

**GEORGIAN
COURT
UNIVERSITY**

SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS & DIGITAL MEDIA



SBDM 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

■ MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and Partners,

I am delighted to present the School of Business & Digital Media's Annual Report, showcasing a year marked by exceptional achievements, innovative initiatives, and impactful collaborations. Over the past year, we have strengthened our efforts to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional success. Our focus on career readiness ensures that our graduates are well-equipped to thrive in their chosen fields.

This past year, we've enhanced our educational offerings with new initiatives and expanded industry partnerships, providing our students with valuable practical experiences and preparing them for successful careers.

Our commitment to collaboration has strengthened our programs and broadened the scope of our students' educational experiences through dynamic projects, internships, and professional networking opportunities. We've also continued to innovate our curriculum, introducing new courses that incorporate the latest trends and technologies.

This report celebrates the remarkable accomplishments of our students and alumni, whose success reflects the high-quality education and support provided by our school. Our faculty and staff have also made significant contributions through research, scholarship, and community engagement, underscoring their dedication to excellence and impact.

As we reflect on the past year, we are inspired by the progress we have made and the bright future that lies ahead. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and partners for their unwavering dedication and support. Together, we will continue to empower, engage, and innovate, ensuring the success of our students and the advancement of our mission.



DEAN JENNIFER J. EDMONDS



■ REAFFIRMATION OF ACBSP ACCREDITATION

The ACBSP Board of Commissioners of the Baccalaureate/Graduate Degree Commission voted to reaffirm the [ACBSP Business Program Accreditation](#). This means that all GCU business programs are accredited by ACBSP. The business programs at Georgian Court University were first accredited by ACBSP in 1994. The next Self-Study will be in 2033.

“This reaffirmation of accreditation speaks to the quality of our business programs and our focus on quality teaching and student outcomes,” said Jennifer J. Edmonds, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Business & Digital Media. “The School of Business & Digital Media is proud to uphold the university’s mission of providing a comprehensive liberal arts education in the Roman Catholic tradition.” [Click to read more.](#)

OUR MISSION

The mission of the School of Business & Digital Media at Georgian Court University is to empower our students to engage and succeed in a rapidly changing world.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

RESEARCH WITH FACULTY

Alyssa Herrera '24 worked with Dr. Jeongwon Choi, assistant professor in sport management, and presented a paper and poster [*Bridge the Gaps: Exploring Student Athletes' Perceptions of College Experiences and Establishing Strategic Plans at NACC Division II Institutions*](#) at the College Sport Research Institute conference in Columbia, South Carolina in March 2024.

Six SBDM students presented three posters at GCU's Academic Excellence Celebration in April 2024 under the mentorship of Dr. Jeongwon Choi.

- Robbie Babson, Nasir McLean, Leah Snisky, and Katherine Clemente presented *Exploring Cultures: A Comparative Analysis of D1, D2, and D3 Athletics*.
- Alyssa Herrera presented *Building Bridges: Understanding Student - Athletes' Perspectives on College Experiences and Formulating Strategic Plans in NACC Division II Institutions*.
- Alec Valle presented *Strategic Fundraising: Georgian Court Track & Field 5k Fundraiser*.



Valeska Yaninas, MBA '24 worked with Dr. Michael Pawlish, assistant professor in business administration, and presented a poster [*Technology Firms Today: The Association between Organizational Culture and a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal*](#) at the Eastern Academy of Management conference in Providence, Rhode Island in May 2024.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

Rod Colón '95 '17, double alum and current Board of Trustees Member, was [GCU's Commencement speaker](#) at the undergraduate ceremony on May 9, 2024.

Commencement speaker, Rodrigo "Rod" Colón, Jr., '95, '17, a renowned recruitment, networking, and career coach, shared amusing stories about his life, failures, successes, and GCU's role in shaping his life path. "GCU wasn't a place of judgment, but opportunity...the entire community provided the support and guidance that propelled me forward."



CONGRATULATIONS TO STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENTS AND HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTEES



2024 DELTA MU DELTA INDUCTEES

Priscilla Alicea
Helena Billero
Michael Bronner Jr.
Sebastian Derflinger
Sierra Emmett
Emma Gildea
Sotirios Gkosdis
Kaitlyn Hajisafari
Hanna Hale
Amber Mason

Aniekan Ntia
Isabel Raimondi
James Sanford
Honorary: Dr. Jeongwon Choi

2024 LAMBDA PI ETA INDUCTEES

Kyle Dodge
Kaitlin Halpin
Audrey Moran
Kirsten Nardini
Carley Polchak

SBDM faculty grant these academic awards and honors in recognition of outstanding ability and achievement in the student's major.

CONVOCATION AWARDS

Ava Ott - *Graphic Design and Multimedia program's Design Leadership Award*

Courtney Fenty - *Digital Communication Leadership Award*

Erika Carrasquillo - *Delta Mu Delta Epsilon Zeta Chapter Book Award*

Helena Victoria Billero - *Robert A. Panten Award in Accounting*

Jack Milne - *Academic Excellence Award in Finance*

Jimmy Woo - *Academic Excellence Award in Marketing*

Kevin Tombs - *Excellence Award in Digital Design*

Valerie Kaufmann - *Sister Muriel Lynch Award in Business*

COMMENCEMENT AWARDS TO GRADUATES

Carley Polchak – *Honorable Mention Award in Digital Communication*

Courtney Fenty – *First Award in Digital Communication*

Jack Milne – *Honorable Mention Award in Finance*

Jillian Romero – *First Award in Graphic Design and Multimedia*

Jimmy Woo – *First Award in Marketing*

Kaitlin Halpin – *Honorable Mention Award in Communication and Digital Marketing*

Kevin Tombs – *First Award in Digital Design*

Kevin Tombs – *Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission Award in Graphic/Digital Design*

Kyle Dodge – *First Award in Communication and Digital Marketing*

Michael Sciacca – *Honorable Mention Award in Marketing*

Olivia Szajdecki – *First Award in Business Administration*

Sierra Emmett – *Honorable Mention Award in Business Administration*

Sotirios Gkosdis – *First Award in Finance*

Tallen Smith – *First Award in Accounting*

Tallen Smith – *SBDM Executive Advisory Council Emerging Leader Award (UG)*

Valeska Yaninas – *First Award in MBA*

Valeska Yaninas – *SBDM Executive Advisory Council Emerging Leader Award (GR)*



SBDM CAPSTONE PROJECTS

For the 2024 [Graphic Design Senior Show](#), four students showcased their print and screen-based work exploring a unique health-related subject, each under the direction of Dr. Jinsook Kim. The chosen themes included mental health concerns, and the projects were presented across various platforms, both print and digital. The areas of study encompassed infographics, package designs, advertising posters, 2D animations, and website designs.



For the **2023 Communication & Digital Marketing Capstone**, students acted as consultants to seven organizations and presented their marketing and communication campaigns during the annual showcase in August 2023. *Artigas Portrait Artist* | *The Connection, Inc.* | *Inspire Life* | *Encounter Christ Global Fellowship* | *Beacon Wealth Partners* | *Family Promise of the Jersey Shore* | *Family Resource Associates, Inc.*

CAREER CONNECTIONS



Three **#CareerConnections** networking-style receptions were held in Spring 2024 and provided students with an opportunity to 'meet and greet' with area professionals from 18 firms throughout Monmouth and Ocean County. Events were held in the areas of [finance and accounting](#), [exercise science and sport management](#), and general business.



COMPANIES THAT HIRED THE MOST SBDM STUDENTS AS INTERNS OVER THE PAST 5 YEARS

Cara Solutions
 Central Jersey Pools, Patio & More
 Central Jersey Tax Services
 Commvault
 Epinium
 ERA American Towne Realty
 First Financial Federal Credit Union
 Go4Hire*
 Holman Frenia Allison P.C.
 Jersey Mikes Corporation
 Jersey Shore Blue Claws*

MJH Life Sciences*
 Nicholas Pools
 Northwestern Mutual
 Opsin Eye Care
 Reborn
 Salted Gems
 Smashing Graphic Games Studio
 Telegraph Hill Records
 Valiont
 Withum*

*These firms employed SBDM students as interns during 2023-2024.



This year's **Annual Celebration of Entrepreneurship** was a pop-up shop showcasing women entrepreneurs in the region. The diverse marketplace featured eight vendors with an array of stunning jewelry, skin care essentials, wellness coaches, captivating books from talented authors, sweets, fragrances, etc.

Cella Gold

Empowering You Health and Wellness Coaching

The Canary Closet

Lucy & Mr. Magee, Author

Bijoux + Spice

Dantoni Wellness LLC

Keep Yourself Smelling Sweet

The Haht Company

The Wonderful World Of Crystals

Touchstone Crystal



Dr. Jeongwon Choi and the Sport Management program sponsored site visits to four sports stadiums in the region during the fall and spring semesters, including: Jersey Shore BlueClaws, Philadelphia Phillies, New York Red Bulls, and MetLife Stadium for students to experience facility tours, opening nights, career nights, etc.



OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT



The SBDM held its second annual **Lion's Den Pitch & Innovation Competition** on Thursday, April 18, 2024 eleven teams from five area high schools participated in the competition – Barnegat,

Lakewood, Manchester, St. John Vianney, and Toms River South – and pitched their business ideas to address at least one of the Sisters of Mercy Critical Concerns. Many teams pitched ideas that addressed Earth and the environment; others addressed immigration, non-violence, and women. This year's competition was sponsored by Withum, Aramark, New Jersey Natural Gas, and Stark & Stark Associates.



LECTURE IN LEADERSHIP



The SBDM hosted the second annual endowed **Sr. Diane Dzumbrowski Lecture in Leadership** in September 2023 featuring Eric LeGrand. Eric inspired attendees to not be afraid to be vulnerable and reach out for help if they needed it. He also pushed students to work hard for the things they really want. Eric's story of #bELieve and resilience hit home for so many, and his words inspired us all!



SBDM & STUDY ABROAD

- Drs. Kathy Marino and Deborah Kennard, assistant professor of nursing, traveled to Aruba with six students to learn about [Healthcare and Sustainability in Aruba](#) over Spring Break 2024.
- Dr. Marci Mazzarotto and Professor Kristen Wedlock, assistant professor of writing, took seven GCU students and alum abroad in May 2024 for the [Film & Literature in Ireland](#) program, designed to immerse students into the Mercy heritage by exploring Irish sociocultural history through the lens of film and literature and offered a connection to both the Mercy International Centre, as well as University College, Dublin.
- Drs. Michael Pawlish and Elissa Cutter, assistant professor of religious studies & theology, took GCU students abroad in June 2024 for the [Business, Religion, & History in Paris](#) program, where students explored how historical and contemporary ethical questions related to business and society are affected by the French context.

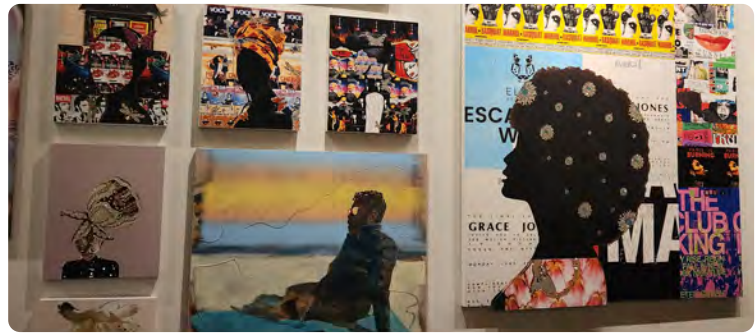
CAMPUS COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

- In service to the **M. Christina Geis Gallery**, Dr. Marci Mazzarotto curated a solo photography exhibition for Sr. Janice Edwards entitled Monhegan, Whence Light Comes into the Soul, which ran from November to December 2023.
- **Media Literacy** workshops were co-hosted by Dr. Marci Mazzarotto, assistant professor in digital communication, and Seth Wilder in the Library spanning the following topics: The Key to Critical Thinking in November 2023 and Media & Information Literacy Crossover in February 2024.
- **Storytelling at the Studio** sessions were hosted by Dr. Marci Mazzarotto spanning the following topics: Basics of Telling a Good Story in October 2023 and How to Tell a Great Story in March 2024. The March session was co-hosted with Christine Stevenson in the Library.
- The **Mercy on Film Screening Series**, a collaborative series curated by the Communication and English departments with Drs. Marci Mazzarotto and Pamela Rader held two installments: Gather by Sanjay Rawal (2020) in October 2023 and The River and the Wall by Ben Masters (2019) in March 2024, which was part of Critical Concerns Week.
- Junior and senior graphic design students were mentored by Dr. Jinsook Kim, associate professor of graphic design & multimedia, through the Special Topics II and Typography II courses in the Graphic Design program in Spring 2024 and created visual demonstrations for the Critical Concerns Week keynote presentation. The students produced posters to explore “[Breaking Boundaries](#)” in unique visual and multimedia ways.

FACULTY & STAFF EXCELLENCE

KUDOS

- Dr. Ellen Bernhard was appointed Punk Scholars Network US president in August 2023.
- Dr. Marci Mazzarotto founded the **Bread & Roses Film Festival**, a female-centric non-profit film festival in New Jersey; Dr. Mazzarotto serves as the executive director. The inaugural festival took place in October 2023 in Asbury Park, New Jersey.



- Dean Jennifer Edmonds was appointed to the Board for the Northern Ocean Habitat for Humanity in January 2024.
- Dr. Kim has been appointed as an external reviewer for the quinquennial review of the B.A. in Digital Communication program at the University of Baltimore.
- Dr. Jeongwon Choi served as a faculty fellow in the Equitable Pedagogy Institute for 2023-2024. In service to the EPI, Dr. Choi presented Creating an Engaging Environment Experiential Learning Opportunities at GCU in April 2024.
- Dr. Michael Pawlish was nominated by a student-athlete for going above and beyond in providing a wonderful educational experience and received the Most Valuable Professor distinction from the GCU Athletic Department in February of 2024.
- Dr. Jeongwon Choi has been recognized as Professor of the Year at GCU Student's Choice Awards in May 2024.

CAMPUS GRANT ACTIVITY

- Dr. Marci Mazzarotto, along with Mike Gross, Christine Stevenson, Paul Cappucci, Jeff Schaffer, Lori Thomas, and Caitlin Connelly, is on the NetVue CIC Reframing Institutional Saga grant, which is a \$40,000 award to GCU in 2023-2024. Dr. Mazzarotto will manage the video production process of all storytelling elements of the grant over the next two years.
- Dean Jennifer Edmonds is the lead on the Some College No Degree grant, which is a \$100,000 award to GCU. The grant funds reenrollment and reengagement strategies aimed at making higher education more inclusive for individuals with some college experience but no degree. Initiatives include enhanced financial aid and merit awards, stipends to bolster retention and graduation rates, and the development and improvement of online courses.
- Drs. Michael Pawlish & Jeongwon Choi were awarded a total of \$7,500 in summer research, travel, and mini-grant awards during 2023-2024.

DR. BERTRAM OKPOKWASILI

The Board of Trustees at GCU has voted to confer the rank of **Professor Emeritus** of Business Administration to Dr. Bertram Okpokwasili, an honor in recognition of his service and dedication to the University. In May, faculty and staff gathered to celebrate his 20+ year tenure at GCU.



NEW THIS YEAR! Meet your major

Incoming students visited the Farley porch to meet SBDM faculty and staff at New Student Orientation.



NEW THIS YEAR: Curriculum Enhancements

- The **Storytelling Studio** began to be used for class projects in the Media Production and Visual Communication courses in Fall 2023 and was officially part of the curriculum in the Digital Field Production course in Spring 2024.
- The Digital Communication and Sport Management programs worked together to create the **Sports Media Minor**, launching in Fall 2024. The Sports Media interdisciplinary minor blends the fundamentals of sport management and communication, including media, principles of sport management, marketing, writing, and public relations.

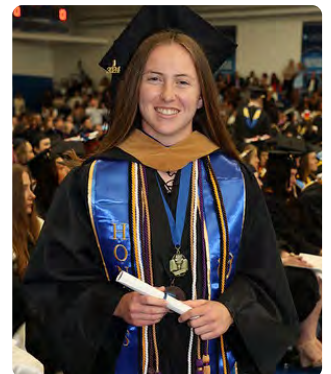
THANK YOU TO 2023-2024 SBDM SUPPORTERS & CORPORATE PARTNERS

Without the generosity, time, and talents of the following individuals and organizations, many of the SBDM Programs would not have been possible!

Alicia Smith	Jersey Shore BlueClaws
Amanada Warner	Kelly Mulvaney
Andrew Maggs	Lauren Holton
Aramark Dining	Mary Brennan
Aramark Service Master Facility Services	Matthew Manfra
Artigas Portrait Artist	Melissa Halk
Beacon Wealth Partners	MetLife Stadium
Blue Moon Estate Sales	Michael Clay
Caregiver Volunteers of NJ	Michael Pawlish
Courtney Marcucci	Nancy Blaustein
Danielle Calabro	Natalie Adis
Danielle Joseph	New Jersey Devils
Denise Wiseman, M.B.A., CPA '84	New Jersey Natural Gas
Dr. & Mrs. James Elmore	New York Red Bulls
Dr. Jim Carroll, D.B.A., CPA	OceanFirst Bank
Eileen Eilenberger '65	Pete Collins
Ellavoz Impact Capital	Philadelphia Phillies
Encounter Christ Global Fellowship	ProCare Rehabilitation, LLC
Enstar Group	Ram Hegde
Express Employment	Ross Campbell
Family Promise of the Jersey Shore	SETS Hybrid Training
Family Resource Associates, Inc.	Smolin
Inspire Life	Stark & Stark Associates
Jacqueline Shea	TD Bank, N.A.
Jamie Scott	The Connection, Inc.
Jennifer Edmonds, Ph.D.	Township of Lakewood
Jennifer Safeer	Underground Strength Gym
	WithumSmith & Brown, C.P.A

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2024!

SBDM Faculty & Staff send our most heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2024 - we know you will do GREAT things!



Our approach includes a commitment to high-quality academic programs, opportunities for within-School and campus-wide development and leadership opportunities, and career exploration through experiential immersion. Make your gift today, and together, we extend the reach of our programming and the impact on our students.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Accounting
Business Administration
Communication
Digital Design
Finance
Graphic Design
Health Information Management
Marketing
Sport Management

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Integrated Marketing Communication
Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)

Let us know how we can create opportunities for you and the SBDM together. Contact the School of Business and Digital Media directly at sbdm@georgian.edu.

Support SBDM Students Today

 Instagram

 LinkedIn

 Website

GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & DIGITAL MEDIA