Ellen Cotter, professor of psychology, has received the second bi-annual Georgia Southwestern State University Caught in the Act of Great Teaching Award. The award is a faculty appreciation initiative intended to recognize faculty for effective teaching strategies.

The Caught in the Act of Great Teaching Award was created earlier this year by Lauren DiPaula, Ph.D., who has been tasked with faculty development and who was inspired by a similar award she heard about at the USG Consortium for Teaching and Learning. The award was made possible by an anonymous donor in the community who saw a need and donated $100.

“The award is a great opportunity to honor faculty and highlight what works best in the classroom,” said DiPaula.

Students nominated professors through GeorgiaVIEW throughout the semester. Then, a committee of students, nominated by the deans of individual schools and colleges, reviewed the award nominees and selected a winner.

The comments and recommendations made by Cotter’s students reveal the effective strategies she uses in the classroom.

“Every day before starting she reviews briefly what she went over the day before which refreshes your memory,” said one student.

“She teaches us in a way that we can put together in every day life,” remarked another student.

The comments also revealed a sense among her students that Cotter really cares about their success and about each student on an individual level.

One student said, “You feel as if she wants you to learn,” while another stated, “She builds relationships with each of her students.”

Ellen Cotter has been teaching at GSW since 1999. She received her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Virginia and did her graduate work at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Although she was originally considering a career in counseling adolescents, she stated that psychology was her major of choice from the start. Currently, Cotter’s interests lie in research related to the teaching of psychology; however, she would like to go back into developmental research in the future.

When asked how she felt about receiving the award, Cotter’s reply was humble.

“I’m delighted that at least some of my students recognize what I’m trying to do, but I also feel a little funny about it because I always think I could be doing better,” Cotter said. “To me, ‘great teaching’ is a constantly moving target, and I’m constantly seeking ways to improve my teaching strategies (even if they aren’t always successful).”

Cotter was presented with the award earlier this month. Lauren DiPaula and Surge, GSW’s mascot, surprised Cotter during one of her classes and presented her with a custom travel coffee mug, displaying her name and the award’s slogan, “I’ve been caught in the act of great teaching!”
Leeder named new athletic director

Mike Leeder has been named permanent athletic director (AD) at Georgia Southwestern State University effective Monday, Nov. 17. President Kendall Blanchard made the announcement following a national search. Serving as the interim AD since June replacing Jaclyn Donovan, Leeder will remain the head men’s basketball coach.

“During his short stint as interim athletic director, Coach Leeder proved he had the talents, energy, and leadership skills that are needed in the regular position,” said Blanchard. “Also, this interim appointment gave him an opportunity to see if this is the direction he wanted his career to take. I am grateful that this experience has led him to accept the permanent position. I am confident he will do an outstanding job.”

Having served in this dual role for the last five months, Leeder has hit the ground running in leading GSW Athletics by strengthening partnerships in the community and recently helping lead a successful President’s Classic Golf Tournament to support the GSW Hurricane Booster Club.

“I would like to thank President Blanchard for the opportunity to continue leading our athletic department with this full time appointment,” Leeder said. “Moving forward, I will continue to work with our current student-athletes, coaches, faculty and staff to improve upon the positive strides that we have already made in the athletic department over the past five months. In addition, enhancing community partnerships will continue to be a priority as we look to solidify our role as positive ambassadors for the Americus community.”

For the full story, click here.

Robinson named 2014 Featured Scholar

Laurel Robinson, professor of art and Department of Visual Arts chair, was named Georgia Southwestern State University’s 2014-15 Featured Scholar. President Kendall Blanchard made the announcement last week.

A member of the Georgia Southwestern faculty since 1978, Robinson is grateful to her peers for recognizing her work and experience with this award.

“I was involved in this award committee at its inception,” Robinson said. “I think the initial intent from what I understood from Dr. Blanchard’s charge originally was that it was actually for the senior faculty. The idea was that you had years of experience, and often times we are not recognized for that experience. So for me, the senior most faculty member on campus, it’s been fun to grow here.”

Robinson’s interest in her surroundings helps lead her work.

“I think if I had to find a word to define me, it would be curious,” she added. “I don’t think you can make art without curiosity. I don’t think you can make art without wonder. And, I don’t think you can make art without a sense of hopefulness… hopefulness that the human condition can improve and art is a way in which you can make that visible for people.”

For many years, she has been illustrating that at Georgia Southwestern to peers, the community and her students.

“As a professor, certainly part of my goal is to teach by example,” she said, “and I think that making paintings and staying active and exhibiting all over the place and here lets students see that I am, in fact, practicing what I preach. I have friends that are artists that find teaching to be draining of their artistic energy, and I find it the opposite…I like the teaching process at the university and certainly like the art-making process and see them all as connected.”

For the full story, click here.
Announcements

Charles Patterson, Ph.D. has been named as interim president of Georgia Southwestern State University. He will assume responsibilities on Jan. 1, 2015 from current president, Dr. Kendall Blanchard, who will retire Dec. 31, 2014. For the full story, click here.

The GSW Testing Center is pleased to announce that they are now approved and certified to administer GACE and TOEFL tests. They will soon have the DANTE as well. Please visit their website to see what other tests they offer.

Laura J. Bauer, director of national initiatives for the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, has been elected Vice President of the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation in Rockville, MD. For more information on the Foundation, visit: http://www.mattieonline.com/

The Graduation and Honors Convocation, co-chaired by Susan Bragg and Courtney McDonald, will take place on Dec. 5, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in Jackson Hall. A reception will follow in the Private Dining Room of the Marshall Student Center with a special surprise students will not want to miss!

Writing Center accepted into 2015 SWCA conference

The GSW University Writing Center has been accepted into the 2015 Southeastern Writing Center Association (SWCA) Conference. The conference will be held on February 19-21 at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. The theme of this year's conference “Identities in Consultation: Diversity in the South and Beyond.”

Lauren DiPaula, director of the Writing Center, and the writing consultants will be presenting a roundtable discussion entitled “Conflict in Consultation: Transforming Conflict in an Online, Synchronous Environment.” The presentation will cover the scholarship of online, synchronous consultations as well as improvements that have been made in tutor training for online consultations. Specifically, they will address training improvements they have made in regards to establishing rapport, forming common goals with students, and addressing a student’s ideas, all within the context of online consultations.

The GSW writing center has attended and presented at SWCA conferences since 2012 on topics ranging from building faculty relationships to dealing with difficult tutorials. The conference offers an excellent opportunity not only for tutor training but also for networking. This will be the fourth consecutive year that the GSW Writing Center will present at the conference.

Second annual RYNO 5K run

On November 15, 2014, the second annual RYNO 5K run was held in memory of belated RCI employee, Ryan Coleman. His friends, family and co-workers get together each year to remember him and to raise money for his favorite charity, the Rosalynn Carter Institute of Caregiving. Pictured are John and Joanna Edge presenting Rosalynn Carter and Leisa Easom with a framed t-shirt from the first RYNO 5K that was held in 2013.

Bragg presents at WWI conference

Susan Bragg, assistant professor of history, participated in a conference marking the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I, held at Georgia Gwinnett College on Nov. 6-8. Bragg’s paper, “Shaping Memories: American Children's Literature and the Trauma of the Great War” explored the impact of children's literature published during and after World War I in shaping new ideas about children's citizenship and duty during wartime. The conference itself was well-attended with scholars from around the nation presenting new research on the global impact of World War I.
Mark Laughlin, associate professor of music, recorded the webinar “Where to Start When Introducing Jazz” this past summer for the National Association for Music Education. It was featured nationally on the Learning Network on July 23, 2014. Laughlin was also featured at the National Association for Music Education’s national conference in October, with his interactive presentation “Improvisation in the Music Curriculum”.

Laughlin also presented at the National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy (GP3) national conference hosted by the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in August. His presentation “Improvisation in Group Piano Curricula: A 10-Year Study” evaluates how colleges and universities throughout the United States meet the National Association of Schools of Music improvisation accreditation requirements within the group piano curriculum.

Laughlin will be presenting two improvisation workshops in early January 2015 for the Huntsville Music Teachers Association (Ala.), and the Florence/Muscle Shoals Area Music Teachers Association and Federation of Music Clubs.

### Sirocco: “Journeys of the Soul”

*Sirocco*, GSW’s arts magazine, is published in the Spring of each year. The magazine features literary, visual, and musical works by students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

This year’s theme is “Journeys of the Soul.” Following are guidelines for submissions.

#### Literary Submission Guidelines

**Deadline: Jan. 31, 2015**

Written works have the following length restrictions:
- Poetry – 40 lines
- Essay, short story, or 1 act – 3000 words

Proofreading is the responsibility of the author.

All submissions must be submitted to gswsirocco@gmail.com.

#### Art Submission Guidelines

**Deadline: Jan. 31, 2015**

All media (with the exception of time-based works) are welcomed. Preferred image format is 300 dpi in CMYK color mode. Please include the medium of the work in your submission.

*Optional*: You may include a short artist statement (250 word limit) with your entry.

Please send any formatting questions to gswsirocco@gmail.com.

#### Music Submission Guidelines

**Deadline: Jan. 31, 2015**

Must be original compositions or in the public domain.

Studio quality recordings are not necessary but are accepted.

Submissions must be on a CD with your name, contact information, and a description of the piece(s) or of the inspiration.

If submitting multiple music submissions, please place them on the same CD.

Multiple submissions are allowed for all categories. All literary and art submissions must be submitted to gswsirocco@gmail.com. All music submissions should be turned in on a CD to Michael Moir (English 239).

Contact Mark Laughlin, mark.laughlin@gsw.edu, before Dec. 31, 2014 for information on studio quality recordings.

Submissions are eligible for one of three prizes. Prose pieces are considered for the Editor’s Choice award, and poetry submissions are considered for the Poetry Prize. Both awards are chosen by Sirocco editors and staff and receive monetary prizes. Any art submitted to the magazine for publication will automatically be entered in the Cover Contest. The winner will be featured on the cover of the 2015 edition of Sirocco and receive a cash prize.

Once submissions are received, a release form will be emailed back. This form must be filled out and sent back or dropped off at Michael Moir’s office (English 239). The form must be returned for your piece(s) to be featured in the magazine.
The fall Board of Trustess meeting took place on Nov. 14, 2014. Pictured (left) are the current and life trustees attending the meeting and GSW Foundation staff members.

The board dinner took place at The Carnegie in Americus, Ga. following the board meeting. Pictured on the right are Drs. Kendall and Connie Blanchard with Kay and Mark Pace. Mark is the current chairman of the GSW Foundation Board of Trustees.