

GC Journeys Report

2025-2026



**J. Whitney Bunting College of
Business & Technology**

June 2026

Executive Summary

The J. Whitney Bunting College of Business & Technology (here after the CoBT) is committed to providing students with diverse high-impact practices (HIPs) that help develop students' key skills and prepare students for their careers. To achieve these goals, we facilitate and encourage students to engage in programs that enhance their leadership abilities, research potential, and civic participation. Furthermore, we seek to prepare students for the job market through structured career planning, internships, global involvement, and speaker series.

Over the course of the academic year 2025-2026, the GC Journeys Fellow worked with the CoBT Interim Dean and Associate Dean to develop a proposal that presented three GC Journeys pathways to facilitate a more systematic approach to attaining two main objectives: 1) incentivizing and increasing students' engagement in diverse HIPs and 2) better tracking students' engagement. The proposal offered several options for tracking/rewarding/requiring our students to engage in more HIPs. The goal in offering three pathways was to enable discussion among the faculty and administration to determine the direction the CoBT wants to take for better implementing the GC Journeys program. The CoBT Strategic Management Committee reviewed the proposal and selected one of the options with some minor changes. This was shared with the Provost and the Associate Provost of Student Engagement and Academic Excellence, and the decision was made that the proposal would best be implemented for the university rather than for one college. The proposal will continue to be modified and discussions about moving this forward to all the other academic units is ongoing and will be addressed in the following academic year.

In the 2025-2026 academic year, the CoBT provided a rich array of experiences for its students. Students benefited from three study abroad programs, and 29 undergraduates conducted independent mentored research. The CoBT also hosted two accounting career fairs and a resume writing workshop. Beyond the classroom, CoBT students were actively engaged in the community, volunteering with various organizations through service-learning projects in their courses and assisting 100 taxpayers with their tax preparation and filing. Furthermore, students participated in numerous campus events: 108 students attended four Column Society talks, 126 students participated in five events organized by the Entrepreneurs Club, 173 students participated in five events organized by the Marketing & Advertising Club, and 670 students participated in the Elevator Pitch competition. Additionally, 146 students completed a for-credit internship, and 92 students participated in leadership experiences offered through GCSU Leadership Programs.

College of Business & Technology HIP performance

This report features CoBT engagement in high-impact practices for summer 2025, fall 2025, and spring 2026 and points out areas of opportunities. The following sections will highlight engagement in seven main high-impact activities: the first-year experience, senior capstone, leadership experiences, mentored undergraduate research, community-based engaged learning, internships, and study abroad/study away. The report will close with additional reporting from various professional development activities offered from the CoBT.



First-Year Experience

Five CoBT faculty members facilitated a GC Reads seminar during the Week of Welcome. Seven faculty members from three CoBT departments provided first year experience courses.

Senior Capstone

Other than accounting, every major has a capstone course.

Leadership Experiences

CoBT students participated in a variety of leadership programs during the 2025-2026 academic year.

- Seventy-three students participated in the “Leadership Academy Program.”
- Three students participated in the “Leadership Program.”
- Twelve students participated in the “Georgia Education Mentorship Program” (GEMP). This program is highly selective.
- Four students participated in the “Intercultural Leadership Program” at the European Parliament.

Mentored Undergraduate Research

Students in the CoBT participated in mentored undergraduate research, either through independent mentored work with faculty or through research projects that are required within their courses. Individual or group research requirements were incorporated into classes across numerous disciplines, with 19 students participating in the summer, 228 participating in the fall, and 261 students participating in the spring. Additionally, for some majors such as economics, students are engaged in undergraduate research through a mandatory course requiring an individual research project. Students can also elect to enroll in a 4999-course dedicated to an individual research project. The table below provides additional details about these projects. Based on faculty reporting, at least eighteen students presented their work at national/regional conferences and/or GCSU Research Day. One research project was submitted to an academic peer-reviewed journal and was accepted for publication.

Field of study	Mentored Students	Conference presentations or Research Day	Submission to PRJs	Published in PRJs
Economics	19	18	0	0
Interdisciplinary Ethics, AI, Economics	1	1	1	1
Data Science	5	5	0	0
Computer Science	2	2	0	0
MIS	2	0	0	0
Total	29	26	1	1

Community-Based Engaged Learning

Service-Learning

There are service-learning projects embedded across numerous CoBT courses, including Business Ethics, Strategic Marketing, and Business Analysis. Seven economics students participated in the GCSU Nudge Unit, which includes a service-learning component. The table below provides data for the number of students who participated in a course with a service-learning requirement. With an approximate 10 hours per student, the estimated service-learning hours are close to 6,770. While not all faculty provided complete data as requested, across several of the Business Ethics sections, at least 109 different organizations were served.

	Summer 2025	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Total
Business Ethics		245	242	487
Computer Science			56	56
Economics		3	4	7
Marketing	4	23	100	127
Total	4	271	402	677

VITA Program

During spring 2026, a group of 18 CoBT students, under the direction of Mr. Victor Scott Burns, participated in the VITA program and provided tax help to 100 individuals in 11 counties. This is compared to the 14 students and 66 taxpayers who were assisted in spring 2025. Taxpayers saved \$20,000 in preparation fees. Taxpayers rated the service on a scale of 1 not satisfied, 2 satisfied, and 3 very satisfied. 92% of taxpayers rated the service as very satisfied, and 8% did not provide rating.

VITA Statistics Spring 2026	
Total Student Certified Tax Preparers	18
Total Service Hours by CoBT Students	900
Taxpayers Assisted	100
Preparation Fee Savings	\$20,000*

*Based on an average filing fee of \$200 per taxpayer.

Global Engagement - Study Abroad & Study Away

In summer 2025, three GC faculty-led study abroad programs were offered across three departments: Economics, Finance, and Information Systems and Computer Science. The total number of students enrolled in these study abroad programs was 59, which was comparable to the 60 who participated in summer 2024.

Dr. Brent Evans and Dr. Cullen Wallace offered a six-credit course on European Economics and Finance in Germany and Switzerland, and 23 students participated. The program was two weeks and covered two distinct courses: 1) European Financial Systems and 2) Capitalism and Communism: Economics and Finance.



Dr. Jeannie Pridmore and Dr. Joy Godin offered a six-credit course on International Design Thinking and AI in Ireland, Germany, and France. The program was three weeks, and 14 students participated. The courses helped students gain international teamwork experience using SAP Design Thinking and acquire knowledge beyond what could be offered in a traditional classroom.

Dr. Ward Risvold and Professor Caroline Collier offered a six-credit course on AI Prompt Engineering in Ireland, England, and France. The purpose of the program was to provide an extraordinary 20-day study abroad experience for 22 students that focused on AI governance and cutting-edge prompting and fine-tuning techniques. This initiative offers a unique blend of academic rigor and cultural immersion across three iconic European cities.



For summer 2026, five faculty-led study abroad and study aways programs are offered: 1) GCSU Spain: Realignment of International Business Leadership and Advanced AI Interaction, 2) GCSU Peru: International Corporate Leadership & Sustainability, 3) GCSU New York: Applied Fashion Merchandising and Retailing, 4) GCSU New York: International Work Practicum in Design Thinking and AI, and 5) GCSU Greece: Business Law, Ethics, and Sustainability in the Emerging Global Marketplace.

Internships

Participating in an internship is highly recommended for the fulfilment of the Bachelor of Business Administration degree and the Bachelor of Science degree across all majors. The table below illustrates the number of internship placements for summer 2025, fall 2025, and spring 2026.

	Summer 2025	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Total
Accounting	23	4	23	50
Computer Science	13	1	3	17
Economics	-	-	-	0
Finance	20	-	1	21
Management	18	2	-	20
Marketing	22	4	10	36
MIS	-	1	1	2
Total	96	12	38	146

Additional CoBT Professional Development Activities

Column Society

In fall 2025, two talks were organized focusing on the following topics:

- September 4, 2025: Ken Hendry, Adjunct Faculty GCSU
Topic: Speaking up for yourself—How to advocate for yourself and effectively negotiate. 29 students attended.
- November 4, 2025: Laura Thompson, Executive Director at Exchange Investment Services at Exchange Bank
Topic: Financial planning. 36 students attended.



In spring 2026, two talks were organized focusing on the following topics:

- March 12, 2026: Dr. Ward Risvold, Assistant Professor of Business Communications and Co-Director of Center of Technology and Empowerment
Topic: Practical and ethical AI: Practical ways students can use AI tools ethically for learning, creativity, and productivity without losing the human touch. 16 students attended.
- April 22, 2026: Skip Willcox, Founder of Kairos Sales Group
Topic: Everyone is in sales: How to market yourself on LinkedIn and beyond. 27 students attended.

Accounting Professional Development

Fall 2025 kicked off with several career planning and internship preparation activities for accounting students:

- August 21, 2025: 'Welcome Back!' event for accounting majors. Sponsored by Nichols Cauley. 49 students attended.
- August 25, 2025: 'Honest Intern Panel' hosted by Beta Alpha Psi for students in the Accounting Profession Class, ACCT 3000.

- August 27, 2025: Resume Workshop sponsored and manned by Fulton & Kozak. 57 students' resumes were reviewed.
- Sept 2, 2025: 'Mastering Meet the Firms' sponsored by Aprio.
- Sept 9, 2025: Accounting Career Fair. 33 public accounting firms attended. Record high student attendance at 152.
- Sept 15, 2025: Accounting Career Fair - PUBLIC SERVICE FOCUS. 5 Governmental Organizations attended.
- November 3, 2025: CPA Pathway - Details and Strategy for taking and passing the CPA Exam hosted by Becker Exam Prep.
- November 11, 2025: Excel Bootcamp, sponsored and delivered by Grant Thornton.

Professionalism Classes

The Information Systems & Computer Science Department offers professionalism classes that help students develop soft skills, explore professional pathways, and build early career readiness. In fall 2025, 71 CS/DS/MIS students were enrolled. In spring 2026, 69 CS/DS/MIS students were enrolled. Below is a summary of the activities conducted:

1. Career Exploration & Resume

- An initial resume workshop led by Ms. Danielle Pittman from the Career Center
- A one-on-one in-person resume critique session led by Ms. Danielle Pittman, her team of advisors, and Dr. Wu
- Guest session on job search strategies and LinkedIn profile development led by Ms. Daniella Pittman

2. Professional Events

- Participation in the Career & Graduate School Fair (March 11, 2026)
- ITAB-sponsored Student Networking Event (April 2, 2026)
- International study possibilities with Drs. Armin Stein and Katrin Bergener from the University of Munster in Munster, Germany (September 25, 2025)
- Transition to career and career paths forum with a panel of recent alumni (November 20, 2025)

3. *Professional Etiquette Training*

- Business Etiquette workshop led by Dr. Meg Geddy
- Formal Dining Etiquette Dinner (March 5, 2026), co-hosted by the Career Center and IT Advisory Board

4. *Skill-Building Deliverables*

- Final resume and LinkedIn profile
- End-of-semester course reflection assignment focused on career paths, professional certifications, and networking

Elevator Pitch

The Elevator Pitch Competition is a bi-annual professional development activity for students in the CoBT that started in Fall of 2012. The Elevator Pitch prepares students for interviews and networking events by giving them skills in self-promotion and self-awareness and gives faculty a measure of oral communication skills used in assessment. This year, 670 students competed in the first round via Zoom, and the top 20 students each semester were invited to an in-person final competition where they presented a 60-second elevator pitch about their personal skills and experiences to a panel of judges. Central Garden & Pet and Fouts Bros sponsored the Elevator Pitch final competition. Across both semesters, we had 81 volunteer judges, and there were 295 instances where the judges wanted to connect with our students.



GC Entrepreneurs Club

In fall 2025, three talks were organized focusing on the following topics:

- October 2, 2025: Kyle Cullars, Owner of Surcheros Fresh Mex franchises in Milledgeville, Warner Robins, Perry, and Lake Oconee
Topic: It's never too late to become an entrepreneur: How I started as a single store franchisee and grew to four and counting. 34 students attended.
- November 13, 2025: Lou Childs, Co-founder of SlumberPod
Topic: Shark Tank veteran shares advice on the process as well as working with family. 26 students attended.
- December 4, 2025: Bob Ewing, Owner of Amici's in Milledgeville and Macon
Topic: How I went from being a GC student to a franchise owner. 29 students attended.

In spring 2026, two talks were organized focusing on the following topics:

- February 2, 2026: Josh MacLaughlin, Founder of Tomorrow Digital Marketing (TDM)
Topic: How to start a company and how to use AI applications within the business field. 24 students attended.
- February 24, 2026: Dr. Mike Martino, Co-owner of several health and fitness related facilities, including Bodyplex in Milledgeville
Topic: How to finance a new business. 13 students attended.

Marketing & Advertising Club

In fall 2025, three talks were organized focusing on the following topics and one headshot event was held:

- September 17, 2025: Alice James, TTI Territory Manager
Topic: Professionalism workshop discussing resumes, interviewing, LinkedIn, and networking. 26 students attended.
- October 22, 2025: Lauren Janis, Focus Brands Social Media Manager
Topic: Ideation, creative strategy, and implementation behind organic social media content. 23 students attended.



- November 3, 2025: Free headshot event in collaboration with Delta Sigma Pi
- November 5, 2025: Joe Domaleski, Founder of Country Frie Creative—an award-winning digital marketing agency
Topic: Better marketing through data and creativity. 77 students attended.

In spring 2026, two talks were organized focusing on the following topics:

- January 28, 2026: Internship Panel
Topic: General Q&A discussion interview help, professionalism tips, and cover letter examples. 34 students attended.
- March 11, 2026: Lauren Roth, Owner of Lauren Roth Consulting
Topic: Social media and influencer marketing. 13 students attended.

Areas of Opportunity

This section highlights the areas of opportunity that could facilitate further advancement of CoBT GC Journeys HIP activities.

1. The CoBT can continue to work with the Provost and the Associate Provost of Student Engagement and Academic Excellence to finetune the GC Journeys proposal that incentivizes and rewards GC Journeys participation in order to implement these ideas within the CoBT and across the other academic units going forward.
2. The CoBT can implement better and more consistent GC Journeys/HIP training for faculty and students in the CoBT. Faculty participation could be improved by incorporating additional training during new faculty orientation and offering structured, continued education about the program for all faculty during faculty meetings or required workshops. While students are educated about GC Journeys during the first-year seminar course, there is an opportunity for the CoBT to improve its approach by adding consistency in the way instructors and first-year guides discuss the program. It is also recommended that additional GC Journeys information be incorporated throughout students' curriculum. For instance, a few required CoBT courses could be identified, and a time could be allocated for the GC Journeys Fellow to do a brief classroom visit to share reminders about the program and its benefits.
3. The systematic tracking process to collect data on students' engagements in all the different areas needs to be strengthened and streamlined. This systematic data collection is likely to lead to more reliable and complete information. We need to ensure that all courses that include mentored undergraduate research, CbEL, or service-learning experiences are appropriately coded. In many cases, faculty are offering HIPs in their

courses, but if they are not appropriately coded, students are not getting credit, and our completion metrics are negatively impacted.

4. Completion of the GC Journeys program is currently tracked in the Transformative Experiences Transcript in DegreeWorks. It is recommended that the current tracking be improved by adding labels that clearly indicate which transformative experiences have been completed (i.e., rather than just listing the courses, the transcript would also indicate which HIP component aligns with each course, such as a CbEL course or research component).
5. Students could be better incentivized to report their internships when the major does not require a for-credit internship and not-for-credit internship tracking needs to be improved. Students that complete an internship that is not for academic credit can have their internship experience added to their transcript by completing a not-for-credit internship. The not-for-credit internship will appear on their academic transcript as 0 course credits but will help show future employers and graduate schools that they have gained real-world experience. The CoBT can more effectively partner with Academic Advising and the Career Center to ensure students are aware of and taking advantage of this option and this can help to more accurately reflect our internship completion figures.
6. There is an opportunity to create more study away and study abroad programs with wider diversity of topics, particularly in areas that lack offerings, such as accounting and management.
7. The CoBT could host representatives from GCSU Leadership Programs, International Education, and the Career Center in classes to inform students of the available programs and their intended outcomes to facilitate increased participation.