department of Writing & Linguistics were selected for the Summer Symposium Program for 2012. Steve Vives, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Biology and professor of Biology, has been selected for the 2012-2013 Academic Year Symposia Program.

The Governor's Teaching Fellow program, established in 1995 by Gov. Zell Miller, provides a unique opportunity for Georgia's higher education faculty to develop important teaching skills, particularly as they relate to emerging technologies so critical in the 21st century classroom. The overall goal is to enhance instruction in public and private higher education statewide.

"Georgia Southern University is fortunate to have an outstanding group of faculty members and we are very proud of Sabrina, June and Steve," said Jean Bartels, Ph.D., provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Georgia Southern. "These individuals have distinguished themselves as outstanding teachers and this is not only a terrific honor, but an opportunity to work with their colleagues throughout the state to improve higher education in Georgia."

As Governor's Teaching Fellows, the three Georgia Southern faculty members will work with other outstanding professors from both public and private institutions across the state. Collaborative work throughout the academic year allows the Fellows to learn new approaches to teaching and fosters a relationship between professionals in varied disciplines. Governor's Teaching Fellows may participate in academic year symposia, an intensive summer symposium, or an academic-year residency at the University of Georgia. Past symposia have addressed numerous topics in using technology in the classroom and other pedagogical innovations.

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# Georgia Southern University to Begin Ticket Distribution for U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Event

SEPTEMBER 7, 2012



Georgia Southern University will host former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Sept. 18 at 7:00 p.m. in Hanner Fieldhouse.

Community Ticket Distribution: September 10-11

Tickets will be distributed from 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. daily at the Hanner Fieldhouse box office.

Tickets will also be available at the Georgia Southern University City Campus, located at 58 E. Main Street, next to the Statesboro City Hall. Tickets will be distributed during regular business hours.

Tickets will also be available to the local Savannah Community at the Coastal Georgia Center, located at 305 Fahm Street, next to the Savannah Visitor Center. Tickets will be distributed during regular business hours.

All tickets are complimentary and will be available on a first come, first serve basis. Tickets will not be available at the door the evening of the event. Please plan to arrive early and note that doors will close at 6:45 p.m. No one will be admitted to the event after that time. No photographs or recording of the event will be allowed.

For more information, visit: [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/Albright](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/Albright).

# Southern Pride To-Go to Inject School Spirit into Statesboro on Friday Nights

AUGUST 30, 2012



If you were in a Statesboro restaurant or hangout on a Friday before a home football game last year, you may have been startled by a clandestine group of Southern Pride Marching Band members who have dubbed themselves, 'Southern Pride To-Go.' Each Friday before a Georgia Southern home football game, a small group of musicians raids restaurants and hangouts throughout Statesboro playing the fight songs and other popular tunes to get fans fired up for Saturday's game.

"This is quickly becoming a popular Georgia Southern tradition," says Colin McKenzie, director of the Southern Pride Marching Band. "It started with a simple idea – nine to 10 marching band members and a van. People loved it last year and we're excited about this year."

The idea began when McKenzie and University Marketing & Communications Director, Christian Flathman sat down and talked about ways to get fans, alumni and the City of Statesboro excited about upcoming home football games. "When we first started calling local restaurants and hangouts, there was a lot of silence on the other end of the phone when we told them about the

idea," says Flathman. "After the first week, people started asking if we would come back the next Friday and then it took on a life of its own."

#### How it Works

Each home football game week the band selects where it will be going on Friday night. Volunteer musicians from the University's Southern Pride Marching Band sign up to be considered and are selected for the group. They meet on campus and after a quick warm up, pile into a multi-passenger van and then head to their first location. When they arrive at a location – which is only known to the band and business owner – the band piles out of the vehicle as fast as they can and immediately goes into the restaurant to begin playing.

"When you see nine marching band members run in with drums, tubas, trombones, trumpets and more it kind of catches you by surprise," says Flathman. "Last year, we had a couple of people jump out of their chairs when they started playing the fight song in the middle of the restaurant."

The band will play three to four quick tunes and then immediately run out, jump back in the vehicle and head to their next location. They repeat the fun until they have completed their route for the evening.

"Local business owners love it because they have students, alumni and fans coming to their business and asking if the band is coming by tonight. Even better, we had opposing teams' fans saying 'this is awesome'," says Flathman. "We want everyone to get excited about the University. If they show up when you're out to dinner or having a good time, we hope you'll join in with them."

"This was one of those ideas that was different and no one really expected it and I think that's what makes it great," says McKenzie, who has to narrow down a huge list of volunteers each week. "We have an incredibly dedicated group of musicians who love to perform and the Friday Night Band is a great way to showcase the group. The smiles and cheers we get when we come running in are worth it. We've already been asked if we're doing it again this year and my answer is, yes...but we're not telling you when or where we're going to show up."

Businesses interested in learning more about 'Southern Pride To-Go' or supporting the band can contact Colin McKenzie at 912-478-5396 or via e-mail at: [cmckenzie@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:cmckenzie@georgiasouthern.edu).

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# Georgia Southern Alumni to Produce Film on Legendary Coach Erk Russell

SEPTEMBER 3, 2012



Two Georgia Southern alumni will begin production on a major motion picture entitled *Erk* in Summer 2013. The film is a biopic about the life of legendary Georgia Southern football coach Erk Russell.

Georgia Southern alumnus Beau Turpin will serve as producer while alumnus James Kicklighter will be directing the film.

Jay and Rusty, the sons of the late Erk Russell, said in a joint statement, "We are excited about

the prospects of this film. We totally embrace the project and feel honored that his miraculous accomplishments will be presented in this form. His story is unique and he was a 'one of a kind' individual. Our family looks forward to seeing his humble yet iconic character portrayed on screen."

When told about the project, U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson, a friend of Erk Russell's stated, "Within a few years of Erk Russell's arrival at Georgia Southern University to establish their football program, Georgia Southern went from just having a program to being a national champion. And he repeated that national championship again. But more importantly, all through his life, Erskine Russell did what only he could do: he led by example, not by lecture, what was right about America, what was right about living by the rules, what was right about playing by the rules, and what was right about moral character. I think a movie celebrating Erk's lifetime of service to young people will be a fitting tribute to his memory."

"Football is the reason why I'm in the film industry," said Erk producer Beau Turpin. "The first three projects I worked on were all football movies, and I consider it an honor to be able to help tell the inspiring story of Coach Russell and forever immortalize his legacy on the silver screen."

Working with Coach Russell during the infancy of Georgia Southern's football program, later winning national titles as the head coach, current Georgia Tech head coach Paul Johnson fondly remembers his years with Russell, "He is a very successful and innovative football coach, but he was an even better and more interesting person. We enjoyed some great seasons together on the football field and I'll always be appreciative of his support of my coaching career."

"Between our time at Auburn and Georgia, we were together some 20 years. His incredible record as a coach speaks for itself," said legendary former UGA head coach Vince Dooley. "Equally as important is his splendid reputation as a great human being. I am pleased to learn of a film about the late, one and only Erk Russell. It is a fitting tribute to a long time friend and coaching associate."

"Growing up 20 miles from Statesboro, I heard about the stories of Coach Russell all throughout my childhood," said Erk director James Kicklighter. "Being a small town boy myself, I am excited to tackle his inspirational all-American story with the support of the Russell family and his closest friends and athletes."

"The university is excited and proud to take part in this film," said Georgia Southern President Dr. Brooks A. Keel. "Coach Russell's unique approach to coaching football is an integral part of Georgia Southern's rich history and culture in athletics. Filming part of this story here in Statesboro will not only draw great attention to our community and university, but will also allow our students a rare opportunity to observe, and in some cases, participate in the making of a major motion picture. The Eagle Nation is delighted to help tell the Erk Russell story "One More Time!"

Turpin and Kicklighter added, "We are thrilled to be making this movie in our home state and filming at our Alma Mater in Statesboro and also in Athens. The support of the Georgia Film Commission, the University of Georgia, and Georgia Southern University is going help make this film extremely special."

Turpin just finished filming Devil's Knot starring Colin Firth & Reese Witherspoon, a true story about the unexplained murders of the 'West Memphis 3.' In 2013, Lionsgate will be distributing his last film, Counterpunch, a Miami-based boxing film starring Latino stars Danny Trejo & Steven Bauer.

Kicklighter is currently directing Desires of the Heart, a film for the international market from producer/executive producer Solila Parida (Vishkanya), starring Val Lauren (Sal) and Alicia Minschew ("All My Children"). It recently wrapped American photography in Savannah, GA and moves to Rajasthan, India in October 2012. The film will be released in late 2013.

For further inquiries, contact [erkthemovie@gmail.com](mailto:erkthemovie@gmail.com).

Tags: [Alumni](#), [Athletics](#)

# Georgia Southern University to Host Fall Family Weekend Sept. 28-30, 2012

SEPTEMBER 4, 2012



The Office of Orientation and Parent Programs at Georgia Southern University will host its annual Fall Family Weekend September 28-30, 2012. The main events for the weekend include a Block Party, silent auction, pre-game tailgate, and the Eagles vs. Samford football game.

The complete 2012 Fall Family Weekend Package costs \$35.00 and includes admission to a fun-filled Block Party and pre-game tailgate, one ticket to the Georgia Southern vs. Samford football game, discounts to local attractions, and one official Family Weekend T-Shirt.

A partial package is available for \$25.00, but the package does not include a ticket to the football game. This package is designed for season ticket holders and Georgia Southern students (who receive free entry to the game with their student ID).

The Parent & Family Association will also be hosting a breakfast on Saturday morning which is complementary for two members of the Parent & Family Association and \$7.00 for additional guests, to be paid with family weekend registration.

Parent Programs is excited to announce the very first Fall Family Weekend Silent Auction. All proceeds raised from the Silent Auction will support student leadership scholarships through Georgia Southern's Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management. All items that will be available for bidding may be viewed on the [Silent Auction's website](#).

Fall Family Weekend Registration Deadline: September 13, 2012.

## RELATED LINKS

[Schedule of Events](#)

[Fall Family Weekend Reservations](#)

[Fall Family Weekend Silent Auction](#)

[Parent & Family Association](#)

## MORE INFO:

Office of Orientation and Parent Programs

P: (912) 478-7627

e-mail [parent@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:parent@georgiasouthern.edu)

# Georgia Southern University's Botanical Garden Renamed Garden of the Coastal Plain at Georgia Southern University

AUGUST 29, 2012



The Georgia Southern Botanical Garden is receiving a new name as part of its 25th anniversary year. Effective Sept. 1, the garden will be known as the Garden of the Coastal Plain at Georgia Southern University. The new name is designed to reflect the garden's growing reputation as a popular destination for tourists, schools and more.

"This new name will help us as we pursue greater regional recognition," said Carolyn Altman, director of the Garden. "The new name incorporates the Garden's mission, focusing on the natural and cultural features of the southeastern coastal plain."

Altman points out that the name also clearly connects the Garden to Georgia Southern. "Including Georgia Southern University in the title clarifies and reinforces the important relationship between the Garden and the University, and introduces Georgia Southern as a University to people who may be unfamiliar with the growing institution."

The Garden of the Coastal Plain at Georgia Southern is an 11-acre natural and historical site located in Statesboro. The Garden attracts thousands of visitors each year and offers a wide variety of gardens, trails, the Bland farmstead and the popular Weathervane Barn Exhibit. One of the most recent additions to the Garden has also become one of the most popular attractions for visitors of all ages — the Oak Grove One Room Schoolhouse. The authentic early 20thcentury schoolhouse provides visitors with an opportunity to not only see how children were taught, but to experience lessons first hand through creative programs designed to educate and entertain.

The Garden is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free of charge. In addition to its normal hours, the Garden also offers rentals for special events, tours and other educational programming. More information is available at [www.georgiasouthern.edu/garden](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu/garden).

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