Spring brings two commencement ceremonies

Ph.D. hooding to precede bachelor, master and specialist graduation

By Liz Babiarz • babiarz@gsu.edu

Georgia State’s 94th commencement will usher in a new way the university confers degrees.

Starting this semester, Georgia State will host two ceremonies: A Ph.D. commencement and hooding ceremony will be held at 9 a.m. on May 9 in the Sports Arena, followed by the bachelor, master and specialist commencement ceremony at 2 p.m. in the Georgia Dome.

“We felt it was appropriate to recognize doctoral students with a smaller, more intimate hooding ceremony in the morning,” Georgia State President Mark Becker said. “The doctoral degrees are the highest awarded by the university; and it is customary at research universities that doctoral graduates be recognized in a separate hooding ceremony. The traditional commencement exercise will take place in the afternoon. Both occasions will be times of great celebration honoring the hard work that went into realizing such an important goal.”

Georgia State will confer 94 doctoral degrees and 2,242 bachelor, master and specialist degrees, for a total of 5,037 expected graduates this spring.

The ceremony is also special because it is Becker’s first as president and Provos Ron Henry’s last commencement before his retirement.

“I’m pleased to have been part of a successful ongoing transition of Georgia State to a major urban research university,” Henry said. “Growth in the quality and size of the student body plus the growth in quality and depth of faculty scholarship have been gratifying.”

The keynote speaker for the afternoon ceremony in the Georgia Dome will be Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, the founding dean and first president of Morehouse School of Medicine.

With the exception of his tenure as secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from 1989 to 1993, Dr. Sullivan was president of Morehouse School of Medicine for more than two decades.

The speaker at the Ph.D. ceremony will be Peter Lindsay, associate professor of political science and philosophy, as well as the director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Georgia State.

Lindsay is the author of “Creative Individualism” and numerous academic articles on subjects such as 19th century political economic theory, contemporary property rights, Lincoln on secession and the role of reason in judgments of conscience.

For more information, visit www.gsu.edu/commencement.

Georgia State Law surpasses anniversary pledge of 25,000 pro bono hours

By Jen Hellegaard • jhellegaard@gsu.edu

In celebration of its 25th anniversary and the school’s historical commitment to public service and the best values of the profession, Georgia State University College of Law students, faculty and staff pledged 25,000 hours of pro bono service. The college surpassed that goal April 21, with the law school community engaging in more than 27,800 hours recorded. That represents more than 110 percent of the goal.

Pro bono partners include Atlanta Legal Aid, Georgia Legal Services, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, the State Bar of Georgia Pro Bono Program and the Georgia Truancy Intervention Project. Pro bono activities include not only those that ensure adequate legal services for moderate and low-income individuals, but efforts that enhance the capacity of law and legal institutions to do justice and activities in the local community that promote justice.

“This was a total law school community effort from students, faculty and staff,” Dean Steven J. Kamminske said. “I’m especially proud of our student body as they contributed more than 22,000 hours toward this effort. That speaks volumes about their commitment to public service, which we believe is an integral quality of every graduate of this law school.”

Students who complete 50 hours or more of pro bono service during law school graduate with “pro bono distinction.”

What is Critical Thinking through Writing Initiative

The CTW initiative offers faculty the opportunity to use their teaching as a research project. Part of the initiative uses rubrics and scoring guides that capture assessment information about how well students are learning to think critically via written assignments. This information is data that faculty can use to enhance their understanding of how students at GSU learn and think. The CTW initiative is proof that a research institution can focus on and value undergraduate education.

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How will CTW courses help students?

These experiences will better prepare students for life after graduation by providing them with opportunities to talk, write and think about what they are learning. In a world that changes as rapidly as ours does, the ability to learn rapidly and share learning with others effectively is far more valuable than any body of received knowledge. These classes, in other words, are designed to make sure that students are thinking about the material and not just memorizing facts and formulas.

How will CTW courses affect faculty members?

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Georgia State is the only research institution of its size to take on an initiative of this scope. More information is available online at www.gsu.edu/ctw.
Get out of rut: Try new fruits and vegetables

By Chris Rosenbloom • dietitian@ajc.com

Get out of rut: Try new fruits and vegetables

Eggplant:
Carambola:
Broccoli rabe:
Plantains:

By Chris Rosenbloom, PhD, a nutrition professor and associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Health and Human Sciences. Her column appears regularly in Villager courtesy of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Baby carrots and apples.

Plantains: A staple of Latin American cuisine, they look like large bananas, but are really a starchy vegetable rich in potassium and vitamin C. Try the ripe ones (they will look almost black) for your test. Slice it, sauté with a little butter or margarine and a pinch of brown sugar and salt for side dish or dessert.

Broccoli rabe: This vegetable, popular in Italy, is also called rapini and has slender stalks with broccoli-like flower buds. It can be bitter, so blanch it, toss with balsamic vinegar and serve it as a side dish. It is also good in salads or soups.

Dried figs: If you like fig Newtons, try a dried fig instead moist, chewy and flavorful, a perfect snack.

Carambola: It’s used in Southeast Asia and is also called star fruit because when sliced each piece looks like a star. Choose a sweet variety like Arkin. Look for one that is shiny and firm to the touch. Kids will like how it looks, and moms will like the extra fiber and vitamins A and C that it delivers.

Eggplant: If you like hummus, try something new. Like baba ghanoush served with pita wedges or flatbread. This Middle Eastern dish is used as a spread or a dip.


Baba Ghanouj

Makes 2 cups or 8 (1/4-cup) servings

Hands on: 30 minutes
Total time: 90 minutes

2 pounds eggplant
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 small garlic clove, minced
2 tablespoons tahini paste (sesame seed paste)
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons chopped parsley

Grill the eggplant over a hot fire or under the broiler until the skin darkens and wrinkles on all sides, about 15 to 20 minutes, turning every 5 minutes. The eggplant should be uniformly soft when pressed withongs. Transfer to a baking sheet and cool for 5 minutes.

Set a small colander over a bowl or in the sink. Trim the top and bottom off each eggplant. Sit the eggplants lengthwise. Use a spoon to scoop the hot pulp from the skins and place the pulp in the colander. You should have about 2 cups of packed pulp. Discard the skins. Let the pulp drain for 3 minutes.

Transfer pulp to a food processor bowl and add lemon juice, garlic, tahini, 1 tablespoon olive oil and a pinch of salt and pepper. Process until the mixture has a coarse, chunky texture, about 8 to 10-second pulses. Transfer to a serving dish, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until lightly chilled, about 45 to 60 minutes.

To serve, use a spoon to make a trough in the center of the dip and spoon in a teaspoon of olive oil and sprinkle with parsley.

Per serving: 50 calories (percent of calories from fat, 72%), 1 gram protein, 3 grams carbohydrates, 1 gram fiber, 4 grams fat (less than 1 gram saturated), no cholesterol, 2 milligrams sodium.

Nutritional bonus points Don’t let the 72 percent of calories from fat scare you. This is a low-fat, low-calorie dip, and the small amount of fat comes from heart-healthy oil in the olive oil and tahini.

Summer is almost here. Will your U-learn courses be ready when you return to campus this Fall?

Yes, but only if you act now!

The migration of course materials from the current U-learn (Version 3) to the new Version 8 is underway. How will your materials move?

1. You can move your materials yourself by downloading the files to your computer and uploading them to Version 8.

2. We can move the materials for you. Simply complete the Migration Request Form from the U-learn Web site: http://ulearn.gsu.edu

For more information, contact the IS&T Help Center at help@gsu.edu or 404-413-HELP (4357).

Study shows increased symptoms lead mentally ill to become victims of violence

By Leoch Steppens • info@gsu.edu

Individuals with major mental disorders are more likely to become victims of violent crimes when they are experiencing an increase in symptoms than they are to commit crime, according to a new study by Brent Teasdale, an assistant professor of criminal justice.

Teasdale found that patients experiencing delusions, hallucinations and generally worsening symptoms are more likely to become victims of violence. In addition, individuals with mental disorders are particularly vulnerable for victimization during times of homelessness and when suffering from alcohol abuse.

“People with severe mental disorders are frequently involved in victimization and are likely to become violent,” Teasdale said. “They actually have higher rates of victimization than they have of violence commission, which I think is counter to the stereotype that highly symptomatic, obviously delusional, visibly mentally disordered people are dangerous, unpredictable and violent.”

Clinicians also could provide clients suggestions for reducing victimization risk when they notice patients exhibiting greater than usual symptoms, Teasdale said. For instance, during these times clinicians may recommend spending less time in public spaces, increases in guardianship or mandated community treatment programs.

The findings of the study are important for clinicians who must pay attention to warning signs of worsening disorders as potential risk markers for violent behavior committed by their clients, Teasdale said. They could also aid in the creation of assessment tools that focus on victimization risk and classes that better educate families about caring for the mentally ill.

The study, “Mentally Ill to Become Victims of Violence,” was published in the 2009 edition of Criminal Justice and Behavior.
Basketball Camps accepting applications
- Georgia State is now accepting applications for two 2009 basketball camps for young ball players. One will be offered for boys by men’s coach Rod Barnes and the other for girls by women’s coach Lea Henry. Both will be held at the Georgia State Sports Arena in June and July.

The day camps focus on the fundamentals of basketball through station work and competition, with emphasis on shooting, ball-handling and individual offensive and defensive skills. The camps are for children ages 8 to 15 for boys, and ages 7 to 18 for girls. The cost for the camps is $250, but Georgia State employees receive a discounted rate of $175.

The Rod Barnes Father-Son Camp is a one-day workshop to be held June 20. Fathers and sons will engage in competition and skill development, and GSU head basketball coach Rod Barnes will share philosophies on how the game can build the bond between fathers and sons. The camp is open to boys ages 7 to 15 and their fathers, and the cost is $100.

For further information, the Georgia State basketball offices can be reached at 404-413-4106 (men’s) and 404-413-4058 (women’s). Online registration is available at www.georgiastatesports.com, under the Rod Barnes Basketball Camps link on the men’s basketball home page, and the Lea Henry Basketball Camps link on the women’s basketball page.

Department of Student Health Promotion receives grant
- For the third year in a row, Georgia State’s Department of Student Health Promotion received a grant from the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety. The $5,100 grant provides traffic and pedestrian safety programs throughout the year; addressing issues such as speeding, impaired driving, motorcycle safety, aggressive driving, distracted driving and pedestrian education.

For more information on this grant, contact Kevin Modgil, health educator and manager of the Department of Student Health Promotions, at kmodgil@gsu.edu.

Georgia State to host 2009 Southeast Turkish Olympiad
- On May 9, the Middle East Institute at Georgia State will host the finals of the 2009 Southeast Turkish Olympiad.

The competition will be held in parallel with the International Turkish Olympiads in Turkey. Last year, students from more than 110 countries participated in the International Turkish Olympiads. Istanbul Center, an organization dedicated to promoting the understanding of Turkish language and culture in the southeastern United States, is organizing the Olympiad.

Teens and adults will compete in singing, poetry reading, folklore, grammar and writing competitions. The Middle East Institute’s Turkish instructor, Nur Yigitoglu, will be one of the judges.

The Olympiad will be held in Kopleff Recital Hall. For more information, visit www.istanbulcenter.org.

GSU to showcase life sciences research at Bio International Convention
- Georgia State University will showcase its bioscience expertise and research during the International Bio International Convention, to be held at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta May 18-21.

Sponsored by the Biotechnology Industry Organization, the convention is the largest biotechnology convention in the world and features biotechnology companies, research institutions and other organizations.

As part of the Georgia Pavilion, the university will promote its research centers, consortiums and institutes, including the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience, the Center for Biotechnology and Drug Design, the Neuroscience Institute, the Molecular Basis of Disease initiative and the university’s Viral Immunology Center — home to one of only two Biosafety-Level 4 laboratories based at a university in the United States.

Harvard expert on quantitative methods to speak
- A Harvard University professor will speak about advanced quantitative methods for the health and social sciences during the Inaugural Distinguished Lecture on Advanced Quantitative Methods on May 18, sponsored by the Partnership for Urban Health Research and the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

Donald B. Rubin, the John L. Loeb Professor of Statistics at Harvard, will speak at the lecture, to be held at 1 p.m. in Room 460/465 at the University Center. Rubin’s lecture will highlight recent methodological and statistical developments for estimating causal effects — important in furthering research and inquiry across a broad range of disciplines.

For more information about the lecture, contact Scott Weaver at sweaver@gsu.edu.

Part-time M.B.A., CIS top 10 in U.S. News rankings
- The part-time MBA at the J. Mack Robinson College of Business is, for the 14th consecutive year, ranked a national top-10 program in U.S. News & World Report’s “America’s Best Graduate Schools.” The 2010 edition also listed Robinson’s Department of Computer Information Systems among the top 10 information systems programs.

Robinson is the only business school in the South to have a top 10 part-time program, and one of very few schools in the United States to hold multiple top 10 rankings.

“The top 10 program for such a prolonged period of time is a tribute to our innovative curriculum, responsiveness to the changing needs of students and the quality of Robinson’s faculty,” said Dean Fenwick Huss. “It also puts us head to head with the part-time M.B.A. programs of such schools as NYU, Northwestern and UC Berkeley.”

STEM Faculty Fellows focus on student learning in science and math
- A new Georgia State fellowship program will partner faculty in science and mathematics with faculty in education and social science to enhance student learning in GSU science and mathematics courses. The program will advance the scholarship of teaching and learning among faculty in multiple science and math disciplines, including astronomy, biology, chemistry, computer science, geosciences, physics and mathematics.

Twenty STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Faculty Fellows representing nine research projects were selected in April as part of the program, which is sponsored by the University System of Georgia STEM Initiative and the Office of the Provost. Fellows will receive seed funds and professional development opportunities to support their scholarly work.

“We’re excited about the potential of the Fellowship to create new pathways for interdisciplinary and cross-college collaboration as well as new capacity for publications and proposals related to research on student learning in STEM fields,” said Cherilyn Morrow, professor of physics and astronomy, director of GSU’s STEM Initiative and co-facilitator of the STEM Faculty Fellowship with Harry Dangel of GSU’s Center for Teaching and Learning.

Women’s golf, tennis teams earn CAA titles
- Georgia State’s women’s tennis team earned its first-ever Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) title, while the women’s golf team snagged its second in four years.

Coach Miha Lisac was named CAA Women’s Tennis Coach of the Year, and freshman Diana Nakic was named CAA Rookie and Player of the Year. Four other members of the tennis team earned All-CAA honors. With the championship win, GSU earns the CAA bid to the NCAA tournament, another first for the women’s tennis team.

Coaches Sandra Maier and Anna Scott were named to the CAA All-Tournament Team. Their team’s win assures GSU a berth in the NCAA Regionals, their fifth in seven years.

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**Brains rule!**

Seventh graders from Renfroe Middle School in Decatur, Ga., get hands-on at the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience’s Brain Expo April 25 at Zoo Atlanta.
Astronomy Ph.D. student receives Hubble Fellowship to explore stellar sizes

By Jeremy Craig • jcraig@gsu.edu

Thanks to a prestigious fellowship awarded by NASA, Georgia State’s Tabetha Boyajian will help expand astronomers’ knowledge about the origins of our galaxy, and learn more about the stars which harbor planets outside of our solar system.

Boyajian is among 17 awardees of the Hubble Fellowship. Winners of the fellowship pursue postdoctoral research associated with NASA’s Cosmic Origins Program. The missions in this program examine the origins and evolution of galaxies, stars, and planetary systems.

Boyajian, who will receive her Ph.D. this summer, uses the CHARA Array, a long baseline optical/infrared interferometer operated by Georgia State’s Center for High Angular Resolution Astronomy (CHARA), located at the Mount Wilson Observatory in California, to measure the size of stars.

For her dissertation, Boyajian is investigating stars similar to the size of the sun. This fall, she will begin her work measuring the size of stars that are much smaller in mass than the sun, as well as stars which have planets orbiting them.

By determining the angular diameter of stars using an interferometer, astronomers can determine more about a star’s effective temperature. And if a star has a planet orbiting it, scientists can learn more about the star’s habitable zone — the area around a star that allows a planet to support life.

“The CHARA array is a very high tech tool that we use to do this kind of science, and it’s fascinating,” Boyajian said. Her research will also focus on some of the oldest stars, called metal-poor stars.

“There are a few [metal-poor] stars close by from which we can learn more by using interferometry, and this will tell us a lot about how our galaxy formed,” she explained.