



THOMAS HOEFER/DAILY NEWS

**LEFT:** University of Georgia-Griffin campus Assistant Provost Gerald Arkin, right, chats with Coordinator for Academic Programs Be-Atrice Cunningham. Arkin said the addition of new degree programs depends in part on the funds available to the local campus. **ABOVE:** The Student Learning Center at University of Georgia-Griffin, which officially opened about 19 months ago, provides students with state-of-the-art opportunities to achieve success.

Article follows

# UGA-Griffin hoping to add students in near future

By **THOMAS HOEFER**

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For the longest time, the Griffin campus of the University of Georgia was known exclusively for its outstanding research programs. Then, six years ago, it made two degree programs available to students for the first time — environmental resource science and agribusiness.

What happened over the next six years up until today can only be described as tremendous growth.

The UGA-Griffin campus currently offers students eight bachelor degree and two graduate programs, among them popular programs such as biological science and microbiology. Approximately 200 students attend the local campus on Experiment Street these days.

And yet, the current student population leaves room for more people to come to campus.

“Our enrollment is not what we’d like it to be,” said UGA-Griffin Assistant Provost Gerald Arkin.

At the same time, Arkin said, “we know these students otherwise wouldn’t have gone to (UGA’s main campus in) Athens.”

Halley Granitz, admissions counselor at the UGA-Griffin campus, said in an earlier interview with The Griffin Daily News that she is happy with the development on the local campus so far.

“I’m really proud of the strides we’ve made over the last years,” Granitz said.

However, she said she would be even happier to see 1,000 students attend UGA-Griffin in the near future, as the campus could accommodate 1,200 students without adding more facilities.

To what extent the UGA-Griffin campus continues to grow over the next five to 10 years will depend on a number of factors, officials believe, and one of them is the economy.

“The economic uncertainty is influencing student choices related to higher education,” said Laura Jolly, vice president of instruction at UGA in Athens.

“Programs will expand on the Griffin campus as we generate student demand for undergraduate and graduate programs. We plan to serve students from the local community and surrounding areas,” she said. “The uncertain economy may affect their ability to pursue higher education.”

Additional degree offerings and further growth will also depend on the money available to the local campus, said Arkin.

“Will the budget have an effect? Of course it will,” Arkin said. “A large portion of the university’s budget comes out of the state Legislature.”

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If future budgets allow for additional degree programs, they will likely focus on areas that have made the Griffin campus successful over the past six years, said Jolly, though adding that students would have the last word.

"There are opportunities to attract more students by focusing on areas of strength, such as the existing programs in agriculture, business, education, arts and sci-

ences as well as degree programs in family and consumer science," Jolly said.

"New programs will emerge based on student and state and regional needs."

Asked if some kind of student housing for the UGA-Griffin campus has been considered by UGA officials, Arkin said such conversations are premature, especially since the students currently enrolled at the local campus are fairly transient.

"People ask about student housing," he said.

However, "we just don't have the student body yet to make it a fiscally responsible undertaking."

While teaching has become an important factor at UGA-Griffin, it is only one of the campus's three missions — the two others being research and public service and outreach.

As for research, Arkin said efforts are being made to bring a Food Product Innovation and Commercialization Center to town, where food industry officials can collaborate with

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scientists to develop new foods, new food products and better packaging, among other tasks.

"Right now, we are trying to identify funds for a facility on campus," he said. "It's a big deal. We are working toward finding the appropriate funding to make this happen. You want to see the research grow with the instruction and the public outreach."

Jolly agrees.

"While the UGA-Griffin campus may be most well-known for its research in agricultur-

al and environmental sciences, it is gaining recognition for its focus on instructional programs," she said.

"The strength of the university is its three-pronged mission. It is exciting to see the addition of academic programs on the UGA-Griffin campus. This enhances the research mission and the mission of public service-outreach."

A good example of UGA-Griffin's community outreach is its Research and Education Garden on

Ellis Road, Arkin said. "Literally thousands of people come to that garden (each year)," he said.

Part of the public service mission of the UGA-Griffin campus is a pre-collegiate program on campus where high school students can take college-level courses to get a head start on their studies.

"It's just another example of how the UGA-Griffin campus engages students," Arkin said. "We expect the program to grow in the future."