

# Dr. Monica Williams Wins National ACPA Award

FEBRUARY 9, 2015



Though she is still in the relatively early stages of her career, Dr. Monica Williams, a licensed psychologist and practicum coordinator at the Georgia Southern Counseling Center, is setting herself apart on a national scale.

The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) recently selected her as the winner of the 2015 Commission for Counseling and Psychological Services (CCAPS) – Early Career Achievement Award. This award honors the “exemplary achievements of an individual’s early significant contributions to the field of college and university counseling and psychological services.”

“It’s exciting, but it hasn’t completely hit me yet,” said Williams. “I was shocked because I work with so many wonderful people at colleges and

universities throughout the U.S. and I’m sure there was some stiff competition.”

Williams did indeed face stiff competition. The ACPA boasts nearly 7,500 members from 1,200 public and private institutions across the U.S. and around the world. The CCAPS Awards Committee received nominations in the form of personal letters, discussing the significance of Williams’ contributions to the field. Those letters came from both inside and outside the confines of Statesboro.

“She had nominations from Georgia Southern, but I know she also had multiple nominations from across the country,” said Dr. Jodi Caldwell, director of the Counseling Center. “She’s chaired several committees with ACPA and she’s come up with a lot of really creative ways to get students to come into the Center before feeling extremely anxious.”

“I could go on and on about her achievements,” she added.

Williams’ achievements include revamping the graduate training program as well as creating the Field Experience program for undergraduate students to get exposure to mental health in several

specializations. She also created the Resiliency 101 class, which allows undergraduate students from any degree program to get course credit while learning mental health coping skills.

"This generation lacks in coping skills," Caldwell said. "They have less stress tolerance and have less coping skills for strong emotions. This leads to higher rates of stress and depression. We have to find a way to intervene early, and [Williams] is finding creative ways to access these students."

Williams will travel to the ACPA Conference and Awards Ceremony in Tampa, Florida, on March 6 to receive her honorary certificate and lapel pin.

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Tags: [Faculty Recognition](#)

# Students encouraged to “Love a Donor” during Student Engagement and Philanthropy Week

**FEBRUARY 6, 2015**

The Offices of Annual Giving and Donor Relations at Georgia Southern are gearing up for the annual Love a Donor event, which this year will be a part of the first-ever Student Engagement and Philanthropy Week at the University.

The offices will co-host four days of events from Feb. 9-12 in an effort to educate students on the impact of private giving to Georgia Southern.



“It is important to build awareness among students about the vital role of private support in enhancing their experience at Georgia Southern,” said Alexandra Washington, associate director of Annual Giving.

In the spirit of Valentine’s Day, students are encouraged to “Love a Donor” by visiting the Russell Union Rotunda between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Feb. 10-11 to write a ‘thank you’ note to supporters of the University.

“Donations and annual support from alumni and friends of the University help Georgia Southern in areas that state dollars do not,” said Jill Forehand, director of Donor Relations at the University. “All areas benefit from charitable giving, whether it’s in the form of scholarships, faculty assistance or program support, and it is important that Georgia Southern students are aware of the impact our alumni and friends are making. Love a Donor is our opportunity for the students to say ‘thank you.’”

In addition, students can participate in games and activities on Feb. 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. by the University Store. These games and activities, which include a bean bag toss, balloon darts and Jeopardy, will give students the chance to win prizes, as well as provide more insight into how impactful giving back to Georgia Southern can be.

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) created Student Engagement and Philanthropy Week as a campaign where universities nationwide organize events and activities throughout the month of February to enhance the awareness and engagement of students in higher education advancement.



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Tags: [Alumni](#)

# Feed the Mosasaur

Flavors of the Greek Isles

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.**

Nessmith-Lane Conference Center Ballroom

Georgia Southern University

RSVP Deadline February 20, 2015 to Debbie Gleason

Call 912-478-0148 or email [debgleason@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:debgleason@georgiasouthern.edu)

*the*  
**Feed the Mosasaur**

*Join us for the Georgia Southern University Museum's premier culinary event.*

## FLAVORS OF THE GREEK ISLES

FEATURING

*Signature Cocktails with Music by Dr. Michael Braz*

*Cooking demonstration by Executive Chef Adam Sapp of Georgia Southern Catering Services with paired wines, commemorative menu and recipes*

*Greek line dancing lesson by Averitt Center for the Arts Instructor Tony Phillips followed by free-style ballroom dancing with music by Do Good DJs.*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2015 · 6:30 P.M.**  
NESSMITH-LANE CONFERENCE CENTER BALLROOM

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**MENU**

<b>- APPETIZERS -</b>	<b>- ENTREES -</b>	<b>- TRADITIONAL TABLE SPREADS -</b>
<b>PANTZAROSALATA</b> <i>Roasted Beet, Kalamata Olive, Orange, Feta and Olive Oil</i>	<b>XIPHIAS</b> <i>Swordfish, Wild Mushroom, Dandelion Green and Garlic Confit</i>	<i>Served with Grilled Pita Bread</i>
<b>OCTAPOTHI</b> <i>Grilled Octopus, Pickled Red Onion and Caper</i>	<b>PAIDAKIA</b> <i>Marinated Lamb Chops, Fingerling Potato and Carrot</i>	<b>TZATZIKI</b> <i>Yogurt, Cucumber and Dill</i>
<b>ASTAKOS</b> <i>Grilled Lobster Tail with Orzo Risotto</i>	<b>- DESSERT -</b>	<b>HTIPITI</b> <i>Roasted Red Peppers and Feta Cheese</i>
	<b>BAKLAVA</b> <i>Phyllo Dough, Almond, Walnut, Honey and Pistachio Ice Cream</i>	

**RSVP by February 20, 2015**  
*\$75 per person, \$400 for a reserved table of six. Must be 21 or older to attend.  
Call Debbie Gleason at 912-478-0148 or email [debgleason@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:debgleason@georgiasouthern.edu).*

 Georgia Southern University Museum

 **GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**

*All proceeds benefit programs of the Georgia Southern University Museum.*

# Georgia Southern University's Second Annual Day at the Capitol

FEBRUARY 4, 2015



*President Brooks A. Keel, Gov. Nathan Deal and Provost Jean Bartels were joined by some of the many Georgia Southern alumni who work at the Capitol during the second annual Georgia Southern Day at the Capitol event in Atlanta on Feb. 3*

Georgia Southern University hosted its second annual "Day at the Capitol" event on Tuesday, Feb. 3 in Atlanta. Representatives from the University's academic, research and athletics divisions, and from student organizations were on hand to speak to state lawmakers and showcase the many programs, initiatives and achievements happening at the University.

The day included appearances by Georgia Southern's bald eagle Freedom, mascot GUS and a University jazz trio. The University also provided updates on its Military Science programs, its groundbreaking concussion research, FabLab construction, STEM activities and the new Manufacturing Engineering program in the College of Engineering and Information Technology.

Georgia Southern Athletics was represented and the football team's Sun Belt Championship trophy was on display, as well. Breakfast was provided by Eagle Dining Services.

Georgia Southern University President Brooks A. Keel, Ph.D., along with Provost Jean Bartels, Ph.D., and other University representatives were invited to the Georgia House of Representatives and Senate sessions as they presented Georgia Southern with invite resolutions for the "Day at the Capitol" event.

After spending time with many of the attendees, Gov. Nathan Deal commended Georgia Southern on its continued achievements both on the field and in the classroom.

"With a century-old record of academic and athletics achievement, Georgia Southern University is a model for success in our university system," Deal said. "The school has launched the careers of countless young professionals, including several members of my own staff, and athletes who so greatly represent Georgia across the country and around the world. I'm confident that there are only greater things to come from Georgia Southern in the future."

While visiting with students and other representatives from Georgia Southern, state Sen. Jack Hill said, "Georgia Southern continues to play a critical role in the success of the state of Georgia. This University is preparing our students to be future leaders and valuable members of the Georgia workforce."

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers 125 degree programs serving more than 20,500 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu).

# College of Education Undergraduates Get Hands-On at Georgia Southern University

FEBRUARY 4, 2015



Special Education faculty members at Georgia Southern University's [College of Education](#) (COE) are embedding research within the student teaching experience at the undergraduate level. The program, "Research to Practice: COE Undergraduate Research Initiative," is a first of its kind within the College. Research, normally reserved for graduate or honors students, has transcended to undergraduate, non-honors students, in an effort to prepare pre-service teachers for the workforce; a [growing need](#) within the state of Georgia

"Field-based experience is perceived by early career teachers to be the most valuable experience within teacher preparation programs. While some feel this experience is critical to their preparation, rarely are pre-service teachers using these experiences to conduct valuable research to support them in their development," says Meca Williams-Johnson, Ph.D., assistant professor in the College of Education. "Pre-service teachers are more equipped to discuss issues that impact the classroom and

schools within the area of the student teaching placement. These pre-service teachers have developed skills in exploring the cultural and sociological aspects that are a part of the school environment.”

The undergraduate research project began in 2012 with a pilot of six students in their senior year. The yearlong project sought to partner with school districts and local schools to focus on in-depth data collection, annotate special education barriers in the classroom, work with faculty and school officials to develop research goals, and to connect school improvement plans with a specific issue that the student teachers would use research to solve.

“What we’ve found is that the knowledge gained in their student teaching semesters prepares them to use research in future classrooms,” says Kymberly Harris Drawdy, Ph.D., assistant professor. “The data and data analysis obtained during the research experience helped our pre-service teachers to address specific questions related to building relationships with students on the statewide performance assessment more than other pre-service teachers who didn’t have this experience.”

Through research and observation, the student teachers were able to collect quantifiable data that revealed connections between the school improvement plan and special education teaching methods. They also worked to introduce assistive technology to teachers in the field as a way to explore other learning techniques, and to collect data for their classrooms.

Student teachers at Georgia Southern are now leading the discussion on how undergraduate research has provided insight into real world special education data collection and application. Drawdy says the increase in teaching skills, confidence and decision-making skills has been worth introducing undergraduates, or pre-service teachers, to research and quantitative data collection.

“Students are now able to speak to how this particular experience has increased their writing, public speaking, and teaching skills and how it’s preparing them for the workforce,” said Drawdy. “They’re presenting their findings to teachers, administrators, principals and other researchers at state-wide conferences, national conferences and the Georgia Department of Education. We’ve also received interest from other universities wanting to start an undergraduate Special Education research program of their own, and there has been an increase in teachers requesting researchers to observe their classes.”

The College of Education will introduce the program to students beginning in their junior year and will start this year’s program with 18 students in the spring.

“Our hope is that by exposing undergraduate students to hands-on research we will increase special education teacher retention throughout the state and open the door for advanced education here at

Georgia Southern," says Tracy Linderholm, Ph.D., professor and associate dean of Graduate Education and Research.

For more information on the College of Education, or special education undergraduate research, visit [coe.georgiasouthern.edu](http://coe.georgiasouthern.edu).

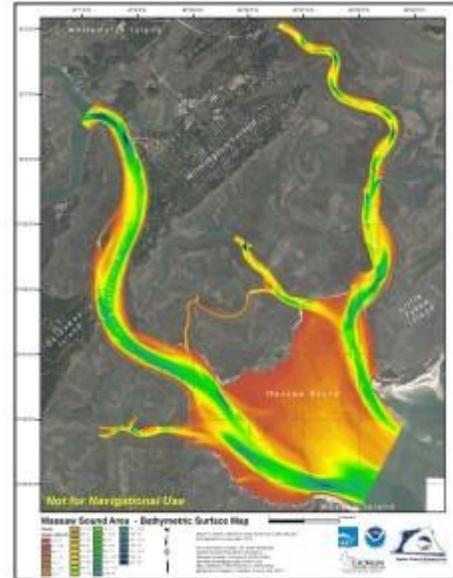
Tags: [College of Education](#), [Research](#)

# Georgia Southern scientists map Wassaw Sound

**JANUARY 28, 2015**

A research team from the Georgia Southern University [Applied Coastal Research Laboratory \(ACRL\)](#) has completed the first high-resolution, bathymetric (bottom-depth) survey of Wassaw Sound in Chatham County.

Led by Georgia Southern ACRL director and geology professor Clark Alexander, the team produced a detailed picture of the bottom of Wassaw Sound, the Wilmington River and other connected waterways. The year-long project was developed in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and in partnership with UGA Skidaway Institute of Oceanography. The ACRL is located on the Skidaway Institute campus, and Alexander holds a joint appointment there.



The survey provides detailed information about the depth and character of the sound's bottom. This information will be useful to boaters, but boating safety was not the primary aim of the project. The primary objective was to map bottom habitats for fisheries managers. DNR conducts fish surveys in Georgia sounds, but, according to Alexander, they have limited knowledge of what the bottom is like. "One of the products we developed is an extrapolated bottom character map," Alexander said. "This describes what the bottom grain size is like throughout the sound. Is it coarse, or shelly or muddy? This is very important in terms of what kind of habitat there is for marine life."

A second goal was to provide detailed bathymetric data to incorporate into computer models that predict storm surge flooding caused by hurricanes and other major storms. Agencies like the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration use mathematical models to predict anticipated storm inundation and flooding for specific coastal areas. A key factor in an accurate modeling exercise is the bathymetry of the coastal waters.

"You need to know how the water will pile up, how it will be diverted and how it will be affected by the bottom morphology," Alexander said. "Since we have a gently dipping coastal plain, storm inundation can reach far inland. It is important to get it as right as we can so the models will provide us with a better estimate of where storm inundation and flooding will occur."

Funded by an \$80,000 Coastal Incentive Grant from DNR, Alexander and his research team, consisting of Georgia Southern alumnus Mike Robinson and Claudia Venherm, used a cutting-edge interferometric side-scan sonar system to collect bathymetry data. The sonar transmitter/receiver was attached to a pole and lowered into the water from a 28-foot research vessel. Unlike a conventional fishfinder, which uses a single pinger to measure depth under a boat, the Edgetech 4600 sonar array uses fan-shaped sonar beams to both determine water depth and bottom reflectivity, which identifies sediment type, rocky outcroppings and bedforms, in a swath across the boat's direction of travel.



The actual process of surveying the sound involved long hours of slowly driving the boat back and forth on long parallel tracks. On each leg, the sonar produced a long, narrow strip indicating the depth and character of the sound bottom. Using high-resolution Global Positioning System data that pinpointed the boat's exact location, the system assembled the digital strips of data into a complete picture of the survey area.

All the other sounds on the Georgia coast were mapped in 1933, but for some reason data from that time period for Wassaw Sound were unavailable. When the team began this project, they believed they were conducting the first survey of the sound. However, just as the researchers were finishing the project, NOAA released data from a 1994 single-beam survey that had been conducted in advance of the 1996 Olympic yachting races that were held in and near Wassaw Sound.

"This worked out very well for our project, because we are able to compare the differences between the two surveys conducted 20 years apart," Alexander said. "We see areas that have accumulated sediment by more than 2 meters, and we also see areas that have eroded more than 2 meters since 1994. Channels have shifted and bars have grown or been destroyed."

Because of advances in technology, the current survey is significantly richer in detail than the one conducted in 1994. "We can zoom down to a square 25 centimeters (less than a foot) on a side and know the bottom depth," Alexander said.

The survey produced a number of findings that were surprising. The intersection of Turner Creek and the Wilmington River is a deep, busy waterway. Although most of the area is deep, the survey revealed several pinnacles sticking up 20 feet off the bottom. "They are round and somewhat flat, almost like underwater mesas," Alexander said.

The researchers determined that the deepest place mapped in the study area was a very steep-sided hole, 23 meters deep, in the Half Moon River where it is joined by a smaller tidal creek. They also found several sunken barges and other vessels.

The survey data set is available to the public on the Georgia Coastal Hazards Portal at <http://gchp.skio.usg.edu/>. Alexander warns that while boaters will find the survey interesting, the information is intended for habitat research and storm surge modeling, not for navigation. "Because the bottom of Wassaw Sound is always shifting and changing, as our survey showed, don't rely on the data for safe navigation," he cautioned.

Alexander has already received a grant for an additional survey, this time of Ossabaw Sound, the next sound south of Wassaw Sound. He expects work to begin on that survey in early 2015.

The Applied Coastal Research Laboratory (ACRL) is a field unit of the College of Science and Mathematics within Georgia Southern University, located on Skidaway Island near Savannah. The mission of the ACRL is to provide logistical support to students and faculty for education and research in the coastal zone. Georgia Southern partners with Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, Grays Reef National Marine Sanctuary and the University of Georgia Marine Extension Service to provide collaborative opportunities for students and faculty.

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