Convocation kicks off new academic year

The faculty and staff of South Georgia State College officially opened the 2013-2014 academic year with Convocation, an institution-wide meeting held on Monday, Aug. 5.

Convocation had previously been held in Stubbs Hall on the Douglas campus and the Dye Building on the Waycross campus. The 2013 meeting was moved to McGouirk Auditorium in Peterson Hall so that employees from all four SGSC locations could attend.

During the meeting, faculty and staff were officially welcomed back to campus and heard remarks from Dr. Virginia Carson, members of the executive leadership team, and Director of Operations Harbin Farr. New SGSC employees were also introduced.

One of the highlights of the meeting involved the designation of emeritus status to two former faculty members who also served in administrative roles. Dr. James A. Cottingham received the designations of Vice President Emeritus for Student Affairs and Professor Emeritus of Education and Psychology. Dr. Carl McDonald received the designations of Vice President Emeritus for Academic Affairs, Chair Emeritus Humanities and Learning Support, and Professor Emeritus of English. Both designations were presented by Dr. Carson.

Another special presentation involved Associate Professor of Mathematics Duane Benson. He was recognized as a 2013 recipient of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Teaching Excellence Award. Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Patricia Brown made the presentation. (See story on page 3.)

Following the meeting, everyone enjoyed a luncheon in Engram Hall sponsored by the South Georgia College Foundation and the James M. Dye Foundation.

After lunch, staff returned to their respective offices on both campuses to continue preparations for the new year. Faculty dispersed to various meetings and seminars, many of which were conducted throughout the week.

The fall 2013 semester officially began Monday, Aug. 12, with the first day of classes. A full slate of "Week of Welcome" activities were enjoyed by students during the week.
An annual study conducted on behalf of the University System of Georgia reported an economic impact of $70 million for SGSC and a contribution of 874 jobs to the local job markets during FY 2012.

Through the multiplier effect of dollars spent again in the region, SGSC makes an even greater contribution in terms of creating jobs. On average, for each job created on campus, two off-campus jobs exist because of spending related to the institution.

SGSC’s primary service area includes 12 counties in southern Georgia.

“In addition to creating more opportunities for its students, a thriving college provides a significant economic boost for the communities in which it serves. The economic impact of the University System of Georgia’s institutions, including that of South Georgia State College, has grown each year this study has been performed. In a challenging economic climate, our public colleges and universities have proven to be reliable and worthy investments,” said Dr. Virginia Carson, SGSC President.

Overall, the USG’s economic impact on the state records a 7.4 percent increase from FY 2011 to FY 2012. In cash, that is a jump from $13.2 billion to a new high of $14.1 billion of direct and indirect spending fueling the regions served by the System’s 31 colleges and universities.

According to the study, the USG generated nearly 139,263 full- and part-time jobs, or 3.6 percent of all the jobs in Georgia. This means one job out of every 28 in the State of Georgia is due to the University System. Approximately 33 percent of these positions are on campus as USG employees and 67 percent are off-campus positions in either the private or public sectors.

Most of the $14.1 billion economic impact consists of initial spending by USG institutions for salaries and fringe benefits, operating supplies and expenses, and other budgeted expenditures, as well as spending by the students who attended the institutions. Initial spending by USG institutions and students equaled almost 69 percent of the total output impact. The remaining 31 percent was created by respending. For every dollar of initial spending by a USG institution or its students, research found that, on average, an additional 45 cents was generated for the local economy.

The Selig Center for Economic Growth in the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business analyzed data collected between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012. The annual study is conducted by Dr. Jeffrey M. Humphreys, director of the Selig Center.

The first study in the series calculated the USG’s impact at $7.2 billion in FY1999. The latest $14.1 billion represents a $7.0 billion increase since FY 1999 – or 98 percent growth in the System’s economic impact on Georgia’s communities. That gain far outstrips inflation, which was only 38 percent over this same time period, Humphreys said.
Dr. Patricia (Pat) Brown of Sylva, N.C., has been named Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs. She has temporarily filled the position vacated by Dr. Carl McDonald, who retired at the end of the spring 2013 semester.

Dr. Brown has over 30 years of experience in higher education, including academic affairs, adult education, distance learning, program development, military education and healthcare. She holds degrees from Temple University, Boston University School of Medicine and Massachusetts General Hospital School of Nursing.

Dr. Brown has been active in a number of professional organizations, and she has authored numerous articles and essays that have been published throughout the country. “Dr. Brown brings a wealth of both experience and expertise, which will benefit our institution as we continue to strengthen our academic programs. We are honored to have an individual of Dr. Brown’s caliber joining SGSC and look forward to her many contributions,” said Dr. Virginia Carson.

SGSC will conduct a nationwide search for a permanent Vice President for Academic Affairs this fall with plans to have the position filled by January 2014.

The first South Georgia State College Leadership Retreat was held May 30-31 at Little Ocmulgee State Park in Helena, Ga., and included 33 faculty and staff from the College’s Administrative Council.

The retreat’s keynote speaker was Dr. Houston Davis, executive vice chancellor and chief academic officer for the University System of Georgia. Dr. Davis provided updates on various USG topics including the institutional function and mission proposal, Complete College Georgia, and massive open online courses (MOOC’s).

Other presentations given over the two-day retreat focused on leadership, fiscal affairs, philanthropy, assessment oversight, student services, cultural competencies, the USG’s strategic plan, and the USG Comparator Study. It was also announced that SGSC was one of the recipients of the USG’s Incubator Grant, which will support SGSC’s Complete College Georgia efforts.

Duane Benson, associate professor of mathematics, has been named a 2013 recipient of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Teaching Excellence Award. Benson’s award was announced in May at the NISOD International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence.

Since 1978, NISOD’s emphasis has been on the importance of teaching and leadership excellence in institutions of higher education. NISOD hosted its first award ceremony in 1989 - in conjunction with its annual conference - to honor individuals featured in a University of Texas national study on teaching excellence. The ceremony has become a tradition and allows NISOD to honor the world’s best in higher education.

Dr. Luck Watford (2012), Drs. Frank Holiwski and Leonard Stevenson (2011), and Dr. Lori Seward (2010) are other recent NISOD recipients.
Sixty-four students from Georgia Rotary District 6920 recently attended the annual Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Conference at South Georgia State College. RYLA is a Rotary International program that started in Southeast Asia and has spread across the world. It was adopted by Georgia Rotary District 6920 in 1989. SGSC’s Douglas Campus has hosted RYLA for the District every year since its inception. The District is composed of Rotary Clubs in the following counties: Baldwin, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bibb, Bleckley, Bryan, Bulloch, Burke, Camden, Candler, Chatham, Coffee, Dodge, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Houston, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Jefferson, Jenkins, Johnson, Jones, Laurens, Liberty, Lowndes, McIntosh, Peach, Pierce, Pulaski, Richmond, Screven, Tattnall, Telfair, Tift, Toombs, Turner, Ware, Washington, and Wayne.

Dr. Charles Johnson, SGSC Chair of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Physical Education and Professor of Physics, is the RYLA Program Director and a Rotary Club member. “RYLA is one of the most important projects that Rotary sponsors. RYLA is instrumental in developing the leaders of tomorrow. Attendees create lifelong friendships and learn valuable lessons in leadership, business, developing positive self-esteem, conflict resolution, and other traits that translate into success in our global society,” he said.

In addition to attending a number of important classes pertaining to leadership, personal development, motivation, and communication skills, attendees were treated to presentations from three featured speakers – Bill Borden, one of only 696 people in the entire world to have successfully completed the 1,151 mile Iditarod Sled Dog race from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska; Dr. Carl McDonald, SGSC’s recently retired Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Andrea Giggetts, owner of Giggetts and Associates, a company that specializes in providing human resources, supervisory and managerial training, a speaker’s bureau, and corporate and professional training.

Patterson Elementary wins Science Olympiad on Waycross campus

One hundred and five elementary students from five area schools recently competed in an Elementary Science Olympiad on SGSC’s Waycross Campus. Patterson Elementary took first place in the competition, followed by Williams Heights Elementary and Blackshear Elementary.

The Olympiad was sponsored by Southern Forest World in Waycross, the Georgia Youth and Science Technology Center (GYSTC) of Kennesaw State University, and SGSC.

“This was the first Science Olympiad held in several years, and coaches and students were glad to have the opportunity to participate,” said Dr. Reba Smith, executive director of Southern Forest World. “It was an exciting day with science going on everywhere!”

Smith complimented SGSC’s staff for making sure the event was a success and was thankful to each school for their participation.

“We would like to congratulate the students for the time and effort they put in to learn the information needed to compete,” she said. “We appreciate the dedication of the coaches and their commitment to science.”

Crosby selected for GLA paraprofessional award

Yolanda Crosby, access and circulation services manager in the William S. Smith Library, was one of three recipients of the 2013 Georgia Library Association’s (GLA) Paraprofessional Award.

The $250 award will facilitate Crosby’s attendance this October at the 2013 Georgia Conference of Media Organizations – the GLA’s Annual Convention. Crosby and the other two recipients will also be honored and receive plaques at an awards ceremony during the conference.

“Miss Crosby works to expand her knowledge of information services and technology skills with self-initiative that aligns perfectly with the goals of the GLA Paraprofessional Grant,” said SGSC Director of Libraries Jacqueline Vickers. “She provides excellent services with an approachable, servant-centered attitude that makes library users feel confident of her assistance and draws them back to the library as a favorite place on campus for research, study, homework, and leisurely reading. I am very excited and pleased that Miss Crosby is receiving this recognition.”

Applicants submit a letter outlining their qualifications and a written recommendation from the library administrator describing why the applicant deserves the award. Although not required, several SGSC faculty, staff, and students submitted individual letters of recommendation in support of Crosby’s application.
BECKY WEHMEIER

Job title/Department: Administrative Assistant/External Affairs
Years employed at SGSC: 5.5 years/Douglas Campus

What do you like most about working at SGSC? “Helping students and seeing that relief on their face that they got the help they needed. Plus, working with my coworkers in External Affairs.”

Hometown: Electra, Texas

Family Info: Husband – Jim; Children – Travis and Megan
Any pets? Two dachshunds - Duber and Gus
Favorite restaurant/food: Mexican
Ideal or dream vacation: Ireland
Favorite singer/group: Gospel and Country Music
Favorite TV shows: Friends and Seinfeld
If you could have one occupation other than your current job, what would it be? Diagnostic Sonography in Cardiac Care
Hidden talent: “I can whistle really loud.”

LYNN CREWS

Job title/Department: Administrative Assistant to the Waycross Campus Director
Years employed at SGSC: 20 years/Waycross Campus

What do you like most about working at SGSC? “Being able to provide service to faculty, staff, and students; interaction with the community.”

Hometown: Waycross

Family Info: Husband – Roger; Sons – Jeremy and Dale
Any pets? “No. I’m allergic to pet dander.”
Favorite restaurant/food: Italian
Ideal or dream vacation: “I don’t really have one.”
Favorite singer/group: Chicago
Favorite current TV show: “Anything on HGTV.”
If you could have one occupation other than your current job, what would it be? “I would like to teach a personal finance and budgeting class for young people.”
Hidden talent: “I am a decent carpenter. I love calculating materials for a project to minimize waste and expense.”
The South Georgia State College cross country team added some hardware to its trophy case after third place finishes in both the men’s and women’s races at the first meet of the 2013 season. The team traveled to Darton State College in Albany for the season opener and competed very well against some strong teams.

Freshman Chris Bonner and sophomore Jose Castanon led the way for the men – finishing 10th and 15th, respectively – and received individual awards. Other finishers for the men included freshmen Isaiah McFarland, Robert Bledsoe, and Marco Loredo.

On the women’s side, sophomore Samantha Arroyo placed 15th overall – the only SGSC female runner to earn an individual award. Following her were sophomores Christine Johnston, Brooke Logue, and Destinee Cason. Freshman Sarah Thorne rounded out the Lady Hawks’ lineup.

Beginning Sept. 13, the cross country team will race three weeks in a row – all in middle and north Georgia.

The South Georgia State College Lady Hawks softball program has hired Nicki Levering, former assistant coach at Galveston College in Galveston, Texas, as its new head coach.

Levering comes to SGSC with a great deal of playing and coaching experience. She played catcher and third base at both Seminole Community College and Trevecca Nazarene University, where she was a NFCA Academic All-American (2005, Seminole Community College) and team captain (TNU, 2008). At TNU, Levering and her teammates won the NAIA Region IX championship and the NAIA Tran South Conference Championship in 2007 and 2008.

After her playing career ended, Levering served as a graduate assistant for two years at the University of North Alabama before moving to Galveston College. While at Galveston, her team won the NJCAA Region XIV tournament and finished seventh in the country in 2013. Over the previous three years, 14 players at Galveston graduated as NJCAA Academic All-Americans. In addition, there were two All-American NJCAA Division I athletes, one NJCAA Region XIII MVP, eight NJCAA Division I All-Conference First-Team athletes, and five Division I All-Conference Second-Team athletes.

“I’m pleased with the opportunity I have here at South Georgia State College. It’s nice to get a little closer to home and to come to a program that values the same qualities I do. I am committed to helping student-athletes develop both athletically and academically. I have high expectations for this program, and I firmly believe that we will be successful both on and off the field,” said Coach Levering.

“Coach Levering brings with her a strong emphasis on excellence in the classroom and on the field of play. She has been successful as a player and a coach, and we feel very positive about the direction she will take the South Georgia State softball program,” said Dr. Greg Tanner, SGSC’s athletic director.

After starting the 2013 soccer season 2-0 with wins over Andrew College and Cedar Valley, the South Georgia State College Lady Hawks lost three in row, most recently 4-0 to Darton State College Sept. 4 in Albany.

Over the Labor Day weekend, SGSC travelled to North Carolina where they faced Louisburg College and Cape Fear Community College. The team lost both games and suffered several injuries to key players.

The Lady Hawks didn’t have much time to lament their misfortune; just two days after returning from North Carolina, they traveled to Albany to face the always tough Lady Cavaliers of Darton. Their luck didn’t get much better; in addition to the 4-0 loss, two more players went down with injuries.

On Friday, Sept. 6, the Lady Hawks played Georgia Perimeter College on the SGSC campus. Results were unavailable at press time. On Wednesday, Sept. 11, the Lady Hawks welcome Georgia Military to town for a 5 p.m. start.