

Academic Affairs Excellence Awards

Application Form



Name: Brooke Conaway

Rank: Associate Professor

Department: Economics and Finance

Award applying for:

(Check one)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Teaching Award*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Online Teaching Award*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Scholarship & Creative Endeavors Award*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in University Service*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellence in Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Department/Program Excellence Award^
<input type="checkbox"/>	Irene Rose Community Service Award^
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laurie Hendrickson McMillian Faculty Award^

*college selection required before being forwarded to university

^university awards

College nominees' final applications received by Center for Teaching and Learning (ctl@gcsu.edu) by March 1.

Please insert the required documentation in the pages below for the award category you have noted above. Detailed information associated with each award is available online at the [Center for Teaching and Learning website](#).

Nomination Portfolio
Excellence in Teaching Award
Georgia College and State University

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Office of the Dean

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March 8, 2021

Jim Berger, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Teaching and Learning
Georgia College & State University
Milledgeville, GA 31061

Dear Dr. Berger,

It is our sincere pleasure to enthusiastically nominate Brooke Conaway for the Excellence in Teaching Award. She is a natural and gifted teacher who has an excellent rapport with her students. She embodies the qualities that a true liberal arts university should have in its faculty.

Brooke challenges her students to go beyond shallow arguments and facile platitudes and engage in analysis and critical thinking. For example, students often have no comprehension of the many and varied ways in which prices and markets benefit our society and help create the conditions for human flourishing. She provides her students with both the philosophical foundation and the concrete examples that help students appreciate the many ways we benefit from trade. She does an excellent job of using current, relevant and entertaining examples of economic concepts. Brooke teaches the economic way of thinking in such a way that she is essentially teaching them how to think—a new experience for some of our students. She is also always seeking new ways to convey economic concepts and improve her teaching.

Despite pushing her students and holding them to rigorous standards, she is extremely well-liked by them. A number of our current majors switched to economics after having Brooke in a lower-level economics class. She actively engages our students outside as well as inside the classroom. She does an outstanding job as the faculty advisor for the Economics Club, helping organize and obtain funding for club activities. We should also mention that there is a significant intellectual dimension to the Economics Club meetings and activities, which is not always the case with student clubs. She also teaches our Senior Seminar in Economics, where she mentors our seniors through completion of their senior research projects. She maintains strong relationships with many of our former students as they achieve greater levels of success.

Brooke has published multiple pedagogical papers explaining innovative teaching

techniques. She has also published peer-reviewed journal articles co-authored with two of our graduates, and is currently conducting joint research with two of our recent graduates. Additionally, she has coordinated the Academy of Economics and Finance Best Undergraduate Paper Competition since 2015, where many of our seniors present their research each year. One of our seniors, Kendyl Lewis, won the Best Undergraduate Paper Award at the February 2021 conference.

In summary, Brooke is the ideal professor for a liberal arts university: She has a passion for teaching and a genuine interest in her students. Most importantly, the intellectual development of her students is her highest priority.

Sincerely,



J. J. Arias, Ph.D.
Chair and Professor of Economics
Department of Economics and Finance, J. Whitney Bunting College of Business



Micheal T. Stratton, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor of Management, J. Whitney Bunting College of Business
President, Management and Organizational Behavior Teaching Society (mobts.org)



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February 25, 2021

I am writing in support of Dr. Brooke Conaway's nomination for the Excellence in Teaching Award. Brooke is a true teacher-scholar, imaginatively innovating in the classroom and documenting the impact in various research outlets. Moreover, she has been instrumental in developing new classes that align the department's offerings with the mission of Georgia College to integrate critical thinking as a core tenant of the student experience. The combination of innovation and creativity in the classroom and subsequent production of pedagogical articles makes Brooke an embodiment of the Georgia College mission and deserving of recognition by this award.

Over the last ten years, I have had the pleasure of working with Brooke on creating three new critical thinking core curriculum courses with an economics focus. Each of these courses is designed to help new college students understand vitally important economic concepts using examples and events they can connect with. The status quo among business academics is to find the best application of course concepts in industry or firms. However, students have yet to experience those environments, rendering abstract concepts still difficult to understand. Brooke is excellent at "meeting the students where they exist," designing examples and even courses that build economic lessons into the experiences students regularly encounter. One such course, Swansonomics, uses quotes and scenes from the television series *Parks and Recreation* to motivate discussion of timeless economics topics focused on public economics and the merits of various economics systems. This kind of innovation is quite uncommon in economics and Brooke is exceptionally good at it. As evidence, the courses she helped create are popular on campus and, based on assessment outcomes, successful in conveying the kind of knowledge and critical thinking skills economists want young people to acquire.

Brooke has also been instrumental in the development of a more robust capstone experience for our economics majors. As a department, we have integrated one continuous capstone experience throughout our Econometrics and Senior Seminar courses. Brooke teaches our Senior Seminar



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class and has done an excellent job helping students to develop their research and present it at economic research conferences. Since making these program changes, the number of our students entering PhD programs in economics has increased relative to those entering master's programs. We have also experienced an increase in the percentage of female students entering graduate programs. Students have also been recognized for the quality of their undergraduate research. Four of our students have earned the award for outstanding undergraduate research at the Academy of Economics and Finance annual meetings. Furthermore, one student won the Frank W. Taussig award, an annual undergraduate research award presented by the international economics honor society, Omicron Delta Epsilon.

In an effort to help other economic educators succeed, Brooke has written four pedagogical papers designed to help teachers at both the high school and college level implement these new techniques in their classrooms. Her research has been published in the *Journal of Economics and Finance Education*, *Perspectives on Economic Education Research*, the *Journal of Economics Teaching*, and the *Journal of Economic Education* (the top pedagogical journal in the economics discipline). Brooke has also presented her work at several international research conferences. Brooke's papers carefully explain how these courses can be taught, assessed, and improved over time. They also provide examples of ways to weave these innovative techniques into more traditional courses. One of these papers has been read more than 4,000 times via Research Gate.

Brooke constantly strives to improve her teaching and the teaching of others in her profession. She is a terrific colleague. I collaborate with Brooke regularly and it is always a rewarding experience. In short, I can think of no one more deserving of the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Christopher Clark, Professor
Department of Economics and Finance

L. Brooke Conaway

Georgia College • J. Whitney Bunting College of Business
Department of Economics & Finance • CBX 014 • Milledgeville, GA 31061
brooke.conaway@gcsu.edu • 478.445.1240 (office) • 478.456.9917 (cell)

Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae • March 2021

Education

Ph.D. Applied Economics, *Clemson University*, 2009
M.A. Applied Economics, *Clemson University*, 2007
B.S. Economics and B.S. Political Science, *Georgia College*, 2003

Teaching and research interests: Education policy; Pedagogy; Industrial Organization;
Controversial Economic Issues; Sex, Drugs and Economics; Public Choice

Academic Positions

Associate Professor of Economics, Georgia College, (August 2018 – Present).
Assistant Professor of Economics, Georgia College. (August 2012 - 2018).
Lecturer of Economics, Georgia College. (August 2010 – July 2012).
Assistant Professor of Economics, Georgia Southern University. (August 2009 - July 2010).
Instructor/Graduate Instructor, Clemson University. (August 2006 - June 2009).

Teaching

[Georgia College Courses Taught](#)

Crit Thinking: Sex, Drugs & Econ, Crit Think: Swansonomics, Economics and Society,
Principles of Microeconomics, Principles of Macroeconomics, Industrial Organization,
Controversial Economic Issues, Senior Seminar in Economics, Economic Growth,
Comparative Economic Systems, Public Choice Theory.

[Selected Mentored Undergraduate Research](#)

Kendyl Lewis, “Do changes in SNAP eligibility affect food insecurity?” (2021).
Abigail Tong, “Does family size affect individual savings?” (2021).
Emma Petrick, “Do marijuana laws affect the consumption of other narcotics?” (2020).
Emily McClarty, “Does Medicaid enrollment affect abortion rates?” (2020).
Hunter Giles, “Does religiosity affect charitable contributions?” (2020).
Nicholas Pallone, “Does race affect the prescription of pain killers?” (2020).
Sarabeth Sutton, “Does Medicaid spending affect maternal mortality rates?” (2020).
Cameron Watts, “Do changes in revenues and expenses for local non-profits affect rural GA
poverty rates?” (2020).
Emerson Kleider “Do charter schools affect juvenile crime rates?” (2020).
Hanna Kagele, “Does gentrification affect racial concentration?” (2019).
Valeria Lopez-Perez, “Does gender affect earnings in professional tennis?” (2019).
Webb Beard, “Does attending virtual school affect educational achievement?” (2019).
Josh Durand, “Does religious affiliation affect perceived social class?” (2019).
Jackson Sutko, “Does a baseball player’s country of origin impact their salary?” (2019).
Jordan Ball, “Does teacher autonomy affect teachers per capita?” (2019).

Research

Journal Articles

- Roush, J., Conaway, B., Clark, C., & Folk, J. (forthcoming 2020). Economics in three acts. *Journal of Economics Teaching*.
- Conaway, B., Clark, C., Arias, J., & Folk, J. (2018). Integrating econometrics: A modern undergraduate economics capstone experience. *Journal of Economic Education*, 49(3), 260–270.
- Conaway, B., & Lee, K.¹(2018). The age rating impact on consumer video game choices. *International Journal of Applied Economics*, 15(1), 23–41.
- Conaway, B., Clark, C., & Arias, J. (2016). The economists strike back: Keeping economics in the core curriculum. *Perspectives on Economic Education Research*, 10(1), 71–93.
- Conaway, B., Scafidi, B., & Stephenson, E.F. (2016). Parents, homevoters, and public-school employees: An analysis of voting patterns in the 2012 Georgia charter school amendment referendum. *Journal of School Choice*, 10(2), 249–269.
- Conaway, B., & Clark, C. (2015). Swansonomics: Using ‘Parks and Recreation’ to teach economics. *Journal of Economics and Finance Education*, 14(1), 41–61.
- Ellis, D.* & Conaway, B. (2015). Do MPAA ratings affect box office revenues? *Academy of Business Research Journal*, Volume I, 64–88.

Book Chapters

- “Workforce development requires educational reform.” 2009. In *Unleashing Capitalism: A Prescription for Economic Prosperity in South Carolina*, Edited by Peter Calcagno, Joshua Hall and Russell Sobel. Columbia, SC: The South Carolina Policy Council Education Foundation, 171-184.

Research in Progress

- “Unobserved competition in baseball: Better looks, better pay?” (with Leng Ling).
- “Franchising across states.” (with Mimi Rickard)
- “Supplemental Instructor Effectiveness.” (with Chris Clark, Tyler Hooks*, and Emerson Kleider*)
- “Labor union classroom experiment”

Selected Presentations

- “SI Effectiveness” Southern Economic Association Conference, Virtual/New Orleans, LA; November 2020.
- “Integrating econometrics: A modern undergraduate capstone experience.”
Academy of Economics and Finance Conference, Houston, TX; February 2018.
American Economic Association Conference, Atlanta GA; January 2019.
- “Economics in Three Acts.” Association of Private Enterprise Education Conference, Las Vegas, NV; April 2018.
- “Unobserved competition in baseball: Better looks, better pay?” Southern Economic Association Conference, Tampa, FL; November 2017
- “Interest group formation across US states” Southern Economic Association Conference, Washington, DC; November 2016.

¹ Student coauthor

“Do ESRB (Entertainment Software Ratings Board) ratings affect video game revenues?”
Academy of Economics and Finance Conference, Jacksonville, FL: February 2015.

Selected Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

Georgia College Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Fellow (2021-22).
Georgia College nominee, Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) Fellow (2021).
University System of Georgia Chancellor’s Learning Scholar (2018-2020).
Georgia College nominee, Teaching Excellence in First Year Seminar National Resource Center and Penguin Random House Publishing (2019).
SoTL Awards; College of Business award & Georgia College award (April 2017).
Certificate of Teacher Training, Academy of Economics and Finance (February 2017).
Honors Student Graduation Faculty Member, Georgia College (May 2016 and May 2017).
Student Athlete Most Impactful Faculty Member, Georgia College (January 2016).
Georgia College's nominee, Lynton Award Scholarship of Engagement of Early Career Faculty (May 2015).
College of Business Excellence in Teaching Award, Georgia College (April 2015).

Memberships

Academy of Economics and Finance (Member 2014-present; Board of Directors 2019-21)
Georgia College Alumni Board of Directors (August 2018 – present).
American Association of University Women (August 2014 – present).
Foundation for Economic Education (FEE) Faculty Network (November 2015 - present).
American Economic Association (January 2015; January 2020).
Association of Private Enterprise Education (February 2012 - 2018).
Southern Economic Association (November 2013 - 2020).

Selected Service Activities

University, College, Department, and Professional Service

Academy of Economics and Finance, 2nd Vice President (2021-22).
General Education Committee, Georgia College (Member 2018-2020; Chair 2020-present).
Undergrad Research Competition Chair, Academy of Economics and Finance. (February 2018-present).
Committee Member, CTL Advisory Council (November 2019 – present).
Diversity Leadership Team, College of Business. (July 2014 - Present).
Book Proposal Reviewer, Routledge Press (February 2020).
Reviewer *American Economist* (2019), *J of Econ. and Fin. Education* (2019), *J of Econ. Education* (2018).
Gateways to Completion ECON 2100 Faculty Chair, Georgia College (March 2018-20).
Committee Member, VP of International Edu. Center search and Provost search, (2018-19).
Honors & Awards Committee, College of Business. (Member 2013-17; Chair 2017-18)
New Faculty Search Committee, Economics & Finance. (Member 2013-16; Chair 2019-20)

Mentorship Activities - Georgia College

Faculty Advisor, Economics and Investment Club. (July 2014 - Present).
Faculty Mentor, Student Group Travel to Academy of Economics and Finance Conference. (February 2015-present).

Reflective Statement

Many students enter their first economics class under the assumption that economics is boring. It has been my goal to shatter that misconception, and as evidenced by my student evaluation comments included in the supporting documents, I feel some measure of success in achieving that goal. My teaching style is centered around getting students interested in economics and helping them understand its critical importance to the world around them. To that end, I teach through real world examples and controversial public policy issues. I aim to highlight the importance of economics, encourage development of critical thinking skills, and bridge the gap between theory and the real world so students leave feeling my courses have benefited them beyond simply acquiring credits for graduation.

By basing grades on their ability to apply concepts, not just memorize them, students are better served in the long run as they are more likely to develop a set of skills lasting beyond their undergraduate careers. This skill can be a difficult to develop and many students get discouraged when it doesn't come easily. To help students improve these skills I regularly use innovative teaching pedagogies including interesting non-textbook readings, relevant in-class video clips, supplemental instructors, and evidence-backed pedagogies such as "muddiest point," low/no stakes assignments, and exam wrappers.

I teach two GC1Y: Critical Thinking courses: (i) Swansonomics and (ii) Sex, Drugs, and Economics. Many first-year students have only used news soundbites or political ideology to form their initial thoughts on the topics I cover in these courses. It is thoroughly rewarding to get them to rethink their ideas about these controversial topics backed by a basic understanding of economics and peer-reviewed research. I challenge them to consider the actual direct and indirect effects of public policies, regardless of intention, and to understand how two seemingly unrelated outcomes can be linked. These courses are meant to teach students to think critically and to show them economics is not just about Wall Street.

Swansonomics uses the fictional character, Ron Swanson from the television show "Parks and Recreation," to teach students about various economic and political systems. Chris Clark and I wrote a pedagogical paper on this course, "Swansonomics: Using 'Parks and Recreation' to Teach Economics," which was published in the *Journal of Economics and Finance Education*. Sex, Drugs, and Economics is a course based on the economics of controversial issues. The success I have had in boosting student interest in economics comes in large part from using controversial real-world examples in class. Students zone out when you talk about the market for "widgets," but they find markets for heroin and sex work notable and fascinating. They can get bored when you talk about private property rights, but they perk up when you apply that concept to engendered species, eminent domain, and civil asset forfeiture, then show them a video of Donald Trump attempting to use eminent domain to build a limousine parking lot over an elderly woman's home in the 1990s. Using controversial public policy topics and interesting real-world examples gives students a memorable experience that sticks in their heads, which helps avoid the "memory dump" many students experience once a class is over. I also like to incorporate many of these examples in my principles classes. A list of topics covered in both Swansonomics and Sex, Drugs, and Economics are provided in Tables 2 and 3 of the attached supporting documents.

Besides interesting courses, topics, and examples, I am fully committed to supporting undergraduate research in a number of ways. I regularly coauthor research with students. I have two publications with former students, Dan Ellis and Kelly Lee. I am also currently working on research related to Supplemental Instructor effectiveness at GC; two of my coauthors are former students, Tyler Hooks and Emerson Kleider, who began working on this research as undergraduates. The opportunity to coauthor research with your professors as an undergraduate is a hallmark of the Georgia College experience, and I'm thrilled to be a part of it.

In 2019, I began teaching our capstone course, Senior Seminar in Economics. Our seniors choose their own research topics, find relevant data and previous literature, perform appropriate statistical analyses, interpret their results, and present their research at conferences. Students begin their research in Chris Clark's Econometrics course taken in the fall, and complete it in the spring during the Senior Seminar course. I have implemented extensive scaffolding for their final papers based on department assessment data from previous years. A random sample of student papers is assessed each year, and as shown in Table 1 of the supporting documents, in 2019-20 the average assessed capstone paper met expectations for 7 of 9 traits assessed; in the previous three years, 4 or fewer traits met expectations. I have thoroughly enjoyed mentoring our seniors, and since taking over the capstone course I have had the pleasure of mentoring over 40 student research projects, and another 22 projects this spring. All seniors present their research both in class and at least one conference, including the GC Student Research Conference, the Academy of Economics and Finance (AEF) Conference, the National Council on Undergraduate Research Conference, and the Georgia Association of Business, Economics, and Entrepreneurship Conference (formerly Georgia Association of Economics and Finance).

I feel my teaching has been improved by participating and leading faculty learning communities, engaging in scholarship of teaching and learning projects, and serving on university committees focused on teaching. I completed Dr. Alby's Design for Transformative Learning course in 2018, which focused on course design using high impact practices and incorporating AAC&U's Essential Learning Outcomes. This course helped me develop strategies for taking over our capstone course in 2019. I was selected as one of Georgia College's first USG Chancellor's Learning Scholars for 2018-2020. I led a faculty learning community focused on small teaching and innovative teaching pedagogies. I was also the Gateways to Completion (G2C) faculty course chair for ECON 2100, which was identified as a "gateway" course with a high DFWI rate. With help from the Gardner Institute, I completed detailed evaluations of this course, including current teaching strategies used by all professors teaching the course, and how we might use new strategies to reduce DFWI rates. A description of the Chancellor's Learning Scholar's Program, the G2C program, and other relevant information and data can be found in the supporting documentation. Finally, as shown on my CV, most of my research is SoTL focused. I was recently chosen as a GC SoTL Fellow, where I am working to produce a new SoTL research project. I currently serve on CTL Advisory Council and the COB Diversity Leadership Team. I have also organized the AEF Best Undergraduate Paper Competition every year since 2017.

Teaching is exceptionally rewarding. I get to share what I love with amazing students, learn more about their experiences and perspectives, and create new ways to help them learn. It's the absolute best part of my job, and gives me the feeling of truly making a difference in the world.

Sample of Innovative Teaching Practices

1. Critical thinking assignment: Critical thinking is the key learning outcome for GC1Y classes. In both the Sex, Drugs, and Economics course and the Swansonomics course, I use a popular journalism assignment to help them practice critical thinking skills. Students learn about various logical and economic fallacies in class, and then turn in several assignments on different articles throughout the semester. I specifically ask students not to choose peer-reviewed articles for this assignment because I know they're more likely to turn to popular journalism in the future when they want to learn more about social and economic issues. With this assignment, they get practice critically evaluating arguments made in popular journalism. Below are abbreviated instructions for the assignment (students are given more detailed instructions along with 2 example assignments from which to work):

Homework instructions for GC1Y courses:

Choose a controversial topic you're interested in, find an article/blog/etc. where the author takes a stance on one side of the issue (e.g. if you picked sex work, look for an article advocating for or against legalized or decriminalized sex work). Then, using what you learned in class, analyze the author's arguments. Is the author considering all the relevant costs/benefits, incentive structures and unintended consequences? Is the author making any logical or economic fallacies? In short, in your analysis I want you to point out and explain at least two economic guideposts that the author ignored (incentives, unintended consequences, opportunity costs, etc.), and at least two logical or economic fallacies committed by the author.

2. Milestone assignments for Senior Seminar: After taking over the Senior Seminar in Economics course, I instituted milestone assignments for their final research papers. Papers were previously started in Econometrics, where students would get feedback on memo assignments linked to their final research papers, but they were not given feedback again until the final papers were submitted. To help students improve their research and writing skills, I now have them turn in each section of their final paper as scaffolding assignments prior to submitting their final research papers. Those assignments are (i) abstract and introduction, (ii) literature review, (iii) theory, (iv) model and data, (v) results, (vi) conclusions and limitations. These scaffolded assignments have resulted in better senior research papers as evidenced by senior paper assessment data provided in the supporting documents section.

3. In-class Experiments: I incorporate several in-class experiments and games into my courses as a means of experiential learning. For example, when teaching students about the effects of property rights on economic development, I play a game developed by my colleagues at Berry College, Frank Stephenson and Lauren Heller. Students get an initial endowment to invest in property, first with no clear titles to their property, and later legal and binding titles to their property are randomly assigned as we play more rounds. Students without titles have a 50/50 shot of losing that property, but those with titles get a return on their investments. I have also developed an in-class game to help students better understand labor union contracts and operation. I have noticed when using in-class games, students often refer to the outcomes of the games when explaining their answers on exams; they have a clearer understanding of the material. Unfortunately, COVID has restricted my ability to incorporate these experiments over the last year; however, I hope to begin using them again in the fall.

Letter of Support from a Current Student

Over the course of my academic career at Georgia College, I have had extended contact with Dr. Brooke Conaway. I have been a student in three of her classes, along with spending a semester in the role of Supplemental Instructor (SI) for her Econ and Society course; that amounts to two full school years of time with her. That level of exposure to her methods and style of teaching allows me to say, very confidently, that Dr. Conaway is supremely deserving of the GC Excellence in Teaching Award.

For me, a few things stand out as the most noteworthy elements of how Dr. Conaway teaches and interacts with her students. Firstly, Dr. Conaway is extremely organized and methodical in the way that she presents content and expectations to her students. Of all the econ professors I've had and courses I've been in, the notes I took in her classes were always the most organized and easy to follow of any; this was fully due to her presentation style. In Dr. Conaway's classes, content is never presented in a scatter-brained manner, and it is always easy to follow along. Additionally, Dr. Conaway ensures that students have a meaningful understanding of the topic at hand, before moving on to the next one – something that I've found lacking in a good deal of other classes. Dr. Conaway also lays out assignment expectations extremely clearly. There is never any confusion as to how an assignment should be completed, and as someone who can be a bit neurotic in worrying about proper assignment completion, I appreciate immensely. If confusion persists, she is always willing to answer any questions to clear things up.

Dr. Conaway also makes content engaging and fun. Instead of simply lecturing the entire class period, she often shows videos in class to make content relatable and understandable. Why just lecture about cost structures or business models when you could watch a Shark Tank clip demonstrating the concept? Also, as a fellow Office and Parks and Rec lover, the in-class references to the shows are always appreciated.

The final element which makes Dr. Conaway such a good professor is her availability. Dr. Conaway goes above and beyond the normal standard of availability, in order to better serve her students. Like other professors, she has her set office hours, but she constantly reminds students that if these hours don't work, she's able and willing to meet at times that work for them. Any emails to Dr. Conaway are responded to quickly, and she is always willing to accommodate students who may be having difficulties. As an example, I was infected with COVID-19 in September of last year, and upon emailing her, Dr. Conaway quickly came up with ways to ensure I would stay up-to-date and still be able to participate in class, meaningfully and remotely. During my time as her SI, she routinely encouraged me to reach out to her if I needed any help and was always willing to work with me on collaborative efforts to ensure better student learning.

Overall, Dr. Brooke Conaway is a kind, funny, and extremely capable professor. She has helped make my experience as a GC economics major a real joy. I truly hope her efforts are recognized with the GC Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,
David Hale

Letter of Support from a Former Student

On a very warm morning in August of 2013, I walked into my very first college course. I was lured into taking the class because of the name - Sex, Drugs, and Economics - although I had not even a suggestion of interest in the field of economics. Yet, the end of that first semester, I had decided to declare an economics minor that I now use daily in my career. And so, it is my absolute pleasure and honor to recommend Dr. Brooke Conaway for a tenured position with Georgia College & State University.

Dr. Conaway is devoted to her field of study, her university, her department, and her students. She made herself available to answer any question, worked with me to create honors option projects, provided guidance and insight when it came to planning my college as well as professional career, and urged me to think from new perspectives. Because of her clear love of the subject matter, her dedication to us students, and her ability to challenge the way we think about some of the most compelling issues in our world today, I took as many classes as I could from Dr. Conaway. Over my three years at Georgia College, I took 5 classes with Dr. Conaway and grew as a thinker, student, and as an individual.

Dr. Conaway supported our clubs, our wild ideas, our heated debates, and our most compelling fascinations. She was one of, if not the most, committed and passionate teachers I have ever had the privilege to know and learn from. For me, and many of her students, she was a guide, mentor, teacher, and friend. She has played such an important role in helping female students like me recognize our aptitude for a field of study which we didn't believe was meant for or available to us.

Knowing her impressive level of dedication to her students, her passion for her field of study, and her love for Georgia College, I am positive that Dr. Brooke Conaway will continue to contribute to the impressive work done at Georgia College and to extraordinary reputation it already holds.

Sincerely,
Julia Fox

Letter of Support from a Former Student

I am honored to write this letter of strong support for Dr. Brooke Conaway. I have known Dr. Conway for several years and have come to admire her as the most influential professor and mentor I have ever known.

I first met Dr. Conaway as an unfulfilled student one semester away from graduation. Dr. Jerry Herbel recommended that I talk to Dr. Conaway after expressing an interest in Economics; he was adamant that she was the most sincere and enthusiastic professor in the department. Dr. Conaway agreed to meet, where she spoke of the rigor of the Economics program, different realms within the Economics field, and promising prospects for graduates. After expressing that I would have to take an upper-level Economics course without a prerequisite, Dr. Conway offered to teach me the fundamentals of microeconomics during December of 2014- and she did exactly that! It was then that I knew if a professor was willing to invest that much energy into a student they just met during the holiday break, I needed to be in that academic program. Thusly, I committed to two more years at Georgia College, a decision entirely fueled by the actions of Dr. Brooke Conaway.

Since then, students from all departments, have made a point to have Dr. Conaway as a professor, often manipulating their schedules to accommodate her courses. Every semester, students compete to enroll in her courses and anxiously look forward to its content. Each of her courses forces students to examine their long-established values and prepares them to be dynamic decision-makers in a constantly changing environment. By virtue of her instruction, many students become more self-aware and better equipped to be engaged citizens of the world, which is a large component of the university's mission.

Dr. Conaway is a hard-working, intelligent, and selfless part of the faculty. It has been one of my greatest pleasures to be mentored by her, as it has for a number of my classmates. An important aspect of Dr. Conaway's interactions with her students is her ability to make students excited about the curriculum, while motivating them to be the best version of themselves. She also has a gift for engaging students in the widest variety of research areas. Most importantly, she makes students feel valued and capable, which means so much to those navigating their college careers.

The community of Georgia College has benefited so much from her. From the academic contributions, and the view-changing courses, to the overall commitment of the student's future- this is only the beginning for Dr. Brooke Conaway. She is an absolute asset to Georgia College and I could not believe any more in her future at the institution.

Sincerely,

Brittan Edwards

Supporting Documents

Student Success Data and Highlights:

Assessment Data for Senior Seminar:

Each year a random sample of senior capstone papers are assessed on the traits listed in Table 1 below. For AY 2019-20, students met or exceeded expectations on 7 of the 9 traits evaluated (expectation is an average score of at least 3). This shows improvement from previous 3 years when 4 or fewer traits met expectations.

Table 1. Assessment Data for Senior Seminar Papers AY 2019-2020

Economics Program Assessment Rubric Worksheet	Surpasses Expectations (5)	(4)	Meets Expectations (3)	(2)	Fails Expectations (1)	AVG Score
Demonstration of Knowledge:						
Application of Economic Terms	1	2	7	2	0	3.17
Application of Concepts & Theory	0	5	4	4	3	3.00
Technical/Analytical Skills:						
Identifiable question to be answered	2	4	4	2	0	3.50
Analysis of topic	0	1	5	6	0	2.58
Usage of Data	0	2	8	2	2	3.00
Draws Reasoned Conclusions	0	3	4	5	0	2.83
Organization and Writing Skills:						
Acceptable Format & Organization	0	3	8	1	0	3.17
Correct Spelling and Grammar	0	2	8	2	0	3.00
Acceptable Citations	2	4	3	3	0	3.42

Recruiting Women to the Major:

Of those earning undergraduate degrees in economics, around 30-35% of them are women across all US colleges and universities.² Georgia College was previously below this national average from 2015-2017; however, in the last three years we have been 5-10 percentage points above the national average in the share of our graduates who are women.

2015 – 2017: percent of GC economics graduates who were women 28% (15/54)

2018 – 2020: percent of GC economics graduates who were women 41.4% (24/58)

Additionally, of our students who attend graduate school after graduation, an average of 72% of them were women over the last 3 years.

² Siegfried, John J. 2017. "Trends in undergraduate economics degrees: 1991 – 2016." *Journal of Economic Education*, 48(3): 238-42

2020: 50% of our graduates were female; 50% of those attending grad school after graduation were female.

2019: 28% of our graduates were female; 67% of those attending grad school after graduation were female.

2018: 53% of our graduates were female; 100% of those attending grad school after graduation were female; an all-female group of students attended the Academy of Economics and Finance Conference to present their research (9 students).

Success of Graduates and Student Highlights (graduation year):

I track our graduates and update their information each year. In the last 3 years (2018-2020), at least 83% (48/58) have jobs or are in graduate school. Of the 10 remaining graduates, a few are still looking for the right job opportunities and I was unable to obtain information on the rest.

Kelly Lee (2015) – Veteran Kelly Lee entered Georgia College as a non-traditional student. Her senior research, “Does Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Affect Employment?” won the Frank W. Taussig Award for the best undergraduate paper, an internationally competitive award given through the economics international honors society, Omicron Delta Epsilon. She also won the Best Undergraduate Paper Award at the 2015 Academy of Economics and Finance Conference. During her senior year, we coauthored a paper that was published in the *International Journal of Applied Economics* in 2018. Kelly is currently completing her PhD in economics at Colorado State University.

Kevin Morris (2017) – Kevin Morris was a student in 4 of my classes, where he completed several honors projects. His research on how USAid impacts in Africa was presented at the 2014 Georgia Collegiate Honors Council, and in the *University of North Georgia Papers and Publications Undergraduate Research Journal*. His senior research, “Does EU Membership Affect Levels of Corruption?” was published in the *Corinthian Journal of Student Research*. He attended the Academy of Economics and Finance Conference three times as an undergraduate to present different research papers. Kevin was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and was Georgia College’s first Marshall Scholar.

Hanna Kagele (2019) – Hanna Kagele was our first student to be accepted into the highly competitive PhD program in economics at Emory University. Emory fully funds all their graduate students, so they are incredibly selective about who they admit. We’ve had many students apply in previous years, but Hanna is the first to be accepted. She presented her senior research at the Academy of Economics and Finance Conference in 2019, which centered on the effects of gentrification on racial concentrations. Hanna has made such a good impression at Emory, they accepted another one of our students, Noah MacDonald, last year.

Cameron Watts (2020) – Cam Watts presented research at the Academy of Economics and Finance Conference as a first-year student and as a senior. Cam was very involved on campus as a founding member of the Georgia College Nudge Unit, completing the GEM Mentorship Program and the Oxford University Exchange Program, and serving on SGA, University Senate, and Council of Student Ambassadors. Cam was awarded the prestigious USG Outstanding Scholar for GC, and upon graduation, he received the Lead for America Fellowship to work with

the GC Rural Studies Institute; unfortunately, due to COVID the fellowship was put on hold indefinitely. He is currently working in finance in Philadelphia.

Kendyl Lewis (2021) – Kendyl founded the first Georgia College chapter of Swipe Out Hunger (<https://www.swipehunger.org/>), a national non-profit that helps college students donate extra meal card swipes to other college students in need. Kendyl has a keen interest in addressing the problems of hunger and food insecurity. Her senior research is titled “Does SNAP Accessibility Affect Food Insecurity?” and won first place in the 2021 Academy of Economics and Finance Conference Best Undergraduate Paper Award. She completed the GEM and Leadership Certificate Programs, and she is currently Chair of the GC Leadership Cabinet and President of the GC chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa, the national leadership honors society. Kendyl graduates this spring and is applying for fellowships to continue her studies in economics.

Selected components of course syllabi:

Course topic outlines:

Tables 2 and 3 show abbreviated course topic outlines for my two GC1Y courses. I use in-class videos, experiments, and various reading assignments. I also have students present scaffolded policy memos on approved topics of their choosing, and I have students team up for in-class debates with pre-assigned topics/sides.

Table 2. GC1Y 1000: Sex, Drugs, and Economics Fall 2020 Abbreviated Course Topic Outline

Date	Topics
Aug 12-17	Economic guideposts; logical and economic fallacies
Aug 19-24	Supply, Demand and Market Equilibrium: How markets work
Aug 25-31	Usury, minimum wage and rent control; Gender pay gap
Sept 2-4	Markets for sex work and solving the kidney shortage
Sept 9-16	Drugs: history of the heroin market; Alcohol and prohibition
Sept 18	Capital Punishment and the Justice System: costs and incentives
Sept 21	Examining the evidence on gun control
Sept 23-30	Healthcare: why prices are rising and the effects of the ACA; COVID19
Oct 2	Legislation meant to address the obesity problem
Oct 5-14	Pollution and environmental issues; alternative energies; recycling
Oct 19-21	Tragedy of the commons and property rights; endangered species
Oct 23	Eminent Domain: public good vs. government abuse; civil asset forfeiture laws
Oct 26-28	Monopolies and monopoly power; government regulations and limits on competition
Oct 30-Nov 2	US k-12 Public Schools: Funding, incentive structures, unions
Nov 4-9	Government debt and Social Security
Nov 11-18	Immigration: costs and benefits of increased immigration; fair trade; sweatshops and child labor; outsourcing and protectionism

Table 3. GC1Y 1000– Swansonomics Fall 2019 Abbreviated Course Topic Outline

Date	Topics
Aug 19-21	Intro econ. concepts; economic & logical fallacies
Aug 23	Economic and political philosophies: Anarchy

Aug 26-30	Capitalism, Socialism, Communism, and Marxism
Sept 4	Degrees of capitalism: economic freedom index, creative destruction, growth
Sept 6-11	How do markets work? Supply and demand model
Sept 13	Controlling market outcomes; Minimum wage
Sept 16	Obesity, soda taxes, large soda bans, and more
Sept 18-25	Black and gray markets; competition and limits on competition
Sept 27- Oct 2	Pay gaps; unions; cartels; sweatshops and child labor
Oct 4	Public vs. private ownership – tragedy of the commons
Oct 7	Externalities and environmental issues
Oct 9	Public goods and the free-rider problem
Oct 11-16	Incentives matter – public vs. private production
Oct 18-28	Political incentives; rational ignorance and rent seeking
Oct 30-Nov 6	Fiscal policy; budget cuts and taxes; Monetary policy and bitcoin
Nov 8-15	Social Security and Medicare; healthcare markets
Nov 18-25	The Great Depression and Great Recession; income inequality & institutions

Achievement going beyond student evals:

2016-17 Excellence Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award (<https://tinyurl.com/fkfn326>)

2018-2020 USG Chancellor’s Learning Scholar (<https://tinyurl.com/xz3jmzds>)

As a Chancellor’s Learning Scholar, I led an FLC focused on small teaching and innovative pedagogies. Our group read the following texts: *Small Teaching* by James M. Lang; *Make it Stick* by Henry L. Roediger III, Mark A. McDaniel, and Peter C Brown; *What the Best College Teachers Do* by Ken Bain. Our consisted of 6-8 faculty members from diverse disciplines including, finance, math, music, psychology, and biology. As a result of this FLC, we each implemented new small teaching strategies into our courses.

2018 – 2020 USG Gateways to Completion (G2C) Course Chair for ECON 2100
(<https://tinyurl.com/mcjtkz79>)

As a G2C course chair, I attended regular teaching and learning conferences, where I learned new techniques to improve student learning. I used supplemental instructors, more low-stakes assignments, more practice questions, post-lecture “muddiest point” assignments, and exam wrappers. I began implementing these techniques in my ECON 2100 classes in Fall 2019. As shown below, the rates of Ds and Fs fell by 7 percentage points and 12.1 percentage points, respectively. My overall DFWI rate fell from 26.9% to 14.3%.

Table 4. Grade Distributions for my ECON 2100 courses Fall 2016-18 and Fall 2019-20

	COURSE	FACULTY	A	B	C	D	F	W	I
Fall 2016-18	ECON2100	Conaway, B.	17.20%	31.70%	24.20%	7%	13.40%	6.50%	0%
Fall 2019-20	ECON2100	Conaway, B.	28.60%	44.20%	13%	0%	1.30%	13%	0%

Summary of Recent Student Evaluations:

Table 4. “Excellent Teacher” Student Evaluation Rating by Course Spring 2017 – Fall 2020

Semester	Course	Excellent Teacher	Semester	Course	Excellent Teacher
Fall 2020	Honors SDE	5	Fall 2018	Industrial Org.	4.7
	Sex, Drugs, & Econ	4.43		Sex, Drugs, & Econ	4.2
	Industrial Org	5		Sex, Drugs, & Econ	4.6
Sp. 2020	Senior Seminar	4.83	Sp. 2018	Econ & Society	4.5
	Principles of Micro	4.57		Econ & Society	4.7
	Econ & Society	3.88		Controversial Econ	4.5
Fall 2019	Swansonomics	4.43	Fall 2017	Comp. Econ Sys.	4.9
	Swansonomics	4.5		Swansonomics	4.5
	Econ Growth	4.2		Swansonomics	4.8
Sp. 2019	Senior Seminar	5	Sp. 2017	Econ & Society	4.8
	Econ & Society	4.4		Econ & Society	4.8
	Econ & Society	5		Economic Growth	4.8

Average Spring 2017 - Fall 2020: 4.62

Sample of recent student evaluation comments:

Sex, Drugs, and Economics

“I will be honest and say that before taking this course I really dreaded it because I really hated economics in high school. However, this class quickly became my favorite class I was taking. I feel that this class is extremely important and can prove to be very helpful to anyone. Through this class I found ways to support my own beliefs as well as better understand others. Having a class that teaches me how to justify my own economic beliefs made me feel more competent in my daily life. Also Dr. Conaway keeps the course interesting and engaging the entire time which is always helpful in a class. I also respect how overall Dr. Conaway was able to keep her own beliefs out of the topics when they are naturally very divided topics so I am sure eliminating any bias can be hard. I honestly feel that this semester I learned the most content and the most useful content in this class. If there was a second course offered I would take it without a doubt and I would definitely take another class taught by Dr. Conaway if given the opportunity. I would also like to note that I was very worried about the tests at first, but found that we were very well prepared for the tests and as long as I paid attention I had basically all the knowledge I needed to be successful. Overall, I really like and appreciated this course.”

“This course is a keeper! Very well laid out, great content, useful application, great professor to teach it. I feel like a much better citizen because of this course. I have even changed my mindset on some topics. I hear a lot of people feel like their GC1Y is pointless and a lot of busy work. Everyone I have talked to has said at least their learning new things, and it’s useful. I would sign up for this class again if I had to.”

“Dr. Conaway is a great teacher. She grades harshly but she truly wants us to understand the concepts. She truly understands her topic and enjoys teaching it. Her lectures are very interesting and she ties our class discussions with bizarre but real world examples.”

Swansonomics

“This was one of my favorite classes this semester and I have enjoyed it very much. I adore the professor, and think very highly of her. She was very helpful when I visited her during office hours, and I worked hard to receive good grades. The lectures were captivating and easy to follow, especially when we got to take a break from lecture and watch clips from Parks and Rec. Honestly, this will probably be my favorite college course I’ve ever taken.”

“I absolutely loved the teacher and the class. I am an economics major, and I took two economics based classes this semester. I generally learned the same things in both, but with how Ms. Conaway taught I learned and absorbed information way better than in my other class. I hope I have the opportunity to take a class with her again because she really reminds me why I want to be an economist one day. She finds a way to get the information across while keeping it fun, interesting, and easy to understand. I really like her examples she uses in class too.”

Economics and Society

“Best teacher I’ve ever had. I could learn nuclear physics if she taught it. One of the few classes I’ve had that was no just memorizing facts; you had to learn it apply it. In my opinion, that’s how college classes should be taught. Uses great examples to explain hard concepts.”

“Dr. Conaway is awesome! I really enjoyed this course, and learned so much more about not only economics, but how to be more involved and intelligent in political activities and saving money. She was creative in her notes and examples, and tests tested our understanding of topics, rather than just stuff we could memorize, which helped me learn everything easier.”

“Dr. Conaway is an excellent teacher and does an awesome job at putting the subject at hand into terms that makes sense. She also is very willing to work with our crazy college schedules, but still stands firm on her due dates. On a scale of 1–10 her teaching ability is an 11. Very impressed and would take another course from her.”

Principles of Microeconomics

“This was by far, the best class I’ve ever taken, anywhere. I thoroughly enjoyed coming to class and learning something new every day. Everything Professor Conaway taught us was practical and could be seen in the real world. She did not test us purely on memorization, like most teachers do; I had to work really hard at earning my grades in the class. This course will be my first B in my college career, but I am perfectly ok with that, because I feel like I’ve learned so much. I would take any course Professor Conaway offered in a heartbeat, and I’d even retake this course if I could. This course made me think and challenged me every day. Professor Conaway is an excellent teacher!”

“I will probably end up with a B in this course but I honestly would not want to have taken it with any other teacher (even if I would have gotten an A). By far one of my favorite teachers here! I did not care to take this class at the beginning of the semester but I had to to have an accounting degree. But I am so glad I took it with her. I have learned more in this class than any other class. I have considered minoring in econ because of it. The tests are a little difficult but I love this teacher! I’ve never missed a class because I actually enjoy going!”

“Conaway is seriously one of the best teachers I have ever had. I had absolutely no interest in economics. Conaway has shown me how economics applies to the real world and I honestly find myself thinking about economics outside of class now.”

Controversial Economic Issues

“Dr. Conaway is an excellent professor who has consistently demonstrated her willingness to help students learn. She creates an atmosphere that is engaging and supportive, which encourages students to ask questions or participate more in class. She has gone out of her way to help me with the material, and has always given me good feedback on exams and papers. I have highly enjoyed this class and professor.”

Economic Growth

“One of the most wonderful professors I’ve ever taken in any subject. Takes a keen personal interest in her students and their success. Without Dr. Conaway, I would not be an economics major. Cannot say enough good things about her, her teaching style, and course content.”

“The class was always interesting, applicable, carefully curated and uplifting. By far the only econ course I’ve taken where I felt built up and encouraged rather than bullied on and less intelligent. I would recommend this course and take any class Brooke Conaway teaches.”

Comparative Economic Systems

“She made this an accessible course and provided thorough, in-depth explanations of the subjects and constantly tied it back to real world examples, solidifying our understanding. Dr. Conaway has been one of my favorite professors because of her enjoyable teaching style and willingness to help. She makes the material that is somewhat dense at times fun and interesting to learn, and makes you want to come to class and learn as much as possible. The course is difficult but she ensures that you learn it and don’t just go through the class without actually learning something. Her grading was fair and she reviewed the exams, helping you understand what your mistakes were and why you were wrong.”

Industrial Organization

“This was one of my favorite Econ classes I’ve taken. All of the material is very relevant and interesting, and Dr. Conaway is so great at providing great examples so we really understand. I really looked forward to coming to class everyday which is something I can’t always say for my other classes.”

Senior Seminar

“Professor Conaway put forth an incredible amount of effort into ensuring the students in this course understood what was required to succeed in their research. I couldn’t thank her enough for her commitment towards student success. She went above and beyond what was required to teach this course and excelled at teaching and extracting the best out of her students.”

“Transitioning to online learning was much easier than I had anticipate for this course. Dr. Conaway did an excellent job at making sure the transition to virtual class was smooth and simple.”