



OFFICE OF
THE PROVOST
GEORGIA COLLEGE & STATE UNIVERSITY

July 2026 Provost Notes



2026 Governor's Summit on Early Language & Literacy

Each year, the [Sandra Dunagan Deal Center](#) hosts the Governor's Summit on Early Language and Literacy to bring together leading researchers, policymakers, and innovators from across the state. Conference content showcases current research, practice, and policy related to early language and literacy development from birth through age eight.

This year's Governor's Summit was held July 7th-8th, 2026 in the Centennial Center, with the *Dinner with the Deal Center* Fundraising Gala in Magnolia Ballroom July 7th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Highlights from the sold-out event can be found on the Deal Center's Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn @dealcentergc.

Faculty Contracts for Academic Year 2026-2027

Georgia College & State University is continuing to use the highly successful OneUSG electronic faculty contract distribution and e-signature system that was deployed last year.

On June 30th, an email containing instructions was sent by Neil Jones (HR) to contract-eligible recipients notifying them about the full-time faculty contract process. The electronic contract is available in the same system that houses your pay statements, W-2s, etc. The deadline to respond to the contract is July 21st, 2026. Please remember that during peak periods, the USG system response times may be slow.

Following Board of Regents – University System of Georgia policies, limited term one-year faculty and part-time faculty employment agreements are covered through the Offer/Acceptance Letter and the Part-time Faculty Teaching Agreement (GC Signatures – DocuSign).

New faculty will not have access to the OneUSG System until August when their employment begins. New faculty employment agreements are also confirmed through the Offer/Acceptance letter process.

Assessment Updates

Summer Training Sessions:

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will hold two final APR/Strategic Planning training sessions for lead report writers. If you have not already attended one of the summer sessions, this is mandatory, so please attend one of the two remaining sessions.

Session Information:

- July 14th, 2026, 11:30 a.m., Library 119
- July 23rd, 2026, 1:00 p.m., Library 119

Annual Report Due Dates:

- APR/Strategic Planning annual reports are due 7/30/26 (for FY26)
- P&P II/Strategic Planning annual reports are due 8/15/26 (for FY26)
- SMART annual reports are due 10/15/26 (for FY26)

Please contact Cara Smith at (478) 445-3530 or cara.smith@gcsu.edu with any questions.

Provost's Office Academic Leadership Academy

This professional development opportunity is highly encouraged for all recently appointed department chairs (*including interim chairs*) and Associate/Assistant Deans. It will be held Monday, July 27th, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., with lunch provided in the Pat Peterson Museum Education Room.

To RSVP, please contact Emily Stauber at emily.stauber@gcsu.edu or (478)-445-4715.

Academic Affairs Leadership Retreat

The Office of the Provost invites all Deans, Associate and Assistant Deans, and Department Chairs to a working retreat on Wednesday, July 29th, 2026, at The Depot from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. This retreat is designed to support strategic planning and collaboration as we prepare for the upcoming academic year. Together, we will focus on welcoming a strong and academically prepared incoming class, while also ensuring a smooth and engaging return for our continuing students and dedicated faculty.



Summer Orientations

Freshman and Transfer Student Orientation is designed for incoming students and their families to connect with others, be introduced to campus resources, and to complete any last steps toward enrollment.

The final two freshman orientations will take place Tuesday, July 21st, 2026, and Thursday, July 23rd, 2026. Transfer student orientation will take place Wednesday, July 22nd, 2026. For more information, please see the [New Student Orientation page](#).

Book Orders for Fall 2026

The Fall 2026 course to the Bobcat First Day Access Program is now closed. To see if you are already in the program or if you would like to be added, please contact Barnes & Noble - Sophia Pope at (478) 445-7305, sm8124@bncollege.com or stop by M-F 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. for assistance.



Join the Cat Crew!

Move-In Day 2026 will be here before we know it, and we need Cat Crew volunteers to help welcome students and families to Georgia College & State University and assist more than 1,500 students as they move into their campus homes.

Central Campus Move-In

Wednesday, August 12th, 2026

7:45am-11am

West Campus Move-In

Thursday, August 13th, 2026

7:45am-11am

If you can help on one or both days, please sign up to be part of the Cat Crew at www.gcsu.edu/housing/cat-crew.

Thank you for helping make Move-In Day a great experience for our new Bobcats!

Be a Conversation Catalyst – Facilitate GC Reads

Support student engagement and critical thinking by leading a **GC Reads** discussion group this year. **GC Reads** will be held on Friday, August 14th, 2026 for all new students during Week of Welcome. **GC Reads** is a 75-minute micro-seminar that gives new students an introduction to college academic discussion. In alignment with the QEP, *Bobcats FIRST*, all of the essays are related to mental health and wellbeing. Seventy (70) facilitators are needed to make **GC Reads** a success.

Facilitators are faculty and staff who help guide a discussion about the assigned essay. Facilitators can be as creative as they wish, and discussion templates will be made available for those wanting more guidance.

To sign up, please complete the form [here](#).

Reach out to emily.jarvis@gcsu.edu or cara.smith@gcsu.edu with any questions.

Assessment Day 2026

Assessment Day will be held Thursday, August 6th, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Meeting locations will be announced soon. Please plan to attend for the latest updates and information.

8:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. Department chairs' session (accreditation update, academic assessment overview/review, strategic planning assessment overview/review, discussion of reports and due dates, Q&A)

9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Program assessment coordinators' session (accreditation updates, discussion of SMART reports, discussion of Core IMPACTS reporting requirements)

10:30 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Core IMPACTS session (general overview, assessment of Core IMPACTS, panel presentation, Q&A)* This session will be virtual. Join [here](#).

Please contact Dr. Cara Smith (cara.smith@gcsu.edu or extension 3530) if you have any questions.

**All faculty teaching in the core are highly encouraged to attend the Core IMPACTS session, as important information will be shared regarding Core IMPACTS continued implementation, assessment, and support resources.*

August Faculty Events

Faculty Contract Start Date: Saturday, August 1st, 2026

New Faculty Orientation: Monday, August 3rd, Tuesday, August 4th, and Wednesday, August 5th, 2026, starting at 8:30 a.m. in Peabody Auditorium

Assessment Day: Thursday, August 6th, 2026; 8:30 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

Faculty and Staff Fall Kickoff Event: Friday, August 14th, 2026; 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

GC Reads: Friday, August 14th, 2026; 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

First Day of Class: Monday, August 17th, 2026

First Year Convocation: Friday, August 21st, 2026

- Meet Your Major: 2:30 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.
 - Convocation: 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 - Cookout/Picnic: 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
 - Block Party: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
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Compensated Outside Activities Reminder

As a reminder, full-time employees, faculty, and/or staff who engage in compensated activities outside of their employment with GCSU whose work relates to the employee's expertise or responsibilities as a USG employee, must obtain written approval prior to engaging in such activities.

Such activities include, but are not limited to, consulting, teaching, speaking, and participating in business, professional, or service enterprises.

The [Outside Activity Approval Request Form](#) ensures that the appropriate written approval will be obtained in accordance with USG policy.

For more information on [Compensated Outside Activities](#), please see the link for the [BOR 08.02.18.02.03 policy](#).

Resources to Improve the Affordability of Course Materials and Textbooks

As part of the University System of Georgia's (USG) [strategic plan](#), GCSU aims to promote affordability for students through responsible resource stewardship and increased system efficiency.

A major element of this effort includes reducing costs associated with course materials and textbooks. While faculty autonomy in selecting instructional materials is respected and supported,

cost considerations for students are encouraged during the decision-making process.

To support these objectives, several existing resources are available to assist institutions and academic units in selecting affordable instructional content. The [Affordable Learning Georgia \(ALG\)](#) initiative offers a range of tools aimed at increasing textbook affordability, including:

- **Open Educational Resources (OERs):** Faculty-reviewed open textbooks accessible through platforms such as the [Open Textbook Library](#), [OER Commons](#), and [LibreTexts](#).
- **USG Faculty-Created Materials:** Resources authored by USG faculty and hosted on [OpenALG](#).
- **Library Resources available at no cost to students through GALILEO:** Academic content including case studies, scholarly books, and educational videos.
- **Inclusive Access Course Materials:** Commercial materials offered through campus bookstores at low cost (typically \$40 or less), ensuring day-one access for enrolled students.

Additional support is available via [Affordable Materials Grants](#), designed to assist in transforming courses through the creation, adaptation, or adoption of open and low-cost materials.

Since its establishment in 2014, the ALG initiative has enabled over 1.6 million students to collectively save more than \$208 million in textbook expenses. Institutional contributions and adoption outcomes can be explored via the searchable database available on ALG's ["Our Impact"](#) page.

Faculty and academic units are encouraged to prioritize affordability in course material selection by adopting open or low-cost resources, utilizing inclusive access programs when feasible, and avoiding the requirement of costly printed materials when lower-priced digital versions are available.

Please reach out to the GCSU ALG Champions below with any questions:

Dr. Shaundra Walker, Dean of the University Library and Faculty Champion; ext. 0987 or shaundra.walker@gcsu.edu

Paula Knight, Digital Resources and Experience Librarian; ext. 1693 or paula.knight@gcsu.edu

Dr. Jaclyn Queen, Instructional Designer and Instructional Design Champion; ext. 1276 or jaclyn.queen@gcsu.edu

TAP Application deadline

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) Application deadline for Fall 2026 is Wednesday, July 15th, 2026. TAP will waive up to nine (9) credit hours for the semester. Please visit the [USG's TAP webpage](#) to locate the systemwide TAP Application, Graduate Student Tax Waiver Form (for graduate students only), and to reference the TAP Policy and FAQ if needed.

For more information, [click here](#).



Office of the Provost

<https://www.gcsu.edu/provost>

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