Spring Break…A Much Needed Breather

Dr. Jeff Knighton

Last Thursday, as I sat working in my office during spring break, it occurred to me that in 1987 I experienced my first spring break as a college student at Panama City Beach, Florida. I remember how excited I was to be spending a week away from my professors.

Fast forward to 2007. I spent my first spring break as a Gordon Assistant Professor sitting in my living room in Macon. I remember how excited I was to be spending a week away from my students!

Now I'm not saying that last week I was excited to be spending a week with students and faculty away from me, but... I did have a lot of quiet time and was able to get a lot done. And I had time to think about how much we've accomplished so far this year in academic affairs. We have really had a busy nine weeks. Here are just a few items that occurred to me:

- Weekend College is now up and running strong, with 22 adult learners working hard to fulfill their dreams. A second cohort is gearing up to start in the fall.
- The ACCESS Institute is now in its third semester with its second cohort. This program has proven to be incredibly successful in providing access to students. Eleven out of 13 students from the Summer Institute are now regularly admitted students; twelve out of 17 students from the Fall Institute are now completing their second semester, with pass rates comparable to or better than regularly admitted students.
- The McDonough Campus continues to grow, with 17% more exclusive students than last spring. The campus now has an Academic Commons with 5 computers and onsite Counseling and Library Services. [Dr. Calhoun is especially excited about improved internet service with fiber connection.]
- The School of Education is busy preparing to implement the baccalaureate in Middle Grades Education, as their proposal was approved by the Board of Regents in January.
- The School of Nursing now has a proposal for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing being reviewed by the USG staff, after many months of hard work.
- In January we had our first "Dinner & Show" event in conjunction with the concert series. It was such a huge success that plans are underway for the next event.
- Guided Pathways to Success have now been mapped out for four of our largest programs: Psychology AA; Teacher Education AA; Business Administration AS; and Nursing AS. As a Vanguard institution, we will implement these pathways as a measure to improve retention.
- We are now officially an E-Core Affiliate, and much work is occurring to bring that program to our students.
- Service Learning continues to be promoted by the Business & Public Service department; Twenty-one baccalaureate students were recently accompanied by 4 faculty members to Selma, Alabama to participate in the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

In addition, the APC Committee is busier than I ever recall. So is Faculty Welfare. Department Heads are actively strategizing to recruit more transfer students into our baccalaureate programs. There's more engagement in Senate proceedings since I've been at Gordon. The Compliance Certification Workgroup is well underway with their work of ensure that we are reaffirmed by SACS-COC. These are just some examples that come to mind, but they make the point. You have all been incredibly busy, and I appreciate all of the hard work. Your spring break—away from students and administrators—was well earned. Now just nine more weeks until your next break.
Approved Absences

Just a reminder that we have a web page with “approved absences” information, should you want to check on a particular student or event. The web page shows approved absences and the students who are expected to be absent from class.

Currently, the page lists only athletic events, but the college is working on a policy that will cover absences for academic-related reasons. We will then have those approvals listed here, as well. You can use the following link or type “absences” in the college’s search window.

International Studies/Study Abroad

On March 6, three Gordon State faculty members attended the “Conference on Social Movements Across the Globe: Mobilizing Students, Citizens, and Ideas,” held at Clayton State University. Christy Flatt, Erica Johnson, and Marc Muneal participated in this interdisciplinary conference intended to support global studies in the college curriculum.

As of May 1, Gordon State College will be a member of the International Studies Consortium of Georgia. The Consortium is dedicated to developing, coordinating and implementing international education and foreign language projects on behalf of the participating universities, recognizing that we all are working with limited resources. The Consortium includes seven other state colleges and five state universities.

Interim Provost Jeffrey Knighton has appointed a task force to help promote international studies and study abroad programs at Gordon. The task force membership includes Christy Flatt, Joe Eyles, Tim Best, Karen Guffey, and Richard Baskin, all of who worked on developing a study abroad council last fall. Dr. Guffey is chairing the task force, whose initial focus will be on finishing the work on study abroad oversight. We would like to develop more study abroad opportunities for Gordon students.

Honors Program Updates

For the third year in a row, students in our Honors Program participated in the Georgia Collegiate Honors Council Conference. This year’s conference was hosted by Georgia Southwestern University in Americus.

The following students presented:
- Rebecca Walls, “The Boy with the Bread of Life”
- Danisha Jordan, “Abusive Relationships and Why the Abused Stay”
- Catherine Crawford, “A Tree without Roots: Classical Epics and the Roots of Being”
- Charly Cowart, “Shakespeare’s Daughters: Katherine, Ophelia, Miranda”
- Austin Corbin, “Music and Sound as Stimuli”
- Preston Allen, “The Effects of Craig Air Force Base on Selma, Alabama”

Our students did an outstanding job presenting their work alongside Honors students from across the state. Good show!

Congratulations to our most recent Honors Program members: Donna Brown, Lee Brown, Whitney Chislom, Griffin Kilby, Zachary Trotter, and Kayla Urbina.

The next application deadline is May 1.
The Georgia Collegiate Honors Council’s 2015 Conference was held February 27th & 28th at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, GA. The Conference’s theme was “Honors as Windows to the World.” Several colleges were in attendance, including Georgia Regents University, University of North Georgia, Middle Georgia State College, Kennesaw State University, Valdosta State University, and of course, Gordon State College. Two Human Services students, Preston Allen and Danisha Jordan, presented research papers at the conference. Preston Allen’s paper was titled “The Effects of Craig Air Force Base on Selma, Alabama.”

Dr. William Brent Carper is presenting “Global Business: An Updated Cultural Perspective” at the 16th Annual Conference of the National Business and Economics Society in 2015 in the Republic of Panama. While in Panama, Dr. Carper plans to meet with members of the Autoridad del Canal de Panama, the Canal Zone authorities to gain insight regarding the potential economic and cultural impact that completion of the third set of locks will have on the world’s economy. The third set of locks will double the capacity of the canal and is scheduled to be completed in 2018.

On Saturday morning, March 7th, 20 GSC Human Services students and 4 faculty joined tens of thousands of spectators in Selma, Alabama to participate in the 50th anniversary of “Bloody Sunday” along with a 100 members of congress, President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama. The GSC students and faculty members stayed throughout Spring Break as part of a service learning class to study the cultural and racial issues still prevalent in Selma and to assist the Freedom Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing racial tension. This is the second year GSC students have traveled to Selma in connection with a program called Alternative Spring Break and will definitely not be the last. (photo above)

On Fredrick Bailey’s invitation, Dr. Brenda Johnson and Dr. Joseph Mayo were selected to participate in The Harriet Tubman Legacy Ball on March 3rd, 2015, at which they and a number of other Gordon faculty and staff and a couple of community-based leaders were cited for their service and dedication to The African-American Male Initiative Program at Gordon where they each received a 2014-15 Harriet Tubman Legacy Award for service and dedication to this very important program. (photo right)
News from Department of History and Political Science

On February 26, Dr. Matt Jennings from Middle Georgia College gave a guest lecture for students and faculty. Hosted by the History Club, Jennings’ talk was titled “The Modern History of an Ancient Place: Ocmulgee’s Recent Past.”

On March 6, Dr. Erica Johnson attended “Social Movements across the Globe: Mobilizing Students, Citizens, and Ideas,” a faculty development and curriculum enrichment conference at Clayton State University, with other faculty from GSC.

Humanities and Fine and Performing Arts Updates

Dr. Steve Raynie’s essay “Selling the English BA Program” is in press at the South Atlantic Review, and Dr. Raynie is now the book review editor for New Perspectives on the Eighteenth Century.

Professor Carlin Mills has two poems, “Axis Mundi” and “I talk to my daughter” appearing in the literary journal, “Metonym” this spring.

Stephen Powers’ poem, "The Mona Lisa in Spain Knows Why I Can't Come in the Side Door Anymore," was selected for inclusion in a forthcoming anthology of Georgia poetry from Negative Capability Press. Professor Perry Ivey’s poem, “To Home” will also be in the forthcoming Negative Press Anthology of Georgia Poetry. Negative Capability Press is the oldest independent press in the Southeast.

Dr. Caesar Perkowski and Dr. Cortney Grubbs presented "Increasing Success Rate in Online Courses within a Rural Georgia Setting" at the Research on Teaching and Learning Summit at Kennesaw State University on February 20, 2015. The presentation was enthusiastically received by the audience; in addition, Dr. Perkowski and Dr. Grubbs received an invitation to speak as consultants to the distance education department at Georgia State University.

Creché Navarro’s band, LadyCreech and the MainStreet Band, will headline Barnesville’s Battle of the Bones on May 1st.

Dr. Neil Boumpani’s granddaughter (photo right) learned to say “purple” correctly.

Goodbye, Sharon!

It comes with great sadness that Sharon Ellis will be retiring from Gordon on March 31st. Everyone in the Business Office will miss Sharon as she has proven to be a Wonderful supervisor, valuable employee, and great friend to those she has worked with over the past five years. We wish Sharon the best and know she will enjoy the much earned retirement!

The winners of the State Charitable Contribution Committee’s VIP parking space raffle were:

- Student Winner: Nancy Walraven
- Staff Winner: Jackie Lovejoy
- Faculty Winner: Geoff Clement – gave his to Betty Carper
News from Department of Math and Physical Science


Candace Carroll gave a presentation at the GPC Math Conference on Friday, February 13, 2015. Her presentation was titled “Permutation Groups and Nearly Even Chords.” A perfectly even chord is one that divides the scale evenly. By single semitonal displacement, a perfectly even chord becomes a chord that is nearly even. Nearly even chords are important in music because they are the most consonant chords. Permutation groups may be used to model this single semitonal displacement from perfectly even chords to nearly even chords. Musical examples included “Oh Darling!” by the Beatles, and Prelude in E minor Op. 28, No. 4 and F Minor Mazurka, Op. 68, No. 4 by Frédéric Chopin. Candace Carroll would like to thank Dr. Neil Boumpani for his contribution to this presentation.

Dr. Marwan Zabdawi is presenting, “Applications in Calculus & Analytic Geometry” on March 14 at the 2015 ICTCM (International Conference on Technology in Collegiate Mathematics) in Las Vegas/Nevada.

Dr. Zabdawi also volunteered as a judge for the St. George Episcopal Middle School Science Fair in Milner on February 27, 2015.

Dr. Richard Schmude, Jr. had the poster “Near-Infrared Photometry of Jupiter and Saturn” accepted at the 46th Lunar and Planetary Science Conference. This conference will be held March 16-20, 2015 in Woodlands, Texas (near Houston).

Two of Gordon State College’s Regents’ Engineering Transfer Program (RETP) students, Morgan Prince and Lael Gobble, have been accepted into the Georgia Institute of Technology for the Summer 2015 semester. Ms. Prince is a second generation Gordon student as her father, Blake, attended Gordon in 2000.

News from GSC at McDonough

We have two new student assistants working at the McDonough site. Mary Browning, who is pursuing a baccalaureate Human Services, and Patrick Mapp, who is pursuing a degree in Political Science. Mary and Patrick are welcome additions to our McDonough office!

We held a midterm snack break with our McDonough students on March 3rd and 4th. The snack break was an opportunity to congratulate students on a job well done and to encourage them to keep up the hard work.

To stay in the loop with the McDonough site, check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GordonStateCollegeMcDonough.

**Remaining Paid Jeans Days to support Gordon Gives**

- 3/27/2015
- 4/3/2015
- 5/21/2015
- 6/12/2015
- 6/25/2015
Gordon State College School of Education received notification that it was awarded another Grant by the Teacher Quality Enhancement program. The grant funds K-12 teachers from around the State of Georgia to explore the water highways and water quality of Georgia from Atlanta out to Gray’s Reef. The grant is in conjunction with our partners the Georgia Aquarium, and NOAA with Gray’s Reef National Marine Sanctuary. The grant will run during the Third week of June in 2015 and will include Dr. Theresa Stanley (Biology) and Dr. Mike Mahan (Education). The grant was for $43,000.00

Also on the grant front, the School of Education is participating with Lamar County Elementary School teachers in Science and Mathematics. Faculty from Gordon State work with teachers from Lamar Elementary School on their instructional methods, delivery and content. There will be a two week workshop at Gordon State during the first two weeks of June in 2015. This is a two year grant and the award was for $210,000.00 from the NSF under Math and Science Partnership grants. Dr. Ed Wheeler, (math) Ms. Susan Byars, (math) and Dr. Kim White-Fredette (education) are working on the mathematics portion while Dr. Richard Schmude (Chemistry) and Dr. Mike Mahan (education) work on the science portion. Ms. Autumn Schaefer provides valuable technical support in instructional technology.

Dr. Kimberly White-Fredette is using this semester to coordinate the latest teacher education requirement from the State of Georgia. Student-teachers from Gordon State College are piloting the new edTPA requirements. There are 11 student-teachers in Henry County that are participating in the pilot. The requirements become effective for all student-teachers in fall of 2015.

Dr. John Barnard, Associate Professor of Education, has been asked to serve on a PSC State Committee. The PSC is looking at the qualifications and licensing requirements for K-12 Media Specialists. Dr. Barnard holds Master’s and Doctoral degrees in Media Specialist and Technology.

On February 19, Dr. Mike Mahan (Education) travelled to the Georgia Statehouse with seven education majors to meet with area legislators “on the hill”. The Georgia Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (GACTE) sponsors a “day on the Hill” each year for member institutions to travel to Atlanta and meet with legislators about teacher education.

Dr. Mike Mahan, Dean of the School of Education returned from Boston, MA during the 6-8th of March to discuss the possibility of students from China attending Gordon State College in Education. Dr. Mahan was joined by Dr. Qi Zhou of Psychology and Dr. Nolan McMurray, Chair of Mathematics and Natural Sciences.

In January, the Board of Regents of the University System approved the major in Middle Grades Education for Gordon State College. The School of Education is busy preparing all of the documentation needed for State and National accreditation visits required. NCATE/CAEP and the PSC will have an off-site visit in July of 2015 and a full on-site accreditation visit in November of 2015. The purpose is to accredit the new Middle Grades Major and to continue the accreditation of our secondary teacher education majors in Biology, English, History, and Mathematics.

Updates from the School of Education

Chili Cook-off Winner

Ms. Karen Stigura, Academic Assistant in Education was chosen the winner in the recent Chili Cook-off. This was in spite of heavy competition.

Congratulations to Karen.