

Digest

► **Nov. 17, 2008**

A newsletter for North Georgia College & State University

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Information literacy extends to math

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Lord retires after 20 years of service

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White Christmas Breakfast Dec. 4

Event showcases musical talent

Campus In Action

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Center opened to students this fall. At the ceremonial openings, alumni, state officials and members of the campus and local communities heard from student leaders about the excitement the new facilities have created.

Technology troubles get a quicker fix with new IIT support



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

North Georgia College & State University, 82 College Circle, Dahlonega, Ga., 30597
Last modified on: Thursday, 08 January 2009 16:09:35 -0500 by [University Relations](#)

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President David Potter cuts the ribbon at the grand opening ceremony for the Student Recreation Center on Nov. 7. (Photo: Joshua Preston)

North Georgia President David Potter and Regent James R. Jolly of the Board of Regents spoke about the significance of the buildings and their places in the larger community.



Library Services Director Shawn Tonner, SGA President Justin Middleton, Regent Felton Jenkins, President David Potter, Regent James Jolly and Chief Information Officer Bryson Payne at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Library Technology Center.

receives 26,000 to 27,000 visits a month – about twice as many as the university's former library during the same time in 2007. Total cost of the project was approximately \$22 million.

The Student Recreation Center, funded through student recreation fees, provides a modern facility for students to stay fit and be active at the university. The 54,000-square-foot two-story facility houses the university's recreational sports programs and is situated upon the university's new parking deck, which added more than 600 parking spaces to the main campus.

The Recreation Center features three basketball courts, an indoor track, a climbing wall, exercise

The Library Technology Center, an 88,600-square-foot, three-story building, has become an intellectual student center that invites students to study, collaborate and learn. The facility's design has expanded the academic resources and technology available to students and faculty by bringing together print and electronic media, computer labs, distance learning classrooms, group study spaces and more.

Additionally, a coffee shop welcomes visitors as they enter the Library Technology Center, which

rooms and state-of-the-art fitness equipment. The total cost of the Student Recreation Center and parking deck was approximately \$26 million.

Technology troubles get a quicker fix with new IIT support

By Joshua Preston

North Georgia's more than 1,900 computers, 44 technology labs and countless printers, peripherals and software programs are maintained by a small team of five technicians who often don't see their own offices in the course of a day as they keep the campus's technology tools humming along smoothly.



Justin Turner put in more than 3,000 lines of programming code and three weeks of his time in customizing the new Help Desk Tracking System software, which provides technology support for maintaining the campus' inventory of 1,900 computers. Jamie Moss and Austin Paszkowski rounded out the team that put the new system in place earlier this month. (Photo: Joshua Preston)

as state budget cuts take place.

A three-person IIT team took an open-source software program, which cost the university a one-time fee of \$65, and customized it to the university's needs to create the new Help Desk Tracking System. An older online tool used by the Help Desk did not have the e-mail notification function and was a \$3,900 software program that had to be renewed annually.

IIT plans to work with plant operations and other units to see if the system can be adapted to create similar cost reductions and better customer service in other areas of campus.

The campus's technician team, equipped with wireless connectivity and high-tech gadgets, has become a mobile working force with the new Help Desk system. Using Nokia n810 Tablets, which McLeod describes as "handheld computers the size of a cell phone," the technicians are able to check work orders from anywhere on campus and communicate with other team members. They no longer have to go to their offices or find an Internet port to plug into to update work orders and communicate with customers.

"The Nokia tablets are a huge help because of the new wireless network," said Katrena Hook, who is one of the team's tier-one technicians. "We can check tickets in the field, and that saves a lot of man

To help manage the technology that powers the campus's classrooms and business operations, a new internally customized Help Desk Tracking System was placed online earlier this month. It allows customers on campus to easily report and see updates on technology problems they are having and includes a new major benefit to customers - they now receive e-mail notifications so that they'll know just how fast their technology troubles will be fixed.

Employees may access the new online system and get answers to FAQs at the [Help Desk](#).

"This system allows you to put in a work order that will be checked by the Help Desk, which is always manned during the work day, and then be assigned to the appropriate technician," said Steve McLeod, manager of the five-person team that makes up Information and Instructional Technology's Client Support Services.

McLeod illustrated how the new system works with an example he hopes no one will actually use.

"If your keyboard isn't working, and then you figure out it's just unplugged, you can update your own work order online. This system really adds a layer of communication that streamlines our workflow."

IIT is also showcasing the new Help Desk system as a combined example of ingenuity, productivity enhancement and a significant cost-savings measure

hours. We can also communicate with other technicians through Skype over the wireless Internet because it's free, and it saves us from using cell phones."

The technicians' resourcefulness with the new Help Desk Tracking System is allowing them to better manage the more than 200 work orders they receive on any given month. Client Support Services also hopes the new system will help to quickly solve those smaller issues – like any unplugged keyboards – that trouble their more than 6,000 customers.

North Georgia breaks enrollment record with 5.2 percent increase this fall

USG enrollment reaches all all-time high of nearly 283,000 students

North Georgia enrolled 5,500 students this fall semester, increasing enrollment by 5.2 percent over fall 2007 and surpassing the University System of Georgia's overall enrollment growth of 4.8 percent. The university's record enrollment includes roughly 4,750 undergraduates and 750 students in graduate programs.

Approximately three quarters of all students are enrolled full time, giving the university a full-time equivalent, or FTE, status of 4,847, a 4.7 percent increase over last year. North Georgia's freshman class started at 1,394 this semester, an 11 percent increase from 2007.

The USG Board of Regents' strategic plan, adopted in 2007, predicted an additional 100,000 students enrolling in Georgia's 35 public colleges and universities by 2020. The board's fall 2008 enrollment report, released Nov. 10, shows the system is on track to reach and perhaps surpass that prediction, with a record 282,978 students.

Nearly 47,000 of those students this fall are first-time freshmen, a group that grew 9.6 percent over fall 2007, pointing to an increasing demand on public higher education resources by Georgians.

The overall USG numbers represent a gain of 12,956 students from fall 2007, or an increase of 4.8 percent. This follows a gain of 10,077 students from fall 2006 to fall 2007. To put the gains in perspective, the USG has grown by 32,319 students, or 12.9 percent, in the past five years.

"We have added the equivalent of another University of Georgia to the system over the past five years," said USG Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr. "This represents significant growth, during a period in which we are challenged to serve more students at a high level of quality with diminished resources."

USG analysis shows that the number of faculty and staff in the system to serve students has decreased by 18 percent per 1,000 students from fall 2000 to fall 2007, while over the same period, enrollment increased 31.5 percent.

Enrollment figures also show that, in keeping with the regents' strategic goal of meeting capacity by increasing enrollment at the state and two-year colleges, state college enrollment grew by 6.1 percent, while two-year college enrollment grew by 8.4 percent, both well above the USG average of 4.8 percent. Nearby, Gainesville State College, saw double-digit enrollment growth of 10.2 percent, to 8,238 students, from fall 2007 to fall 2008.

Overall, in the system's 13 state universities, growth was smaller, at 5 percent, which is in line with USG plans for more modest enrollment growth in this sector. Enrollment increased at the four research universities by just 2.6 percent – again, right in line with the objectives of the strategic plan to shift enrollment to the system's four- and two-year institutions.

The full USG fall 2008 enrollment report is available online as a [PDF](#).

Math professor designs project to make students 'statistically literate'

By Joshua Preston

Dr. Karen Briggs, in her second year of teaching at North Georgia, is confident that an information literacy project she's designing will enable students to understand the statistical references they are given in news articles, Web sites and on TV and assess their validity – rather than relying on what they see streaming across the TV on CNN and other popular media.

Her opportunity came when she was awarded one of 16 Leaders in Information Literacy Grants this semester. The \$1,000 grant will permit her to work closely with her statistics students and help them to become "statistically literate."



Dr. Karen Briggs (Photo: Joshua Preston)

[Information literacy](#) is at the core of North Georgia's Quality Enhancement Plan, a component of institutional accreditation, and helps students develop critical thinking skills that encourage them to effectively seek, evaluate and use information.

With the grant, she will develop Statistical Literacy Projects, or SLPs, that will engage math majors, as well as other students taking statistics, to make the subject a meaningful experience, rather than just a course requirement.

"My teaching philosophy is centered on the belief that students will become more engaged in the learning process, if I can make the material matter to them," Briggs said.

Through the SLPs, students will look at statistics found in the popular media on current national issues of interest to them, such as the link between autism and vaccinations. This summer, TIME magazine focused on the topic and used data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Briggs said that after identifying the news topic of interest, students would obtain the original research reports and use class concepts to evaluate the validity of the statistical argument reported by the news article.

"I came to understand from students that they thought that most statistics were made up, and I wanted to dispel the notion that you can make up any statistical lie that you want," Briggs said.

She added, "You would expect students to associate information literacy with areas like the humanities, so I thought an information literacy project in mathematics would be something new for them to explore."

How does Briggs expect to bridge the gap between students accepting or rejecting statistics at face value and getting them to understand how to make that assessment?

"I plan to hire four math majors who will serve as teaching assistants to help the Math 2400 students identify, compare and evaluate the statistics that they find in both the popular media and research articles," she said. "Students will then reflect upon how the process of gathering relevant information and using statistical knowledge has changed or strengthened their opinions and values."

The remaining part of the grant will support a subscription to the Mathematical Association of America's Special Interest Group on Statistics Education and opportunities for Briggs to present the

results to other teachers of college statistics courses.

Math education majors will be among the beneficiaries of Briggs' statistics experiment.

"Our math education majors are going to be teaching students at a young age even before a college professor can get their hands on them," she said. "The better [math education majors] are prepared, the better teachers they'll be."

Lord retires after 20 years of distinguished service

Long-time leader helped shape campus

By Joshua Preston

In the 20 years that Gerald Lord committed to North Georgia, he witnessed dramatic physical growth and change to the university – including seven major new facilities, the school's name change, and a student population that more than doubled – but, according to Lord, the fundamental character of North Georgia and its student body has remained relatively unchanged.



(Left to right) Gerald Lord with his wife Kay Lord and son Jonathan Lord (Photo: Estelle Gilstrap)

A 1961 alumnus and a retired U.S. Army colonel who committed a second career to the university, Lord understands first-hand the profound experience that North Georgia has provided for generations of students.

After overseeing completion of the new parking deck earlier this year and the Student Recreation Center in October, Lord retired that same month and celebrated a 20-year career with his alma mater that included four years as the professor of military science and commandant of cadets and another 16 leading critical business operations at the university.

Auxiliary services, which Lord began directing in 1992, presented him with a challenge in that it was a lesser known part of the university's business operations but every bit as important. Auxiliary services is a self-sustaining campus unit that is not supported with state funding but provides many essential services to students, including comfortable campus living spaces, a bookstore, dining services, vending, transportation, infirmary services, and print services.

Lord spent much of his career tackling large issues that affected the long-term sustainability of campus, from capital building projects to roadway and parking expansions, and planning for infrastructure improvements that would often span several years.

An ambition of his early career was his plan to improve campus housing every summer and "to make the dorms the best in the University System of Georgia," he said.

Though he said that goal wasn't quite achieved, significant improvements were made. Gaillard Hall finally had its aging furniture – that Lord himself used in the 1950s as a student – replaced. Essential improvements, including bathroom renovations, window replacements and air conditioning upgrades, took place in at least one dorm every summer.

"I had a mother call me in the late 1990s and said her daughter was coming to North Georgia and was going to live in Lewis," Lord said. "She said that Lewis had hardly been improved since she was a student."

Lord told her that she was right. It was near the turn of the century, and Lewis Hall had only just gotten central air conditioning. He asked the mother that she give him some time and ensured her that a multi-year planning process was under way.

"The mother didn't believe me," Lord said laughing.

But Lewis did get some attention and, in 2003, it received a \$3.5 million facelift that made it one of the most sought-after dorms on campus. Lord also campaigned to have Internet access put in all the dorms, and North Georgia was the second state institution, behind Georgia Tech, to accomplish that feat.

But dorm space wasn't the only improvement that Lord and his staff tackled. There was also a major bookstore reorganization and renovation that included adding more registers and reduced students' wait time, when they were buying books, from as much as three hours to only 15 minutes.

Lord showed a razor-sharp focus in making assessments about the campus infrastructure and finding ways to improve it, but deflects any credit given to him for advancing the campus.

"Gerald is a great leader," said Mac McConnell, vice president for business and finance, at Lord's retirement ceremony. "Gerald had confidence in me that I had not realized in myself. He insisted on the highest levels of excellence in himself, and he always had an interest in your career, always encouraging greater levels of greatness [in others]."

In 2001, Lord became the associate vice president for business & finance and added oversight of plant operations and public safety to his auxiliary services role.

At his retirement ceremony, attended by more than 100 friends and family, including his wife Kay and son Jonathan, in the Student Recreation Center, McConnell paid tribute to his friend and mentor, "When you consider the core values of this university – courage, integrity, loyalty, respect, service, truth and wisdom – I challenge you to find someone who exemplifies these values better than Gerald Lord."

Annual White Christmas Breakfast Dec. 4

The North Georgia Staff Council and the local Community Helping Place need the campus community's help again this year to make the White Christmas Program a success. Last year, the university and CHP collected 4,293 pounds of food, along with generous monetary and toy donations.

So far this year, there has been a 26 percent increase in families served through the CHP Food Pantry and a 32 percent increase in households seeking some type of emergency assistance.

The "Bag-A-Feast" program, now under way, is designed to help with these families' needs. Each department on campus has received paper bags with shopping lists for holiday feasts for families in need in Lumpkin County.

The Staff Council asks that employees within their respective departments work to fill the bags with the specific food items listed. These feast bags will be collected at the White Christmas breakfast on Dec. 4 from 7 to 8:30 a.m. in the campus Dining Hall. The breakfast is free for all faculty and staff with the donation of four canned goods or one unwrapped toy. Decorated boxes will also be set up around campus soon for the collection of unwrapped toys.

Given current economic conditions, CHP anticipates a significant increase in applications for its White Christmas program this year.

"All of us at the Community Helping Place are so appreciative of everyone who participates in the North Georgia Staff Council breakfast," Paula Palmour, CHP programs coordinator, said. "Each year we are amazed at the level of generous support the event generates."

For more information, call 706-864-1840.

Event showcases NGCSU musical talent, raises funds

The NGCSU Singers presented the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah at Dahlonega Baptist Church earlier this month. In addition to showcasing the talents of North Georgia's musicians, the presentation helped raise funds for an upcoming tour. The chorus, under the direction of Dr. John M. Broman, NGCSU director of choral activities, included members of the North Georgia faculty and staff. Pictured are: back row (L-R), Dr. Joe Chapman, music; Anita Prince, mathematics; Dr. Mark Spraker, physics; front row (L-R), Dr. John Clower, vice president for student affairs; Dr. John Broman; Jeff Boggan, director of development.



Campus in Action

NGCSU faculty and staff members are welcome to submit their academic accomplishments for the Campus in Action section to digest@ngcsu.edu.