



A
Transformative
Year:
Milestones on our
Path to Excellence



Middle Georgia
State University

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Milestones on the Path to Excellence	2
Program Accomplishments.....	3
Strengthening Our Communities.....	4
Faculty Accomplishments	6
University Support	7
Athletics	8

Dear Campus Community, Supporters, and Friends,

As we celebrate the start of our second decade as Middle Georgia State University (MGA), I am filled with pride in what we have accomplished together and excitement about the path ahead. The past year has been transformative, resulting in tremendous progress on our strategic plan, Middle Georgia's Path to Excellence.

The success stories featured in this publication demonstrate the innovative spirit that defines our MGA family. From offering the University System's first B.S. in Applied Artificial Intelligence to our nursing graduates exceeding state and national NCLEX pass rates, we are building the foundation for sustained excellence.

We have a clear vision for the future and unprecedented momentum in implementing strategic initiatives. An example of this is the recent creation of our new Division of Institutional Strategy and Planning. This realignment exemplifies our core value of Adaptability, reflecting our commitment to unified purpose and data-driven decision making as we chart our course forward while maintaining our fundamental mission to provide lifelong learning opportunities that transform lives and strengthen communities throughout the region.

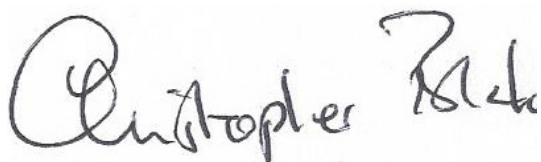
In another exciting move, we received approval for Knights Athletics to become a provisional member in the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division II and relaunched the Knights Athletic Association. These achievements represent more than athletic advancement — they embody our emergence as a State University with growing regional and national recognition. As we now serve more than 8,400 students across our six academic schools, these developments signal our readiness to compete and excel at the highest levels.

Our commitment to our core value of Learning extends far beyond our campuses through innovative programming and community partnerships. We recognize that education is a lifelong journey, offering flexible programs that empower individuals to adapt and thrive throughout their careers. MGA remains steadfast that education should be accessible to all who seek it.

Looking ahead, we continued to be guided by our core values — Stewardship, Engagement, Adaptability, and Learning. Through our collective commitment, we continue to serve as a beacon of opportunity and transformation in middle Georgia.

I have never been more optimistic about our future. Together, we are building something truly remarkable — a University that combines accessibility with distinction and creates lasting impact both locally and beyond.

Go Knights!



Christopher Blake, Ph.D.
President
Middle Georgia State University

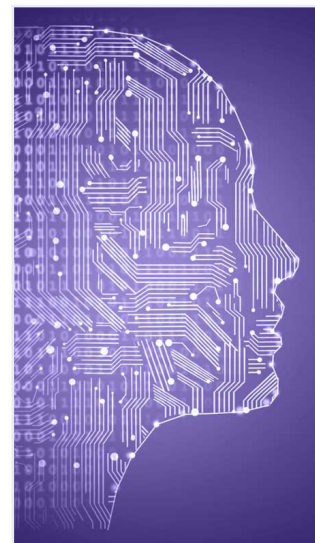


Milestones On The Path To Excellence

▷ MGA to offer University System's first B.S. in Applied Artificial Intelligence

In Fall 2025, Middle Georgia State University became the first institution in the University System of Georgia (USG) to offer a Bachelor of Science in Applied Artificial Intelligence (AI). Approved by the USG's Board of Regents in February 2025, the program is housed on the University's Warner Robins Campus.

The first-of-its-kind undergraduate program emphasizes hands-on, interdisciplinary learning and prepares students for immediate workforce entry. Graduates of the program can build careers in a variety of areas, including market research analysis, agri-tech data science, logistics, AI solutions architects, and computer and information system managers, among many other roles.



▷ Phi Mu Sorority Joins MGA Greek Life



Middle Georgia State University welcomed its first sorority, Phi Mu, to its Greek Life offering in Spring 2025. Founded in 1852 in Macon, Georgia, Phi Mu is the second oldest sorority in the United States. The organization provides members with personal and academic development, community service opportunities, and a support network of lifelong friendships.

▷ MGA Reaches Record-high Enrollment

Middle Georgia State University hit a record-high 8,409 students enrolled in Fall 2024. The 4.6 percent increase over the previous academic year was attributed to major increases in the number of dual-enrollment and graduate-degree students, as well as higher retention rates.

▷ MGA Hosts Inaugural Jennings Family Distinguished Lecture

Middle Georgia State University hosted Matthew Stepka, former Google vice president and managing partner of Machina Ventures, in September 2024 as the inaugural speaker for the Jennings Family Distinguished Lecture Series. Stepka's lecture focused on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming education and the human experience.

The Jennings Family Distinguished Lecture Series is made possible by a generous gift from the Jennings Family. Hosted annually, the lecture series features national and regional experts to enhance learning, promote dialogue, and strengthen the connection between MGA and our communities.

▷ MGA Earns ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Gold Campus Seal

In September 2024, the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge awarded MGA a Gold Campus seal for achieving between a 40 percent and 49 percent voting rate among students in 2022. About 1,060 colleges and universities in the U.S. participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, a national, non-partisan initiative that helps institutions strengthen efforts to improve civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation.



Program Accomplishments

▷ **FAA Grants Enhanced CTI Status to MGA's Air Traffic Management Program**

Middle Georgia State University's air traffic management program became the first in the state of Georgia to be selected by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for participation in the Enhanced Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative. By becoming an Enhanced AT-CTI school, the University can offer graduates a quicker, more direct pathway into a field vital to aviation safety.



▷ **Flight Program Regranted AABI Accreditation**

Middle Georgia State University's Bachelor of Science in Aviation Science & Management, Advanced Flight (Airplane) was regranted full accreditation for another five years by the Aviation Accreditation Board International (AABI), the accreditation body for collegiate aviation programs. This distinguished recognition reaffirms the School of Aviation's commitment to graduating knowledgeable and skilled aviators, managers, and leaders in the aviation industry.



▷ **Respiratory Therapy Program Earns Credentialing Success Award**

Middle Georgia State University's Department of Respiratory Therapy and Health Sciences was recognized at the annual Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) Awards Ceremony for Distinguished Credentialing Success, an honor they received the past four years. The program also received notification of annual continuing accreditation based on its submitted 2024 report.



▷ **Nursing Graduates Exceed State and National NCLEX Pass Rates**

For a second consecutive year, Middle Georgia State University's nursing programs have exceeded the National Council Licensure Examination's (NCLEX) state and national pass rate levels.

According to official 2024 NCLEX results, MGA's Associate of Science in Nursing program has a 96% pass rate for first-time test takers, while the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program has a 100% pass rate. MGA nursing graduates' remarkable scores surpass most regional competitors and transcend both state and national averages.



▷ **IGNITE DeKalb Teacher Residency Program Graduates First Class from MGA**



Among the nearly 800 students who graduated in Fall 2024 from Middle Georgia State University were about 40 members of the charter class of the IGNITE Teacher Residency Program, a grow-your-own classroom teachers initiative of the DeKalb County School District (DCSD).

The school district chose to partner with MGA's School of Education & Behavioral Sciences, which offers an online Master of Arts in Teaching program. The district selected DCSD employees who hold non-education bachelor's degrees to move through MGA's master's program together as a cohort. DeKalb covered tuition and provided each student in the cohort with a living stipend. In exchange, the graduates commit to teaching in the DeKalb County School District for at least five years.

▷ **MGA's Warner Robins Campus Houses New Department of Computer Science**

In Fall 2024, the School of Computing at Middle Georgia State University launched the Department of Computer Science, housed at the institution's Warner Robins Campus near Robins Air Force Base.

By spinning off computer science degree programs into a brand-new department, MGA is making reality of the strategic foresight outlined in the University's academic master and strategic plans and fostering a vibrant ecosystem of innovation and learning. The programs had been housed in the Department of Information Technology.



Strengthening Our Communities

▷ **MGA and Museum of Aviation Foundation Announce Partnership Focused on Education and Community Engagement**

Middle Georgia State University and the Museum of Aviation Foundation launched a new partnership designed to strengthen educational outreach, community engagement, and innovation throughout the region in June 2024.

The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to expanding access to educational experiences, especially in STEM fields, while leveraging the resources, facilities, and expertise of both institutions.



▷ **MGA Hosts Georgia Premier Cross Country Course Groundbreaking**

MGA hosted a project groundbreaking in August 2024 to signify the beginning of construction of athletic facilities connected by a pavilion at the University's Georgia Premier Cross Country Course, located along the western edge of the Macon Campus. The project will allow MGA to collaborate with Macon-Bibb County to host high-profile recreational activities that draw visitors from across the state. The project is funded through a \$1.24 million federal grant and \$300,000 from Macon-Bibb.

▷ **MGA Opens New Satellite Building at Cochran Airport**



In October 2024, MGA and the city of Cochran hosted a formal opening of a new satellite building at the Cochran Airport. The building will support flight education and training for the University's Eastman-based School of Aviation.

The \$70,000 project reflects the strong collaboration between the Cochran community and the University, supporting MGA's aviation program and fostering educational growth.

▷ **MGA & Macon-Bibb Reopen Reconstructed Macon Downtown Airport Runway**

In November 2024, Macon-Bibb County and MGA held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly reconstructed Runway 10-28 at the Macon Downtown Airport. Construction on the project began in January of 2024, made possible by a \$5.7 million grant from the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Middle Georgia State University uses the airport for its School of Aviation, which is the fastest growing school at MGA.

Faculty & Staff Accomplishments

▷ **Dr. Renat Khatmullin Named 2025 U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad Coach**

Dr. Renat Khatmullin, associate professor of chemistry at MGA, was selected to serve as the 2025 U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO) coach. In this role, Dr. Khatmullin will help students prepare for the Local or National Olympiad Exams.

The USNCO is a multi-tiered competition sponsored by the American Chemical Society designed to stimulate and promote achievement in high school chemistry.



▷ **Teri Miller Sworn in as VP of Internal Affairs for the American Association for Respiratory Care**

Teri Miller, chair of MGA's Department of Respiratory Therapy and Health Sciences, was sworn in as vice president of Internal Affairs for the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) at their 70th International Congress and Annual Business Meeting. Miller will complete a two-year term in her position.



▷ **Dr. Susan Asbury and Dr. Heather Ness-Maddox named Governor's Teaching Fellows**

Dr. Susan Asbury, assistant professor of history at Middle Georgia State University, and Dr. Heather Ness-Maddox, assistant professor of psychology and director of MGA's Honors Program, were selected as Governor's Teaching Fellows. Drs. Asbury and Ness-Maddox were two of 16 faculty members from institutions across Georgia chosen for the highly competitive program.



Established in 1995 by then-Gov. Zell Miller, the Governor's Teaching Fellows program provides faculty at Georgia's higher education institutions with opportunities to develop teaching skills. The program aims to help educators integrate emerging technologies and instructional tools into their teaching.

▷ **Dr. Monica Miller Appointed Carolyn Wynn Smalley Distinguished Chair of Georgia Studies**

Dr. Monica Miller, associate professor of English, was appointed as the inaugural recipient of the Carolyn Wynn Smalley Distinguished Chair of Georgia Studies. This prestigious appointment honors Dr. Miller's outstanding contributions to teaching, scholarship, and the exploration of Georgia's rich cultural heritage.

Funded by a \$1.2 million gift from the estate of Carolyn Wynn Smalley to the Middle Georgia State University Foundation, the Carolyn Wynn Smalley Distinguished Chair of Georgia Studies is a landmark investment in the University's commitment to regional scholarship. Housed within MGA's School of Arts and Letters, this endowed professorship focuses on Georgia-specific topics spanning history, literature, culture, geography, and structural design.



Dr. Monica Miller

▷ **Dr. Greg George, Oliner Professor in Free Market Economics**

Dr. Greg George, associate professor of economics, was appointed as the inaugural Oliner Professor in Free Market Economics at Middle Georgia State University. The professorship was established and approved by the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents in early 2024.



Dr. Greg George

Housed in the School of Business, this professorship honors Henry Oliner and is used to recognize the promotion and investigation of free market economics, as developed historically and within the tradition of economic figures such as Friedrich Hayek and Adam Smith.



In September 2024, MGA formally launched the Center for Middle Georgia Studies with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Funded by gifts from the Peyton Anderson Foundation and the estate of Carolyn Wynn Smalley, the Center aims to leverage the combined power of community assets and University faculty and staff expertise to address issues related to poverty, workforce demands, and healthcare.

University Support

▷ **HCA's Fairview Park Hospital and Medical Staff Donate \$85,000 to Local Healthcare Scholarship in Memory of Late CEO**

In memory of its late CEO, Don Avery, Fairview Park Hospital and staff donated \$85,000 to Middle Georgia State University. The donation was added to the Don and Fara Avery Endowed Nursing Scholarship, an existing scholarship personally created by Mr. Avery in 2022.

At the time of his passing, Mr. Avery had proudly served on the MGA Foundation Board of Trustees for nine years and was the current chair elect. He was an advocate for local healthcare education and was passionate about creating a strong partnership with the Middle Georgia and State University nursing program with the goal of creating a pipeline of healthcare professionals back to Dublin–Laurens County and Fairview Park Hospital.

▷ **Major Gift from Delta Air Lines Foundation Fuels MGA Aviation Scholarships for Clayton County Students**

Middle Georgia State University's School of Aviation is in line to receive \$2.5 million in Delta Air Lines Foundation grants to provide scholarships to Clayton County students who dream of becoming pilots.

Middle Georgia State's School of Aviation will use the grant money to provide scholarships to graduates of Clayton County's 12 public high schools who show aptitude for aviation. Students who meet Middle Georgia State's admissions requirements will have the opportunity to apply for competitive scholarships that award up to full tuition, fees, and flying instruction for the four years they are enrolled.

▷ **Piedmont Macon, MGA Partner to Support Nursing Education**



Piedmont Macon made a major investment in the future of healthcare by funding a new clinical instructor position for Middle Georgia State University nursing students. The partnership highlights Piedmont Macon's commitment to strengthening the workforce of skilled healthcare professionals in central Georgia.

Piedmont Macon will fund a full-time clinical instructor position for one year, a commitment valued at \$125,000. Based at Piedmont Macon, the instructor will provide hands-on clinical instruction and supervision to MGA nursing students, ensuring they gain essential real-world experience in a healthcare setting.

▷ **Record year – Faculty and staff giving campaign**

The contributions from the 2024 Faculty and Staff campaign made a difference by helping support every aspect of campus life – from students to departments, athletics, and non-academic programs, as well as keeping our campus beautiful.

\$103,599

RAISED WITH OVER

62%

PARTICIPATION

▶ Winning Season for Knights Softball

In their final year of competition before transitioning to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) DII, the MGA Knights softball team left an indelible mark on the 2024-2025 season. The Knights made history this past spring, clinching the program's first-ever Southern States Athletic Association (SSAC) regular season championship title.

The Knights capped their 34-8 regular season record with a four-game winning streak in the 2025 SSAC Softball Tournament — earning them the conference tournament title and their third consecutive trip to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) national tournament.

Several Knights were recognized for their outstanding contributions on the field and earned post-season accolades. Leading the charge was head coach Randi Wimpy, who was named SSAC Coach of the Year. Senior Emily Proctor was named SSAC Pitcher of the Year for her dominance in the circle, and junior Madison Cosgrove was named SSAC Newcomer of the Year as the lead hitter for the Knights.



Emily Proctor



Madison Cosgrove



Coach Wimpy





Middle Georgia
State University

Office of the President
100 University Parkway
Macon, GA 31206

mga.edu

MGA's Mission

Middle Georgia State University educates and graduates inspired, lifelong learners whose scholarship and careers enhance the region and the state.

MGA's Core Values

Stewardship • Engagement • Adaptability • Learning

