

# **GC Journeys Report 2023 – 2024**



**J. Whitney Bunting College of  
Business & Technology**

**May 2024**

## **I. Introduction**

GC Journeys aims at enhancing student/faculty experience in at least five different areas. Every student at GCSU is required to participate in activities related to “First year experience”, “Career planning”, and successfully complete a capstone course. Additionally, students chose two HIPs out of five different options.

The J. Whitney Bunting College of Business and Technology is keen to offer its students a variety of high-impact practices. The high-impact practices are designed on one hand to develop students’ leadership skills, societal engagements, and research potential, and on the other hand to prepare them for the job market through systematic career planning activities and global engagements.

Over the course of the academic year 2023-2024, the GC Journeys Fellow met with the Dean and the Associate Dean on regular basis to discuss the progress being made and potential opportunities to increase students’ participations in HIPs, as well as tracking students’ engagements.

During this year we prepared a proposal for an elective course on Research Methods to facilitate and encourage undergraduate mentored research. This course is designed to accommodate all business students irrespective of their major or academic background. A new initiative has been kicked off in the Spring semester to strengthen the connection between CoBT and high school students and enhance community-based engagement learning. Through this initiative, a group of CoBT students supervised by faculty have designed and delivered an awareness cybersecurity course to high school achievers’ students. We also added a theme for the Column society talks to have more focus and align the discussions with the college strategic plan. The theme for this year is “Leadership for the public good”.

This report demonstrates in the next section the CoBT engagements in high-impact practices for Summer 2023, Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 and points on areas of opportunities.

## II. College of Business & Technology HIP performance

### The CoBT facilitates eight HIP



#### 1. Global engagements - Study Abroad & Study Away

The GC Journeys Fellow met with the director of the International Education Center (Dr. James Callaghan) to obtain information on study abroad courses available to business students, the courses offered by CoBT faculty, the number of CoBT students enrolled in these courses, and the capacity of the offered courses for the last two years.

In summer 2023 only one faculty led program on Comparative Economic Systems was offered and six GC programs. The total number of CoBT students enrolled in the study abroad programs is 24, out of which 8 students were in the CoBT faculty-led program. It is noticed that none of the accounting or logistics students participated in study abroad programs. This might be due to a lack of related courses in their respective fields.

For summer 2024, two faculty-led programs are offered for students to explore new cultures and study at overseas universities.

Dr. Jeannie Pridmore is arranging for summer 2024 a three weeks of international working experience in companies in Germany, Netherland and France. This will help students gain

international teamwork experience and acquire knowledge beyond what could be offered in a traditional classroom.

Professor Jehan Eljournagy is arranging for six credits course on International Corporate Sustainability & Leadership to be offered in New Zealand. The course will be given over two weeks in summer 2024 aiming to enhance students’ ability to lead high-performing global organizations and to implement environmental compliance and sustainability in workplace.

## 2. Community-based engaged learning

The Business Ethics faculty agreed last year to roll out the “service-learning project” in Fall 2023 to expand the number of students with exposure to this HIP. The table below provides data for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 performance. This is compared to 771 hours volunteered to various organizations in the community in the past academic year.

Term	No. of Business Ethics students	Volunteered hrs.	Organizations served	Economic Impact
<b>Fall 2023</b>	132	1,260	12	\$35,956
<b>Spring 2024</b>	170	1,620	23	\$42,580
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>2,880</b>	<b>27*</b>	<b>78,536</b>

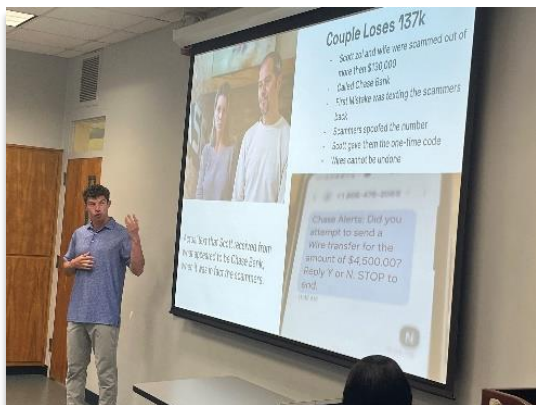
\*Some organizations are the same in both fall and spring semester.

CoBT took part in the VITA program in Spring 2024. Six students led by an accounting faculty member (Mr. Scott Burns) participated in the VITA program, of which 4 undergraduate students and 2 graduate students. One of the undergraduate students and one graduate student received advanced training. The total number of student training hours is 72 hours, and the total number of service hours is 162 hours.

Student information	
Undergraduate basic training	3
Undergraduate advanced training	1
Graduate students	2
Total number of training hours received	72 hrs.
Total number of student service hours	162 hrs.

VITA team helped in preparing 33 tax files; 6 of which virtually; and reviewing 25 files and filing 24. Taxpayers rated the service on a scale of 1 not satisfied, 2 satisfied, and 3 very satisfied. 25 out of 33 rated the service and the “Taxpayer Service Rating” was 3/3, very satisfied.

The GC Journeys Fellow suggested a new initiative, “Knowledge before College”, to raise awareness among high school students on selected business-related topics. The objective of this initiative is to educate high school students on essential business topics that participate in formulating effective decisions and contribute to a better and safer economy. High school students might not get the chance to join a college or might not opt to do business studies, however several business topics turn out to be essential to every individual and should not be limited to business graduates. Such topics can include, among others, personal finance, taxation, contracts, and cyber security. Through this initiative, groups of CoBT students will get the opportunity to develop an awareness workshop/seminar under the supervision of a faculty member and deliver it to high school students. We believe that this project can serve the community through sharing business knowledge, develop teamwork and communication skills for students, enhance students-faculty collaboration, conduct research to design seminar/workshop material, and promote GCSU among high school students.



The awareness workshop series was launched on April 9, 2024. Two distinguished Management Information Systems students having high spirit of voluntarism and knowledge sharing designed under the supervision of Mr. Brad Fowler a “Cybersecurity” awareness material and delivered it to the High Achievers Program students. In today’s digital age, understanding

the fundamentals of computer security is more important than ever, especially for young individuals who are increasingly immersed in the online world.

The Cybersecurity awareness presentation aims to demystify the complex world of computer security, breaking it down into understandable and relatable concepts that are directly applicable to the daily lives of high school students. The presentation covered important cybersecurity topics such as cyber hygiene practices, social media safety, understanding malware, and safe browsing habits. The presentation was designed to be



interactive, with real-world examples, demonstrations, and a Q&A session where students can ask questions and share their experiences.

### 3. Column Society

Column society is an organization that aims at connecting students with industry professionals and alumni. Column society started in the spring of 2022, and since then monthly talks are provided.

In Fall 2023, the GC Journeys Fellow of the CoBT discussed with Mr. Mike McCabe, a member of the Dean’s Leadership Advisory council, the potential of aligning the talks with the strategic plan of the college. Mr. McCabe welcomed the idea and agreed on the suggested theme “Leadership for the public good”. Our objective is to develop the spirit of doing well by doing good.



In Fall 2023, two talks were organized focusing on the following topics:

- ✓ **October 18, 2023:** Employee employer relationship - Attitudes and behavior.
- ✓ **November 14, 2023:** Sustainability or profitability: Do they conflict in the decision-making process.

In spring 2024, three talks were organized focusing on the following topics:

- ✓ **January 3, 2024:** Coping with the changes in the business environment.
- ✓ **February 27, 2024:** What employers expect from young professionals.

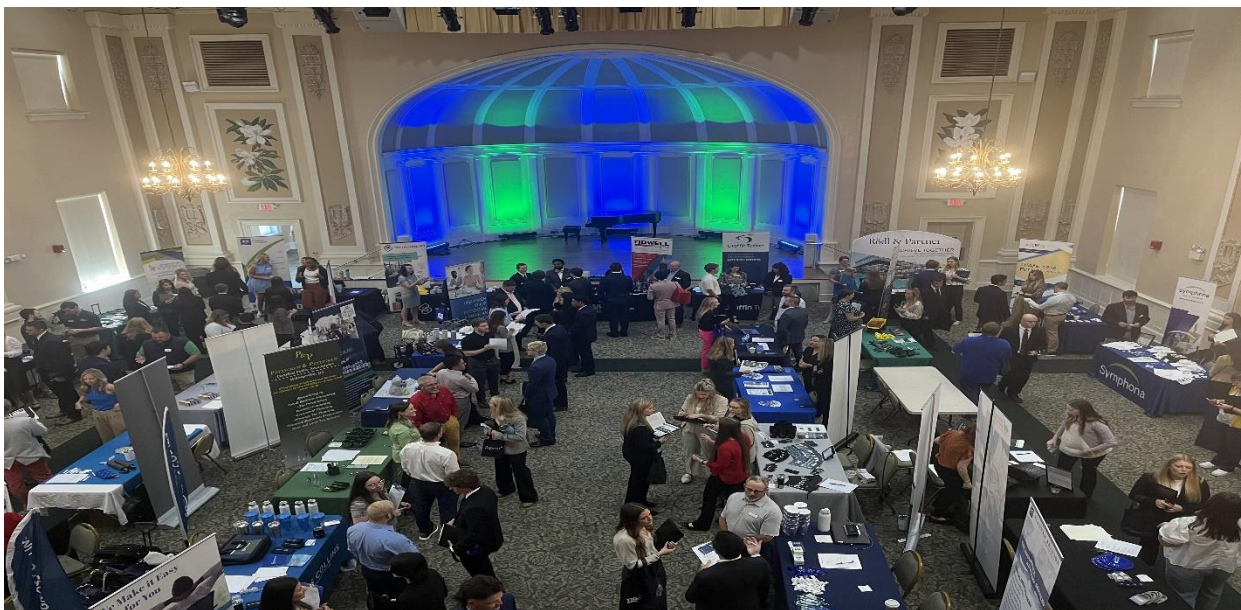
**157 students participated.**

#### 4. Career Planning & Internships

Mrs. Susan Manrodt from the accounting and Business Law department arranged for “Resume Workshop” in collaboration with Fulton & Kozak, a public accounting firm. 35 students met one-on-one with the firm representatives and got the opportunity to have guidance on how to prepare a professional resume and improve their resumes.

A record number of firms showed interest in participating in the “Accounting Career Fair” this year. Given this high interest, Dr. Herbert Snyder and Mrs. Susan Manrodt from the department of Accounting and Business Law organized two accounting career fairs. The first fair was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September and a second fair focusing on the public service entities on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September. 37 firms including 3 first-time attendees, 82 students, and five faculty members from the accounting department and the associate dean attended the fair to encourage students, welcome the firms, listen to employers, and explain more about the programs. The Public Service Focus career fair attracted six employers and 54 students.

In Spring 2024, two career fairs were organized for Accounting and Information Technology students. 26 firms and 62 students attended the January 31, 2024 “Meet the Firms” accounting career fair. 15 firms and 120 students attended the IT career fair on February 7, 2024.



Internship is one of the requirements for the fulfilment of the Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting. In the academic year 2023-2024, 50 students in both graduate and undergraduate programs completed their internship.

The table below illustrates the number of accounting internship placements for the current academic years compared to the prior three years:

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
<b>Undergrad 0 Cr. Hr.</b>	3	3	2
<b>Undergrad 3 Cr. Hrs.</b>	5	16	10
<b>Graduate 6 Cr. Hrs.</b>	29	29	26
<b>Graduate 3 Cr. Hrs.</b>	5	5	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>50</b>

**GC Entrepreneurs Club** hosted in Fall 2023 Richard King, the CEO and Founder of “Good Measures” to share with students his experience with a start-up company that grew and led the company to General Mills Company acquisition.

In Spring 2024 the GC Entrepreneurs Club hosted three guest speakers:

**February 8, 2024:** Greens as a proof of concept for an alternative restaurant that provides a healthier, plant-based diet and franchising in real estate.

Speaker: Doug and Frank Pendergast, owner/operators of Greens Farmhouse Restaurant. Doug has a Harvard MBA, was a past consultant with McKinsey, a former VP of Operations at both Church’s Chicken and Popeyes, and the former CEO of both Quiznos and Krystal’s. Frank owns the Brick restaurant and many investment properties in town.

*38 students were in attendance.*

**March 7, 2024:** Recognizing an opportunity, the product development process, marketing, and financing.

Speaker: Lou Childs, co-founder of Slumberpod, a portable, easy for traveling, sleeping solution for infants and young children. To the latter point, she and her co-founder daughter appeared on Shark Tank and received multiple offers from the Sharks.

*42 students were in attendance.*

**April 4, 2024:** How to turn an entrepreneurial dream as a business major in college into real life. Speaker: Josh Sprayberry, founder, owner, and chief operating officer of Anchors Marina on Lake Oconee. He is also the new owner of a marina on Lake Sinclair with development plans beyond a new marina that include a hotel and restaurant.

*28 students were in attendance.*



**The Marketing Club** led by Dr. Whitney Ginder hosted three guest speakers in Fall 2023. The total number of students participated in these events is 175 students.

**September 27:** The story behind Erin, clients and services of Marketing Georgia, by Erin Andrews – Founder of Marketing Georgia.

**October 18:** Professional development, resume writing, networking, interviewing, by Kevin Petek - Sr. Director of Sales for TTI and Kal Caviness, Territory Manager for TTI

**November 15:** The innovation process and professional development advice, by Denny Walton - Director of Innovation at Coca-Cola North America

## **5. Mentoring Undergraduate research**

All Marketing and Economics students are engaged in this area through a mandatory course requiring research project. To enhance the opportunities of having more undergraduate students engaged in research activities, the CoBT GC Journeys fellow discussed with the Associate Dean, Dr. Tanya Goette, possible ways to facilitate and encourage the process of mentoring undergraduate research. It was agreed to develop and propose an elective Research Methods course to be offered as an elective course to all business students. Dr. Ania Rynarzewska willingly agreed to develop the course proposal. This course will be a platform that connects undergraduate students interested in conducting research with faculty and accumulate credits toward their graduation. The proposal is prepared and pending university approval.

In Fall 2023, **17** undergraduate students were mentored for research in economics and finance. **Six** students will present their work at national/regional conferences (e.g. Academy of Economics and Finance Annual Meetings), and **ten** will present their work in GC Research Day in March 2024. **One** mentored undergraduate research has been published in an academic peer-reviewed journal. In Spring 2024, 21 undergraduate students were mentored for research in economics and MIS.

The table below provides some details on the mentored undergraduate students.

Term	Field of study	Mentored Undergrad. students	Conf. presentations	Submissions to PRJs	Published in PRJs	In-progress
<b>Fall</b>	Economics/Fin	17	6	-	-	-
	Ethics & Bus. Law	1		1	1	-
<b>Sub. Total</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Spring</b>	Economics	18	7	0	0	1
	MIS	3	1	0	0	1
<b>Sub. Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

## 6. First Year Experience & Capstone

15 faculty facilitated a GC Reads micro-seminar during Week of Welcome (25 % of all faculty who participated). Every major, other than accounting, has a capstone course.

## 7. Leadership

CoBIT students participated in a variety of leadership programs during the 2023-2024 academic year.

- a. 35 students completed in May 2023 the “*Leadership academy program*” and 39 students are currently enrolled with anticipated date of completion May 2024.
- b. One student completed the “*Leadership Certificate Program*” in May 2023 and 39 students are currently enrolled with anticipated completion upon awarding of their bachelor’s degree.
- c. 14 students completed the “*Georgia Education Mentorship Program*” (GEMP) in May 23 and 11 students are currently enrolled with anticipated date of completion May 2024.
- d. 2 students are admitted for “*Intercultural Leadership Program*” at the European Parliament

In addition to the above students’ engagements in leadership programs, the CoBT arranged for a leadership tour for ten students from May 6 to May 10, 2024. The tour visits 20 businesses in Georgia.

### **III. Areas of opportunity**

This section highlights the areas of opportunities that facilitate further advancement to CoBT GC Journeys HIP activities.

1. Defining the main HIP areas and developing a process to collect data on students' engagements in all activities under each of the defined areas. This is likely to ensure systematic data collection for higher accuracy and completion of reported information.
2. Introducing a point system (or equivalent) and setting a minimum point to achieve as a graduation requirement.
3. Developing a GC Journey transcript that presents the HIP activities of each student over the course of the four years of study.
4. Creating more opportunities for study away / study abroad programs with wider diversify of topics, particularly in areas that lack offerings such as accounting, finance, and logistics.
5. Incentivizing students to report their internships when the major does not mandate it.
6. Hosting representatives of GCSU Leadership programs to inform students on the available programs and their intended outcomes to facilitate higher students' participation.

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