

Georgia Southern Students BUILD relationships, serve the community

AUGUST 3, 2015



Michelina Restaino helps bathe a horse at Heart of Dixie Equine Rescue Facility just outside of Statesboro.

More than 100 rising Georgia Southern freshmen made the trek to campus early, rolled up their sleeves and got their hands dirty in the Statesboro and Bulloch County community during the annual student volunteer program, BUILD.

Building Undergraduate Involvement in Leadership Development, or BUILD for short, is held at the end of each summer before fall semester begins. The Office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement (SLCE) hosts the program.

"If you ask [students], they say it's the opportunity to come and meet new friends," said Todd Deal, executive director for the Office. "But along with that the benefit, what they'll realize — as they're at Georgia Southern and in Statesboro, their new home — is they have connected with our community,

they've helped rebuild the community and there will be a time when they'll come back through and say, 'We started tearing down that house,' and there is a sense of pride that it gives them."

Blaine Bishop, a middle grades education major from Adairsville, Georgia, chose to participate with the program to not only meet new friends before coming to campus, but as a way to continue volunteerism, something he's passionate about.

"I've always done community service work in my hometown, so I thought what better way to come to statesboro, which will be my home for next four years, and make an impact in the beginning," he said.

Bishop was one of about eight students working with the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority to renovate an historic, abandoned home just off of South Main Street. Allen Muldrew, executive director of the Authority, said he is amazed with the positivity the students bring.

"The students are always a great team," he said. "They work hard and always have a great attitude, they're really ready to just jump right in. The kids come in here and put on gloves, clean out buildings, help renovate and fix flooring or do landscape and trash pick up. It's good hard work every week, all day long."



Student volunteers help clear an abandoned home to help the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority move forward with a renovation project.

Madi Pasterz, a multimedia communication major from Canton, Georgia, wasn't afraid of hard work and sweat to clear out the abandoned home.

"It's a lot more intense than I expected," she said with a laugh. "They told us we'd be going to a horse farm or working with kids. Then it's like, 'Surprise! You're demoing a house!' But it's really a lot of fun and it's challenging."

In addition to rising freshmen, students are accompanied by a BUILD leader: an upperclassmen student volunteer to help new students adjust. Jonathan Templeton, a junior marketing and logistics major, was keeping his team motivated while they removed trash and clutter from the home. "We're keeping the cool stuff," he said with a smile as he pointed to a poster portrait and a record.

Although passionate about volunteer work now, Templeton wasn't always interested in it. An alternative break trip through the SLCE, however, showed him the true value of helping others.

"Coming in as a freshman I didn't care about volunteer work or service or anything like that," he said. "But taking that trip — it really got me involved in school and in the community. So I kind of want to have that same impact on other people — hopefully get them motivated and more involved on campus, and help them become the leaders they can be on campus and in the community."

BUILD students also traveled to the Heart of Dixie Equine Rescue Center, an organization which rescues abused, neglected and unwanted horses. At the horse farm, located just outside of Statesboro, students helped build and repair fences, worked together to bathe horses and more. Julie Barnes, owner of the facility, said without the help of students like these, she would likely have to close.

"I was really thinking about closing before all of them came to help — it's pretty overwhelming," she said. "Since partnering with Georgia Southern, it's gone from me to being a private rescue to really having a life of its own." She added she will soon be an officially registered nonprofit organization.

"I just love it. I can't even explain it," she said. "All the kids that have come here, they all have done such a good job and been so helpful."

Even though it was hot and sweat beaded up on their foreheads, students smiled as they hosed down the 1,200-plus pound creatures to lend a helping hand. Michelina Restaino from Columbus, Georgia, plans to major in history, but first on her agenda as a college student is getting to know her community. She's volunteered for years in her hometown and was excited about the opportunity to continue volunteering as an Eagle.

“This is somewhere that I’ll be for a really long time — at least for the next four years — so I thought it would be a good opportunity to actually get into the community and to actually see the city how it is, the people who are going to be here and to meet people who are also ready to do stuff and make some kind of change.”

For more information on BUILD and other volunteer opportunities, visit <http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/LeadServe/build/>.

Georgia Southern University Ranked Top School for Fashion Design, Merchandising

JULY 28, 2015



Illustration by Agustina Biggio ('15)

STATESBORO, Ga. (July 29, 2015) — Georgia Southern University's Fashion Merchandising and Apparel Design program has been named one of the top fashion schools in the United States by Fashion-Schools.org.

Georgia Southern's program was ranked in the top 40 percent of schools considered nationally for both Fashion Design and Fashion Merchandising, and was ranked seventh of programs in the South. The review looked at hundreds of institutions across the country, including schools like Savannah College of Art and Design, Louisiana State University, Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising and San Francisco State University among others, and based the list on criteria including academics, admissions, faculty, value and more.

"In recent years, the program has seen tremendous growth and recognition nationally," said Hope Wallace, MFA, professor and program coordinator of the Fashion Merchandising and Apparel Design

(FMAD) Program. "We have had an influx of students that are coming to Georgia Southern University to study fashion from other regions of the United States. We have also seen an increase in students that are transferring into our program from other institutions."

Students in the Georgia Southern FMAD program have opportunities to intern and work in every area of the fashion industry, said Wallace. Some companies students have had opportunities with include Spanx, Phillips-Van Heusen/Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Nordstrom and Bloomingdales, along with magazines such as Vogue and Teen Vogue, Redbook, Glamour, GQ and others.

"Our program is working on becoming a bit more interactive and based in practice. We currently offer trips to the Atlanta apparel market as well as a New York Fashion study tour (course), which is taught annually," Wallace added. "In addition to the study abroad opportunities the University offers, we currently have in place a formal student exchange program in FMAD with two universities in Korea: Keimyung and Chung Ang Universities. We are also in the process of setting up an International Study Tour."

Some notable alumni from the program include local designers Emily Bargeron ('06) of [Mamie Ruth](#), Diane Bailey of [The Bailey Boys](#), and [Mychael Knight](#) ('02), a previous competitor on the show Project Runway and a member of the University's inaugural 40 Under 40 Class. Knight returned to campus as a judge for the 2014 FMAD showcase highlighting student work, along with local designers Elizabeth Seeger and Brooke Atwood.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 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 and hands-on approach to education.

Tags: [College of Health and Human Sciences](#)