As I sat down to write this column, the first thought that occurred to me was that I certainly didn’t expect to be writing this column in January. I tend to follow Thomas Jefferson’s advice and use as few words as possible, and so, admittedly, writing a column like this produces a small amount of anxiety. But the second thought that occurred to me involved the many changes that have occurred at Gordon State over the past few months. No doubt many of us are feeling a certain amount of anxiety. Numerous leadership changes combined with recent announcements about more consolidations within the USG naturally lead all of us to feel a bit uneasy. However, I try to always think positively, and so want to start off 2015 by pointing out some things that have not changed.

I believe that Gordon State is the strongest state college in the University System of Georgia. And there are several hundred people here who ensure we stay that way. As I’ve had numerous meetings (in groups and one-on-one) since January 5, I’m reminded how truly dedicated and hard-working our faculty and staff really are. In fact, just a list of people I’ve observed going above-and-beyond the call of duty would fill this entire column. You are the reason that

Gordon State is “where students flourish.” I greatly appreciate your commitment to our students and their success.

I also want to assure everyone that my philosophy has not changed. I still view my role as to do all I can to serve you. I continue to have an open door policy and welcome you dropping by or calling any time you need to. I consider it an honor and privilege to be a member of the Gordon State family, and look forward to us accomplishing great things together this semester.
A special thank you to the faculty members who serve as AAMI Faculty Mentors: Dr. Brenda Johnson, Dr. Brent Johnson, Dr. Chad Davies, Dr. Joseph Mayo, Dr. James Wallace, Dr. Joyce Klaus, Dr. Henry Gore, Mr. Melvin Seale, and Dr. Mustapha Durojaiye. Thanks are due, as well, to staff members Tonya Colman, Ginny Hammond, Gratasha Banks, Laura Shadrack, Justin White, Linda Littken, Bossie Davis, Martellis Curtis, and Tonya Moore for assisting with the program. All of these individuals have gone above and beyond to help our students succeed.

The African-American Male Initiative has contributed to increases in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates for this student subpopulation in the University System of Georgia. The Gordon State program would not exist without the hard work of and inspired mentoring by Mr. Fredrick Bailey, program coordinator, and Michele Perry-Stewart, program director.

Coordinator of the Consortium for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: Alan Burstein has done an excellent job for us in taking responsibility for CETL and developing creative ideas for faculty to share ideas about teaching and learning.

At the end of this semester, Alan is moving on to other opportunities at the college, which opens the coordinator position for 2015-2017. We would like to continue the strong leadership of this valuable faculty resource. Look for an email from Richard Baskin with the position and application details.

Director of Gordon State—McDonough: Dr. Ric Calhoun has been serving as director of our site in McDonough, Henry County, on an interim basis, and applications for the position will be accepted this spring. An email with full information will be sent shortly by Richard Baskin.

Two Positions to Fill Internally

Dr. Richard Baskin

Statistical link between tutoring and retention

Peter Higgins has summarized the retention numbers for Frequently Tutored Students (FTS), those who came to the SSC for tutoring three or more times for one class:

There were 380 FTS in Fall 2013:
- 82% were either back in Spring 2014 or had graduated at the end of Fall 2013
- 66% (251/380) were either back in Fall 2014 or had graduated at the end of Fall 13, Spring 14, or Summer 14

There were 310 FTS in Spring 2014:
- 78% (244/310) were either back in Fall 2014 or had graduated by then
- 73.5% (228/310) were either back in Spring 2015 or had graduated by then

To give these numbers some context, the fall-to-fall retention rate for all first-year, first-term students at GSC (fall 2013 cohort) was 52.3%. FTS came back at a rate 14% higher than the overall rate.

Our thanks to Peter, his staff, and the SSC tutors for their long hours and strong work!

Note of appreciation

A special thank you to the faculty members who serve as AAMI Faculty Mentors: Dr. Brenda Johnson, Dr. Brent Johnson, Dr. Chad Davies, Dr. Joseph Mayo, Dr. James Wallace, Dr. Joyce Klaus, Dr. Henry Gore, Mr. Melvin Seale, and Dr. Mustapha Durojaiye. Thanks are due, as well, to staff members Tonya Colman, Ginny Hammond, Gratasha Banks, Laura Shadrack, Justin White, Linda Littken, Bossie Davis, Martellis Curtis, and Tonya Moore for assisting with the program. All of these individuals have gone above and beyond to help our students succeed.
Early Intervention Works!

Dr. Richard Baskin

Yes, Early Intervention works! Many of you have seen the difference that the college can make when we identify low-performing students early in the term and make an effort to counsel them. Many end up becoming more engaged in the class and in school in general, some end up making a better grade, and some realize that it is not the right time for them to be in the class. (And some just can’t be helped, unfortunately.) I want to show you one piece of evidence that the Early Alert process (see Peter Higgins’s recent email), which includes efforts by many who work at the college, can make a positive difference for our students.

The chart below shows the ABC rate, and the rate excluding withdrawals, for all first-year students whom faculty referred in fall 2013, for the referred courses only. It also shows us the difference in outcomes between those students who responded quickly and participated in an intervention (counseling) session, those who responded only after a recorded phone call from President Burns in the sixth week of the term, and those who never came to an intervention session.

This data does not tell us about all the factors that contribute to the ABC rate, but it is another piece of evidence that your Early Alert efforts are making a difference. While we would all love it if the ABC rate were 100%, we know that these were all students who showed one or more signs of being disengaged from the learning process. Feedback from students tells us that many did not realize that they weren't doing what they should be doing. Many said “thank you” for shaking them by the shoulders and helping them take responsibility.

We appreciate your doing the work to see that these students are referred and appropriate information is provided. We appreciate Peter and his staff, who spend many hours contacting and working with the students to provide the guidance each one needs.

News from the McDonough Campus

Dr. Ric Calhoun

The McDonough campus welcomed 296 students to classes for the Spring Semester on Wednesday, January 7th! We have 20 classes (4 daytime classes and 16 evening classes) for the Spring term as well as Weekend College which will consist of 4 classes in a hybrid format.

Dr. Ric Calhoun was a guest panelist for the Henry County Library System’s January Small Business Lunch & Learn: Marketing! on Tuesday, January 6th. Dr. Calhoun along with 2 other guest panelists answered questions about general marketing practices as well as offering practical advice to the small business owners and entrepreneurs who attended.

Jordan Cavallin, our program director at McDonough, is leaving us on February 5th for an opportunity at Georgia State University in their Alumni Office. Mrs. Cavallin has been instrumental in our development of the McDonough campus over the past 5 months and we wish her the best in her new endeavors.

Phone Numbers Have Changed

The phone numbers in McDonough have changed.

You can now reach Dr. Ric Calhoun, Director of GSC at McDonough, at (678) 359-5034. You can reach Jordan Cavallin, Program Administrator, at (678) 359-5035.

Simply dial the extension—just like on campus!
News from the Department of Math and Physical Science

Dr. Joseph Eyles, just returned from The Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Antonio, Texas in January 2015, where he made the following three outstanding presentations.

“Tour de Math: Teaching Through the Mathematical Culture of France” From the Pont du Gard to Paris and from aqueduct siphons to CERN, can travel in France give students new perspectives from which to study mathematics? Will dallying among the designs of DaVinci, roaming the ruins of the Roman Empire, surveying the components of an atom-smasher, or looking over the world’s most renowned landmark enhance understanding in mathematics? The presenter discusses some uniquely French mathematical experiences that should appeal to students of mathematics and his experiences with American students in France.

“IBL College Algebra” For those of us who employ inquiry in our learning, it seems natural to employ IBL in teaching. However, college algebra students may be new to IBL and have difficulties adapting to this approach to learning. In acknowledgement of the importance of college algebra as the final course in mathematics for many students and the difficulties some of them have with the IBL method, the presenter identified some possible changes to improve his delivery of an IBL college algebra course. This report discusses effectiveness of changes that began in 2011 with support from The Educational Advancement Foundation.

“TRIGONometry: An Inquiry of Triangle Measurement” Often students arrive in a college level pre-calculus class with varied backgrounds in geometrical thinking. Some states’ school curricula specify an algebraic treatment to high school geometry and recent textbooks relegate constructions with a compass and straight-edge to enrichment activities instead of the fundamental exercises. So, trigonometry, measuring triangles, has become essentially an abstraction to students today instead of the practical skill that it has been through the millennia. This presentation will focus on activities developed to enhance students’ trigonometrical thinking through inquiry and practical applications.

Graduate School Symposium

On Friday, October 17th, we held the first Graduate School Symposium. This symposium was hatched in the mind of bachelor student Tasha Lee, and transformed into a positive informational experience. Dr. Kalisha Smith served as faculty advisor, and the collaboration with Tasha Lee along with invaluable input from Dr. Erica Johnson and a host of Gordon faculty and staff, was successful. We hosted Representatives from UGA Griffin, Clark Atlanta, Georgia State, Mercer University, and Penfield College as well as Spalding Hospital. Over 200 students met with recruiters and were enlightened with information about graduate school - from applications to expectations. This event successfully gave Gordon students information, as well as contacts, to elevate their academic expectations and opportunities. This experience was an invaluable step to complement the needs of our growing bachelor’s degree student population.

Recent Publications:


*Southeastern Naturalist.*

News from the Department of Biology

Dr. Mustapha Durojaiye

Dr. Greg Hartman participated in the Georgia Bat Working Group’s annual meeting held at Gordon State College on 16 December 2014. Dr. Hartman serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the group.


Dr. Marwan Zabdawi participated as a judge for the Spalding County High School Science Fair on Friday, January 9, 2015.

Recent Publications:


*Southeastern Naturalist.*
GSC Students and Rotaract members participated in the Rotary Club of Barnesville’s 3rd annual Feeding Our Neighbor 5K Run & Fun Walk on November 8th, 2014. Gordon State participants (photo to the right) included Tim Vick, Rotaract Adviser, and students Dalton Strom (Overall Male Winner), Adam Carson (2nd Place Overall Male and 1st Place age 20-29), Brooke Reese (1st Place age 15-19), Mary Browning (Rotaract), Miriam Mast, and Brian Reviere.

The Department of Business and Public Service continues to inform local organizations about Weekend College, Gordon State’s new, flexible, Bachelor’s Degree in Human Services adult learner program. The Spring 2015 cohort includes students from governmental offices and courts in Spalding and Henry counties, the Department of Family and Children’s Services, the McIntosh Trail community service board, and others interested in entering or advancing in the human services field.

On Oct. 21, Mary Browning, Human Services senior and Weekend College intern, was the featured speaker at the Rotary Club of Barnesville. She was introduced by Dean Jeff Knighton of the School of Arts and Sciences and followed by Dr. Melinda Hawley, Weekend College coordinator, who answered the member’s questions.

Dr. Hawley was the keynote speaker Oct. 28 at Connecting Henry, Inc., a family connection collaborative. The receptive audience of more than 50 service providers in Henry County represented the Department of Family and Children’s Services, McIntosh Trail, hospice facilities, shelters, church-based programs, and other United Way-affiliated organizations.

Dr. Hawley shared information about Weekend College at the Lamar County Family Connection Collaborative meeting Nov. 13 at the E.P. Roberts Center in Barnesville.

Dr. Brenda Johnson has been working on an economic development project at the request of the administrators of the City of Milner. On Wednesday, November 12th, 2014 she presented findings of her study to the Mayor and City Commissioners.

Kiana Battle, a part-time Sociology instructor and fulltime student in the Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work Doctoral Program, successfully defended her dissertation. A big congratulations goes out to Kiana from her BPS family!

On October 10, Tim Vick was an invited presenter at the 2nd Annual Georgia First-Year and Transitions Conference held at Kennesaw State University. Along with Stephanie Foote, KSU’s Director of the Master of Science in First-Year Studies program, Vick co-presented a workshop titled, "Fostering Success of First-Year Seminar Faculty: Providing Care, Support, and Strategies for Success in the Classroom."

On October 20-22, in New Orleans, LA, Tim Vick was one of three invited presenters to deliver a conference hosted by Academic Impressions titled “First-Year Student Experience: Assessing and Improving Your Program.” The conference attracted an international audience from all types of post-secondary institutions. Relating to the overall conference topic, Vick presented six workshops titled Localizing the First-Year Student Experience, Building Learning Outcomes, Programmatic Assessment Design, Faculty-based Programming, Getting Change off the Ground, and Ongoing Communication and Improvement. Vick also provided one-on-one coaching sessions for select attending institutions.

On October 23, Tim Vick attended the Cyber Education Summit hosted by Georgia Regents University in Augusta. The summit examined issues surrounding the security of data, particularly in healthcare and higher education. Also discussed were the ways post-secondary institutions could achieve “Center for Academic Excellence” status for information assurance academic programs.
Updates from the Department of Humanities

Dr. Becky Godlasky will be speaking on 27 January at Clayton State University as part of its Visiting Writers Reading Series. Her talk will focus on creating a successful blog. The upper-division Creative Nonfiction course this semester takes personal narrative as its focus, and students are required to produce a blog as their portfolio.

Laura King’s play Independence Day at Happy Meadows is playing February 12-15 at Lionheart Theatre in Norcross, GA.

Perry Ivey’s poem *To Home* will be in the Negative Capability Press Anthology of Georgia Poetry in early 2015.

Stephen Powers has three poems (“The Game of Life,” “Lou Ferrigno’s Delicate Feet,” and “Universal”) in the current issue of Levure Litteraire.

New at Hightower Library

The Hightower Library staff would like to welcome everyone back for Spring semester. We are very busy preparing for the library renovation and repository. Please be on the lookout for upcoming forums where we will unveil the library design and any questions regarding our temporary location, services we will provide, and the availability of library resources during this year long project.

Professors Beth Pye and Beverly Eskridge offer library workshops through the Student Success Center. Please encourage your students to attend these sessions so they can learn how to use GALILEO in general or specifically learn how to conduct research related to nursing. Dr. Gaither also offered a workshop through the SSC on library resources and services provided.

The Hightower Library staff has partnered with the McDonough Public Library (MPL) to provide computer access and research assistance to our GSC students who visit MPL. Dr. Gaither will offer GALILEO workshops to our students at MPL. The schedule will be forthcoming. GSC library resources and technology handouts have also been made available on the MPL computers for GSC students to access. We have also included a link to the MPL events on the Electronic Resources section of the library’s webpage. Please have your students check the link for activities they may attend at the MPL and consider giving them extra credit for attending.

We are also here to provide library instruction for your classes. If you are interested please contact Dr. Gaither or Professor Pye. You may also submit a request online. See the library web page for contact information.

The Alumni Room is now open to anyone to use as a quiet reading or study area. Please feel free to come and visit with us. I want to thank the entire library staff for providing such quality service to our campus community. You are a wonderful group to work with.

Remember GALILEO databases are accessible via Brightspace by D2L. This means you do not need a password to access library resources from off-campus. Just log into your D2L account and click on the GALILEO icon to start your search. There will also be a new search widget revealed in the upcoming D2L release around February. So please be on the lookout.

We want to say “THANK YOU!” to all of the departments who provided their course syllabi to us last semester. This helped us answer your students’ questions regarding their research assignments. We are asking that you provide us with your Spring course syllabi so we can continue to assist your students more effectively.

The library staff participated in a half day professional development workshop presented by Sherri Gooch from GSC Human Resources. The topic dealt with communication styles. We thank Sherri for her presentation and look forward to working with Human Resources on other professional development topics.

Also, I want to thank the GSC family for promoting the library among yourselves and encouraging your students to come to the library. We had a high volume of traffic last semester and hope for the same this semester. We are here to help you in any way we can. Be on the lookout for more great information regarding the library staff, services, and resources as well as the renovation details. *This is Your Library!*
Dr. Theresa Stanley Received ALG Recognition Award for Innovation and Early Success in Textbook Transformation.

Congratulations to Dr. Theresa Stanley who was honored with an ALG Recognition Award for Innovation and Early Success in Textbook Transformation on December 12, 2014. She and 23 other USG faculty members were recognized for their transformations of the textbook to no-cost Open Educational Resources, saving USG students more than $1,000,000 in Academic Year 2014. The awardees slideshow may be viewed at the following link.

Awardees Slideshow (PPT)

GSC Staff News

Justin White

Vicky Forsyth with the Lamar Co. Empty Stocking Fund wanted to thank everyone who participated in our toy drive. We almost filled her trailer with all the toys we collected. Thank you to everyone that helped make a child’s Christmas a special one.

Congrats to Amanda Skelton, who earned her Bachelors in Human Service from Mercer University!

Open textbooks are available for many core courses. Some possible sources for open textbooks include OpenStax College, MERLOT, and UMN Open Textbook Library. Other sources may be found on the ALG web page.

ALG Webpage

The use of OER or open textbooks is just one component to making the college degree more affordable.

GORDON GIVES

Remaining Paid Jeans Days to support Gordon Gives

1/30/2015
2/27/2015
3/9/2015 through 3/13/2015
3/27/2015
4/3/2015
5/21/2015
6/12/2015
6/21/2015