Excitement continues building on the Georgia Gwinnett campus as students, faculty and staff watch the college’s new facilities take shape during the final months of construction. On their way to classes, students stop and stare at the progress being made on the campus construction sites. Staff members proudly describe the facilities to campus visitors and new hires. GGC President Daniel J. Kaufman regularly escorts guests to view the changing campus landscape from the best vantage point: a west-facing, third-floor window of GGC’s signature building.

“Wow, I had no idea all this was happening back here,” is the usual response from guests. Continuing to rise in visibility from Highway 316, the campus is growing dramatically in every conceivable way. Residence halls for 1,000 students, a 91,000 square-foot Library and Learning Center and a 79,000 square-foot Student Center are set to open for the 2010 fall semester. On the horizon are a new Science and Technology Building, athletic fields and more.

Groups of students, faculty, staff and guests recently got a sneak peak at the new buildings during hard hat tours and topping-out celebrations. During spring semester, students attended housing information sessions by the dozens, and began applying for spaces in the residence halls. As spring arrived, landscaping began appearing outside the buildings, and new parking lots were swathed in a layer of new asphalt. Construction workers disappeared from the rooftops and exterior.

Georgia Gwinnett prepares for history-making transition

This graph compares GGC’s first-year student retention rates with those of other USG state colleges and universities.

GGC achieves impressively high student retention rates

One of the most important success measures in higher education is the rate of first-year student retention. Closely related are measurements of student progression toward a degree, and graduation rates. Within the University System of Georgia (USG), universities perform better than state colleges when it comes to these measurements. Access institutions tend to have the lowest rates. However, Georgia Gwinnett College is breaking that pattern, achieving retention rates that surpass those of USG colleges and are on par with those of USG state universities.

“Each student’s educational needs are unique, but all of our students have one thing in common—they are doing well in the affordable, innovative, educational environment pioneered by Georgia Gwinnett,” said President Daniel J. Kaufman.

In a presentation to a special committee of the USG Board of Regents, Kaufman explained how Georgia Gwinnett’s educational “experiment” is working. He exhibited the graph at left, which illustrates how GGC stacks up with other USG institutions.
GGC fares well as 2010 Session comes to a close

Despite a tough and continuing economic climate in Georgia, Georgia Gwinnett came away from the 2010 Legislative Session with $16.6 million in state funding for fiscal year 2011 to hire additional faculty and to pay for needed operations. This figure represents a $1.2 million increase from the final fiscal year 2010 budget.

The Georgia legislature also approved $7 million in construction bonds for new laboratories to accommodate GGC’s increasing enrollment. The state budget containing these funds now proceeds to the Governor’s desk for his consideration and approval.

“We are grateful to the Gwinnett legislative delegation which served as a united front on behalf of GGC. We especially thank Don Balfour in the Senate, and House members Donna Sheldon and Len Walker for spearheading the efforts on behalf of the delegation. These leaders worked diligently with the Senate and House leadership to keep our funding in the budget throughout the budget process,” GGC President Daniel J. Kaufman said. “We would not have been successful without them and their efforts.”

Gordon Harrison, vice president for Advancement at GGC said that while the process was especially complicated this year because of the difficult economic times, the college came away a winner.

“There is much to be thankful for as we grow to 5,000 students next fall. It truly was a pleasure to see the support and engagement of our elected officials,” he said.

Harrison noted the exceptional community support that helped Georgia Gwinnett succeed in the session.

“There was broad and unified support from the Gwinnett County Commission, the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, and from the GGC Foundation Board of Trustees,” Harrison said. “It was gratifying to see all of our supporters come together to make good things happen for their college.”

Mentorship benefit is focus of new video

Students and faculty share their perspectives on mentorship in a new video posted on Georgia Gwinnett’s YouTube channel. Featuring several students paired with their faculty mentors, the video explores how mentoring differs from advising, and how it impacts the student/faculty relationship.

“Mentoring is finding out what matters to students, what interests them – what they need help on,” says Dr. Jan Wunder, assistant professor of English.

In the video, student Anthony Dyle explains how a non-inspiring high school experience led to his dropping out of school. After later getting his GED, he decided to attend GGC. He then describes his surprise when a faculty member called him before classes even started.

“This is a great place to go simply because people care,” Dyle said.

Student Rory Jones describes appreciation for GGC’s access to faculty.

“Almost all of my professors I’ve been able to talk to – and even just walking down the hall or eating lunch with them … that’s just never happened at any other place I’ve been,” he said.

“This video gives viewers a taste of what makes GGC different, and why our model of education is working,” said Stan Proczewski, vice president of Academic and Student Affairs. “Georgia Gwinnett’s commitment to mentorship and student engagement is key to our success in retention.”

To see the video, go to www.youtube.com/georgiagwinnett or do a search on the YouTube Web site for, “Mentoring at GGC.”

**GGC achieves high retention rates: continued from page 1**

These data are more impressive considering that as an access institution, some of GGC’s students are the least prepared for college. In addition, 37 percent work at least 21 hours a week, compared to the national average of 13 percent. About 36 percent require learning support. These factors usually inhibit retention, progression and graduation rates.

“Once students choose to come to GGC, they stay at GGC,” Kaufman said. “More importantly, they stay in school.”

The graph at lower right illustrates that GGC students who transfer to other USG institutions stay in school at a very high level, again either surpassing or comparing closely to intra-system transfers from elsewhere in the USG.

“This is exactly what we set out to achieve at Georgia Gwinnett. This college, and its students, are succeeding.” —Daniel J. Kaufman

These data are from academic years 2007-08 and 2008-09, when Georgia Gwinnett only offered four majors and many students planned to take introductory courses at GGC and then transfer to a school that had their majors. Instead, most of them stayed.

Now that the college offers 12 majors and 40 areas of study, the number of students who stay should increase.

This pattern is projected to continue in subsequent years, with GGC’s retention rates and in-system transfer rates comparable to USG state universities and surpassing USG state colleges by similar margins.

Georgia Gwinnett is also on track to achieve some very high graduation rates, projected to best the national average.

Other data confirming that Georgia Gwinnett’s educational approach is working come from the students themselves. In 2008 and 2009 surveys at colleges nationwide, students ranked GGC in the top 10 percent nationally in student/faculty interaction, active and collaborative learning, supportive campus environment and enriching educational experiences—key features of GGC’s approach.

“This is exactly what we set out to achieve at Georgia Gwinnett,” said Kaufman. “This college, and its students, are succeeding.”

The challenge for Georgia Gwinnett is maintaining this pattern of high retention and its corresponding progression and graduation rates as the college continues its rapid growth. The college’s student population has grown dramatically each year since it opened its doors in 2006 with 118 students. In fact, enrollment has even increased with the start of each spring semester, adding to the growth curve.

The total enrollment for 2009-10 was about 3,400. With 5,000 expected this fall, and up to 8,000 in 2011, the college will experience tremendous change.

However, Kaufman is confident that Georgia Gwinnett’s model will continue to be effective.

“We are hiring faculty at a rate to keep up with our enrollment,” he said. “And we are hiring faculty with the same commitment to the GGC vision as the outstanding faculty already on staff.”

This graph indicates that first-year students who leave GGC stay in school, and within the USG system, at a high rate.
U.S. Senator Jack Reed speaks at 2010 Spring commencement

U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) gave the keynote address to 69 Georgia Gwinnett students who graduated at the May 28 spring commencement ceremony. These students bring the college’s total alumni to more than 180 graduates.

A leader on defense, education and health care issues, Reed is a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, member of the Appropriations Committee and senior member of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee. Before being elected to the Senate in 1996, Reed was a three-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Rhode Island’s 2nd Congressional District.

After graduating from West Point and receiving an active duty commission in the United States Army, Reed attended the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University where he received a master’s of public policy. An Army Ranger and a paratrooper, Reed served in the 82nd Airborne Division as an infantry platoon leader, a company commander and a battalion staff officer. He returned to West Point in 1978 as an associate professor in the Department of Social Sciences.

Donors have giving options for funding scholarships

Staff members in Georgia Gwinnett’s Office of Development are working with donors to build the college’s scholarship resources. With 37 percent of the student body working at least part-time and another 54 percent receiving some sort of financial aid, it is clear that Georgia Gwinnett students need help with paying for their education.

“Most colleges and universities have a long list of scholarships available to students,” said Lori Buckheister, director of Development. “These scholarships not only help recruit students, they may make it possible for a student to go to college in the first place.”

Buckheister and her staff help prospective donors explore options for establishing these needed funds.

“We can help donors understand the various ways they can finance a gift,” she said. “There is a misconception that one needs a lot of money up front to establish a scholarship. This simply is not true.”

Donors can make gifts over time, gradually building a fund. This strategy was used by Mike Schelke (see story, page 6) to establish a scholarship fund in his father-in-law’s memory. Over the next few years, the fund will build to a point at which it can permanently provide scholarships for GGC students.

Organizations that require or prefer annual management of its charitable giving can opt for making a commitment to an annual scholarship gift, as did Gwinnett Federal Credit Union (see story, page 6).

One of the most overlooked options is using employer matching programs to increase one’s giving capacity.

“Some employers have generous matching gift programs that can greatly increase the value of the donor’s dollar,” Buckheister said.

“Donors also can make gifts of stock or other investments. Many gifts can be leveraged to maximize tax benefits for the donor. Another option is making gifts through one’s will.”

“Donors also can support existing funds,” Buckheister said. “For example, the Georgia Gwinnett College and President’s Choice scholarship funds can receive gifts of all sizes. Every gift can make a difference.”

Whether it is a company that wants to support a program related to its core business or philanthropic goals, or an individual who wants to honor a loved one or establish a personal legacy, the college’s development staff is ready to help navigate the legal and financial process of setting up a scholarship.

To learn more, call the Development Office at 678.407.5588 or send an e-mail to development@ggc.edu.

Campus voice

Winning the Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful Scholarship helped me continue my undergraduate education without the worry of taking out loans and having to repay them once I graduate.

Personally, the scholarship meant that I do not have to wait until I graduate to see the rewards of my hard work.

Winning the scholarship also helped me focus more on my studies, become more involved with organizations and attend more on-campus events.

I would like to attend medical school once I graduate, but I am also thinking of taking some time off before medical school to join the Peace Corps.

I love GGC and have made great friends here. I love my classes, and my professors are always there to help and listen, even if it doesn’t have to do with class.
Factors of Success

About 600 hotdogs, 300 hamburgers and 200 pieces of salmon. These were the stats at the annual end-of-year gathering of faculty and staff on the back patio of Building B. I am not complaining, mind you, but while President Dan Kaufman, and VPs Eddie Beauchamp, Lonnie Harvel and Stas Preczewski flipped burgers and hot dogs on finely tuned spa-griddles, I cooked massive amounts of salmon on a couple of flamer grills that clearly intended me to be medium-rare by late afternoon.

What fun it was, though! A perfect afternoon, and I think every GGC faculty member and employee showed up. All I burned the salmon into mouthwatering status, I heard faculty talk about how happy they were to be associated with GGC and what a terrific academic experience the college offers.

It has been one of those textbook (no pun intended) years. GGC’s academic distinctions are remarkable and head-turning, catching the attention of policymakers, lawmakers and educational authorities across the nation. Down at the legislature, a day did not go by when one of the members of the leadership would tell me that the work we are doing is making a difference and is being noticed. My new theory of government affairs is that funding is directly related to success. GGC’s success is nothing short of breathtaking. Being the chief advancement officer, I can make these definitive statements.

Senator Don Balfour heard about the cookout and, as a senior Waffle House executive wishing to know about our burger-flipping techniques, dropped by. He was well received by all, and I believe very appreciative of the afternoon. I asked the Senator what he thought of the college he played such a hand in creating. His response was, as always, humble and self-effacing. Make no mistake of his influence, though.

Next year I am certain we will cease - pardon me - grease the 1,000 hotdog mark. I plan to hold a celebration for that particular dog. The milestones keep mounting up.

GFCU creates first scholarship for GGC education majors

Gwinnnet Federal Credit Union (GFCU) has established an annual scholarship fund for GGC students majoring in early childhood education, special education or another major leading to teacher certification.

This is the first scholarship established at GGC that specifically benefits students in the School of Education. It also is the first scholarship established at Georgia Gwinnett by a business in the financial services sector.

“We are very appreciative of GFCU’s generosity,” said Cathy Moore, dean of the School of Education. “An investment in education majors is unique in that it ensures an ongoing impact on our community’s youth, as our students will spend their careers teaching others.”

Local family honors patriarch, establishes English scholarship in his memory

Michael Schelke recently surprised his wife with a profound gift ... a scholarship in memory of her father.

“I wanted to honor Jessica’s father because he was the embodiment of the entire story of the Damián family,” Schelke said. “I wanted to recognize what he did to build a better life for his family.”

Antonio Damián was born in El Salvador to Lebanese parents who left Beirut in the 1920s. His father’s work ethic and interest in travel and languages inspired Damián to build a career in international business, taking him across four continents.

When civil war erupted in El Salvador in 1980, Damián and his family fled to the U.S. to seek political asylum. He died of cancer in 1999.

Damián and his wife instilled an appreciation for life-long learning and intellectual curiosity in their children. The youngest, Jessica Damián, is now an assistant professor of English at GGC.

“I think it’s impressive to achieve so much in a country and language that’s not your own,” Schelke said.

The Antonio Damián Scholarship Fund will support English majors, with preference to those from underrepresented groups, or who are first-generation college students and who demonstrate financial need. Renewable for up to four years, the scholarship will be awarded beginning in 2010.

“The scholarship is the first for the School of Liberal Arts, and the first created by a faculty member’s spouse,” said Lois Richardson, dean of the School of Liberal Arts. “We deeply appreciate Mike’s generosity. This scholarship will allow a special population of students to receive a 21st century education.”

“An endowment provides a permanent source of support, which is a perfect way to make a lasting investment, and a very meaningful way to recognize a loved one,” said Gordon Harrison, president of the Georgia Gwinnett College Foundation.

Donors like Schelke can recommend how the fund will be used, said Lori Buckheister, director of Development. They also can choose how to announce their gift.

“Some donors prefer anonymity, while some prefer a general announcement. Others want a memorable occasion,” Buckheister said. “In this case, it was a surprise.”

“I had no idea Mike was planning this,” Jessica Damián said. “I am so touched that he chose to honor my father this way, and to benefit students who need support to pursue their education. My father would have been so proud to be remembered in this way.”
Students benefit from $11.3 million in federal financial aid

When Georgia Gwinnett College was granted candidacy for accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in June 2008, it also became eligible to apply to the Department of Education to receive federal financial aid for its students.

This academic year, GGC disbursed $11.3 million in federal financial aid, which benefitted students by covering the costs of tuition, fees, books and living expenses. About 54 percent of the college’s students receive some level of federal financial aid.

“Accreditation means that many students can benefit from the availability of these funds, in many cases making their education possible,” said Stas Preczewski, vice president of Academic and Student Affairs. “This also means that there is $11.3 million flowing through our community that wasn’t here last year, representing a large economic boost for the area.”

For English major Erin Corrigan-Smith, the funds came at a critical time.

Corrigan-Smith worked for six years as a medical practice administrator before she returned to college to get a business degree. However, she discovered a love for English and changed majors, with her sights set on a master’s degree or perhaps even a Ph.D. While her husband worked, Corrigan-Smith used the couple’s savings to attend Georgia Gwinnett. Even with the college’s reasonable tuition costs, the savings account dwindled. This past fall, Corrigan-Smith obtained federal financial aid that provided support for school and living expenses.

“I wouldn’t have been able to go to school much longer without taking out student loans,” Corrigan-Smith said. “It made the difference of getting a degree or not.”

Jennifer St. Juste is a rising junior in information technology. She began working in her early teens as a dog grooming assistant and developed a determined work ethic. She also is determined to complete her education, no matter the challenges.

“The work two jobs here at GGC, one in classroom and media support and the other at the fitness center,” she said. A new mother, St. Juste worked and attended classes until her daughter was born in September, and returned soon thereafter.

“ar can’t thank the GGC staff enough for helping me get my grant,” she said.
scaffolding as they shifted their focus to interior finishing work. It is only a matter of weeks before Georgia Gwinnett College makes the historic transformation from a commuter-only campus to a residential institution—a remarkable and significant shift for both the college and the community.

This process involves more than moving into the new buildings. With residential status comes a more challenging and complex way of doing business as an institution.

“This is an exciting time in that we will soon be able to provide our students with the full, dynamic, residential-campus experience,” said Stas Preczewski, vice president of Academic and Student Affairs. “At the same time, the responsibility we have for our students will increase significantly.”

College plans for changes large and small

The college must address new security concerns, expanded campus life activities and accommodations, extended hours for many services and 24-hour availability of others. The list of critical needs is expansive, and the planning process involves a dedicated, campus-wide effort, Preczewski explained.

From campus signage to an expansion of the GGC Web site, some changes will be immediately apparent. Others will be less obvious, but no less important to the transition’s success. This includes policy and procedural changes to support critical, on-campus student programs and services.

Laura James, associate vice president for Academic and Student Affairs Operations, is responsible for coordinating efforts to prepare for the transition.

“Food services have been provided at small eateries located across campus,” James said. “The new dining services will offer a varied selection of affordable meal plan options to accommodate the individual needs of GGC students and employees.”

Other changes will enhance current services, or introduce new options for GGC students. Laundry facilities, an increased number of ATMs, and improved, on-campus postal delivery service will be available. The college’s first athletic fields are set to open shortly after students arrive. A new counseling center has opened in the fitness center building.

Campus safety and security efforts to expand

Safety and security are among the transition team’s most important planning processes. “Student safety is our number one priority,” said GGC Police Chief Terrance Schneider. “We take this responsibility seriously, and are putting security practices in place with the goal of making Georgia Gwinnett the safest campus in the South.”

The college’s police force is increasing its ranks to provide an around-the-clock campus presence by mid-summer. Satellite security offices will be located in the student residence halls.

In partnership with Gwinnett County, Georgia Gwinnett will update and coordinate emergency response and communications procedures. The college already conducts table-top emergency drill exercises. Campus officials also are outlining detailed plans for response to severe weather warnings and resulting campus closures.

GGC ready for enrollment growth, first move-in day

GGC’s transformation to a 24/7 campus in August coincides with a projected, near-double increase in student enrollment. About 3,400 students attended the college in 2009-10 and about 5,000 are expected for fall 2010.

As the summer progresses, James will continue guiding the transition team’s coordinated efforts to prepare GGC for its first, historic move-in day.

“What an exciting time to be part of GGC,” James said. “We are building a small city within our campus that will enhance and change the nature of the college forever.”

The Library and Learning Center’s bright green waterproofing layer stands out against a rare March snowfall.

Deputy Chief Chris Bingham, Lt. Jim Wilson, Lt. Cory Hughes,Lt. Ray Rawlins, and Chief Terrance Schneider at a recent swearing-in ceremony for new members of the GGC Police Department. More officers will join the force’s ranks this summer.

No longer to be envisioned from an architectural rendering, GGC’s new residence halls stand ready for their first tenants.

Georgia Gwinnett College
For the next few months, the calendar of events at Georgia Gwinnett College will feature ribbon cuttings, grand openings and other events centered around the completion and opening of its cornerstone facilities – the residence halls, Student Center and Library and Learning Center.

“These facilities represent major milestones in the growth of the college,” said Georgia Gwinnett President Daniel J. Kaufman. “Each deserves its own commemorative celebration.”

The fun began earlier this spring, as the builders of the three major projects held topping-out ceremonies, a tradition of the construction industry when a building nears completion.

Events for the broader Georgia Gwinnett community are being scheduled as firm dates become available. As with all major construction projects, weather and other factors may impact when the college can occupy the new buildings. Events are listed on the college’s online calendar at www.ggc.edu.

“What we do over the next several months will establish a history for the college,” Kaufman said. “These events will create a legacy for all future generations of GGC students. They will be integral to the new educational culture we are building at Georgia Gwinnett.”

The events also will commemorate the support received by the college from area community leaders, supporters and partners in its current and future initiatives.

“One cannot separate a college from the communities it serves,” he said. “GGC wouldn’t be here if it were not for the persistent determination of our Gwinnett friends and neighbors. This is their time to celebrate, as well.”

Some of the upcoming commemorative events may have sponsors, while others will be modest to conserve costs. Whatever the budget, Kaufman said the college will ensure that the celebrations are meaningful and memorable.

“We want our students to tell their grandkids someday, ‘I was there.’”

The Student Center will feature a dining hall that extends to a large outdoor seating area beside a pond. In this view of the building’s south side, one can see a second-story terrace that overlooks the outdoor dining area and pond. The Library and Learning Center appears to the upper right, and Building C appears to the upper left.

The Student Center will feature a dining hall that extends to a large outdoor seating area beside a pond. In this view of the building’s south side, one can see a second-story terrace that overlooks the outdoor dining area and pond. The Library and Learning Center appears to the upper right, and Building C appears to the upper left.

The threat of a chilly rain did not dampen the spirits of those attending a topping-out celebration for the student residence halls. Here, GGC Student Government Association representatives Brittany Dertz, Jonelle Faal and Corbin Satterwhite visit with GGC President Daniel J. Kaufman.

GGC welcomes USG chancellor to campus

Erroll B. Davis, chancellor of the University System of Georgia, recently spent a day visiting with the Georgia Gwinnett community.

In a whirlwind schedule, Davis first met with GGC President Daniel J. Kaufman and members of the cabinet, during which he heard reports on the college’s status. After meeting with representatives of the faculty senate, he joined about 50 members of the Gwinnett area community for a luncheon in the atrium of Building B. The guest list included members of the Gwinnett legislative delegation, local mayors, members of the GGC Board of Trustees and other distinguished guests.

Davis then spent an hour with officers of the college’s Student Government Association, which was followed by interviews with the news media.

“We had an opportunity to put everything we know about doing higher education well in one place. A lot of things are different here - there are no departments, the dialogue is different. The collegiality is different. It is an experiment. It is working. It is successful.”

–Erroll B. Davis
GGC’s mascot, General, greets Georgia Lt. Governor Casey Cagle during Gwinnett Day at the Capitol, March 30.

Ross Marumura received his bachelor’s degree in business administration at the Fall 2009 Commencement Ceremony.

Corbin Satterwhite was one of several GGC students who spoke with the news media about the impact of potential budget cuts on the college’s continued growth and vitality.

Student Devon Pattullo and Bagie George, assistant professor of biology, present one of the entries in the cockroach races, which were held during the School of Science and Technology’s annual spring semester science expo.

GGC’s student club Colleges Against Cancer kicked off its 2010 campaign with the theme, “Be a GGC Superhero.”