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Georgia Southern faculty, Information Technology Services team up to conduct solar research

APRIL 13, 2018

Save



Solar tracking equipment is mounted at Allen E. Paulson Stadium. Researchers at Georgia Southern use this to gather data on solar energy for the area.

South Georgia is known for its sweltering, sunny days. While residents may resent the heat now, researchers at Georgia Southern are trying to prove its benefit by determining the amount of potential solar energy available in the Statesboro area. Their findings could not only provide groundbreaking data for clean energy resources, but could also save local residents a lot of money.

Pioneering this research is Assistant Professor David Calamas, Ph.D., and Associate Professor Biswanath Samanta, Ph.D., who hope to determine the viability and cost effectiveness of using solar energy as an energy source in the region.

Calamas reached out to the University's Center for Sustainability in 2014 to promote his team's research idea and earned a \$31,424.75 grant funded by the University's student sustainability fees to cover the cost of the solar trackers needed to begin the experiment.

In 2016 Calamas and Samanta earned a \$97,795, two-year grant from Georgia Power Company to cover the other necessary equipment and instruments required for accurate data and measurement recording.

"We have been collecting data since 2015, and now we're just collecting more," said Calamas. "We essentially need to average out cloudy and rainy days. Just because it may have rained a lot this January doesn't mean that's historically true. We need enough data to know what an average day in January looks like, and that will take years to determine."

The amount of effort and research into this initiative is more than worth it, though, says Calamas. The goal of their research is twofold. For one, the team would like to determine the specific combination of equipment and measurements needed to record the most accurate data.

"We have different types of instruments to measure the different types of solar energy," he said. "The goal is to determine what types of measurements we need to make the most accurate prediction into the future. The farther into the future we can predict, the better that is for a power company."

For the last three years Calamas and his team have been able to record enough data to predict the sun's power source potential hours in advance.

"We're very accurate right now," said Calamas. "Currently, we can predict incident solar energy accurately four hours in advance. For example, if we can show a power company the predicted solar potential for a specific time, say around 5 p.m., when people are getting off work, the companies can offset some of the costs by switching to solar power during those times."

The second goal, Calamas says, is "pure scientific merit." The results from this research could bring a whole new wave of clean energy facilities to the south. Major companies throughout the nation are looking to this research to learn more about the clean energy potential of the area and to potentially host this data as well.

"There's not a lot of this data available in the U.S.," he said. "The closest solar research facility, I believe, is in Tennessee, and there are maybe 15 or so stations in the country. Essentially, there is very little to no local data on solar energy right here in south Georgia."

The data needed to make these predictions is extensive. Recordings of the sun's position are taken every single minute of every day, equating to more than 1,400 measurements daily. To store this massive amount of information, Calamas needed specific, high-end technology to report accurate findings.

Calamas teamed up with Brandon Kimmons, director of Computational Research Technical Support (CRTS) in the University's Division of Information Technology Services (ITS), to store this high quantity of data on a special server.

"By using our virtual server hosting solution, we were able to provide a reliable and secure way to access and store the data coming in from the Solar Tracker hardware," said Kimmons. "Once the data is logged and stored on the virtual server, it is then available for Calamas and Samanta to access for further analysis."

"Data is collected by the plethora of sensors that are on the device, then stored locally on the device for a short period of time," said Kimmons. "The data is then synced off to a server, and we're able to pull this data over the Georgia Southern network."

Kimmons has also helped to quantify the data, create charts and compute measurements.

It has taken more than just Calamas and Kimmons to make a project of this magnitude work. They have worked with various University departments throughout the entire process to make this research possible. CRTS assisted with managing the project and the relationships with the various groups to ensure a successful result.

"From a support perspective, it crossed a lot of different areas on campus," said Kimmons. "We've had physical plant guys to get the equipment mounted; we brought in our networking team to install network drops where it was mounted; Eagle Athletics let us mount it on the press box at Paulson Stadium.

"We were able to get a lot done because we worked together. We created a benefit for Georgia Southern that would not have existed otherwise."

Ron Stalnaker, Georgia Southern's Chief Information Officer, looks at this collaboration as indicative of the type of service that ITS provides to the University community.

"Our driving goal is to provide excellent service to our students, faculty and staff," Stalnaker said. "We really enjoy the opportunity to innovate and help create these types of solutions. I'm especially proud of the work that Brandon and his team did on this project and I expect more great things from them in the future."

CRTS is willing to help with other research projects and anyone who needs assistance collecting data or running computational simulations. Email [crtts@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:crts@georgiasouthern.edu) for more information.

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Georgia Southern University military veterans volunteer to maintain American flags on Statesboro Campus housing facilities

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Save

Georgia Southern University continues to recognize the members of the U.S. military and military veterans through a new initiative by University Housing. The American flag will be flown at all eight residence halls on the Statesboro Campus and in accordance with the U.S. Flag Code for the first time in University history. The initial flag raising ceremony will take place Tuesday, April 17, at 10 a.m. at University Villas, 1707 Chandler Road.

A volunteer team of military veterans within University Housing and ROTC students will carry out the U.S. Flag Code, which formalizes the act of flying the American flag and aims to show respect and tradition in a unified way across the country. According to the code, certain procedures must be followed to properly honor the patriotic symbol of the flag. The veteran team will train volunteers on flag etiquette and proper procedures.

The U.S. Flag Code will be carried out at each of the eight residence halls. The flags will never touch the ground and will be secured during inclement weather. When not in use, they will be folded in military form and be stored in a secured location.

"I have had the pleasure of working within the facility profession for more than 29 years now," said Michael Head, director of University Housing and Auxiliary Facilities. "Our current American Flag project here at Georgia Southern is my favorite of all projects with which I have been involved. Displaying our country's American flag at eight separate Housing complexes, while showing pride and respect for what these flags represent, is extremely motivating and patriotic.

"Just as exciting is the fact our department's military veterans and employees have volunteered to oversee this honorable flag management program," he continued. "I can think of no better way to educate our students and show pride toward our country and the freedoms and liberties we are provided, than to proudly display our American flag for all students, parents, staff and visitors to see while traveling to and from our University Housing complexes."

The veteran team includes:

- Hakim Finlaytor, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army National Guard
- Danny Woodard, U.S. Navy
- Brian Lang, U.S. Army
- Jared Holloway, U.S. Army
- Mackenzie Thomas, U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps
- Patrick Holland, U.S. Army, University Veteran Team Schedule Coordinator

- Cameron Jones, U.S. Air Force, University Veteran Team Flag Etiquette Coordinator
- Kenny West, U.S. Marine Corps
- Shakeia Salem, U.S. Army Reserve
- David Davis, U.S. Army
- Darrell Walling, U.S. Air Force
- James McCray, U.S. Army Reserve

An initial flag raising ceremony will be held on April 17 at 10 a.m. to honor the volunteers and all service members of the United States military. All military veterans will be recognized at the ceremony. The event is open to the public and will take place at University Villas (next to the pond), located at 1707 Chandler Road, on Georgia Southern's Statesboro Campus.

About Auxiliary Services

The division of Auxiliary Services is comprised of six different departments working together to provide the Georgia Southern University campus community with quality products and services. Auxiliary Services supports the strategic direction of the University and is committed to its advancement and success. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/auxiliary.

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Georgia Southern University Counseling Center earns re-accreditation

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The Counseling Center at Georgia Southern University Statesboro Campus has been re-accredited by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS), the accreditation association for university and college counseling centers.

The Counseling Center was evaluated by IACS to ensure that it is complying with the organization's professional standards, which are the highest standards available for campus counseling centers. The Georgia Southern Counseling Center was found to offer outstanding professional services to its clientele.

"We are proud to have maintained IACS accreditation for over 30 years," said Jodi Caldwell, Ph.D., a licensed psychologist and executive director of the Counseling Center for all Georgia Southern campuses. "Our fully accredited status attests to our commitment to providing the highest quality of mental health care, community education and professional training for our University community."

The Counseling Center provides free clinical services to Georgia Southern Students. It offers a range of confidential counseling services and programs including individual, group and couples therapy, crisis intervention resources, workshops and outreach programs. In addition, it serves as a training facility for graduate students in master's and doctoral level counseling and clinical psychology programs, and has a Doctoral Internship Program in Professional Health Psychology that is accredited by the American Psychological Association..

Georgia Southern's Counseling Center is one of six in Georgia that have achieved IACS accreditation.

IACS began in 1949 as a committee within the National Vocational Guidance Association. IACS was established as an association in 1972 to encourage and aid counseling services to meet high professional standards through peer evaluation and to inform the public about campus counseling services that are competent and reliable.

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Georgia Southern students earn Commitment to Advocacy Award for sexual assault awareness contributions

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The Georgia Southern University Sexual Assault Response Team (GSU-SART) recently co-awarded Kristen Baker and Gemma Skuraton, MPH, the 12th annual Commitment to Advocacy Award for 2017.

“The award is given to deserving members of the University community who have exhibited outstanding personal and professional contributions to promoting sexual assault awareness and education, as well as serving as an advocate for victims of sexual violence,” said Georgia Southern Counseling Center Executive Director Jodi K. Caldwell, Ph.D.

Baker, a senior sociology major, currently serves as president of the Sexual Assault Student Educators (GSU-SASE) and has demonstrated years of commitment to providing peer education to fellow students. She has assisted in planning and implementing sexual assault programming on the Statesboro Campus and has begun extending programming to the Armstrong Campus.

Skuraton is a “Double Eagle” (’12 and ’14) currently enrolled in Georgia Southern’s Doctorate of Public Health program. She is the Health Promotions Coordinator in Georgia Southern’s Health Services and a member of GSU-SART. Skuraton has demonstrated a commitment to advocacy by implementing and assessing sexual assault programming such as It’s On Us week and Denim Day, among others.

Both Baker and Skuraton serve as victims’ advocates at the Teal House Sexual Assault and Child Advocacy Center, a nonprofit organization in Statesboro that provides emotional support and advocacy for individuals who have been sexually assaulted.

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