

Dr. Jean Bartels Named Interim President of Georgia Southern

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Dr. Jean Bartels

University System of Georgia (USG) Chancellor Hank Huckaby has named Dr. Jean Bartels as interim president at Georgia Southern University following the appointment of Dr. Brooks A. Keel as president of Georgia Regents University.

She will begin her new assignment on July 20, upon the departure of Keel.

"I am very honored that Chancellor Hank Huckaby and the Board of Regents have the confidence to appoint me as the interim president of Georgia Southern University," said Bartels.

"I have a strong allegiance and dedication to this University and will be proud to continue with the momentum of success we are experiencing at Georgia Southern. There will be no

standing still."

Bartels currently serves as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Georgia Southern. She has held this position since July 1, 2012. Prior to this role, she served as dean of the Georgia Southern College of Health and Human and Sciences. Bartels came to Georgia Southern in 1999 to serve as the chair and professor of the School of Nursing.

"Dr. Bartels is an incredible asset to Georgia Southern and our University System," said Chancellor Hank Huckaby. "I look forward to her leadership during this time of transition and am confident that her stewardship will ensure that Georgia Southern continues to thrive."

Some of Bartels' service to professional organizations includes serving as president of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and as a member of its board of directors and executive committee. She has also served as a member of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) Steering Committee that created the CCNE accrediting body and as a CCNE site evaluator.

Bartels received a diploma in nursing from Columbia Hospital School (Milwaukee, Wis.), a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Alverno College (Milwaukee, Wis.), a Master of Science in nursing from Marquette University (Milwaukee, Wis.) and a Ph.D. in nursing from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

Keel has served as president of Georgia Southern University since January 2010. As president he has focused on expanding undergraduate and graduate education through research and community experience. He has also worked to raise the national profile of Georgia Southern academically and athletically.

"I had the great fortune to earn both my undergraduate and graduate degrees in Augusta, and I'm eternally grateful for the fantastic opportunities in research, scholarship leadership they have brought to my life," said Dr. Brooks Keel. "I am honored and humbled to return to Augusta and rejoin Georgia Regents University at this exciting time."

Under Keel's leadership, Georgia Southern launched the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology and the Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education. The University also manages the Herty Advanced Materials Development Center, which was transferred to the institution by the state of Georgia.

He also serves on the board of directors of the Georgia Southern University Research and Service Foundation, board of trustees of the Georgia Southern University Foundation and board of directors of the Georgia Southern University Housing Foundation.

Prior to joining Georgia Southern, Keel served as vice chancellor for research and economic development and professor of biological sciences at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge).

Keel received a Bachelor of Science in biology/chemistry from Augusta College (now Georgia Regents University), a doctorate in reproductive endocrinology from the Medical College of Georgia (now Georgia Regents University) and completed post-doctoral work at the University of Texas Health Science Center (Houston) and University of South Dakota School of Medicine (Vermillion).

Georgia Southern study shows overweight and obese teens think they're 'just fine'

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As national obesity rates have risen over the last 20 years, overweight and obese adolescents are now less likely to accurately perceive their body weight, according to a recent study at Georgia Southern.

The study, "More Overweight Adolescents Think They Are Just Fine," is being published in the upcoming issue of the American Journal of Preventative Medicine, and is part of a series of research initiatives led by Dr. Jian Zhang, associate professor of epidemiology in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health.

While previous papers have focused on the parents of preschoolers and school-aged children, Zhang says this study focuses on the adolescents themselves, both because of their growing independence from parents and because of a diminishing likelihood they will outgrow their obesity as adults.

"It's estimated that about a third of obese preschoolers and half of obese school-aged children — including adolescents — will become obese adults," he said. "Adolescents with accurate self-perceptions of their body weight have greater readiness to make weight-related behavioral changes and are more effective in making the changes. By contrast, overweight adolescents who do not perceive their weight status properly are less likely to desire weight loss, and are more likely to have a poor diet."

Zhang and researchers from Georgia Southern and Fudan University in Shanghai, China, compared data from adolescents ages 12-16 who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) in 1988-1994 and in 2007-2012. Respondents were asked if they thought they were overweight, underweight or just about the right weight.

The study revealed that overweight or obese adolescents from the most recent survey were 30 percent less likely to accurately perceive their body weight compared to adolescents from the earlier survey.

The researchers suggest that a combination of issues may be the reason for this change in perception. As the prevalence of obesity has more than doubled in adolescents over the last 20

years, Zhang believes our socially accepted standards for “normal weight” may be shifting accordingly.

In addition, researchers pointed to social comparison theory as a possible explanation. According to the theory, individuals compare themselves to others, rather than to some scientific standard such as the Body Mass Index (BMI).

“In the wake of an obesity pandemic, a teenager is more likely to compare his or her body size to peers or friends, or anyone she or he sees daily,” said Andrew Hansen, Dr.P.H., assistant professor of community health behavior and education and spokesman for the research group. “Teenagers are less likely to use growth charts and biologic tools to measure their weight, but are more likely to socially compare or associate their weight to what they feel is normal.”

Because of these factors, Zhang says exploring new strategies to correct these body weight misperceptions are more urgent than ever, and that parents are a key factor in every one.

“As parents, we need to proactively create a conducive family environment to engage kids with a healthy lifestyle — clearly let our teens know that we care,” he said. “It is also crucial that we proactively discuss weight issues with doctors to make sure youths are on a healthy growth track.”

Zhang says parents should also serve as role models, watching their own weight and focusing on healthy lifestyles instead of weight control to protect their teens attitude about body image.

“This doesn’t have to be an anti-obesity campaign,” said Hansen. “This can be a pro-health campaign.”

Tags: [College of Public Health](#), [Research](#)

Georgia Southern's Garden of the Coastal Plain Named to Top 50 List

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The Heritage Pavilion at the Garden of the Coastal Plain

The [Garden of the Coastal Plain](#) at Georgia Southern University has been named to a list of the 50 most amazing university botanical gardens and arboretums in the U.S. by [BestOnlineColleges.org](#).

The Garden at Georgia Southern boasts over 11 acres of gardens on the early 20th century farmstead of Dan and Catherine Bland. Woodland trails, a landscape garden of coastal plain natives, an arboretum, a children's garden, 20th century farm buildings, the Rural Life Museum and a native azalea collection are just a few of the attractions the garden has to offer.

"It is an honor to be included with some of the world leaders in botanical research and conservation," said Carolyn Altman, director of the Garden. "Since its inception, the Garden has developed unique and important collections featuring plants native to the coastal plain and engaged the University and beyond in discovering the fascinating life this area produces. We're about to be adding significantly to the Garden, and encourage visitors from all over to stop in often and explore the wonders of the coastal plain and its culture."

The list was created using a point system for various accolades including awards, variety of plant species, conservation and education, connected University degree programs and "wow factor."

Conservation efforts in cultivating over 20 of Georgia's protected plants and 17 endangered species and the offering of internships, service learning projects and research projects are just a few of the things that stood out about the Garden of the Coastal Plain when being considered for the list.

Other universities mentioned on the list include Louisiana State University, University of Delaware, University of Kentucky and the University of Michigan among others.

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. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu