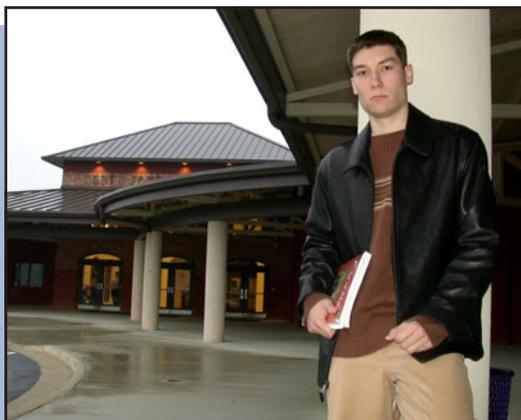


NGCSU marks five years in Forsyth County

North Georgia made access to higher education a little easier for Forsyth County residents five years ago by offering classes in Cumming.

Since the unveiling of the university's sign in 2001 in front of the Forsyth County Board of Education building on Hwy. 9, NGCSU has maintained its commitment to serving citizens in Forsyth and the surrounding area with university courses leading to a degree and also continuing education classes covering a wide array of needs.

County citizens have shaped the direction of the NGCSU Forsyth campus through direct input during the first five years. Located at various locations throughout the county, NGCSU has enrolled close to 2,000 students over that same period.



Joe Kleid, a marketing senior, used North Georgia's off-campus programs in Gainesville and Cumming to propel his undergraduate education. Kleid is pictured at North Forsyth High School, where he took NGCSU classes. Read about his journey and other Forsyth students' experiences at www.ngcsu.edu/news.

"We've made an effort to build up three specific areas based on survey feedback - education, health and business," says Donna Gessell, NGCSU director of graduate studies and external programs. "A main

focus is to offer core university classes needed for every field of study. Our instructional sites in Forsyth County make it convenient to attend college near home and act as a starting point for those looking to come back to school."

NGCSU also offers graduate programs in Forsyth County. The Education Specialist degree, a step above a master of education degree, will begin a new cohort next summer.

North Georgia will address the need for healthcare professionals and the state's shortage of nurses when it starts a new

partnership with Lanier Technical Institute in August to offer the NGCSU associate of science degree in nursing at the Lanier Tech campus in Cumming.

(Continued on page 3)



LISTEN UP: Sgt. Doug Hyde, NGCSU military tactical officer, gives instructions to Summer Transition Program students before a hike.

North Georgia welcomes early arrivals for the Corps of Cadets

The Summer Transition Program at North Georgia provides students an advance start on higher education, physical training and an introduction to the university's award-winning Corps of Cadets.

"Our summer military program is designed to assist incoming military freshmen to transition from a civilian lifestyle and prepare them for the academic and physical requirements of the university and the Corps of Cadets," said retired Maj. Richard Neikirk, assistant commandant of the corps.

(Continued on page 3)



Campus in Action



Shawn Tonner is the new director of the Stewart Library. She has been interim director since December. Tonner has a master's degree in instructional design from Florida State University, a Master in Library Science from McGill University in Montreal Quebec and a bachelor's of philosophy from Saint Francis Xavier University in Antigonish Nova Scotia. She was previously the director of Reinhardt College's library and served as department head and assistant director of the FSU library in addition to holding library and teaching positions at Emory University and Agnes Scott College.

President David Potter has changed the title and responsibilities of **Billy Wells**, former assistant to the president for leadership development. Wells' new title is executive assistant to the president. He now provides a broader range of administrative services, including coordination of senior staff and the strategic plan of the university's development. Among his numerous assignments and oversight responsibilities, Wells serves as the liaison between Potter and other campus officers; develops information resources, special analyses and background studies for various projects; represents the president with different constituencies; and plans and coordinates major campus events, presidential committees and task forces. Wells also participates in the president's cabinet.



The **NGCSU Continuing Education Spring Brochure** cover is featured on the cover of the May/June 2006 Learning Resources Network (LERN) Magazine, which is published by the leading international association in lifelong learning, with more than 4,000 members in 16 countries.

Gilstrap named Outstanding Staff Member

Estelle Gilstrap, secretary to the Department of Fine Arts, is the recipient of the 2006 Outstanding Staff Member Award.

The self-proclaimed Dahlonega "nugget" was born and raised in the town and made a career at the local college. Gilstrap stayed at North Georgia because "the faculty members in fine arts were so warm and down-to-earth," she said.

"There's a bond I had and still do have with the faculty, almost like family."

Gilstrap spent her first few years on campus providing administrative support in different areas – the foreign language department, math department, counseling center and the developmental studies area. In 1980, with a new decade came the new job in fine arts, where she has made a home.

"I try to help students in any way I can, whether it's helping them register for classes that are closed or consoling students who come in my office and cry.

"I look at them as if they were my children and treat them how I would want my kids to be treated if they were away from home. One student recently said to me, 'You are my college mom,' which made me feel really good."

Gilstrap remembers the days when fine arts was housed in the bottom floor of the Education Building. It couldn't fit all the instructional space needed by the seven faculty members, who were spread across campus.

"Music people were in Barnes Hall, faculty members had offices in their classrooms, the band room was in the student center – we were tight on space."

Bob Owens, the former department head, oversaw the renovation of the Nix Center in 1988, formerly the campus dining hall, which became a much needed home for fine arts. Gilstrap remembers her boss's commitment to teaching.

"Bob would teach pottery in a small uninsulated building where the library is now, and it would get as cold as you-know-what during winter classes."

Gilstrap plans to continue her career at NGCSU for as long as she can. She and her fiancé, Jeff Balch, the network manager in IIT, reside in Dahlonega along with her daughter and son-in-law, Angie and Chad Williams, with their children, Kayla, 8, and Zac, 5, who are their grandmother's pride and joy.

Gilstrap is the second recipient of the Staff Council's Outstanding Staff Member Award. She went to public school at Lumpkin High with Wes Thomas, the inaugural recipient and also longtime NGCSU employee. 🙏



Estelle Gilstrap



Corrigan is Author of the Year

The Georgia Writers Association named Dr. Brian Jay Corrigan "Georgia Author of the Year" in the debut fiction category at a June 18 gala event at Georgia Tech's Ferst Center for the Performing Arts in Atlanta.

Corrigan took home an engraved crystal bowl after his "The Poet of Loch Ness" was named the winner over other nominated Georgia writers' first novels. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter won in the essay category for his 20th book, "Our Endangered Values." For the complete list of winners, go to www.georgiawriters.org.

In recent months, Corrigan's novel was included in a number of "best sellers" lists around the country. A North Georgia professor of Renaissance literature, Corrigan also won a Georgia Board of Regents' Award for Teaching Excellence and serves as the general editor of "The Compendium of Renaissance Drama."

HANDS-ON LEARNING:

Forsyth County teachers from across the public school system shortened their summer break for a hands-on education experience at North Georgia in June. The group of 40 teachers, representing elementary through high school grades, were part of the "Math & Science on Wheels" program, an NGCSU School of Education initiative to show educators an approach to teaching that provides rich hands-on experiences for children. David Moore and Heather Marshall (center) prepare a rocket for lift-off on the drill field. "When learning experiences are made tangible and visible via innovative teaching strategies, learning for all students is at once deeper, engaging, and far more fun," said Marshall, a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching.



Forsyth County *(Continued from page 1)*

Forsyth's business community will have an expanded slate of professional development courses available through the NGCSU Stewart Center for Continuing Education starting next month. The center, focused on lifelong learning, is partnering with the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce to offer courses during the day at the chamber's events facility.

"North Georgia is working with the county to meet the education needs in Forsyth's Visioning plan and the university is entering educational partnerships to answer those needs," Gessell says.

An anniversary event celebrating five years in Forsyth will take place during fall semester. Call 864-1543 for information about the event and the Forsyth County programs. 🏰

Summer Transition Program *(Continued from page 1)*

The 56 students in the program take six hours of classes. All of them are enrolled in wellness (physical education), and half take English and the other half study history. At the same time, they improve their physical fitness levels, as they learn about the corps, the university and the military.

By the time the other cadets arrive on campus for FROG Week, beginning Aug. 15, these recent high school graduates will be better prepared for their Freshmen Recruit Orientation Group (FROG) experience. Along with other new cadets, they will be called "FROGS" throughout the mini-military basic training prior to the start of fall semester classes.

Neikirk said the Summer Transition Program includes students from throughout Georgia and from eight other states, thanks to the national marketing campaign conducted by the Cadet Recruitment Center on campus, with Keith Antonia the director. Three experienced cadet leaders, Colin Sattler, Kristen Landis and Bryan Galas, are serving as counselors to train and mentor the new first-year students. 🏰

Web conference: *Implementing an Online Student Rating Program*

The July 13 conference in the Health & Natural Sciences Building, room 140, 1-3 p.m., will address how to overcome challenges presented by online student rating systems, such as obtaining and sustaining faculty and student support, maintaining adequate response rates, and ensuring appropriate access and use of online reports. This conference will detail research and experiences from Brigham Young University and other campuses across the United States.

Trav Johnson of the Brigham Young University Faculty Center is the conference speaker. He is responsible for teaching assessment and for teacher assistant training at Brigham Young.

Faculty members and academic administrators involved in planning, implementing, or using online student ratings of instruction will be provided information on assessment, research, student ratings, faculty evaluation and development, and institutional policies and procedures related to these areas.

the **Digest**

digest@ngcsu.edu

NGCSU President:

Dr. David Potter

Director of University Relations:

Annette Hannon Lee

Editor/Writer:

Joshua Preston

Designer/Writer:

Debbie Martin

Photographers:

J. Preston, D. Martin

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The next scheduled publication date of the Digest is Aug. 14. **The deadline for submissions is Aug. 7.**

NGCSU Spelling Bee

Dr. Alice Sampson and **Shirley Davis** helped organize an interactive Spelling Bee – one of the NGCSU Georgia Appalachian Center for Higher Education’s outreach programs – to raise literacy awareness. The event promoted the Sept. 7 Lumpkin County Spelling Bee, which will help the Lumpkin County Literacy Coalition raise money for various programs to increase the literacy rate in the county.



The team representing NGCSU in the fall event will be spelling champs **Drs. Thomas Austenfeld** and **Linda Williams** (a.k.a. Drs. Spellgood and Spellwell) and dominating speller **Dr. Barry Friedman** (a.k.a. the Political Wonk). Pictured are **Dr. Larry Berneking**, Friedman and the Spell Doctors.



Judges (l to r) **Neal Miller**, **Billy Wells** and **Laura Whitaker-Lea** with **Beekeeper Eric Link** (standing), who gave the contestants the college-level words to spell. **Dr. David Broad**, far right, used the buzz-o-meter to gauge audience participation.



S.W.A.T. - Spelling With Attitude - came to compete, but **Cynthia Horne**, **Mary Poland** and **Susan Hughes** were shut down, along with the rest of the competition, by the two dominating teams.



TAP into the future: Register for free classes by July 14

The University System of Georgia Tuition Assistance Program, which allows employees to take classes at any of the 35 USG institutions for free, was recently revised to allow employees to take coursework in any area of interest. Previously, university or college classes employees took through TAP had to be career-related.

The deadline to participate in TAP for fall semester courses is July 14. Classes are free for employees up to eight credit hours. Employees must have completed at least six months of full-time regular employment within the USG prior to the date that TAP registration forms are due to the Office of Human Resources.

“Career advancement is one important reason to invest in education,” said Thomas George, director of Human Resources. “The minimum requirements for higher-level jobs have changed over time and a key to unlocking the door to the future is a college degree.”

George said that out of a workforce of about 500 employees at NGCSU eligible for TAP, less than 20 are participating. He hopes this 4-percent rate will improve and that others take advantage of TAP.

The availability of specific classes for employees each semester is dependent on classroom seats remaining after students enroll.

The complete TAP policy is located at www.usg.edu/employment/benefits/tuition.