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A newsletter for North Georgia College & State University

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The Digest is published weekly by the Office of University Relations for North Georgia's faculty, staff, students and community.

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Leadership conference to focus on building Georgia students' skills

By Joshua Preston

North Georgia's 2009 annual Regional Leadership Conference will take place April 2-4, bringing together students, faculty and staff from Georgia's colleges and universities to discuss the topic of engaged leadership and how to prepare students for the challenges of the next decade.

The conference will allow faculty members and students to share information and learn from practical experiences on different college campuses, and students will be able to showcase various accomplishments their leadership roles have afforded them.

North Georgia, a state-designated leadership institution, recognizes the need for leadership development programs that prepare students to become leaders in the 21st century. The annual leadership conference is part of a continuing university initiative to teach students fundamental leadership skills and train them to be public- and private-sector leaders.

North Georgia has also created a broad range of organizations to give students practical experience in shaping and influencing group dynamics. The largest and oldest of these is the university's military program, in which cadet leaders manage and train more than 600 of their peers on a daily basis.

"This conference gives students an opportunity to talk about leadership and what they consider to be important now as a student and in the future as they graduate," Dr. Michele Hill, conference program director, said.

The April 2-4 conference in Dahlonega will highlight student leaders and groups from across Georgia and identify how they have been successful in their leadership roles. Attendees will share their ideas and experiences on how to be influential on their campuses and become more involved in their local communities.

"Students have many different ways in which they work as leaders, and they want to share those experiences," Hill said. "The students presenting are from many different majors and leadership roles."

A call for proposals went to more than 40 of Georgia's public and private colleges and universities, and faculty mentors and students are invited to submit proposals through March 16. Several presentations at the conference will include how leadership relates to topics such as diversity, ethics, women, development and education.

"At North Georgia, we provide leadership instruction to every new incoming student, which gets the student involved or thinking about their leadership role from their first semester," Hill said.

That approach allows North Georgia to build a foundation for students to contribute to solutions or activities that enhance the campus. Hill wants to spread the "early engagement" model and show the real-world application that leadership is taking in the lives of many students.

"For those attending, they will see ways in which leadership is important on our campus, other campuses and as a part of their future," she said.

Students, alumni connect through phonathon

By Kate Maine

Jennifer Collins, a senior from Blue Ridge, Ga., has taken on a special task at North Georgia for each of her four years of college – helping raise money for the university through the annual phonathon. Her above-average performance as the top pledge-getter – she has raised more than \$16,000 in four years – has made her a valuable asset to the project's success.

The phonathon is an annual operation that transforms the university's Alumni Center into a call center that employs students to phone alumni and parents to secure gifts to the North Georgia Fund, which provides financial support to all of the university's academic departments and co-curricular activities.

Collins, a marketing major, said the experience has helped her appreciate the importance of alumni support to the institution.

"It has helped me understand that it takes more than tuition to support the university," she said. "I've enjoyed talking with alumni and hearing their stories about how North Georgia has developed through the years."

This year's phonathon was conducted Feb. 8 through March 5 and used 67 student callers to contact about 17,000 constituents. Chris Church, director of annual giving and manager of the phonathon, said the students' hard work paid off with 1015 gifts or pledges totaling more than \$54,000.

Church said the 2008 campaign

Fundraising takes on increased priority at state institutions

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) recently elevated the importance of fundraising for all USG institutions as a means to increase revenue to maintain the quality of the education they provide.

In January, the USG Task Force on Philanthropy, which is chaired by North Georgia President David Potter, presented a systematic survey of what each school is doing with regard to fundraising and received direction to proceed with a plan to set philanthropic targets for USG campuses.

The task force is charged with assessing



Jennifer Collins (Photo: Debbie Martin)

used 42 callers to attempt calling 6,500 prospective donors.

"This past year's effort secured commitments of about \$50,000, but with the current economic climate, we really had to increase the staff and number of prospects to reach a comparable level of support this year," she said.

An incentive to encourage gifts this year was the opportunity for new or increased gifts to be doubled through the support of an anonymous \$50,000 challenge gift that is matching any new or increased gifts to the North Georgia Fund up to that amount.

The students' role in this project provides an invaluable connection for alumni, according to Church.

"The alumni learn when talking with students that the experience at North Georgia today reflects the same values and traditions that were a part of the student experiences of their generations," Church said. "It is important to our donors, especially alumni, to feel that connection to the university and a common bond with today's students."

She added that the students also learn and grow through their participation in the project.

"The students often start out nervous about making persuasive calls, but, with the proper training, they end up having great conversations with alumni and parents and learn how precious North Georgia is," she said.

Collins, recalling a conversation she had with a 95-year-old alumna, said, "She told me how much North Georgia meant to her, how grateful she was to the school, and that she thought about North Georgia every day."

the ability of USG institutions to raise private funds and proposing improvements. Its report showed that while Georgia is one of only seven states with two or more public universities ranked among the Top 100 university endowments, there is plenty of room for Georgia's public colleges and universities to further increase revenue.

"Information on fundraising in higher education is very limited, so this data is extremely valuable," Potter said. "It gives us a baseline from which to work on improvements and monitor our progress."

The task force also recommended an initiative to strengthen fundraising capacity – particularly at the state and two-year college sectors, where philanthropic endeavors are underdeveloped as compared to other sectors – with the goal of each campus having at least one full-time professional dedicated to philanthropy, and having the board, the USG campuses and their affiliated foundations undertake initiatives to provide resources to increase fundraising staffs and the capacity of USG institutions to conduct effective fundraising.

Service Spotlight

Tiffany Yeoman

Staff Associate, Career Services

Yeoman, who is a 1998 graduate of North Georgia and has worked at the university for more than three years, became a member of the Career Services staff this past July.

How do you interact with students in your job?

Our job at Career Services is to help students with resumes, determining majors, and job searches. Each year, we put on a career fair, and will help students in any way that we can. If we can't help, we'll try to find someone who can. I work with students to schedule appointments with career counselors and employers interviewing on campus. I also collect student resumes and schedule interviews for them.

What is your favorite thing about your role?

My role in Career Services is filled with variety, and that's what keeps it interesting.

What is your favorite thing to do outside of work?

I'm a homebody, so I love spending time with my family, friends and cats. I have also become a member of a group at the university that is hiking the North Georgia portion of the Appalachian Trail, and recently went on my first hike.



Take note...

CTLE offers class in teambuilding

Explore ways to increase group co-operation while maximizing individual contributions. Michele Hill, assistant professor in psychology & sociology, will present sessions to explore the tools and techniques necessary to monitor and evaluate the processes and the results obtained in the team approach. Join her in the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, room 380 in the Library Technology Center, March 12, 12:45 - 2:10 p.m., and Friday, March 13, 3-4 p.m.

Don't you wish you had a V8?

An introduction to the Vista 8 migration

The University System of Georgia is migrating from GeorgiaVIEW Vista 3 to Vista 8, the latest version of Blackboard's Learning System, and this month North Georgia will begin its phase of the migration with complete conversion to Vista 8 by fall semester 2009. To learn more about the Vista 8 environment, see newly enhanced teaching tools, and learn more about the differences between Vista 3 and Vista 8, join Judy McHan, of the Information & Instructional Technology office, for one of the following sessions. The location for each of the sessions is the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, room 380 in the Library Technology Center.

Friday, March 13, 10 - 11 a.m.
Friday, March 13, 2 - 3 p.m.
Thursday, March 26, 1 - 2 p.m.
Friday, March 27, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Legislative Update highlights education legislation

Learn about legislation under consideration by the General Assembly that is of significance to the University System of Georgia (USG) by checking out the current issue of [Legislative Update](#). This week's issue includes information on House Resolution 532, by Rep. Sharon Cooper of Marietta, which would create a Joint Study Committee on Nursing Education in Georgia. The resolution was introduced on March 3 and passed out of the House Health and Human Services Committee on March 6. If approved by the General Assembly, the committee would consist of 15 members of the legislature, the nursing community and the general public, and would be staffed by the University System of Georgia's (USG) Center for Health Workforce Planning and Analysis. The chair of the House Human Services Committee and the chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee would serve as co chairpersons of the study committee. If passed by both chambers and signed into law by the Governor, the study committee would meet during the interim between sessions.

Additionally, a new issue of [The System Supplement](#), a monthly report of University System of Georgia news is available online.

Toastmasters Club forming

Presentation skills are crucial to success in the workplace, yet many people lack the confidence to speak to an audience. If you find yourself in that category, consider joining the Toastmasters International chapter now forming at North Georgia. Toastmasters has been around for more than 84 years and offers members the opportunity to practice and enhance their communication and leadership skills. If you are interested in joining this new group, mark your calendar to attend the next meeting on Thursday, April 2, at 12:45 p.m. in meeting room B of the Hoag Student Center. Details about Toastmasters are available [online](#).

Alumni After Hours

Nearly 150 alumni participated in the Alumni After Hours event in Gainesville on March 5 at the Northeast Georgia History Center. Sponsored by the North Georgia Alumni Association and the Mike Cottrell School of Business, the event was the first of its kind for North Georgia alumni living and working in the Gainesville area, and gave participants the opportunity to socialize with each other and meet faculty and staff members from the university. The Alumni Association looks forward to holding similar events in other communities in the coming months. *Pictured: Alumnae Abby Branan '05, Leanne Gilleland '01, and Leslie Fowler '81 served on the committee that helped produce the Alumni After Hours social.*



Choirs to present post-tour concerts

The NGCSU Singers and Le Belle Voci will present two "homecoming" concerts, following their spring break concert tour of Scotland and England. The concerts will be March 30 at Dahlonga Baptist Church and March 31, in the chapel at Gainesville First Baptist Church.



Le Belle Voci

Both programs will begin at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$2 for students and children (NGCSU faculty, staff, and students admitted free). The choirs will have just returned from touring Scotland and England (March 12-21) where concerts are scheduled in the Auchteradar Parish Church (Scotland), Wakefield Cathedral (England), Lincoln Cathedral (England), New Life Church (Scunthorpe, England) and All Souls Church (London, England).

Computer classes added

Due to a great response to Continuing Education's recent Microsoft Office computer classes for NGCSU faculty and staff, they have scheduled two more classes in April.

- PowerPoint 2007 – Basic course: Friday, April 3, 9 a.m. - 12 noon
- Word 2007 (transition from 2003) – 3 hour course: Friday, April 10, 9 a.m. - 12 noon

Each class is limited to 15 students and registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. These classes are free of charge; however, a deposit check of \$25 per class is needed to hold your seat. Your check will be returned to you at the beginning of class. If you cancel at least 24 hours in advance of the class start date, your check will be returned. Choose the class that meets your needs and call Continuing Education at ext. 1918 to register.

Campus in Action

Gessell presents at conference

Dr. Donna Gessell, director of regional engagement and English professor, presented a paper, "'Deep Play': Notes on Teaching a Jane Austen Course Using Experiential Learning Techniques," at the 35th annual meeting of the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in Charlotte, NC, on March 6.

Chesnut honored for foreign language education

Dr. Jim Chesnut, professor of modern languages, received the President's Certificate of Excellence Award from the Foreign Language Association of Georgia (FLAG) at its annual conference in Atlanta this past week. The award honors Chesnut's contributions to the state foreign language educators-- K-12 AND post secondary, as well as his leadership as past president of FLAG, past president

of Southern Conference on Language Teaching, and his current participation on the national board of the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Dr. Elizabeth Combier, also a professor of modern languages, is the new president-elect of FLAG.

Nursing faculty, students participate in state conference

North Georgia College & State University nursing faculty, students and alumni were well represented at the Georgia Association for Nursing Education (GANE) Conference held in St. Simons, Ga., Feb. 19-21. Faculty and students were involved in numerous committees, governing boards, as well as presenters of podium papers and posters.

In addition nursing faculty, current fulltime students and recent graduates of the MS in Nursing Education attended the conference. Many alumni presented papers or posters, and the current students assisted with moderating rooms and assisting conference organizers.

The nursing faculty who participated are: (front row) Nancy Stahl, Kathy Callahan, Brenda Smith and Myra Clark; (back row) Jan Partin, Patti Simmons, Dr. Michelle Byrne, Olga Turner, Dr. Nancy Cyr, Teresa Payne, Dotty Gabrels, and Janet Melton. (Not pictured, Dr. Marina Slemmons).



North Georgia faculty and staff are invited to submit news of professional accomplishments for the Campus in Action section to digest@ngcsu.edu.