Q&A with UGA President Jere W. Morehead

Jere W. Morehead became the University of Georgia’s 22nd President in 2013. Prior to becoming President, he served UGA in many key administrative roles. President Morehead is the first alumnus of UGA to be named President in more than forty-five years. He received his law degree (J.D.) from the University of Georgia in 1980 and has been with UGA since 1986.

What do you enjoy most about the Athens community?

The diversity of our community is one of the most attractive parts of Athens. There truly is something for everyone here—whether it is music, art, athletics, the outdoors, food, or simply access to countless cultural and educational opportunities. Most of all, however, I enjoy seeing UGA students engaged in the many community organizations and initiatives. UGA students want to make a difference in the world, and their desire to do so often begins in Athens.

What’s the biggest change you’ve seen in Athens over the past years?

Over the years, downtown Athens has become an increasingly vibrant part of our community. The dining and shopping options are outstanding. With the addition of the Classic Center, Athens now is a destination for large meetings, conferences, and concerts. Throughout its growth and evolution over the years, the charm of downtown Athens has remained constant. I also continue to be impressed by the many distinctive neighborhoods in our city, from the Five Points area—where I always lived before becoming President—to Prince Avenue, where I currently live.

How would you describe the “town-gown” relationship today?

The relationship between the University and Athens-Clarke County is strong and generally positive. The two entities connect on many levels, several of which are described in this newsletter. Many faculty, staff, and students of the University are citizens of Athens-Clarke County and—like all ACC citizens—desire to live in a vibrant community in which all individuals can succeed. The University and the city partner on many key issues facing our community.

Where do you think the university and the community could work better together?

In recent years, UGA faculty, staff, and students have become more engaged in the life of the Athens community. I do think, however, that there are additional opportunities for our schools and colleges to connect to the community in meaningful ways. Recently, faculty governance approved a new, transformational initiative that will provide all undergraduate students with a tailored experiential learning opportunity prior to graduation, such as an internship or a community service project. This initiative will have a positive impact on the Athens area, as more of our students seek experiential learning opportunities locally. Obviously, we have challenges with the late hours and early mornings downtown, and I think we need to work together to better address those issues.
A partnership between the University of Georgia College of Education and the Clarke County School District that gives more than 500 teacher candidates classroom experience each year has been named one of the top programs in the country.

Called the Professional Development School District, the program was awarded the NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement from the National Association for Professional Development Schools. The award recognizes university-school district partnerships that "create and sustain genuine collaborative partnerships" and help shape future educational leaders.

What makes the partnership unique is the placement of College of Education faculty and students into local classrooms. Many schools have a "professor-in-residence" who supervises student teachers, teaches on-site courses and provides professional development to teachers at the school. In addition, most faculty members involved with the program teach at least one teacher-preparatory course in a local school, and some serve as a "professor on special assignment," working at a school on a project developed by the school's administration and teachers.

As a result, UGA students graduate with experiences teaching in many different schools, Clarke County students benefit from additional classroom support and role models, and teachers and faculty benefit from collaborative research projects and ongoing professional learning.

"This honor reflects the level of commitment our faculty have for sharing exemplary teaching methods with our students and professionals in the field, and a commitment to educating the next generation," said Craig H. Kennedy, dean of the College of Education. "We are thankful to have such a strong partnership with the Clarke County School District and the ability to set a standard for the nation."

Now in its sixth year, the Professional Development School District is in place at 11 schools across Clarke County, at the early learning, elementary, middle and high school levels. Each semester, around 20 College of Education courses are taught on-site at schools across the district, with eight faculty members working as professors-in-residence.

"I am extremely pleased that our nationally innovative work is being recognized at this level, and I am so proud of what the Clarke County School District and the University of Georgia have been able to accomplish together," said Clarke County Superintendent Philip D. Lanoue. "We are making a real difference in connecting research and practice to ensure the most effective teaching and learning environments at all levels—from our students to UGA students to our teachers to UGA professors. Partnerships are central to who we are as a community school district, and I look very forward to this continued work as we transform our classrooms."

Learn more about the Professional Development School District
UGA is in the Sustainable Living Business

With the growing popularity of backyard chickens and home food preservation, it does seem everything old is new again.

As UGA Extension—the original DIY Network—moves into its second century, it’s ready to help families reconnect to the land and protect the environment.

UGA Extension has been in the sustainable living business since Congress created the Cooperative Extension Service with the Smith Lever Act of 1914. With that act, Congress challenged each state to create a network of agents who would be able to share the latest in agricultural and home economics research from land-grant universities with farmers and their families who otherwise would have limited access to the university system.

In those first years, UGA Extension agents fanned out across Georgia to help farmers battle erosion and soil depletion and develop crops that would thrive in Georgia without expensive fertilizers and irrigation.

Today, UGA Extension is still helping farmers produce food while caring for their land and the environment, but Extension agents and specialists now have a broadened focus—helping families start community gardens, protect water resources and build more energy-efficient households.

Read more about UGA Extension’s work on urban agriculture, water conservation and quality, fresh food, and local farming. Learn more and access UGA Extension’s resources here.

The Athens-Clarke County Cooperative Extension office is located at 2152 W Broad Street, Athens 30606.
UGA Students Raise More Than $200,000 to Fight Cancer

More than 2,000 students participated in the 16th Annual University of Georgia Relay for Life overnight from April 17-18 in the main gym at the Ramsey Student Center. The night culminated with the announcement that the student fundraising teams had raised a total of $203,396.31 toward this year's campaign. The top fundraising team was Alpha Chi Omega, which raised $16,130.

The UGA event is notable for being Relay for Life’s first event organized by, led by and composed entirely of college students. The student group, led this year by senior Savannah Grow, is an affiliate of Relay for Life that is registered with UGA Student Affairs’ Center for Student Organizations. The university’s intramural fields traditionally play host to the event, but for the third year in a row, rain forced the event indoors.

UGA Relay has raised more than $3 million for the American Cancer society since the first relay in 1999 and annually ranks as one of the top collegiate relays in the nation.

"It's wonderful to witness the passion and effort of UGA's students, especially with philanthropy," said Victor K. Wilson, UGA vice president for student affairs. "At relay, students from across campus come together to make a real difference in our community. It's truly inspiring." Read More

Meet the 2015—2016 Student Government Association Administration

Johnelle Simpson, President, is a third-year student from Donalsonville majoring in risk management/insurance and political science.

Houston Gaines, Vice-President, is a second-year political science and economics major from Athens. Houston was Mayor Nancy Denson’s 2014 reelection campaign manager.

Darby Miller, Treasurer, is a second-year business management major from Rogers, Arkansas.

Leslie Petch Lee Named Interim Campus Dean Of GRU/UGA Medical Partnership

Dr. Leslie Petch Lee, assistant dean for curriculum at the Georgia Regents University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership, has been named its interim campus dean.

Lee, who joined UGA in 2005, became involved in the early planning and development of the GRU/UGA Medical Partnership in 2007 and was appointed coordinator for the first- and second-year curriculum—known as phases 1 and 2—for the Medical Partnership in 2008. She became assistant dean for curriculum in 2010, a position in which she oversees the development and implementation of the phase 1 and 2 curriculum. She also represents the Medical Partnership on the MCG Instructional Technology Advisory Committee, the Phase 1 and 2 Curriculum Committee, the Curriculum Oversight Committee, the Admissions Committee, and the Executive Committee for Reaccreditation.

“Dr. Lee has helped guide the growth and progress of the GRU/UGA Medical Partnership since its founding, and I am confident that she will provide outstanding leadership while the national search for the next permanent campus dean continues,” said Dr. Pamela Whitten, UGA senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. Read More
Hands-On Learning to Become a Requirement for UGA Undergraduates

The University of Georgia has taken a significant step toward ensuring that all of its students engage in the kinds of hands-on experiences that enhance learning and position them for success after graduation. All undergraduate students will be required to engage in experiential learning—through opportunities that include undergraduate research, study abroad, service-learning, internships and other experiences.

With the experiential learning requirement, UGA will become one of the largest public universities in the nation to provide each of its students with high-impact, experiential learning opportunities that enhance academic performance and better prepare them for graduate school or careers. Each student will be able to select from a diverse slate of opportunities that reflect their individual interests and aspirations.

Each of UGA’s 14 schools and colleges that offer undergraduate degrees will determine which courses and experiences will fulfill the experiential learning requirement. UGA will also aggressively expand the hands-on learning opportunities that it offers to students.

Experiential learning is often defined simply as “learning by doing,” and it has been shown to play an important role in fostering engagement on campus, improving students’ ability to analyze and synthesize information, and helping students transition to graduate school or the workforce. The new requirement builds upon UGA’s strong history of leadership in providing experiential learning opportunities to students. UGA is consistently ranked among the nation’s top universities for study abroad participation, for example, and more than 7,300 UGA students participated in service-learning courses in the last academic year alone.

Read more and learn how UGA is helping communities.
Annual Fundraiser

The University of Georgia Office of Service-Learning held its second annual fundraiser to benefit Experience UGA in April at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. The event celebrates the success of the program this year in bringing almost 9,300 Clarke County School District students on field trips to UGA colleges and schools. **The goal next year is to bring all 13,000 CCSD students to campus.** UGA faculty, staff and students who led Experience UGA trips showcased some of the programs that were offered this year.

Second Graders Visit UGA During National Public Health Week

Approximately 1,300 second-grade students in the Clarke County School District visited campus April 7-10 during National Public Health Week for a field trip that introduced them to basic health principles through hands-on activities. Sponsored by Athens Regional Medical Center, the trip was organized by students in UGA’s College of Public Health.

Each day, groups of approximately 250 students from different schools visited Stegeman Coliseum to participate in four stations focused on nutrition, hand-washing and germ spread, physical activity and bullying prevention. Each station included a Q&A session where students learned basic principles followed by a hands-on activity or game. The event was staffed by more than 100 UGA undergraduate and graduate students from numerous schools and colleges.

About Experience UGA

Experience UGA is a partnership between the Clarke County School District, the UGA Office of Service-Learning, and the Office of School Engagement in the UGA College of Education. Through a variety of field trips, CCSD students participate in hands-on, curricular-based learning activities. The goal is to foster interest in the pursuit of higher education among the 13,000 Clarke County students. The Office of Service-Learning reports jointly to the vice presidents for public service and outreach, and instruction.

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