About our 24 Institutions
Private Colleges Public Good

72,260 students
52,162 undergraduates
20,098 graduate students
22,815 employees across Georgia

$3.7B in salaries and wages
GICA PRIVATE NONPROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES VARY IN TYPE AND MISSION:

BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTIONS

MASTERS COLLEGES

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS

FAITH RELATED

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

SINGLE-GENDER EDUCATION
As chair of the Georgia Independent College Association (GICA) Board of Directors, I offer my greetings on behalf of the Board, which is composed of the twenty-four presidents of GICA institutions and ten public members of the Board. We are proud to serve the Georgia Independent Colleges Association, which represents a rich and impressive history of higher education in the South.

HISTORY OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN GEORGIA

In 1835, Oglethorpe University was chartered by the state of Georgia, followed in 1836 by Georgia Female College (now Wesleyan College) and Emory College (now Emory University). Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, additional institutions were either founded as colleges or changed their charters to grant college degrees. Collectively, our Georgia private colleges have served students for 2,898 years—not counting the years they existed as grammar and high schools, institutes, and female seminaries!

Over the last two centuries, these private institutions of higher education have witnessed the addition, merger, and closing of private colleges and universities. They have endured wars, natural disasters, economic crises, and changes in curriculum, accreditation requirements, and funding. But 2020 brought challenges that we had not imagined, even in our most strategic planning: a worldwide pandemic.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR 2020-2021

As we concluded our February 2020 GICA Board meeting, several Board members had an impromptu conversation about how we might respond on our campuses if the coronavirus that was in the news might come to Georgia. Little did we know that our lives would change—quickly and radically. Within weeks, we moved most of our instruction online, arranged for students, faculty, and staff to work remotely, suspended athletic competition and on-campus events, and developed policies and procedures for a
pandemic-regulated world of higher education. The word “pivot” had a new meaning in our vocabulary, and we scrambled to understand the possibilities of “COVID stimulus aid.”

Throughout these challenges, GICA has provided exceptional leadership to our network of colleges and universities. Collaboration between and among GICA Board members and the GICA team has been more important than ever during the last year, as we faced the challenges of the pandemic.

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

Early in the year, we learned we would need to conduct a search for an experienced leader to replace Dr. Susanna Baxter who served ten years in the role of GICA president. In July 2020, the Board named Jenna Colvin as GICA president.

President Colvin brought a unique combination of legal, advocacy and higher education experiences to the role as GICA moved into its next chapter. She has kept our campus presidents connected with regular updates on federal and state legislation, emergency relief programs, and evolving public health guidance. She and her staff hosted Zoom calls for leaders across campus to share best practices and work through common challenges as the pandemic conditions evolved.

The Board also enthusiastically welcomed Dr. Baxter to GICA’s Board when she assumed the presidency at LaGrange College, a GICA institution, and recognized her leadership and personal commitment to GICA institutions by granting her President Emeritus status with the association in October at the annual meeting.

The state of Georgia, and the students attending our institutions, benefit from the rich histories, excellent programs, unique missions, exceptional value, and significant financial contributions to students offered by Georgia’s private colleges. This report provides an overview of the work of the GICA staff over the past year to support Georgia’s private institutions of higher education.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Georgia Independent Colleges Association, I express profound gratitude to GICA for its leadership and commitment to this noble cause of private higher education.

Vivia L. Fowler, Chair
GICA Board of Directors
President, Wesleyan College
2020 Leadership

GICA STAFF

Ms. Jenna M. Colvin  
President

Ms. Lisa K. Macke  
Vice President

Dr. Melissa P. Tarrant  
Director of Research

Mr. James M. (Chip) Moore III  
Director of Operations & Data Analysis

Ms. Juliet Jatcko  
Marketing and Events Manager

Ms. Judith W. Spain, CCEP  
Compliance Program Consultant, Spain & Spain

Mr. James E. Toney  
Consultant, Cornerstone Communications Group
Dr. Susanna Baxter Appointed President Emeritus

In special recognition of distinguished service to the Georgia Independent College Association, Dr. Susanna Baxter was appointed President Emerita of GICA. While serving as President of GICA from 2010 to 2020, Dr. Baxter’s service demonstrated exceptional commitment and contributions to the Association, exemplifying the highest standards of personal and professional integrity, civic responsibility, vision, and leadership. Dr. Baxter also provided visionary leadership to numerous advisory boards, committees and professional organizations critical to the higher education sector, including the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities State Executives organization and the Coalition for College Cost Savings.

LIFETIME HONORARY TRUSTEES

Robert K. Ackerman
Lexington, SC

Nancy Blake
Griffin, GA

John S. Burd
Gainesville, GA

Manly F. Gilmer
Woodstock, GA

R. Kirby Godsey
Macon, GA

James M. Griffin
Sanibel, FL

Henry J. Hector
Montgomery, AL

Ross W. Lenhart
Pawleys Island, SC

Sarah H. Lunsford
Roswell, GA

Walter Y. Murphy
Atlanta, GA

Manning M. Patillo
Atlanta, GA

I. Clayton Ramsey
Atlanta, GA

John K. Trainer
Jacksonville, FL

Preston C. Williams
Montezuma, GA
The presidents of each of the 24 independent colleges and universities in the state, along with business and community leaders, comprise the GICA Board of Directors.
About Our Students

64% of degrees earned by GICA students were in high demand fields.

49% of GICA undergraduates identify as Black, Latinx, AAPI, indigenous or persons of color.

GICA students SUCCEED by graduating ... on time ... with high demand degrees ... and critical thinking skills to solve today’s complex problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADUATION RATE</th>
<th>4-YEAR</th>
<th>6-YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-YEAR</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-YEAR</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GICA

USG
GICA began 2020 anticipating a typical year, with plans to engage in the legislative session, work on a variety of policy issues, host a robust schedule of professional development meetings for campus leaders, and launch several new initiatives. The spring 2020 semester kicked off on our campuses with the excitement of new classes.

On January 27, the first press release from the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) was issued regarding growing concern about the outbreak of coronavirus. Governor Brian Kemp joined GICA’s February 26, 2020, Board Meeting and on March 2, he announced that two coronavirus cases had been confirmed in Georgia. GICA began gathering information from multiple national and state sources, facilitating online meetings about the status of the virus and contingency plans for students and academic delivery, and convening affinity groups to share best practices and innovative ideas to manage the pandemic and plan for a return to “normal” operations.

GICA’s institutions were ready for the challenge—across the state our colleges responded to the outbreak of the pandemic and various emergency public health orders with resilience and agility. They shared the goals of keeping campus communities safe and working through the operational challenges institutions faced in a once-in-a-lifetime event.

Institutions initially took a variety of actions from extended or modified spring breaks to suspended classes during the shelter-in-place orders, and by mid-March most institutions had pivoted to remote education and operations. GICA worked closely with leaders in the Governor’s office, the General Assembly, the Department of Public Health and the Department of Emergency Management during this time, and we appreciate the collaboration and support from those offices.

Campus leaders communicated with the Georgia Congressional delegation to provide campus-based perspective on plans for resuming operational capacity, the potential disruptions the virus could cause and the long-term impact of COVID-19. GICA was in constant communication with congressional staffers, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the American Council on Education to provide input based on the needs of the GICA campuses for relief aid. GICA joined other associations and institutions from across the country in signing several letters seeking policy and financial support for the private sector. On March 27, 2020, the President signed the CARES Act that included emergency relief-aid grants for students and GICA institutions.

Over the summer, campus leaders spent tireless hours monitoring developments with the
pandemic, creating plans for the safe resumption of operations and ensuring compliance with the new CARES Act requirements and regulations. GICA supported its institutions by negotiating and promoting collaborative purchasing agreements, connecting campuses with resources for technology services and equipment, personal protective equipment, COVID tests, and cleaning supplies, and assisted them with navigating the Paycheck Protection Program. GICA hosted webinars to promote best practices in pandemic mitigation activities and managing the COVID response on campus. GICA hosted virtual meetings focused on safely reopening campuses by exploring ideas related to staffing, cleaning, PPE use, mask regulations, physical distancing, quarantining, testing, and countless other considerations as institutions explored resuming in-person operations. GICA also went through some major changes in the summer of 2020, as LaGrange College appointed GICA’s longtime president, Dr. Susanna Baxter as its new president on April 28, 2020. In special recognition for her distinguished service, Dr. Baxter was appointed President Emeritus of GICA. GICA enthusiastically announced the appointment of Jenna Colvin as its president on July 27, 2020. In August 2020, Governor Kemp approved GICA’s request for support from the discretionary CARES Act funding, resulting in $10 million in state financial assistance for Georgia’s private colleges. Similarly, despite the economic uncertainties, the FY21 budget passed by the General Assembly preserved student aid programs that are so important to students attending GICA institutions. GICA’s campuses approached the Fall 2020 semester with a variety of options for their students—largely driven by the needs of their communities and the cultures of their campuses. Some schools welcomed students back to campus, others offered low-density residence models, and still others offered students remote learning opportunities. The faculty and staff of Georgia’s private, not-for-profit colleges have had to be nimble, adaptable, and responsive during 2020. GICA is proud to have assisted and supported these institutions through a remarkable 2020. As we head into 2021, Georgia’s private, not-for-profit colleges and universities are uniquely positioned to accelerate the revitalization of the economy. With their resources, research and development, and community partnerships, these institutions are primed to invigorate—economically, culturally, and socially—the areas hardest hit by the health and economic crisis. GICA remains committed to being a voice for private higher education in Georgia and to advocating for our 24 institutions and the 72,000 students they serve.
Collaborative Services

As an association, GICA serves its colleges and universities through a variety of collaborative projects that provide opportunities to work together to improve the efficiency of their institutions, learn new ways of serving their key stakeholders and leverage their collective buying power to decrease costs. GICA collaborative services are designed to enhance the educational experience and operational efficiency of each campus.

**ACADEMIC COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS**

Academic programs offer unique opportunities for colleges to explore innovative ways to deliver curriculum. These programs have multiple impacts, such as expanding academic opportunities for students, improving student retention rates, and containing tuition costs. Ultimately, institutions involved in these projects see benefits to their students, faculty, and staff, as well as the communities in which the institutions are located. New leading-edge academic programs can be created and communities benefit from job creation and the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

**Example: Lower Cost Models for Independent Colleges Consortium (LCMC)**

GICA has facilitated the work of LCMC with GICA campuses to create innovative, collaborative program solutions, while streamlining and lowering institutional costs. The LCMC brings together presidents, chief financial officers, chief academic officers/provosts, and engaged faculty members and administrators from over 75 institutions to offer expanded academic degree programs. By taking selected online courses from leading academic experts within particular fields curated by LCMC, students can earn their degree at the GICA college of their choice, while choosing from an expanded list of majors. LCMC’s expanded academic programs enhance career readiness and expand educational opportunities for students.

**SHARED SERVICE PROGRAMS**

GICA campuses continually seek creative ways to share services at their colleges and universities. While these programs take a considerable amount of innovative thinking and time to establish, sharing services offer numerous benefits that far outweigh the short-term challenges. GICA schools have either formed or are currently implementing shared service programs in the areas of compliance, information technology, retirement planning, and data collection from institutions to inform policy development.

**Example: Compliance Collaborative Program (CCP)**

The GICA Compliance Collaborative Program (CCP) is the first program of its kind in the nation. Established in 2016, the CCP is currently comprised of 15 GICA member institutions. Originally focusing on providing consulting services to ensure compliance with several specific laws and regulations, the CCP Steering Committee has extensively expanded the scope of the services provided.

The mission of the CCP is to support each participating CCP member institution as it develops and enacts policies and procedures that are compliant with state and federal laws,
mandates, and guidance. The staff of the CCP support campuses in this process by offering training, consultation, guidance, and policy review and recommendations.

COLLABORATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAMS

GICA institutions frequently collaborate on purchasing programs to save money and increase efficiencies. Companies work with GICA to establish cost savings on a broad range of products and services. In addition, GICA maintains membership in three group-purchasing organizations, the Coalition for College Cost Savings, E&I, and Omnia which increase member institutions’ access to discounts offered through national contracts. GICA member campuses spent over $32 million through the GICA procurement programs in 2020.

Example: The Virtual Care Group

GICA partners with The Virtual Care Group (VCG) to offer specialized pricing for medical and mental health services to GICA campuses around the clock through a telehealth solution. VCG combines the highest quality clinicians with an advanced technology platform to promote high member satisfaction and participation. Board-certified physicians and licensed counselors support the needs of students, faculty, and staff at many colleges and universities throughout the country. VCG leads the industry in setting up telehealth operations within 24 hours, expanding campus health center resources and providing safe, affordable, private, and convenient healthcare. VCG was of vital importance in quickly expanding GICA institutions’ capacity to meet student health needs during the COVID pandemic.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

GICA maintains a robust calendar of professional development programs annually. These programs are offered to key campus groups to provide inexpensive, high-quality opportunities for professional growth and development. These educational opportunities are consistently listed as one of the most valued services offered by GICA. GICA institutions place a high value on these training programs and find them to be a cost-effective way for staff and faculty members to remain current in their fields of expertise. Additionally, the programs allow participants a forum to explore new solutions for issues that arise on all campuses. During 2020, GICA convened leaders from all 24 institutions, including chief academic officers, chief financial officers, chief enrollment officers, information technology directors, human resource directors, and chief student affairs officers to share best practices and innovative solutions for common challenges.
Keeping college accessible for students and their families is a priority for the 24 GICA institutions. GICA institutions provided $678.7M in institutional aid to students, and GICA awarded $625,000 in scholarship funding in 2020. With almost 40% of the first time, full-time students attending GICA institutions being eligible for the federal Pell grant, federal and state aid programs for students are a critical component for keeping college accessible for all Georgians.
I currently attend Brenau University where I study Accounting. In addition to being a student athlete, I work multiple part-time jobs including on campus leadership positions. This scholarship helps me balance my time and money for college.”

—Samantha Glover, ‘23

$678.7M of institutional aid awarded

$20,502 average aid per student

$625,000 in scholarship aid

40% of first time/full time undergraduates are eligible for the Pell Grant

$93.9M appropriated by Georgia General Assembly for Georgia students at private colleges and universities
Philanthropic Support

ENDOWMENT & TRUST FUNDING

We are also pleased to recognize the special endowment and trust funds which supporters have created over the years to benefit GICA’s member colleges and their students. In 2020, over $625,000 was returned to member institutions in the form of scholarship aid.

Bank of America
GICA Member Services Council
Julia and Lawrence Willet
Lucy Claire Harris
Marianne and I. Clayton Ramsey
Plantation Pipe Line Company
Reunette W. Harris
W.P. Stevens
William W. and Catherine M. Kelly
John and Emma Derst Foundation

GICA Honor Roll
Distinguished 2020 Investors

SPONSORS
($15,000-$24,999)

PACCAR, Inc.
28 years

Vulcan Materials Company
52 years

Warren Averett
6 years

ASSOCIATES
($5,000-$9,999)

Gertrude & William C. Wardlaw Fund, Inc.
56 years

J. W. & Ethel I. Woodruff Foundation
52 years
FRIENDS
($4,999 and under)

- ABM, 2 years
- Apogee, 5 years
- Ardeo, 1 year
- Arthur H. & Ernest B. Merry Foundation, 3 years
- B & D Industrial, 3 years
- Barron, Frank, 30 years
- Barron, Thomas W., 39 years
- Baxter, Susanna L., 10 years
- BB&T, 25 years
- Burd, John, 22 years
- Canon Solutions America, 4 years
- Campus, 1 year
- CapinCrouse, 3 years
- Carter, 14 years
- The Castle Group, 3 years
- Cherry Bekaert, 2 years
- Collegis Education, 3 years
- Colonial Foundation, Inc., 62 years
- Columns Fundraising, 3 year
- Colvin, Jenna, 1 year
- Conklin Metal Industries, 50 years
- Cornerstone Communications Group, Inc., 22 years
- Crawford Investment Counsel, 31 years
- Credo, 3 years
- Dock Sisk, 24 years
- Dykhouse, James, 27 years
- First American Education Finance, 3 years
- First Risk Advisors, 3 years
- Gilmer, Manly F., 11 years
- Harmon, Charlie, 2 years
- William & Audrine Honey Foundation, 60 years
- HRP Associates, Inc., 6 years
- IMA Financial Group, 1 year
- Jatcko, Juliet, 2 years
- Jenzabar, 2 years
- Juneau Construction Company, 9 years
- KI, 3 years
- Lee, Gary, 21 years
- Lilly Realty Associates, Inc., 24 years
- Lockstep Technology, 2 years
- Macke, Lisa 7 years
- Mauldin & Jenkins, 10 years
- McGraw Hill, 4 years
- McNeely Foundation, Inc., 57 years
- Merry Foundation, 50 years
- Metz Culinary Management, 4 years
- Milner, 1 year
- New Riverside Ochre Company, Inc., 57 years
- Paymerang, 2 years
- Pentegra, 2 years
- PNC Bank, 3 years
- RaiseMe, 1 year
- SageView, 7 years
- ScholarBuys, 8 years
- Seaman, RH, 63 years
- Shaheen Carpet Mills, Inc., 45 years
- Shurbutt, Keith H., 10 years
- Sizemore Group, 16 years
- Smith & Howard, 2 years
- Southwest Contract, 2 years
- Stevens & Wilkinson, Inc., 10 years
- Tarrant, Melissa, 1 year
- Taylor English, 1 year
- Tallo, 1 year
- TIAA, 6 years
- The Dixie Group Foundation, Inc., 55 years
- The William E. and Audrine C. Honey Foundation Inc., 59 years
- Thiele Kaolin Company, 62 years
- Vemo, 3 years
- The Virtual Care Group, 1 year
- Washington EMC, 52 years
- Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of Georgia Foundation, 45 years
- Ziegler, 1 year
GICA wishes to gratefully acknowledge the following companies that are members of the GICA Corporate Allies Program:

- ABM
- AIG
- BB&T
- Canon
- CAPINCRUDE
- CARTER
- ARDEC
- Campus
- CASTLE
- Cherry Bekaert
- Collegis
- First American
- Columns
- Cornerstone
- Crawford
Thank you to the following members for the use of their photographs: Agnes Scott College, Berry College, Brenau University, Mercer University, Oglethorpe University, Piedmont University, Truett McConnell University, and Young Harris College.