

# Digest

► **Dec. 16, 2009**

A newsletter for North Georgia College & State University

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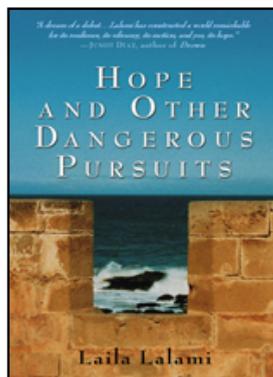
MBA Program launches new lecture series

## Campus In Action

## Doctorate degrees approved for North Georgia

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## Books selected for university's Common Reader Program



First-year students at North Georgia are in for some excellent reading with the next three years' common readers, which have been selected recently. "The Library Committee hopes to build on the success and experience of the 2009-2010 common reader, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* by Laila Lalami," said Shawn Tonner, director of library services. This year's common reader supported North Georgia's efforts to provide students with a global learning perspective through a book that introduces them to a part of the world that is likely unfamiliar, yet has a significant impact.

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

**Director of University Relations:** Kate Maine  
**Designer:** Debbie Martin

**Make submissions to [digest@ngcsu.edu](mailto:digest@ngcsu.edu).**

The next scheduled publication date is Jan. 13. The deadline for submissions is Jan. 8.

North Georgia College & State University, 82 College Circle, Dahlonega, Ga., 30597  
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# Doctorate degrees approved for North Georgia

## *First doctoral program will be physical therapy*

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In October, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents approved North Georgia's plans to offer a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree, but the new degree level also required accreditation approval and a classification change by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Commission on Colleges.

"I am very pleased that SACS and the Commission on Colleges have approved a level change for North Georgia College & State University," said Dr. Linda Roberts-Betsch, vice president for academic affairs. "We are now a Level V institution with the authority to award doctoral degrees."

The Commission on Colleges classifies colleges and universities, for the purposes of accreditation, according to the highest degree level offered by an institution. North Georgia's new classification as a Level V institution means that it is able to offer up to three doctorate degrees as the highest degrees.

North Georgia's first doctorate degree will be the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT). North Georgia has provided doctoral-level courses since 2006, through a consortium program with the Medical College of Georgia (MCG), in which MCG is the degree-granting institution.

"We will begin admitting students to our own program, instead of MCG's program, effective May 2010," Roberts-Betsch said.

Physical therapists are health care professionals who diagnose and manage medical problems or other health-related conditions that limit a person's ability to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives.

"A critical shortage of physical therapists exists in many parts of the country, including Georgia," said Dr. Stefanie Palma, department head. "Part of the mission of the Department of Physical Therapy at North Georgia is to provide physical therapists for rural and underserved areas in need."

The shortage of physical therapists is expected to grow because of the health needs of the baby boomers, technological advances that are saving the lives of a larger proportion of newborns with severe birth defects, and a growing number of sports injuries as more Americans exercise.

"In the past five years, entry level physical therapy education has transitioned to the doctoral level," Palma said. "The conversion to the professional doctorate is consistent with the changes in the scope of practice of physical therapy and the needed preparation of students for clinical decision making."

Prior to the consortium with MCG, the program was established at the Master of Science level in 1992. North Georgia's physical therapy program was one of the first in the nation to implement a problem-based curriculum, which emphasizes the integration of science, clinical practice and work in a variety of settings.

The pass rates on the national licensing exam for the past two graduating DPT classes taking courses through North Georgia is more than 97 percent – above the national average of 85 percent for 2008.

North Georgia's physical therapy program is also independently accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, the recognized accrediting body for all physical therapy education programs in the United States.

North Georgia expects each DPT cohort to enroll 30 full-time students. The application deadline is Jan. 1, and applications are available [online](#).

North Georgia is also considering the addition of a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, which is currently under review with the Board of Regents.

# Engaging bodies and minds through hippotherapy

By Michael Marshall



*With help from North Georgia students and the Gold Dust Hippotherapy Camp, physical therapy patients like Nick Smith improve their balance and strength.*

For several years, Dr. Terrie Millard, assistant professor in North Georgia's physical therapy department, has led an unusual program that relies strongly on some equine friends, and has resulted in a well-rounded treatment program that boosts strength, balance and social skills in patients.

The premise behind hippotherapy is simple. By riding a horse for extended periods of time, patients must use their core muscles to balance, and by feeling the movement of the horse, they gain a greater awareness of their bodies as a whole. They also practice social skills in the process with the many dedicated student workers who assist Millard through the Gold Dust Riders Hippotherapy

Camp.

A veteran of hippotherapy, Russell Conaway thoroughly enjoys his sessions, and his parents are pleased with the progress he has shown in the past three years. Russell suffers from microcephaly, a condition that prevented the top portion of his brain from fully developing. As a result, his physical capabilities are limited and he is unable to speak. However, there is no denying that he loves the program, as a smile is frequently on his face as he rides around the ring.

"We wanted him to be able to stay upright, especially when the horse stops," said his parents, Bob and Linda Conaway. "It has definitely strengthened him and improved his balance."

Resources limit the availability of hippotherapy sessions, which are a priority for the 16 to 20 patients who forego normal physical therapy treatments in favor of hippotherapy when it is available.

Hippotherapy is also a popular treatment for autism, and one four-year-old patient cannot get enough of it.

"He has stronger core muscles, improved body awareness, and rising social skills," said the boy's mother. "He's become much more independent."

Millard never stands still for more than a few seconds to make sure that every patient and relative had the maximum experience.

"While this is a part of the pediatric and neuromuscular curriculum, many students from other concentrations participate, as it is an excellent opportunity to gain leadership skill and volunteer hours," Millard said.

Indeed, the patients are not the only ones who take positive learning away from the sessions. Each worker constantly exercises their body and mind to communicate and assist the patients while challenging the patients so they may improve themselves.

"The opportunity to watch a patient break through barriers and grow by leaps and bounds in just a few weeks is amazing," said Ashton Jones, who has been working with Millard for three years.

While many of the patients are children, several patients are in their 20s. Millard hopes the program will be able to continue treating patients into their adulthood and eventually take adults as new patients.

## Books selected for university's Common Reader Program

*Selections emphasize core values, global experience for first-year students*

First-year students at North Georgia College & State University are in for some excellent reading with the next three years' common readers, which have been selected recently.

"The Library Committee hopes to build on the success and experience of the 2009-2010 common reader, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* by Laila Lalami," said Shawn Tonner, director of library services.

This year's common reader supported North Georgia's efforts to provide students with a global learning perspective through a book that introduces them to a part of the world that is likely unfamiliar, yet has a significant impact. All new freshmen have been assigned Lalami's book, which provides insight into the immigration experience and what it is like to travel and integrate into a new country or culture.

"The idea of a common reader is to provide a context in which we can examine important subjects and build community around significant issues," Dr. Tanya Bennett, English department chair, said. "We chose this book because it provides an opportunity for students to read a very important contemporary author and because immigration issues impact us in our region, and this book gives us a chance to explore their effects."

*Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* is a collection of short vignettes about several Moroccan characters, some who struggle to survive in contemporary Morocco and some who are emigrating from Morocco to Spain to find a better life. Her book was inspired by an incident in which 15 Moroccan immigrants drowned while crossing the Straits of Gibraltar on a fishing boat.

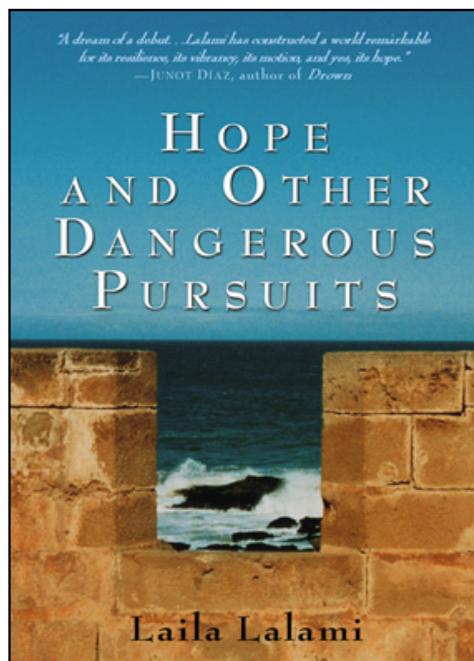
The author's heritage also highlighted the university's emphasis on education for life and leadership in a global community and efforts to internationalize the campus and curriculum. Lalami was born in Rabat, Morocco, and she was educated in Morocco, Britain and the United States. In addition to her popular literary blog, Moorishgirl, her work has appeared in many national newspapers.

"The common reader program exemplifies those activities we value most in our North Georgia community – critical thinking, communication, exploration of important societal themes and values, as well the interactions among faculty, staff and students," Tonner said.

In addition to students discussing the book in one or more of their classes, the university has hosted discussion group sessions to give students, faculty and staff an opportunity to talk about the issues raised in the book.

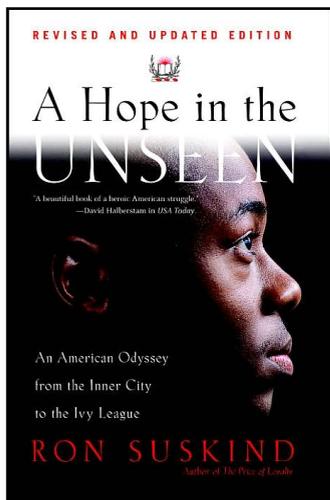
"This program encourages reading and discussion inside and outside the classroom through the shared intellectual experience of reading a common book," Tonner said.

Lalami, who currently lives in Los Angeles, will visit North Georgia's campus March 1-2, 2010, as a visiting author and guest lecturer for the university's annual Hoag Lecture. In addition to the lecture, Lalami will conduct a reading of her work and a book signing in the Library Technology Center.

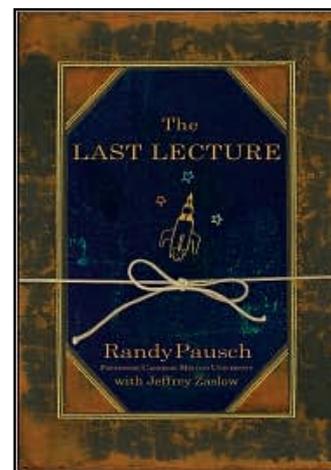


The selections for future common readers for the first-year experience program are:

- 2010-2011, *The Last Lecture*, by Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow.
- 2011-2012, *A Hope in the Unseen: An American odyssey from the inner city to the ivy league*, by Ron Suskind.



- 2012-2013, *Three cups of tea: One man's mission to promote peace – one school at a time*, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.



"The Library Committee began its search for the common readers in early fall, starting with a long list of candidates," Tonner said. "By November, the list was narrowed and after surveying students, faculty and staff, it was clear that these three titles were the stand-outs."

Copies of these books are available for checkout in the Library Technology Center and available for purchase in the campus bookstore. Want to learn more? Visit the new [Common Reading Web site](#).

## Take note...

### White Christmas event supports Community Helping Place

The university's Staff Council thanks the campus community for supporting the White Christmas program again this year! This year's program – culminating in a breakfast social on Dec. 3 – successfully provided the Community Helping Place with food and toys needed to make this holiday season brighter for many families in Lumpkin County. The Community Helping Place is very appreciative of our donations totaling an amazing 1,897 pounds!



### City thanks Campus Police

On Dec. 7, the Dahlonega City Council presented a proclamation to the North Georgia College & State University Public Safety department thanking our police officers for the superior service and dedication to the students, faculty and staff of North Georgia and the City of Dahlonega. *Pictured: Mayor Gary McCullough presents the proclamation to Chief Mike Stapleton.*

## Campus offices to close for holidays

All offices at North Georgia College & State University will be closed for the holidays beginning Monday, Dec. 21, and will reopen Monday, Jan. 4. The normal holiday closing has been extended this year as a result of furlough days that have been included in the break.

## North Georgia is using social networks to connect with alumni, students

North Georgia College & State University has expanded its presence on the Internet through two new venues – the university's official Facebook fan page and North Georgia NetCommunity. Please share these sites, particularly as you visit with friends and relatives over the holidays!

Our Facebook fan page – [www.facebook.com/northgeorgia](http://www.facebook.com/northgeorgia) – was launched a little more than a month ago. Administered by the Office of University Relations, it now has nearly 4,000 fans, including alumni, students, employees, parents and more.



North Georgia NetCommunity – [www.northgeorgia.org](http://www.northgeorgia.org) – enables alumni and donors to connect with the university, its foundation, and with each other in numerous ways. Registration on the site is free and provides users with the ability to update their contact information, receive e-mail newsletters and more. Members of the Alumni Association have further access to members-only benefits, including a searchable online alumni directory.

## MBA Program launches new lecture series

On Jan. 14, the Mike Cottrell School of Business will launch a new community-oriented TeamMBA Lecture Series at the Cumming City Hall. The first speaker is James L. Dinkins, vice president of marketing for Coca-Cola Food Service. A continental breakfast will begin the day, followed by the speaker's presentation in the Cumming City Hall Council Chambers.

This new series is designed for graduate students, business men and women, and community leaders in Forsyth County. Speakers will include business, government and military leaders who will speak on the three key components of the TeamMBA program – leadership, teamwork and a global perspective.

Each session will begin at 7 a.m. with a continental breakfast, and the lectures will be from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Look for more information soon at [www.NorthGeorgiaMBA.com](http://www.NorthGeorgiaMBA.com).

## Campus in Action

Dr. Timothy May, associate professor of Middle Eastern and Central Eurasian history, published "The Mongol Military Machine" in ABC-CLIO's World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras database.

*North Georgia faculty and staff are invited to submit news of professional accomplishments for the Campus in Action section to [digest@ngcsu.edu](mailto:digest@ngcsu.edu).*