

# Digest

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*A newsletter for North Georgia College & State University*

## Budget reductions impact university

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## Radar Ridge access moves forward

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## New dining system reduces food waste

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## White Christmas benefits community

Monetary, food and toy donations benefit the Community Helping Place in Dahlonega

## Campus In Action

## Global engagement center expands to meet strategic vision

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## Master plan taking shape for future campus development



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instructional space, student housing, transportation and parking, administrative space and campus access.

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# Global engagement center expands to meet strategic vision

By Joshua Preston

North Georgia's Center for Global Engagement, a 3-year-old enterprise to help students become more competitive in a global environment, moved its offices into West Main Hall this semester and added two full-time staff members to provide additional support for international students and students seeking to learn overseas.

Study abroad participation has increased by 30 percent and international student enrollment has grown by 60 percent since the center's inception, and its new study-abroad advisor and international-student advisor will support further growth.



*The Center for Global Engagement is in a new home in West Main Hall and has enhanced services for studying abroad and international students. (Photo: Joshua Preston)*

The university's international programming encompasses a dynamic range of options for students and will be enhanced by the center's expansion, according to Dr. Dlynn Armstrong-Williams, director of the center and professor of political science.

The Center for Global Engagement divides its attention between roughly five areas – study abroad experiences, international student engagement, supporting language education, internationalizing the core curriculum, and mentoring students in international-related studies.

"North Georgia has a design and a real plan for international education that permeates the institution," said Richard Sutton, assistant vice chancellor for international programs at the University System of Georgia. "Global engagement is essential to any student preparing for a career in the 21st century."

North Georgia's current five-year strategic plan, implemented this year, includes a theme of "educating engaged citizens" that focuses in part on developing strategies for global engagement and understanding. As part of the plan, the university plans to increase first-hand experiences with other cultures for faculty, staff and students, expand modern language learning opportunities, and enhance personal and institutional commitments to fulfilling social and environmental responsibilities.

Related to curriculum enhancement, a new online master's degree in international affairs was recently approved to complement the current bachelor's degree in the field. A major step to modern language expansion took place with the successful Chinese Summer Language Institute, which will be modeled by other language programs this summer.

North Georgia has sent students to more than 20 countries in recent years and averages about 110 study abroad experiences every year, according to Daniela Martinez, the new study-abroad advisor. The center is hoping to increase those numbers by having Martinez promote and recruit for study abroad trips along with advising students.

The Center for Global Engagement is now able to fully support Study Abroad Services, where students are advised on overseas program selection and application, course equivalency administration and pre-departure orientation.

International Studies Services has been similarly enhanced with Jared Goodall, NG '07, who advises

international students and ensures they have a smooth transition to the university and a new culture. He helps students with their visa and status requirements, registration and advisement while studying at North Georgia.

The center held an open house on Nov. 20 to showcase its new home and the synergy being created to elevate the university's multi-faceted international programming. The center is located on the third floor of West Main Hall with a full-time staff of three and two student workers.

## Master plan taking shape for future campus development

*By Kate Maine*

With 5,500 students enrolled at North Georgia this fall and projections that estimate enrollment could grow to 7,000 within the next decade, the university is updating its master plan that takes into account physical needs for instructional space, student housing, transportation and parking, administrative space and campus access.



A recent enrollment report from the University System of Georgia showed North Georgia's growth of 5.2 percent from fall 2007 exceeded the system's overall increase of 4.8 percent for the same time period.

Key factors in the planning process to accommodate the university's present and future needs include promoting campus efficiency, preserving the campus' historical character, and balancing that vision with cost effectiveness, according to Jeff Davis, associate vice president for auxiliary services.

The master planning process coincides with the development of the university's strategic planning process.

"The university is completing a major strategic planning process that focused on academic needs and programs, so this is a good time for us to look at the physical needs that will support that plan," Mac McConnell, vice president for business and finance, said.

Consultants with Sasaki, the firm working with the university to develop the master plan, met with students, faculty, staff and university administrators earlier this fall to identify needs.

Based on industry standards, the preliminary findings indicate that North Georgia has adequate classroom and lab space. However, also noted were the need to improve the quality and location of some spaces and the need for some larger classrooms.



*(Photo: Joshua Preston)*

Campus constituents also communicated a strong desire to maintain a compact campus and to preserve its pastoral feel and history. Other items on the wish list were the creation of more lounge and recreational areas for informal community-building activities and meetings, improving the condition of learning facilities, and strengthening the first

impressions of campus.

"As plans develop for the construction of additional facilities, the university will strive to integrate buildings into the campus landscape and maintain the green space that the campus community values so much," McConnell said.



(Photo: Joshua Preston)

Student housing is a top priority for the plan, as current facilities are at capacity and a recent military mandate that calls for North Georgia commission 100 officers per year by 2015 creates a pressing need to grow the Corps of Cadets and provide more cadet housing.

The university plans to add 600 to 1000 beds to accommodate growth in the Corps of Cadets and civilian student enrollment during the next few years. New housing may include suite-style residence halls or a student village concept that incorporates housing, food options, community study spaces and learning areas, as well as recreational facilities. Both

are popular options at many campuses but are not currently available at North Georgia.

The university plans to complete the master planning process by April 2009.

## Budget reductions impact summer schedule, insurance premiums

By Kate Maine

As a result of state budget cuts that continue to impact North Georgia and its peer institutions in the university system, the university has announced that North Georgia will implement a campus-wide four-day work schedule in summer 2009 and that changes are ahead for employee health insurance premiums.

"The university is actively exploring opportunities to reduce operating expenses without impacting the quality of academic programs," said Brenda Findley, associate vice president for administration and director of human resources. "We anticipate significant savings by implementing a Monday through Thursday summer work week."

The summer schedule – Mondays through Thursdays, starting May 4 and ending Aug. 7 – will allow the university to "shutdown" 13 buildings for three consecutive days each week, to reduce energy consumption and utility costs. An initial announcement about the schedule indicated that it would end on Aug. 14, however, the end date has been shifted to accommodate cadets who will be reporting for Frog week.

As an added benefit, the summer schedule will allow many employees to spend less on gasoline, Findley said.

However, not all departments will be able to take advantage of a Monday through Thursday summer schedule, as some offices have responsibilities that require staffing every day. Where possible, those departments will operate on a flexible schedule during the summer.

To ensure that university constituents are minimally impacted by offices being closed on Fridays, departments will be fully operational during the university's expanded work hours Monday through Thursday, and those departments that will maintain service to the community Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., are expected to provide the department's direct telephone number in their publications and on their Web sites so constituents can still contact those departments directly, as the automated telephone attendant will not forward calls on Fridays.

In response to continued declines in state revenue, the Board of Regents of the University System of

Georgia announced in December further system-wide budget reductions, to include an increase in the employee portion of premiums for most health insurance plans, effective in January.

"On a positive note," Findley said, "the merit raises scheduled for January 2009 will be implemented as planned."

Findley encourages employees who have additional ideas to reduce costs at North Georgia to contact her via email at [bkfindley@ngcsu.edu](mailto:bkfindley@ngcsu.edu) or at ext. 1440.

## Radar Ridge access moves forward

By Joshua Preston

An access road that is under construction adjacent to Morrison Moore Parkway and the university's campus will facilitate North Georgia's development of more than 200 acres of the Radar Ridge property, the use of which will be determined by the campus master planning process currently under way.

The road project, which started in June and is expected to be completed in February, provides for future campus expansion. The work includes creating a level surface at the bottom of the road at the Morrison-Moore Parkway intersection to accommodate possible future parking.



*Construction of an access road on Radar Ridge. (Photo: Joshua Preston)*

The new level surface is currently a deep ravine that is being filled with dirt and rock displaced by the grading process for the main access road. Rather than dispose of the dirt and rock, which is costly, officials decided to put it to good use, according to Julio Canseco, director of project management.

While parking will almost certainly be the first use of the reshaped real estate at the intersection, in the long term, the land will likely be used for a building of some kind. However, final plans for the space have not yet been determined.

The Radar Ridge road project will also take advantage of old roadways and an existing dirt walking trail on the property to create a new paved and extended walking trail that forms a complete loop.

"When property development starts, the trail will be an added attraction," Canseco said. "People can take nature walks with the easily accessible trail."

The money for the Radar Ridge project is earmarked for roadway and traffic-related projects and has allowed university officials to maximize access to the property with these additions.

Future plans may include enlarging parking at the soccer and softball fields. For now, completing the Radar Ridge road is the top priority to create the access needed for future campus growth. For more information on the project, see the June 2008 issue of the Digest.

# New dining system reduces food waste, water use

## Healthier dining experience results

By Joshua Preston

The dining hall averaged serving 12,000 patrons a week this semester, with staff working continuously to keep food on the front lines and provide a variety of selections for customers.

Dining services, in an effort to mitigate food waste and reduce water use, discontinued the use of dining trays, resulting in significant energy, water and food savings this semester. A successful summer pilot program continued this semester, allowing the dining hall to become "trayless."



*Dining Hall* (Photo: Joshua Preston)

Almost 80 percent of patrons piled plates of food and sometimes up to four beverage glasses on the dining trays, said David Owen, director of dining services.

Approximately 5,000 gallons of water went to washing trays every week. That water is now saved along with energy used for heating the water and chemicals used in the dishwashing process.

Food waste has also been reduced simply by limiting

students from sampling multiple entrees at one time with the trays. Students now carry their plates and glasses by hand, which reduces the "eyes are bigger than their bellies" syndrome.

"Students are still able to eat unlimited portions, they just have to go back and get more," Owen said.

An added benefit, according to Owen, is a healthier dining experience and a more restaurant-style feel without the cafeteria trays, and students in large part have been receptive to the new experience.

Catherine Wike, a sophomore, previously never used a tray, but she was forced to get one after every meal in order to go through the dish return line that used a conveyor belt to move trays through. Now, students push their plates through a return window, above which reads "please push dishes as far forward as you can." Wike, like many students, slides her plates right through the window.

"It's a little stress reliever. When else do you have a chance to sling plates," Wike joked during finals week.

The trayless system has also helped dining services to better plan its made-to-order food options, which are fresher and more appealing to students, according to Owen.

Laura Balkcom, in student health services, distributes nutrition information and said the impact on eating habits could be significant.

"In terms of going trayless, it helps with portion control, and students are limited to what they eat on the first go around, which is a huge part of weight management," she said.

Balkcom said that the system could translate into students avoiding the "freshman 15" and help them to develop healthier eating habits.

"Hopefully, instead of piling food on their plates now, they'll make better food choices," she said.

## White Christmas donations benefit local community

North Georgia community members combined efforts this semester to provide monetary, food and toy donations to the Community Helping Place, a Lumpkin County non-profit outreach agency assisting residents in need.

The annual White Christmas breakfast, sponsored by Staff Council, took place on Dec. 4 at the Dining Hall, where the donations were collected and transported to the CHP. North Georgia employee contributions this year included 3,647 lbs. of food, 388 toys and \$117.

If any employees wish to make further contributions, contact Andi Georgia at ext. 1602 or [apgeorgia@ngcsu.edu](mailto:apgeorgia@ngcsu.edu).



*Left: NGCSU Staff Council members with the collected donations.*

*Right: Michael Youngblood and Ann Reed load donated toys into the van. (Photos: Joshua Preston)*

## Campus in Action

Laurie Davis, campus bookstore, gave a presentation on "Clever Ways to Promote Your Bookstore on Your Campus" at the Georgia Association of College Stores' annual meeting held in St. Simons, Ga., Nov. 6.

Dr. Timothy May, history and philosophy, published an article, "The Relationship Between Sufis and Inner Asian Ruling Elites" in the December 2008 issue of the "Southeast Review of Asian Studies." May also published his second book, "The Culture and Customs of Mongolia" (Greenwood Press, 2008).