The Nucleus 2012-2013

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Celebrating Women in STEM

Also inside:
- Elephant expert in residence at Georgia College
- University wins first statewide STEM award
- 50-million-year-old cherry blossom fossil on display
- Center for Engaged Learning opens
In September 2011, I joined several female faculty colleagues, students and Dr. Nancy Jackson for a “Women in Science” roundtable discussion at Georgia College. At that time, Dr. Jackson (more page 8) served as president of the American Chemical Society — the world’s largest scientific society — and manager of the International Chemical Threat Reduction Department in the Global Security Center, which is located at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Like Jackson, an increasing number of women have obtained doctoral degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, known as STEM fields. However, as much as women in STEM have to celebrate, we have much work to do. Women, particularly women of color, are significantly underrepresented in almost all STEM academic and non-academic positions. Plus, according the National Science Foundation, although women make up close to half of the U.S. workforce, only one in four STEM jobs is held by a woman.

Research suggests women’s representation and advancement in STEM are affected by many factors — stereotypes; societal impacts; organizational constraints; differential effect of work and family demands; implicit and explicit bias; and lack of women in leadership and decision-making positions — that are unrelated to their ability, interest and technical skills. In fact, a recent Yale study revealed science professors at American universities widely regard female undergraduates as less competent than male students with the same accomplishments and skills.

From a national perspective, underrepresentation of women in STEM is particularly alarming as we need a diverse workforce to remain globally competitive. This issue of The Nucleus gives a peek into the impact made this year by a few of our own women in STEM.

Happy reading!

Dr. Rosalie Richards, Editor
Local educator becomes SSP Fellow

Congratulations to Susan McGill for becoming one of 10 Society for Science & the Public (SSP) Fellows for 2012.

Fellows received $8,500 to contribute to their classroom or community, and ongoing training and resources from SSP.

“At first, I really did not believe I was selected as a recipient,” said McGill, a Baldwin High School science teacher in Milledgeville and part-time science professor at Georgia College. “This grant will help support an algae research program, introducing high school biology, chemistry, physical science and environmental science students to academic research. It also encourages them to consider attending college to pursue science as a career goal.”

The SSP Fellowship provides teachers financial and training resources to support and inspire science students. The fellowship also supports high-quality, independent scientific research by interested and motivated students.

Fellows are competitively selected from high school science and math teachers from across the nation.

Visit societyforscience.org/outreach to learn more about the SSP Fellowship.

Earth Science Experience

Georgia College science students helped local third-graders answer these questions in engaging ways during Earth Science Experience on campus throughout the academic year.

Third-graders of Blandy Hill Elementary School and Creekside Elementary School spent a week identifying different types of rocks, soils and fossils and exploring each of their uses through games, videos and art activities.

Earth Science Experience is part of Dr. Sam Mutiti’s historical and environmental geology courses. His college students spent a semester developing innovative lesson plans to help educate local elementary students about the fields of study.

“Earth Science Experience is about getting our youth interested in the field early,” said Mutiti, geology professor at Georgia College and expert in surface and groundwater interactions.

“In Georgia, third grade is when K-12 students learn about rocks, minerals, weathering and soils. Not only are our local third-graders receiving hands-on experience about science, they are learning from our students who are passionate about science as well.”

For more information about the program, email samuel.mutiti@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-5858.

Honoring STARs

Congratulations to Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) honorees for the 2012-2013 academic year.

STAR acknowledges Georgia’s outstanding high school seniors and teachers who have been instrumental in students’ academic development.

This year’s honorees received recognition during ceremonies at Toombs County High School in Lyons, Ga.

Among the science teachers honored was Ashley Lampp, Georgia College alumna and member of the university’s Regional Science & Engineering Fair advisory board.

Showcasing regional scientists and engineers

Georgia College hosted its annual Regional Science & Engineering Fair this semester, themed “Reshaping our Future,” to answer these questions and more.

Providing a forum for regional kindergarten through 12th-grade students to display their results of scientific inquiry, this year’s two-day event explored everything from growing rock candy crystals to measuring the speed of light using egg whites.

For more information about the annual fair, email science@gcsu.edu or call 478-445-7531.

Say ‘YES’ to science

Elementary students said “YES” to science in June 2012 during the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) program Summer Science Camp at Blandy Hills Elementary School.

Local educators and Georgia College students, faculty and staff developed programs in areas such as robotics, gardening, musical experimentations and water quality testing during the four-week camp.

The program’s goal is to help extend students’ understanding of science throughout the academic year.

The YES Program is funded by the Georgia Department of Education’s 21st Century Learning Community Center Programs.

For more information about YES, call 478-445-0145.
Chemist uses position to inspire community

Serving as an endowed professor takes nonstop commitment, collaboration, communication and campus and community support across all disciplines and professions.

The position also requires a distinctive personality — a person who is passionate about excellence in scholarship, research productivity and providing leadership and engaging learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

“An endowed professorship is a chance for a faculty member to bring a niche area of distinction to Georgia College,” said Dr. Rosalie Richards, Georgia College’s first Kaolin Endowed Chair in Science. “The Kaolin Endowed Chair in Science allows me to work with various disciplines to provide science-related possibilities for people of all ages.”

Richards works alongside a range of students, faculty, staff, community members and state and national agencies to provide engaging science-related opportunities at Georgia College. Throughout the academic year, she collaborates with:

- Approximately 250 faculty and staff members across campus;
- More than 100 students in her classrooms each semester;
- Roughly 300 participants of the Science Education Center’s summer science academy, including camps, teacher workshops, research programs and academic programs;
- More than 31 counties to foster projects and partnerships; and
- Brings in approximately $600,000 per year in funding for science education through partnerships with individuals and organizations.

For the entire story, visit infox.gcsu.edu and search “Kaolin Endowed Chair.”

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Environmental scientist recognized for innovative workshop

Dr. Caralyn Zehnder’s work in environmental science has been recognized in national science education newsletter SENCER — Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities.

The publication acknowledged Zehnder for developing and implementing an innovative lab-designing workshop with the assistance of Georgia College undergraduate and graduate students.

“Every year approximately 320 undergraduate, largely non-science majors, enroll in Georgia College’s ‘Introduction to Environmental Science’ course,” said Zehnder, assistant professor and environmental science program coordinator.

“These redesigned labs are more meaningful to our students because they are connected to environmental issues students care about.”

The student-built labs were funded through a 2009 SENCER one-year, $2,800 award granted to Georgia College’s Department of Biological & Environmental Sciences.

SENCER is part of the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement, which awards competitive funds to promote projects emphasizing measurable, achievable goals and innovative plans.

“These redesigned labs are more meaningful to our students because they are connected to environmental issues students care about.”

— Dr. Caralyn Zehnder

For the entire story, visit infox.gcsu.edu and search “SENCER.”

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One of spring’s most iconic flowers blooms at Georgia College’s Natural History Museum and Planetarium — in fossil form.

Fifty-million-year-old cherry blossom fossils now add historical hue to the museum’s fossil plant collection.

“These fossils give us our first glimpse of tree species found today right here in Georgia,” said Dr. Melanie DeVore, Georgia College’s Georgia Power Endowed Professorship for Environmental Science.

The opportunity to explore the ancient flora came after amateur diggers unearthed the fossils at Stonerose Interpretive Center & Eocene Fossil Site in Republic, Wash. “What’s significant about these fossils found in Republic is that many of the fossil trees represented in the rock record there are similar to deciduous species found in the Eastern United States,” DeVore said. “So there is a direct connection to us.”

DeVore arranged for Stonerose to loan the cherry fossils to Georgia College for display in the Natural History Museum and Planetarium through 2013.

The cherry blossom fossils are among more than 50 different fossil plant specimens on display in the museum. However, the museum’s entire fossil plant collection includes several thousand plant fossils that rotate on display throughout the academic year.

Georgia College’s Natural History Museum and Planetarium is free and open to the public 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. the first Saturday of each month.

Call 478-445-2395 for museum information.

For the entire story, visit info.gcsu.edu and search “cherry blossom.”

Georgia College’s chapter of the American Chemical Society (ACS) has earned the Outstanding Chapter Award for the fifth consecutive year.

The chapter also received the scientific society’s Green Chapter Award for the fourth year in a row.

The awards acknowledge the Chemistry Club’s chemical and green chemistry activities throughout the 2011-2012 academic year.

“These awards recognize the leadership of our executive board led by chapter president Katie Fredo, senior chemistry major, as well as the enthusiasm for sharing chemistry with our community,” said Dr. Catrena Lisse, professor of chemistry at Georgia College and faculty adviser. “The legacy of winning these awards during the past several years drives the current students to work just as hard as the previous year to ensure success. It is a privilege to serve as adviser to such an amazing group of students.”

The list of winning chapters published in the November/December issue of inChemistry, student member magazine of ACS.

Award-winning chapters also will become honored at the 245th ACS National Meeting in New Orleans, La., during April 2013.

“This chapter is large and very well organized,” wrote Nancy Bakowski, ACS Undergraduate Programs Manager, in a letter. “This year you were able to meet your stated goals of increasing community outreach, maintaining member participation and adding more fun social activities. Keep up the great work.”

Georgia College’s previous awards include the following:

► 2010-2011 Outstanding Chapter
► 2009-2010 Outstanding Chapter
► 2008-2009 Outstanding Chapter
► 2007-2008 Outstanding Chapter
► 2006-2007 Commendable Chapter
► 2005-2006 Commendable Chapter
► 2004-2005 Honorable Mention Chapter

► 2010-2011 Green Chemistry Award
► 2009-2010 Green Chemistry Award
► 2008-2009 Green Chemistry Award
As part of Women in Science and Women’s History months, this year’s cover highlights women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). These students, faculty members and alumni are trailblazers in their particular fields of study. Learn why each one stands out as a leader in STEM.

Five Georgia College women share their paths to STEM success.
Dr. Gita Phelps (COMPUTER SCIENTIST)

Georgia College faculty member Dr. Gita Phelps makes it her job to stay up to date with the latest advances in technology. She also extends her curiosity for computer software development to her students. “It’s a challenge to keep up with new technology,” said Phelps, associate professor of computer science in Georgia College’s J. Whitney Bunting College of Business. “However, I encourage my students to remain curious and try new things.”

LeAnne Lee (CHEMIST)

The unlimited possibilities chemistry provided led alumna LeAnne Lee to the lab. “Chemistry is a unique field,” said Lee, ’05. “The skills learned in chemistry are desirable in other positions, and there is always something new to learn.” Lee’s undergraduate experiences at Georgia College helped prepare her for a career in chemistry. Currently, she works as laboratory manager for Microbac Laboratories Inc. in Nashville, Tenn.

Kathleen Bergin (BIOLOGIST)

Georgia College alumna Kathleen Bergin is a biologist by training and an educator by passion. She also is a strong believer of preparation, opportunity and options for youth to excel in mathematics and science. “My only goal has been to share my passion for learning and support those I encounter in developing their own passion and knowledge,” said Bergin, ’72. “All the positions I have held throughout my career have afforded me the privilege of accomplishing this goal.” Bergin’s career in science took her from high school science teacher to state science coordinator to now program director of the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Division of Undergraduate Education.

Chelsea Davis (MATHEMATICS ALUMNA)

Awarded Georgia College’s “Outstanding Senior Math Major,” alumna Chelsea Davis has a knack for numbers. “I studied math because I always have enjoyed learning about the subject matter,” said the math major and computer science minor. “Since most subjects involve math, it is a valuable skill to know.” While studying at Georgia College, Davis served as a peer tutor in the university’s Learning Center. She held tutoring sessions to help students with math and computer science questions. Before graduating fall 2012, Davis earned the opportunity to conduct software engineering research with the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa as a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) participant — a National Science Foundation program that supports active, ongoing research projects with undergraduates. Her research project involved the use of design patterns in the development of scientific software. The experience also allowed Davis to engage in graduate-level software engineering workshops. Currently, Davis is earning a master’s degree in mathematical sciences at Clemson University in South Carolina. “My master’s program is going good so far,” Davis said. “I plan to go into industry after graduating and work for a company where I can apply my math skills to solve real-world problems and applications.”

Audrey Poole (PHYSICS ALUMNA)

During her undergraduate studies at Georgia College, the physics major developed the necessary skills to not just ask questions but the right questions to grasp physics concepts. “Prior to taking physics, I never spoke up in class,” said Poole, ’12, a university Physics Scholar. “I quickly learned that in order to understand physics, I had to ask questions. Now, I naturally ask questions inside and outside the classroom.”

Phelps earned a bachelor’s degree in computer science at Georgia College. She earned a master’s degree and doctorate in computer science from the University of Georgia (UGA). “Computer science is a male dominated field,” she said, “so I’m proud I was the first female to graduate with a doctorate in computer science from UGA.” Phelps returned to her alma mater to inspire more students to enter computer science. Phelps and her students already have created helpful apps for students, faculty and staff to use around campus: Career Center app BobcatTrack to help students with career development and web-enabled SNAP app to request safety escort service.

“Microbac is one of the most diverse, commercial testing laboratories in the country,” said Lee, who oversees daily operations of Microbac’s laboratory. “We test everything from food to pharmaceuticals. The Nashville Division also specializes in food and water microbiology.” Lee successfully led Microbac’s Knoxville Division to national accreditation.

“Georgia College gave me the foundation,” said Bergin. “It also afforded me many opportunities to develop leadership skills that have served me well throughout my career of more than 40 years in this field.”

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Supplemental Instruction

Georgia College students are helping each other to succeed in a meaningful way: supplemental instruction (SI). SI is peer instruction by trained undergraduates. Providing the necessary learning tools to help their peers, supplemental instructors are typically hired for entry-level gateway courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) — courses that present the largest hurdles to students pursuing STEM and related careers, such as medicine and dentistry.

Junior chemistry major Ruchi Patel works as a supplemental instructor.

“A supplemental instructor helped me get used to college life,” said Patel. “SI is an important resource because it helps students with trouble areas as they get acclimated to the professor and coursework.”

STEMming Out

Georgia Scholarship of STEM Teaching and Learning Conference:

Georgia College STEM and education faculty participated in the state’s inaugural conference during 2012 at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Ga. Faculty gave presentations about best practices in STEM teaching and learning.

Regional STEM Institute of Teaching and Learning Conference:

STEM faculty participated in the one-day educational experience at the University of Georgia. The free conference discussed the importance of STEM education reform and ways to improve student achievement in STEM courses.

Fun Fact: The kaolin industry of Middle Georgia and Georgia Eminent Scholars Endowment Trust Fund at the University System of Georgia (USG) support science education at Georgia College. Several local kaolin companies have contributed approximately $700,000 to establish the Kaolin Endowed Chair in Science and Science Education Outreach Program fund.

STEM Mini-Grants

The STEM Mini-Grants Program at Georgia College announces its 2013 awards. The program supports projects that aim to advance innovative teaching and learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Nine projects earned funding, totaling $54,350. The recipients include the following: Cynthia Alby and Angel Abney, foundations and secondary education, mathematics; Christine Mutiti, biological and environmental sciences; Kimberly Cossey, chemistry; Kelly Massey, kinesiology; Julia Metzker, chemistry; Lyndall Muschell, early childhood education; Indiren Pillay, biology; Gita Phelps, computer science; and Sandra Webb, literacy.

Grants are available for up to $7,000. The program is part of the Georgia College STEM Initiative, funded by the University System of Georgia.

For the past four years, grant recipients have presented their results at the annual STEM Symposium. The symposium will take place at 9 a.m. Wednesday, March 20, in the Pat Peterson Museum Education Room.

Chemical Expert Speaks

A world expert on reducing possible chemical threats, Dr. Nancy B. Jackson spoke to the Georgia College campus community. During her visit, she served as then-president of the American Chemical Society.

Jackson lectured about “The State of Chemistry in the International Year of Chemistry.”

She also provided tips to female faculty and students for navigating STEM careers during a Women in Science roundtable session.

Go to gcsu.edu/stem or contact stem@gcsu.edu for more information.
Road map to institutionalizing undergrad research

JUNE 2011: Faculty and staff attended the Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research Working Conference at the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) at University of North Carolina-Ashville.

JULY 2011: The team submitted an action plan of recommendations to Georgia College administrators for advancing undergrad research.

APRIL 2012: Georgia College hosts its 15th annual Student Research Conferences.

OCTOBER 2011-MAY 2012: Two yearlong teaching circles were implemented to learn about and share best practices in undergrad research.

AUGUST 2012: Georgia College hires its first coordinator of undergraduate research and director of the new Center for Engaged Learning.

SEPTEMBER 2012: Center for Engaged Learning opens. $100,000 to support undergrad research and creative endeavors (URACE) was approved.

NOVEMBER 2012: Calls for proposals were issued for URACE grants to support departmental projects, student travel, summer research and course design.

JANUARY 2013-PRESENT:
• Deadline for the first URACE proposals
• Rolling deadlines for student travel grants
• Georgia College hosts second URACE Symposium for faculty development.

University wins STEM award

Georgia College’s Program of Distinction, Science to Serve, is winner of this year’s first S.T.E.M. Education Awards. Presented by Technology Association of Georgia (TAG) and TAG Education Collaborative, the award recognizes the university’s program for its outstanding efforts and achievements in supporting and promoting STEM in Georgia. Georgia College won in the STEM education category for post-secondary outreach.

Elephant expert visits campus

The heavy footsteps and trumpeting calls of the largest living land mammal, the elephant, resounds at Georgia College spring semester 2013.

Internationally recognized elephant expert Dr. Caitlin O’Connell-Rodwell began her residency as the inaugural Martha Daniel Newell Visiting Distinguished Scholar.

She will host the following 7 p.m. open presentations about her research this spring:

• “Using Animal Behavior to Solve Conservation Problems: From Coral Polyps to Flamingos to Elephants:” Thursday, March 21; Arts and Sciences Building, Room 370;
• “Employing the Conservancy Model to Ensure Human Health: An HIV Case Study:” Thursday, April 4; Arts and Sciences Building, Room 370; and
• “A Writer’s Guide to the Changing Face of Publishing: The Art of Storytelling in a Digital Age:” Thursday, April 18; Arts and Sciences Building, Room 370.

2013 IC-bG Summer Institute

Faculty from across the state will explore how to move “Beyond Engaged Learning” during the second annual Innovative Course-building Group (IC-bG) Summer Institute. The one-day event will take place Friday, May 31, at Georgia College’s Macon Graduate Center, featuring interactive sessions for designing courses for students.

Visit idbg.wordpress.com for more information.
Museum Moments

Guests will learn about never-displayed-before bones and fossils at Georgia College’s Natural History Museum this year.

The museum’s exhibits have undergone a year-long renovation project to engage visitors in new ways.

“We’re in the process of gaining museum accreditation, so as part of that process, we’re making our museum more fun and educational for all ages,” said Linda Chandler, exhibit designer. “The natural world is full of wonder. As we tell the story of evolution using a geologic timeline, our museum opens up that world to visitors. This year we will feature two new displays devoted to mammals and birds using lots of skeletons.”

Last year, John Simmons, collections consultant of museum collections care and management company Museologica, visited the 2,500-square-foot public gallery to assess its effectiveness to the campus and local community.

He reported that the museum’s “staff have done an excellent job of presenting faculty research in interesting ways.”

Building on his feedback, the eight-year-old museum now includes a display for the evolution of invertebrates, each vertebrate group and plants.

“We also have the vertebrae and skull of a giraffe peeking from around a corner of the museum,” Chandler said. “Guests will learn cool facts about giraffe necks too.”

The renovation project completes summer 2013; however, the museum remains free and open to the public.

For more information about the museum, call 478-445-2395.

Fun Fact: More than 90 percent of the museum’s specimens are real bones and fossils. Most of the collected fossils are from Georgia College’s own students and professors.
Biology professor teaches agency about algae

Georgia College’s Dr. Kalina Manoylov helped a Georgia environmental agency identify algae in an effort to increase protection of water resources in the state.

The algae expert gave a three-day workshop this year to water quality specialists and environmental engineers of the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

“State legislators require protection of all species, including algae,” said Manoylov, assistant professor of biology in the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. “We can achieve this preservation with state specific nutrients criteria that will ensure protection of the reported species. The workshop helps participants understand the role of algae while standardizing collection, processing, data analyses and the interpretation of results.”

Junior becomes national green chemistry scholar

Georgia College junior Peng Hao joined student scholars of Ivy League schools to present his “green” research at this year’s international Green Chemistry & Engineering Conference.

The chemistry major became a 2012 National Science Foundation (NSF) Scholar for his green chemistry research, which he presented during the 16th annual event in Washington, D.C. Hao’s work earned NSF’s highly competitive Student Travel Scholarship to participate in the conference with Georgia College faculty mentor Dr. Koushik Banerjee, assistant professor of chemistry.

Hao worked alongside Banerjee to develop a green chemistry method that minimizes the use and generation of hazardous substance pyridine in organic chemistry laboratories.

Fun Fact: During 2011, Georgia College recycled more than 6 tons of materials — approximately 1,000 pounds per month.

‘Green’ goes blue

A Georgia College “green” initiative goes blue this year, encouraging a stronger commitment to recycling.

Student volunteers of the Georgia College Recycling Program started the Blue Bin Program to simplify recycling on campus.

“Student organizations, faculty and staff have adopted 40 of our new blue bins,” said Dr. Doug Oetter, associate professor of geography and chair of the Georgia College Sustainability Council. “Now, our campus community offers a one-stop shop for recycling magazines, newspapers, shredded paper, cardboard, aluminum cans and plastics No. 1 and 2.”

The bins are marked with the triangular recycling emblem and have four slots: two oblong for newspaper and mixed paper; a triangle for cans; and a circle for plastics.

Student volunteers have placed the blue bins in most of the buildings on main campus and several bins in residence halls on West Campus.

“Recycling is such an easy process to incorporate into your lifestyle,” said Ellen Gaither, a sophomore and student volunteer. “We have the recycling bins right next to trash cans.”
Hot Topics | Check out more science, technology, engineering and mathematics stories happening on campus by visiting info.gcsu.edu and searching the headlines below:

| Freshman becomes national chemistry scholar | Georgia College hosts Herty Hall addition grand opening | Professor’s research impacts Hong Kong student | Teaching Circles teach professors new lessons | Study abroad teaches teachers new techniques |

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2013**

**MARCH**

15 | Women’s Studies Student Symposium Milledgeville, Ga.
16 | URACE Symposium Milledgeville, Ga.
20 | STEM Symposium, Milledgeville, Ga.
21-23 | Georgia Science & Engineering Fair Athens, Ga.
27-29 | SoTL Commons Conference, Savannah, Ga.

**APRIL**

4-5 | USG Engaged Learning Conference, Athens, Ga.
5-6 | COPLAC Regional Undergraduate Research Conference Wise, Va.
7-11 | National Meeting of the American Chemical Society New Orleans, La.
11-12 | Student Research Conferences Milledgeville, Ga.
22-24 | Shades of Green Week Milledgeville, Ga.

**MAY**

31 | Innovative Course-building Group Institute Macon, Ga.

**JUNE**

10-14 | Science Camp/Jr. Milledgeville, Ga.
24-28 | Science Camp/Jr. Milledgeville, Ga.
1-12 | SMART Summer Institute Milledgeville, Ga.
8-12 | Science Camp Milledgeville, Ga.

**JULY**

Visit gcsu.edu/science for more events.