

## Wolves Baseball & Softball Preview

Head coach Skip Fite begins his 10th season at the helm of the West Georgia baseball program this spring with a talent-loaded roster as the Wolves look to continue the success of the 2017 campaign. Fite enters the season with 13 returners who had a significant impact on the 32-18 record last year, including four-year starter Cade Marlowe (pictured).

The starting center fielder for the past two seasons, Marlowe comes into the season with a career batting average of .354 after hitting .366 as a junior last year, earning First Team All-Gulf South Conference honors. The Tifton native played with the Savannah Bananas over the summer, earning All-Star honors in the summer league after being named Mr. Wolf at the 2018 WESTPY awards as the year's top male athlete.

On the pitching staff, four starters return from last year's squad, with Greyson McLeod, Wes Bucher, Tyler Garner and Ryan Parker combining for 22 of the Wolves' 32 wins in 2017.

On the softball diamond, Al Thomas comes into his third season as the Wolves' head coach with a solid nucleus of starters returning from a young team in 2017. The Wolves won 25 games last season, led by freshman phenom Alley Taylor.

Taylor became just the second player in school history to hit .400 for a season, ending her first collegiate campaign with a .401 batting average. She had 12 doubles, five home runs, three triples and set the school record for stolen bases with 33 in earning All-Gulf South Conference honors.

On the pitching staff, Thomas returns his top starter in Katie Foote, who had 10 wins last season and led the team with 73 strikeouts. In addition, Thomas brought in junior college All-American pitcher Morgan Goree from Chipola Community College in Florida.



## UWG Events

Watch for monthly digital news from UWG and special printed editions for key events!

Discover more UWG events at [go.activecalendar.com/westga](http://go.activecalendar.com/westga).

## Head Back. Look Forward.

Reconnect with classmates, explore new developments on campus or introduce your family to the university that you love! Find out more about Alumni Weekend and register for events at [westga.edu/alumniweekend](http://westga.edu/alumniweekend).

**April 5**  
Alumni Take the Square

**April 6**  
Reunite West! The Big Event

**April 6**  
Alumni Awards Celebration



## STAY CONNECTED

### UPDATE US!

We want to stay connected with you. Share your success and see what other UWG alumni are doing. While you're there, please take a moment to update your information so we can stay in touch! Visit our online update form at [alumni.westga.edu/update](http://alumni.westga.edu/update).

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UWG University Communications & Marketing

# Forever West

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UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

## LEAP into Action

Crafton Named Senior Fellow at National Organization

For the University of West Georgia, every year is a LEAP year.

2019 will see the growth of LEAP West!, a UWG offshoot of a national higher education initiative called Liberal Education and America's Promise, or LEAP. This year's "giant LEAP" will provide enhanced opportunities for students to become further engaged in practices that will transform not only their educational journeys, but their future careers and lives.

Launched in 2005 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), LEAP emphasizes analysis, critical thinking, written and oral communication, personal responsibility, civic engagement and other skills that form a more rounded, engaged individual both in- and outside the workplace.

UWG's Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Micheal Crafton—who has spearheaded LEAP efforts not only at UWG but across Georgia—has been named a senior fellow in the organization by AAC&U.

"It is a great honor to be recognized for the work we've done to advocate for this initiative," Crafton said. "I remember going to a national gathering hosted by AAC&U and hearing about LEAP for the first time. I was hooked right away. The kinds of leaders and thinkers America needs to flourish are the people with this kind of education."

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Since that moment, Crafton has taken LEAP and its practices and promises on the road, serving as the chairman of the LEAP State Georgia steering committee. Georgia received formal LEAP State status in 2016, thanks in large part to Crafton's leadership.

"This is important work because so many people in our country have lost sight of the connection between a broad, liberal education and earning a living for themselves and their families," Crafton said. "Most jobs today require broad learning that incorporates all aspects of a liberal education, and even the individuals who hold more specific careers like engineering and accounting would find value in having the foundational knowledge of numerous subjects and skills we're promoting."

Those skills—including the ability to effectively communicate both in writing and orally; critical thinking and analytical reasoning; and the ability to work effectively both in teams and independently—are frequently identified by executives and hiring managers in American corporations for essential qualities most applicants lack.

One key aspect of the LEAP initiative is high-impact practices—a wide spectrum of practices and programs that range from study abroad opportunities to internships to engaging, small seminars in which faculty-student interaction can be maximized.

"Many students lack the resources to take advantage of these often life-changing opportunities not because of a lack of ability or interest but because of economic constraints or lack of confidence," Crafton said. "We're working to change that so that high-impact learning can be for everyone."

LEAP is thoughtfully designed to take on two sets of goals. One is Essential Learning Outcomes, which address the core skills required of students, such as writing or critical thinking.

"The No. 1 criticism we hear from employers is that their hires can't write," Crafton said. "Essential learning outcomes not only addresses written and oral communication, but factors such as civic knowledge, inquiry, analysis, ethical reasoning and action."

The other set of goals is called Principles of Excellence.

"These ask us to hold nothing but the highest expectation of our students and ourselves," Crafton said. "To achieve excellence and inclusiveness so we are working always on these issues of community, civic responsibility, equity and inclusion, as well as the highest forms of academic achievement."

The work of LEAP culminates in what's called a student's Signature Work—a project completed across a semester of study that challenges students to integrate and apply their learning. Signature Work can be pursued in a research project, a capstone experience or in service learning.

Crafton said he looks forward to seeing the continual progress LEAP West! has afforded the university since its launch a few years ago.

"If we continue this upward push we've been riding for the past several years, we could see an elevation of our educational programming we haven't seen in 30 years or more," he said. "I'm excited to see what 2019—and beyond—has in store for the opportunities we can create for our students."

## Report: UWG Contributes \$577 Million to Regional Economy

The University of West Georgia contributed \$577 million to the region's economy during the state's 2017 fiscal year, according to a report recently released by the University System of Georgia (USG).

UWG's economic impact has climbed 30 percent in the last six years. Sixty-four percent of this year's contribution came from direct expenses from the university, according to the study. The remaining \$207 million, or 36 percent of its contribution, came from investing those dollars in the region by UWG students, employees, vendors and other sources.

"We are proud of our role as one of the region's leading economic drivers," said UWG President Kyle Marrero. "Working together, we all ensure a healthy, growing economy while preparing future leaders and talented graduates who will serve their employers and community well."

UWG supported 5,788 full- and part-time jobs in the region, up 8.5 percent over the prior year's report. The study also tracked the university's spending for salaries and benefits; operating supplies and expenses; capital projects; and other budgeted expenditures.

UWG continues to receive accolades for its contribution to the region and the state. Named one of the Most Promising Places to Work in Student Affairs for the last five years by "Diverse: Issues in Higher Education" magazine, UWG's ability to attract talent to the region is also seen through its eight consecutive years of record enrollment.

Reaching 13,733 students this fall, UWG's consistent enrollment increase has contributed to the university's economic figure, according to Dr. William "Joey" Smith, chair of UWG's Department of Economics. More students mean more money spent locally and more jobs needed to support the increased enrollment, Smith said.

"The reason we continue to see growth in what we contribute to the local, regional and state economy correlates to the enrollment growth we've seen over the past decade," Smith said.

According to the economist, a large slice of UWG's contribution can be credited to its students.

"Their spending supported 2,830 of the 5,788 jobs," Smith said. "They buy locally from grocery stores, restaurants and other retailers and, by doing so, have become a driving force in economic development in our region. That gives our local economy the wherewithal to continue its growth in providing an array of services we've come to enjoy in West Georgia."

The University System of Georgia's 26 institutions generated a comprehensive impact of \$16.8 billion in fiscal year 2016, according to the study. The report further found that USG institutions generated a combined 163,754 full- and part-time jobs—3.7 percent of all non-farm jobs in Georgia. Approximately 31 percent of these positions are on-campus USG employees, and 69 percent are off-campus positions in either the private or public sectors.

"As we strive to graduate more students, keep college affordable and increase the efficiency in delivering education, it's important to keep in mind that higher education is an investment, and from these numbers, it's a smart one," USG Chancellor Steve Wrigley said. "Communities across our state and the state as a whole are benefiting from the economic engine that is the USG and its 26 institutions."

The annual report is produced by the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business and can be viewed online.

## UWG ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### Taylor Jordan

As a member of the national award-winning UWG cheerleading program, Taylor Jordan '18 has already conquered by land. Now she is navigating the high seas as part of the Cirque du Soleil troupe onboard the MSC Meraviglia.

"The UWG cheerleading program helped tremendously—I learned everything that I know about co-ed stunting," shared Jordan, who graduated with a degree in sport management. "The courses taught me about how companies like Cirque operate. It's pretty cool to see from the inside."

Along with the similarities come some differences.

"I was used to training all year for one or two big competitions, and now I perform twice a day. Every day is a highlight."

### Jennifer Schelp

UWG alumna and Carrollton Junior High School Spanish teacher Jennifer Schelp has no limitations for providing her students with the best educational experience possible. Schelp was recently nominated for the LifeChanger of the Year Award, a national award sponsored by the National Life Group Foundation.

She believes that learning a language is so much more than just learning words—it's also about why and how people use the words.

"Expressing myself—using certain words and how I say them—allows me to showcase my Hispanic culture with my students," Schelp shared. "That alone is a great cultural lesson."

### Chelsi Weaver

Chelsi Weaver leveraged a networking opportunity at the Southwire Internship Expo, hosted by the Richards College of Business, into an internship with the cable and wire manufacturer.

Now, she's graduated with a degree in business administration and hopes to work for Southwire full time.

"I really feel like that day, attending the expo, started my whole career," Weaver said. "Whether I remain with Southwire or move on to other opportunities, I know using my leadership skills in human resources is something I'd like to continue doing. I've enjoyed meeting so many new, different people and embracing each day's new challenges."

### Tammy Lee

Computer science major Tammy Lee recently placed third in competition at the Grace Hopper Celebration held in Orlando, Florida. The celebration, hosted by AnitaB.org, is the world's largest gathering of women technologists.

Prior to graduating in December, Lee already had a position secured with Honeywell International in Atlanta. She credits UWG's small class size and personalized attention from professors for her success.

"I never felt lost in a sea of students," Lee said. "Other schools are often more theoretical. West Georgia focuses on applied computer science, which is what I needed for the career I wanted."