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I. PRESIDENT

Mercer’s mission is to equip its students with the skills and knowledge required to live full and successful lives, to empower them to become leaders in communities throughout the world, and to inspire them to deploy their talents to positively impact the human condition. Today, more than ever before, the University is transforming the lives of its students through engaged learning experiences – by engaging its students in discovery and creative activity, through service learning, and by exposure to different cultures through international study. The centerpiece of an engaged undergraduate learning experience at Mercer is the Mercer On Mission program, that integrates research, service, and international study into a single impactful package.

This signature program is unique in higher education in its impact on communities being served and in its impact on the lives of our students. Mercer faculty and students have been called to more than 35 countries since the program began in 2007, using the theory learned in our classrooms to solve real-world problems such as bringing clean water to remote villages in Kenya, Uganda and the Dominican Republic, developing highly functional and durable prosthetics for landmine victims in Vietnam, and mapping and remediating mercury contamination in mining communities in Mozambique, Ecuador and Peru. More than 1,250 Mercer students have joined in these endeavors. When their work is completed, they are forever changed by the experience.

A particularly exciting development is the impact Mercer On Mission is having in fueling a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship on campus. Students and scientists worked this past year to develop an efficient and effective system for capturing mercury emissions from gold mining activity in order to prevent environmental contamination. They are seeking patent protection for this system, which they are now working to commercialize to facilitate its distribution to hundreds of thousands of small scale gold mining operations across the globe. Another Mercer student, who saw a need to diversify the economy in these gold mining communities, is now working with farmers in Zaruma, Ecuador, to develop a local coffee industry. This Mercer senior has started a company called “Z Beans Coffee,” has obtained a license to import coffee from Ecuador, and has begun marketing this coffee for sale to coffee shops as well as directly to consumers.

This growing culture of innovation and entrepreneurship is being fueled by the dramatic expansion in research activity at the University over the past decade. Mercer is today ranked among the four leading first-tier national research universities in Georgia. Mercer is one of three Phi Beta Kappa research universities in the state and a member of the Georgia Research Alliance. The
GRA has recently invested in two start-up ventures launched by Mercer scientists. The first is DD Therapeutics, which has developed patented transdermal drug-delivery systems for treatment of patients with psychiatric and neurological disorders. The second is SynPloid LLC, which has developed a patented synthetic chromosome system for delivery of therapeutic genetic material directly to cancer cells.

Mercer is especially renowned in higher education circles for undergraduate research and is currently ranked among the top 30 universities in the United States for the quality of its undergraduate research program. As evidence of the quality of this program, Mercer has become the leading producer of Goldwater Scholars in the region. This is the most prestigious national scholarship available to students in the STEM disciplines and is based on the quality and relevance of their research activities.

The Mercer Innovation Center encourages students and faculty to take ideas developed through their research and build those ideas into successful companies. There are currently nine start-up companies based in the Mercer Innovation Center, developing healthcare diagnostic systems, personalized mobile apps to improve medication compliance, natural performance enhancing supplements for white collar workers, and credit card sized mobile tracking devices. This is an energetic and exciting time to be a Mercer Bear as we aspire to prepare each of our students to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities presented to our 21st century global community.

The University’s bylaws require the president to provide a report on the state of the University at the annual meeting each year. As has been the case for several years, this report will focus on progress under the 10-year strategic plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in April 2008, the term of which is coming to a close.

As discussed at our strategic planning workshop in Asheville, the plan expressed Mercer’s aspiration to be recognized academically as a peer of the other leading private research universities in the South, but in doing so we would not seek to replicate them. Our special challenge was to raise the academic achievements of our students and faculty and the profile of the University, while preserving our historic commitment to diversity and while manifesting a compelling model for faith-based higher education in recognition of our heritage as a university founded and nurtured by generations of Baptists.

By any measure, Mercer has achieved its aspiration of standing among the leading private research universities in the South. This standing has been achieved without sacrificing the qualities that have made Mercer special – without losing our soul. We have preserved a personal and intimate educational
experience in which class sizes remain among the smallest in the country. No undergraduate classes are taught by teaching assistants or graduate students and the percentage of students engaging in research with faculty remains higher than at our peer institutions. We have preserved the diverse environment that helps make Mercer special, a quality that has been carefully nurtured at Mercer since the 1960s. A significantly higher percentage of our student body are of African-American heritage than at any of our peer and aspirational peer institutions. Mercer’s heritage as an institution founded and nurtured by Baptists continues to undergird our university through the work of the McAfee School of Theology, through our strong commitment to intellectual freedom, and through compelling programs that inspire students to lead lives of service to others.

As the conversation surrounding higher education has shifted, our emphasis on controlling cost, achieving efficiency, and producing measurable outcomes has increased. Several objectives identified in the 2008 strategic plan are no longer prudent because they would have the effect of increasing cost for our students. Nevertheless, Mercer has not deviated from the principal thrust of the strategic plan and continues to make strong progress toward achieving the ten overarching goals identified in the plan.

**Goal 1**

The focus of our first goal was to increase demand among prospective students for a Mercer education. Once enrolled, we also intended to improve retention and graduation rates for undergraduate students.

Demand continues to grow among prospective undergraduate students. In the fall of 2007, we enrolled 582 qualified freshman students. Ten years later, we enrolled a freshman class of 892 students. The following graph illustrates our recent growth in freshman headcount for our traditional undergraduate program in Macon:
At our board planning retreat in 2014, we concluded that we would allow undergraduate enrollment in Macon to eventually reach 3,500 students. In the fall of 2017, our Macon undergraduate enrollment reached an all-time high of 3,251. At our workshop in 2017, the Board determined to raise the cap on undergraduate enrollment to 3,750 students, and we endeavor to offer the special “Mercer Experience” to more students. It is worth remembering that we are accomplishing this at a time when private colleges and universities across the country are facing significant challenges in meeting their enrollment goals as parents and prospective students are becoming increasingly cost conscious. Our growth in the face of these headwinds is remarkable.

Even more remarkable is the fact that the academic profile of the entering freshman class continues to improve as we have grown. The average high school grade point average of entering freshmen has improved from 3.6 in 2007 to 3.9 in 2017. Average scores on standardized tests have improved from the 76th percentile to the 90th percentile.

Retention is tracked based on three-year rolling averages to provide a more accurate assessment that discounts one-year aberrations. The freshman-to-sophomore retention rate for the three-year period immediately prior to adoption of the strategic plan (2005-2007) was 79.4%. The most recent three-year retention rate (2014-2016) was 87.2%.
This is strong improvement on an important metric of success, and we continue making progress toward our goal of 89% by the matriculating class of 2018.

Graduation rate is also tracked on a three-year rolling average. The graduation rate is something of a misnomer, because it does not measure the percentage of an institution’s students who graduate from college. Rather, it measures the percentage of an institution’s entering freshmen remaining to graduate from the same college where they began. Transfer students are not counted in the graduation rates of either the institution where they began or where they finished. Mercer’s three-year average for the last three years prior to adoption of the strategic plan was 53.7%. The most recent three-year average was 64.9%. Data on transfer students confirms that more than 90% of students who begin at Mercer graduate from college.
Mercer’s historic commitment to diversity means that we accept and enroll a significantly higher percentage of Pell Grant-eligible students than any of our academic peer institutions – approximately 27% of our freshman class in 2017. Because of their family financial circumstances, these students are much more likely to transfer to less rigorous or costly programs than students from wealthier backgrounds. While we are making progress toward our goal that 75% of Mercer freshmen will ultimately graduate from Mercer, our special challenge is to accomplish this objective while not substantially reducing our commitment to enrolling students from economically diverse backgrounds.

Goal 2

The focus of our second goal was to increase the level of high-quality research activity within the University. We have improved start-up packages for new faculty, improved laboratory resources, increased sabbatical opportunities and expectations, and increased seed funding for faculty with promising research agendas.

As a result of these efforts, NSF research expenditures have increased from $18.1 million in 2006-07 to $31.7 million in 2015-16. We will not have our final research number for 2016-17 until January 2018, but we expect it to exceed $35 million, which would be a record high. Our recent selection for membership in the Georgia Research Alliance is a reflection of these gains and should provide more access to state-funded support for research. Our goal of $40 million by 2017-18 remains in reach.
Goal 3

Our focus in the third goal was to engage more students in transformative learning experiences, including undergraduate research, service learning, and study abroad. These efforts directly support the mission of the University, which explicitly includes “to create, to discover” and “to serve,” while creating impactful and inspiring learning experiences for students.

With respect to undergraduate participation in research, Mercer has now been recognized among the 50 leading universities in the United States for undergraduate research, along with the likes of Carnegie Mellon, Harvard, Yale, Duke, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Princeton, Stanford and Vanderbilt. The following data indicate substantial growth in the number of undergraduate students who participate in faculty-mentored research and the number of undergraduate students who present their original research at national research conferences:
In addition, the University now celebrates undergraduate student scholarship with BEAR Day. At the most recent BEAR Day, 457 undergraduate students presented their research and scholarship to the University community, a nearly ten-fold increase from the original event in 2007:
Service learning has also been an area of considerable progress. Mercer was one of the most decorated institutions in the nation on the 2015 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, released in October 2016. The University was one of only four finalists nationally for the Presidential Award in the economic opportunity category and received Honor Roll with Distinction recognition in both the general community service and education categories. Among Georgia institutions, Mercer was the only finalist for a Presidential Award and the only to be recognized in more than two categories.

Over the past decade, the University has earned numerous awards and national recognition for community engagement. Mercer is one of fewer than 10% of the colleges and universities in the country to hold the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The classification, first awarded in 2008, was renewed for another 10 years in 2015. The University was previously on the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in 2014, 2013 (with distinction), 2008, 2007 and 2006.

The following graph reflects the upward trend in courses across the University with a defined service learning component:
Like undergraduate research and service learning, study abroad is an important form of engaged learning. Our goal was to achieve greater than 50% participation in study abroad among our traditional undergraduate students in Macon. Two surveys administered to senior undergraduate students in 2016 indicate that we are approaching that goal. The first (Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory) indicated that 42% of our seniors had engaged in at least one study abroad experience. Consistent with this result, the second survey (National Survey of Student Engagement) revealed that 41% of Mercer seniors had completed at least one study abroad experience. This compared to 37% at selected undergraduate peer institutions (such as Belmont, The Citadel, Elon, Furman, and Trinity) and 18% at private universities collectively in the Southeast. While we have not yet achieved our goal, we are now making positive progress toward that goal and are outperforming a number of quality undergraduate institutions. The continued growth of Mercer On Mission will be a key factor in continuing to build study abroad participation as we move forward.

Given our experience that indicates students who reside on campus are more engaged in the academic life of the institution and gain more from their undergraduate experience, we aspired to enhance the residential character of the undergraduate community in Macon by moving to a fully residential undergraduate community, which would in 2008 have required an additional 500 beds on campus. We have made enormous progress toward achieving this objective by adding more than 900 beds (including a 300-bed freshman residence hall and a 313-bed loft development for upperclassmen last year) and requiring freshmen through juniors to reside on campus, unless their families reside locally.
As the undergraduate population has grown, however, we have been pressured to accelerate our pace of adding campus housing, dining capacity, laboratories, and co-curricular space. In the fall of 2017, we have 2,480 undergraduate students living on campus, the most in our history, with space for only another 70 students. This is an occupancy rate of 97.25%. With projected growth in undergraduate enrollment, we will not be able to fully accommodate student demand by 2018. We are planning another 300-bed loft development across from Five Star Stadium that will be ready by the fall of 2019.

We have added a second cafeteria and multiple other food options including a Which Wich sandwich shop, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Panda Express, and a full-service Chick-fil-A. These additions provide sufficient dining capacity to meet our foreseeable needs. We gained 600 additional parking spots on campus in the fall of 2016. We are planning two additional parking decks, one in connection with the new loft development and the second adjacent to the engineering complex. The two decks will provide a net gain of 600 spaces. These additional spaces will meet our needs for the foreseeable future.

One outcome we anticipated from engaging more students in undergraduate research, service learning, and study abroad was to enhance their post-graduate opportunities. Specifically, we expected to place “on average at least five graduates each year in such prestigious post-graduate academic and service programs as Rhodes, Truman, Marshall, Teach For America, and the Peace Corps.” This expectation has been more than realized. During the 2016-17 academic year, for the fifth consecutive year a Mercer student was among the few recipients from Georgia institutions who were awarded the Goldwater Scholarship. Indeed, two Mercer students won the Goldwater – the first time we have had multiple winners in the same year. Three Mercer graduates received the Fulbright Scholarship, four were named Woodrow Wilson Fellows, four were
accepted into the Peace Corps, and one was accepted into Teach For America, among other significant post-graduate opportunities and fellowships.

Goal 4

Our focus in Goal 4 was obtaining a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, building our research profile through the addition of at least five Ph.D. programs in strategically important areas, and having “at least five” academic programs achieve “national prominence.” Mercer has made significant progress on each of these objectives.

A Phi Beta Kappa chapter has now been installed at Mercer, with students selected for inclusion in Phi Beta Kappa in the spring of 2016 and 2017. With respect to Ph.D. programs, we have added programs in nursing, counseling, and clinical psychology since the strategic plan was adopted and are working toward a Ph.D in religious studies and biomedical sciences. The number of Ph.D. students enrolled at Mercer has increased significantly over the last eight years. We are working to continue building quality and rigor in these Ph.D. programs. A necessary consequence of this focus has been and will continue to be to slow their growth – especially in the College of Education. Indeed, we expect to downsize the total number of Ph.D. students in the immediate future. As is evident from the following chart, the number of Ph.D. degrees being earned on an annual basis has also increased significantly, from only seven the year the strategic plan was adopted to nearly 60 in 2016-17. This increase has resulted in the Carnegie Foundation formally reclassifying Mercer as a research university, achieving another goal established in the strategic plan.

Ph.D. Degrees Awarded
While it is necessarily subjective to identify programs obtaining national prominence, several of our academic programs have moved in this direction, including The Center for Southern Studies, The Center for Drug Delivery Research, The Center for Collaborative Journalism, The Center for Rural Health and Health Disparities, The McDuffie Center for Strings in the Townsend School of Music, and the Law School's programs in Legal Writing and Professionalism.

Goal 5

For 173 years Mercer University was closely associated with the Georgia Baptist Convention, which had founded what was then called Mercer Institute in 1833. Since that relationship ended in 2006, Mercer has become an independent university with a self-perpetuating board.

Nonetheless, our Baptist heritage remains foundational to the University. The comments that accompany and expound on our mission statement make clear that Mercer “remains grounded in a tradition that embraces freedom of the mind and spirit, cherishes the equal worth of every individual, and commits to serving the needs of humankind.”

No program is more central to this heritage than Mercer On Mission, founded in 2007. Mercer On Mission combines academic rigor, research, service, and study abroad in a single impactful package. The program fosters spiritual growth by encouraging students and faculty to put feet to their faith through service to others, especially to the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed throughout the world. The Mercer On Mission program is becoming a principal vehicle in the University’s efforts to integrate the research and service missions of the institution.

During the 2016-17 academic year, 270 Mercer On Mission participants served at 12 sites around the world, the highest level of participation since the program was launched in 2007. The prosthetics program in Vietnam has now fit more than 7,000 amputees with new prosthetics at Mercer clinics in Vietnam. The Prime Minister of Vietnam has described Mercer as the most effective NGO operating in Vietnam. We now have two year-round clinical sites in Vietnam.

Mercer chemistry faculty and students continued and expanded their work on protocols to protect artisan gold miners in South America and Africa from mercury poisoning. Mercer environmental engineering faculty and students continue their work in bringing clean water to rural areas of Kenya and Uganda. And Mercer medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and pre-med students continue operating rural health clinics in Cambodia and Ecuador. As we move forward with Mercer On Mission, we intend to focus on high-impact programs that leverage the research mission of the University to advance our service mission.
Mercer was founded in large measure to educate ministers for Baptist churches. This founding mission continues today through Mercer’s McAfee School of Theology. With the continued erosion of denominational identity, as well as an increased reliance on bi-vocational ministers, McAfee will be challenged to enlarge its focus to educating ministers in new ways and for broader constituencies.

There are many other ways that Mercer is remaining faithful to its heritage, including requiring undergraduate students in the College of Liberal Arts to engage in a serious study of religion as part of the required curriculum, the Mercer Press publishing works focusing on religious issues, maintaining the extensive archives of the American Baptist Historical Society, and sponsoring regular conferences that explore how faith relates to pressing issues such as poverty, the environment, torture, and human trafficking. But most importantly, Mercer is a place where faculty and students are encouraged to explore questions that are fundamental to an informed life – questions about meaning and good and evil, questions about God, and questions about life and death.

Goal 6

Our sixth goal focused on expanding and improving our physical facilities. Almost all the projects identified in the 2008 strategic plan have been completed or are underway. In Macon, construction nears completion on the $44 million Spearman C. Godsey Science Center, a 140,000-square-foot facility that will
house our important programs in biology, chemistry, biochemistry and molecular biology, and neuroscience.

Construction was completed in March of 2017 on the new baseball facility – OrthoGeorgia Park at Claude Smith Field. The first game played in the new stadium was a stirring victory over the University of Georgia, the Bears fifth victory over the Bulldogs in their last six contests.
The most significant facilities project identified in the strategic plan that has not yet been addressed is the construction of a new student center in Macon, which remains a long-term need. We have conceptual drawings for a new student center, but are several years away from taking on this project. In the short term, we have substantially renovated the existing student center and have converted some of the University Center to functions that are traditionally located in student centers.

Goal 7

The strategic plan recognized that technology touches every aspect of the University’s operation and can enhance the learning environment for our students. Given this reality, the plan identified eight objectives to ensure that the University maintained an appropriate technology infrastructure for administration and learning. As we reported last year, we have achieved seven of these eight objectives. With respect to the eighth goal, to equip 75% of our classrooms as “smart” classrooms, we remain on track to complete it by 2018.

The rapid rate of information technology change, of course, creates continual challenges. We completed implementation of our new information system several years ago, but the University has recently completed a major upgrade that will enhance functionality of this system. The original objective of implementing wireless internet on all campuses was to allow students to connect their laptops anywhere. Nationally students now bring between four and six wireless devices, which has necessitated that the wireless network be expanded on a regular basis. The objective to upgrade online communication systems focused originally on e-mail and the web, but student use of e-mail has been replaced by texting, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. The University support and services have been adjusted accordingly. The training of faculty and staff in the use of enhanced technology remains an ongoing quest because there is new technology being applied to education with each passing year.

Goal 7 has been mostly achieved, but to maintain the ideals embodied in this goal requires continual diligence, regular planning updates, and significant investment each year.

Goal 8

Our eighth strategic goal focused on generating greater support among constituents for the work of the University.

The University’s visibility has grown in recent years with (1) the addition of football and the fact we are beginning to play higher visibility games such as the
near victory over Auburn earlier this fall and the upcoming game with top-ranked Alabama, (2) the NCAA Tournament win over Duke in men’s basketball, (3) achieving membership in the Georgia Research Alliance and our formal reclassification as a research university, (4) being elected into Phi Beta Kappa, and (5) being ranked among national universities in publications such as U.S. News & World Report. As a consequence of all of this, Mercer is reaping benefits as reflected in increased undergraduate enrollment and growing financial support.

We continue working to improve our programming for alumni, including reviving our Homecoming tradition that had essentially died. Tremendous progress has been made toward achieving this objective, with a goal of having 3,500 registrations for Homecoming 2017. Experience has taught us that the number of registrations, while significant, represents only a fraction of the alumni who return to campus for Homecoming. The resumption of intercollegiate football competition in 2013 has dramatically increased participation in Homecoming, with over 15,000 individuals expected on the Macon campus over the course of the weekend.

U.S. News & World Report’s ranking methodology considers the giving rates of traditional undergraduate alumni. New and additional tactical strategies are being utilized to continue making progress in this area, and further detailed information is included in the University Advancement section of the President’s Report.

The Advancement Office encompasses an Alumni Services and Special Events department that consists of a team that has year-round responsibilities related to our approximately 76,000 alumni worldwide. During the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the Office of Alumni Services and Special Events planned and/or conducted approximately 125 alumni and University special events on our campuses and throughout the United States.

Creating a network of Mercer Alumni Chapters is another way the office has reached out to alumni and friends for some Mercer presence and activity in their hometowns. Promotion of volunteer leadership opportunities began in early 2014. Chapters have now been launched in 43 cities, and include approximately 2,450 alumni members. Our goal is for each of these chapters to grow into vibrant sources of activity helping to maintain and deepen the connection between our alumni and the University.

The Mercer brand also continues to experience a wider profile through the sale of licensed merchandise. For the 2016-17 fiscal year, sales of licensed merchandise surpassed $1.73 million in retail value, a 10.9% increase over 2015-16 and a new record for the University. Perhaps more important than the
financial benefits to the University, the increasing number of constituents who are purchasing Mercer-branded merchandise reflects growing institutional pride and healthy school spirit. And every person walking the streets wearing Mercer apparel is a moving advertisement for the University.

Support for the University from the Middle Georgia community has never been stronger. Community leaders credit Mercer’s investments in the College Hill Corridor, Downtown Macon, and in surrounding historic neighborhoods as major factors in the renaissance taking place in Macon. This community revitalization helps Mercer by enabling the University to be more successful in recruiting and retaining talented students, faculty and staff.

Mercer’s return to intercollegiate football competition continues to advance the University. Football is helping the University reconnect with its alumni, it has enhanced school spirit, is a factor in our growing undergraduate student enrollment, and most certainly paved the way for the invitation to join the Southern Conference. In its fourth year, football averaged more than 10,000 spectators in attendance, the second-highest average attendance level in the Southern Conference. Thousands more participate by viewing the ESPN3 broadcast of every home game – broadcasts largely produced by students interested in careers in sports journalism in our Center for Collaborative Journalism. As we continue upgrading our schedule, we anticipate realizing even greater benefits.

Increased alumni engagement benefits the University in many ways. We believe that it has contributed to our growing undergraduate enrollment, as alumni have become more active in recommending prospective students to Mercer. The number of alumni who support the University financially has also grown, from 3,590 in 2009-10 to 4,856 in 2016-17. The overall number of contributors has likewise grown, from 6,771 in 2009-10 to 8,684 in 2016-17.

Goal 9

The ninth goal focuses on our intercollegiate athletics program, which competes in Division I of the NCAA as a member of the Southern Conference. We continue making significant progress on every imperative identified in Goal 9.

Almost all of our student-athletes are preparing for careers in the fields of business, law, education, engineering, and medicine – rather than careers as professional athletes. While we strive mightily to compete successfully on the courts, courses and fields, the first priority for our student-athletes must be to compete successfully in our classrooms and laboratories.

It is especially appropriate that several imperatives identified in Goal 9 focus
on academic achievement by our student-athletes. The first of these is to achieve at least a 925 Academic Progress Rate (APR) in each intercollegiate sport sponsored by the University. Each student-athlete earns one retention point for staying in school and one eligibility point for being academically eligible. A team’s total points are divided by the total points possible and then multiplied by 1,000 to equal the team’s APR score. Assume, for example, that the men’s basketball team has the maximum of 13 student-athletes on scholarship, but two are academically ineligible and one of the two drops out. There would be a maximum possible 26 APR points and the team would earn 23 of those points. The team’s APR score would be 885.

Our goal of being above 925 in every sport was far too modest. The NCAA now mandates that teams maintain a minimum score of 930 calculated on a rolling four-year average. The NCAA penalizes any team that falls below that average. We have revised our goal upward to a minimum of 965 for each team, calculated on a rolling average – a goal well above the mandated NCAA minimum. During the 2016-17 academic year, 10 of our 18 sponsored sports had perfect APR scores of 1000.

The Graduation Success Rate of our student-athletes reached 91% this year, which tied with last year for the highest in our history. Among the seven Division I athletics programs in Georgia, Mercer continues to have the highest Graduation Success Rate:

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<tr>
<td>Georgia State</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Tech</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Southern</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennesaw State</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah State</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second imperative was to maintain an overall athletic grade point average of at least 3.0. Our student-athletes have met this standard each year, with an overall grade point average of 3.4 for the 2016-17 academic year – the highest in Mercer’s history.

The third academic imperative was to have at least 65% of our student-athletes achieve Southern Conference academic honors. During the 2016-17 academic year, 314 of 364 total Mercer student-athletes achieved this distinction by posting grade point averages of 3.0 and above (86%), which ranked Mercer first among the 10 institutions in our conference. Furman was a distant second with 228. We have led the Southern Conference in student-athlete academic achievement every year we have been in the league.
A record-setting total 78 of our student-athletes were awarded the Commissioner’s Medal, given annually to student-athletes in the Southern Conference who maintain a GPA of at least 3.8 during the year. And 32 of our student-athletes had perfect 4.0 GPAs for the year. The bottom line is that in terms of academic achievement, our student-athletes continue to dominate the Southern Conference.

We sought to strengthen athletics fundraising to help achieve increased competitiveness in intercollegiate athletics competition. We have been remarkably successful in this endeavor, as demonstrated by the following athletics fundraising totals for annual operational support:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$377,497.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$552,275.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$608,854.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$1,024,918.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>$1,506,335.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>$1,604,329.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>$1,819,487.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>$1,934,380.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three Mercer athletics teams won conference championships during 2016-17: Men’s Soccer, Women’s Basketball, and Baseball.

**Goal 10**

The financial goals established in the strategic plan reflect the very different circumstances that existed prior to the Great Recession that began in 2008 and the upheaval in higher education over the intervening years.

The expectation of increasing tuition revenue by $15 million to $20 million annually, as expressed in the strategic plan, is no longer realistic or desirable given our intense focus on holding down costs for students and their families. While the idea of voluntarily foregoing millions in annual revenue would seem foreign in a different context, as a mission-driven non-profit educational institution our challenge is to provide the highest quality, most impactful, and most relevant educational experience possible for the lowest price possible.

Our below-market undergraduate tuition increases since FY 2010 (2-2.5% in each of the last five years) have reflected this changed focus:
We have had a similar focus in our graduate and professional school programs. 2016-17 was the fifth consecutive year without a tuition increase in the School of Medicine in an effort to hold down student debt and thereby encourage our students to enter primary care in rural and underserved areas of Georgia. The $35 million grant received from the State of Georgia in 2015-16 will further advance this goal given our decision to use the entire sum to endow scholarships for students who will commit to providing primary care to patients in rural Georgia. We began awarding these scholarships earlier this year, and have named the program for our current Governor and double Mercer graduate Nathan Deal. For the fourth consecutive year there was no tuition increase in the School of Law.

Our annual net tuition revenue since the strategic plan was adopted in 2008 has been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Percentage Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>$97,835,581</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>$110,434,401</td>
<td>(+$12.6 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>$117,981,276</td>
<td>(+$7.6 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>$125,104,147</td>
<td>(+$7.1 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>$131,176,829</td>
<td>(+$6.1 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>$135,607,480</td>
<td>(+$4.4 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>$141,728,617</td>
<td>(+$6.1 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>$145,173,154</td>
<td>(+$3.4 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>$143,954,802</td>
<td>(-$1.2 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>$145,682,732</td>
<td>(+1.7 m)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With respect to enrollment, we have surpassed our aspiration of at least 8,500 students (headcount) by 2017. Our final enrollment in 2017 will approach 8,700, up from 7,308 in 2007. The following graph illustrates our growth pattern since we adopted the strategic plan:

![University Enrollment by Headcount](image)

Over Mercer’s first 173 years, its endowment grew to $172 million – just under $1 million a year. The strategic plan articulated an aspiration of increasing this endowment by $825 million over the next 10 years – an average increase of $82.5 million a year. This aspiration was quite evidently optimistic under any circumstances, but especially so given the sluggish economic conditions that have existed throughout the intervening years. Nonetheless, Mercer has experienced solid growth in endowment from $174 million in 2006 to more than $325 million in 2017. We think it is realistic to aim for having doubled the endowment over the 10 years of the strategic plan – which would require us to reach $350 million by 2018.
As anticipated by the strategic plan, we have reduced our spending rate on the endowment to a conservative level of 4.75%.

The Great Recession negatively impacted private giving at universities across the country, but the level of giving to the University has fully rebounded from a low of $10.5 million in 2009-10 to $49.8 million in 2015-16 and $31.5 million in 2016-17. Annual totals tend to be skewed by large gifts, but using a three-year rolling average we have grown from $11.8 million per year from FY 2009-11 to $36.3 million from FY 2015-17. Two years into the campaign, we are approaching $215 million toward our campaign goal of $400 million.

Given the new realities of higher education in the post-Great Recession era, we should anticipate having less additional revenue than was forecast in the 2008 strategic plan. This will require rethinking several initiatives that would have the effect of reducing productivity and efficiency. Among these were the aspirations to reduce student/faculty ratio from 13/1 to 11/1 and thereby further reduce faculty course loads.

The University has consistently operated within its means, achieving our aspiration of “operating within a balanced budget.” We have operated with a budget surplus for 11 consecutive years and have experienced positive operating results in every year but one over the past decade. In three of the past 11 years, we have experienced a net reduction in assets – in each instance a reduction due to investment declines in the financial markets. Nonetheless, the following
data confirm $33.5 million in budget surpluses over the past eight years, as well as an increase of more than $33 million from operations and total growth in net assets in excess of $169 million:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Budget Surplus</th>
<th>Net Assets from Operations</th>
<th>Net Asset Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$301,635</td>
<td>($2,037,864)</td>
<td>$10,404,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$4,129,064</td>
<td>$7,331,312</td>
<td>$49,258,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$2,697,923</td>
<td>$2,854,338</td>
<td>($2,677,109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$4,033,306</td>
<td>$4,701,068</td>
<td>$24,762,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$3,124,328</td>
<td>$1,579,421</td>
<td>$37,695,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$2,613,001</td>
<td>$5,762,274</td>
<td>$8,683,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$8,065,982</td>
<td>$3,250,403</td>
<td>($6,268,295)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$8,653,584</td>
<td>$9,701,675</td>
<td>$47,572,895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

As we enter the final year of the current strategic plan, we look forward to continued progress toward achieving the bold goals and vision established in that plan, as well as developing the next plan to guide the course of this important institution of higher learning.
II. PROVOST

The Office of the Provost oversees and provides support for all curricular and academic programs at the University. The largest and most complex academic building in the history of the University was underway in 2016-17 with the construction of the Spearman C. Godsey Science Center. The Departments of Chemistry and Biology, along with science faculty from the Tift College of Education and Penfield College, will begin teaching in the space at the start of the Spring 2018 semester. The Godsey Science Center will be a key piece of infrastructure to facilitate and support the growth of undergraduate students interested in the sciences, engineering, and health-related fields. Equipped with modern teaching laboratories and research spaces, the building will promote and increase problem-based laboratory experiences and expand the capacity of our undergraduate research portfolio. This new science center will further strengthen the University’s national recognition and will place Mercer in the upper echelon for undergraduate science education.

The Godsey Science Center features over 143,000 sq. ft. of space. The scale and scope of the building is tremendous with nearly 1,000 tons of steel, 103 miles of wiring, and 27 tractor-trailers of laboratory casework. The building features 19 teaching labs with 10 preparatory spaces to support them and 8 classrooms ranging in size from 24 to 100 seats. In the spring of 2018, there will be as many as 450 students taking courses in the building at a given time. To support the increased demand in undergraduate research, the building features over 10,000 sq. ft. of dedicated research space, which is over a 180% increase from Willet Science Center. There is also
another 6,200 sq. ft. of space to house over $3 million of new and existing instrumentation for use in the upper-level teaching labs as well as undergraduate research. The building has 46 offices, with about 10-15% of those slated to support future growth. Within the common areas of the building there will be seating for over 150 students who wish to study or work in small groups outside of class and laboratory time. The size, scale, and design of the building both empowers the science faculty and allows them to provide a nationally recognized experience for current and future Mercerians. The Willet Science Center, former home of the Departments of Biology and Chemistry, will be renovated to house the departments of Psychology, Computer Science, Athletic Training, Public Health, and Environmental Engineering. Approximately 60,000 sq. ft. will be modernized to accommodate these growing academic programs.

RESEARCH THAT REACHES OUT

Research That Reaches Out, the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), completed its second year of implementation. Research That Reaches Out provides traditional residential undergraduates with opportunities to integrate research and service with two guiding goals: (1) enhance student learning through service-focused research and (2) foster a culture of civic engagement through scholarship and service. In this way the QEP enhances student learning while also advancing the mission and strategic plan of the University. The Research That Reaches Out plan continues through 2020.
The curricular model designed for Research That Reaches Out involves a three-level approach to empowering students to participate in service-focused research: Expose, Explore, Express. The aim is to provide learning opportunities to allow graduating classes to progress through this three-step sequence: Expose 95% of each cohort to the process of analyzing community-related problems; Explore with at least 50% of each cohort the implementation of contextually-relevant responses to local, national, or global issues; and enable at least 25% of each cohort to Express solutions through careful analysis of needs and implementation of research methods and service activities. The 2016-17 academic year was the second year of the Expose, Explore, Express implementation.

The first introduction of freshmen to the ideas of service-based research, Expose, occurs through a specially-designed assignment in a required general education course. These assignments, called “Signature Assignments,” expose students to guided practice with proposing solutions to a local, national, or global problem using academic knowledge. Examples of successful Signature Assignments include asking students to make connections between modern political struggles to tactics presented in the Peloponnesian War and prompting students to research new approaches to and the ethics of the use of biofuels, artificial intelligence, and nanotechnology. The 2016 freshman class exceeded the goal of 95% by exposing 97% of students to service-based research.

The next level, Explore, was fully operational in 2016-17 through such opportunities as upper-level coursework, undergraduate research, Mercer On Mission,
and internships. In the previous academic year, several faculty piloted Explore-level coursework to learn how to guide students to successfully design and implement solutions to real-world problems through an integration of research and service. In 2016-17 faculty capitalized on these pilot experiences by continuing to find creative ways to bring in service-research projects into existing courses. For example, in Biology of Aging students learn about aging from the cellular level to disease manifestation. In the Explore-level version of BIO 390, students combined this academic knowledge with training for being community hospice volunteers, and then worked outside of class time as hospice volunteers. This fulfilled a local need for caring and informed hospice volunteers and provided the students with a transformative Research That Reaches Out experience. Another example of a faculty member creatively incorporating service-focused research occurred in the senior-level Marketing classes, Marketing Research and Marketing Management, in the Stetson School of Business and Economics. In these linked courses, students learn about research methods, including data collection and analysis, and gain practice implementing them for a client. Dr. Tammy Crutchfield took these course learning outcomes and applied them to a community need: a lack of education about sex trafficking. Students took what they learned in the classroom about marketing and combined it with new research on sex trafficking and curriculum development. A team of 29 students developed a financial and marketing plan to sustain their brand, Traffick Jam, and then they developed a curriculum to train area teens and their parents in how to recognize and stop sex trafficking. In Spring 2017 this curriculum educated over 300 local high school students.
Additional service-research opportunities were explored through funding from the Research That Reaches Out office during 2016-17. Over $27,000 supported the development of new Explore or Express service-research opportunities such as Go Baby Go, a national, community-based research, design, and outreach program for providing children with disabilities the opportunity for mobility through the use of modified motorized toy cars. Go Baby Go was implemented into the Engineering Scholars Track of the University Honors Program and gave all students in that track the opportunity to apply their engineering research and design to a Middle Georgia need. Last year the honors students researched, designed, and modified 20 battery-powered toy cars for children with disabilities.

The Summer Student Research Program, which began in May 2016 and will continue until at least 2020, supports students working directly with faculty on Research That Reaches Out projects. The purpose of this summer program is to immerse students in the integration of research and service at the Explore and/or Express levels. Summer program support includes faculty stipends of $5,000, student stipends of $3,500, on-campus housing, and $750 in supplies. In Summer 2017 Research That Reaches Out funded $112,675 of Student Summer Research projects, supporting 10 faculty and 14 students who represent five of Mercer’s schools and colleges. For example, Arjit Saxena (Neuroscience, CLA) and Ted Dorfeuille (Computational Science and Physics, CLA) worked with Dr. Andy Pounds (Chemistry and Computer Science, CLA) and a local neurosurgeon to develop improved virtual reality simulations for training of medical students. Catherine Crowe (International Affairs, CLA), with the
guidance of Dr. Eimad Houry (International and Global Studies, CLA), researched new ways to address social and cultural barriers to assimilation for refugees. She implemented her findings in a refugee settlement in New Haven, CT. These and other summer service-research project results will be disseminated by the students at the Summer Student Research Symposium, BEAR Day, and regional and national conferences.

Many of the Mercer On Mission projects achieve Explore or Express learning outcomes. These international experiences, taken together with the on-campus opportunities during the academic year and summer program, have the first two Research That Reaches Out classes on track to meet the Explore participation goal of 50% of each class prior to graduation, with more than 500 students achieving the Explore level of Research That Reaches Out. Express is fully operational in 2017-18.

FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The University had another successful year for students receiving nationally and internationally recognized fellowships and scholarships. Major awards include three Fulbright Scholars, two Goldwater Scholars, a Davies-Jackson scholar, a Payne scholar, and a Boren scholar. Mercer students are succeeding at the highest levels and outperforming many of the best institutions in the nation in fellowship and scholarship success.

Major awards received by Mercer students include:

- Morgan Akridge: Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship
- Caleb Barefield: Peace Corps
• Kyle Bligen: Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Internship
  Newman Civic Fellow

• Drew Bryant: Teach for America

• Jaz Buckley: John Lewis Fellowship

• Runyu Cai: Goldwater Scholarship

• Maggie Callahan: Boren Scholarship

• Anna Cizek: Teaching Assistantship Program in France

• Joey Chan: Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship

• Nora Darling: Fulbright Student Program (Alternate)

• Austin Lord: Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship

• Jiyou Oh: Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship

• Cole Porter: Mount Vernon Leadership Fellowship

• Gabriel Ramirez: Peace Corps

• Zac Rice: DAAD Research in Science and Engineering

• Jessica Resnick: AMGEN Scholarship, Goldwater Scholarship Honorable Mention

• Jose Santana Villa: Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship

• Aaron Scherf: Payne Fellowship in International Development, Fulbright Student Program (Germany) Humanity in Action

• Kyla Semmendinger: Goldwater Scholarship

• Teal St. Nicklaus: Davies-Jackson Scholarship

• Emily Thompson: Truman Scholarship (Finalist)
• David Wildes: *Fulbright Student Program (Spain)*
• Alayna Williams: *Fulbright Student Program (South Africa)*
• Anastasia Winfield: *Critical Language Scholarship*

**RESEARCH**

Conducting basic research and finding applications for this research in service to others is a vital component of the mission of Mercer University. We support our researchers to advance, contribute, and disseminate original knowledge both foundational and applied to improve humanity. Through this, we are able to contribute to Mercer’s mission “to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve.” In support of this goal, Mercer’s annual research expenditures have increased from $18 million in the 2006-07 academic year to approximately $35 million in the 2016-17 academic year.

Engaging graduate and undergraduate students in research programs provides opportunities for students to express creativity, find innovative solutions to problems, engage in inquiry and discovery, add to the body of knowledge in a respective field, and to make scholarly contributions. For the 2016-17 academic year, 373 undergraduate students participated in an individual research project with faculty and 147 undergraduate students presented their research work at national/international conferences. Undergraduate student participation in individual research projects and presentations at national/international conferences has shown steady growth with a 47% increase in student participation over the last five years.
As part of the Southern Conference Academic Exchange, Wofford College hosted the first SoCon Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF) on October 28-29, 2016. Representatives from each conference school worked to organize this inaugural event. The forum featured students and faculty from the 10 Southern Conference institutions presenting their research projects in all disciplines of the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences. Mercer selected 12 projects with 13 student presenters from the College of Liberal Arts, School of Engineering, and School of Business and Economics to give poster and oral presentations at the event.

Breakthroughs in Engagement, the Arts and Research (BEAR) Day was held in Macon on April 6-7, 2017, and serves as an annual showcase of outstanding undergraduate student research and special projects from the College of Liberal Arts, Stetson School of Business and Economics, Tift College of Education, Townsend School of Music, and from the School of Engineering with Engineering Expo Day. This year’s event had over 457 student presentations in the program, demonstrating the breadth and depth of the academic experience at Mercer. Student participation in BEAR Day has increased by 52% over the last five years. The Mercer Atlanta campus hosted its 7th Annual Research Conference on April 8, 2017, with presentations by 115 students (primarily graduate level) and faculty. The Atlanta Research Conference featured presentations from the College of Pharmacy, Georgia Baptist College of Nursing, College of Health Professions, Penfield College, McAfee School of Theology, Tift College of Education, and the School of Medicine. The School of Medicine and the College of Pharmacy hosted a joint health sciences research conference on the Atlanta
campus on May 22, 2017, with 75 presentations given by faculty and graduate students. This research symposium reflected a combination of biomedical and applied clinical science research. These Mercer research conferences provide an interactive forum for students and faculty to share their research ideas and results with colleagues and provide opportunities for discussions leading to further inter-disciplinary and collaborative research efforts.

Undergraduate research experiences and opportunities have been enhanced through the development and implementation of Mercer Undergraduate Biomedical Scholars Program (MUBS) providing extensive research experience for undergraduate students in the biomedical sciences (modeled after National Science Foundation – Research Experience for Undergraduates program NSF-REU). The MUBS program provides stipends, housing, research supplies allowance, and conference travel support at $7,000 per student for summer research experiences. MUBS students have received more than $5 million in tuition, scholarships and stipends, including the prestigious Goldwater Scholarships -- the highest undergraduate scholarship for STEM students. The University has produced six Goldwater Scholars over the past five years, an unusual accomplishment for an institution with Mercer's undergraduate student body size. The one- and two-year scholarships, awarded to undergraduate sophomores and juniors, cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, and room and board up to a maximum of $7,500 per year. Goldwater Scholars have very impressive academic qualifications that have garnered the attention of outstanding postgraduate fellowship programs.
Kyla Semmendinger, a junior from Bremen, and Runyu Cai, a sophomore from Macon, each received 2016-2017 Goldwater Scholarships based on academic merit from a field of 1,286 mathematics, science and engineering students nominated by the faculties of 470 colleges and universities nationwide. They are the University’s first pair of Goldwater Scholars in a single year.

Semmendinger, who is majoring in environmental engineering with minors in Spanish, chemistry and engineering for development, conducts research in the labs of Dr. Laura Lackey, professor of environmental engineering, and Dr. Michael MacCarthy, assistant professor of environmental engineering. Semmendinger was instrumental in the success of a 2015 Mercer On Mission trip to Kenya that focused on monitoring the efficacy of using biosand filters to treat water for drinking, has been a key member of Mercer’s Engineering for Development Research Team and has conducted research related to low-cost shallow geothermal heating and cooling systems for households in Central Georgia. She plans to obtain a Ph.D. in environmental engineering with a research focus in the relationship between hydrology and forestry, specifically in developing nations.

Cai, who is double-majoring in electrical engineering and physics and is originally from Weihai, Shandong, China, has made significant contributions to the lab of Dr. Makhin Thitsa, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, including devising a method to apply nonlinear control to modulate 550-nanometer laser emission, which is the key wavelength of interest for underwater communication without frequency chirping, and developing a method to eliminate crosstalk in semiconductor
optical amplifiers using nonlinear state feedback control. He plans to obtain doctoral degrees in both electrical engineering and physics, teach at the university level and conduct research in nonlinear control and theoretical physics.

In 2016-17, Mercer partnered with the Georgia Research Alliance (GRA) on several initiatives. With a combination of GRA and in-house funds, Mercer purchased and installed a state of the art transmission electron microscope ($800,000) that is located on the Savannah campus as part of a microscopy core facility. This key equipment purchase greatly enhances the research capabilities for faculty in the School of Medicine and throughout the Health Sciences. Faculty in the School of Medicine and College of Pharmacy are also partnering with the GRA on initial start-up funding for potential commercialization opportunities/new company developments based on discovery of novel drug delivery methodologies. These new drug delivery methods result in targeted and more efficient processes of drug administration while minimizing drug side effects. Two start-up companies have been launched at Mercer to commercialize promising new drug delivery systems developed in the labs of University research scientists.

SynPloid LLC, formed by Dr. Edward Perkins and Dr. Amy Greene, associate professor and assistant professor, respectively, in the Mercer School of Medicine, is focused on bioengineering solutions for complex biological problems using their synthetic chromosome system. One application of this new system allows for delivery of genetic material, including multiple encoded chemotherapeutic agents, in a targeted manner to directly attack tumor cells while not harming healthy normal tissue. Dr.
Perkins’ lab is currently focused on applying this new gene/drug delivery technology in treatment of certain forms of breast cancer as well as orphan genetic diseases. Dr. Perkins’ research program is currently funded by two grants from the National Institutes of Health and grants from the Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). The DARPA awards represent a collaborative partnership to develop further new applications for the synthetic chromosome gene/drug delivery system. The Perkins research program has completed a Phase I DARPA award that provided proof of concept for engineering of multiple, large genetic payloads onto the synthetic chromosome. It is now in the Phase II DARPA process, which provides funding for the company start-up, expansion of the gene/drug delivery system applications, and development of commercialization strategies.

DD Therapeutics, formed by Dr. Kevin Murnane, associate professor and vice chair of pharmacy practice, and Drs. Ajay Banga and Martin D’Souza, professors and co-directors of the Center for Drug Delivery Research in Mercer’s College of Pharmacy, are developing new transdermal and nanotechnology-based drug delivery systems that will provide more stable and sustained dosing with less fluctuations and variability in dosing and improved drug delivery at therapeutic levels in the central nervous system. Potential therapeutic applications include improved treatment in a variety of neurological diseases such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), substance-abuse, substance-dependence, narcolepsy, and appetite suppression. Patent applications for these new drug delivery technologies have been filed and DD Therapeutics has been formed as a start-up company focused on development and commercialization for these
technologies. DD Therapeutics has received a Georgia Research Alliance Ventures Phase 1 grant and is also pursuing grant applications with the National Institutes of Health, including Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) awards.

In another business development to come out of Mercer research labs, the University has entered into a licensing agreement with Kiromic Inc., a biotechnology company based in Houston, Texas. The licensing agreement is centered on the patented drug delivery technologies developed in the research lab of Dr. Martin D'Souza. Dr. D'Souza has developed a novel biodegradable nanoparticle oral drug delivery system. These encapsulated drug delivery microspheres are at a nanometer size scale that allows for improved access to tumor cells and cells of the immune system. The microspheres contain drugs that serve as potential cancer vaccines to stimulate a patient’s own immune system to recognize developing cancers as foreign molecules, much like it would to an invading bacterial or viral infection. In this case, the immune system would eradicate the presence of these cancer cells before they have a chance to grow into tumors.

SERVICE

Mercer faculty members throughout the University continue to create high-impact learning opportunities for students and provide irreplaceable capacity-building and outreach to communities through service learning. Last year students across the University contributed over half a million hours of service (535,969 hours) to communities through service learning and volunteerism. Based on the University
enrollment for the year, this equates to two hours per week per student or 62 hours per student per year. The estimated labor value of that service is nearly $13 million.

Among the noteworthy programs included in this community outreach are two programs managed through the Office of Service Learning and focused on supporting Bibb County public school students. The first is Mercer’s participation in the college readiness tutoring program for the Bibb County School District, GEAR UP. Mercer has provided 200 tutors per year for the past six years to cohorts of students, beginning in the 6th and 7th grades and continuing through the 12th grade. The first cohort has just graduated from high school, and the school district credits the tutoring program with helping to close the academic achievement gap for these low-income students.

According to statistics provided by the school district, not only did 99% of the students who received tutoring graduate high school on time (compared to 77% for the district as a whole), but 84% applied to colleges and 71% were accepted. This far exceeds the performance for the rest of the district student body.

The second program is Mercer’s partnership with the United Way of Central Georgia in providing tutors for a reading literacy program, Read2Succeed. For several years, only approximately 50% of elementary school students in the Bibb County School District reached grade-level reading scores. For the past three years, Mercer has provided nearly 100 tutors per year for these low-income 1st-3rd graders who are struggling to learn to read, with a goal of helping students achieve grade-level reading scores by the end of third grade -- the point at which children stop learning to read and
read to learn. Last year, thanks to the Read2Succeed program, 92 students reached grade-level reading, and all students receiving tutoring improved their reading scores.

Junior Kyle Bligen was selected as a Newman Civic Fellow by Campus Compact, the nation’s leading organization working to advance service-learning, civic engagement and the public purposes of higher education. The fellowship is a one-year experience providing a variety of leadership and networking opportunities, including a national conference in partnership with the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, as well as access to exclusive scholarship and postgraduate opportunities. Bligen, a politics, philosophy and economics (PPE) major from Peachtree City, is one of 273 students from across the nation to be selected for this year’s cohort. As a Newman Civic Fellow, Bligen will spearhead a mentorship initiative that will pair successful Mercer student leaders with at-risk youth in the Macon community.

Mercer Service Scholars, a part of the University Honors Program, is a cohort of approximately 45 high-achieving sophomores-seniors who engage in a special curriculum to develop skills in servant leadership and community development. Like all Honors Program students, they must maintain a 3.5 GPA over their Mercer career. In addition, Service Scholars are expected to contribute 60 hours of leadership and service to the community each year, participate in a special Mercer On Mission trip that they help to design, and complete a capstone community-based service project that will have significant impact. Many of the projects that Service Scholars have launched in the past are now fixtures at Mercer: Service Saturdays, alternative spring break, and the Leadership Mercer Program.
Last year’s graduating Mercer Service Scholars class distinguished themselves. Of the 13 graduates, five were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa (Timothy Lewis, Drew Winslett, Anna Johnson, Andrew Hearn, Annalise Estrada); Alayna Williams earned a Fulbright Teaching position and the Louie D. Newton Medal; and Timothy Lewis earned the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. In the junior class, Andrew Kelley was awarded the James T. McAfee Endowed Vision and Leadership Award; Natalie Wharton received the Gordon Ware Award and Cardinal Health Foundation Scholarship; and Joseph Payne received a Nicholson Scholarship and the J. Marion Roberts Award to study in the U.K.
III.  ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

A.  College of Liberal Arts

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) experienced another year of growth and success. The faculty worked with Dean Anita Gustafson to focus on examining and promoting the value of a liberal arts education in an environment where such an education is often called into question. The Faculty Development Committee formed reading groups to discuss Mark William Roche’s book *Why Choose the Liberal Arts?* and discussions centered on how best to prepare our graduates for future careers. Numerous studies show that in fact, employers value the skills in their employees that a liberal arts education develops. As noted in a 2017 publication by the *Chronicle of Education* entitled *The Future of Work: How Colleges Can Prepare Students for the Jobs Ahead*, a 2015 World Economic Forum issued a report, “A New Vision for Education” that identified skills needed for 21st-century workers. Of the 16 skills identified in the report, six were “literacies” where deep knowledge was needed. The rest were “competencies” and “character qualities,” such as “creativity, initiative, grit, and curiosity.” (p.13) This combination is also referred to as developing a “T-Shaped Professional,” where the horizontal bar of the T represents “teamwork, communication, perspective, networks, critical thinking, global understanding, and project management” and the vertical bar represents “deep learning in at least one discipline or system” and analytical thinking and problem solving. (p. 39)
Our own CLA Alumni Board members concur with these studies. When asked at their spring meeting, Board members said that when hiring new employees they look for both depth and breadth. In addition to expertise in a particular field, they value skills such as oral and written communication, critical thinking and resilience, the ability to work with diverse people, and valuing constructive criticism while becoming a continuous learner. Overall, discussions will continue among CLA faculty and staff about how to help our students understand the practical value of the liberal arts as they apply their Mercer education to a variety of educational and professional opportunities.

CLA students reflect this ability to combine areas of learning to achieve success on a national stage. Teal St. Nicklaus (English Literature and Philosophy) won the prestigious Davies-Jackson Scholarship to study English Literature at Cambridge University. This scholarship is intended for applicants with exceptional academic records and who are among the first generation in their families to graduate from college. David Wildes (International Affairs, Spanish, and Political Science) and Alayna Williams (Women’s and Gender Studies, International Affairs, and Spanish) were awarded Fulbright Scholarships to teach English in Spain and South Africa respectively, while Nora Darling (Global Health Studies and Anthropology) was chosen as an alternate. In addition, Alayna Williams was selected as the first-ever Mercer University student commencement speaker for the class of 2017. Sophomore Anastasia Winfield (Global Health Studies on the Pre-Med Track) won a Critical Language Scholarship from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to study Kiswahili in Tanzania during the summer of 2017. The Peace Corps selected Caleb
Barefield (Religion and Philosophy) as a Community and Youth Development Volunteer in Armenia.

Maggie Callahan (Political Science, Economics) won a Boren Scholarship to study the Georgian language in the Southern Caucasus region in the Republic of Georgia. This scholarship will help her prepare for a career promoting stability and development in the area. In exchange for funding, she will work for the federal government in national security for at least one year. Anna Cizek (International Affairs, French, and Global Health Studies), a member of the Mercer Bears softball team, was recently selected for a Teaching Assistantship Program in France. This program, sponsored in part by the French Ministry of Education and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, is designed to bring English speakers into French classrooms while also giving the recipient the opportunity to experience French language and culture first hand.

Several CLA students were selected as Woodrow Wilson Georgia Teaching Fellows. This program, now in its second year, awards STEM students funds to complete a specially-designed master’s degree program in return for a commitment to teach for three years in the Georgia schools that most need math and science teachers. CLA winners include Morgan Akridge (Biology), Joey Chan (Biology/Art Minor), Austin Lord (Math), and Jiyou Oh (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology/Chemistry and Math Minor). In addition, Drew Bryant (Psychology and Philosophy) was selected for the Teach for America Corps. He will spend two years teaching science in Eastern North
Carolina. In a true spirit of serving, he said of his award, “there may not be a higher honor than to give back to the next generation.”

Living into the University motto “to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower, and to serve,” CLA students find ways to pursue leadership opportunities with the goal of giving back to their communities. Student Kyle Bligen (PPE: Politics, Philosophy, and Economics) is a prime example. He recently served as a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Intern and was named a Newman Civic Fellow. Established in 1986, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Summer Congressional Internship was formed to help diversify American democracy by increasing the pool of talented public servants. The Newman Civic Fellowship, supported by the KPMG Foundation and Newman’s Own Foundation, selects 273 students from across the nation to participate in networking and learning opportunities in order to cultivate leadership by bringing communities together to create positive change.

Jaz Buckley (Political Science and Women’s and Gender Studies/French minor) was awarded the John Lewis Fellowship. One of thirty American and European University students selected, Jaz took part in an intensive summer program at the Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta that focused on diversity and civil rights. Cole Porter (Political Science) won a Mount Vernon Leadership Fellowship, a highly selective program for students who want to make a difference, located on George Washington’s famous Virginia estate. Cole was one of 16 students from diverse disciplines from around the nation who were selected to immerse themselves in the leadership development program.
The Debate team performed well in both regional and national tournaments. For example, the team had its best-ever showing at the nation’s largest tournament held at the University of Utah. A total of 144 debaters from more than 30 colleges and universities participated in two separate divisions of the tournament. In the first half of the tournament, Kyle Bligen finished in 11th place and Jaz Buckley placed 14th overall. Daniel Alvarez (Stetson School of Business) and Keanu Lowo (Media Studies and Pre-Law) finished second and third respectively in the second half of the tournament.

The Biology and Chemistry departments are anticipating the opening of the new state-of-the-art Spearman C. Godsey Science Center next year. Faculty spent the year planning, preparing, and packing for the move that will take place late fall semester 2017. In the meantime, students and faculty continue to achieve success. Jessica Resnick (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology) received an Amgen Scholarship. This scholarship allowed her to spend ten weeks this past summer conducting cutting-edge genetic research at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. She presented her research at the National Amgen Scholars Program Symposium at UCLA as part of the program. Jessica also received an Honorable Mention in the Goldwater Scholarship competition. Another student, Arbaz Momin (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology) was accepted to the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine—a unique program that only accepts 32 students per year for their five-year research and medical education program and provides students with full tuition and fees. Thirteen Chemistry students presented their research at major regional or national meetings, attesting to the success of our student and faculty research. Chemistry professor Dr. Adam Kiefer was named
Distinguished University Professor at the spring 2017 Board of Trustees meeting and Biology professor Dr. Michael K. Moore was named a Governor’s Teaching Fellow by the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia.

Computer Science students made a name for themselves in regional competitions. The Cyber Defense Team came in third place out of over 40 teams in the Qualifying Round of the Southeast Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition. The Binary Bears took second place in the 2016 Consortium for Computing Sciences in Colleges programming contest in Asheville, North Carolina. Several majors participated in summer Research Experience for Undergraduates, a program funded by the National Science Foundation: Emily Herron researched the BigDataX at the Illinois Institute of Technology; Lauren Fowler researched cognitive psychology and human perception at the University of Rochester; and John Allen researched educational applications of human/computer interaction at Carnegie Mellon University.

In March, Mercer’s Southern Studies program was christened the Spencer B. King, Jr. Center for Southern Studies in honor of the long-time, highly-respected faculty member and historian. As Center Director Dr. Sarah Gardner noted, “Dr. Spencer B. King, Jr. played a vital role in the College of Liberal Arts. As longtime Chair of Mercer’s History Department, Dr. King introduced many of the courses that became core components of the Southern Studies Program.” Previously the Center received a highly competitive grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to support its competitive interdisciplinary program, and the King family has made a major endowment commitment in support of that grant. The Center’s faculty have also had a
productive year in terms of scholarship. Director Dr. Sarah Gardner’s book *Reviewing the South: The Literary Marketplace and the Southern Renaissance, 1920-1941* was published in 2017 by Cambridge University Press. She also had four articles published in edited collections by the University of Mississippi, the University of South Carolina, and the University of Tennessee, as well as an article that appeared in the *Georgia Historical Quarterly*. At the end of last academic year she stepped down as Director of the Center in order to concentrate on scholarship and teaching. Dr. Douglas E. Thompson has taken over the Chair’s role, and Dr. Gardner and Dr. David Davis will continue to assist with events and courses. Dr. Thompson also had a book published in 2017 by the University of Alabama Press entitled *Richmond’s Priests and Prophets: Race, Religion, and Social Change in the Civil Rights Era*.

The History Department began a partnership with Jarrell Plantation Historic Site on a QEP project to research and interpret African American history at the site. As part of this project, student Tamara Andrews was the only undergraduate to present her research on “Making Black Lives Visible at Jarrell Plantation” at a national conference “Transforming Public History” in Charleston, South Carolina. In addition, History Department member Dr. Matt Harper published a book, *The End of Days: African American Religion and Politics in the Age of Emancipation* (University of North Carolina, 2016). Dr. John Thomas Scott published “Christian Colonization on the American Frontier in the 1780s: The Countess of Huntingdon’s Plan and the American Response” in *Fides et Historia* 49:1 (Spring 2017): 24-46. Dr. Scott was also reelected to a third term as an Arts and Humanities Councilor for the Council on Undergraduate Research.

Two College of Liberal Arts faculty members were selected to participate in month-long programs funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Dr. Abby Dowling of the History Department attended the Institute on Roman Migration and Empire at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Natalie Bourdon participated in the Institute on Islam in South and Southeast Asia hosted by the East West Center at the University of Hawaii.

Creative Writing student Ashlyn Rebel was a finalist in the Agnes Scott Writer’s Festival, and Jena Dees also published a work of creative nonfiction. Alumna Dr. Sara Hughes (CLA, 2002) won the Adrienne Bond Award for Poetry for her first collection of poems forthcoming from Mercer University Press in 2018. Two English majors, Elizabeth Lynch and Sarah Ugan presented papers at the Southeastern Medieval Association Conference.
B. Walter F. George School of Law

Daisy Hurst Floyd stepped down from her second stint as Dean of Mercer Law at the end of June, and she was succeeded by Cathy Cox. Dean Cox comes to Mercer Law from Young Harris College, where she served as President for the last ten years; she also previously served two terms as Georgia Secretary of State. She is the first alum to lead the law school since William Augustus Bootie served as dean from 1933 to 1937.

Building upon a decision to downsize its student body, the Law School targeted an entering class enrollment for Fall 2017 of 115 students. The decrease in size is for the purpose of improving the entering class's academic profile in a time of local and national decreases in both law school applications and bar examination success. Because of a slightly higher than expected yield, a class of 122 first-year students enrolled. The Fall 2017 entering class has a median LSAT of 152 and a median GPA of 3.32, an improvement from the year before. The 25th to 75th percentile LSAT range improved from 149-153 in 2016 to 150-155 in 2017.

On the July 2016 bar exam, Mercer had a first-time success rate of 67.7 percent, compared with 75.2 percent in July 2015. In addition to changing its admissions strategy to decrease the number of students with incoming predictors (LSAT scores and grades) correlating with lower bar passage rates, Mercer Law has undertaken a number of measures to improve bar passage and students' academic success while enrolled, including substantial increases in bar-related course requirements for law students, increased focus on the Academic Success program, enhancements to bar preparation strategies, and more intensive academic success efforts aimed at at-risk students.
The American Bar Association (ABA) has adopted new standards regarding the establishment of learning outcomes and increased formative assessment. During a retreat in the fall of 2016, the faculty adopted the following learning outcomes: legal literacy; legal communication (written and oral): problem identification; problem analysis; critical thinking; forming professional identity; cultural competence; and interpersonal skills. The learning outcomes were the culmination of an intensive process undertaken during the prior academic year. Since adopting these outcomes, the law school faculty has been working to develop new assessment approaches that will allow it to measure whether it is achieving the learning outcomes.

The Semester in Atlanta program, built around externship opportunities, continues to develop. Eight third-year students were enrolled in Fall 2016 and 18 in Spring 2017. Employer interest has exceeded expectations, and feedback from both students and fieldwork supervisors is very positive. Illustrative field placements for students enrolled in the Atlanta program include: the Environmental Protection Agency; the Department of Veterans' Affairs: the Department of Education; Atlanta Beltline General Counsel; the Securities and Exchange Commission; the Center for Disease Control; and the Internal Revenue Service.

The American Bar Association collects and publishes employment data for each law school's graduating class ten months after graduation. The Mercer Law class of 2016 reports a total of 82.4% (136 of 165) of graduates employed, contrasted with 78.3% (90 of 115) employed for the class of 2015. In addition, 11 students (6.7%) are in graduate degree programs, as opposed to 5 (4.3%) for the class of 2015. The ABA
posts data according to types of jobs, with two important categories being (1) graduates in bar passage required jobs, broken out in long-term or short-term and full-time or part-time and (2) graduates in JD advantage jobs, broken out in the same categories. Our data show that 63% (104 of 165) of our graduates are in jobs for which bar passage is required, as opposed to 66.1% (76 of 115) for the class of 2015; 14.5% of graduates (24 of 165) are in jobs for which a J.D. is an advantage, compared to 8.7% (10 of 115) for the class of 2015. Therefore, we have a total of 77.5% in those two categories, compared with 74.8% for the class of 2015. In the categories of bar passage required full-time, long-term jobs, our number is 60.6%, (100 of 165) compared with 64.3% (74 of 115) for the class of 2015.

Since 2016, Mercer Law School has participated in Lawyers for Equal Justice, an incubator program designed to help recent graduates build innovative, socially conscious law practices while also providing low-cost representation to low-and moderate-income clients, who might otherwise have no access to legal representation. Two 2015 Mercer Law graduates, Tamorra Boyd and Mark Stevens, participated in this 18-month program during the 2016-17 school year.

There are substantial changes among the faculty and leadership of Mercer Law. Longtime professors Chris Wells and Tony Baldwin entered a phased retirement where each will be teaching only one semester during the 2017-18 school year. John O. Cole announced he will retire as of the end of fall 2017. Teri McMurtry-Chubb was promoted to full professor, and Jeremy Kidd was awarded tenure. Longtime Law Library Director Suzanne Cassidy retired at the end of the school year, and she was succeeded by
Leslie Street. Leslie comes to Mercer Law from the University of North Carolina, where she served as clinical assistant professor of law and assistant director of public services at the law library. Assistant Dean Mary Donovan also retired in July, and she will be succeeded in late September by Jenny M. Wright, former Director of Student Judicial Affairs for the University of Tennessee.

The law school faculty remains active in a number of ways, assuming leadership roles in the profession and legal education, accepting speaking engagements, and continuing scholarly productivity. The following are a few selected examples of the faculty's leadership at state and national levels. David Hricik serves on both the American Law Institute and the American Bar Foundation. Linda Jellum holds leadership positions in American Association of Law Schools (AALS) and American Bar Association (ABA) sections. Gary Simson chairs the Scholarly Research Committee of the Southeastern Association of Law Schools (SEALS). Steve Johnson serves on the Board of the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI). Pat Longan is a member of the Georgia State Bar's Formal Advisory Opinion Board and the Board of Advisors of the National Institute for Teaching Ethics and Professionalism. Daisy Floyd is a member of the ABA Standing Committee on Professionalism. Jeremy Kidd serves on the Georgia Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights. Tony Baldwin serves as a member of the National BLSA Frederick Douglass Moot Court Advisory Board. Tim Floyd is a member of the Supreme Court of Georgia Access to Justice Commission and the Board of Directors of Lawyers for Equal Justice. Karen Sneddon serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the Legal Writing Institute.
During the 2016-17 academic year, faculty members published over 40 law review articles, book chapters, and books. They also spoke at over 60 professional and academic conferences, including annual meetings of SEALS, the AALS, the Law and Society Association, the Federalist Society, the Federal Circuit Bar Association, the International Society for Family Law, the National LGBT Bar Association, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Like the faculty, many Mercer Law students excel as scholars. Our student writers and editors worked very hard in 2016-17 to publish multiple editions of the Mercer Law Review, including the 17th Annual Georgia Symposium on Professionalism and Ethics, which featured nationally renowned scholars focusing on the development of professional identity. In addition to the Mercer Law students publishing case notes and comments in the Mercer Law Review, four third-year law students published articles in other national law journals. Moses Tincher co-wrote an article on the unconstitutionality of S.E.C. administrative law judges with Professor Linda Jellum, which was published in the S.M.U. Law Review. Robert Davis published an article about veterans disability compensation in the Veterans Law Review; Roland Weekley published an article on standards of review in second amendment cases in the Albany Government Law Review, and Jeff Rowe published an article about the feasibility of Medicaid expansion in the Journal of Health and UFE Science Law.

Mercer Law student organizations play a leading role at the law school and beyond. For instance, Mercer's Black Law Students Association (BLSA) chapter was honored in February 2017 for the second year in a row as the Southern Region's
Regional Small Chapter of the Year. The Law School successfully defended its title as champion of the Attorney General's Cup in the Fifth Annual Legal Food Frenzy, a competition to help feed the hungry in Georgia. Mercer came out on top of the contest against the state's other law schools by gathering 37.2 pounds per student for the Middle Georgia Community Food Bank. The Legal Food Frenzy is part of a statewide food drive organized by the Georgia Attorney General's Office and the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia, which will help provide food for the state's eight regional food banks. The Association of Women Law Students hosted the 19th Annual Charity Auction and Ball at the Cox Capital Theatre in downtown Macon in March. They raised almost $11,000 to benefit the Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. In the past six years, they have raised over $82,000 to support local charities.

Mercer Law's student advocacy teams were remarkably successful in national competitions in the 2016-17 academic year. The following are a few highlights. A Mercer team won the prestigious Ruby Vale Interstate Corporate Moot Court Competition in Delaware for the first time in 2017 after advancing to the final round eight times since 2003. The Mercer Law Client Counseling team advanced to the final round of the ABA National Client Counseling Competition, placing second in the country after winning the regional competition for the second consecutive year. Another Mercer team advanced to the semifinals of the National Ethics Trial Competition, where second year student Aliyah Baaith won the award for best oralist! At the Charleston Constitutional Law Moot Court Competition, the Mercer team also advanced to the semifinals, and third year student Chris Rhodes won the best oralist award. At the ABA National
Appellate Advocacy Competition, the nation's premiere moot court competition, our team made the regional quarterfinals, and two of our students won best advocate awards. Out of more than 100 competitors, our students were named 8th and 10th best oralists. Both of Mercer's teams also advanced to the quarterfinals at the John L. Costello National Criminal Justice Mock Trial Competition.

The Law School hosted 17 alumni events in 2016-17, including reunions, receptions, and small group meetings and collaborated with student groups on four other events to allow alumni-student networking. We had a total of 1,404 attendees at all events, which included 858 alumni and 546 guests. Event attendance increased approximately 25% increase over the previous year’s recorded alumni attendance. The Third Annual Alumni Dinner in Atlanta was attended by 242 alumni and 111 guests. The Young Alumni Council is off to a good start – having a launch reception in September 2016 attended by 70 alumni, and a YAC After-Party in February attended by more than 130 alumni. The BLSA Alumni Council (BAC) established bylaws and an executive board. The Law School’s Alumni Association Board of Directors voted to formally recognize BAC as an affinity group. BAC will host its first annual awards dinner in October 2017. The BAC has 400+ members and produces a quarterly e-newsletter for its membership.
C. College of Pharmacy

The College of Pharmacy (COP) has a commitment to providing a high quality educational experience. This ethos has served as a catalyst for many outstanding achievements by our faculty and students throughout the 2016-2017 academic year. Faculty distinguished themselves through publications, grant/contract acquisition, and service. Students distinguished themselves by being recognized nationally for their excellence in scholarship and professional service in their student organizations. Hewitt W. “Ted” Matthews retired at the end of the academic year after 27 years as dean and 44 years at Mercer. He is succeeded by Mercer alumnus and longtime educator, Dr. Brian Crabtree, effective October 1, 2017.

College Highlights for 2016-2017 include:

- The College of Pharmacy had the highest enrollment in history in Fall 2016 with 675 students (627 Pharm.D., 41 Ph.D., and 7 Pharm.D./Ph.D.).
- During the Spring 2017 commencement, 156 Pharm.D. and 7 Ph.D. degrees were conferred. In addition, two Pharm.D. students graduated in Fall 2016.
- The College is ranked in the top six private pharmacy schools in the nation by U.S. News & World Report.
- The Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) program scheduled a record 171 students to complete 1,327 APPEs in 41 different courses with 536 unique preceptors at 172 distinct practice sites including 25 students who participated in International, Indian Health Service, and Global Medical Missions.
• The Center for Clinical Outcomes, Research and Education (CCORE) placed eight students for summer internships with Xcenda, UCB Medical Affairs, North Georgia Rheumatology, The Medical Affairs Company, and CCORE.

• CCORE entered a collaborative agreement with GALT Pharmaceuticals to offer a one-year Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship starting on July 1, 2017.

• Eight students enrolled in the inaugural combined PharmD/MPH program.

• Twenty-seven pharmacy students were enrolled in the combined PharmD/MBA program, and six earned both degrees in spring 2017.

• Thirty-two high school students participated in the 2017 Pharmacy Scholars Summer Program. The program, designed to provide insight into the Pharmacy profession, is co-sponsored by Walgreens as a part of their initiative to foster diversity.

• College faculty received a total amount of $1,138,011 from 22 extramural grant or contract obligations over the fiscal year. During this timeframe, faculty received 16 new extramural grants/contracts with a value of $1,015,863.

• College faculty published 33 individual original or other scholarly articles, and contributed to 108 research presentations, invited presentations, or workshops to regional, national, or international audiences. One U.S. Patent was obtained.

Student Highlights for 2016-17:

• Student pharmacists provided nearly 13,000 hours of health-related service to the community through the Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience program.
• Thirty Pharm.D. students (19%) in the graduating class of 2017 matched for a post-graduate year one (PGY1) American Society of Health-System Pharmacists residency. The national average for all pharmacy schools and colleges is 14%. Five additional students obtained residencies with national associations, industry, and managed care providers. In total, of the 55 students from the Class of 2017 who applied for a residency or fellowship, 64% will be pursuing this post-graduate training.

• Four student members of the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy competed in the 17th Annual National Student Pharmacist “Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee Competition” in Denver. Our students placed among the top eight teams nationally.

• During the American Pharmacists Association – Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) Awards Ceremony at the 2017 APhA Annual Meeting in San Francisco, Mercer’s chapter received the prestigious Policy and Legislative Award, one of only seven specialty awards given on the national level. In addition, the immediate past APhA-ASP Region Three Speaker of the House and rising P4 student, Jason Gaines, was elected by the APhA-ASP delegates to serve as National Speaker of the House. Gaines will be one of only five national officers to serve on the APhA-ASP National Executive Committee.

• Mercer University was recognized as the first place chapter by the International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research Student Network. Awards are based upon the chapter’s impact in the community through
educational events, networking events, community outreach, social events and contribution to the student network.

• The Gamma Psi chapter of Mercer University was recognized as the top collegiate chapter of 2016 by the national Kappa Psi Pharmaceutical Fraternity. The fraternity was judged on participation in Kappa Psi regional and national events and in other pharmacy associations, member academics and community outreach.

• During the Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) national conference in Atlanta, Mercer was recognized as a top-three large size chapter. A four student team won a $10,000 award from SNPhA and Walmart/Sam’s Club for the College’s chapter in recognition of their community service project focused on patient education about blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol. Also, two Mercer pharmacy students received awards, and four students received scholarships. Helen Mitchell, immediate past president of Mercer’s chapter, was named the J. B. Hills SNPhA Chapter President of the Year; Soumya Vishwanath, 2016-2017 president-elect, received the Future Leaders Scholarship Pharmacy Award; Jacqueline Alvarez received the $1,000 NPhA Foundation and Kroger Scholarship; and Michelle Vu was awarded the $1,000 Walgreens Diversity Advancement Award Scholarship.

• At the spring meeting of the Georgia Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Meron Mezgebe received the Best Student Research Project award for her work on pharmacy student self-perceptions of literature evaluation skills.
• Mercer pharmaceutical sciences graduate students gave 26 poster presentations at the 2016 annual meeting of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) in Orlando, Florida, and they served on numerous AAPS focus groups and sections.

• In recognition of innovative research using pharmaceutical excipients, the International Pharmaceutical Excipient Council of the Americas Foundation presented a cash award of $1,500 to graduate student Arunprasad Sivaraman during the 2016 AAPS Annual Meeting.

• In recognition of her research examining genetic biomarkers for hyperlipidemia, graduate student Lesly-Anne Samedy received the Student Research Award from the American Association of Indian Pharmaceutical Scientists at the 2016 AAPS Annual Meeting.

• Graduate student Rikhav Gala received an award from the Society of Biomaterials for the presentation, “Needleless measles vaccine delivery: Preclinical evaluation of oral disintegrating films in a juvenile pig model.”

• The Honors, Awards and Scholarship Committee under the direction of the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs awarded $916,200 in merit scholarships to 273 students. An additional $182,525 in expendable and endowed scholarship monies were awarded to 130 students.

Faculty Achievements for 2016-2017:

• Dr. Ashish Advani, clinical associate professor, was elected to three-year term for Georgia Pharmacy Association Board of Directors.
• Dr. Ajay Banga, professor, is the senior editor of *Therapeutic Delivery*. Dr. Banga is also on the editorial advisory boards for five peer-reviewed journals and reviewer for two.

• Dr. Phillip Bowen, professor, is on the Georgia Bio Board of Directors and on the editorial advisory boards for two peer-reviewed journals and reviewer for two.

• Dr. Martin D'Souza, professor, is the executive editor for *Translational Medicine*. He is also on the editorial advisory board of *Journal of Biomaterials* and journal reviewer for eight peer-reviewed journals.

• Dr. Jennifer Knaack, assistant professor, is the associate editor for the *Journal of Applied Bioanalysis* and *MOJ Bioequivalence & Bioavailability*. Dr. Knaack is also on the editorial advisory boards for seven peer-reviewed journals and reviewer for five.

• Dr. Kendra Manigault, clinical assistant professor, was appointed to the Georgia Pharmacy Association (GPhA) Patient-Care Workgroup and the GPhA Continuing Professional Education Advisory Committee.

• Dr. Kathryn Momary, associate professor, was appointed Vice Chair of the Translational & Precision Medicine (TPM) Network of ASCPT (American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics) and a grant reviewer for the American Heart Association Innovative Research Grants in cardiac sciences.

• Dr. Nadar Moniri, associate dean and associate professor, is on the editorial advisory boards for five peer reviewed journals and reviewer for seven. Dr. Moniri
is also a member of the Scientific Board of Advisors of the Institute for Advanced Medical Research.

- Dr. Pamela Moye, clinical associate professor, was appointed to the advisory board for Hospitals for Humanity (Atlanta, Georgia and Lagos, Nigeria).

- Dr. Kevin Murnane, assistant professor, is a member of the editorial advisory board for one peer-reviewed journal, a journal reviewer for 5 peer-reviewed journals, and a grant reviewer for the Alzheimer’s Association. Dr. Murnane is also a grant reviewer on the Executive Committee Councilor, Division of Behavioral Pharmacology, American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics.

- Dr. Grady Strom, Jr., associate professor, is a journal reviewer for two peer-reviewed journals and a member of the Board of Advisors for Health Students Taking Action Together, Inc.

- Dr. Maria Thurston, clinical assistant professor, is a peer reviewer for the *Journal of Pharmacy Technology*. Dr. Thurston received the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) Ambulatory Care PRN Member Recognition Award and was appointed to the 2017 ACCP Awards Committee, the GPhA Continuing Professional Education Advisory Committee, and the AACP Lyman Award Selection Committee.
D. School of Medicine

The mission of Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) is to provide physicians for rural and underserved Georgia. MUSM has established strong clinical rotations for fourth year electives with quality physicians and institutions throughout rural Georgia, working with the curriculum committee to add well-designed third year rotations in underserved and rural areas.

Dr. Jean Sumner accepted the position of Dean, effective July 1, 2016, succeeding Dr. William F. Bina, III. A long-time practicing physician and expert in rural medicine, Dean Sumner is eminently qualified to carry out the mission of the School of Medicine.

MUSM has partnered with the statewide 4-H organization to start a health careers track and with regional high school administrators and counselors to recruit students from rural, underserved, and minority populations. Supporting the effort to address the mission, the first scholarships were awarded under the Physicians for Rural Georgia Initiative. These scholarships are made possible from funds ($35 million, in trust) allocated to MUSM by the State of Georgia. Up to 11 full scholarships will be awarded each year to students from rural Georgia who plan to practice in a rural area. The recipients will be designated as “Nathan Deal Scholars” to recognize the contributions of the Governor and State in changing health care access for rural and underserved areas.

Seventeen students have entered MUSM’s accelerated track, with the program available on all three primary campuses. Though the curriculum is the same, the
program enables students to complete medical school in three years versus the more typical four with not more than one year of debt.

MUSM has three primary campuses—Macon and Savannah (four years) and Columbus (two years)—with the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program present in Macon and Atlanta and the Master of Preclinical Science and Biomedical Science Programs offered on the Macon campus. The Hoskins Medical Education Building in Savannah was dedicated in April 2016 and the first class of 63 students matriculated in August 2016. An electron microscope was placed in the medical education research area through support from the Georgia Research Alliance. The Columbus campus continues growing with an entering third year class of 18 students. Consideration of expanding the Columbus campus to a full four-year program is moving forward. The Macon campus renewed its affiliation agreement with Navicent Health. Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) Coliseum Medical Centers announced new residency programs in Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, Family Medicine, and Emergency Medicine, with a potential General Surgery program in the future with Mercer as their academic partner. The Mercer Faculty Practice plan has been restructured to provide for physician leadership and has significantly improved financial performance.

The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) renewed accreditation of the Master of Family Therapy Program with no stipulations. The next program review is scheduled for 2021. The Master of Family Therapy Program developed two clinical projects with Navicent Health’s Department of
Pediatrics. The projects focus on treatment of childhood obesity and inclusion of behavioral health consultants in the pediatric treatment team.

The Master of Biomedical Sciences and Pre-Clinical Sciences programs have been extremely competitive, with graduates successfully entering the field and a high acceptance rate for students interested in more advanced degree programs.

Student Highlights:

- Dr. Matthew Kahrmann (Class of 2017) received the Griffin Bell Award for Community Service.
- Dr. Parth Desai (Class of 2017) received the James T. McAfee Endowed Vision and Leadership Scholarship.
- Elected to the Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism Society were: Kristen Kettelhut, Binh Ngo, Jennifer Anhut, Kristen Corcoran, Katie Harper, Leslie Hilding, Chris Kiker, Jake Kirkpatrick, Michael Lowery, Zach Skipper, Ekta Berry, Jared Brown, Brad Harrison, Andres Montes, Abbie Saccary, and Lexie Vaughn.
- Dr. Lauren Spradlin (Class of 2017) received a National Health Service Corp scholarship and will enter a Medicine-Pediatric residency.
- Chelsea Fechter (Class of 2018) was nominated for the student position on an LCME review committee, has served twice as student government association president, and was selected by peers to the Gold Humanism Honor Society.
- Ryan Guilbault (Class of 2019) participated in the Medical Student Research Training Program at Vanderbilt, led his class committee in the organization of the
Service Leadership Conference, and is active on the Board of Team Triumph in Columbus.

- Thomas Harper (Class of 2020 President), a Navy Scholarship recipient, has been interviewing retired physicians about their careers in medicine and their guidance for young physicians.

- Laurel Duvall Cantrell and Calvin Cantrell, along with three faculty, led a team of students in the second annual MUSM Day of Service at the Moses Jackson Community Center in March 2017.

- Daniel Gordon, M.D. (Class of 2014), won the 2016 American Academy of Family Physicians Award for Excellence in Graduate Medical Education, one of 12 residents nationwide to earn this distinction.

- Several students presented at the 2017 annual meeting of the Association For Prevention Teaching And Research on April 5, 2017, including a poster presentation by Jose Milan and Ralph Rogers (Class of 2018) and Meagan Doyle and Emma Graf (Class of 2019), Nicole Neal (Class of 2019), and Anamaria Uceda (Class of 2019).

- Merry Ellen Barnett, Timothy Cartwright, Kevin Jiles, Kasey Lanier, Weston Robison, and Shadi Saboori (Class of 2018) were inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society in the spring of 2017.

- Dr. Wesley Stroud (Class of 2017) and Akshat Mehta (Class of 2018) presented at the 2016 American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress.
• Drs. Bradley Corbin, Allison Wood, and Jared Brown (Class of 2017), Taylor Boyd and Andrew “Reid” Merwin (Class of 2018), and alumni Dr. Heather MacNew (Class of 2002) and Dr. Christina Berenguer McCain (Class of 2005) were inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society.

• Jacob Chandler (Class of 2018), Kent Beam and Zachary McGalliard (Class of 2019), Morgan Castleberry, Hannah Galloway, Joshua Herndon (Class of 2020), Wesley Durrance, Ryan Ratchford, Emily Smith, Joseph Snooks, and Jordan Woodard (all Class of 2021) were named winners of the Georgia Rural Physician Scholarship in April 2017.

Faculty and Staff Highlights:

• Dr. Andrea Meyer Stinson, Dr. Bowden Templeton, and Dr. Susan Codone, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, coauthored a paper published in *Contemporary Family Therapy*.

• Dr. Kristen Horner and undergraduate researcher Caroline Logan presented a poster at the Experimental Biology Meeting in April 2016 sponsored by the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics.

• Dr. Gretchen Bentz, with undergraduates Natalie Biel and Ashley Ray, presented their work at two international meetings (International Herpesvirus Workshop and International Symposium on EBV and Associated Diseases).

• Dr. Christy Bridges and undergraduates Sanya Nijhara and Hannah George presented their work at BEAR Day. Sanya and Hannah were also contributing authors on the study published in the journal *Reproductive Toxicology*.
• Dr. Rick McCann’s undergraduate researcher Arbaz Momin was accepted into the five-year Cleveland Clinic Research M.D. program.

• Undergraduate Jessica Resnick received Honorable Mention for the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship for the second consecutive year for research performed in Dr. Clay Pandorf’s laboratory. Jessica presented this research at the Experimental Biology Conference in Chicago, at Mercer’s BEAR day, and was co-author on a poster presented at the Skeletal Muscle Biology Conference in Gainesville, Florida. Jessica also was selected as an Amgen Scholar for summer 2017.

• Undergraduate Lindsey Theodore presented research she performed in Dr. Pandorf’s lab at the Experimental Biology Conference in Chicago, at BEAR day, and was co-author on a poster presented at the Skeletal Muscle Biology conference in Gainesville, Florida.

• Dr. James Thomas and undergraduates Catherine Will and Matthew Halbert were contributing authors on a manuscript submitted to the *Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology*. Their work also was presented at several meetings including BEAR day and the American Chemical Society National meeting.
E. Eugene W. Stetson School of Business and Economics

As the Stetson School of Business and Economics (SSBE) closed its 33rd year, the college once again experienced growth in enrollments, innovation in programming, student engagement, and research productivity.

The Risk Management and Insurance track in Finance was approved by the faculty and the curriculum has been developed. Pledges to support this program for the next three years now exceed $300k. Industry demand prompted revisions in two Macon Undergraduate programs as Sports Business has been renamed Sports Marketing and Analytics and the Marketing major was revamped to include analytics and research.

A total of 62 aspiring entrepreneurs were trained this year at the Mercer Innovation Center (MIC) through three programs – 3 Day Start Up, YEA (Young Entrepreneurs Academy) and Start-Up Land. The Innovation Center awarded four start-up Fellowships which included financing, office space and housing. The center also expanded awards this year to include 5 businesses in residence, founded by students, who are receiving office space and entrepreneurial training. The center will continue conducting community-training programs, including a new program “Co-Starters,” developed by C-Lab in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The Center for Executive Education (CEE) serves as a place for faculty to pilot new content, for alumni engagement and as a revenue generator. SSBE continues to host and grow custom executive training programs for the American Financial Services Association, Piedmont Healthcare, and Greystone Power, serving hundreds of participants. The CEE also held open-enrollment programs in Process and Quality
Improvement and Internet Marketing, attracting employees from a variety of organizations, including Amazon and Coca-Cola. The CEE grossed revenues of nearly $400K during the 2016-2017 school calendar. Lean Six Sigma training and certification continues to be our most sought-after programming.

The BB&T Center wrapped up its 8th year, supporting two course offerings—"The Moral Foundations of Capitalism" and "Institutional Barriers to Entrepreneurship," and supported the new Honors Track in Economics. The BB&T Center continued its successful annual program offering undergraduate research grants to Mercer University students. The center awarded 4 grants for a total of $5,000, and sent students and faculty to 3 conferences. The BB&T Center also hosted five guest speakers, including Christopher Lingle, Visiting Professor of Economics of Universidad Francisco Marroquín, who presented “Regulating Human Actions: State Dictate vs. Cooperative Agreements.”

The Stetson School of Business and Economics earned and received some first time accolades and rankings in 2016-17. The MAcc students achieved a 100% pass rate on all parts of the CPA exam. Once again, undergraduate business students in Macon yielded a 100% placement rate in internships, and these were paid internships. The recently developed Online MBA was ranked #19 by CEO magazine and the redesigned PMBA in Innovation was ranked #22 by CEO magazine. SSBE has the second largest MBA program in the greater Atlanta area, according to Atlanta Business Chronicle and, more importantly, is classified as Tier 1 by CEO magazine.

Student highlights for 2016-17 include:
• Aaron Scherf, triple major in International Business, Finance and Economics and 2017 graduate, received a Fulbright Association Award to work and study in Germany as well as a Donald Payne International Development Fellowship which will fund his graduate study and guarantee employment at the US Agency for International Development.

• Maggie Callahan, economics major, received the Boren Scholarship to study in the Republic of Georgia.

• Sarah Barry, a junior majoring in Economics, was the recipient of Best Undergraduate Research paper at the Society of Business, Industry and Economics. Her work focused on The Role of Interpersonal Trust in Rural Ecuador, and used experimental economics methodology.

• Shane Buerster and Lane Wakefield presented “The Effect of Fan Passion on Consumer Ethnocentrism” at the Sport Entertainment and Venues of Tomorrow 2017 Conference, Columbia, SC.

• Beta Alpha Psi – The accounting honor society earned their official Charter from the National organization and is now recognized by Beta Alpha Psi National.

• Financial Management Association Club – Finalized the investment course associated with the Student Managed Investment Fund and established the fund. Donors have contributed nearly $10K to the fund and students will begin investing in fall 2017.

SSBE Highlights for 2016-17 include:

• BizBridge – A student-led organization in Atlanta launched by faculty advisor,
Elizabeth Chapman to connect students across various programs with the business community and alumni. Representatives from each business academic program form the steering committee of BizBridge, and they help design, advertise, and implement various events to bridge the various business groups. Last year, they were instrumental in organizing the following events: M&A Panel Discussion, Alumni Panel on Leadership Discussion, Invite-Only Women's Panel on Women and Work at BOV Elizabeth Chandler's home, and several social events at local breweries where private tours described the operations of those startups.

- Beta Gamma Sigma - SSBE inducted 29 new student members in Spring 2017. Beta Gamma Sigma is the international honor society serving business programs accredited by AACSB International. Membership in Beta Gamma Sigma is by invitation only, based on academic achievement, and the highest recognition a business student anywhere in the world can receive in a business program accredited by AACSB International.

- Antonio Saravia led a team of Economic students to Ecuador for the second straight year. They were following up on their initial visit conducting research concerning the economic viability of the coffee industry in a small remote town. Dr. Saravia will continue to analyze the data into the fall 2017 semester.

- Dr. Etienne Musonera and Dr. Carol Cagle were the faculty sponsors for the SSBE Mercer on Mission trip to Rwanda. This is the third consecutive year that SSBE faculty and students have traveled to Rwanda, to provide business skills
training to the widows of the Rwandan genocide. Our Rwandan partners were the leaders of the Association des Veuves du Genocide Agahozo (AVEGA). This non-profit organization was created in January, 1995, by 50 widows who survived the genocide of 1994. The mission took the form of a 2-way workshop. Many hours were spent in a classroom setting and in break-out sessions of small groups educating the leadership of AVEGA in various areas of entrepreneurship with emphasis on marketing and financial skills. AVEGA has 19,000 members and over 60,000 beneficiaries. More than 600 total service hours were devoted to this mission.

- **VITA** - Stephanie Morris, Lecturer in Accounting, once again assisted eligible community residents with filing their taxes through the VITA program. This year, more than 25 accounting majors participated in the class.

- **Traffic Jam** - Traffic Jam, an anti-sex trafficking effort, led by Tammy Crutchfield’s marketing class, again made headlines throughout middle Georgia. The course is comprised of senior marketing majors in SSBE, but its volunteers and service learning supplement course attracted a total of 86 Mercerians.

**Faculty Achievements:**

- Dr. Jody Blanke published “Smart Cities, Big Data, and the Resilience of Privacy”, in the *Hastings Law Journal*. The journal is ranked as #29 by Google Scholar.

- Dr. Briana Stenard was published in top ranked *Organization Science*, a management journal, and her work was then featured in the October edition of
Harvard Business Review. Her paper was titled “Educational Mismatch, Work Outcomes, and Entry Into Entrepreneurship”.


- Dr. J. Michael Weber was the Guest Editor for the International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing, for which he published a special eight article issue, titled: “Issues in Healthcare and Pharmacology for Vulnerable Populations.”

- Mercer Innovation Center received three Downtown Challenge Grants from the Community Foundation of Central Georgia, totaling $74,000. The Center is naming four fellows to its 2017-18 cohort and will welcome nine startups to its incubation space.

SSBE Awards/Recognition:

- Dr. Ania Rynarzewska was awarded top paper in Sports Marketing/ Business Track at the Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC.

- Dr. Eric Kushins received a Black Belt in Six Sigma from the globally recognized American Society for Quality.
• Stephanie Howard was named one of 5 Young Leaders under 40 by Macon Magazine.

• Dr. Jody Blanke served as President of the Association of Legal Scholars in Business, the largest professional organization of business law faculty in the US.

• Dr. Lynn Jones serves as Vice President of the American Taxation Association.

• Dean Susan P. Gilbert was once again named to the annual list published by Atlanta Business Chronicle, Who’s Who in Higher Education, (5th consecutive year).
F. School of Engineering

After eight years at the helm, Dr. Wade Shaw stepped down as Dean of the School of Engineering. Dean Shaw oversaw a period of record growth in the school, the development of a number of new academic initiatives, and fostered a college wide commitment to utilize Mercer Engineering to make a difference in the lives of others. Dr. Laura Lackey, a long-time Mercer Engineering faculty member and associate dean, will serve as the Interim Dean.

The Mercer University School of Engineering (MUSE) continues to serve the University and the community through achievements in academics, research and service. The first-year student academic preparedness profile continues to improve while freshman enrollment has increased by 50% since 2011. MUSE continues to rank in the top 20% of peer schools that offer BS and MS degree programs in engineering by the US News & World Report. Faculty continues to provide leadership for multiple Mercer On Mission (MOM) programs each year; six MUSE faculty championed four MOM programs during the summer of 2017. Dr. Ha Van Vo continues to work tirelessly to engage his students to design, build, and test universal socket above- and below-knee prosthetics. After testing, prosthetics are manufactured in Vietnam and fit by his MOM student team during the summer. We are delighted that his efforts are celebrated by the University; during spring 2017, Dr. Vo was appointed the rank of Distinguished University Professor
Student engagement and success remains a focus. MUSE students Kyla Semmendinger and Runyu Cai were recognized as Mercer’s first pair of Goldwater Scholars in a single year. Junior Zechariah Rice was selected for the German Academic Exchange Service’s (DAAD) Research Internship in Science and Engineering (RISE). Graduate student Gabriel Ramirez currently serves as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Vanuatu. Dr. Anthony Choi and his students are engaged in NASA-funded community outreach projects. Highlights from this year include robotics training and mentoring to RoboBibb, the Bibb County School District’s robotics team. With encouragement and mentorship from MUSE students, RoboBibb qualified for the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Championship by winning the state competition this past season. Dr. Choi and his students also partnered with the Putnam County Charter School System to train high school students to become FAA-certified drone pilots. In the program's first year, ten high school students earned drone pilot certification. Additional NASA funded projects include extensive research on high-altitude ballooning with the intent to capture footage and live stream via NASA website the 2017 solar eclipse.

The School of Engineering had a very productive year as exemplified by the following highlights:

- The School of Engineering was ranked 42 out of 198 masters level universities in the 2017 USN&WR annual survey. This continues to place MUSE in the top 20% of peer schools in the USA.
• A Bachelor of Science Education (BSE) in the Civil Engineering Specialization, a Technical Communication (TCO) Graduate Certificate, and an Engineering for Development Graduate Concentration were introduced.

• Dr. Mike MacCarthy (Assistant Professor of Environmental Engineering) was instrumental in developing a relationship with the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD). His efforts resulted in a signed agreement between UNHRD and MUSE; MUSE now serves as the UNHRD’s sole North American Research Partner. Three MUSE graduates, Holly Berns, Katelyn Dimopolis, and Ryan Monty, are currently working as interns at the UNHRD laboratory in Brindisi, Italy.

• MUSE support of and involvement with the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Research That Reaches Out, is exciting. This academic year, 18 MUSE faculty engaged multiple undergraduate students in QEP research projects. Example projects include: Optimization of the Biocompatibility of a Nanofiber Vascular Tissue Scaffold (Dr. Joanne Thomas), Wireless Power Transfer System based on Resonant Inverter (Dr. Ruiyun Fu), Development of a Low-cost Indoor Air Quality Measurement Device for International Applications (Dr. André Butler), and Desalination of Salt Water for Developing Communities (Dr. Stephen Hill).

• Over 200 students and faculty participated in the Engineering Expo. Seventy-nine posters were presented and eight podium presentations were made by MUSE students.
• MUSE enrollment has increased by 45% since 2011 and enjoyed its largest undergraduate graduating class during 2016–2017. A record total of 114 students earned their BS or BSE degrees. A record total of 185 (BS, BSE, MS, and MSE) degrees were awarded.

• MUSE continues to hold its annual student-recruiting event, the Engineering Scholarship Challenge. In November 2016, 225 prospective engineering students participated in the event. Eighty-two event participants plan to attend Mercer in Fall 2017.

• Freshmen retention of engineering students continues to maintain record levels of ~80%.

We continue to celebrate student successes as summarized here:

• Gabriel Ramirez being selected as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Gabe is currently serving in Vanuatu.

• Two electrical engineering students, Josephine Mazurkiewicz and Michael Gentry were awarded the 2017 Science, Mathematics & Research for Transformation (SMART) scholarship. SMART scholars receive full tuition, a stipend, summer research internships, and employment placement at a DoD facility after graduation.

• School of Engineering student, Jonathan Alfred was selected as one of 210 Tau Beta Pi Scholars nationwide. Tau Beta Pi, the prestigious engineering honor society, was founded in 1885.

• Engineering student Brandon Hancock partnered with Aaron Scherf, a triple major in international business, finance and economics to participate in the Harvard Social
Enterprise Conference Pitch Competition. Students presented their idea called LandLink Parcel Management System. LandLink is a social enterprise that offers secure property registry software services for land deeds and offices in middle-income countries.

- Zechariah Rice was selected for the German Academic Exchange Service’s (DAAD) Research Internship in Science and Engineering (RISE).

- Ten senior Engineering Scholars presented their project work at the Southern Regional Honors Council Conference, March 30 - April 1, Asheville, NC [http://www.srhconline.org](http://www.srhconline.org).

- Many students obtain real world experiences over the summer through paid internships. Others gain experience by participating in NSF funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF-REUs) or Mercer On Mission. A subset of MUSE senior students were interviewed in August 2017 about their summer 2017 experiences. Eighty-four of 138 senior students interviewed were employed as interns during summer 2017. Three students participated in REUs while 17 of our seniors participated in a MOM. Six other students were involved in research on Mercer’s campus through either the Mercer Summer Engineering Experience (MeSEE) or Mercer Undergraduate Biomedical Scholar Training Initiative (MUBS) programs. In addition to the U.S., MUSE seniors had internships in Canada, Panama, England, and Germany. Students worked in 13 different states for over 70 different companies. Example student summer experiences are as follows: Lyndsey Conley, a mechanical engineering student, worked with Northrop Grumman in San
Diego, California. She worked on their program integration team for the Glow Hawk program, which is a high altitude, long endurance reconnaissance vehicle; Abbie Weeks participated in an REU at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN where she developed an algorithm to evaluate the volume of kidneys from MRI images; Brittany Gary worked on the FBI cyber-crime team in Atlanta, GA; Gavin Lamberth, an industrial engineering student, worked for General Electric in Greenville, SC to develop augmented reality (AR) applications on Microsoft HoloLens to improve the training experience for MRI and CT machines for field engineers.

The work of many MUSE faculty were recognized this year as follows:

- Dr. André Butler, Associate Professor of Environmental Engineering, received the Clayton R. Paul Teaching Excellence Award for 2016 – 2017.
- Dr. Laura Lackey, Senior Associate Dean and Professor of Environmental Engineering, was named Mercer University’s representative to the Southern Conference All-SoCon Faculty Team.
- Dr. Scott Schultz (Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Industrial Engineering) co-wrote a proposal with MERC to help Robins Air Force Base predict the impact of future workload on their operations. This proposal led to a $475,000 grant called the RAMP Scheduling Analysis Tool, awarded in July 2017. In addition to the grant award, Dr. Schultz’s 2016 American Society for Engineering Education-Southeastern Section (ASEE-SE) Conference paper with coauthors Dr. Pablo Biswas (Assistant Professor of Industrial Engineering) and Nicole Baker
(International Office), “When Opportunity Knocks – An Alternative Summer Engineering Internship” was awarded the Zone 2 best paper by the ASEE.

- Dr. Pam Brewer, Associate Professor in the Department of Technical Communication, worked with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to conduct user experience (UX) testing on the redesigned DHS.gov website.

- In the summer of 2017, four Mercer On Mission teams included six engineering faculty. Drs. Ha Vo, Edward O’Brien and Richard Kunz returned to Vietnam to fit prosthetics developed by the Biomedical Engineering faculty and students. Since program inception, the MOM Vietnam faculty and student teams have fit over 7000 prostheses. Dr. Mike MacCarthy led a group to the Dominican Republic to focus on finding appropriate options to improve and maintain sustainable access to safe water for under-served communities. Dr. Sinjae Hyun led a group to work at the Drim School, located 60 miles south of Seoul, South Korea. Drim School provides education to North Korean refugees and their children. Dr. Hyun’s students focused on teaching English and computer and robotics skills to the North Koreans. These skills are important for securing a STEM-oriented career in South Korea. Dr. Laura Lackey led a team to Zaruma, Ecuador where her students primarily focused on two projects. In many underdeveloped countries, artisanal and small-scale gold miners use mercury to purify gold from ore; the mercury is eventually liberated to the atmosphere. MUSE MOM-Ecuador participants designed, installed and tested a mercury capture system that can easily be used by miners. Additionally, students
conducted pathogen testing on water samples taken from taps intended for drinking and cooking.
G. Tift College of Education

The highlight of the 2016-17 academic year for the Tift College of Education was the successful review from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. The College met all standards with identified areas of strength in clinical partnerships and practice that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all Preschool - Grade 12 students. Specifically, reviewers noted (1) Tift’s depth and breadth of clinical experiences for candidates in the Master of Arts in Teaching in Secondary Education STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) program as part of the Woodrow Wilson Georgia Teaching Fellowship and (2) the Holistic Child candidates’ participation in Tift’s Professional Development School partnership with Ingram-Pye Elementary which is situated near the Macon campus. The Tift College of Education continues to develop robust, mutually beneficial school-university partnerships to improve both the quality of teaching and student learning. Partner schools are akin to teaching hospitals for medical students; these settings provide intense clinical preparation in a real-world setting. In addition to the Professional Development School (PDS) partnership with Ingram-Pye Elementary, Tift has developed PDS partnerships with Hartley Elementary in Bibb County; Cowan Road Elementary School and Cowan Road Middle School in Griffin-Spalding County; Sagamore Hills Elementary School in DeKalb County (DeKalb’s first school to earn dual
STEM certification), and Tapestry Public Charter School in Atlanta (serving neurotypical and autistic middle and high school students).

Other highlights follow:

- **Tift graduated its first class of Woodrow Wilson Georgia Teaching Fellows.**
  Candidates completed the Master of Arts in Teaching in Secondary Education that prepared them to teach in grades 6-12 in Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Math, or Physics. Half of the graduating cohort accepted teaching positions at Tift’s partner high schools in Middle Georgia, and others accepted teaching positions in the Atlanta metropolitan area. All graduates will be teaching in Title I schools in which high percentages of children are from low-income families. Dr. Sharon Augustine serves as the Program Director.
- **Tift was selected to serve as the Host Institution for the 2017 Georgia Professional Standards Commission Site Visitor Training, based on the College’s successful review by the state agency.**
- **The College developed new curricula and received state approval to begin offering:** (1) the Autism Endorsement Program that will provide certified teachers the knowledge and competencies to work with students on the autism spectrum; (2) the STEM Education Endorsement Program that will prepare educators to use the principles of STEM education in their teaching practice; and (3) the graduate Ed.S. in Educational Leadership degree or certification only program.
- **Beginning Fall Semester 2016, Tift began offering a Bachelor of Science in Early Learning and Development in Birth through Kindergarten to respond to the**
state’s growing demand for professionally prepared educators who work with the youngest learners.

- Tift partnered with the Autism Center, Navicent Health to offer the second annual Spring Symposium for Autism and Developmental Disorders to provide knowledge, training, and resources to individuals and families living with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental disorders.

- Tift is meeting the demand of STEM education in a number of ways. The College partnered with Penfield College and the Real I.M.P.A.C.T. Center in Macon on its annual Girl Power STEM Summer Camp. Tift again partnered with Penfield College to offer the Second Annual STEAM Day to provide professional development activities for pre-service teachers that consists of integrated STEAM (STEM plus the Arts) learning for K-12 teachers. Faculty and graduate students from Tift teamed with Penfield College, the School of Engineering, and the Department of Defense’s STARBASE youth program at Robins Air Logistics Complex to offer a summer camp for Middle Georgia girls in grades 3-6. Funding from a QEP grant supported these initiatives.

Faculty highlights from 2016-17 include the following:

- Tift faculty members published over 30 education articles, book chapters, and books, and made presentations at over 47 professional conferences.

- Dr. Justin Ballenger in collaboration with colleagues from Penfield College and the School of Engineering received a $25,000 QEP grant to study adolescent STEAM Education research. Dr. Ballenger and his students held two STEAM
fairs that included constructing 3-D printed gliders and demonstrating force and motion with model cars at a DeKalb County school and hands-on demonstrations for SheSTEAMS (STEAM with a Service component), an organization that promotes STEAM engagement among area girls.

- Dr. Vicki Luther received a $40,000 grant from Georgia Power and the University System of Georgia for new teacher assistance and mentoring, a literacy grant for $11,000 from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and Federal Government, and $9,000 P-20 Regional Collaborative award from the Georgia Network for Transforming Educator Preparation and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Dr. Luther has served on the editorial review boards of the *Georgia Journal of Reading* and *The Journal for the National Association of Professional Development Schools*.

- Dr. Jeff Hall served as co-principal investigator to complete the National Science Foundation’s $50,000 grant, “Interdisciplinary Teaching about Earth for a Sustainable Future,” and on the $18,000 STEM Scale Up grant from the Georgia Governor’s Office of Student Achievement in collaboration with Georgia Southern University. Dr. Hall served as editor of the *Georgia Educational Researcher* and President of the Georgia Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators.

- Dr. Andrew Grunzke served as Executive Director of the Southern History of Education.

- Dr. Jane West served as editorial review board member of *Research in Middle Level Education*. 
• Faculty members received multiple awards and honors, including: 10th Annual Asa G. Hilliard III and Barbara A. Sizemore Research Course on African Americans and Education (Dr. Justin Ballenger); Mercer’s Excellence in First Year Student Advising Award (Dr. Sybil Keesbury); Governor’s Teaching Fellows Academic Year Program Nomination (Dr. Justus Randolph); and Griffin-Spalding Educator Hall of Fame (Dr. Cynthia Anderson).

Tift faculty and students have also been involved in international efforts. Two recent projects include the continued work in the Dominican Republic and the Mercer on Mission trip to Nepal. The College with support from The Thomas C. and Ramona E. McDonald Fund for Advancement of Global Education has partnered with several schools in the Dominican Republic to improve student learning. Since 2013, Tift’s efforts have focused on developing and implementing a viable and culturally responsive professional development program for P-12 educators. Faculty members Sherah Carr, Cynthia Anderson, Justin Ballenger, and Michelle Vaughn returned to the Dominican Republic to conduct the Second Annual Best Teaching Practices Conference, a two-day conference that has grown to include 250 participants.

The purposes of Tift’s Mercer on Mission trip to Nepal were to better prepare Mercer’s teacher candidates to be culturally responsive educators and to introduce and model researched-based best teaching practices in their designated Nepali school. The student group consisted of three graduate students, three undergraduates from the Macon residential program, two undergraduates from the Regional Academic Centers,
and two Journalism students. Drs. Sybil Keesbury and Michelle Vaughn served as team leaders.

Student highlights of 2016-17 include:

- The recently named 2017-18 Woodrow Wilson Georgia Teaching Fellowship cohort includes five Mercer graduates: Austin Lord (Math); Joey Chan (Biology); Jose Santana Villa (Engineering); Morgan Akridge (Biology); and Jiyou Oh (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology with a master's degree in Biomedical Science).

- Twenty-one students from the Henry, Douglas, Newnan, and Atlanta Regional Academic Centers were inducted into Mercer’s Upsilon Theta chapter of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education. These students earned a GPA of 3.80 or higher in their coursework.

- Fourteen Macon undergraduates were inducted into the Kappa chapter of Kappa Delta Epsilon, an honorary educational fraternity.

Tift alums have been quite successful:

- Several Tift graduates have been recognized as Teacher of the Year in their respective schools in Bibb, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Dodge, Douglas, Glenn, Gwinnett, and Houston counties.

- Daniel Brown from Central High School was named STAR Teacher in Bibb County and received the Middle Georgia Education Together Teaching Award.

- Dr. Tommy Welch, graduate of Ph.D. Educational Leadership program and Principal of Gwinnett County’s Meadowcreek High School, was named the
Principal of the Year and will represent Georgia in the competition for National Principal of the Year.

- Dr. Tiffany Taylor, graduate of Tift’s M.Ed. and Ph.D. Educational Leadership programs and Principal of Carver Road Middle School in Spalding County, was named the Middle School Principal of the Year and finalist for the Principal of the Year.

- Dr. Cleopatra Warren, Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction graduate, was selected by the University of Pittsburgh’s European Studies Center to participate in the Brussels Study Tour, an opportunity for undergraduates, K-12 educators, and faculty teaching at community colleges or minority-serving institutions to gain firsthand knowledge and experiences to further their understanding of Europe and the European Union.

- Akear Mewborn, Ed.S. in Teacher Leadership graduate and Kendrick High School teacher in Muscogee County, participated as a Fellow in the Project Zero Classroom at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Project Zero strengthens teachers’ knowledge and skills on student engagement through critical thinking and creativity.

- Toni Bailey, Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction candidate and Druid Hills Middle School art teacher in DeKalb County, was awarded the Atlanta Families’ Award for Excellence in Education. She received $7500 to conduct a visual arts project on digital storytelling with her eighth grade students.

- James Philmon, Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction candidate, had his proposal
accepted to the Annual Conference of the national organization, Association of Teacher Educators.
H. James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology

Mercer University’s McAfee School of Theology begins its twenty-second year as a leading institution in the theological disciplines and the practice of ministry, evidenced by the continued influence and accomplishments of its students, alumni and faculty.

McAfee Student Achievements and Highlights 2016-17:

- Brittini Palmer was accepted into Union Theological Seminary’s Millennial Leaders Summer Conference, held this summer in New York. The conference, which includes full financial support, is for young leaders who have a sustained history of social justice activism. She was also accepted into Princeton Theological Seminary’s Black Theology and Leadership Institute, a weeklong continuing education event for clergy, lay leaders, and seminarians.

- Libby Grammer published her book *Privilege, Risk, and Solidarity: Understanding Undocumented Immigration through Feminist Christian Ethics*

- Rachel Hall and Adam Peeler were chosen to attend a highly selective summer program in Wittenberg. Rachel and Adam were two of five international students who received scholarships from the German Academic Exchange Service via Phillips University, Marburg. This year’s theme is “Concerning Me: Enough,” and the week of study will center on the Reformation movement that took place in Europe, beginning exactly 500 years ago.

- Linsey Addington was called to Church at Ponce and Highland, Atlanta, GA as Associate Pastoral Resident
• Jukabiea Barlow completed US Army Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course
• Chelsea Banks created, organized, and implemented a youth conference and awarded her organization’s first scholarship
• Collie Cato was called as Chaplain, Chaplain Northeast Georgia Health System
• Vinton Copeland, called to Powell Baptist Church as pastor
• Fabiani Duarte, became 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lt. USAF and argued and won first case
• JD Granade, called to Roxboro Baptist Church, Roxboro, NC, as Minister to Children
• Jeremy Hall called by First Baptist Church, Decatur, GA, as interim Fresh Start Worship Leader
• Amanda Lewis called as a resident chaplain at Carolinas Medical Center
• Taylor Mason developed a blog/website "dedicated to creating a community of ministers that help one another discover and follow their calling," called searchingforwisdom.net
• Adam Peeler called as Interim Senior Minister for Walterboro, SC, Christian Church
• Billy Thomas, Senior Director U.S. MAPS at General Council of the Assemblies of God USA and Missionary Evangelist

Alumni Notables of 2016-17:

In the last year the School of Theology witnessed the ascent of several of its graduates/students to no less than five prominent Georgia Baptist Churches:

• Jonathan Barlow called as senior pastor to FBC Dalton.
• Matt Sapp called as senior pastor to Central Baptist Church, Newnan.
• Brandon Patterson called senior pastor to Maranatha Baptist, Plains.
• Matt Duvall called as senior pastor to FBC Rome.
• Will Dyer called as senior pastor to FBC Augusta (current DMin student).
• Charles Qualls was called as senior pastor to Franklin Baptist Church, Franklin, VA.
• Brett Baddorf, serving as logistics person and unofficial chaplain at the National Science Foundation (NSF) South Pole Station in Antarctica.
• Erica Cooper was called to become Assistant Pastor at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, NY.
• Matthew Brantley was commissioned with the Air Force as a chaplain, will be stationed in Nebraska.
• Heather Coles is now serving as Religious Education Instructor at Center Pointe in Gainesville, GA.
• Heather Burke was called to Georgetown Baptist Church, Georgetown, KY as Minister to Children and Spiritual Formation.
• Anthony Neal now on faculty at Mississippi State, spoke at International Society for African Philosophy and Studies’ 23rd Annual Conference in Vienna.
• Wesley Thompson was called as Senior Pastor Bethel Colbert Missionary Baptist Church in Leighton, AL and published a book, *In Sickness and In Health: A Story of Love, Strength, and Faith*, (Tandem Light Press), available on Amazon.
interview on tv on an ABC affiliate station: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5K-dp0EHaA

- Alex Vance, therapist and counselor, now seeing clients at two locations in Atlanta—Buckhead and Inman park

Notable Faculty Accomplishments 2016-17

Faculty members continue to make impressive contributions to their respective fields, as well as to the University and the school’s wider constituencies.


- Dr. Nancy deClaisse traveled to South Africa and presented a paper titled “The Importance of Land in Book Five of the Psalter”; attended the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament at the University of Stellenbosch
and presented a paper titled “Let the Floods Clap their Hands: A Feminist Reading of the Enthronement Psalm”; In addition Dr. deClasse-Walford was awarded a $24,000 Sabbatical Grant from the Louisville Institute to travel to South Africa in the Spring of 2018 to complete a commentary on Books Four and Five of the Psalter for Liturgical Press. She also delivered the Todd Lectures in Old Testament Studies at Memphis Theological Seminary: “A New Journey through the Psalms: A Feminist Reading of Psalms 90-92” and “A New Journey through the Psalms: A Feminist Reading of the Enthronement Psalms.”


- Dr. Thomas Slater was elected to the very prestigious Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas; wrote four commentaries to Working Preacher online

- Dr. David Gushee published his Memoir, *Still Christian*. Dr. Gushee also served as the President of the Society of Christian Ethics, and was voted President-elect of the very prestigious American Academy of Religion.

- Dr. Loyd Allen delivered the Britt Lectures sponsored by the Hawaii District of the United Methodist Church in Honolulu, Hawaii, February 17-20, 2017, on the theme, “One Christian Spirituality: Spiritual Unity in Our Diversity;” presented a paper titled “Dreams and Visions: Means of Grace, Spirituality, and Bimodal Interpretation in Baptist Life” for the Biographies and Narratives: Baptist Perspectives and Convictions section of the annual Baptist History and Heritage Society meeting, June 2, 2017; and, served as spiritual guide and lecturer on Celtic spirituality for a Celtic pilgrimage to Ireland sponsored by the Academy of Spiritual Formation, July 3-16, 2017.

Program Highlights include:

- In June the Lilly Endowment funded Center for Teaching Churches issued its second edition of its curriculum *Faith in 4D*. This edition featured McAfee faculty providing insights into various aspects of the Christian life of Prayer.

- The faculty also completed and approved the school’s Self-Study report that will serve as the basis for the school’s reaccreditation visit by the Association of Theological Schools in October 2017.

- The faculty approved a new Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies designed for professionals and dedicated laity with a deep desire for thoughtful theological reflection, preparing persons of faith for leadership in their church or in other ministry settings.

- The faculty, through the auspices of the Master of Divinity Committee, prepared revisions of the current Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Christian Ministry degrees reducing the required credits to 74 and 38 respectively. In addition, the committee developed a new degree program, the Master of Theological Studies requiring 48 credit hours.

- In 2016-17 the McAfee School of Theology developed the Institute for Spirituality in the Professions. The purpose of the Institute is to provide opportunities within the professional community to address and provide educational content for the spiritual needs of professional communities. In May of 2016, the Institute conducted its first of what is anticipated as an Annual Consultation on *Spirituality & Law Enforcement*. 
• Dr. Willetts, the new Dean, worked with the Director of the Baugh Center for Baptist Leadership to develop a Leadership program directed at the needs of local churches.

• The McAfee School of Theology established the first academic link between the School of Theology and the Townsend School of Music in order that graduate music students may pursue studies in theology.

• McAfee School of Theology was once again selected by the Center for Faith and Service as one of just a few “Seminaries that Change the World.”
I. Penfield College of Mercer University

Penfield College continues to demonstrate fierce commitment and innovative approaches to serving adult learners seeking professional advancement into leadership roles in and beyond their communities through its distinctive undergraduate and graduate degree programs and through the general education program it offers to Tift, Stetson, and Penfield students in the Regional Academic Centers and on the Atlanta campus. Penfield undergraduate offerings include a pre-nursing curriculum in the Regional Academic Centers, fully online courses in support of the College of Nursing’s RN to BSN degree program, and graduate dual degree programs in leadership and counseling in collaboration with McAfee School of Theology. Penfield’s offerings represent multiple workforce sectors including technology; healthcare; organizational development, leadership, communication, and administration; criminal justice and homeland security; social services; and liberal arts/humanities. The largest undergraduate enrollments are in human services, organizational leadership, and psychology, and the largest graduate enrollments are in clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and health informatics. The College is currently providing workforce development non-credit training programs in leadership and in substance abuse counseling, including a series of leadership development programs for employees of Georgia’s Department of Public Health. The intensifying work of Penfield College parallels calls at the national level to increase the number of citizens with bachelor’s degrees to strengthen communities, regions, and the national economy and
recognition that this outcome cannot be achieved without a focus on adult learners who now make up the majority of America’s college enrollments.

Following the positive 8-year accreditation decisions of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CAPREP) for the Master of Science degree programs in clinical mental health counseling and school counseling with all standards met, the new Master of Science degree program in clinical rehabilitation counseling received early accreditation by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) and full 8-year accreditation by CACREP. The latest results on the Certified Professional Counselor Examination (CPCE) include a 100 percent first-time rate for Mercer’s counseling students. Mean scores for each competency area assessed were above the mean for all universities that use the CPCE as an exit exam.

Student highlights include:

- Inspired to apply by her participation in a Mercer on Mission experience, Valerie Jerome, a 2016 graduate of the undergraduate organizational leadership program, was selected as a Peace Corps volunteer and is serving in Ghana.
- Donnisha Lavigne, a student in the clinical mental health counseling program, is one of only 30 students nationwide selected to participate in the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) Minority Fellowship Program for Addictions Counselors. She was awarded $11,000 in support of her education and addictions counseling service to underserved minority transition-age youth.
- Sixteen students in the clinical rehabilitation-counseling master’s program were named Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Scholars and will receive full
tuition scholarships for 3 semesters funded by a $956,956 U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration grant.

- Keith Myers, a 2017 graduate of the Ph.D. program in counselor education and supervision, received the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision 2016 Outstanding Graduate Student Leadership Award.

- Felicia Tillman, was selected as one of 22 Digital Inclusion Scholars, a program sponsored by Google Fiber and the Nonprofit Technology Network that works to address the digital divide. Tillman is placed with PowerMyLearning, a national nonprofit in Atlanta, committed to ensuring all children are able to power their learning through a combination of technology, teachers, and families.

- Melissa Waller, a student in the Ph.D. program in counseling, was selected for the 2016 Outstanding Atlanta Class. Waller, a national certified counselor and educator for the deaf and hard of hearing, was also selected to participate in the Georgia Women’s Policy Institute, the signature advocacy program for the YWCA of Greater Atlanta.

- Liberal Studies student Vanessa Braswell received the Macon American Association of University Women (AAUW) scholarship for non-traditional female college students.

- Sarah Amuka Williams, a student in the master’s program in organizational leadership received the National Association of African Americans in Human Resources (NAAHR) Atlanta Scholarship.
• Ryan Johnson, a criminal justice leadership major, employee of the Transportation Security Administration at Hartsfield-Jackson airport, and graduate of the FBI Citizens Academy, was awarded the Atlanta Metropol Continuing Education Scholarship for the study of criminal justice/corporate security. Metropol ‘s members serve in leadership positions at local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and in corporate security operations in the greater metropolitan Atlanta area.

Faculty Notables include:

• Dr. Kenyon Knapp, professor of counseling and coordinator of the Ph.D. degree program in counselor education and supervision, was among 14 faculty members from the state to be named a Georgia Governor’s Teaching Fellow. Dr.Knapp was also recognized by the Human Trafficking State Task Force for his activities for his Work Group-Community Awareness and Education.

• Dr. Zipa Vokhiwa, associate professor of science, completed his term as president of the board of directors of the Fulbright Georgia chapter and participated in a Fulbright study trip to Malawi with other Fulbright leaders.

• Dr. Caroline Brackette, associate professor of counseling, was elected president of the Georgia chapter of the American Counseling Association. She was a featured panelist at the Soledad O’Brien and Brad Raymond Starfish Foundation Summit held at Case Western and focused on educational, professional, and personal development for high school juniors, seniors, and college-aged populations and 300 young women who are the first in their families to attend
college. She authored a book chapter, entitled “Hope Deferred,” in the edited text *Child and Adolescent Counseling Case Studies: Developmental, Relational, Multicultural, and Systemic Perspectives* published by Springer Publishing and presented “Addressing the Mental Health and Relational Needs of Black Student-Athletes” at the Black Student-Athlete Summit at the University of Texas-Austin, live-streamed on ESPN.com. She was an invited guest on the “Into the Fold” podcast segment on mental health and the Black student-athlete for the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health and a subject matter expert for ESPN’s The Undefeated website.


- Dr. Wesley Barker, assistant professor of religious studies, co-authored an article, titled “Creating Intentional Pathways: The STIRS (Scientific Thinking and Integrated Reasoning Skills) Institutional Phase,” for the Association of American
Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) fall 2016 edition of its publication, *Peer Review*. Dr. Barker co-presented “Evidence-based Reasoning: STIRS Framework as an Exemplar of Integrative Liberal Education” at the AAC&U 2017 General Education and Assessment conference. The article highlighted Penfield’s work to further the mission of AAC&U’s STIRS initiative. Dr. Barker presented a paper at the prestigious conference focused on the work of Luce Irigaray at the University of Winchester, UK.

- Dr. Charles Roberts, associate professor of mathematics and Mercer alumnus, received the Historical Leaders Award from Michigan State University’s Black Faculty and Administrators Association in recognition of his sustained service to Michigan State and the Black community.

- Dr. Kevin Williams, associate professor of healthcare leadership, was invited by the Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization to participate in a technical meeting on ethnicity and health in the United States. His participation was funded by PAHO/WHO’s unit on Gender and Cultural Diversity.

- Dr. Margaret Eskew published the second volume of *Regeneration, A Journal of Creative Writing* through her Regeneration Writers Press. The book includes the work of students in writing classes, faculty members, and community members.

- Mathematics and science faculty members Dr. Greg Baugher, Dr. Colleen Stapleton, Dr. Zipa Vokhiwa, and Dr. Sabrina Walthall led professional development activities alongside faculty members from Tift College of Education.
for pre-service K-12 teachers for the Technology Association of Georgia’s STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Art) Day.

- Dr. Stapleton and Dr. Vokhiwa participated in the National Science Foundation–sponsored workshop on “Pan-African Approaches to Teaching Geosciences” at Morehouse College, part of the InTeGrate program funded by a five-year STEP Center grant from NSF which aims to develop a citizenry and workforce that can address environmental and resource issues facing our society.

- Jacqueline Stephen, Penfield’s instructional designer and instructor of instructional technology, and Dr. Feng Liu, program coordinator for the informatics major, presented their collaborative work at the annual ASCUE (Association Supporting Computer Users in Education) conference as part of Penfield’s Office of Distance Learning Fellows Program to enhance the online learning environment.

- Dr. Sabrina Walthall collaborated on a QEP research project with colleagues in the College of Education and School of Engineering focused on computational thinking in elementary and middle school students, teaching coding skills to elementary and middle school students and usage of the MIT developed software, App Inventor, in STEM related summer camps.

The College is in the second year of funding from a five-year $956,956 grant from the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, which supports eight three-semester scholarships per year and professional travel for students enrolled in the Master of Science program in clinical rehabilitation counseling. The
Georgia Compassion Project provided a five year, $500,000 grant in support of the Center for the Study of Narrative which offers students and faculty throughout the College a unique opportunity to commit to service to community, research, and public presentation related to narrative as a form of teaching, learning, and counseling. The grant funded the Center’s Annual Showcase of student and faculty research and community-based service as well as the keynote and workshop led by Dr. William Randall, founding director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Narrative and expert on narrative gerontology. The Georgia Humanities Council provided a grant in support of a public presentation of Dr. Melanie Pavich and her students’ research and service related to preservation of African-American historic sites in coastal Georgia. The grant supported a public presentation of digital stories focused on the mapping of a historic African-American cemetery on St. Simons Island and lectures by Christopher Lawton, executive director of Georgia Virtual History, and Stephen Berry, Gregory Professor of the Civil War Era and co-director of the Center for Virtual History Project at the University of Georgia. The InteGrate Center funded by the National Science Foundation Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Talent Expansion Program continues to support the work of Dr. Colleen Stapleton, associate professor of science and chair of the department of mathematics, science, and informatics on her project, “Providing Cultural and Regional Relevance to Issues of Global Sustainability.” Dr. Stapleton and collaborators Dr. Jeff Hall from Tift College of Education and Dr. Sabrina Walthall from Penfield develop virtual field trips to sites in Georgia and the southeastern U.S. to include in InTeGrate teaching modules designed to increase earth
literacy among undergraduates. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) funded a second year of participation in AAC&U’s STIRS (Scientific Thinking and Integrative Reasoning) initiative at the $4,000 level to redesign curricular pathways to signature work to improve undergraduates’ capacity to use evidence to solve problems and make decisions. The grant supported two faculty workshops, one led by the AAC&U STIRS Fellows including Dr. Wesley Barker that included metro Atlanta two-year college leaders. The second workshop, led by Amy Jessen-Marshall, AAC&U’s Vice President for Integrative Liberal Learning and the Global Commons, assisted faculty members teaching the Engagement and Citizenship capstone courses in becoming more intentional in tailoring their capstone courses—from topic to assignment—to the existing outcomes so as to reflect the integrative and global dimensions of the General Education experience.

For the fourth consecutive year, Penfield counseling students, led by Dr. Kathy Robinson, assistant professor of counseling, sponsored a three-day suicide prevention initiative on Mercer’s Atlanta campus. The goal was to establish an environment on campus where individuals are comfortable reaching out for help by training students and faculty members on how to get help for someone in crisis. Georgia Governor Nathan Deal recognized the initiative as “leading the way in building awareness at Mercer and across the nation.”

Penfield’s student Informatics Club and User Experience Club collaborated to host Mercer Informatics Day on the Atlanta campus. Faculty and students provided education on the emerging field of informatics and offered free website design and user
experience evaluation services. Arondale Withers, national UX head of Emerging Technologies, Architecture and Design, was the keynote speaker.

Penfield partnered with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency to offer employees who hold a bachelor’s degree an opportunity to further their education and their career through a new advanced rehabilitation certification program. Consisting of six undergraduate courses offered over a nine-month period, this is the first bachelor’s – level advanced rehabilitation certificate program in the nation. The new curriculum prepares professional staff with the tools to help meet the objective of serving youth and students with disabilities from middle school and high school. The department of mathematics, science, and informatics launched a Master of Science degree in Health Informatics and a four-course credit-bearing certificate in health informatics. The undergraduate human services major added two tracks: gerontology services and family services. The undergraduate organizational leadership program added concentrations in change leadership, civic engagement and community leadership, communication for a global society, and women and leadership.
J. Townsend School of Music

The Townsend School of Music experienced another outstanding academic year in 2016-17. Townsend graduates have been accepted into some of the leading graduate programs across the United States while others have moved into strategic work positions in music and the arts. Interest in the Townsend School of Music continues to rise as inquiries, applications, and auditions were extremely high. Concert audiences have increased in number and diversity and the Discover Townsend brochure of music events continues to draw critical acclaim for its design and for the array of world-class performing artists.

Among the many notable achievements during the 2016-17 academic year include:

- The Mercer Singers and the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings performed for a near sell-out at Carnegie Hall in New York City on February 19, 2017.
- Graduating seniors from the Townsend School of Music were accepted into the Master’s program at Indiana University, the University of Northern Iowa, the Juilliard School of Music, Florida State University, and Mercer University.
- Kennedi Johnson was accepted into the Ethnomusicology program at Indiana University where she will be getting a dual Master’s degree in Ethnomusicology and African-American/African Diaspora Studies.
- Victoria Yrizarry was one of 12 students from around the world offered an apprenticeship with the Berkshire Choral International and will be studying in Budapest.
• Mary Lathem, a Mercer Stamps Scholar, had an internship with the institute for Contemporary Music Performance in London, England and made conference presentations at the Semiotic Society of the American Annual Conference and the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities.

• Reed Tucker, a double-bass student in the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings, received the Kovner scholarship to Juilliard School of Music. During his time at Mercer, Reed has also been the principal bass of the New York String Orchestra and has performed for four sold-out concerts at Carnegie Hall.

• Cannon McClain, graduate student, was offered an apprenticeship with the Berkshire Choral International and studied during the summer in Sheffield, Massachusetts.

• Melissa Rodrigues (MM voice performance), Joel Terning (BM, voice) and Nathan Holmes (BA, voice) were selected for singing roles in a full production of *Carmen* and scenes from other operas at the summer 2017 Harrower Opera Workshop.

• Peter Schultz was one of eight students selected from over 200 applicants into the Western Kentucky University Department of Psychological Sciences Summer 2017 REU Program. Schultz conducted research on the effects music has on stimulating brain function and elevating psychological and physical states after a stroke.

• Clay Young, a Mercer undergraduate and now graduate student, was selected as a member of the C. S. Lewis Institute Choir at Oxbridge.
• Joy Mote and Joel Terning were accepted into the AIMS Vocal Program in Graz, Austria. This intensive program prepares students for professional careers in opera or the concert stage.

• MaryGrace Bender and Abigail Paris were named winners of the 2017 James T. McAfee, Jr. Endowed Vision and Leadership Scholarship.

• Zhihao Wu received a full scholarship to attend Meadowmount School of Music this summer.

• Bronwyn James and Keoni Bolding, students in the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings won fellowships to the Aspen Music Festival.

• Bethany Moss, violin, won the 2017 Robert McDuffie Scholarship as well as the Mu Phi Epsilon Atlanta Alumni Chapter Scholarship.

• Atticus Mellor-Goldman performed in the Brahms “Clarinet Quintet” on the Fabian Concert Series that was featured on the national APM radio show “Performance Today.”

• Ten students from the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings were selected to participate in the Rome chamber Music Festival Young Arts Program in Rome, Italy.

• Students in the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings attended summer programs and festivals at:
  
  o Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival in Florida
  
  o Aspen Music Festival and School in Colorado
  
  o Blue Lakes Fine Arts Camp in Michigan
o Chautauqua Institute in western New York
o Dali Quartet International Music Festival in Pennsylvania
o David Kim Orchestral Institute
o Encore Chamber Music Festival in Cleveland, OH
o Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival
o Marrowstone Music Festival
o Meadowmount School of Music in upstate New York
o Philadelphia International Music Festival
o Rome Chamber Music Festival’s Young Artist Program in Italy
o Renova Music Festival
o Sarasota Music Festival in Florida
o Wintergreen Summer Music Festival and Academy

One of the features of the Townsend School of Music is the commitment to provide opportunities in music and the arts in the community and the region. The performances of world-class recitalists and concert series events are constantly filled to capacity. Among the many guest recitalists included pianists Barbara Lister-Sink, Julie Coucheron and Edward Eikner, and vocalists Javier Abreu and Jasmine Habersham. The Fabian Series continues to attract outstanding performers that provide recitals in a variety of musical genres. Performers in the Fabian Series this past year included the Cortona Trio as well as guest artists including Edward Arron, Jaewon Park, Richard Aaron, Annie Fullard, Erin Keefe, and Osmo Vanska. Students and community guests
were also exposed to the many outstanding master classes by the above listed artists as well as Byron Grant (musical theatre), James Ehnes and Anne-Marie McDermott.

The School of Music also helps to provide opportunities to external programs through the Mercer Children’s Choir (now named Mercer University Youth Choir), the Choral Society of Middle Georgia and the University Choir. All of these organizations use Mercer facilities for rehearsals and performances and are making a tremendous impact in the cultural life of the Macon community. The Mercer University Opera Company presented one children’s performance of “The Gondoliers” to a capacity audience of children and parents. Children were able to ask questions of the performers at the conclusion of the performance. This type of outreach continues to enrich the lives of young children and further acquaint them with the importance of arts in their life.

During the academic year 16-17, Townsend School of Music faculty were outstanding mentors through advising, teaching, coaching, guest conducting, and presentations at scholarly society meetings.

- Carol Goff, the Helen Wall Rich Professor of Collaborative Studies, was extremely active as accompanist for student, faculty, and guest performers. In addition, she was a conference presenter for the Georgia Music Teachers Association State Conference leading a session on “Creating and Building a Thriving Collaborative Piano Program.”

- Richard Kosowski continued to represent the university through his leadership with the Mercer University Youth Choirs. Dr. Kosowski was also Artist-in-Residence for the Berkshire Choral International as soloist for performances of
Mozart, “Grand Mass in C-minor” and Choruses from “Idomeneo.” Kosowski also served as conductor of the Houston County Board of Education Ninth Annual Fifth Grade Honor Choir and as soloist for performances throughout middle Georgia.

- Amy Schwartz Moretti continues to be recognized for her outstanding artistry and for her work as Director of the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings. Among her many chamber music performances include the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Da Camera Society of Mount Saint Mary’s University, Georgia Chamber Players, Chamber Music Festival in Charleston, SC, the Seattle Chamber Music Society. Ms. Moretti also was featured in performances in London, England and Bilbao, Spain with the Ehnes Quartet. She continues to be a member of the GRAMMY review committee.

- Elizabeth Pridgen made her debut as piano soloist with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. She also was a performer for the Governor of Georgia as part of the Arts and Humanities Award Ceremony. As a chamber music performer, Ms. Pridgen was featured in the Kon-Tiki Chamber Music Festival performances at the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo, Norway and also performed a benefit concert for the Aspen Music Festival, Aspen, CO.

- As Director of Choral Studies, Dr. Stanley Roberts continues to be in demand as clinician and conductor for schools and churches. Roberts conducted the Mercer Singers and Alumni Choir along with the Strings from the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings for a near capacity crowd at Carnegie Hall in New York City. He has
been nominated for Southern Division President of the American Choral Directors Association.

- Christopher Schmitz, Associate Professor of Music Theory, has developed a complete curriculum for the undergraduate music theory sequence that includes a broad overview of the topics covered, required texts and supplemental materials, weekly timeline of topics and detailed lesson plans for each class meeting. As a composer, Schmitz continues work on an original opera, “Hugh Smalling.” A performance of “Scenes from Hugh Smalling” was presented in the Fickling Recital Hall in April with a cast composed of 14 undergraduates, 5 graduate students and 2 alumni performers and was accompanied by an orchestra comprised of undergraduates, graduates, high school students, community member, and adjunct faculty member. This original opera has a libretto by Suzanne Doonan, stage direction by Martha Malone, and was conducted by Richard Kosowski.

- Kathryn White has been active in scholarship. Her paper “Ein feste Burg”: Transcending the Tune was recently published in the *Historical and Pedagogical Issues in History: Insights from the Great Lakes History Conference*. Dr. White also had four presentation at conferences: “Signifying and the “Heterogeneous Sound Ideal” in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Hamilton was presented at the Great Lakes History Conference and the American Musicological Society—Southeast. Dr. White also presented a paper, “Race and Music in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Hamilton, at Mercer, and “Controversial Casting in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s
Hamilton at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. She continues to serve as a program notes annotator for the International Chamber Artists (Chicago, IL), the Atlanta Chamber Players (Atlanta, GA) and for the Fabian Series concerts at Mercer University.
K. Georgia Baptist College of Nursing

The College of Nursing embraces a commitment of excellence in teaching, scholarship, leadership, practice, research, and service. In 2016-2017, the College had a total enrollment of 433 students in four nursing degree programs: Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice and Doctor of Philosophy. College highlights for the 2016 – 2017 academic year period include:

- Upon completion of an October 2016 on-site accreditation, the College received full 10-year accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for the BSN, MSN, and DNP degree programs. The next on-site evaluation will be in October 2026.

- The University conferred 164 nursing degrees, which includes 128 BSN, 27 MSN, 2 DNP, and 7 PhD.

- U.S. News & World Report ranks the MSN and DNP degree programs in the top 100 nursing programs across the country.

- The College submitted grants/contracts exceeding $3.5 million in value and received funding commitments of $2,416,414 in new awards. Additional pending award reviews total $429,105.

- Following Board of Trustee approval, the BSN-DNP degree option and the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner specialty commenced fall semester 2016.

- Faculty gave over 20 scholarly presentations at regional, state, national, and international meetings/conferences and published 23 peer-reviewed manuscripts.
• Five faculty serve on journal editorial review boards and 15 nursing faculty serve as manuscript reviewers for 30 well recognized peer-reviewed journals.

• The College holds a 91% 4-year average pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®) based on a four-year data trend (2013-2016) for first time test candidates.

• The College licensure data for 2016 graduates yielded a 91% pass rate, which is 3.2% points higher than the national BSN pass rate and 4.28% points higher than the Georgia BSN pass rate. The May 2017 preliminary nursing licensure pass rate is currently trending at an average of 90%. In comparison to other Georgia BSN programs, in 2016 GBCN held the second highest 4-year pass rate average for schools graduating 119 or more students.

• The MSN degree program graduated 27 FNPs in December 2016. The December 2016 cohort yielded a >96% FNP certification pass rate for first time candidates. Furthermore, the nursing program average score is 611, which represents 47 points higher than the national average.

• A new academic-practice partnership was established with Northside Hospital Forsyth. A Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) will be piloted fall 2017 with senior nursing students with an interest in ICU nursing who are currently employed by Northside Hospital. The ICU DEU is the second GBCN/Northside partnership collaboration after a successful Northside Scholars program for junior and senior BSN students at Northside Atlanta.
Selected Student Highlights

- Dedicated to Diversity grant launched in 2016 to support 20 undergraduate students. The total College student population represents 52% Caucasian and 48% minority students.
- BSN graduate Christina Petty served on the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) Board in the position of National office of NEC South (Nominating Election Committee).
- BSN students Ashlea Shumpert, Katherine Tak, Savannah Jones and Jacquelyn Broad were primary authors on two separate resolutions passed by the NSNA House of Delegates by a 100% margin. RESOLUTIONS: In support of encouraging safe-secure addresses for every nurse; and In support of expanding access to postpartum depression (PPD) education for the pregnant family.
- BSN student Teressa Hill received a NSNA $3500 Helene Fuld Foundation Scholarship.
- BSN students Lacey Evans, Julia Weng, Ashlea Whitaker, Emily Thompson, and Victoria Collins were elected to the 2016-2017 Georgia Association of Nursing Students (GANS) Board.
- BSN students Janay Gonzalez and Elizabeth Berchak received the 2017 Daisy in Training Award. This award recognizes a nursing student for the above-and-beyond care and compassion they show patients and their families as they are learning, we celebrate what it truly means to be a nurse.
- The Georgia Baptist Association of Nursing Student (GBANS) group received the
GANS 2016 Community Service Award for their robust community service programs. The undergraduate students contribute in excess of 5000 community service hours.

- Six undergraduate students were named Northside Scholars.
- Graduate students presented at national and international conferences, including: Southern Nursing Research Society Conference, Georgia Association for Nursing Education, Georgia Nursing Leadership Coalition, American Association of Colleges of Nursing Doctoral Conference, Georgia Affiliate of the College of Nurse Midwives, International Nursing Research Congress, National League for Nursing Summit, and Sigma Theta Tau International.
- BSN student Ashlea Shumpert and PhD student Paula Sutton were selected to attend the AACN Healthcare Policy Summit in Washington, DC.
- Alumni Dr. Susan Carter McMillan received the STTI Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame Award. Her award was presented in Dublin, Ireland.
- Shakira Lynn (’13) received the Enda Earle Teal Award to recognize her distinguished service.
- Delyn Heberlein Keeton (’82) received the Distinguished Alumna Award for excellence in nursing practice, humanitarian contributions, and support of the alma mater. Keeton also received the AJC Nursing Excellence Award.
- Susan Liipfert Shelton (’97) received the Excellence in Nursing Education Award for her outstanding contributions toward the education of future nurses.
Selected Faculty Highlights

- Lanell Bellury served as PD/PI for a nearly $350,000 grant by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to increase nursing education opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including racial and ethnic minorities who are underrepresented among registered nurses. The College will continue to meet the need for diversity in healthcare with a continuing grant of nearly $2M for 2017-2021.

- Darlene Rogers was the recipient of the 2017 Duke University Annie Beery Bieber Award for Outstanding Leadership.

- Tammy Barbé was selected the Mercer University representative - 2017 Georgia Governor’s Teaching Fellows Program Academic Year Symposia.

- Fran Kamp was the recipient of the 2017 International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation and Learning Frontline Simulation Champion Excellence Award. She was also the recipient of the 2017 Distinguished Faculty of the Year Award and the 2016 GANS Advisor of the Year Award.

- Brenda Rowe accepted appointment by the Office of Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle to serve on Senate Study Committee on Barriers to Georgians’ Access to Adequate Healthcare.

- Maura Schlairet received the Southern Nursing Research Association (SNRS) award for Spotlight Senior Researcher.

- Freida Payne serves on the editorial board for the Journal of Nutrition and Obesity.
• Jennifer L. Bartlett serves on the American Nurses Association Ethics Education Advisory Board.

• Tara Bertulfo serves as clinical consultant, reviewer, and committee chairperson, Office of Family Planning, Office of Public Health & Science, Office of the Secretary, US Department of health and Human Services.

• Elaine Harris serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, Chair of Strategic Planning Committee, and Chair of the Residential Services Committee for Developmental Disabilities Ministries of Georgia.

• Linda Streit was re-elected to the board for the Georgia Association of Deans and Directors.

• The College continues to receive funding support from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) for the Nurse Faculty Loan Program. This grant financially supports the advanced education of nurses seeking to teach in academe following completion of their master’s or doctoral degree.

• Dr. Lanell Bellury is co-investigator/consultant on Phase III of a funded collaborative grant with the Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education (Georgia CORE). The award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) focuses on cancer survivors, healthcare providers and many other stakeholders in the process of developing research to address the needs of vulnerable cancer survivors in Georgia.

• Two faculty are Fellows in the American Academy of Nursing.
• Five College faculty serve as regional (SACS) and/or professional (CCNE) accreditation visitors.

• Seven nursing students and two nursing faculty participated in Mercer on Mission Cambodia and Honduras teams, summer 2017.
L. College of Health Professions

The College of Health Professions is comprised of four departments: Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies, Public Health, and Clinical Medical Psychology. In 2016-2017, the College had an enrollment of over 475 students on the Macon and Atlanta campuses. In addition to bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs, the College offers postgraduate Physical Therapy residencies (orthopaedic, neurologic, cardiovascular/pulmonology), Physical Therapy fellowships (orthopaedic manual), and a Physician Assistant residency (advanced cardiology). The College also operates the Mercer Physical Therapy Clinic, which serves students, faculty, and staff on the Atlanta campus as well as individuals from the surrounding communities.

College Highlights

- Total enrollment in the College in 2016-2017 was 479 students: 110 Doctor of Physical Therapy; 157 Physician Assistant; 114 Master of Public Health; 48 Doctor of Psychology; and 50 Bachelor of Science in Public Health students.

- The College awarded 35 Doctor of Physical Therapy, 49 Master of Medical Science, 41 Master of Public Health, and 2 Bachelor of Science in Public Health degrees at the May 2017 commencement ceremonies.

- The Department of Clinical Medical Psychology joined the College in July 2016 and offers the Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) degree with the first anticipated graduates in 2017-2018.

- The College offers five combined degrees: DPT/MPH, DPT/MBA, MMSc/MPH, PsyD/MPH, and PharmD/MPH.
• Faculty received $768,703 in grants and contracts ($633,153 in research grants and contracts; $135,550 in other contracts) in 2016-2017.

• Faculty published 31 peer-reviewed manuscripts and presented 73 scholarly presentations at regional, state, national, and international conferences in 2016-2017.

• The College offers multiple postgraduate residencies and fellowships. In 2016-2017, there were 11 physical therapy residents (9 orthopaedic, 1 neurologic, and 1 cardiovascular/pulmonary); 3 physical therapy fellows (3 orthopaedic manual); and 2 physician assistant residents (2 advanced cardiology).

• The Mercer Physical Therapy Clinic, which operates on the Atlanta campus with one clinician and one physical therapy postgraduate orthopaedic resident, had a record year with 4,590 patient visits in 2016-2017.

• The Center for Evaluation and Applied Research in the College’s Department of Public Health partnered with public health and other government agencies, school districts, community-based organizations, and foundations to help them meet their accountability and program improvement needs to provide evaluation and applied research services.

**Student Highlights**

• The Master of Medical Science graduating class of 2017 had a first time pass rate of 100% on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination, the licensure exam for the profession of physician assistants.
• The Doctor of Physical Therapy graduating class of 2017 had a first time pass rate of 100% on the National Physical Therapy Exam, the licensure exam for the profession of physical therapy.

• The Doctor of Psychology students achieved a 100% match rate in applying for the pre-graduation, yearlong internships in phase one of the national match.

• The Mercer Physical Therapy students were awarded first place for their fundraising efforts in the national VCU-Marquette Challenge raising $45,220 to support physical therapy research for the Physical Therapy Foundation. In 2017-2018, the challenge will be named the Mercer-Marquette Challenge.

• College of Health Professions students provided over 20,000 hours of healthcare-related service (service-learning, volunteerism, community-based) to the community.

• Twenty-six students in the College presented scholarly posters at regional, state, and national conferences.

• Ten students published peer-reviewed manuscripts in collaboration with faculty.

• Sydney Coleman, MPH Class of 2017, and Paige Crawford, MPH Class of 2018, were accepted to the 2017 One Heart Source Internship Program in Cape Town, South Africa.

• T. Ryan Cooke, PA Class of 2017, received the Student of the Year Award from the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants.

• Aleece Diaz, PA Class of 2018, was selected as the 2017 Scholar for the GE-National Medical Fellowship Primary Care Leadership Program.
• **Carolyn Elliott**, DPT Class of 2018, was appointed *Newsletter Co-Chair*, Student Special Interest Group of the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia.

• **Emily Glidden**, Class of 2017, received an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) Fellowship at the Centers for Disease Control in the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry/Division of Toxicology and Human Health Sciences/Environmental Epidemiology Branch.

• **Esteban Guigou**, MPH Class of 2017, received a ORISE Fellowship as a Technical Research Assistant Internship at the Centers for Disease Control, Office of Infectious Diseases/Mycotic Disease Branch, Division of Foodborne Waterborne and Environmental Diseases.

• **Elizabeth Heard**, PA Class of 2019, was elected as *Student Representative* for the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants.

• **Elizabeth Judy**, PA Class of 2018, was elected as *Student Representative* for the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants.

• **Katherine June**, DPT Class of 2018, was elected *Core Ambassador* to the national Student Assembly Board of Directors, Student Special Interest Group of the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia.

• **Raymond Lynch**, DPT Class of 2017, was elected *Vice President*, Student Special Interest Group of the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia.

• **Kathleen Mitchell**, PA Class of 2018, was elected *Representative* for Student Association of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, Assembly of Representatives.
• **Spencer Price**, MPH Class of 2018, was elected to the Georgia Rural Health Association Board of Directors.

• **Johane Simen**, MPH Class of 2017, received two Centers for Disease Control, Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response awards for Zika Virus response: *Director Award for Esprit de Corps and Excellence in Frontline Public Health Service*.

• **Sarah Stallman**, PA Class of 2019, was elected *Representative* for Student Association of the American Academy of Physician Assistants, Assembly of Representatives.

• **Kenneth Wessel**, DPT Class of 2019, was appointed *Assistant to the Secretary*, House of Delegates of the American Physical Therapy Association.

**Faculty Recognition and Awards**

Faculty are serving in elected/appointed leadership positions in national, state, regional, and community-based professional organizations and have received national and state awards.

• **Jeannette Anderson** served as *Chair* of the Ethics Committee for the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia.

• **Sheena Brown-Waller** was appointed *Chair* of the Conference Proposal Review Committee for the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants 2017 Summer Conference.

• **Meghan Cody** was awarded an *Early Career Travel Grant Award* from the International Convention on Psychological Science.
• **Beth Collier** served as *Vice President* of the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia.

• **Elizabeth Dickerson** served on the Medical Advisory Committee for Good Samaritan Health Center of Gwinnett.

• **Joseph Donnelly** received the *Distinguished Lecturer Honor* from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists and served as *President* of the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia through April 2017 then began a three-year term as Past-President.

• **Jeffrey Ebert** was elected for a second term as a *Delegate* to the American Physical Therapy Association, House of Delegates, representing the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia.

• **Alyssa Fiss** served as *Chair* of the Practice Committee of the American Physical Therapy Association, Section on Pediatrics.

• **Cheryl Gaddis** was elected *Vice Chair* of the Georgia Public Health Association, Health Education Health Promotion Section.

• **Ann Lucado** was selected as Clinical Practice Guideline Coordinator for Hand and Upper Extremity for the American Physical Therapy Association, Section on Orthopedics.

• **Lisa Lundquist** received the *Committee Chair of the Year Award* from the Georgia Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

• **Craig Marker** was appointed to the Executive Committee for the American Psychological Association Division 5 (Quantitative and Qualitative Methods).
• **Jill Mattingly** received the *Humanitarian of the Year Award* from the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants and was selected for the American Society of Addiction Medicine Fundamentals Program Planning Committee.

• **Catherine Sadowski** received the *Faculty Achievement Award* from the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants.

• **Jimmie Smith** was elected *Chair* of the Health Education Health Promotion Section of the Georgia Public Health Association.

• **Mark Stillman** was awarded an *Early Career Achievement Award* from the American Psychological Association and was reappointed to the Society for Health Psychology, Integrated Primary Care Committee.

• **David Taylor** received the *Award of Merit* from the American Physical Therapy Association and served as *Chief Delegate* to the American Physical Therapy Association, House of Delegates, representing the Physical Therapy Association of Georgia.

• **Leslie Taylor** served as *State Liaison* for the American Physical Therapy Association, Academy of Geriatric Physical Therapy.

• **Nannette Turner** was appointed *Co-Chair* of the Georgia Cancer Control Consortium Prostate Cancer Task Force.

• **Deborah Wendland** served as Associate Editor of *Journal of Acute Care Physical Therapy*. 
M. University Library

The University Library continues to support the vision and mission of Mercer University. The reorganization of the Library into a cross-campus, team approach has brought librarians and staff together in their functional areas. The exciting, challenging work to build strong teams to deliver exceptional library operations began in summer 2016 and throughout the year there have been new collaborations and initiatives taking advantage of partnerships, shared decision making, and new ways to serve the University better.

This "One Mercer, One Library" culture was validated by officially changing the name from University Libraries to University Library in early 2017. The Library remains the primary provider of quality information resources, enhancing our strong print collections with a vast array of electronic books, journals, streaming audio and video, digitized archival collections, and more. Print collections are shared across campuses and deliver e-resources to the Mercer community wherever they are. We also serve as the most popular gathering spots, not only for our strong services and assistance, but for the spaces and amenities we provide - individual and group study spaces, social spaces, computers and print services, 24-hour study rooms, and a place to get a cup of coffee.

Supporting Student Learning and Research

In the 2016-17 academic year, Research Services Librarians reached 6,185 students, faculty and others during instruction and consultation sessions on 129
occasions. Research assistance and services were provided to Mercerians in varied formats which included face to face, telephone, instant messaging and email.

Each year the Library recognizes exceptional student research. On April 3, 2017, the Monroe F. Swilley Jr. Student Research Award was presented to Penfield College student Danielle Render at the Seventh Annual Atlanta Research Conference to Showcase Student and Faculty Scholarship. The award, which includes a $250 cash prize, recognizes a student who best incorporates the use of the University Libraries’ collections and services and demonstrates active critical thinking.

The Library is determining its impact on the research process at Mercer, as well as its impact on student success. The Library plays a large part in the academic life of our students but gathering data and information to quantify and analyze that impact is an exciting challenge. This orientation has underlined the need for objective data to add to the subjective data already at hand. During FY17, a program of using pre- and post-instruction testing was initiated for data on whether students are learning discrete skills specific during instruction. This data will be added to subjective (student and faculty evaluation forms) data gathered to assess instruction in research methods using library resources.

A number of librarians have created important research projects that will lead to better support of student learning: best practices in web page and instructional design for helping students better learn research skills; exploring the use and perceptions of e-books; investigating how McAfee School of Theology students and faculty use electronic resources for their coursework and scholarship; and collecting student data
that can be correlated with grades to show library impact on learning outcomes as well as who is actually using our e-resources. All of these efforts will enhance the Library's effectiveness as well as provide librarians with rich opportunities for their own scholarship.

Technical Services and Systems and Collection Services collaborated to dramatically increase the overall content available to Mercerians. Significant additions of electronic book and video collections to the University Library’s virtual holdings have boosted the catalog system’s holdings to exceed the 1 million record point - over 1.1 million. Significant new electronic resources were acquired to support faculty and student research, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education, Project Muse*, and *RILM: Repertoire International de Littérature Musicale* with full text. A second video streaming was purchased to supplement the successful Kanopy service.

The Library also entered into new subscriptions which brought significant e-book collections and the Library continued the Demand Driven Acquisitions (DDA) program. These new acquisitions give Mercerians access to over 588,000 titles via the Library’s online catalog and Discovery Service. 228,193 of those titles are part of the DDA program. DDA titles cost the University Library nothing until users choose to use the item for a significant amount of time, while other e-books are supported by membership in the GALILEO consortium. This year, Mercerians chose to purchase 789 titles through the DDA program, and in the 2017 fiscal year, they used almost 900 of the total titles purchased through this program. The Library has also expanded its video DDA program to include access to 28,196 videos, a 76% increase over last year. 714 videos saw a
total of 2,895 plays at a cost of $5.47 per play, or $22.22 per title, for a total outlay of less than $13,000. This mode of media acquisition is much more cost effective than per-title purchases. The University Library’s collections have also grown to include 185,541 electronic journals, an increase of 21.8% from last year.

The Library received two significant collections from donors. Dr. Y. Lynn Holmes, Mercer graduate, noted scholar, teacher, and administrator, donated his collection of 770 Near East archeological artifacts. Dr. Holmes desires for these items to be displayed, studied, and used by the Mercer and middle Georgia community. This is an exceptional opportunity for students and scholars to see firsthand a wide variety of items - household objects, coins, jewelry, weapons, and religious objects - from the ancient world. The collection has been thoroughly documented on the Library website with photos and descriptions: http://libraries.mercer.edu/ursa/handle/10898/3790.

Ken Medema, an internationally known composer, recording artist and collaborator, donated his personal archives to Tarver Library. The array of sheet music, photographs, recordings, and other documents are a testament to an extraordinary career touching thousands of lives through his music. A celebration of Mr. Medema's career and the opening of the collection will be held in October 2017 - see http://libraries.mercer.edu/about-us/news-items/ken-medema-celebration-weekend.

A number of facility projects are improving library service to the Mercer community. In December 2016 the Douglas Center library was transformed into a new library service model by mixing on-site and virtual research assistance with access to all electronic resources. The 3,000 print book collection was not used and its removal
allowed more space for badly needed patron study spaces. A large portion of the lower level Swilley Library was renovated to create 3,700 sq. ft. of additional 24/7 study space for students on the Atlanta campus and a proposal to add additional study rooms in Tarver Library is under consideration.

University Library faculty have been very active in the past year. A selected list of those achievements include:

- William Brogdon served as Vice-Chair of the Georgia Library Association Hubbard/Beard Scholarship Committee.
- Arlene Desselles and Louise Lowe presented "Demonstrating Your Professional Value," at the 28th Annual Georgia Library Association Conference, October 2016, in Athens, GA.
- Stephen Michaels and Ms. Lowe presented "Finding Our Place in Canvas," at the June 2017 meeting of the Atlanta Area Bibliographic Instruction Group.
- Lee Olson and Gail Morton presented "BIG Group Hug: Supporting professional growth through internal learning networks," at the Atlanta Area Bibliographic Instruction meeting.
- Kim Eccles was elected Vice Chair, Standards Committee. Association of Colleges and Research Libraries.
- Rebecca Engsberg published "On Your Mark, Get Set, Go! Learn More about Using Games in Library Instruction" in the Georgia Library Quarterly.
• Beth Perry, contributed to the Public Services Interest Group Panel for
  Proceedings of the 2016 American Theological Library Association (ATLA)
  Annual Conference.

• Kathryn Wright presented "When Baptist Entities Divorce: A 10 Year
  Retrospective on Changes Navigated by the Archives at Mercer University" at
  the 2017 Association of Librarians and Archivists at Baptist Institutions
  meeting.

• Molly Kernan, and Gretchen Smith presented a Virtual Poster, "Unexpected
  Discovery: Catalog Cleanup after Implementing Discover." for the Association
  for Library collections & Technical Services (ALCTS) Exchange.

• Jeremy Brown presented “Wrangle Your Data like a Pro with the Data
  Processing Power of Python” at the 2016 Charleston Library Conference.

With the University Library reorganization, Special Collections was renamed
Archives and Digital Initiatives (ADI), continuing their mission to collect, preserve,
digitize, and provide access to Mercer University records and Baptist history. The
search also began for a new archivist to focus on processing and digitization of
materials.

The department received a variety of new acquisitions. ADI worked with history
faculty to move a number of books from their former departmental library into special
collections. Work continued on inventoring and processing the Ken Medema collection
of choral anthems, sound recordings, business records, and other files donated by the
renowned composer and performer. ADI partnered with the library's Technical Services
and Systems staff to develop categories for university publications, many of which were previously uncatalogued.

For the first time, Mercer graduate students' theses and dissertations were loaded as digital documents into URSA, and several undergraduate professors expressed an interest in showcasing their students' work online. During the year, 930 digital items were created or modified in URSA, including university catalogs, Caroline Brackette's (Penfield College) e-book on counseling during disaster relief, Engineering Expo programs, faculty presentations, oral history interviews, and many others.

ADI also conducted research on Mercer history and alumni for Advancement, Marketing Communications, Alumni, Athletics, and other campus offices and provided photos and text for each issue of *The Mercerian*. Several INT 101 classes met in the archives and had students tackle Mercer history projects. The students from Matt Harper's HIS 363 class did extensive research on the lives of slaved and free blacks at Jarrell Plantation in Jones County, expanding the body of knowledge on this significant topic; Laura Botts and Kathryn Wright assisted the plantation with organizing its archival holdings.

ADI partnered with on- and off-campus organizations during the year. Two groups from the Daughters of the American Revolution visited and used church records for genealogy research. Kathryn Wright worked with Josh Rogers of NewTown Macon to restore a mural at Macon's historic Capricorn Studios. Laura Botts and Chinekwu Obidoa led seven students on a study abroad trip to Bermuda to learn about global health.
Mercer University Press supports the work of the University in achieving excellence and scholarly discipline in the fields of liberal learning, professional knowledge, and regional investigation by making the results of scholarly investigation and literary excellence available to the worldwide community. The year 2016–2017 was the 37th year of operation of the Press. The Press published 31 new books and had 20 reprints.

Award Winning Books and Authors

- Dan Aldridge, *To Lasso the Clouds* (2016 Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council Award for Excellence in Documenting Georgia History Using the Holdings of Archives and Finalist – 2016 Georgia Author of the Year Award – History Category)
- Raymond Atkins: Lifetime Achievement Award by the Georgia Writers Association
- R. Kirby Godsey, *The God Particle* (Winner – 2016 Georgia Author of the Year Award – Inspirational/Sacred Category)
- Kathy A. Bradley, *Wondering Toward Center* (Winner – 2016 Georgia Author of the Year Award – Essay Category)
• Raymond Atkins, *South of the Etowah* (Finalist – 2016 Georgia Author of the Year Award – Essay Category)

• Terry Kay, *The King Who Made Paper Flowers* (Finalist – 2016 Georgia Author of the Year Award – Literary Fiction Category)

• Ann Hite, *Sleeping Above Chaos* (Honorable Mention – 2016 Georgia Author of the Year Awards – Literary Fiction Category)

• Susie Gardner, *1, 2, 3, TEAM!* (Finalist – 2016 Georgia Author of the Year Award – Children’s Category)

**BOOKS PUBLISHED 2016–2017**

• R. Kirby Godsey, *The God Particle: God-Talk in a “Big Bang” World*

• Susie Gardner, *1,2,3 Team!*

• Mary Anna Bryan, *Cardinal Hill* (2014 Sams Award Winner)

• Anne Hite, *Sleeping Above Chaos*

• Milinda Jay, *Annie Laura’s Triumph*

• Ashley Havird, *Lightningstruck* (2015 Sams Award Winner)

• Casey Cagle, *Education Unleashed*

• Glenn Jonas, *A Cloud of Witnesses from the Heart of the City: First Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, 1816-2016*

• John Brinsfield, *Summon Only the Brave: Commanders, Soldiers, and Chaplains at Gettysburg*

• Steven Fink, *Dribbling for Dawah: Sports among Muslim Americans*
• Andrew Young, Harvey Newman, and Andrea Young, *Andrew Young and the Making of Modern Atlanta*

• Michael “Buffalo” Smith, *Capricorn Rising: Conversations in Southern Rock*

• Jill Stuckey, Evan Kutzler, *Ossabaw Island: A Sense of Place*

• Tracy J. Revels, *Florida’s Civil War: Terrible Sacrifices*

• *The Doc Schneider Songbook: Homemade Songs, 1974–2016*

• Vincent Joseph Dooley and Samuel Norman Thomas, Jr. ed., *The Legion’s Fighting Bulldog: The Civil War Correspondence of William Gaston Delony, Lieutenant Colonel of Cobb’s Georgia Legion Cavalry, and Rosa Delony, 1853-1863*


• Stephen Corey, *Startled at the Big Sound: Essays Personal, Literary, and Cultural*

• Steve Oney, *A Man’s World: Portraits* (A Gallery of Fighters, Creators, Actors, and Desperadoes from the author of *And the Dead Shall Rise*)


• Cathryn Hankla, *Galaxies: Poems*

• C. Mildred Thompson, *Reconstruction in Georgia: Economic, Social, Political, 1865–1872*, ed. William C. Bragg

• Susan Cushman, ed. *A Second Blooming: Becoming the Women We Are Meant to Be*

• Anna Schachner, *You and I and Someone Else*, A Novel

• Katy Giebenhain, *Sharps Cabaret* (Adrienne Bond Poetry Award)

• Joel McMahon, *Our Good and Faithful Servant: James Moore Wayne and Georgia Unionism*

• Dan Wimberley, *Cherokee in Controversy: The Life of Jesse Bushyhead*


• Philip D. Dillard, *Jefferson Davis’s Last Campaign: Confederate Nationalism and the Fight to Arm Slaves*

• Christopher Martin, *This Gladdening Light: An Ecology of Fatherhood and Faith*

One special project

• Wade Padgett, *From Court in the Wilderness to Court in the Metropolis: A History of the Augusta Judicial Court*
O. Office of International Programs

The Office of International Programs (OIP) supports the development and management of study abroad programs and international agreements, provides advising for students interested in studying or interning abroad and promotion for study abroad programs, manages the application process, and tracks non-study abroad travel for members of the Mercer community. The OIP also provides comprehensive services for international students and scholars who wish to engage with Mercer University, especially in terms of immigration advising and support, and intensive English language training. Finally, the OIP engages with external stakeholders to develop new opportunities for global engagement for the Mercer community.

In the fall of 2016 International Programs hosted 25 Mexican students in the English Language Institute as part of a collaboration between the U.S. and Mexican governments entitled Proyecta 100,000, which intends to provide new and innovative opportunities for educational and industry exchange between the two countries. The OIP also collaborated with the Institute of International Education and the German-American Fulbright Commission to host 24 high-level German educational administrators as part of a five-day seminar exploring how U.S. universities balance education with their commitment to research and industry. The OIP also hosted for the second time a state-wide Japanese language speech contest supported by the Japanese Consulate in Atlanta and the Japanese American Society of Georgia on the Atlanta campus in which approximately 200 high school and college students and their families from all over the state of Georgia participated and attended.
The Southern Conference (SOCON) Academic Exchange finalized a Memorandum of Understanding allowing for students to move internationally among SOCON schools for a wider range of study abroad opportunities, and a proposal has been submitted for the development of a shared program in Panama with hopes of launching in the summer of 2018.

For the 2016-17 year, 375 individual students participated in programs abroad, a 12% increase over last year. Participation is broken down as follows:

- 185 Mercer on Mission, 11 Programs
- 118 Traditional Faculty Led, 12 Programs (30% increase)
- 26 Independent Long-term (Exchange or affiliate) (8% increase)
- 13 Internships (69% increase)
- 53 Medical and Pharmacy Rotations or Student Travel (Not previously captured)

Mercer hosted a total of 466 international students on F-1 or J-1 visas, supported six J-1 visiting scholars and their dependents, and managed the immigration records of 49 international graduates on Optional Practical Training (OPT). Seven degree-seeking students participated in Curricular Practical Training (CPT), and one J-1 student participated in Academic Training.

The English Language Institute (ELI) enrolled 235 students from 28 countries. The top five sending countries in the ELI included Saudi Arabia, Japan, Vietnam, Mexico and China. Enrollment in special, short-term programs secured through continued partnerships with Oberlin College in Japan, ITTI Global in Atlanta, and through a grant
from the Mexican government accounted for 35% of total ELI enrollment in FY17. Nine ELI students matriculated into degree programs at Mercer during the year, 43 former ELI students remain in active status within degree programs at the University, and five former ELI students graduated from degree programs in FY2017.

Forty-six percent (46%) of all the 231 international students from 54 countries enrolled in degree programs at Mercer in FY2017 hailed from the top sending countries of China (13%), India (11%), Saudi Arabia (9%), South Korea (7%), and Vietnam (6%). The top enrolling schools of international students at Mercer include the School of Business (38%), the College of Liberal Arts (19%), the College of Pharmacy (17%), and the School of Engineering (14%). Undergraduate students (53%) make up the majority of the international student population, followed by graduate students (36%) and professional students (6%). Exchange students and non-degree students account for 5% of the international student population. Top enrolling schools of undergraduate students include SSBE (36%), CLA (35%), and Engineering (27%). Top enrolling schools of graduate and/or professional students include SSBE (51%) and the College of Pharmacy (32%).
P. Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs consists of 11 departments on two campuses (Macon and Atlanta): Campus Life, Center for Career and Professional Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, the Office of Access and Accommodations, Greek Life, Housing and Residence Life, Judicial Education, the Center for Community Engagement, Recreational Sports and Wellness, and the Federal TRIO Programs (Upward Bound, Minority Affairs Student Support, and the Educational Opportunity Center). The division’s mission is to enrich the Mercer student’s experience through co-curricular and extracurricular programming that complements the academic mission of the University.

A number of highly successful programs and initiatives took place during the 2016-2017 academic year to support student development. Among them were:

- The Office of Campus Life Macon sponsored 215 social and educational programs on the Macon campus, including a collaborative Macon party co-hosted with Wesleyan and Middle Georgia College in the fall that was located downtown and was attended by approximately 800 students. Over 600 students attended the first ever Spring Fling on the Atlanta campus where faculty, staff, and students enjoyed food, an obstacle course, and various games aimed at building community and de-stressing the students. On top of the traditional Family Weekend, Homecoming, and tailgating activities, this office coordinated transporting approximately 900 highly spirited Mercer students to see the Mercer Bears take on the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets in football in September.
• Bearstock, a signature community event in Macon, was split into two events this year. A daytime family oriented event, and nighttime (“After Dark”) event for Mercer students (and their guests) featured national recording artists Waka Flocka Flame and B.o.B.. The event was highly successful as over 3,500 students and guests filled the University Center basketball arena for a night of entertainment.

• The Center for Community Engagement facilitated 918 volunteers this year, and “Be a Good Neighbear,” the division’s annual community service event, grew to a record 550 students involved this past fall. Coordinator Hannah Vann and Dr. Eimad Houry presented the “In America” event at the 2017 Gulf South Summit on Service Learning and Civic Engagement at UNCG in Greensboro, NC.

• The Student Government Association hosted a variety of highly successful events fostering traditions that included taking more than 800 students to Pilgrimage to Penfield and having 1,000 students at the annual Christmas Tree lighting event in December. Former Mercerian and television journalist Nancy Grace spoke to a packed house of approximately 1,300 students during the Founders’ Day event that was held in February.

• The Sexual Assault, Hazing, and Alcohol Prevention and Education (SHAPE) Committee hosted a series of educational programs in Macon including National Hazing Awareness, the Red Flag Campaign, Alcohol Awareness, SHAPE Carnival, and Sexual Violence Week. The group also hosted the nationally acclaimed Sex Signals program that was met with overwhelmingly positive
feedback by the students. Over 2,200 students attended SHAPE programs during the course of the year.

- The division continued to provide access and accommodations to 225 students with disabilities, and personal counseling to 616 students on both campuses.

- The Center for Career and Professional Development (formerly Career Services) on both campuses has now consolidated under one executive director to boost coordination and maximize resources. In summer this office transitioned to Handshake, a platform for students to connect with employment and internship opportunities across the country. In the first 40 days of implementation they connected with 1,000 employers. During the year reviewed, this office served 1,970 students and 177 alumni through individual services, engaged 758 employers, and held 46 on-campus career events.

- Minority Affairs hosted nine cultural events including Bear Sensitivity Training, a Peace Panel, and Diversity week. The Educational Opportunity Center coordinated over 1,000 hours of tutoring and the Student Support Services program awarded $15,000 in Grant Aid scholarships to 19 students. In addition, 100% of Upward Bound seniors graduated from high school and 22 seniors engaged in a college signing day event.

Key indicators for success in Student Affairs focus on student involvement, student leadership, and service. A number of metrics are routinely used to measure student success for the Division of Student Affairs and include:
The Mercer University chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success concluded the year with the induction of 80 new members in fall 2016 and 10 new members in spring 2017. In addition, nine students were inducted into the Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society in the spring.

Students graduating in the spring of 2016 were asked to complete a “Next Destination” survey reflecting their plans for post-graduation. Of the reporting students, 84.7% of students responded they were either employed or accepted to graduate or professional programs within six months of graduation. In addition, Mercer students report approximately 72% involvement in internship opportunities.

The Center for Community Engagement coordinated 918 volunteers who put in an estimated labor value of $344,719.

Greek Life had 710 total members in the fall. Greeks raised approximately $50,000 for philanthropies during the year.

Mercer provided leadership to coordinating the SOCON Voter Participation challenge in which all ten conference schools participated in a voter registration competition that was held in fall 2016. Results from that competition are still pending.
IV. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

This division of the University is composed of the offices of Athletics, Audit & Compliance, Auxiliary Services, Benefits, Payroll & Wellness, Budget, Information Technology, Human Resources, Mercer Engineering Research Center, Physical Plant, Police, Treasurer’s Office, and University Center.

Substantial growth and campus improvement occurred on the campus this year, and they can be attributed to several of these offices.

Athletics

The Mercer athletics department’s 2016-17 academic year was highlighted by a multitude of team and individual athletic and academic successes, further establishing the Bears’ tradition of balancing the two areas.

Most importantly, Mercer’s athletic programs continued their dominance in the classroom. The Bears claimed their second consecutive Barrett-Boner Award – given to the school that places the highest percentage of its student-athletes on the Southern Conference’s academic honor roll. Mercer led the SoCon with 314 student-athletes named to the academic honor roll, 86 more than the next closest school (Furman, 228). Baseball’s Hunter Bening and Charlie Madden were named CoSIDA Academic All-Americans, making Mercer one of only four baseball programs in the entire nation to have multiple players honored. Three other Bears – Tori Penrod (beach volleyball), Maddie Clark (women’s soccer) and Gabe Tucker (men’s soccer) earned CoSIDA Academic All-District honors. Lindsey Zeltwanger (women’s lacrosse) was not only
named the ASUN Player of the Year, but claimed Scholar-Athlete of the Year honors as well.

On the playing field, Mercer claimed two SoCon regular season titles (baseball and women’s basketball) and won one SoCon Championship (men’s soccer). The men’s soccer team defeated ETSU on penalty kicks in the tournament final to advance to its first NCAA Tournament in 15 years. Junior Will Bagrou led the men’s soccer team with one of the most decorated seasons by a Mercer student-athlete. Bagrou was named the SoCon Male Athlete of the Year, becoming the only men’s soccer player to ever win the award. He was additionally named a semifinalist for the MAC Hermann Trophy, collegiate soccer’s equivalent to the Heisman Trophy, as well as an All-American by two organizations.

The baseball team won its third straight SoCon regular season title and finished tied for the second most wins in program history (39). Baseball reached a national ranking as high as No. 22 and led the nation in wins for nearly a two-week span while head coach Craig Gibson (SoCon Coach of the Year) and Ryan Hagan (SoCon Co-Player of the Year) earned individual honors. Danny Edgeworth, Ryan Askew and Charlie Madden were all selected in the 2017 MLB Draft following the conclusion of the season.

Women’s basketball set a program record for wins (25) in the NCAA era and reached the WNIT for the second straight season after claiming a share of its second consecutive SoCon regular season title. It was the third straight season the team has won 20 or more games. The Bears were led individually by Kahlia Lawrence, who was
named the SoCon Player of the Year for the second consecutive season and also earned the title of 2017 Georgia Women’s College Player of the Year.

Other teams that earned admirable accolades included men’s golf, which earned an NCAA Public Recognition Award after finishing in the top 10 percent of APR scores. Men’s lacrosse saw Colin Massa earn USILA Scholar All-American honors and become the program’s first-ever drafted player (selected by Denver Outlaws in 2017 MLL Draft). Men’s tennis won 20 straight matches and was the runner-up at the SoCon Tournament while Olivier Stuart won SoCon Freshman of the Year. Women’s golf won two tournament titles at the Idle Hour Collegiate Championship and the Amelia Island Collegiate.

Audit and Compliance

The Internal Audit Office provides important support for University management and the Audit Committee of the Board. It performed operational reviews in five areas, conducted eight special projects and investigations, assisted KPMG with the annual University audit and provided advisory services for various University projects/committees. The office leads the HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) privacy and security compliance initiative. New staff and students from Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy have received HIPAA online training.

The Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Office oversaw environmental health and safety on all campuses; assisted in the planning and execution of emergency preparedness table-top exercises for the Macon, Atlanta, and Regional Academic
Centers; initiated safety presentations for various University operations; worked with the College of Pharmacy and the School of Medicine to enhance EH&S policies and procedures; provided counsel for two institutional research committees; and provided significant input for commencement emergency planning.

The Title IX Office has ensured compliance with federal, state and University Title IX guidelines as well as provided online and in-person education and training to faculty, staff and students on all campuses. The return to Mercer of a highly experienced coordinator will be a boost for FY18.

**Auxiliary Services**

*Bear Card Campus Card System:* We continue to work with the Mercer community and the various construction and renovation projects across the University to expand and provide security access as well as point of sale solutions, attendance tracking and event admissions. New vehicular security access gates were installed along University Circle and into the parking lot for the Garden Apartments to aid in traffic control and security.

*Bear Bucks* -- the debit card component of the program that provides a prepaid stored-value account -- processed nearly $2 million in sales last fiscal year, increasing campus safety by eliminating the need to carry cash. Approximately $275,000 was spent last year using the Bear Bucks account at off-campus merchant locations in Macon that accept the card, further demonstrating the economic impact Mercer students have in the Macon community.
Bookstores: Over the course of the 2016-2017 academic year the bookstore continued to focus on ways to reduce the cost of textbooks and materials for students. Working with our faculty and department heads we are now able to offer nearly 80% of our textbooks in a rental or digital format.

Food Services: Auxiliary Services and ARAMARK, our food service provider on the Macon Campus, continue to refresh and enhance services provided. Ratings from student satisfaction surveys continue to increase, as well as retention of students in the program beyond the mandatory meal requirements. During the 2017 fiscal year we saw 10% growth in voluntary meal plans over the previous year.

We continue to focus on efficiencies and enhancements on the Atlanta Campus as we are able. A plan for renovations and upgrades has been developed to meet the needs of our growing community as funding becomes available.

Laundry: Over the past year working with Caldwell Gregory, our service provider, we have continued to refresh and update facilities on a rotating basis.

Cable Television: Working with our partners at Cox Communications and Comcast, Auxiliary Services manages the cable television contracts for both the Macon and Atlanta Campuses.

Alarm Services/Closed Circuit Security Cameras: Auxiliary Services continues to maintain and install security systems to assist campus police in their mission to protect and maintain a secure environment for our campus community.

Rental Property Management: Auxiliary Services continues to manage various properties owned by the university. In addition, we work with the University
Advancement team to market and maintain a variety of trust and endowment properties as needed.

Mail and Document Services: As our campus community continues to grow we continue to see dramatic growth in this area. Over the last 12 months our package volume has increased by over 42% as more and more consumers utilize Amazon and other mail order services. In order to meet the needs of our campus communities we need to explore opportunities for expansion and renovation of our processing facilities in Macon and Atlanta.

**Benefits, Payroll and Wellness**

Mercer’s Retirement Plan Investment Committee successfully completed the transition from individual annuity contracts to group contracts in Mercer’s 403(b) retirement plan. With this change, the committee is able to fulfill ERISA requirements that declare a plan sponsor’s duty to remove an investment that becomes imprudent. Along with these changes, investment options for our employees were expanded.

Rising healthcare costs continue to be a challenge with no immediate relief in sight. We continue to explore any and all options for deeper discounts with managed care and network affiliations.

**Office of Budget & Analysis**

The Office of Budget & Analysis provides analytical and budgetary support to the president, officers and operating units (academic and administrative) for fiscal management of the University. Functions include coordination of the annual budget
process, financial modeling and forecasting. The office also assists in the institutional research and assessment functions of the University.

Mercer’s 2017-2018 operating budget was successfully balanced for the fifth consecutive year utilizing the integrated module of the CampusVue financial management system. As is always the case, the budget was balanced. The Office of Budget and Analysis worked closely with budget officers and senior administrators to ensure a budget that aligns with the mission of the University.

**Information Technology**

Listed below are objectives from the 2008 Strategic Plan followed by activities during the past year that contribute to achieving those objectives.

**Replace its financial, student, human resources, alumni and donor information systems to maximize efficient operations.**

- Built an online application for identifying and monitoring students that are behind on their payments.
- Built an online application form for pharmacy that also generates external requests for personal recommendation.
- Built web application to allow students to request withdrawal from courses after drop/add. Notifications sent to students, advisors, and enrollment management staff.
- Migrated Blackboard and Moodle Rooms courses to the Canvas learning management system.
• Built a student-centric dashboard for the student portal to give instant access to critical information.

• Upgrade online communication systems to facilitate effective communication with on- and off-campus constituents.

• Installed technology infrastructure at the OrthoGeorgia stadium at Claude Smith Field.

• Installed wireless and Birch Communications’ gigabit network in the Mercer Innovation Center.

• Upgraded all wireless access points in Lofts 1.

• Replaced 23 emergency phones in Macon and Atlanta.

• Built telepresence rooms in Sandersville, Wrightsville, Savannah, and Columbus.

• Migrated Piedmont and Columbus networks to AT&T Ethernet-OnDemand to reduce costs.

• Migrated 707 Pine Street and 655 First Street to dark fiber to increase bandwidth.

• Renegotiated Macon-area Cox Communications network connections to lower costs.

• Replaced over 75 wireless access points in Atlanta.

• Added six wireless access points in Cruz Plaza due to student requests.

• Deployed dark fiber to the Center for Clinical Research in Atlanta.

• Added 790 First Street to Mercer network.
- Deployed new or upgraded security and protection capabilities for many points of access into and out of the University network; the upgrades include network packet inspection to block advanced malware.

- Upgraded the guest wireless network from 150mbps to 1,000mbps (1 GB). This will enhance access primarily for visitors at events.

**Link all campuses through advanced video-teleconference systems to facilitate instruction and administrative operations. Equip at least 75 percent of classrooms with appropriate technology for interactive instruction (”smart classrooms”).**

- Upgraded or replaced audiovisual systems in 39 classrooms, other learning spaces, and meeting spaces at the following locations: 790 1st Street; Macon Physical Plant; Atlanta Administration and Conference Center; Atlanta Business and Education; Hardman Fine Arts; Knight Hall; Langdale Hall; Ryals Hall; Stetson Hall; Science and Engineering; and the School of Medicine.

- Integrated WebEx audio and video with the Canvas learning management system.

**Develop a life-cycle replacement plan for personal computers and printers.**

- Replaced over 200 thin clients, composed of 10 labs on the Macon campus, with larger screens and updated Hyper-V technology, offering faster login times and overall improved system performance.
• Began deploying Windows 10 on all new computers in an effort to ensure all systems are running Windows 10 before January 14, 2020, when Windows 7 will be end of life.

• Updated all desktop, laptop, and monitor offerings published on the IT website to remain current with the latest hardware advancements.

• Total thin client device inventory: 833

• New Windows systems: 467. Total PC inventory: 2,237 (individuals: 1,456; labs: 781).

• New Apple systems: 43. Total Mac inventory: 326.

• Migrated or redeployed systems: 59.

**Ensure that faculty and staff are appropriately trained in the use of enhanced technology.**

• Initiated new employee onboarding orientation service to educate new employees about the systems and tools offered by IT. Designed a “Getting Started” webpage to use as a training guide.

• Increased the number of new student orientations offered to familiarize new students with the systems and tools offered by IT.

• Continued e-mail campaigns, IT website, and social media to increase cyber security awareness. Selected as a National Cyber Security Awareness Month Champion.

• Worked with the Teaching and Learning Center, the Distance Learning Committee, and other faculty to plan for and implement the Canvas learning management system.
• Provide WebEx training and tutorials.

• Developed additional video-based training and tutorial resources for numerous products and systems. All of these resources are available for faculty, staff, and students on the IT website.

• Provided lunch-and-learn sessions and faculty/staff roundtable presentations and discussions on Canvas, CampusNexus, and other software and systems as needs are identified.

Significantly strengthen the course development and support structure for online learning to undergird new academic initiatives.

• Continue to work with the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Distance Learning Committee to enhance services and support for online learning.

• The Canvas learning management system was put into production in the fall semester.

Support Services

• Implemented additional troubleshooting features in the campus-wide ticketing system, which aided in improving the Help Desk’s first call resolution time.

• Total incidents/tickets opened by all of IT: 23,289 (increased from 21,513 last year)

• Total incidents/tickets opened by IT Help Desk: 16,470

• First-Call Resolution Percentage by the Help Desk: 46%. This percentage has increased from 45% last year.

Human Resources
In FY 2016-2017, the Human Resources Department provided a full scope of human resource management functions to 1,583 regular employees on four campuses, as well as the Regional Academic Centers.

Recruitment and Retention

Turnover rates improved in FY 2016-17 with a total turnover rate (including Mercer Engineering Research Center) of 13.8%, a decrease from the 15.5% reported last fiscal year. Total voluntary turnover for the University (excluding MERC), was at 11.4%, also down from last year’s 14.0%, but still the second highest rate since FY 2008. A more detailed breakout of voluntary turnover rates by employment type, excluding MERC, revealed a significant decrease among non-exempt staff moving from 22.5% last fiscal year to 15.9%. This decrease was due in large part to increased retention among our clinical support staff at Mercer Medicine. Faculty turnover also decreased, moving from 9.2% in FY 2016 to 7.1% this fiscal year. Voluntary turnover for Professional/Administrative remained the same at 12.6%. These rates of turnover were comparable to the national averages published by the College and Universities Professional Association for Human Resources that reported a median turnover rate for faculty of 7.0% and staff of 14.0%. Affirmative efforts to increase diversity in the workforce were successful in all three major employment categories. Mercer’s workforce, including MERC, as of June 30, 2017, was composed of 26.3% minority employees, up slightly from last year’s 25.5%.

Compensation
A merit pool of 2% was distributed in July 2016. In addition, academic promotional increases and merit awards were granted to select faculty and staff members that demonstrated exemplary performance. During the same period, CUPA-HR (College and University Professional Association for Human Resources) reported a median salary increase for faculty of 2.0; 2.4% for non-exempt staff; 3.1% for professional staff and 2.7% for administrative staff. If we are to remain competitive, an increase in salary budgets will be required.

Workplace Culture and Employee Engagement

Retirement and Recognition Ceremonies were held in the spring of 2017 on the Atlanta, Macon, and Savannah campuses and at the Mercer Engineering Research Center. A total of 25 retirees were honored and 227 employees were recognized for benchmark years of service. In recognition of the many contributions faculty and staff make to the life of the University, Faculty-Staff Appreciation Day events were held in both fall and spring semesters. Mercer’s 2016 United Way Campaign allowed employees the opportunity to impact their local community through their financial contributions and time. A total of 543 Mercer employees contributed a sum of $107,094.68, making it the most successful campaign to date.

Training and Development

Human Resources attempts to engage employees to “Be The Bear” from the very start of their employment. Twenty new employee orientation sessions were offered, allowing the University’s mission, core values, goals and priorities to be shared with 161 new staff. A separate new faculty orientation was coordinated with the Provost’s Office
in August 2016 to orient a total of 51 new faculty members. Orientation was also conducted in Henry County in August 2016 for over 60 adjunct faculty members.

**Mercer Engineering Research Center**

Since its inception July 1, 1987, the Mercer Engineering Research Center (MERC) has received over $456,452,792 in contract awards. During MFY17 we received $24,795,584 in client funding for various research activities, approximately $2,370,000 less that that received in MFY 2016. The reduction from last fiscal year’s funding level was largely due to the fact that MERC did not have an active contract vehicle that was convenient and easily accessible in allowing Department of Defense (DoD) clients to quickly and easily issue contracts to MERC.

As a result, one of MERC’s goals for MFY17 was to work toward client justification and award of an Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract vehicle for MERC. After a significant amount of effort from Ms. Andi Mitchell, who was instrumental in working with the appropriate DoD contracts personnel toward our goal, MERC was issued a $57,500,000 contract vehicle in late August of this year. DoD Clients may now issue contracts to MERC for services much more easily using the new contract vehicle, which should result in a significant increase in the amount of contract activity over the coming years.

The original MFY17 goal was the establishment of a $90M IDIQ that could be utilized DoD-wide. Going forward MERC will continue to work toward that goal.
MERC is the University’s applied research arm serving to broaden Mercer’s national recognition as an outstanding institution while engaging University faculty and staff in research activities when appropriate. MERC’s mission is to provide our clients with solutions for their research and development needs. MERC’s areas of research include a broad spectrum of activity designed to advance the state of the art. Our client base includes the DoD, along with the U.S. Departments of Transportation, Education, Health and Human Services, Social Security, and the Department of Homeland Security; as well as a number of commercial organizations nationwide.

Physical Plant

The Physical Plant is dedicated to providing routine maintenance and initiating preventive maintenance for all Mercer facilities. We respond to approximately 15,000 work orders annually from customer requests and preventive maintenance.

Physical Plant provides oversight of contracts for custodial services, grounds maintenance and HVAC maintenance. Additionally, preventive maintenance contracts related to life/safety issues, such as elevator and fire safety, are maintained. The Physical Plant operations comply with city, county, state, and federal regulations. Physical Plant and Environmental Health and Safety work together to keep up the Environmental Management System for the University campuses and ensure environmental compliance.
Physical Plant will continue to work on energy saving measures for the campus. It will also work on cleaning buildings and improving landscaping to enhance the appearance of the University.

Physical Plant provides construction oversight for all University construction and renovation projects.

**Plant Fund Projects**

Physical Plant used the Plant Fund budget of $1 million to undertake several repair and replacement projects. The following is a list of the major projects completed:

- Sheffield Roof Replacement
- Admissions House Wood Repair and Painting
- Sherwood Hall Carpeting and Painting
- Tift and Lee Alumni Houses Wood Repairs and Painting
- HISRA Triangle Clean Up
- Atlanta Apartments (2900 and 2904) Carpeting and Painting
- Atlanta Administration and Conference Center Elevator Controls Replacement

Other University funds were used to complete the following projects:

- Renovation for Mercer Innovation Center
- New Baseball Stadium
- New Science Building
- Replace Connell Student Center HVAC Unit
- Replace Medical School Vivarium HVAC Unit
- Campus Tree Inventory
• Newton Chapel Boiler Replacement
• Campus LED Lighting Retrofit
• Swilley Library Tech Support and Study Area Renovations

Major Future Projects
• Capricorn Studio Renovation
• Hardman Hall Window Replacement
• 332 Second Street Renovation (Bachelor of Fine Arts Program)
• Tarver Library Main Floor Interior Renovations
• Willet Science Center Renovation
• Mercer Medicine MOB Buildout
• McAfee 2nd Floor Renovations for PA Program

Police

The Mercer Police Department is a certified police agency as defined under the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Act. Its powers are outlined in Section {20-8-1} Law Enforcement Powers of Campus Policemen of the Official Georgia Code Annotated. Those duties listed in Section {20-8-1} include the enforcement of the laws of this state; the preservation of public order; the protection of life and property; the prevention, detention, or investigation of a crime; or any combination thereof. Macon has eighteen police officers and five support staff. Atlanta has eight officers and four support staff. All officers receive a minimum of 20 hours of training annually to maintain certification as police officers with arrest power. Student education is an important part of crime prevention and Mercer Police partners with Student Affairs and the faculty to
help students learn good decision-making. This process begins each year with orientation, continues with classroom presentations as requested by faculty and produces periodic partnerships with the Student Government Association to enhance campus safety.

Both departments offer the following services to students, faculty, and staff: 24-hour, seven-day-a-week staffing and patrols; providing crime prevention tips through meetings, e-mail, and campus newspaper columns; assistance with room/office lockouts, keys locked in vehicles, jumpstarts, and escorts; conducting criminal investigations and background checks; monitoring alarms and responding accordingly; managing the parking ticket system; and communicating with other local public and private law enforcement agencies.

In the past year, a Sizemore Security officer was added to the staff to provide additional oversight in the Stadium Drive Bridge/University Center/Owens Rain Garden area to communicate anything suspicious to Mercer Police. Additional officers were added to both evening (4 p.m. – Midnight) shift and the Midnight (12 a.m.- 8 a.m.) shift.

Officer Sandra Bryant was chosen by her peers for Officer of the Year award. Officer Vince Broccolo was the “Top Gun” with the best firearms qualifying score.

**Treasurer**

The Treasurer’s Office manages and tracks monthly performance by comparing the budget versus actual. This monthly review provides valuable information to help ensure fiscal responsibility. During fiscal year 2017 the University reported a $8,653,584 surplus over net budgeted revenue and expenses.
The Treasurer’s Office tracks and reports the change in unrestricted net assets from operations which was a $9.7 million increase in fiscal year 2017.

The Treasurer’s Office completed the facilities and administrative rate audit conducted by Defense Contract Audit Agency with “no exceptions”. This rate is applied to research-related grants and contracts for MERC and the general university and is required to apply for federal grants and contracts. The rate is pending the Office of Naval Research’s approval, which negotiates and approves Mercer’s rate.

**Accounts Payable Office and Fixed Assets**

Accounts Payable is responsible for the timely and accurate processing of all non-payroll disbursements made by the University. This includes vendor invoices, employee travel advances, travel reimbursements, and other miscellaneous payments. Accounts Payable is also responsible for the submission of all 1099 forms to taxpayers and reporting this information to the IRS.

For the 2017 fiscal year the Accounts Payable Office processed 21,349 checks totaling over $110 million.

A significant technology enhancement was the implementation of software to scan W-9’s and attach to vendors within the purchasing database.

In FY 2017, $68 million in capitalized equipment and building renovations were added.

**Purchasing**

The Purchasing Office reviews all requisitions for proper approvals and adequate budget for the transfer to purchase orders, assists departments with the procurement of
requests for the best cost, and assists the Accounts Payable Office in resolving invoicing issues. It maintains active membership of our purchasing consortiums to facilitate best pricing.

The Purchasing Office oversees the purchasing card program for the University, which eliminates paperwork, facilitates timely acquisition, improves controls and generates rebate income.

The Purchasing Office maintains an internal lease program for departmental purchases that lowers operating costs, stretches budgets and improves operations.

**Office of Grants and Contracts**

The Grants and Contracts Office (GCO) had steady activity during the 2017 fiscal year, submitting 146 applications totaling approximately $31.6 million, as compared to 166 applications totaling more than $49.5 million for the 2016 fiscal year. This represents a 12% decrease in the number of submissions over the prior year and nearly a 36% decrease in dollars requested.

Federal, state and private grant/contract expenditures for the 2017 fiscal year for research and other sponsored activities totaled $38.4 million, consisting of $18.4 million MERC federal expenditures and $20 million expenditures for all other research and sponsored activities. This is in comparison to the 2016 fiscal year total of $34.3 million, consisting of $19.9 million MERC federal expenditures and $14.4 million expenditures for all other research and sponsored activities for the 2016 fiscal year.

Other activities undertaken by the GCO during fiscal year 2017 include the following:
• Continued training of GCO staff through nationally accredited programs for research; participated in user training for Cayuse424; participated in other training sessions applicable to accounting for the administration of grants and contracts.

• Submitted the 2016 fiscal year FISAP report and NSF annual survey; completed or reviewed Annual Operating Reports submitted for student and faculty grant funds expended in the 2016 fiscal year.

• Prepared for Mercer’s 2017 Single Audit of Federal Expenditures.

• Continued to provide training sessions, individual assistance and informative emails to faculty and staff for preparing Grants.gov applications and for identifying grant and contract funding opportunities.

Student Loan

The Student Loan Office achieved a 0% Cohort Default Rate for the third fiscal year in a row on the following four Federal Student Loans: Loan for Disadvantage Students, Health Professional Student Loan, Nursing Student Loan, and Primary Care Loan.

The Student Loan Office implemented a new credit card recurring system for borrowers to increase enrollment in auto pay and successfully enrolled 105 new borrowers. This eliminated manual posting of monthly payment transactions for enrollees, as well as both incoming and outgoing call volume.

The Student Loan Office implemented operational enhancements that reduced bank fees by $4,000 and total expenses by $13,000. The Office also processed a record number of General Loans and Perkins Loans for the benefit of Mercer students.
Finally, creative personnel arrangements were implemented to strengthen working relationships with both the Financial Planning Office and the Bursar’s Office, each of which will provide better service for students.

**Bursar Office**

The Bursar Office implemented an innovative new automated hold that allowed students to pay outstanding balances on-line 24/7. It also saw significant growth in the on-line payment plan implemented the previous fiscal year.

The Bursar Office has worked collaboratively with Retention and Financial Planning to reduce accounts transferred to Student Loans for internal collections by 22.5% for all Atlanta Campuses, 13% for Macon, and 15% for Regional Academic Centers during FY 17.

The Bursar Office headed several projects during FY 2017 to remain compliant with Title IV Regulations. These projects included the creation of an Online Withdrawal Form and Title IV Book Advance policy and associated online form. Both projects allowed the Bursar Office and other Student Service areas to provide students with immediate online, user-friendly, service opportunities and provided the University with tracking tools to ensure compliance with Title IV regulations.

The IRS announced a change to federal reporting for 1098-T tuition statements for the 2018 tax year. This mandate requires the University to change from reporting eligible expenses billed to payments received for eligible expenses. The Bursar Office is working in close conjunction with Campus Management and our IT department to
ensure that we are ready to go for the reporting changes scheduled to take place on January 1, 2018.

The Bursar Office billed for approximately $215 million in tuition alone. We recorded and deposited $299,564,163 in student payments and issued $46,731,620 in refunds and stipends during FY 2017.

University Center

The University Center had 585,646 guests in the past year, an increase of 3% over the previous year. The Fitness Center had 125,879 guests. The University Center hosted over 423 events, including varsity athletic games, student-sponsored events, Mercer’s Executive Forums, as well as University Commencements. The University Center continues to support the football operation and provided 1,700 hours of labor in the form of ticket taking and ushering for the five home games during football’s fourth season. The Farmers Market expanded its operation to include dinner this past year and is fast becoming a favorite dining location for students. The Fitness Center replaced a portion of its equipment, which was well received by users. The University Center is open 118 of the 168 hours in the week (70% of the week, M-F 6 a.m. – midnight, and Saturday – Sunday 10 a.m. – midnight). The University Center continues to be the largest employer of student workers on campus with over 175 current student employees. The “Bear Force” (the name of the student work force) provides an invaluable service to the operation of the facility while providing an opportunity for students to develop leadership and supervisory skills. The University Center employs two graduate assistants and nine Bear Force Leaders (undergraduate students) who
assist in the operation of the University Center. The University Center replaced all fluorescent and metal halide light with energy-efficient LED. All areas in the University Center are now brighter with lower utility costs.
Since the Board of Trustees adopted the 2008 strategic plan, the frame of reference for the Mercer brand has changed. The preamble to the strategic plan reads, “Within the next 10 years, Mercer University will become widely recognized as one of the leading private universities in the Southeast, along with other outstanding institutions such as Vanderbilt, Emory, Duke, Wake Forest and Tulane.” The idea has been that Mercer will position itself in order to compete with these institutions for the best talent – students, faculty and staff. Over the last eight years Mercer has been able to do this while sticking to its core mission. It has been true to itself, and that’s what good brands do.

With the 2016 Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching reclassification Mercer has moved into a new competitive set. Prior to 2016, Mercer was classified as a Regional Master’s University. For the U.S. News & World Report America’s Best Colleges rankings, that put Mercer in the same category as Southern institutions such as Elon, Rollins and The Citadel. For more than 15 years Mercer was ranked by U.S. News among the top 10 institutions in this category. In 2016, the Carnegie Foundation reclassified Mercer as a National Doctoral University with Moderate Research Activity. For the U.S. News rankings, that moved Mercer into the National Universities category with institutions such as those referenced in the strategic plan preamble.

U.S. News considers the 220 highest-ranked national universities to be “top tier.” In Mercer’s 2016 debut in this new category, the University was ranked No. 135, and
thus considered a “top tier” national university – one of only four in the State of Georgia. The September 13, 2016, Atlanta Journal-Constitution mobile site ran a story about the rankings with the headline “Emory, UGA, Georgia Tech, Mercer Among Nation’s Best Universities.” We could not have said it better ourselves.

In addition to moving into the national research universities category, Mercer in recent years has marked several other key milestones that have contributed to the University’s repositioning. In 2013 Mercer was invited to join the Southern Conference, one of the country’s oldest and most prestigious athletic conferences. In 2014, Mercer was admitted to the Georgia Research Alliance, on the strength of its expanding research profile. And in 2015 Mercer was awarded a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s oldest and most prestigious academic honor society. These achievements have all contributed to Mercer’s repositioning and growing national visibility.

While we don’t orient our mission and strategies to chase magazine rankings, we do increasingly compete with these top tier national research universities for talent. We are going to be true to ourselves and not become all things to all people. That’s what good brands do. Mercer will continue to differentiate its brand based on authenticity and purpose.

One example of how Mercer did this in 2016-17 was through an ad campaign in The Chronicle of Higher Education, the major trade publication for higher education that is widely read by presidents, chancellors, board members and other college and university leaders, as well as funders. In spring 2017 Mercer ran a series of ads to showcase the unique manner in which the University integrates research and service.
This is the focus of our Quality Enhancement Plan, “Research That Reaches Out.” The ads told the stories of three hallmark Mercer On Mission initiatives – the Vietnam prosthetics program, the Ecuador mercury remediation project, and the Kenya clean water program, as well as a blight remediation project that the School of Engineering has been working on right here in Georgia with Macon Habitat for Humanity. The campaign was supported by a microsite that contained more detailed information about each of the programs, including photos, videos and links to other media coverage that the initiatives have received. While the audience for the campaign was leaders of peer institutions who at that time of year were filling out their U.S. News surveys, we also promoted this series of ads through our social media channels and home page hero images for the wider Mercer constituencies.

The temptation when you go to a new competitive set is to “do a student body right” on brand strategy. Mercer is not taking that route. We’re going to stay with what got us here – authentic, mission-driven programs that differentiate Mercer from other research universities and communicate the uniqueness of the Mercer brand.

Other Office of Marketing Communications highlights from 2016-17 follow.

**Publications**

The Office of Marketing Communications produced a number of publications in 2016-17 that communicated Mercer’s achievements and distinctive place in American higher education. These included the fall and spring editions of *The Mercerian*, which were mailed to more than 81,000 alumni, friends and selected prospective students; the Mercer Health Sciences Center magazine, *Reach*; the Law School magazine, *The
The office also designed and produced various special publications, including the Board of Trustees directory and the University Commencement program.

**Design Projects**

In fiscal year 2016-17, Marketing Communications staff continued implementation of the new University branding, endorsed by the Board of Trustees. New stationery, communication packages for executive offices, deans and academic units, and nameplates for academic and administrative units were completed.

The Marketing Communications design staff managed the production of more than 300 official projects including magazines, weekly and monthly online newsletters, as well as school-specific online newsletters and e-blasts, advertisements, campus map updates, posters, brochures, display banners, presentation displays, web banners, electronic presentations, fact sheets, programs, flyers, directories, certificates, invitations, postcards, athletic event ticket packages and game access badge packages. In the area of campus map updates there were some 11 variations produced throughout the year for various uses related to Macon and Atlanta campus improvements, construction, traffic and event parking.

Marketing Communications also designed and installed several new large displays for the cases in the University Center Heritage Hall.
Online Communications

Marketing Communications continued to make extensive use of social media to engage with Mercer constituents, with all of the University’s platforms growing substantially in reach:

- The University Facebook account saw an increase of 3,846 page likes (21% increase).
- The University’s Twitter account saw an increase of 1,119 new followers (12% increase).
- The official Instagram account saw an increase of 1,516 new followers (51% increase).
- The Mercer YouTube account added 95 new subscribers, and videos posted to the account were viewed 37,258 times for a total of 88,456 minutes.
- The University recently added Snapchat as an official account and began using its features to better engage with our constituents.

Major new website updates were conceived, designed and launched, including: Health Sciences Center, College of Health Professions, International Programs, Research That Reaches Out, Mercer Innovation Center, Campus Improvements, Strategic Plan and the Save Capricorn campaign.

Media Relations

According to Meltwater online media monitoring, Mercer was mentioned in 8,930 articles in 2,059 news outlets in 49 countries during fiscal year 2016-2017, with those mentions accounting for 6.4 billion potential views.
The office wrote and distributed 226 news releases and nine media advisories to local, regional and national media outlets regarding major events and accomplishments for the University, as well as 8,826 hometown news releases to local media outlets regarding individual achievements.

In addition to facilitating day-to-day media coverage, the office mobilized the local media for several special events, including Move-in Day (Aug. 20), School of Medicine White Coat ceremonies (Aug. 18 and 25) and Match Day ceremonies (March 14), MUSM’s inaugural “Setting Your Sights on Medical School” outreach program with Georgia 4-H (Aug. 29), ribbon-cutting for the Mercer University Drive pedestrian bridge (Sept. 1), “Be a Good NeighBear” service day (Sept. 21), groundbreaking and free outdoor concert for Mercer Music at Capricorn and The Lofts at Capricorn (Oct. 6), community partnership events in Douglas County (Nov. 14) and Henry County (March 20) and commencement (May 6 and 13).

Photography

The power of visual content is essential to communicate Mercer’s stories to the community and around the world. A total of 490 photography sessions were coordinated with professional photographers from across the globe during the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Marketing Communications has access to more image-capturing methods than ever before. With the use of its unmanned aerial vehicle, commonly known as a drone, the office can capture beautiful campus scenery and document construction from a bird’s eye view. It is also a valuable tool in assisting with map creation and editing. Aerial photography and video provides an excellent opportunity to showcase Mercer’s
beautiful campuses.

The 360-degree camera is also a powerful tool providing wide panorama shots and spherical images that can be viewed in a browser, smartphone, tablet, or virtual reality headset. It allows viewers to feel “in the moment” and visually manipulate scenes for different angles and perspectives.

The University’s online photo gallery, SmugMug, serves as Mercer’s digital asset management program, providing quick, efficient access to images and sharing options across departments. It also serves as an archive to preserve the University’s images.

Videography

More than 81 video projects were completed during the 2016-17 fiscal year. These include documenting and promoting campus and student events, speaker series and projects for the President’s Office. All videography is produced in-house and uploaded to the University’s Youtube channel for public viewing. Several events have been Livestreamed for global reach, and others have been streamed via network for our cohorts on other campuses.

We have upgraded our social media presence with more video, as well as adding a video component to our e-newsletter This Week at Mercer to help provide a visual insight to University events.

We continue to produce the Inside Mercer Basketball show, hosted by Rick Cameron and head coach Bob Hoffman. This show is viewed in seven states, more than five million homes and globally, thanks to its positioning on YouTube.
The Grand Opera House

Marketing Communications is responsible for marketing The Grand Opera House and its programs, including The Grand’s Broadway Series, Concert Series, GrandKids Arts Education Series and community performances including the Macon Civic Club Musical Revue and The Nutcracker of Central Georgia. The venue presented 44 performances in the 2016-17 fiscal year and hosted an additional 38 community events.

Annually, Marketing Communications produces a 24-page season brochure that is mailed to over 18,000 Grand patrons, a GrandKids promotional brochure that is mailed to over 200 central Georgia elementary schools and sends out over 30 e-blast campaigns to 15,000 subscribers.

The Grand upgraded its website to a more user-friendly format with a 360-degree panoramic feature of the seating. In 2017, The Grand took over management of The Nutcracker and will facilitate all its regional marketing and administrative needs. This fiscal year also included a successful marketing campaign to promote the Macon-Bibb 2016 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, in which The Grand Opera House will receive a portion of the tax for a major theatre renovation, beginning summer of 2017 with all new seats and flooring and back-of-house upgrades.

Townsend School of Music

Marketing Communications is responsible for marketing the Townsend School of Music and its programs, including the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings, Fabian Concert Series, Joan Stockstill Godsey Concert Series, Townsend Presents concerts, and the concert season of faculty, students and ensembles both on and off campus. For
each of the 50+ concerts a program is created, e-blast formatted and monthly posters are distributed.

Press releases were distributed to a list of more than 70 print, broadcast and online news sources throughout Central Georgia. A new focus on utilizing social media to promote upcoming events with live video has seen an increase in website traffic and Facebook followers.

**Athletics**

Marketing Communications was responsible again for some of the marketing of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in 2016-17, producing print and web ads and radio spots promoting season ticket sales and attendance at home games. Marketing Communications also assisted the Mercer Athletic Foundation with several printed pieces, including a season ticket package.

For the 12th consecutive season, Marketing Communications originated on-site production and provided on-air personnel for radio broadcasts on the Mercer Sports Network. The network consists of 97.3 FM in Macon, 1280 AM in Macon, 103.3 FM in Warner Robins and iHeartRadio, that allows fans to listen to Mercer Athletics on the web or on smart phones and/or tablets via the iHeartRadio app. The Mercer Sports Network aired 11 Mercer football games, 32 men’s basketball games, 21 baseball games and nine women’s basketball games over the course of the regular season, the Southern Conference Tournament and the women’s participation in the opening round of the National Invitational Tournament against the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. The fifth season of the 60-minute *Bobby Lamb Radio Show* aired live from
Wild Wing Café at The Shoppes at River Crossing in Macon each Thursday night during football season. The 60-minute *Bob Hoffman Radio Show* aired each Tuesday night from Margaritas in Mercer Village during basketball season.
VI. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mercer’s community development initiatives continue to pay dividends for the University and for the communities across Georgie where we have a physical presence.

In Macon, the College Hill Alliance – the Knight Foundation-funded organization charged with implementing the College Hill Corridor Master Plan – has fully transitioned back to a volunteer-led Commission. Although Knight funding has ended, the Commission continues to liaison with other community organizations to find ways to implement master plan initiatives through partnerships.

For more than a decade Mercer has been actively involved with the revitalization of the historic Beall’s Hill neighborhood adjacent to the Macon campus through its membership and leadership role in the Hills and Heights Development Corp. The initiative received a boost in 2017 with Macon-Bibb County’s investment of $2 million to enhance infrastructure. New curb and gutters, sidewalks, ornamental street lights, and other streetscaping improvements have made the neighborhood an even more attractive place to live. Mercer’s Down Payment Assistance program, funded in part by grants from the Knight Foundation, offers faculty and staff up to $20,000 in assistance for homes purchased in Beall’s Hill.

Mercer continued to provide leadership and support for NewTown Macon in 2016-17. Committed to commercial and residential development, NewTown Macon is a public-private partnership of concerned businesses and citizens working together to improve the quality of life in downtown Macon.
In October 2016, Mercer, NewTown Macon, Sierra Development and Southern Pine Plantations broke ground on the restoration of the historic Capricorn Sound Studios as part of the largest market-rate residential development in the history of downtown Macon. The studio co-founded by the late Phil Walden, a Mercer alumnus, during its heyday recorded such acts as the Allman Brothers Band, Wet Willie, Elvin Bishop and the Marshall Tucker Band and was the epicenter of Southern Rock. For more than a decade the facility sat vacant and fell into disrepair until it was purchased and stabilized by NewTown Macon with a grant from the Peyton Anderson Foundation. In 2010 it was named one of Georgia’s most endangered historic buildings. Sierra Development and Southern Pines purchased the property from NewTown Macon and in 2016 donated the building – along with a $350,000 cash contribution – to Mercer for the purpose of renovating it into a music incubator and commercial recording studio. The University is working with the Historic Macon Foundation to secure historic tax credits to help fund the renovation and is soliciting gifts and grants from foundations, companies and individuals to complete the project.

In Atlanta, Mercer is involved in several aspects of community engagement. The University has been a member of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce for several years, and this past year, President Underwood became a member of the Executive Committee of its board, joining presidents of other Atlanta educational institutions, CEOs and other leaders in the metro Atlanta area. This involvement keeps Mercer integrated into important discussions impacting economic development, research, workforce development and many other topics.
Mercer has held several meetings with various real estate developers who are interested in possible retail or housing developments on or near the Atlanta campus. There are very few retail options nearby and Mercer would welcome the opportunity to partner with a developer to provide these amenities to the University community, similar to the Mercer Village project in Macon.

In addition, we completed a site evaluation of the wooded and wetlands portion of the campus and have met with several foundations about grant opportunities to turn these areas into an Urban Forest, with walking trails, outdoor learning labs, etc. accessible not only to Mercer, but to the community as well.

Also, there are many cityhood efforts underway in the unincorporated area of DeKalb County where Mercer’s campus is situated, and we have met with several of these community organizations to ensure we are apprised of their efforts and goals. In addition, we have been approached by the City of Chamblee regarding annexation of our campus into their city, and we are evaluating this potential opportunity.

In Savannah, Mercer School of Medicine students continued to provide monthly health screenings at Forsyth Farmers’ Market and conduct the Teddy Bear Clinic at the Market twice per year. In collaboration with Moses Jackson Advancement Center, students conducted health screenings and provided culinary/nutrition classes to adults, teenagers and elementary school students at the Center. Students also conducted nutrition classes in elementary schools, supported Girls on the Run and worked with families at the Ronald McDonald House. In March, a Service Leadership Symposium and Day of Service were conducted at Moses Jackson, an event in which about 30
students, faculty and staff participated. The School began a new collaboration with Bethesda Academy, a day school and residential facility for at-risk young men, as medical students planned and conducted a health camp during Bethesda’s Day Camp. The University strengthened its existing partnership with Henry County and Douglas County in 2016-17, demonstrating Mercer’s commitment to those communities served by the Regional Academic Centers. In communication between Douglasville’s Mayor Robinson and Dr. Penny Elkins, Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management, the University identified the city’s creation of a Military Honor Garden as a key initiative for the community. In November 2016, Mercer leadership invited city and county government officials, business and education leaders, as well as military/veteran groups and county residents, to a “Douglas County Community and Military Appreciation Day” at the Regional Academic Center. Donating $3,000 for the Military Honor Garden project, Mercer, Georgia’s First Purple Heart University, challenged other organizations to lend their support to this community project. During January and March 2017, Mercer hosted a “New Year-New Beginning” event and the “Henry County Community Partnership Development Day,” respectively. Building on the Mercer-Henry County partnership established before the Regional Academic Center opened in 2003, more than 60 leaders of industry, not-for-profit organizations, education, and city/county government participated in these events to learn more about Mercer’s commitment to providing high-quality education in the Henry County community and surrounding region. President Underwood highlighted initiatives designed to strengthen Mercer’s partnerships, after which guests participated in
innovative sessions and discussions led by faculty members offering programs at the Henry County Center. Faculty presenters aligned session topics with the needs of Henry County industries and organizations such as entrepreneurship, business technology, health sciences, public and human services, teacher education and educational leadership. Mercer’s subsequent participation in the One Henry Economic Development Alliance and the Workforce Development Task Force has provided access to 47 of Henry County’s largest regional employers to engage corporate leaders and present educational opportunities available through Mercer.

The University’s continuing participation in local organizations and numerous community-sponsored service activities are vital to identifying 21st century workforce trends that will directly benefit and empower lifelong learners to achieve their educational, professional and career goals with a Mercer education.
VII. OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

During this past year, the University raised nearly $31.4 million in private gifts. Those gifts, coupled with government grants, generated over $68 million in financial support for Mercer. The total number of donors who generously supported the University this past fiscal year was 8,684. Alumni accounted for 4,856 donors. Over the past five years, the total number of donors as well as alumni donors have both increased more than 20 percent.

Major gifts or pledge payments supported projects such as additional support of Center for Collaborative Journalism, support for the Spearman C. Godsey Center for Sciences, the Stamps Scholarship program, endowment support for the McDuffie Center for Strings, McAfee School of Theology, the Townsend School of Music, the Griffith Family Scholarship and the College of Pharmacy, capital gifts for the Savannah campus of the School of Medicine, the Mercer Innovation Center as well as for the renovation of the art gallery/classroom space in downtown Macon, and additional gifts towards new endowed scholarships and funds. Other major gifts supported the Mercer Fund (the University’s annual fund for operations), Mercer On Mission, the Spencer C. King, Jr. Center for Southern Studies, and gifts toward the football and lacrosse complex and Five Star Stadium. The Mercer Athletic Foundation and other athletic funding components including corporate sponsorships and team excellence funds secured the most ever with over $1.9 million in unrestricted funding that impacted the athletics budget. The Aspire Campaign was launched at Homecoming 2014 and as of summer 2017, gifts and pledges for the campaign stood at $209 million.
Alumni Giving

With the move to the U.S. News & World Report National University category in 2016, Mercer is now being rated using a rubric that places a 10% score on alumni giving rather than a 5% score (Master’s Level Universities). This will require continued and increased emphasis on raising the traditional Macon Campus alumni giving percentage.

The Office of University Advancement manages several programs to continue making progress of reaching a traditional Macon campus alumni giving percentage goal of 20% by 2020.

Greek Challenge: The Greek Challenge was launched in 2015 and continues to be a key component in Mercer’s alumni giving program. The Greek Challenge is an initiative of the Office of University Advancement designed to increase alumni giving and award prizes for Greek chapters, while also creating connections among alumni of Mercer’s national fraternities and sororities. The challenge pits alumni from various chapters against each other in an annual giving competition. The chapter with the highest giving percentage relative to their overall alumni count in our database wins the top cash prize.

Day of Giving

The University held its inaugural Day of Giving during a 24-hour period held May 3-4, 2017. Branded as “Orange & Black Give Back,” this online-based fundraising event encouraged students, alumni, faculty, staff, parents and friends make an annual fund
gift to a school, college or program of their choice. “Orange & Black Give Back” was the University’s first crowdfunding campaign, which means the project is shared via social media similar to GoFundMe or Kickstarter platforms. Created to encourage donor participation, the Day of Giving generated 712 gifts—97 of which were first time alumni donors—for a total of $87,059.

Scholarships and Other Expendable/Endowed Funds

The Office of University Advancement generates endowed and expendable (donor-restricted) fund agreements for all colleges, schools and areas of the University. To establish an endowed fund, the University currently requires a minimum of $25,000, which can be paid over a period of five years. Endowed funds are invested with the University’s pooled endowment and earnings are distributed at a spending rate approved by the Board of Trustees. Each endowed fund has a separate associated earnings account into which income is distributed monthly.

An expendable fund currently requires a minimum contribution of $1,000. Expendable funds are not merged with the University’s endowment, so they do not earn income. They are typically received and expended within the same fiscal year.

In consultation with donors, we assemble criteria for fund agreements. These criteria, though often supplied by the donor, fully abide by the University’s legal and financial/tax policies. After incorporating the donor’s wishes in a standard contractual document, our office shares the draft with the donor. The donor either makes further revisions or signs the agreement. The document is countersigned by the president and
copies are distributed to areas including Accounting, Financial Planning, General Counsel, respective academic deans and development officers. They are also filed in at least two locations in the Advancement Office, scanned and electronically attached to the donor’s record in the database.

In the 2017 fiscal year, 36 new scholarships and funds were established. They are as follows:

**College of Liberal Arts**
Laurie Byington Lecture Series on the Contemporary South
Dr. Mary R. Wilder Classroom Fund

**Walter F. George School of Law**
Griffin B. Bell and Frank C. Jones Endowed Fund for the Enhancement of Advocacy Education Programs
Class of 2017 Expendable Scholarship
Thomas W. Malone Endowed Scholarship
Thomas J. and Wendy W. Reiman Endowed Scholarship

**College of Pharmacy**
Meredith J. Blalock Expendable Scholarship
Dr. Lakesha M. and Dr. Isaac Butler Expendable Scholarship
Liza Guy and Ronald Eugene Chapman Endowed Scholarship
Kappa Epsilon, Alpha Delta Chapter Expendable Scholarship
Vickie Starkie Memorial Expendable Scholarship

**School of Medicine**
T. Raleigh and Gail H. Mann Expendable Scholarship
Margaret McCurdy Sumner Memorial Endowed Scholarship

**McAfee School of Theology**
Rev. John Cecil Daniel and Margaret Wise Daniel Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Henry and Betty Fields Endowed Scholarship
David and Peggy Jump Expendable Scholarship
Glen Harold Stassen Distinguished Chair in Christian Ethics
Tift College of Education
Dr. Harriett “Anne” Hathaway Scholarship
Mary Lou Brown Sauls Endowed Scholarship

Georgia Baptist College of Nursing
Joanne Paul Allison Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Johnnie Ruth Forgay Memorial Expendable Scholarship

Townsend School of Music
Fickling Endowment Fund for McDuffie Center for Strings
Mac and Elizabeth Grace Endowed Scholarship in Music
Genelle and W. Mansfield Jennings, Jr. Endowed Fund for McDuffie Center for Strings
J. Loyd Landrum Endowed Scholarship in Church Music

College of Health Professions
Patricia “Cece” Glenn Diabetes Clinic Enhancement Expendable Fund
Dr. Herbert L. Silver Expendable Fund for Myofascial Pain Research
Dr. Leslie F. Taylor Student Leadership Development Expendable Fund

General University
Blue Bird School Bus Foundation Expendable Scholarship
William Brady Fallin Memorial Endowed Scholarship
Rush and Julia Peace Endowed Graduate Scholarship
Bill and Kathy Pou Endowed Scholarship
Sigma Nu Endowed Scholarship

University Library
Tarver Library Renovation Project

Athletics
Mercer Athletic Endowment
Bert and Anne Vaughn Champions Fund

Foundation Proposals and Foundation Relations

The Advancement Office works in collaboration with academic and administrative departments to prepare and complete funding proposals for various University projects.

Through a subscription to a research tool called FoundationSearch, a staff member
conducts research that often uncovers potential new funding sources or informs the proposal process and grant ask amount. During the 2017 fiscal year, proposals were submitted for new projects such as first-generation scholarships and Tarver Library renovation support. Funding proposals for ongoing projects such as the Spearman C. Godsey Science Center, Mercer On Mission, Center for Collaborative Journalism and named foundation scholarships were also completed. We were the primary author of, or assisted with, proposals submitted to the following foundations or organizations:

Coca-Cola Foundation  
E. J. Grassmann Trust  
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation  
Dorothy V. and N. Logan Lewis Foundation  
James Hyde Porter Charitable Trust  
Margaret and Jack Tarver Foundation  
Wells Fargo Foundation  
Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation

We maintain good relationships with foundation funders by providing detailed, accurate and timely project updates and financial reports. During the past year, reports were submitted to BB&T, Dash Family Foundation, Dorothy V. and N. Logan Lewis Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation and Frances Wood Wilson Foundation.

**Mercer Fund Phonathon**

The Office of University Advancement operates a phonathon campaign in which current Macon-based undergraduate students call alumni of the 12 current colleges and schools, along with graduates of Tift College and the College of Arts and Sciences. Annually, 27 to 30 students are hired. This program, which is common at colleges and universities throughout the country, has been in existence at Mercer and
run by the Advancement Office for several decades. It has been conducted using a computer-automated software program since the late 1980s. Phonathon occurs for approximately 20 weeks of the academic year, between September and March. Working in a computer lab in the School of Engineering, students call from 6 to 9 p.m. on Monday through Thursday nights, as well as Sunday afternoon from 2 to 5 p.m.

Though most of the individuals called by phonathon are donors who give between $25 and $1,000, with the majority of donors giving $250 or less, they comprise a significant portion of the Mercer’s overall donor count. Through mailing and calling efforts during fiscal year 2017, phonathon was responsible for 2,725 donors, a total that includes nearly 50 percent of the University’s alumni donor count and almost one-third of the University’s overall donor count.

In our fourth year using CAMPUSCALL by Ruffalo Noel Levitz, software that is considered the industry standard, students attempted 249,638 calls to alumni and current parents of Macon undergraduate students, and spoke with 9,795 unique prospects. Among those with whom we spoke, 3,159 alumni made a verbal commitment of support (pledged). This figure includes 1,401 pledges from alumni who had previously never given to Mercer.

Another significant increase for fiscal year 2017 was in credit card fulfillment. Our overall credit card fulfillment rate for 2017 was 24 percent. 891 individuals, including 725 alumni and 166 parents, fulfilled their phonathon pledges with a credit card while speaking with the student caller, an increase of 47 percent in overall
credit card fulfillment from 2016. We saw a 29 percent increase in alumni donors who fulfilled their pledges via credit card while on the phone with a student caller in 2017.

In addition to calling Mercer alumni, parents of Macon-based undergraduate students and parents of recent graduates who had been previous donors are called for Parents Fund. We attempted 9,072 calls to parents, speaking with 1,426 individuals and logging 565 pledges. Of those parents who pledged, 30 percent fulfilled by credit card. Parents Fund mailing and calling efforts are responsible for another $13,135 and 405 donors given to Mercer in 2017.

Office of Alumni Services & Special Events

The Advancement Office encompasses an Alumni Services & Special Events department which consists of a staff of five full-time staff members. The Alumni Services and Special Events team has year-round responsibilities related to our approximately 77,500 alumni worldwide.

Alumni Boards of Directors

Of the 12 existing colleges and schools within Mercer University, 11 have an alumni association led by an Alumni Board of Directors. (Notes: The 12th, the College of Health Professions, has few alumni yet due to its relatively recent establishment in July 2013.)

In addition, there is an alumni board for the former Tift College for women (Forsyth, GA) which no longer exists. Mercer upholds its commitment to the Tift College legacy by supporting that board’s endeavors and by funding a part-time staff member to
work with that board throughout the year. One primary focus of this board is the Tift Scholars program. (See next section for additional information.)

The management of alumni boards at the staff level is typically a shared responsibility between the dean’s office and the development officer, with help when necessary from the Alumni Services staff. Most boards have committees that assist with college/school specific alumni events, recruitment of prospective students and fund raising activities.

**Tift Scholars**

For academic year 2016-17, a total of 147 female Mercer students received the Tift College Scholarship: 30 freshmen, 51 sophomores, 38 juniors, 28 seniors. The Scholars participated in three special events: the Tift Scholar Open House in September, Tift Scholar Interviews in December, and the Tift Scholar Recognition Dinner in March where the 28 seniors received their Tift Scholar medallions. In the fall of 2016, the Tift College Alumnae Board of Directors decided to offer fewer Tift Scholarships in an effort to reduce the size of the program to 100 total Tift Scholars with approximately 25 students in each class. By reducing the total number of Tift Scholars, the Board hopes to offer more events and opportunities for Scholars to interact with one another and increase the overall quality of the program.

**National Alumni Association**

The National Alumni Association Board of Directors is the umbrella group of the University Alumni Association. The National Board is composed of presidents and presidents-elect of each of the college/school-specific boards. Dr. Liza Chapman serves
in a volunteer capacity as president of the National Board. She is a 2002 graduate of the College of Pharmacy. The Associate Vice President for Alumni Services (currently Jill Kinsella) serves from her staff position as the Executive Director for the University Alumni Association.

**Homecoming 2016**

Mercer’s annual Homecoming weekend is designed and steered by the Alumni Services & Special Events staff. Homecoming 2016 was held November 4-6, 2016. A total of 3,284 registered alumni and other friends attended. Including Homecoming football fans, the overall number of visitors to the campus for that weekend is estimated at over 10,000. Homecoming continues to grow in terms of its inclusion of many different campus departments/entities and in terms of its offerings to visitors. Homecoming 2016 featured the 2nd Annual Alumni Awards Dinner on Friday night, emceed for a second time by alumna Karla Heath-Sands, CLA ’84. Awards were presented in the following categories: Alumni Chapters, Chapter Leaders, Greek Challenge Winners, Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees, Alumni By Choice, and the three Traditional University Awards (Young, Meritorious and Distinguished). Attendance at the dinner approached 300 guests, and indicated that we are on goal toward making the dinner a traditional anchor event of Homecoming weekend.

**Event Management**

During the 2016-17 academic year, the Office of Alumni Services & Special Events planned and/or conducted over 100 alumni and university special events. These events include all-school alumni events, college/school-specific alumni events,
assistance with the Atlanta and Macon commencements, and other special events. Among those is the Alumni team’s signature event known as the “Mingle.” The concept of a casual, inexpensive, unstructured event that is open to all alumni continues to gain momentum. Mingles have been held in restaurants, bars, country clubs, university sports venues, alumni homes, etc., and have been very popular with alumni/friends and also prospective students.

Mingle locations in 2016-2017 included:

Atlanta, GA
Macon, GA
Baltimore, MD
Chattanooga, TN
Nashville, TN
Kennesaw, GA
Newnan, GA
Vero Beach, FL
Ft. Myers, FL
St. Simons Island, GA
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
Spartanburg, SC

In May 2017, the Office of Alumni Services hosted our 4th Annual Reunion Zero—a week-long slate of activities designed to engage graduating seniors during the week between final exams and Commencement, just before they become Mercer’s
newest alumni. During the week of May 8-11, over 160 students attended at least one celebratory networking event. The week culminated with a picnic on the Woodruff House lawn that featured a buffet dinner catered by Satterfield’s, beverages from Just Tap’d, and live music by Mercer alumna Molly Stevens (CLA ’05). Reunion Zero’s 2017 sponsor was Sierra Development, dba Live @ Lofts.

New Alumni Chapters

The alumni office staff of five is challenged with meeting the needs of, and maintaining relationships with, potentially 77,500 alumni. Creating a network of Mercer Alumni Chapters seemed to be the best way to satisfy the growing demand by alumni for some Mercer presence and activity in their hometowns. Promotion of volunteer leadership opportunities began in early 2014. Since then, the opportunities to lead chapters have attracted a surprising number of alumni who were not otherwise engaged with Mercer but who found this volunteer service appealing. Chapters have now been launched in the following 45 cities, and are engaging approximately 2,770 alumni members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>LEADER</th>
<th>SCHOOL, YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savannah, GA</td>
<td>Jamie Smith Arkins</td>
<td>CLA ’98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacksonville, FL</td>
<td>Chris Pang</td>
<td>BUSM ’11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleston, SC</td>
<td>Jody Wright</td>
<td>Tift ’81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City, NY</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainesville, FL</td>
<td>Nora Kilroy</td>
<td>CLA ’96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest GA</td>
<td>Jesse Vaughn</td>
<td>CLA 95 LAW98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville, TN</td>
<td>Susan Barkley</td>
<td>EGR ’00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valdosta, GA</td>
<td>Chris Donnelly</td>
<td>CLA ’96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattanooga, TN</td>
<td>Valerie and Tray Brantley</td>
<td>CLA ’03, LAW ’06; BUSM ’03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenville, SC</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham, AL</td>
<td>Brian Cooper</td>
<td>CLA ’01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once again this year, Amy Griswold Martin, ENG ’05, who leads our Atlanta Chapter, volunteered to organize a second annual Alumni Letter Writing Campaign. She recruited and organized 146 alumni volunteers who wrote approximately 900 personal
letters of welcome and encouragement to our incoming freshman—the Class of 2021.
The letters were delivered on Move-In Day, August 19, 2017, on the Macon campus.

Alumni Travel Program

The Alumni office continued offering its Alumni Travel Program for the fourth year. The target audience for this type of trip has traditionally been our active, 55+ demographic. This year, we are expanding that audience to include a wider swath of our alumni population. AHI Travel, an established international travel company that specializes in educational travel for alumni groups only, leads the international tours. We have recently also partnered with Collette Travel to offer domestic tours.

Below are the recent and upcoming tours:

- **Holiday Markets (Europe)**  
  - **Dates:** December 6-17, 2016

- **England Castles, Cottages & Countryside**  
  - **Dates:** July 13-23, 2017

- **Portrait of Ireland**  
  - **Dates:** August 28-September 8, 2017

- **Cruise the Face of Europe**  
  - **Dates:** September 22-October 7, 2017

- **Cuba: Art, Culture, and People**  
  - **Dates:** **UPCOMING:** January 14-22, 2018

- **Treasures of Northern California**  
  - **Dates:** **UPCOMING:** June 10-18, 2018

Partnering With Athletics

The popularity of Mercer’s football and basketball programs among alumni continues to provide ripe settings for alumni engagement. To take advantage of the large numbers of alumni visiting the campus, the Alumni Office designed and offered tailgate packages (tents, table, chairs, coolers, etc.) for purchase online—a service
provided to help ensure the best tailgating experience for our alumni, students, community members and other fans. The Alumni Office also provides support (see next section) to welcome guests to the President’s Suite in the Drake Field House. During basketball season, the Alumni and Athletics departments partnered to host an Alumni Day suite for basketball alumnae. We also promoted attendance at, and entertained alumni/friends during, the SoCon basketball tournament in Asheville, NC.

**Mercer Ambassadors**

The Mercer Ambassador program was founded in 1983 to develop future alumni leadership. Ambassadors are nominated by their peers and selected through a process of written application and panel interviews. They are some of Mercer’s best and brightest students, and they are typically laser-focused on choosing activities to advance their education, careers and interests. After careful selection, they are afforded the privilege of representing the student perspective to our alumni and others within Mercer’s circles of influence. It is our hope that these unique privileges and experiences contribute to a lifelong dedication to supporting, recruiting and advocating for Mercer. During the 2016-17 academic year, 24 students served as Mercer Ambassadors, and participated in a total of campus 31 events.
Development and Fundraising Update
(2016-17 Fiscal Year)

Overall University Giving
(Includes Government Support)
$68,098,348.22

Private Gifts
$31,469,895.39

Endowed Gifts
$6,999,287.15

Total Donors
8,684

Alumni Donors
4,856

Lifetime President’s Club Members ($100,000 or more)
410

President’s Club ($1,000 or more)
1587

Penfield Club ($500-$999)
656

Spires Club ($250-$499)
577

Towers Club ($100-$249)
1861

Orange and Black Club (up to $99)
4003
Major Gifts Received  
(July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017 Fiscal Year)

The Exemplary Donors Circle  
($500,000 or Above)

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Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation  
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XI. ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

The mission of the Office of Enrollment Management is to recruit, enroll, retain and graduate highly-qualified students at all levels and administer financial aid as needed, whether for traditional undergraduate students, international students, athletes, transfers, graduate students, or adults completing degrees started at other institutions.

The Office of Enrollment Management is comprised of the following:

- Traditional Undergraduate Enrollment Services
  - Traditional Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions
  - Traditional Undergraduate Operations and Data Systems
  - Traditional Undergraduate Office of Student Success
  - Campus Visitation and Events

- Regional Academic Centers/Atlanta Campus Enrollment Services
  - Adult Student Recruitment and Admissions, which includes undergraduate and graduate processes for the following:
    - Tift College of Education
    - Penfield College of Mercer University
    - Stetson School of Business and Economics
    - Support and Coordination of all other academic units of the University
  - Adult Student Operations and Data Systems
  - Regional Academic Centers / Atlanta Office of Student Success

- Regional Academic Centers Operations
Office of Student Financial Planning

Office of Enrollment Management Marketing and Communications

Other University-wide Initiatives as assigned

Primary goals of the Office of Enrollment Management are tied to enrollment and retention numbers, as outlined in other sections of this report; however, secondary goals for this year are as follows: to attain excellence in quality service in every aspect of the enrollment management process; to encourage and promote interdependence among all units and locations of enrollment management, as well as across the University; and to support the professional development of each team member. The Enrollment Management team began the year with the annual strategic planning retreat to set goals in accordance with the University’s mission statement and strategic plan. Some, though not all, of the highlights and strategies are articulated throughout this summary document.

Traditional Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions Highlights for 2016-2017

Met and exceeded freshman admissions goal of 875 by enrolling a class of 892 new freshmen, the largest in University history, and a 7.7% increase over the Fall 2016 class

Increased incoming Freshman profile

- 3.90 Academic GPA compared to 3.88
- 28 ACT compared to 27
- 1290-1300 SAT average (new version)

Increased yield of gross deposits by 6% over prior year (82% compared to 76%).
- Implemented yield communication flow and corresponding counselor contacts
- Reviewed an unprecedented number of financial aid packages, an 8% increase over prior year
- Implemented “Mercer Fit” ranking in admissions evaluation to prioritize mission driven communication and scholarship awards
- Restructured yield events to increase the total number of events by 3, with a combination of dinners and receptions to reach more students in a more intimate environment
- Implemented survey to qualified students who chose not to attend Mercer to identify areas of improvement

**Strategies for 2017-2018**

- Reach admissions goal of 900 incoming freshman by May 1
- Diversify incoming class statistics
  - Increase out-of-state student population by 2 percentage points
  - Purposefully promote academic programs with ability to grow such as: Business, Education, Humanities, and Health Professions
  - Increase international student population by 2 percentage points
- Increase academic profile (1210/1420 and 3.90 GPA)
- Decrease discount rate by 2 percentage points
- Increase yield of Presidential and Heritage Scholars to 43% versus 39% in 2017.
- Begin researching and developing early targeting program for middle or high
Implement three new program-specific events: Pre-Med Day, Discover Townsend, Spring Health Sciences Day

**Fall 2017 Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Percentile</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>1110</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAT 75&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Percentile</td>
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<td>1275</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic GPA</td>
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<td>3.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average ACT</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Actual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>6200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross Deposits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Deposits</td>
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<td>892</td>
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<td>Transfers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
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<td>389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admits</td>
<td>335</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross Deposits</td>
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<tr>
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**Athletics**

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<tr>
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<th>Transfer</th>
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<td>Baseball</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Men's Basketball</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men's Cross Country</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men's Golf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men's Lacrosse</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Soccer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Tennis</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's Cross</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>% Change</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
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<td>Sand Volleyball</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Soccer</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Tennis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Track and Field</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
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**Macon Campus Visitation Highlights**

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<td>Bears on Deck</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday Previews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Law Day</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Sciences Day</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Scholarship Challenge</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presidential Scholarship Competition</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>455</td>
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<td>Heritage Scholars Competition</td>
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<td>Business Scholarship Competition</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Changemaker’s Scholarship Competition</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make it Mercer</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lanier Scholars</td>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>Homecoming</td>
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<td>Day and Night</td>
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<td>Daily Tours</td>
<td>1405</td>
<td>1497</td>
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<td>121</td>
<td>144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4958</td>
<td>5263</td>
<td>8%</td>
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</table>

**Traditional Undergraduate Operations Highlights for 2016-2017**

- Implemented the usage of Transfer Equivalencies System (TES) and trained staff to utilize system with prospective students
- Enhanced student application to streamline data collection with The Common Application and provide better data within Connect CRM to use for reporting
- Integrated Hobsons Connect CRM with Mongoose text messaging
- Collected better data on why students are not attending Mercer through survey results

**Strategies for 2017-2018**

- Improve test score matches in Nexus and utilize more exception reports through Campus Nexus
Update index scores and scholarship matrix to accommodate the new SAT scoring scale

Improve process for final transcripts, specifically dual enrollment and college transcripts

Begin to collect data in closure survey of students interested in receiving transfer or graduate information

Assist Registrar’s Office with transfer credit data entry to decreases wait time for transfer student recruitment

Traditional Undergraduate Office of Student Success Highlights for 2016-2017

Achieved a first-year retention rate of 87.6% for the 2015 cohort

Achieved a 96.4% retention rate from fall to spring semester of the fall 2016 full-time, first-time cohort

Achieved graduation rate of 63.8% for the 2011 cohort

Increased summer enrollment by 10.75% from summer 2016

Changed office name from Office of Retention to Office for Student Success to better convey purpose and positive connotation

Implemented “Bear Your Button” initiative for upperclassmen

Created website for Office for Student Success

Began work on a predictive model for attrition and course sequencing

Strategies for 2017-2018

Achieve a first-year retention rate of 88.5% for the 2016 cohort and 89% for the 2017 cohort
o Complement and expand first-year efforts from Academic and Advising Services

o Collect list of incoming students who may be at risk of attrition from Office of Admission in order to monitor students and establish proactive intervention

o Implement First Generation Mentor Program called Mercer Firsts for Fall 2017
  - Available to First Generation first-year students
  - Faculty, staff, and graduate/professional students serve as mentors
  - Host monthly workshops for participants tailored to their unique needs

➢ Achieve a graduation rate of 64% for the 2012 cohort

➢ Grow and further develop a comprehensive Sophomore Experience
  o Support the Center for Community Engagement and Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) offices to facilitate Real Talk workshops and expand their current offerings
    - Design programs to normalize dialogue about challenges that impede student success (open to all students)
    - Integrate QEP Grand Challenge topic of personal well-being with priorities identified from Sophomore Experiences Survey such as relationship-building and mental health
o Enhance targeted outreach to sophomores at increased risk of attrition based on GPA indicators

o Create “halfway there” program for Spring 2018 to celebrate the progression of second-year students to their third year at Mercer
  ▪ Invite Administration to attend celebration

➢ Acquire text messaging software and develop texting strategy

➢ Curtail summer melt of rising sophomore and juniors by employing student workers to call and speak with registered students

➢ Expand use of current offerings of Starfish Retention Software to a larger user pool

➢ Build Lettie Pate Whitehead Scholars (LPWS) program for Fall 2018
  o Collaborate with the Associate Vice President for Financial Planning and the Office of Admissions to determine eligible students
  o Create a hybrid program for first two years while membership grows
    ▪ Host programming specific to LPWS
    ▪ Work with Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and others under the Provost to integrate academic components with the program
    ▪ Establish ongoing eligibility criteria
  o Liaise with Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation

➢ Form returning students scholarship in partnership with the Associate Vice President for Financial Planning
➢ Hire additional personnel to accommodate the growing needs and demands on the Office for Student Success

➢ Continue to develop the predictive model in partnership with key faculty

➢ Require students receiving HOPE replacement funds to attend programming and develop an academic success plan beginning Fall 2017 to decrease students’ attrition and increase their likelihood for academic success and regaining HOPE

➢ Revamp Retention Task Forces (First-Year, Sophomore, and Upperclassmen) to address students’ holistic experience

➢ Continue discovery of disconnect between students’ actual experience versus expected experience
  
  o Reach out to other survey administrators to gain additional information

  o Host focus groups and other means of information gathering

➢ Help inform admissions considerations based on retention and graduation data

➢ Collaborate with academic offices, colleges, and schools to provide proactive counseling to students (such as intra-university transfer) in advance of academic sanctions

➢ Strengthen partnership with Residence Life
  
  o Continue to provide list of non-registrant, non-responders for Resident Advisors to meet with and determine intentions

  o Develop proactive programming with engaging RAs in early
Regional Academic Centers / Atlanta Recruitment, Admissions and Data Systems

Highlights for 2016-2017

- Enrolled 504 new Penfield College, Stetson School of Business and Economics (SSBE), and Tift College of Education (TCOE) adult undergraduate students across all campuses, online, and Regional Academic Center (RAC) locations

- Increased overall fall, spring, and summer enrollment of Penfield College undergraduate programs by average of 3% over 2016 through retention and recruitment of new students

- Enrolled 274 new Tift College of Education (TCOE) graduate students across TCOE’s campus, online, and Regional Academic Center locations

- Increased overall fall, spring, and summer enrollment of Penfield College graduate programs through retention and recruitment of new students by average of 6%
Increased overall graduate Stetson applications by 10% over prior year

Implemented Radius Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool for entire Adult student recruitment and admissions processes

Established entering post-traditional undergraduate GPA analysis reporting

**Strategies for 2017-2018**

- Increase attendance rate by 10% for information sessions and webinars with use of Acuity Scheduling and Radius CRM Events module with a goal of 50%-55%

- Improve yield and increase enrollment by 5% with process improvements

- Increase application-to-admit conversion rate to 50% (40% Fall 2016-Spring 2017) and maintain admit-to-enroll conversion of 85% in Penfield College

- Host 3-4 Lunch and Learn information sessions each semester at local businesses to build relationships within the community and create awareness for Mercer and SSBE

- Establish 3 new partnership agreements with commercial organizations to increase new Penfield College and Stetson School of Business and Economics (SSBE) student enrollment in center and online programs, especially for technology and individualized major programs and 3 new initial teacher
certification partnerships for TCOE.

- Develop strong relationships with foreign embassies and foreign institutions to create a more diverse Two-Year MBA cohort

- Expand existing Preferred Provider Partnership (PPP) agreements to increase Penfield and SSBE enrollment of partner employees by 10% over 2017

- Continue Integration of Hobsons Radius with all functioning modules

**Regional Academic Centers / Atlanta Office of Student Success**

**Highlights for 2016-2017**

- Recruited back 160 adult students during the 2016-2017 academic year

- Established Scholarship Committee

- Achieved and exceeded Adult Undergraduate student retention goals for most programs

**Strategies for 2017-2018**

- Recruit back a total of 176 adult students who have stopped out for various reasons

- Conduct Starfish Update Training for faculty and staff

- Expand from a general communication plan to college specific communication plan
Organize and meet with the Retention Task Force once a semester

Meet with a college representative once a semester to review current retention by program and develop strategies for improvement

**Regional Academic Centers Operations Highlights for 2016-2017**

- Conducted well-planned “Go Red Week for Heart Healthy Wellness” Campaigns at Center locations
- Spearheaded Center participation in the 2016-2017 National Hurricane Awareness PrepareAthon®, a community-based campaign led by the Henry County Emergency Operations Center
- Partnered with local churches in the packaging of 30,277 meals, as part of a local Stop Hunger Now Meal Packaging Event
- Led the university effort in hosting the Douglas County Community and Military Appreciation Day
- Hosted the “Henry County Community Partnership Development Day”
- Rebranded Centers and co-located support services as the “Office for Student Success”

**Strategies for 2017-2018**

- Coordinate monthly meetings or events with Henry County or Douglas County leaders (partners) and Mercer’s Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management to sustain and create new energy and excitement
- Increase collaboration in the One Henry Economic Development Alliance and Workforce Development Task Force initiative.
➢ Strengthen security preparedness, surveillance and vigilance at all Center locations

➢ Recommend actions to target military/veterans for certain academic programs and/or sources/locations for possible military/veterans Mercer recruitment with the goal of 200 enrolled veterans and military connected students served in Regional Academic Centers/Campus Evening Student Support Centers by Fall Semester 2018

➢ Continue efforts to increase enrollment in Mercer Youth Programs at all locations with improved marketing strategies and expanded course offerings

**Office of Student Financial Planning Highlights for 2016-2017**

➢ Converted from paper to digital imaging for all documents

➢ Proven excellence in financial aid processing with zero findings in federal audit

➢ Completed first steps in conversion to one website for Financial Planning

➢ Updated outside scholarship check processing for automation using digital imaging and contact manager

➢ Transitioned Director of Operations and Awarding to replace IT position as Destination Point Administrator. This personnel change will allow Financial Planning to control access to all federal financial aid sites.

➢ Established Undergraduate Associate Director for the Atlanta Campus

**Strategies for 2017-2018**

➢ **Empowering staff with Knowledge and Leadership for Student Success**
Schedule Quarterly Teach Back sessions with staff

Equip financial aid leadership to increase Excel proficiency by taking advantage of Lynda.com

Empowering Excellence in Communication, Technology, and Service for Student Success

Establish Auto-Reply Responses for all submitted documents

Continue centralized website strategy that provide students with up-to-date information and confidence in the processing of their financial aid packages

Establish text communication through Mongoose

Establish “Thank you” campaign for state aid

Empowering Collaborative Partnerships with Student Success Office, Registrar’s Office, Bursar’s Office, and Admission’s Office across the University.

Partner with Student Success Office to counsel and intercede for students who failed to meet HOPE GPA standards and may be eligible for HOPE replacement

Establish annual HOPE and Zell Miller Scholarship training with the Registrar’s Office to ensure all HOPE and Zell requirements are met and establish a flow of information

Service and Community Projects
Empower staff members to meet and plan a service project. Select a Committee to review volunteer opportunities and collaboration with other departments

**Enrollment Management Marketing and Communications Highlights for 2016-2017**

- Produced new traditional undergraduate admissions video; garnered applause at multiple event showings, exceeded 57,000 views on Facebook
- Created and implemented new traditional undergraduate yield campaign for accepted students including creation of new email series, 9 new videos, and the launch of Mercer Admissions blog, #mercerbound, (mercerbound.blog) to keep accepted and deposited students engaged with the brand throughout the cycle with timely new content
- Created and implemented new traditional undergraduate Hold/Wait List email campaign with 2 videos to encourage potential students to improve academic qualifications and stay engaged in admissions process
- Completed web audit for traditional undergraduate admissions website and adult undergraduate/graduate “working adults” website to inform site updates and redesigns
- Produced new adult undergraduate admissions video (roll out in Fall 2017)
- Produced new adult undergraduate orientation guidebook
- Produced new Preferred Provider Partnerships employer recruitment booklet, video, and banner
➢ Expanded adult undergraduate and graduate digital marketing campaigns, to include more programs and digital channels (such as Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Bing, Instagram, etc.)

➢ Produced a variety of new print collateral and email campaigns for adult undergraduate and graduate recruitment

**Strategies for 2017-2018:**

➢ Improve user experience across digital channels for traditional undergraduate, adult undergraduate, and graduate prospects to increase next-step conversions

  o Add new event-specific landing pages to traditional undergraduate admissions website

  o Redesign and relaunch working adults admissions website as MercerForYou.com

  o Begin process to redesign traditional undergraduate admissions website, undergrad.mercer.edu

  o Strengthen social media strategy and execution to better engage prospective students

  o Collaborate with offices of Marketing and Communications and Web Management to improve navigational structure, content, and search engine optimization (SEO) of school/academic websites
Increase use of storytelling through student/alumni testimonials and outcomes information across digital and print marketing for traditional undergraduate, adult undergraduate, and graduate audiences

Improve conversion performance of adult undergraduate and graduate digital advertising campaigns
  - Evaluate/shift existing vendor relationships and advertising channels
  - Reallocate ad spends based on FY17 effectiveness and FY18 goals
  - Evaluate conversion of digital leads later in funnel through analysis of Radius CRM data

Increase inquiries and enrollments in specific areas
  - International students (traditional undergraduate)
  - Business majors (traditional and adult undergraduate)
  - Military-connected students (adult undergraduate and graduate)
  - Education students (traditional undergraduate, adult undergraduate, and graduate)

Collaborate with Office of Student Financial Planning and admissions teams to create financial aid print collateral for adult undergraduate and graduate prospects
XII. LEGAL AFFAIRS

LITIGATION REPORT

During the previous year, the University was named as a defendant in five (5) lawsuits. A summary of the background and current status of these cases is provided below.

*John Stofer, as Executor of the Estate of Ms. Sally Stofer, and John Stofer and Susan Stofer Chandler, individually, as surviving children of their mother, Ms. Sally Stofer v. Mercer University*

(State Court of Bibb County)

This is a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the surviving children of Ms. Sally Stofer, a 68-year-old woman who died as a result of injuries sustained in a fall at a “Second Sunday” concert sponsored by the University’s College Hill Alliance on July 13, 2014. The College Hill Alliance had rented Washington Park, a facility of Macon-Bibb County, for the purpose of hosting the concert. When exiting the park via a stairway at the conclusion of the event, Ms. Stofer lost her balance and fell, sustaining serious head injuries from which she never recovered.

The plaintiffs assert that Mercer, as the “occupier” of the Park on the date of the accident, is liable for Ms. Stofer’s injury and subsequent death pursuant to the premises liability statute of the Georgia Code. The suit alleges that the stairway used by Ms. Stofer had a handrail that had been broken off or removed about halfway down, leaving the bottom eight steps without a handrail, and that the stairway was also poorly lit. The plaintiffs assert that Mercer failed to exercise care and diligence and was negligent in
failing to ensure that all stairways were accessible and adequately lighted, and in failing to assign volunteers to be stationed at potentially dangerous areas of the Park.

The plaintiffs seek to recover (a) damages for the pain and suffering endured by Ms. Stofer before her death, as well as all medical, funeral, and other bills associated with the incident; (b) damages for the wrongful death of Ms. Stofer, including the full value of her life, both economic and non-economic, tangible and intangible; and (c) the expenses incurred in advancing this legal action.

Following conclusion of discovery in the case, the University filed a motion for summary judgment, asserting two primary defenses to this claim. First, the University has argued that Ms. Stofer’s knowledge of the hazard was equal or superior to that of Mercer’s. At the time of the fall, there was sufficient daylight and the missing handrail was clearly visible. Ms. Stofer had an opportunity to observe the hazard, yet chose to navigate the staircase anyway instead of choosing one of several alternate routes for exiting the park.

A second defense is afforded by the Recreational Property Act (RPA), a Georgia statute designed to encourage owners of land to make land and water areas available to the public. To accomplish this purpose, the statute provides that “an owner of land owes no duty of care to keep the premises safe for entry or use by others for recreational purposes or to give any warning of a dangerous condition, use, structure, or activity on the premises to persons entering for recreational purposes.” Given the fact that Mercer did not charge admission for the concert (it was free and open to the public), the University has asserted the defense provided by the statute.
Following a hearing and oral argument on November 15, 2016, the Court issued an order partially granting the University’s motion for summary judgment as to the issues of stubborn litigiousness and negligence per se, but denying the motion as to the application of the Recreational Property Act, finding that the application of the RPA should be a jury question because there was evidence of a commercial purpose associated with the Second Sunday Concert Series. In response to this ruling, the University filed a petition for a certificate of immediate review which was granted by the Court, allowing the University to file an interlocutory appeal with the Georgia Court of Appeals on the application of the Recreational Property Act.

On August 9, 2017, the Court of Appeals heard oral arguments on the University’s appeal, and a decision is expected later this year.

In the event that summary judgment is denied on appeal and the case goes to trial, the University will argue that responsibility for damages should be apportioned to Macon-Bibb County for its failure to maintain the park in a safe condition.

The University has Commercial General Liability insurance that covers the costs of defense and any judgment that might result from this lawsuit.

*Sara Kalantari v. Mercer University; Dr. Hewitt Matthews, individually and in his official capacity as Dean of Pharmacy; Dr. C. Lea Bonner, individually and in her official capacity as Assistant Dean of Pharmacy; Dr. Mark Carmon, individually and in his official capacity as Preceptor; and Dr. Tomeka Kim, individually and in her official capacity as Instructor*

*(United States District Court, Northern District of Georgia – Atlanta Division; Superior Court of DeKalb County)*

The plaintiff, a United States citizen of Iranian descent, was a pharmacy student in the doctoral program at the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Throughout
her course of study, the plaintiff struggled academically, failing a second year class and being accused of plagiarism during her third year. Several members of the College were concerned that the plaintiff was not grasping the foundational knowledge necessary to practice pharmacy, but despite those observations the plaintiff was allowed to continue her studies.

As part of her fourth year Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience ("APPE"), the plaintiff participated in a pharmacy rotation at a Rite-Aid Pharmacy in Marietta, Georgia. Soon after beginning her rotation, the plaintiff’s preceptor recognized that the plaintiff lacked basic pharmacy skills, noting that she provided inaccurate pharmacological information to Rite-Aid’s customers and pharmacists on numerous occasions, and that she was unable to demonstrate basic pharmacy knowledge and skills such as distinguishing between brand name and generic pharmaceutical drugs and counseling patients regarding the proper use of various medications. Ultimately, Rite-Aid informed the College that the plaintiff could not continue the rotation because of patient safety issues. The plaintiff received a failing grade for the rotation. Because the plaintiff had failed two classes (the second year class and the APPE rotation), the University dismissed the plaintiff from the pharmacy program in accordance with academic policy.

In a lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court, the plaintiff alleged that the University unlawfully dismissed her from the pharmacy program on the basis of her national origin and race, and further alleged that the University unlawfully provided her academic information to the Rite-Aid preceptors. In her Complaint, the plaintiff asserted the following causes of action:
• Discrimination and retaliation in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e et seq. ("Title VII");
• Discrimination in violation of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq. ("Title IX");
• Breach of contract and tortious interference with contractual relations; and
• Negligence.

The University filed an Answer denying each of the asserted claims, and also filed a Motion to Dismiss the plaintiff’s lawsuit for failure to state a valid cause of action. On February 11, 2016, the District Court dismissed the plaintiff’s federal law claims (i.e., Title VII, Title IX and FERPA) with prejudice, but declined to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the plaintiff’s state law claims.

On February 12, 2016, the plaintiff filed a new Complaint for Damages in the Superior Court of DeKalb County, renewing the state law claims that had been dismissed without prejudice by the federal District Court. In the new complaint, the plaintiff alleged the following “causes of action” against the University and the same individually named defendants:

• breach of contract;
• tortious interference with contractual relations;
• intentional infliction of emotional distress;
• negligence;
• invasion of privacy; and
• negligent supervision.

The plaintiff’s Complaint claimed damages in an amount no less than $3,000,000, along with court costs and attorneys’ fees.

In response, the University filed a Motion to Dismiss the plaintiff’s Superior Court Complaint.

On Feb. 2, 2017, before the Superior Court had ruled on the University’s Motion to Dismiss, the federal District Court awarded attorneys’ fees to the University in connection with the U. S. District Court case. In an attempt to resolve the matter, the University offered to forgo the awarded attorneys’ fees if the plaintiff dismissed her state law claims in the Superior Court with prejudice. The plaintiff did not agree to do so.

On March 3, 2017, the judge in the Superior Court granted the University’s Motion to Dismiss on most of the above-referenced counts, but denied the University’s Motion to Dismiss on the breach of contract claim. This claim remains pending before the Superior Court.

In any event, defense costs in this matter have now exceeded the self-insured retention in the University’s liability insurance coverage. Accordingly, any future costs of defense and any judgment that might result from this lawsuit will be borne exclusively by the insurance carrier.

Ruby Brown v. The Corporation of Mercer University
(State Court of Bibb County)

This is a premises liability lawsuit arising from a trip and fall incident on the Macon campus.
On September 21, 2013, the plaintiff was attending a baseball game on campus when she tripped and fell due to an allegedly “dangerous and/or defective condition” on a sidewalk. On September 18, 2015, the plaintiff filed suit, seeking recovery of damages for past and future medical expenses, pain and suffering, and attorneys’ fees.

The University has filed an Answer denying liability for all asserted claims, and discovery in the suit is nearing completion.

The University has Commercial General Liability insurance that covers the costs of defense and any judgment that might result from this lawsuit.

**Sharon Diane Turner v. The Corporation of Mercer University**  
*(Superior Court of Douglas County, Georgia)*

This is a premises liability lawsuit arising from a trip and fall incident on the Regional Academic Center campus in Douglasville, Georgia.

On the evening of March 24, 2014, the plaintiff was leaving the Douglas County Regional Academic Center when she tripped and fell in the parking lot. On February 12, 2016, the plaintiff filed suit alleging that her injuries were the result of the University’s negligence in not maintaining adequate lighting in the parking lot. The suit sought recovery of damages for past and future medical expenses, pain and suffering, and lost wages.

The University filed an Answer denying liability for all asserted claims.

Following completion of discovery, the parties reached an agreement regarding settlement. In January 2017, the case was settled for $17,000 and the lawsuit was dismissed with prejudice.
This is a premises liability lawsuit arising from a trip and fall incident on the Macon campus.

On April 15, 2014, the plaintiff, an enrolled student, was exiting her residence hall when she tripped and fell due to an allegedly “dangerous and/or defective condition” on the building’s staircase. On April 15, 2016, the plaintiff filed suit alleging that her injuries were the result of the University’s negligence in failing to use ordinary care in remedying or preventing a dangerous condition on the staircase. The suit seeks recovery of damages for past and future medical expenses, pain and suffering, and costs of litigation.

The University has filed an Answer denying liability for all asserted claims, and discovery in the suit is continuing.

On its face, the Complaint suggests that the circumstances surrounding the plaintiff’s fall involved active maintenance and/or construction activities by University personnel who failed to ensure the safety of their work area. The plaintiff’s discovery responses suggest something very different and more routine, however, indicating that she fell as a result of an alleged static hazardous condition (specifically, chipped concrete on the stairs and the absence of handrails). That scenario makes the case more defensible, as it increases the plausibility of her being contributorily negligent and/or assuming the risk. If it can be established that the plaintiff had traversed the staircase many times prior to this fall and was thus aware of the existing conditions (i.e., the chipped concrete and absence of handrails), it might be argued that she assumed
the risk of traversing those stairs that particular day, and/or that she failed to exercise
due care for her own safety in light of these conditions of which she was aware.

The University has Commercial General Liability insurance that covers the costs of defense and any judgment that might result from this lawsuit.
XIII. UNIVERSITY MINISTER AND DEAN OF CHAPEL

Dr. Craig McMahan is now in his twelfth year of service as University Minister and Dean of the Chapel. That role calls upon him to provide leadership in a variety of capacities, including religious and pastoral support, academic and administrative engagement and service to others both locally and globally. While each of these roles maintains a certain continuity of expectation over time, they are also shifting in new, and sometimes unimagined, directions.

In order to remain relevant, the University Minister’s religious and pastoral responsibilities are in a constant state of realignment and development. In 1980, for example, 89% of Mercer undergraduates identified as being religious with 82% of them identifying as Christian, half of whom were Baptist. In 2016, however, only 73% of Mercer undergraduate claim a religious identity of any kind with 64% of them being Christian and 26% being Baptist. In light of our changing, more pluralistic, more secular culture, the role of the University Minister has, by necessity, adjusted. University-wide chapel has been replaced by more customized worship experiences hosted by the nine campus ministries. Instead of the University Minister leading the chapel program, Dr. McMahan lends his guidance and support to the campus ministries that welcome over 500 students per week into their denominationally-based meetings. Of course, the University Minister continues to lead the Mercer community in prayer at significant recognitions, provide devotional reflections at academic, athletic and seasonal events, organize periodic worship services and attend to the pastoral needs that emerge in the
unpredictable rhythms of life’s happiest and saddest moments. Even the focus of these traditional duties, however, has widen in order to be hospitable to an ever more diverse university community that has an abiding spiritual appetite but is interested in an expanded menu.

Jesse Mercer envisioned a school in which the theological and the intellectual were joined in a holistic quest for truth and understanding. The University Minister serves in this capacity as the Dean of the Chapel. Dr. McMahan has an appointment as an assistant professor in the Roberts Department of Religion. Each semester he teaches an introductory course in the New Testament. With a growing level of expertise and experience in international development gained through his leadership in Mercer On Mission, he has developed courses in the theory and practice of international development. He participates in a global development work group that sponsored Mercer’s first global development summit, which took place in October. Dr. McMahan’s interests also include ethics. For the previous three years, he has led student seminars on medical ethics and health care decision-making as part of the Center for Leadership and Ethics. In addition, and in partnership with a number of experts from across Mercer’s faculty, Dr. McMahan has helped to organize a panel discussion entitled “Making Sense of Charlottesville,” which took place in October. He is also a permanent member of the organizing council for Mercer’s Beloved Community Symposium, which engages students and faculty in dialogue with a keynote speaker and the community to address racial reconciliation in Macon.
In keeping with the Baptist tradition of humanitarian service to others, the University Minister is the founder and director of Mercer On Mission, the University's international service-learning program that responds to real-world problems with research-based solutions. 2017 was the biggest in Mercer On Mission’s eleven year history. MOM experienced a significant increase in student participation this past year, rising from 183 students to 227 students in 2017. Students came from a variety of disciplines: medicine, pharmacy, nursing, engineering, public health, political science, chemistry, religion, business, Spanish, English, education, economics and biology. They operated medical clinics in Cambodia and Honduras, built water systems in the Dominican Republic, participated in inter-faith renovation projects in the Republic of Georgia, conducted health screenings and did water testing in Greece, worked with school teachers and students in Nepal, assisted widows in a small business start-ups in Rwanda, conducted anti-bullying and anti-violence workshops with middle and high school students in South Africa and taught English and robotics to North Korean refugees in South Korea.

Two MOM programs continue to attract international attention. The prosthetic legs program in Vietnam successfully launched new a clinical site in northern Vietnam, near Ha Noi. Previous sites were all located in southern Vietnam, but at the urging of the Prime Minister the program expanded to the north. MOM’s biomedical engineering team fit 712 amputees during this year’s program, pushing the total number to over 7,000. In addition to the prosthetic leg, lead engineer, Dr. Ha Van Vo, is presently working on a prosthetic hand, which should be ready for testing at the end of this year.
MOM’s work with mercury contamination in Ecuador has come to the attention of the government of Ecuador’s neighbor, Peru. In October, Dr. McMahan and Dr. Adam Kiefer, went to Peru to do initial assessments of mercury contamination and to meet with government officials to explore possibilities of enlarging MOM’s South American presence to include Peru. This project continues to operate in partnership with the United States Environmental Protection Agency by advancing the design of our Mercury Capture System, which is now proceeding through the patent process. Through Mercer On Mission, Mercer students and faculty are making a very positive difference in South America, Vietnam and around the world in ways that Jesse Mercer would never have imagined but would proudly applaud.