

The Path to Excellence:
Strong and Steady

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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Dear MGA Community,

In late 2023, we launched the University's new strategic plan: Middle Georgia's Path to Excellence. I am pleased to report that we achieved several important milestones:

- Implementing First-Year Experience programming
- Dedicating support to research and sponsored projects
- Developing and launching a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan
- Continuing to increase our retention rate of first-year students

I am delighted to be able to share with you in this publication some of the success stories from our campuses that have occurred over the course of this year, many that support our strategic plan.

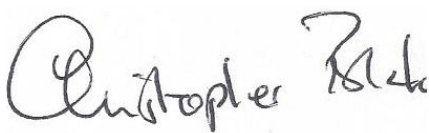
One of the more notable accomplishments was the approval of our final year of tuition realignment by the Board of Regents. This adjustment aligns us with our peers in the state university category, fortifying our position as a best-value university in Georgia. Our commitment to providing an exceptional and affordable education remains steadfast, and the tuition realignment empowers us to uphold that commitment while further enhancing the quality of our academic offerings and student services. Our deepest gratitude goes to the Board of Regents and the Chancellor's Office for their support and for their trust in us to embody our MGA core value of Stewardship, maximizing returns on these new fiscal resources.

Another crowning achievement from our strategic plan was the launch of the Center for Middle Georgia Studies (CMGS) this past year. Made possible through the generous support of the Peyton Anderson Foundation and the Carolyn Wynn Smalley estate, the Center capitalizes on the efforts of many at MGA. The CMGS connects knowledge with community and stands as a testament to our commitment to the region our campuses call home. The Center will serve as a hub for research, education, and community engagement, addressing the unique challenges and opportunities of middle Georgia. The CMGS is not just a new facility but also a symbol of our enduring dedication to the region and our role in its future. I encourage you all to become familiar with the Center's work and to take part when opportunities arise. Together, we can work to strengthen our University and the communities that surround us.

I joined this institution more than 11 years ago, and as we approach a decade since we were granted status as a University, there has never been a better time for us to reflect on the progress we have made during this period of growth. The strides we have made are nothing short of remarkable, yet I am convinced that our finest achievements lie ahead. I emphasize here the charge I recently issued to the MGA community: focus on becoming even more engaged.

I thank each of you for your continued support, dedication, and belief in the mission of Middle Georgia State University. As we move forward, let us do so with a renewed sense of purpose, confident in the knowledge that we are stronger together than as individuals. Through a united effort, we can resume the trajectory we were on pre-pandemic and continue to progress on our path to excellence.

Go Knights!



Christopher Blake, Ph.D.
President, Middle Georgia State University



ACHIEVEMENTS

Nursing Students Excel at Licensing Examinations

Middle Georgia State University's (MGA) nursing programs exceeded the National Council Licensure Examination's (NCLEX) state and national pass rate levels for 2023.

According to the official 2023 NCLEX results, MGA's Associate of Science in Nursing program had a 94.12% pass rate for first-time test takers. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing program had a 97.52% pass rate for first-time test takers, with MGA graduates scoring higher than most competitors in the region.



MSOT Program Granted Full ACOTE Accreditation

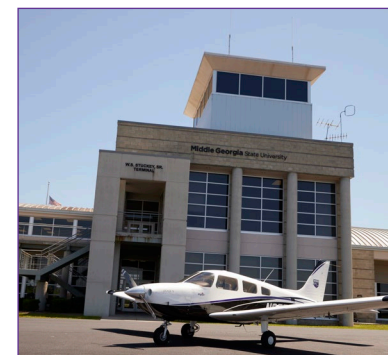
Middle Georgia State University's Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (MSOT) Bridge Program was granted full accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE).

ACOTE accreditation serves as a seal of approval for occupational therapy programs that satisfy educational requirements in the United States and its territories. The MSOT program received news of the accreditation status in April, announcing that, after a meticulous application and evaluation process, the program was awarded full accreditation for a seven-year period – the longest possible accreditation period for new programs.

United Airlines Joins Growing List of Aviation Partners

Middle Georgia State University (MGA) established a new partnership with United Airlines to provide a career pathway for MGA pilots through United's Aviate program.

United Airlines established the Aviate program in 2019 to support the airline's pipeline of highly qualified pilots. As an Aviate university partner, MGA's School of Aviation will give flight students and instructors an opportunity to apply to the Aviate program and follow a defined pathway to a career at United. Aviate is United's industry-leading pilot career development program, offering aspiring and established pilots the most secure path to the United flight deck.



HIGHLIGHTS IN INNOVATION

Dr. Hinze Chosen as Governor's Teaching Fellow

Middle Georgia State University faculty member Dr. Scott Hinze was chosen to be a 2024 Governor's Teaching Fellow. An associate professor of psychology, Hinze was among the faculty chosen for the highly competitive program from institutions across the state.

Established in 1995 by Zell Miller, then governor of Georgia, the Governor's Teaching Fellows program is designed to provide Georgia's higher education faculty with expanded opportunities for developing important teaching skills. Miller envisioned that this program would address faculty members' pressing need to use emerging technologies and instructional tools that are becoming increasingly important for learning in today's society.



Dr. Wengier Wins USG Award For Teaching

Dr. Sabrina Wengier was selected to be the 2024 recipient of the Regents' Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. An associate professor of French and humanities, Wengier was the sole faculty member selected for the state university sector.

The Hall of Fame Award is given by the University System of Georgia (USG) in recognition of individual faculty for a strong commitment to teaching and student success.



ADVANCEMENTS IN ACADEMICS

Regents Approve Graduate Degree in Education

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved a new Master of Education and Instruction with Literacy Focus in February 2024.

The new degree, launched in Fall 2024 and delivered fully online, will give certified teachers the opportunity to take advanced coursework related to literacy education. They will learn content and strategies to teach literacy skills to students who may have learning challenges or live in difficult home or community environments that affect their ability to gain literacy skills.



New B.S. in Health Science

Middle Georgia State University (MGA) now offers a Bachelor of Science in Health Science, following approval of the degree in May 2024 by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The program, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, welcomed its first students this fall.



The degree is designed to complement existing programs in nursing, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, and rehabilitation science. Graduates can use the degree as a means of entering the healthcare field as community health educators, patient representatives, healthcare data analysts, or other allied health professionals. Or they can build on the knowledge gained through the program by entering graduate school or by pursuing a second bachelor's degree in a specific healthcare profession, such as respiratory therapy or nursing. Many of the core courses in the new program would apply toward degrees in clinical healthcare fields.



School of Computing Expands with New Department of Computer Science

In July 2024, the School of Computing at Middle Georgia State University (MGA) launched the Department of Computer Science, housed at the institution's Warner Robins Campus near Robins Air Force Base.

By spinning off computer science degree programs into a brand-new department, MGA is making reality of the strategic foresight outlined in the University's academic master and strategic plans and fostering a vibrant ecosystem of innovation and learning. Previously, the Department of Information Technology housed the programs.

The new department will build upon the school's existing strengths in IT and mathematics by expanding access to STEM education in the region. The Department of Computer Science will become a center of excellence for education and innovation, driving advancements in a dynamic field.

MGA launched both bachelor's and associate's degrees in computer science last fall, basing those programs in Warner Robins for in-person classes. Open to all qualified students, the degrees especially appeal to students of the Georgia Academy, a dual-enrollment program for high school students in Houston County. Students enrolled in the Georgia Academy on the Warner Robins Campus can potentially finish high school and graduate with computer science associate's degrees at the same time.



LEADING THE WAY

MGA Welcomes New Hires in Leadership

Middle Georgia State University continues to attract excellent people to join us in achieving our mission – and these are just a few that we have welcomed to MGA this past year to lead their respective areas.



Nancy White

Vice President for University Advancement and Executive Director of the MGA Foundation



Dr. Kristie Roberts-Lewis

Executive Director of the Center for Middle Georgia Studies



Michael Brown

Director of Athletics



Dr. Monica Baloga

Special Assistant to the President for Accreditation and Strategic Planning



Dr. Billy Wooten

Dean, School of Arts & Letters

ATHLETICS

MGA joins Peach Belt Conference

In January 2024, the Peach Belt Conference (PBC) Board of Directors voted unanimously to extend an invitation to Middle Georgia State University (MGA) to join the league pending approval of MGA's acceptance into the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II provisional process. MGA is expected to apply on February 1, 2025, and, if accepted, will begin the process and join the league in the fall of 2025.

Middle Georgia State Athletics currently competes in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC). The Knights will bring baseball, softball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer, men's and women's tennis, and women's cross country and volleyball to the PBC with plans to add women's outdoor track and field (distance) starting in 2025-26. MGA Athletics is housed on the Cochran Campus with cross country, volleyball, and tennis competing in Macon.



Knights Tennis Sweeps SSAC Championships

The MGA Knights men's and women's tennis teams won their respective championship titles in the 2024 Southern States Athletic Association (SSAC) Tennis Tournaments. This was the women's team's second title win in the last three seasons, marking the first time the Knights have swept the regular season and tournament titles. The win also gave the men's team back-to-back titles, their third in the last four seasons.

With their wins, the Knights secured an automatic spot to compete in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics National Tournament.



UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

Smalley Estate Donation Funds Equestrian Scholarships and Georgia-centered Professorships

A \$1.2 million gift to the Middle Georgia State University Foundation from the estate of Carolyn Wynn Smalley, a Wilkinson County woman known for her love of horses, nature, and Georgia history and culture, will fund the creation of two special professorships and develop scholarships and other support for the institution's equestrian team.

Attorney and newspaper publisher DuBose Porter, who serves as executor of her estate, announced the gift – one of the largest ever to the MGA Foundation.

Smalley died in 2016 at the age of 93. As her estate was settled, some of the proceeds of the sale of her 1,200-acre Wilkinson County property – a rolling landscape on the Georgia Piedmont – were gifted to MGA for carefully chosen purposes reflecting her many interests.



Smalley's passions included nature and conservation, as well as Southern history, literature, and culture. The two endowed chairs/professorships MGA is funding with her gift will reflect those interests.



One chair is based in the School of Health & Natural Sciences. The faculty member who holds it will teach biology courses that cover the native species of Georgia, ecology, and the importance of preserving natural lands. The other, based in the School of Arts & Letters, will teach courses in Southern studies, with content covering Georgia-specific topics in history, literature, culture, geography, and structural design.

Smalley also adored horseback riding, a hobby she continued to indulge in until she was well into her 80s. She often invited friends to bring their horses to her property (which included her main house, a historic log cabin, and stables and barns) for long trail rides.

As a reflection of that passion, the estate gift will provide scholarships to some MGA students who are part of the University's equestrian team. The estate gift will help cover expenses associated with competing and provide a stipend to the team's head coach.

Finally, MGA is using some special pieces from Smalley's historic hilltop home for the history department's material culture studies class, where students consider objects and artifacts from everyday life. Among the objects from Smalley's home currently in the material culture studies collection are a settee, secretary, corner cabinet, trunk, wooden bowl, and century-old almanacs.



Houston Healthcare Continues to Support Health & Natural Sciences at MGA

Houston Healthcare has been a continued supporter of Middle Georgia State University's nursing programs, helping to shape the education and future careers of aspiring nurses. In recognition of its dedication, MGA announced the naming of the nursing suite on the University's Warner Robins Campus as the "Houston Healthcare Nursing Suite" in December 2023.



HOUSTON HEALTHCARE
Connecting People, Community and Care

For nearly two decades, Houston Healthcare's generosity has contributed \$1.2 million to MGA through nursing faculty line support alongside program and scholarship funding that helps ensure nursing students remain enrolled and graduate without the worry of financial burden. They have also provided vital medical equipment, which has been instrumental in preparing students for a challenging career in healthcare.



Houston Healthcare is also committed to the continued development of the Department of Nursing's faculty, further enriching the education that students receive by ensuring that faculty members are equipped with the tools and knowledge they need to lead the next generation of healthcare professionals.



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