Georgia State faculty explore language and literacy

By Jeremy Craig • jccraig@gsu.edu

Georgia State faculty are exploring how language and literacy are acquired, opening the door for learning across ages and content areas.

The Language and Literacy Initiative brings together researchers from multiple departments in two colleges who are interested in language and reading acquisition. They are focusing on individuals and groups that face challenges to acquiring these skills in typical ways, such as children with learning and intellectual disabilities, as well as adults acquiring reading skills for the first time or second language learners.

“This is an incredible opportunity to bring together expertise from multiple colleges, departments and centers to highlight our work in this area at Georgia State,” said Rose Sevcik, professor and co-director of the initiative.

“With unemploying soaring, what does the future hold for industrial relations? There are many parallels to the 1930s in what’s going on now. In normal times, unions have a marginal role in our society and there are only certain times – perhaps two or three during a century – where the conditions are such that employees become more radicalized and the lawmakers become more receptive to unions. Then you’ll see a big spurt. It will be interesting to see if we’re entering another spurt period. That will be good for my field.”

You were recently named to the Labor and Employment Relations Association’s inaugural group of distinguished fellows for 31 years of contributions to the field. What does the study of industrial relations involve today?

The goal of industrial relations is to find ways to make the workplace function more efficiently and fairly and to provide interesting jobs with opportunity for growth and development. I’m an economist, but I have specialized in industrial relations rather than just pure labor economics because it gives me an opportunity to research in all of the different areas of industrial relations. Industrial relations has an economic dimension, a management dimension, a legal dimension and a social dimension. Underlying all my research is the belief that labor markets are not self-equilibrating. If you let wages fall, it doesn’t bring things back to full employment; rather, it makes things worse because people’s wages affect their paycheck and when paychecks go down or they lose their wages, then there’s less spending.

Bruce Kaufman

professor of economics and a senior associate at the W.T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations

Georgia State faculty explore language and literacy

King Convocation set for Jan. 15

Michael Eric Dyson to keynote

By Liz Babiarz • lbabiarz@gsu.edu

Scholar and best-selling author Michael Eric Dyson will be the keynote speaker at the 26th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Convocation at 4 p.m. on Jan. 15 in the Student Center Main Ballroom. The title of his speech will be “Dr. King for the 21st Century.”

The convocation pays tribute to King for his work in the areas of social justice and human rights. The event is sponsored by Georgia State University’s Office of Student Life and Leadership/Intercultural Relations, Campus Events and Spotlight Programs Board. It is supported by student activity fees and is free and open to the public. This year’s theme is “Change, Transform and Inspire: Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders.”

Dyson will discuss his most recent book, “April 4, 1968: Martin Luther King Jr.’s Death and How It Changed America,” which is a comprehensive re-evaluation of the face of black America over the four decades following King’s death.

“Professor Dyson is the perfect person to present to today’s college students and help them understand the relevance of Dr. King’s death and legacy to their own lives,” said Cara Dawn Byford, campus events advisor.

A professor at Georgetown University, Dyson is a renowned scholar and ordained Baptist minister. His scholarship combines cultural criticism and biography, focusing on race, religion, popular culture, and contemporary issues in the African-American community.

For more information on the convocation, contact Tonya Cook, program specialist, or contact Cara Dawn Byford, campus events advisor.

Several events will be held Jan. 15 – 22 to honor King’s legacy, including tours of the King Center on Jan. 16, a volunteer service project on Jan. 19 and a lunch-and-learn about civil rights around the world on Jan. 22. For more information, visit www2.gsu.edu/wwwvillager/mlkConvocation.htm.

Welcome Aboard

New Georgia State President Mark Becker hit the ground running Jan. 2, his first day on the job. Becker, the former executive vice president for academic affairs and provost at the University of South Carolina, is Georgia State’s seventh president.

Read a letter to the Georgia State community from President Becker on page 4.

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With unemploying soaring, what does the future hold for industrial relations? There are many parallels to the 1930s in what’s going on now. In normal times, unions have a marginal role in our society and there are only certain times – perhaps two or three during a century – where the conditions are such that employees become more radicalized and the lawmakers become more receptive to unions. Then you’ll see a big spurt. It will be interesting to see if we’re entering another spurt period. That will be good for my field.

Your office has been facetiously dubbed the Bruce Kaufman Collection of Economic Literature or Pofen Library “West.” How many books do you have checked out?

I’ve got over 1,100. Professors can keep a library book out an entire year and so it’s every June 15th that we have to renew our books. This is the worst day of the year for me. I’ve got 200 or 300 books at home and of course my office is over owing. I’ll get a huge project done and a lot of the books go back. But then I’ll start another huge project and they build up.

What do you plan to do after your retirement this summer?

I do not consider it a real retirement but more of an extended sabbatical. I plan to be here as my home base but to do more teaching and research overseas.
What can I bring? How about something healthy?

By Chris Rosenbloom • dession@gsu.com

N eighborhood open house, office potluck, or holiday family meals — what to bring? Instead of dropping by the grocery store and picking up a box of cookies, this year try something different. Here are some tips that will keep you on the invitation list of any hostess.

Nuts are a healthy snack with a bonus. They don't require refrigeration so they are the perfect food to take to an after-work event. Opt for something unusual — every nut has a commodity Web site containing great recipes. For example, try the wasabi almonds at www.snacktrition.com. If pressed for time, try the new line of nuts from “Snacktrition” (www.snacktrition.com). They offer a variety of nuts that are oven-roasted, not oil-roasted. My favorite is the salt-and-pepper cashews, but the smoked almonds with added calcium are a close second.

If a salad or appetizer is your assignment, think about fall colors — check out the Web site for Georgia pecans (www.georgiapecans.com) and try the “Fall Is in the Air” fruit kebabs with Georgia pecans. Or try Marion Cunningham's cranberry and walnut coleslaw from www.walnuts.org. Since everyone will ask for the recipe, type it on a recipe template found in most word processing software programs, print and copy for a personal touch.

If you want to make sure there is a healthy, delicious choice at the buffet table, bring it yourself. A pretty vegetable or fruit tray with a yogurt-based dip is always a hit at a party but break out the baby carrots and celery sticks routine. Try a red and green vegetable tray to carry on with the traditional Christmas colors — green and red bell pepper slices or grape tomatoes threaded on a skewer with mozzarella pieces and fresh basil leaves.

Consider a nonfood addition to the party — seasonal soap dispenser for the kitchen sink, red and green cutting boards, flowers (in a vase so the hostess doesn’t have to be bothered with finding a vase) or a bottle of wine are welcome at any party.

For more information and a list of our co-sponsors, please visit: www2.gsu.edu/direction/corporate_relations or call 404-413-1580.

The programs are sponsored by student activity fees.

Michael Eric Dyson conversation keynote speaker

Commemorative Week
January 15-22, 2009

Thursday, January 15
4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Student Center Ballroom

LGBT Civil Rights Past and Present
Safe Zones Coordinators and Gay, Lesbian and Gender Diversity / BlackOUT / CPS-Pride / Gender Pride
Participants will have the opportunity to learn about the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights movements, past and present, through media presentations and guest lecturers.

Tuesday, January 20
7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Student Center Ballroom

Crossing Lines
Lambda Theta Alpha Sorority and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity
Come join us as we discuss issues related to inter racial relationships. An award-winning event will feature speakers and media presentations.

Wednesday, January 21
12 p.m. - 1 p.m. Rialto Center for the Arts

Feed Your Senses
Rialto Center for the Arts
Join us for a special edition of the lunchtime learning Performing Arts as Feed Your Senses celebrate MLK Week! Featuring a jazz music performance by Gordon Verick and a jazz combo. For more information, call the Rialto Center for the Arts at 404-413-9800.

Wednesday, January 21
4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Student Center Ballroom

Monday, January 19
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Student Center Ballroom

Volunteer Service Project: “A Day On, Not A Day Off”
Office of Civic Engagement
Spend some time with your peers serving the Atlanta community. There will be multiple projects focusing on serving those in need. For more information, contact the Office of Civic Engagement at 404-413-1550 by Monday, January 12, 2009.

Tuesday, January 20
11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Student Center Ballroom

Student Government Association
The Student Government Association will host a viewing of the U.S. Presidential Inauguration of Barack Obama. All students, faculty and staff are invited to experience this historic moment together.

Wednesday, January 21
7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Student Center Ballroom

Wednesday, January 21
7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Student Center Ballroom

Thursday, January 22
12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. 480/465 University Center

MLK Dedication — I’ve Been to the Mountaintop
Student Life & Leadership / Intercultural Relations
The second annual Dedication will serve as a culminating event to MLK Commemorative Week. This program includes dancing, spoken word and song to give new life to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This event will conclude with a student reenactment of the “I Have Been to the Mountaintop” speech.
Undergraduate Research Conference proposals due by Jan. 29
Faculty are asked to remind students that proposals for the 2009 Georgia State University Undergraduate Research Conference — to be held March 13 — are due no later than 5 p.m. Jan. 29.

The third annual conference will be held at the Student Center, starting at 9 a.m. The event will include poster presentations, oral presentations and artistic displays from the Robinson College of Business, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education, the College of Health and Human Sciences, and the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Students are required to have faculty sponsors and will be notified of proposal acceptance in February. More information about the conference — including required forms for proposal submission and a list of previous winners and their abstracts — is available online at www.gsu.edu/gsurc.

Georgia State University Police Department seeks public input for re-accreditation
The Georgia State University Police Department is trying to achieve voluntary national re-accreditation by verifying that it continues to meet a series of professional standards. Administered by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), the re-accreditation program requires agencies to comply with state-of-the-art standards in four basic areas: policy and procedures, administration, operations, and support services. Anyone wishing to submit written comments about the department’s ability to comply with the standards for re-accreditation should write to: Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA, 10302 Easton Place, Suite 100, Fairfax, VA 22030-2215). For more information, please contact Georgia State Police Sgt. Regina Davis at 404-413-3214 or rdavis@gsu.edu.

CSB celebrates 10th anniversary
The Caucus School of Business (CSB), founded in 1998 by the Robinson College of Business and a small group of schools in the Republic of Georgia, is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Established seven years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the school was created to help the Republic of Georgia make the transition from a planned to a market economy. Bijan Fazlollahi, director of the Institute of Business Development in Transitional Economies and a professor in the Institute of International Business, visited the capital city of Tbilisi in 1996 and determined that “there was a real need to train a new generation of managers to assist Georgia’s economic transition.” He obtained a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development through the Eurasia Foundation. Two years later the CSB opened its doors. Enrollment is approximately 2,000 students, and the school offers both a bachelor’s and master’s in business administration. It also has a “two-plus-two program” in which participants study two years each in Tbilisi and at the Robinson College.

Courses are taught in English. Lecturers are full-time and part-time CSB faculty as well as visiting professors and administrators from Robinson College.

Coach Barnes talks Georgia State basketball on new weekly radio show
During basketball season, Head Basketball Coach Rod Barnes will hit the airwaves from 4 to 5 p.m. each Sunday on WGKA Radio (920 AM). The Rod Barnes Radio Show will originate live from the new Panthers Den restaurant, 75 Piedmont Ave., and Georgia State students and fans are invited to be in the audience as Coach Barnes and co-host Dave Cohen talk Georgia State basketball. Fans may participate with in-person questions and comments or by calling 770-226-0920 during the show.

PAUS changes name to Public Management and Policy
The Public Administration and Urban Studies department at the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies has changed its name to Public Management and Policy.

Department Chair Harvey K. Newman said the change was initiated by his predecessor, Professor Greg Streib, and better reflects the department’s mission and the teaching and research interests of its faculty.

“The Department of Public Management and Policy will continue its mission of preparing managers in the public and nonprofit arenas to manage people, resources, information, organizations and networks effectively,” said Newman.

The department is highly ranked by U.S. News & World Report for its programs in public finance and budgeting; city management and urban policy; information and technology management; nonprofit management; public policy analysis; and public management administration.

The name change took effect Oct. 8.

Nursing faculty and staff take 25 million steps toward health
Members of Georgia State’s Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing took millions of steps this fall during an “On the Move” challenge to encourage fitness, fun and camaraderie.
Participants, divided into four teams, were given pedometers to track their steps, with a goal for each person to walk at least 10,000 steps per day in the course of normal daily activities. More than 40 participants logged a total of 25,599,965 steps, with the blue team logging more than 6 million steps, according to E. Johnna Bacon, academic professional for the school of nursing.
Eight participants logged at least 100,000 steps daily: A similar, coincidental university-wide wellness challenge started was held this fall.
Dear friends and colleagues:

As we get rolling in 2009, the one thing that is for certain is that this will be a year of change. Change for our nation with Barack Obama’s upcoming inauguration as our 44th president, change globally as economies worldwide try to find their footing as we progress through the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression, and change for Georgia State as I begin my term as the university’s seventh president.

It is a distinct honor and privilege for me to be given the opportunity and responsibility to lead Georgia State at this time. My goal each and every day will be to advance our university as one of the premier urban research universities in our nation, and with near certainty that means changes be ahead for Georgia State. Excellence and greatness do not result from standing still.

We have a unique mission and role as Georgia’s urban research university, and in this role we are positioned to increase our impact and reach. Georgia State can and should be a national model for the future of American higher education, an institution where access, diversity, excellence and innovation are the hallmarks for driving positive changes. At all times we must strive to be recognized for excellence in education and research.

Our paths to success in that regard will necessarily build on our history of engaging in constructive partnerships with a wide range of external entities, be they government agencies, other educational institutions, in the corporate sector or not-for-profit agencies. And, to best serve our students and society, we must be globally oriented at the same time we faithfully fulfill our commitments to Atlanta and Georgia. The building blocks are in place, and with unwavering commitments to recognized excellence, constructive partnerships and an appropriate global-local balance, Georgia State’s advancement will be assured.

The journey ahead will be exciting, but it will not always be smooth. This is particularly true during these extremely challenging economic times. We must manage according to available resources; at the same time we also must tirelessly pursue additional resources in order to create an even better future for our students, faculty and staff.

What I promise you at this time is that my decisions will be made with a singular focus on advancing Georgia State University as one of our nation’s premier urban research universities.

The Georgia General Assembly convened this week, and in light of the current fiscal crisis we must anticipate that questions will be raised about higher education in the state. I am already meeting with our elected officials, and I assure you that we will vigorously make the case for Georgia State — and higher education in general — each and every time we meet with legislators and the governor.

Intercollegiate athletics is a unique feature of American higher education. At Georgia State we are a proud member of the Colonial Athletic Association and fortunate to be represented by outstanding young men and women who have accepted the challenge of simultaneously excelling in the classroom and in competition. It is important that we demonstrate our appreciation and support for their efforts on behalf of Georgia State by showing up to cheer them on in competition.

Every day, on and away from campus, I am experiencing excitement about the university’s first-ever football program. With Coach Bill Curry at the helm, the foundation is being put in place for a program of which we all can and will be proud. I look forward with great anticipation to seeing a huge turnout in the Georgia Dome for our first kick-off in 2010.

If Georgia State’s accomplishments over the past 10 years are any indication of its promise, I am certain that the coming years will bring even greater achievement. Together we will show our state, our nation and the world that Georgia State is emerging as an outstanding model for the future urban research university.

Sincerely,

Mark P. Becker
President