I always chuckle when people outside the college ask me when school is over. “When does school get out at Gordon?” they might ask. I chuckle because there is no real summer break for higher ed administrators. I am happy to point out that summer session starts soon after spring semester ends and fall semester right after that. We never really close down on a college campus for more than a few days at a time. Nevertheless, the spring commencement does signal a kind of ending of one academic year that is significant to those of us who live in this world.

I am reflecting on all that has transpired during my first academic year at Gordon. We have accomplished a lot and yet it is hard not to let the unfinished work nag at me. Therefore, I am relieved that we will have another fresh start in August and that I have the summer to continue working. I couldn’t possibly think of all of the things we have done this year, but these are a few of the highlights that come to mind from my corner of the world:

- Transitioned to a new organizational structure in Academic Affairs, albeit with several interim leaders
- Launched a Task Force on Academic Progress which explored ways in which we can improve student success at Gordon
- This is still a work in progress. This group generated MANY wonderful ideas and we have only begun to implement these. We will continue our work on implementing these ideas this next year.
- Hosted a successful site visit by a SACSCOC visitation team for our proposal to offer more than 50% of an associate degree at the Henry County location
- This was an important milestone also because it gave us a preview of our upcoming accreditation reaffirmation visit in fall of 2016.
- Served record numbers of Accel students this academic year
- Served record numbers of students in the Student Success Center through a variety of innovative and engaging practices
- Made significant strides toward revising our Assessment process in preparation for Fall 2014 implementation
- HIred umpteen faculty with this work still ongoing.... (umpteen is a technical term that some folks may have to research)
- Began the exploration of Lecturer faculty titles, with implementation details to be worked out in the coming academic year
- Expanded offerings at the Henry County site and offered alternative class times and schedules such as half-term classes and hybrid classes to test viability and student interest
- Received SACSCOC approval to offer our Human Services and Health Services and Informatics Administration baccalaureate degree programs
- Received approvals from the USG to prepare both Pre-licensure BSN and Middle Grades Education baccalaureate degree proposals

This is clearly not an exhaustive list --although it was exhausting work. I certainly cannot take credit for this work. I can only acknowledge that it has occurred and I am pleased to see that we are making progress toward moving Gordon State College forward, even as I lament the work that is left to be done in future years. The Academic Affairs leadership team will hold a retreat on Thursday, June 5 to review the past year’s work and develop a prioritized list of goals and projects for the 2014-2015 academic year. The work never ends, but I am grateful for that. I enjoy the challenge of the work and I am grateful to have found so many kindred spirits who are willing to shoulder such responsibility and heavy workloads alongside me. I hope to see you around this summer, but I especially hope everyone comes back in the fall full of renewed energy and ideas. Take care.
How to Name a Group of Faculty and/or Staff Assigned to Work on Something

Dr. Margaret Venable

Is it in the Statutes? Call it a Standing Committee or a College Committee
Is it a big project? Call it a Task Force
Is it a smaller project? Call it an ad hoc Committee
Is it something NO ONE WANTS TO DO? Call it a Workshop or Training
Will there be refreshments? Call it a party!

Advising Tip of the Month

Expect advisees to experience difficulties – sometimes because of poor judgment, mistaken ideas, or even plain bad luck. Although the temptation is often to think, “They brought it on themselves,” the reality is, we’ve all been in need, too, and were grateful for an extra effort from someone we trusted to help us. Just a little added attention and understanding from the advisor may change a struggling student’s attitude and perspective—and possibly turn a reluctant learner into an independent learner.

Farewell to Dr. Marvin Thomas

Dr. Don Butts

Professor of History, Dr. Marvin Thomas, is retiring this summer after close to forty years of service to Gordon State College. Dr. Thomas arrived at Gordon in its early years as a junior college in the University System of Georgia. The student body was a little over a thousand, the faculty could be numbered in the dozens, and many of the buildings that now make up the campus were not yet here. Marvin witnessed and played an important role in the institution’s transition from Gordon Junior College, to Gordon College, and to Gordon State College. In addition to serving as a member of the history faculty, Dr. Thomas did a stint as the Dean of Students. His lifelong passion for the Civil War is well known, although some of his students indicate that after taking his class, they are not quite sure who won.

During his years at Gordon, Dr. Thomas served on just about every faculty committee, took an active part in student affairs, and was a truly entertaining colleague. We will not go into the dunking booth or Ms. Bush’s scuppernong wine, but his sense of humor and dedication to his students and the college will be missed. We all wish him the best in his retirement.

Did You Know?

Gordon State College has graduated more than 400 students with baccalaureate degrees since Spring of 2009.
News from the Department of History and Political Science

Dr. Erica Johnson

National History Day
Dr. Erica Johnson and Phi Alpha Theta President Pamela Fuentes participated as judges for National History Day on Saturday, August 26, 2014, at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. National History Day is an annual competition for students in grades six through twelve. This year, 522 students (a new record) submitted historical papers, exhibits, documentaries, performances, and websites on the theme of “Rights and Responsibilities in History.” Winners from Georgia’s state contest of National History Day program, sponsored by the Georgia Humanities Council, will advance to the national contest in College Park, Maryland in June 2014.

Publications
Spring 2014 BA-History and Phi Alpha Theta member Wendy Giere-Frye’s article “Emancipation for Slaves or Emancipation for All: Women, Free Speech, and the Abolition Movement” has been accepted for publication in Papers and Publications: Interdisciplinary Journal of Undergraduate Research, a peer-reviewed undergraduate research journal published by the University of North Georgia.

Dr. Erica Johnson’s article “From Harlem to SoHo: Perceptions of Deep Ellum” has been accepted for publication in fall 2014 in Legacies: a History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas, a biannual peer-reviewed journal devoted to the rich history of Dallas and North Central Texas.

Student Successes
Congratulations to Christopher Childress, BA-History, Spring 2014, for his acceptance into the Mercer University School of Law for the Fall 2014 semester.

Congratulations to the students who earned their bachelor's degrees in history this semester: Wendy Giere-Frye, Summa Cum Laude; Christopher Childress, Cum Laude; Stephanie Martin, Cum Laude; Ahmed Foggie, Cum Laude; Joshua Lunn, Cum Laude; James Cordele, Ricardo Gordillo, Michael Leverett, Adam Serpas, Holli Stouffer, Arnaldo Vazquez!

Faculty Milestones
Congratulations to Dr. Frank Winters on his promotion to Associate Professor of History and his being granted tenure. Dr. Winters joined the Gordon State College history faculty in 2009. He specializes in the history of the British Isles, and his teaching fields include Modern Europe, Modern Britain and Modern Russia. He recently concluded a successful three-year run as Director of the Undergraduate Research Symposium and has an article under review for publication.

Congratulations to Dr. Jeffrey Rogers on his promotion to Professor of History. Professor Rogers joined the Gordon State College history faculty in 2004. He specializes in early American history and the American South, and his teaching fields include the Constitution, the early American republic, and the US Civil War. Dr. Rogers' well–deserved promotion comes on the heels of his recent journal publications.
News from the Department of Humanities

Dr. Steve Raynie

Dr. Rhonda Wilcox’s book, Reading Joss Whedon, is now available through the Syracuse University Press!

GSC Staff News

Justin White

COLLEGE PICNIC:
On Thursday, May 15th, the Staff Council hosted a College Picnic in the Dining Hall for Faculty and Staff. Thank you to all those involved with planning, setup, and PARTICIPATION!! We had a really nice turn out. Also, thank you for to President Burns, Dr. Venable, and Dr. Chamberlain, who served us hotdogs and hamburgers!!! A special thank you goes out to Bill, Yvette, and Brittany with Sodexo who worked hard all morning to get the meal setup for us.

Tammy Barton and Carlous Plummer will be leaving the Bookstore staff on May 23rd. Tammy will be moving on in her career to Henry County Schools and Carlous will be transferring to the Business Office. They will both be missed in the Bookstore! The Bookstore Staff wish them both the very best that life has to offer!!

CONGRATULATIONS:

- Laura Shadrick earned her Bachelors in Business Administration.
- Susan Crosby earned her Associates in Business Administration.

Remaining Jeans Days to support Gordon Gives

- May 23, 2014
- June 13, 2014
- June 27, 2014