Top Ten Reasons to be Thankful

Dr. Margaret H. Venable

10. A long holiday weekend is coming up so you can get caught up on all of that grading!
9. When awkward conversations come up at family gatherings, you can always excuse yourself to write a final exam.
8. Clearly, no one can be expected to diet at this time of year!
7. Despite what your friends may say, you are NOT a turkey.
5. Half-time.
4. Increased state revenues during the holiday season.
3. In a few weeks, the semester will be over and we make a fresh start!
2. Our first ever December commencement ceremony at Gordon.
1. There is no place like home, and home is wherever you make it.

These days, people often ask me “where are you from?” or “where are you living?” and I have to admit that I am not sure how to answer either of these questions. I’m feeling a bit like a gypsy in recent years and months. All of this helps me remember, though, that what really matters is not my billing address or acreage. Rather, what matters is that sense of belonging, that sense of fitting. I call Gordon State College my home now. I have family all over the world as a result of my life experiences and now I find more family here in Barnesville – and Griffin and Thomaston and Henry and Pike counties…..

As the Thanksgiving season approaches, I am increasingly aware of all of the people and things in my life for which I am grateful. It is easy to lose sight of these things some days when life does not go as I had planned, but there are so many reminders around me.

There are many challenges and opportunities ahead of us at Gordon State College, yet none of these seems insurmountable after a good night’s rest – or a good cup of decaf. Every day, I am inspired by at least one other person on campus. We have accomplished much work this semester and I look forward to spring semester with anticipation of new experiences and continued progress.

Fall Concert

The Gordon College Instrumental Ensemble Fall Concert will be held in the Fine Arts Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, November 25. All are welcome!
I don’t dare try to list all of the work that is being done within Academic Affairs. I will only call to your attention a few brief updates.

An Assessment Workshop was held on November 1 with consultant Dr. Ed Rugg. We learned a great deal of practical information about how to update our assessment processes to better position Gordon for re-accreditation by 2017. Look for proposed changes in our assessment processes coming soon.

Gordon State College representatives attended a symposium hosted by the University System entitled, “New Models: MOOC’s and Beyond”. This was an opportunity to learn what other Institutions within our system are doing to re-design the learning experiences for students with the goals of increasing affordability, student success and student access to higher education. MOOC’s were only one tool discussed.

The USG is launching a new initiative called Affordable Learning Georgia (ALG). This initiative is described as “a one-stop service to help USG faculty and staff identify lower-cost, electronic, free and Open Educational Resources, building on the cost-effective subscription resources provided by GALILEO and the USG libraries.” Dr. Phil Jenn has agreed to serve as Gordon’s representative in this effort, called as our “ALG Campus Champion”. Furthermore, Ms. Brenda Rutherford will serve as our library liaison for this initiative. Watch for more news and information from Phil and Brenda!

As requested by the USG, Gordon State College has submitted two customer service initiative project ideas that we will implement this coming year. One project involves offering remote tutoring services and the other involves the revision of our General Studies Area F. Stay tuned for more details!

Watch for the agenda coming soon for the December 4 (2 pm) Faculty Meeting.
Academic Affairs Updates

Dr. Richard Baskin

Getting Students Registered: The college is making a special effort to get eligible students registered for the spring term. Enrollment management remains a high priority in the USG, and Gordon State’s Enrollment Management Council met this month to develop more proactive methods for attracting new and continuing students to our spring course offerings. Advisors continue to play a key role in the retention of eligible, current students. You may have already read the Advising Tip in this month’s GSC Connect. The Provost will be sending an email after Thanksgiving with more details.

COMPASS as Exit Test for Learning Support Classes: Beginning this semester, learning support students who pass their learning support classes will not be required to take the exit COMPASS. The University System of Georgia is phasing out use of the COMPASS Test as exit test, as the COMPASS was designed for placement into a course level, not as an assessment of learning in a particular course. Many testing experts contend that the two things are different, and as many of us in the System know, as an exit test, the COMPASS is flawed, especially in English and Reading. Gwen Sharpe, our Coordinator of Learning Support, has been working with faculty this semester to ensure that learning assessments in LS courses meet the college’s expectations. COMPASS is still being used as the instrument for placement.

Moving Forward with Prior Learning Assessment

Ms. Tonya Moore

Gordon State College is moving forward with its efforts to develop Prior Learning Assessment options for Adult Learners. 11 faculty members participated in PLA Assessors training at Southern Poly Technical College this fall. Assessors were trained on differentiating learning from experience, assessing prior learning, determining the degree and level of competence and learning how to identify, articulate, measure and evaluate student portfolios. After successful completion of the course each assessor will be able guide students in preparing evidence for the assessment of learning. Multiple areas are represented within the assessment team such as Nursing and Allied Health, Ann Purvis, Margie Wright and Nanci Cross, Business and Public Service, Jeffery Knighton, Ric Calhoun, and Barry Kicklighter, Humanities, Cortney Grubbs, Brian Webb and Adria Goldman, Education, Michael Mahan and our Adult Learner Coordinator, Tonya Moore. The PLA Assessment team will meet in January to begin the process of establishing policies and guidelines for the Portfolio Development process options for students.
By now many of you have seen the splendid poster and logo designed for CETL by Gordon State graduate and SSC Program Assistant Charlie Coile, reflecting so well our theme of conversation about teaching and learning. So what comes next? The CETL advisory board is excited about our plans for the spring semester; for now, please mark two dates on your calendar:

- **Thursday, January 16**: CETL Happy Hour at 506 Spencer Street, across from the Fine Arts Building. Drop-in from 5 to 7, find out about teaching circles, open classrooms, Mid-semester Instructional Diagnosis, etc., and maybe even sign up for something!

- **Friday, January 31, 1:00-4:00**: Workshop on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, led by Dr. William Buskist, Distinguished Professor in the Teaching of Psychology and Fellow of the Biggio Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning at Auburn University. The workshop will lead us through the nuts-and-bolts of SoTL, from idea to data to analysis to presentation to publication.

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**Henry County Happenings**

*Dr. Ric Calhoun*

Dr. Max Burns and Dr. Margaret Venable visited the Henry County Campus at the Academy for Advanced Studies on Tuesday evening, November 5th. Students and faculty had a great time meeting and talking with Drs. Burns and Venable about Gordon State and opportunities in the future at the Henry Campus. Dr. Burns took the time to encourage the students to engage themselves in college life as much as possible, pointing out opportunities that were upcoming on the campus in Barnesville. Students and faculty shared refreshments during their short time out from class that evening. Special thanks to Valerie Calhoun for providing some delicious snacks.

**Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning**

*Dr. Alan Burstein*

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Submitted by Dr. Ivey: On Monday of November the 18th, The Blackshear Literary and Creative Writing Club traveled to Barnesville’s Heritage Inn Assisted Living Facility to read poetry and short stories to the elderly as part of the club’s community charity project. Members of the club performed classic works which included AnnaBel Lee, Birches, After Apple Picking, Homage to my Hips, and My Papa’s Waltz. Club members also performed short essays on parenting by Bill Cosby which inspired laughter. The literature used in the event represented the works of such greats as Shel Silverstein, Ernest Hemingway, Rudyard Kipling, and Li Young Lee. The club’s president, Ryan Ferguson, even performed guitar as the rest of the club served refreshments.

Marlin Adams reports that he has a show continuing through the end of November with three of his long time painting students: Warren Griffin, Stacy Ingram, and Gloria Smith at the Macon Arts Alliance Gallery at 486 1st St, Macon, GA. 31201. His contribution is almost entirely pottery, with two paintings in the show.

Dr. Rhonda Wilcox attended the second "Culturing the Popular" conference at Converse College in Spartanburg, SC, on Nov. 15. As the keynoter for the first conference, she was invited to participate in session discussions.

Dr. Wesley Venus taught his unit plan “Modes of Conflict” at Lamar County High School this month as part of the “Building the Bridge to College English” program. Dr. Venus led reading discussions and tutored students in writing their essays on the topic.

Dr. Steve Raynie gave a paper entitled “Selling the English Major” at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association conference on November 10. He was part of a panel called “Building the Degree: The Potential and Pitfalls of Establishing a B.A. Program in English During Uncertain Times.”
Dr. Qi Zhou attended the School Science and Mathematics Association's Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas from November 14 to November 16 where she and Dr. Houbin Fang presented “A Comparative Study: Teachers’ Geometry Knowledge and Their Beliefs in Geometry Teaching”.


Dr. Alan Burstein attended the CETL directors meeting at the BOR on November 14. He also attended, along with Chad Davies, Ed Whitelock, and Peter Higgins the “National Students in Transition” Conference in Atlanta on Oct. 12-13.

Dr. Christy Flatt was asked by “Sociologists for Women in Society” to serve as a judge for the Undergraduate Social Action Award. The national award recognizes undergraduate students who have made significant contributions to making the lives of women better. Emily Mumford, current Human Services major, was one of three 2013 award winners for the “Undergraduate Social Action” Award.

Dr. Christy Flatt, who is a member of Griffin’s Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT), assisted the Griffin Fire Department in directing traffic in downtown Griffin on Thursday, October 31 for the annual business candy giveaway.

As a member of Sociologists for Women in Society and the Social Action Committee, Dr. Christy Flatt will be working as editor for a publication on gender and language. Dr. Flatt will be coordinating with the author and leading scholars in both Sociology and Linguistics to develop an informed resource for faculty and activists interested in social justice.

Dr. Brenda Johnson was elected as the Georgia State Representative to the Southern Organization of Human Services.

Dr. Ric Calhoun participated in the Changing Face of Principles of Marketing Forum in Atlanta on Friday, November 15th. The event was sponsored by McGraw-Hill and led by Dr. Steven Hunt from Arkansas State University. The forum had participants from a number of Marketing programs around the state of Georgia. The focus was on Best Practices in the Marketing Class, Global Marketing, and the Relevance of Marketing.

Honors Program Proud to Announce Graduates

Congratulations to Asia Anderson and Anna Cogdill, our first Honors Program graduates to complete a bachelors degree!
Updates from the Department of Math and Physical Science

Dr. Allen Fuller

Richard Schmude, Jr. has published two papers:

“ALPO Observations of the Remote Planets in 2011-2012”


Richard has also given the following talks/presentations:

- A telescope/binocular viewing session and a laser light show to children and their parents on Halloween. (given on October 31 in Barnesville).
- “The Polar Caps of Mars” a 60 minute presentation given to the Charlie Elliott Chapter of the Atlanta Astronomy Club on November 2, 2013. [About 18 attended] The talk was given at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center near Atlanta, GA.
- “Studies of the Polar Caps of Mars: 2003-2012” a 20 minute presentation given at the Georgia Regional Astronomy Meeting at Columbus State University on October 26, 2013.

Dr. Marwan Zabdawi has been accepted into Marquis Who’s Who 2014 Publication.

For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food, for LOVE and FRIENDS,
For Everything Thy goodness sends.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Happy Thanksgiving