



# Provost Notes

June 2023

## Board of Regents Approves Statement of Principles Regarding Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) recently approved a statement of principles that affirm and protect academic freedom and freedom of expression for students, faculty and staff at the 26 public colleges and universities.

The principles assert the Board's commitment to academic freedom. They also affirm that USG values the diversity of intellectual thought and expression among students and faculty as well as the need for faculty to be unburdened by ideological tests, affirmations and oaths.

"Higher education is a place where people — young people particularly — come to realize that not everybody brings their same life perspective," USG Chancellor Sonny Perdue said. "We want people to feel free to be expressive with their First Amendment rights on our campuses without being shouted down or called out as a matter of mutual respect and civil discourse."

The Board additionally asked the chancellor to conduct a review of Board and university system policies regarding academic freedom and freedom of expression and to make recommendations for improvements.

The principles approved include:

**PRINCIPLE 1:** The BOR affirms the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom (from the American Association of University Professors).

**PRINCIPLE 2:** USG values the diversity of intellectual thought and expression, which shall be reflected in a student body and faculty that respect the individuality and beliefs of all.

**PRINCIPLE 3:** The BOR values our faculty and the important role they play in teaching, conducting research and providing service. Faculty have the right to be unburdened by ideological tests, affirmations and oaths. The key basis for hiring, promotion and tenure should be achievement and a commitment to student success.

The full press release can be found at [https://www.usg.edu/news/release/board\\_of\\_regents\\_approves\\_statement\\_of\\_principles\\_regarding\\_academic\\_freedom\\_and\\_freedom\\_of\\_expression/](https://www.usg.edu/news/release/board_of_regents_approves_statement_of_principles_regarding_academic_freedom_and_freedom_of_expression/)

### [Related policies:](#)

- 6.5 Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom
- 6.5.1 Academic Freedom
- 6.5.2 Institution Freedom of Expression Policies

## *Congratulations!*

**Hasitha Mahabaduge, PhD, Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy, 2023 IEF Prototype Grant, Georgia Foundation for Public Education, \$25,000.**

**Holley Roberts, EdD, Academic Affairs, USG STEM IV Initiative (YR 4 Continuation), University System of Georgia \$15,000.**

## Summer Orientations

Georgia College & State University recently welcomed a large number of very excited first-year students to campus for New Student Orientation. The first two orientation sessions were held on June 6 and 8 and were well attended - 266 students at the June 6<sup>th</sup> program and 273 at the June 8<sup>th</sup> event. Students had the opportunity to meet with their academic department, pick up their Bobcat Card, attend a variety of open houses, explore the Bobcat Marketplace, and take a selfie with President Cox!

These important events are an exciting milestone as we prepare to welcome our largest, most diverse, and most academically prepared class to campus in August. There are four more new student orientations scheduled for June 13, 15 and July 18, 20, 2023.

## Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)/GC Journeys Summer HIPs Institute

The 4th Annual High Impact Practices (HIPs) Summer Institute: Incorporating Transformative Experiences into the Classroom is a professional development opportunity sponsored by GC Journeys and hosted by the CTL. The institute provides faculty with the opportunity to engage with expert guest speakers on incorporating or enhancing elements of transformative experiences into their classrooms. Through collaboration, mentorship, and insightful discussions, participants will gain invaluable tools and perspectives to create impactful educational experiences for their students. The GCSU mentors leading the charge in each transformative experience area are as follows: *Capstone*, Aran Mackinnon; *First-Year Experiences*, Erin Weston; *International Education*, James Callaghan; *Internships*, Chelsey Scoggins; *Leadership*, Harold Mock; *Service Learning*, Liz Speelman; and *Undergraduate Research & Creative Endeavors*, Scott Butler. In addition to the esteemed mentors, the Institute had the privilege of hosting two influential guest speakers on May 11, 2023. Marina Smitherman from Dalton State College shared her expertise in creating a quality matrix and explored the question, "What makes high-impact practices truly impactful for students?" Furthermore, Kevin Hunt discussed his transformative experience work on "Healthcare in Rural Belize." This year's faculty participants are:

**Alex Blazer**, *English*

**Allison Miller**, *Management, Marketing, & Logistics*

**Andrew Allen**, *Music*

**Arnab Sengupta**, *Biological and Environmental Sciences*

**Brad Fowler**, *Information Systems & Computer Science*

**Carrie Cook**, *Government and Sociology*

**Cassie Napier**, *Accounting and Business Law*

**Eryn Viscarra**, *Government and Sociology*

**Jamie Downing**, *Communication*

**Jennifer Flaherty**, *English*

**Jessica Wallace**, *History & Geography*

**John Moore**, *Health and Human Performance*

**Kasey Karen**, *Biological and Environmental Sciences*

**Molly Wilkins**, *Communication*

**Nicholas Creel**, *Accounting and Business Law*

**Peter Rosado Flores**, *Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy*

**Rachel Bray**, *Teacher Education*

**Sheryl Melton**, *Continuing and Professional Education*

**Stephen Hoy**, *Music*

**Taylor Elsey**, *Psychological Science*

**Ward Risvold**, *Information Systems & Computer Science*

## New MAT in Elementary Education

In May, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved a MAT in Elementary Education, which will be delivered in an online format. The five-semester program supports candidates who may be employed full-time. Synchronous online meeting times are incorporated for each course. GCSU also offers MAT degrees in Middle Grades Education, Secondary Education, and Special Education.

## Summer Undergraduate Research Funding

MURACE Summer Scholarship Funding typically awards up to four (4) GCSU undergraduate students the opportunity to work on mentored research or creative projects for 8-weeks over the summer while getting compensated for their time. Following a highly competitive process, MURACE awarded funding for two additional projects:

Camile Browning, mentor Dr. Kasey Karen, *Biological and Environmental Sciences*

Marissa (Rose) Wagley, mentor Dr. Wathsala Medawala, *Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy*

Belen (Ava) Avalos, mentor Dr. Jamie Downing, *Communication*

Evan Dunnam, mentor Dr. Hasitha Mahabaduge, *Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy*

JinYeong Kim, mentor Dr. Arnab Sengupta, *Biological and Environmental Sciences*

Gavin Incrocci, mentor Dr. Nicholas Creel, *Accounting and Business Law*

For more information, visit the MURACE [Summer Research Funding](#) page.