

THE LION'S TALE



Georgian Court University

Lakewood, NJ

Sister Stories

Georgian Court Brings Sisters of Mercy to Campus for Oral History Project

By Alexandria Graziosi
Co-Editor

“I’ve had fun, fun, fun,” commented Sister Diane Szubrowski, RSM, on her life as a Sister of Mercy. “I’m living a WILD life, like our Women in Leadership Development. I’ve traveled around the world, had many global experiences, and I’ve danced the whole time.”

“It’s important to document the history of specific people. Not only did we learn, we had the chance to be a part of history by documenting things people wouldn’t necessarily have known.”

Contrary to popular belief, the Sisters of Mercy do not fit the role of the disciplinary stereotype most people have come to associate with women in religious life.

They do not wield rulers at their student’s knuckles, don the traditional habit, or break into song and dance every half hour (although there may be some truth to the singing and dancing myth, as half way through her interview, Sister Ruth Neely, RSM, burst into song, singing, “there’s no business like nun business”).

Along with their passionate outlooks on life, the Sisters of Mercy are best known for their vows to serve those less fortunate. To help further serve their communities, many pursue careers in education, health care,

and community outreach.

In order to highlight the wide range of service the Sisters of Mercy actively participate in, this past November, Georgian Court University orchestrated a project to help shed light on the truths of religious life.

On Sunday November 23, Georgian Court University wrapped up filming for the Sis-

ters Oral History Project, the weekend long event that captured the stories of six Sisters of Mercy from the surrounding area, with interviews conducted by university students.

The project, funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for Sisters, functions as an extension of St. Catherine University’s National Catholic Sisters Week, a campaign that brings awareness to the lives of Catholic Sisters and aims to “demystify” religious life.

Plans for the project began last March, when GCU professor Mary Paula Cancienne, RSM, Ph.D., and senior Kerrin McCarthy flew out to Minnesota to attend National Catholic Sisters Week 2014.

“It was a very powerful weekend,” explained Canci-

enne. “Some women there were interested in becoming a Sister, some were just attracted to the charism of becoming a Sister, and some were just a part of the connection.”

The event hosted around 150 students and about 150 Sisters. It consisted of a number of events designed to showcase the lives and work of various Sisters of Mercy and show how they have impacted the nation throughout history.

“The whole trip was really moving,” commented McCarthy. “One day we had the opportunity to listen to four Sisters share their stories about what led them to religious life. It was all very touching.”

Soon after their return, GCU President Rosemary E. Jeffries, RSM, Ph.D. was approached by the president of St. Catherine University, who thought including Georgian Court in the campaign would be a great opportunity to highlight the Sisters of Mercy.

“Our proposal for the project was focused on media,” commented Jeffries, who in just three short weeks drafted the proposal to contribute to the national campaign. “It is always a new time, so using media was a way to carry out our charism in the present moment.”

Once the proposal was approved, Cancienne and McCarthy began recruiting students, faculty, and local

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GCU Celebrates Annual Christmas Tree Lighting



Every year, Georgian Court University celebrates the holiday season with the lighting of the Christmas tree located in the Casino. One of this year’s festivities included in this year’s tree lighting featured Kerrin McCarthy’s rendition of “Oh Holy Night.”

For more pictures from this year’s tree lighting, see page 3.

Photo by Megan Kelly



Pictured above are all of the individuals who participated in the project.

Photos by Alexandria Graziosi



Sister Ivette Diaz was one of the Sisters of Mercy interviewed for this project.

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From the Editor



Last spring, I was approached by Kerrin McCarthy, who asked whether or not I would be interested in participating in an Oral History Project involving the Sisters of Mercy. At the time I was intrigued, although I'll admit I was not very sure what that would consist of. As time went on, Kerrin (who was helping to direct this project alongside Sister Mary-Paula Cancienne) would continue to fill me in on some details as they were planned, and we met frequently to practice using the camera equipment, peruse the interview questions, and discuss how we thought the weekend would go.

Because the specific details of the project were so elusive, many people asked myself and the other students involved why we were so interested in participating if we weren't completely sure of how the weekend would go. However, that concern never crossed any of our minds. From the moment that Kerrin approached myself and the other two participating students (sophomore Lisa Gravato and junior Amanda Earle), we knew how valuable this project would be. "It's

important to document the history of specific people," Amanda commented, "not only did we learn, we had the chance to be a part of history by documenting things people wouldn't necessarily have known." This was an experience that all four of us were eager to be a part of, even before it had started.

After all of this, on the morning of Friday, November 21 2014, I still had no idea what would be in store for me over the course of that weekend. I knew that we would be spending a lot of time in Georgian Court University's Mercy Hall. I knew that I would soon be setting up camera equipment, moving furniture around, and preparing for the next couple of days. I knew that in a few hours I would be introduced to six different Sisters of Mercy. And I knew that at some point, I would be taking part in the interview of three of these Sisters. But that was all that I really knew.

Now, while I wasn't completely sure of the progression of the events, or the specific course of action the weekend would take, I did have a few expectations for those few days as a whole. In my mind, we would spend Friday talking to all of the Sisters and getting acquainted with everyone. Then on Saturday, we would be interviewing each Sister individually—which to me implied a lot of down time in between interviews. Sunday was reserved for any interviews that we did not have time to complete on Saturday.

Walking into Mercy Hall that Friday afternoon, the progression of events started

to live up to my fragmented expectations, but not for long. We did sit and converse, attempting to become more personally connected to each Sister, but it soon became so much more than that. From the moment these women arrived on Friday, the change in atmosphere was palpable. The energy of the room wasn't suspenseful, anxious, or unsure, as it had been when there were only four students in the room moving furniture around. Instead, the room was comfortable, lively, and even playful.

As we made our way to the dining room for dinner that evening, the chatter only stopped for the moment when we said grace. This pattern continued throughout the entire weekend. There was no down time—as we all had expected there to be. There were moments when some Sisters were in their interview, but the conversations with the rest of the women did not cease because of that. And it was precisely this detail that gave this weekend so much meaning.

The individual women that participated in this project were all so different; the diversity of the individuals, their experiences, and where they were in life gave the room an energy that was purely indescribable. From my point of view, the most rewarding piece of the entire experience was seeing how all of these women have made such a difference in so many different aspects of life. Their stories were all so unique, and their passions reflected the paths they chose to pursue.

As the interviews progressed, this was highlighted with not only the experiences that these women chose to share, but with the interview

questions that each individual found most valuable and wished to highlight. Each story was unique to the individual and each story complemented the personality of the sister who shared it.

Ultimately, this experience for me can be summed up with one sentence that Sister Theresa Kane stated in her interview: "You may not be Sisters of Mercy, but you are women

of Mercy." This really hit home for me, because even just one weekend with these women showed just how much we can do to make a difference, regardless of the path of life we choose to pursue. We all have unique and individual interests and talents that these women exemplified, and if we can put them to use in a constructive and endearing way, then what more can we ask for?

Interested in contributing to the Lion's Tale?

e-mail
lions_tale@georgian.edu

Don't forget to visit
www.lionstale.gcublogs.org

Op-Ed pieces are written at the discretion of the writer and are strictly opinion based. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the Lion's Tale, the Lion's Tale staff, or Georgian Court University.

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Jersey: Born and Raised

By Patty Nelson
Staff Writer

New Jersey is horribly misunderstood, and you can't really blame people; our reputation was reshaped after a group of overly tanned misfits ran wild on our beaches for television entertainment.

While I indulge in the pleasures of Jersey Shore re-runs, I also am a Central Jersey native. I know that the show is not a representation of my home state, or more importantly—the people of New Jersey.

However, anyone outside of New Jersey may not have anything else to go by. Cue... the Jersey Shore stigma.

It's not like people thought New Jersey was so awesome

before. We've always been criticized for something. Let's revisit a few New Jersey stereotypes:

We don't pump our own gas

We must be spoiled and/or lazy. Or, maybe it's just a state law.

We "tawk" funny

Or perhaps you just say it wrong.

New Jersey is synonymous with "smelly"

News flash: Garbage smells, people with poor hygiene smell. It exists everywhere! Not just in New Jersey!

Worst of all—no left turns

Oh, the inhumanity!

You see what I'm saying? We're hopeless.

Whilst we may have our drawbacks, there's nothing like growing up on the Jersey Shore. I have such fond memories of summers in Seaside Park, building sandcastles by day and eating Kohr's famous ice cream twist by night.

It's hard to describe this lifestyle, but if you grew up in Central Jersey you'd understand. We're fairly simple folks: we value family, summer, and the beach that is never too far—no matter where you are.

We locals appreciate our place of origin, and we find that no matter where we travel to, we always have New Jersey in our heart and on our mind. Jersey is forever home.

GEORGIAN COURT NEWS

Tree Lighting Cont.



Along with McCarthy's performance, audience members were treated to musical performances by Santa's Helpers and the Voices of Mercy, along with a ballet number performed by four of Georgian Court's dance majors.

Santa's Helpers consisted of members of Georgian Court's church choir, while the Voices of Mercy is a newly formed Georgian Court acapella group. The left picture shows Santa's Helpers, while the right shows two of the dance majors during their performance.

Photos by Megan Kelly

Kerry Weber Speaks at Georgian Court Incorporating the Corporal Works of Mercy into Everyday Lives

By Kerrin McCarthy
Contributing Writer

Bringing your boyfriend on a date to the International House of Mercy may seem strange to some, but for Kerry Weber it wasn't.

As a young, single, working woman living in New York City, dating can be hard, particularly for religious people. However, through her new book, Weber was able to prove that it's possible to be religious while still adhering to modern social customs.

On Tuesday, November 18, Weber visited Georgian Court University to describe her personal story and present on

her book "Mercy In The City: How to Feed the Hungry, Give Drink to the Thirsty, Visit the Imprisoned, and Keep Your Day Job."

As described in her book, Weber set out to discover if incorporating acts of mercy into her everyday life was possible.

Weber was a member of the Mercy Volunteer Corps and worked as a special education teacher. In her presentation, she described one of the turning points of her work with the Mercy Volunteer Corps. One day, while celebrating Fat Tuesday by eating pancakes in her apartment with friends, Weber decided that she was going to complete the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy during the 40 days of Lent.

The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy consist of feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, harbouring the harbourless (or sheltering the homeless), visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned, and burying the dead.

Throughout the presentation, Weber used her personal story and own acts of mercy to show how students can incorporate mercy into their everyday lives. A significant portion of her talk was dedicated to her modernization of the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy. In one example, Weber described

how the Corporal Work of feeding the hungry does not necessarily require visiting a soup kitchen; feeding the hungry can be something as simple as making a sandwich for a friend who hasn't eaten that day.

Weber concluded her presentation by saying, "I sit on my bed, lace up my shoes, and assure myself that if the nuns reject me on the basis of my footwear, I don't want anything to do with them anyway." This sentence appears as the first line of her book, and Weber was used it to tie together her entire presentation.

Weber's transitions from topic to topic and the clear passion and enthusiasm in her voice kept the audience intrigued for the entire time. Many of the Georgian Court students and faculty in attendance believed the presentation to be personally uplifting.

"I found everything that she did so inspiring, I'm interested in learning more about the Mercy Volunteer Corps," commented senior Brigid Joyce. Her presentation showed that mercy does not live just within the walls of Georgian Court or just within the Sisters of Mercy. Everyone is called to bring out their own personal education of mercy in everything that they do throughout their lives.

Georgian Court Reaccredited by Middle States Commission

By Megan Kelly
Editor-in-Chief

"As of its November 20, 2014 meeting, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education acted to accept Georgian Court University's Periodic Review Report and to reaffirm GCU's accreditation" stated Associate Provost, Dr. Michael Gross.

According to the Education

"GCU has been accredited continuously since 1922."

Corner®, a guide to reputable education sites and resources, The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is one of three commissions within the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, a regional higher education accrediting agency within the United States.

The MSCHE is responsible for evaluating and accrediting colleges and universities as a whole, not evaluating specific programs within the institution.

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools consists of six regional accred-

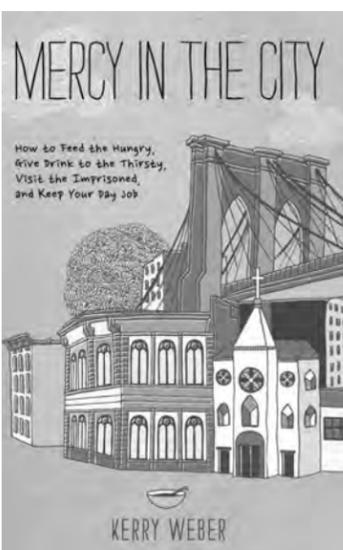
itors, who are each responsible for reviewing institutions in a different part of the country. The Middle States Commission specifically accredits over 500 individual institutions in Washington DC, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Puerto Rico.

Gross explained that every five years, academic institutions are required to submit a comprehensive, lengthy report demonstrating how they meet the Middle States' standards for accreditation.

"The Commission then reads the report and recommendations made about the report by people from other universities, and decides whether or not to reaffirm accreditation" Gross continued.

The recent accreditation of Georgian Court is not necessarily a surprise, owing to the fact that GCU has been accredited continuously since 1922.

"Accreditation is important because without it, students cannot receive federal forms of financial aid such as PELL grants and Stafford loans, and institutions cannot participate in NCAA athletics," Gross concluded.



Weber's book, *Mercy in the City*, was published this past January.

Photo by Alexandria Graziosi

FEATURES

Sister Stories cont.

Cont. from page 1

Sisters of Mercy to take part in the project.

In addition to McCarthy, the student volunteers were senior Megan Kelly, junior Amanda Earle, and sophomore Lisa Gravato.

Over the course of the weekend, each student conducted interviews with the Sisters, through which they learned more about the Sisters' current lives and what led them to religious life.

"I never thought about people not knowing about Mercy," said McCarthy, "so I really

sustain."

Along with sharing their current work with the students and faculty, the Sisters also shared stories about what led them to religious life.

"My parents didn't like the idea," explained Martin, as she discussed telling her parents for the first time that she wanted to join the Sisters of Mercy. "They didn't want me to join but I applied anyway."

Although the stories shared were not all as rebellious, like Martin, many of the Sisters grew up being educated in Catholic high schools and had

common issue of the 20th century. Women were never public, they were anonymous. The Sisters were among the first to be public."

Along with learning about the history of the Sisters who founded their university, the participating students also had the opportunity to reflect on the Corporal Works of Mercy and learn more about the Mercy core values that play such a large role in their educations.

As a Mercy institution, Georgian Court incorporates its five core values of service, integrity, respect, justice, and compassion, into the curriculum. The project not only highlights the life's work of the Sisters, but the university's incorporation of these values on campus as well.

Students will not only be able to learn the stories of these Sisters, but see and hear about how they have impacted their fellow classmates.

"It's important to document the history of specific people," commented Earle. "Not only did we learn, we had the chance to be a part of history by documenting things people wouldn't necessarily have known."

Through the video, GCU hopes to broaden the community's awareness towards the Sisters of Mercy and also inspire students to live out the Corporal Works of Mercy.

While the students and faculty involved had the chance to hear a variety of "Sister Stories" through the project, the opportunity is not limited solely to them.

There are a number of Sisters of Mercy who play crucial roles in Georgian Court's everyday operation, who are willing to share their stories with all curious students.

Religious or not, all Georgian Court students embody



Students involved in the project also got to spend time speaking with each sister individually.

Photo by Alexandria Graziosi



Pictured above, Sister Theresa Kane, RSM was one of the Sisters of Mercy involved in the project.

Photo by Megan Kelly

wanted to help inform people and show them all the amazing things these women are doing."

The Sisters work in a number of fields. Sister Ruth Neely, RSM, works as a nurse practitioner for HIV Aids patients, while Sister Rose Martin, RSM, cofounded and presently directs an education center in Philadelphia for underprivileged children.

"Acts of mercy don't discriminate," commented Neely. "It's like that saying, when you're a nurse on a battlefield you don't ask, you just treat."

As Neely explained, the medical field is full of opportunities to spread the message of mercy. "A good nurse lives out the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy: compassion, presence, reassurance," she added. "We see, we act, we

strong relationships with Sisters prior to joining.

In fact, the Sisters of Mercy are among the most educated in the Catholic community.

After the Sister Formation Movement, a movement created in order to promote the spiritual, intellectual, and professional development of religious women, degrees became required for Sisters of Mercy.

"We had to prove we were going to continue our education after high school," commented Sister Theresa Kane, RSM. "We had to prepare for careers."

Among the Sisters interviewed, Kane spoke the most on the history and achievements of religious women.

"Religious women are never published in history, because women are never published in history," Kane stated. "It was a



Over the course of the weekend, the students put together a compilation of selfies taken with some of the Sisters of Mercy, including President Rosemary Jeffries, RSM, Ph.D.

Photo by Amanda Earle

the Mercy of the university. Though they may not be able to identify it, from the moment students step foot on campus, the compassionate atmosphere is undeniable.

While students do not always realize it, their small acts of kindness, like opening a door or waving hello, are impacting the people around them.

When combined, these small acts all help make up the merciful community that the Sisters of Mercy exemplify.

"We are all called to walk the spiritual path," added Cancienne. "We are called to live in God's goodness, called to be gentle with people and the Earth. We don't always do it perfectly, but we do it."



Senior Kerrin McCarthy had the chance to reconnect with Sister Karen Schneider, who she had met at a Mercy summit in Ireland this past summer.

Photo by Megan Kelly

FEATURES

Retention at GCU

How Georgian Court's Retention Rate Compares

By Nataya Culler
Staff Writer

When choosing a university, high school students must take a number of things into consideration. Academic programs, tuition, distance from home, and campus size are just a few of the factors that students should look into. However, one important factor that is often overlooked is the school's retention rate.

A retention rate, as defined by the federal government and reported on the web site fasfa.ed.gov, is "the percentage of a school's first-time, first-year undergraduate students who continue at that school the next year. For example, a student who studies full-time in the fall semester and keeps on studying in the program in the next fall semester is counted in this rate."

"We're hovering around 70% and the finest institutions in the country are in the nineties."

Officials at most colleges and universities focus on keeping the retention rate high, because keeping students in college increases the number of graduates yearly and allows for higher enrollment.

According to College Navigator, a web site maintained by the federal government that provides statistics related to higher education, Georgian Court University had a 71% first-to-second year retention rate for students who began pursuing a four year degree in the fall of 2012. This means that 71% of students newly enrolled in a four year program

in the fall of 2012 were still enrolled in the university in the fall of 2013.

The six year graduation rate for full time students who began as first-time college students at GCU in the fall of 2007 is 51%. Thirty-six percent of these students transferred from the university before the end of their sixth year, according to College Navigator.

The figures reported above do not include transfer students, who are not considered first year students.

Just under 70% of students who graduated from Georgian Court in the 2013-2014 academic year were transfer students, and 78% of transfer students who entered in 2007 graduated from the university within six years, according to GCU's Fact Book.

ACT.org, the web site of the organization best known for developing the ACT standardized college admissions test, reports a national average 67.3% first-to-second year retention rate for first time students beginning their college careers in fall 2012 at private schools offering bachelor's degrees, and a 69.5% rate for the same student population at private institutions offering master's degrees.

Over the same period, the rates at public institutions are reportedly slightly lower at 64.9% for bachelor's granting institutions and 68.9% for

those offering master's degrees.

Georgian Court's retention rate numbers are above average, but just barely.

"They're lower than I'd like them to be," stated Dr. William Behre, Georgian Court University Provost. "We're

"Georgian Court has a profound effect on everyone who comes here."

hovering around 70% and the finest institutions in the country are in the nineties. I think it would be reasonable for us to have goals in the upper seventies and eighties and push towards the nineties eventually. They're low and they shouldn't be that low."

The question of why students leave is critical in considering what should be done to address the issue. In some instances, it may simply be the case that the school is no longer a good fit for a student. This may include if a student has decided to change majors and GCU does not offer the program the student needs. However, in many cases, the explanation for a student leaving is more complex.

Kathleen Boody, Dean of Student Success, stated that there is no single factor as to why students leave, and that there are a number of possibilities, such as academic issues, financial problems, outside jobs, personal issues, and family issues.

Often, a student's decision to leave is influenced by more than one of these factors. For example, a student who has an outside job that makes it hard for him or her to schedule classes may experience

difficulty keeping up academically, and financial issues may make it impossible for the student to give up the job.

Boody noted that there are groups and other resources available on campus that will reach out to students and help them with the issues that they

face. The Academic Development and Support Center, located on the lower level of the library, offers a range of services, including peer tutoring.

The Counseling Center is open to all students who are dealing with stress or other personal issues.

Students who qualify may also receive help through TRIO – Student Support Services and EOF (Educational Opportunity Fund). This department is located upstairs in the Casino.

Student organizations, such as WILD (Women in Leadership Development) and SGA (the Student Government Association) also have a role in retention, since students involved in extra-curricular activities are often more connected to the university.

"If you are a student who doesn't have one of those connections, particularly our commuter students, I think sometimes you come to campus, take classes, and are struggling a little bit and don't necessarily know what is the next step to take to resolve the problems," said Boody. She added that any student who feels disconnected should take advantage of the services mentioned, or reach out to his or her academic advisor, or a faculty member.

Students had different impressions about what makes their classmates stay at the university, or go elsewhere. A fifth year nursing student who asked to remain anonymous said that the school could do better in their efforts to make students want to stay, and that freshmen often received more attention than upperclassmen. She said she felt that residents are the students in the most need of school outreach, and that commuters are less affected because they are in their own environment.

"I feel that the only people who really want to stay here are the ones who are highly

involved with the university," she stated.

Another student, sophomore Alexandra Gulko-Hyman, feels that students are well taken care of at GCU, which gives them a reason to stay.

"If you say what your problems are to the right people you can get your issues figured out or solved," Gulko-Hyman said. "Most of my friends have returned sophomore year. I feel like most students are happy here. They'll find common ground here."

Even with the current above average retention rate, Dean Boody and Provost Behre have stated that they are working on a plan to keep students in school and to ensure they graduate. They are going to be checking for early indicators that students might be having problems, such as low grades, billing holds, and not completing enough credits.

They also mentioned that they will be working to help freshmen complete 30 credits by the end of their first year, because completing these credits can greatly affect their return rate and should bolster their ability to graduate.

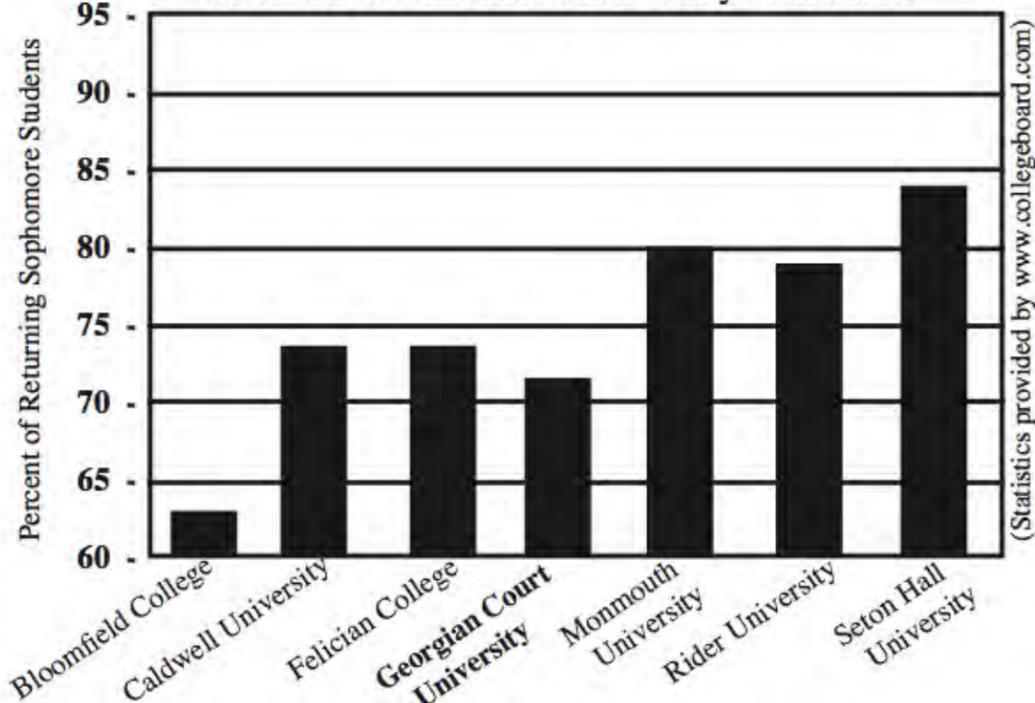
Behre thinks it's important that every freshman has a four year plan related to what they're going to take and when they're going to take it. He explained that the fifth year is the most expensive year as a college student, and if students have a plan to finish within four years they can save themselves thousands.

Boody highlighted the benefits of a supportive environment, such as the one GCU is trying to provide.

"Georgian Court has a profound effect on everyone who comes here," commented Boody. "Even with the student for whom, for whatever reason, it didn't work and they left us, they're doing good things. Our students are going on and at least continuing their education. They're not dropping out and falling off the face of the earth. They're going back to their community college and getting their Associate's Degree, or they're traveling on to another four year school and they're finishing their degree," she continued.

There are many reasons why students do not return to Georgian Court, but for those that do return they're coming back to a place committed to their success.

Retention Rate of Private New Jersey Universities



Yik Yak

New App Offers Outlet for Anonymous Cyber Bullying

By Alexandria Graziosi
Co-Editor

In November 2013, developers Tyler Droll and Brooks Buffington launched Yik Yak, a new social media app that allows users to write and share anonymous posts with other users within a 1.5 mile radius.

Like most social media sites, Yik Yak has received a fair amount of criticism for creating an outlet for cyber-bullying. However, unlike Facebook or Twitter, the app allows users to remain nameless and therefore allows people to speak freely without consequence.

Reports of harassment and inappropriate use of the app grew rapidly. Once schools and school districts began banning the app, developers immediately changed Yik Yak's age rating and hired outside company, Maponics, to redesign the app to prohibit its use near middle schools and high schools.

Because the app was initially designed for college students, its redesign does not prohibit users to post near or on college campuses.

However, due to recent scandals regarding the app, people are beginning to question if the use of Yik Yak should be banned on college campuses as well.

In October, two male students were suspended at Row-

an University when one of them recorded the other having sex with a female student, who was unaware that she was being filmed, and posted the video online. The female student later found out after reading about it on Yik Yak.

Another event that received a great deal of media attention took place at Colgate University, where threats were made against the campus women's center. Following a student run protest against the university's mistreatment of minorities, threats of rape and violence were made on Yik Yak against the residents.

The app has taken significant strides to prevent misuse, such as establishing a list of rules.

The list reads, "1. You do not bully or specifically target other yakkers. 2. You DO NOT bully or specifically target other yakkers. 3. Zero-tolerance policy on posting people's private information. 4. Don't clutter people's feeds with useless or offensive yaks. If you see a useless or offensive yak, make sure you do your part by downvoting or reporting it. 5. If your yaks continue to be reported, you will be suspended. 6. Ride the Yak."

Despite their emphasis on not bullying, university users continue to use the sites anonymity to share gossip and

slander against other students.

While Georgian Court has had no newsworthy events pertaining to Yik Yak, students on campus have fallen victim to anonymous threats and harassment through the app.

"I feel like Yik Yak is a way for cowards to harass someone just to make them feel better about themselves," commented a Georgian Court student who chose to remain anonymous. "I know that my teammates yak about me which hurts me the most. It's easier for someone when they're typing behind a phone."

Despite its initial popular-

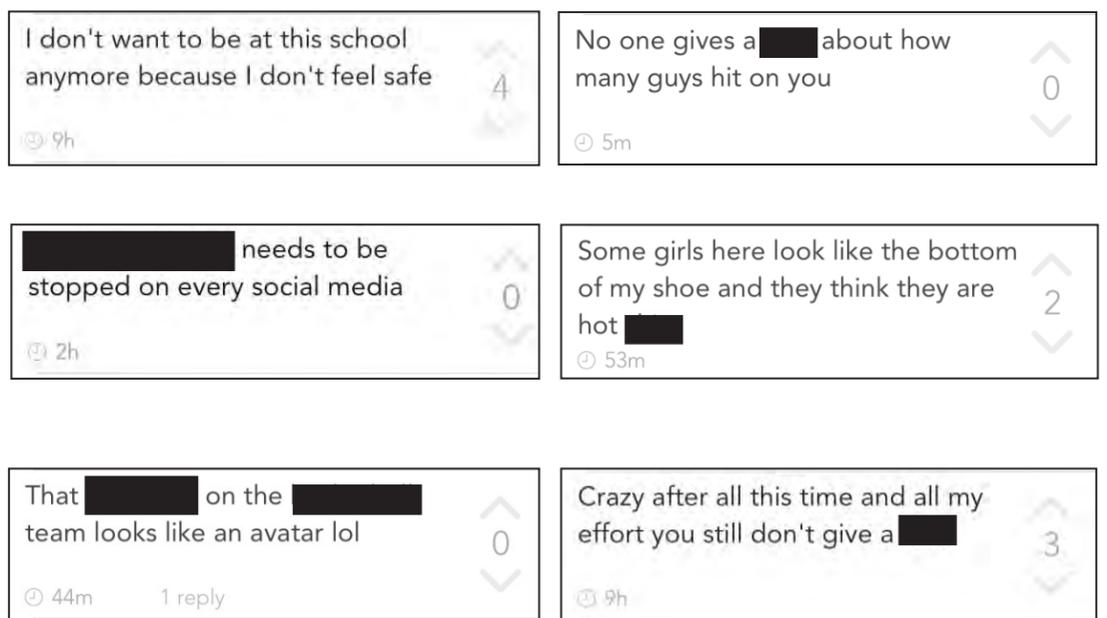
ity, the app has recently fallen from the fifth to the twelfth most popularly downloaded free social networking app on the iTunes app store and continues to receive negative attention in the media.

The app continues to spark debates on whether or not it should be prohibited on college campuses. While many believe it is cowardice and simply an outlet for anonymous gossip, there are those students who believe the app allows users a safe environment to speak truthfully without being judged.

However, with users con-

tinuing to misuse the app by posting offensive and cruel comments about students on campus, the argument for Yik Yak being a safe environment gradually weakens.

"I feel like this app was not thought out well at all," concluded another anonymous student. "I find it hard to believe that the creators did not envision their app being used for anonymous cyber bullying. Personally the most disturbing thing to me is that these people created the app anyway, despite the high risk of bullying that should have been evident."



These are just a few of the hundreds of "Yaks" posted by and about Georgian Court students. While some use Yik Yak to vent their personal frustrations, others clearly use it to target other students. ("Yaks" have been censored for profanity and anonymity)

The Age of Blackboard Georgian Court Transitions from Angel to Blackboard

By Crystal Lees
Staff Writer

As many students and faculty have noticed, there are some changes being made in the learning management system used by Georgian Court University during this semester.

Up until now, the university has been solely using Angel as its main platform for online learning. However, this year Georgian Court is starting the transition to Blackboard Learn.

There are already some classes being offered through Blackboard, and the transition is expected to be complete by the end of the upcoming spring semester.

Angel, the school's current learning management system, or LMS, is owned by Blackboard. Angel is being phased out by the company, and will soon no longer be an option for use.

To aid in making the choice of which learning system should replace Angel, a task force was selected. Many different systems were reviewed, including Canvas, Moodle and others. The top choices of the task force were presented to different faculty members for review. Blackboard received positive feedback from the task force and faculty overall, which was one of the major contributing factors in the choice to switch to that company.

After the decision was made to switch to Blackboard, a committee called the LMS Implementation Task Force was formed. This committee consists of faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students. The committee is designed to help ease the transition to Blackboard.

"I think it's a great switch," said Dr. Mary Chinery, Assis-

tant Provost and a member of the LMS Implementation Task Force.

Chinery, who also served on the task force that helped review LMS options, pointed out that Blackboard is fully updated and integrated, which means that it can handle many more things than Angel did. Film clips, narrated PowerPoints, discussion boards, and other interactive features stand out in particular. An added bonus to Blackboard is that, unlike Angel, there are more regular system updates.

This fall, a number of faculty members agreed to be mentors and early adopters of the Blackboard system. The early adopters went through a series of summer classes which trained them to use and manage Blackboard, and pilot classes were implemented by these professors in the fall.

Reviews show positive feed-

back for this new system after the original implementation. However, there is expected to be an even bigger pilot in the spring semester, in order to gain a wider range of feedback. Blackboard is expected to be fully integrated around May 25, 2015, when GCU's contract with Angel ends.

One advantage of choosing Blackboard is the fact that the university is able to run both systems, Angel and Blackboard, at the same time.

"This meant that faculty who wanted to stay on Angel could do so, and that the faculty who really wanted to move to Blackboard could," explained Chinery.

Student training and videos are planned for future semesters, in order to help new and returning students to navigate the new system. Additionally, existing Angel groups will not be lost as a result of the switch

to Blackboard since groups are transferable from one system to another.

The Blackboard contract also provides a product called "Collaborate" so that professors can create live interactive classes and video podcasts.

Blackboard is also highly compatible with iPads and iPhones. For students interested, there is a free Blackboard app available through the app store. This app requires users to log in with their school user name, and provides a list of courses, assignments, discussion boards, updated course and assignment grades as professors post them, and access to all of the same content that the online platform provides.

Overall the switch is anticipated to run very smoothly in the upcoming months and full integration is looked forward to by many different faculty members and students alike.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Concert Band Performs Annual Christmas Show

By Grace Talian
Contributing Writer

On Monday, December 1, Georgian Court University's Concert Band hosted their annual Christmas Concert, located in the Casino.

This performance, conducted by Director of Bands, Wilbur Wittemann, was comprised of a compilation of traditional Christmas songs and medleys, including "Sleigh Ride," "Christmas Lights," and "The Polar Express."

"Being the fourth and final Christmas concert I have at-

tended during my time here at Georgian Court, I can honestly say that it was the best one thus far," commented senior Kerrin McCarthy. "I was very impressed with their performance."

The Georgian Court Concert Band is comprised of current Georgian Court students and faculty, Georgian Court alumni, and is also open to the public.

Wittemann also serves as one of Georgian Court's music

professors, as well as serving as the director for the Georgian Court Jazz Band.

Currently, Concert Band is looking for new members interested in contributing their time and musical talents.

Any interested candidates can contact Wittemann through Georgian Court's music department.

The band practices one night a week and rehearsals are located on the Georgian Court campus.



The Concert Band performance took place in the Casino.
Photo courtesy of Grace Talian

The Top Ten Ranking of the All-Time Best Christmas Features

10. Home Alone
9. Miracle on 34th Street
8. Frosty the Snowman
7. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
6. The Year Without a Santa Claus
5. How the Grinch Stole Christmas
4. The Santa Clause
3. A Charlie Brown Christmas
2. A Christmas Story
1. Elf



Winter Events

Wednesday, January 21
Bubble Ball
Casino; 11:00am - 4:00pm

Friday, January 23
Club GCU
10:00pm - 1:00am

Tuesday, January 27
Mass of the Holy Spirit
University Chapel; 2:00pm

Wednesday, January 28
Comedian Rip Michaels
Little Theater; 5:00pm

Monday, January 29
Winter Club Day
10:00am - 4:00pm

FOUNTAIN SPRAY

OPEN TO
STUDENTS, FACULTY & STAFF

Five submissions per person!

750 word count for literary submissions.

All submissions must follow
MERCY CORE VALUES.

LITERARY & ART SUBMISSIONS TO:
Caitlin Roman
cr03093@georgian.edu

drawing
painting
photography
poetry
Short-story
drama

ART LITERARY

SUBMIT BY JANUARY 26, 2015

SPORTS

Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Expands Philanthropic Efforts

By Megan Kelly
Editor-in-Chief

Every year, Georgian Court University's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) works to improve the degree of service, leadership, and school spirit of the athletes around campus. Georgian Court's SAAC is comprised of a five member Executive Board, as well as two representatives from each of the twelve teams of the Athletic Department.

In the past, SAAC has been responsible for organizing the athletes' participation in Georgian Court events such as the Crop Walk for Hunger, Homecoming Weekend, and the Thanksgiving Basket Drive. However, SAAC has also been responsible for organizing original service projects, such as the Adopt-A-Family initiative, the Learning with the Lions program, and the department's contribution towards the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The Adopt-A-Family initiative is a project in which each team is assigned a family in need, with a list of items they want for Christmas. Each member of a team is respon-

sible for an item or two on this list, so that the teams can help give these families an easier time around the holidays. This year, the initiative has evolved slightly, so that each team is assigned a child instead of a family. These children are then receiving the accumulation of contributions from an entire team of people for their Christmas.

"I really like focusing on one child this year," commented Cross Country SAAC representative, Laura Amdur. "I know that one child is going to get everything that they wanted and that it's because of us. In years past, I felt we weren't able to focus enough on each individual member of a family."

The Learning with the Lions program takes place over the span of the entire academic year. With this program, a group of student-athletes visit the Oak Street Elementary School in Lakewood every Friday morning. Once there, the athletes interact with the children, play learning games, and read stories, all based on that particular morning's lesson.

"I think that Learning with the Lions is the most important activity that we engage in as a SAAC and an Athletic Department," commented SAAC President, Amanda Cathcart. "The relationships that we make with the children and the ability to give

"The relationships that we make with the children and the ability to give them positive role models to look up to are imperative."

them positive role models to look up to are imperative."

As a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) conference, the Central Atlantic Collegiate Conference (CACC) has a strong affiliation with the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Each team in the conference focuses a large part of its philanthropy towards raising funds to help grant wishes for the children in the program.

To help contribute to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, SAAC has often hosted the

Gatorade Pong tournament, donating all proceeds towards the cause.

For the past three years, SAAC has also participated in Macy's National Believe Campaign. During the holiday season, Macy's department store hosts this annual campaign in

which they donate one dollar to the Make-A-Wish Foundation for every letter that comes into one of their department stores.

However, for every letter that comes in on National Believe Day, the store donates two dollars. Last year, SAAC collected 3,035 letters, making an indirect donation of \$6,070 towards Make-A-Wish.

More recently, SAAC has launched a partnership with the Atlantic Coast Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center in Lakewood.

Once a month, athletes visit the center, deliver hand-made seasonal crafts to residents, and engage in different activities with them. This initiative started last spring, after Cathcart contacted their management staff about visiting the residents for Valentine's Day.

"The ability to brighten the residents' day and take time out of our schedules to give back is extremely important in today's fast-paced world," Cathcart added. "The joy that we bring to each resident and the smiles on their faces is priceless."

As the semester draws to a close, SAAC prepares for projects that are being organized for the spring semester. While many of these activities have taken place in past years, this year's SAAC is looking to expand Georgian Court's impact on the community as much as possible.

"With the majority of SAAC being seniors this year, it's crucial that the leadership we exemplify inspires future leaders to continue GCU's tradition of service," Cathcart concluded.

Final Fall Season Records

Men's Cross Country

7th place finish in conference



Men's Soccer

Overall	Conference
3-12-2	3-4-1



Tennis

Overall	Conference
3-10	1-6



Women's Cross Country

3rd place finish in conference



Women's Soccer

Overall	Conference
10-6-4	7-4-1



Volleyball

Overall	Conference
20-14	15-4

