

2025 Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award Portfolio

Nomination Packet for Associate Professor Shanika Wright Turner

School of Business and Professional Studies, Georgia Highlands College

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12/03/2024

Dear Regents' Teaching Excellence Awards Selection Committee:

On behalf of Georgia Highlands College (GHC), I am pleased to nominate Shanika Wright-Turner, Associate Professor of Business Administration, for the 2025 Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. This nomination is also strongly supported by the Dean's Office of the School of Business and Professional Studies and is further endorsed by her colleagues and students. Professor Turner's teaching, service, and mentorship exemplify a profound dedication to advancing student success at GHC and beyond.

Mrs. Wright-Turner's unwavering commitment to teaching and learning is evident in her innovative approaches to pedagogy and her development of programs that foster real-world engagement. As the creator of GHC's Entrepreneurship pathway, she has transformed the classroom into an incubator of ideas, guiding students through the practical application of business concepts. Her hands-on approach includes initiatives such as the Entrepreneur Speaker Series, which connects students with accomplished business leaders, and her BBA mock interview exercises, where students refine critical communication skills. These experiences not only build confidence but also equip students with tools to navigate the professional world successfully.

Her use of high-impact practices extends beyond traditional instruction. For example, she developed a mentorship program pairing students with experienced entrepreneurs, enabling them to gain invaluable insights and guidance. This program has been instrumental in launching multiple student-led businesses, including ventures like Ginny Bird, a thriving boutique founded by a GHC graduate. Through initiatives like these, Professor Turner ensures that her students leave the classroom with more than knowledge—they leave with experience and the confidence to achieve their goals.

Mrs. Wright-Turner's commitment to fostering academic success is most evident in her tireless mentorship and engagement with students outside the classroom. Whether organizing the GHC Charge into Leadership Conference or supporting students through one-on-one mentoring sessions, she consistently goes above and beyond to empower them. Her efforts have created a culture of encouragement and innovation at GHC, inspiring students to pursue ambitious goals.

Her impact is not only felt by her students but also by her colleagues. Professor Wright-Turner regularly shares her expertise through workshops and conferences, including the Online Learning Consortium and the USG Teaching and Learning Conference. Her contributions to faculty development, particularly in online learning and student engagement, underscore her collaborative spirit and dedication to advancing teaching practices across higher education.

Students consistently highlight the transformative impact of Professor Wright-Turner’s teaching and mentorship. Letters from former students describe her as a guiding light, someone who balances rigorous academic standards with personalized support. One student reflects on how her encouragement helped clarify their vision for their career, while another credits her with providing the confidence to launch their business successfully. These stories are a testament to her profound influence on the lives of those she teaches.

In service to GHC’s mission as an access institution, Professor Wright-Turner demonstrates the very best of what it means to be an educator. Her innovative teaching strategies, dedication to mentorship, and passion for student success embody the qualities celebrated by the Felton Jenkins, Jr. Hall of Fame Faculty Award. It is with great pride that I offer my strongest recommendation for her nomination.

Sarah Coakley

Sarah Coakley, Ph.D.
Provost & Chief Academic Officer
Georgia Highlands College
scoakley@highlands.edu

Shanika Wright Turner

Curriculum Vitae

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/shanikaturner>

Education

- MBA: MIS, Florida Institute of Technology-Melbourne - Melbourne, FL, Dec 2009
- Bachelor of Science: MIS, Alabama A & M University - Normal, AL, May 2007

Teaching Experience

- Associate Professor of Business Administration, Georgia Highlands College, Marietta, GA (Aug 2022-Present)
- Assistant Professor of Business Administration, Georgia Highlands College, Marietta, GA (Aug 2018 - July 2022)
- Adjunct Instructor, Georgia Highlands College, Marietta, GA (Aug 2017 - July 2018)
- Adjunct Professor/Instructional Designer, University of Illinois Springfield, Springfield, IL (Aug 2012 - May 2014)
- Adjunct Instructor, Robert Morris University, Springfield, IL (Aug 2012- May 2014)

Institutional and Community Service

- Co-Facilitator of Charge into Leadership Conference at GHC- Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024
- Doing RSI Without Burning Out- GHC Panelist Fall 2024
- Tenure and Promotion Workshop Speaker- GHC Spring 2024
- Academic Showcase Judge- Spring 2024
- Charger Innovation Challenge Committee Member- Spring 2022
- Online Welcome to Campus Orientation Presenter- Spring 2022
- High Impact Practices Implementation Team - Fall 2020 - Fall 2023
- In- Service Breakout Session Presenter- Fall 2021
- Launched the Entrepreneurship Mentorship Program- Fall 2021-Current
- BUSA 2700 -Face to Face/Web Based- Fall 2021
- A-Team Taskforce - Summer 2019 - Summer 2021
- Institutional Effectiveness Committee - Fall 2019 - Spring 2022
- BUSA 2105 - Web Based - Fall 2019
- TLAP Group, School of Business and Profession Studies - Fall 2020 - Spring 2023
- BUSA 2600 -Face to Face/Web Based- Fall 2020
- Entrepreneur Speaker Series/Podcast- Fall 2020- Current
- Momentum Tuesday Speaker Series, Fall 2020
- Psychology of Sustainability, Spring 2020
- Search Committee
 - Assistant Professor of Healthcare Management- Summer 2024
 - Assistant Professor of Logistics and Supply Chain Management- Summer 2024
 - Instructor of English- Summer 2023
 - Instructor of English- Summer 2023
 - Division Chair of School of Business and Professional Studies- Spring 2022
 - Assistant Professor of Healthcare Management- Spring 2019
- American Cancer Society, Relay for Life Team Captain, 2012- Current

Professional Development

- Passion-Powered Pedagogy, Propelling Students to Participates. (2024) Presentation at Online Learning Consortium Accelerate Conference and USG Teaching and Learning Conference.
- Using High Impact Practices While Creating Your Courses at Penn State- Presenter Spring 2024
- The Effects of High Impact Practices on Student Engagement: A Guide to Using Collaborative Assignments and Projects to Increase Student Persistence. (2022) Presentation at Online Learning Consortium Accelerate Conference and USG Teaching & Learning Conference,
- SBPS Business Mixer breakout Presenter- Spring 2024
- SBPS Business Mixer breakout Presenter- Fall 2023
- TiE Conference- Fall 2023
- Ledbetter College of Business Leadership Summit, Shorter College- Spring 2022
- USG High Impact Practices Course- Spring 2022
- Georgia Highlands College, High Impact Practices Course- Spring 2022
- 8 Week Course Design course for The School of Business & Professional Studies Faculty- Fall 2021
- AAC&U Institute on High-Impact Practices and Student Success- Virtual Learning, Summer 2021
- Faculty Learning Community- Hybrid Learning- Spring 2021
- Workshops
 - Effective Use of Zoom Breakout Rooms, CETL- Fall 2020
 - Colorism in the Latinx Community Workshop, School of Social Sciences and Education - FALL 2020
 - Assessing Learning with Creative Assignments, CETL- FALL 2020
 - Engaging Online Learners Through Synchronous Meetings, Office of Faculty Development- SU 2020
- Cengage Training- Fall 2020
- Western Europe Conference – April 2019, Clayton State University, Morrow, GA
- Faculty Academy – Fall 2018- Spring 2020
- Continuing Education- Summer 2019
 - Assessment by Design: A Comprehensive Overview Course, Johnson County Community College.

Honors and Awards

- GHC Impact Award- Fall 2024

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Reflecting on my teaching and learning philosophy, strategies, and objectives, I recognize that every aspect of my work is deeply rooted in a commitment to fostering connections, inspiring growth, and supporting lasting success for my students. My approach is built on empowering students to move from learning to action, whether it leads to launching their own businesses, excelling in their careers, or developing into impactful community leaders. My classroom is a place where students gain practical skills, see the relevance of their education, and discover confidence in their potential to achieve great things.

My journey as an educator began with a formative experience as a student. During my first college course, I felt isolated and unsure of my ability to succeed. I lacked a sense of connection to the course material and to my instructor, which underscored the importance of an active, supportive instructor presence in student success. Although I ultimately succeeded in the course, I recognized the gap left by the absence of meaningful guidance and interaction. This experience has shaped my approach to teaching and remains a touchstone in my commitment to creating a learning environment where students feel seen, valued, and encouraged. I aim to provide my students with the support and tools they need to feel capable, no matter their field of study or career path.

Central to this commitment is my effort to connect with my students in meaningful ways, providing real-world guidance and regular feedback on their progress. In my classes, I incorporate ongoing course check-up assignments, which give students a chance to share their thoughts on the course, voice any concerns, and reflect on their growth. These check-ups are essential for understanding each student's unique needs and experiences, and they offer students a safe space to communicate openly. I respond personally to each entry, often following up individually to ensure students feel understood and supported. Through these conversations, I foster a sense of belonging and a classroom culture where students feel connected to one another and to me.

My teaching philosophy extends to creating learning experiences that inspire action and build real-world connections. One example is the *Entrepreneur Speaker Series*, which I designed to bring successful entrepreneurs and business leaders into the classroom to share their personal stories. Speakers range from co-founders of well-known brands to creative leaders in various industries, each offering a unique perspective on the challenges and rewards of building a business. Through these talks, students gain a deeper understanding of entrepreneurship, hear firsthand about overcoming obstacles, and are encouraged to envision their own success. This series has a lasting impact on students, as evidenced by the number who have since opened their own businesses, using these insights as a foundation for their ventures. Student feedback consistently highlights how much these sessions increase their confidence and sense of possibility, making their entrepreneurial dreams feel achievable.

Another practice that directly prepares students for real-world success is the mock job application and interview process I conduct in my Business Communication course. I create a realistic job posting that aligns with roles students might pursue after graduation, and they are required to respond with a professional cover letter and resume. But the experience goes beyond written submissions—I conduct in-person interviews with each student, simulating the environment of a formal job interview. This immersive, hands-on exercise helps students develop professional communication skills, learn how to present their qualifications confidently, and receive individualized feedback on their approach. Students leave these mock interviews better prepared for the challenges of real interviews, often noting that the experience helped alleviate the anxiety surrounding the hiring process. This

approach ensures that students not only understand the principles of effective communication but also practice them in a supportive, growth-oriented setting.

Beyond the classroom, I co-facilitate the *Charge into Leadership Conference*, an annual event that brings together college students and community leaders. This conference provides a platform for students to engage in meaningful discussions, witness the impact of leadership, and consider their roles as future leaders and entrepreneurs. By interacting with established professionals and peers, students develop a stronger sense of their potential to make a difference in their communities and beyond. The conference has a transformative effect on participants, many of whom leave feeling more confident and prepared to apply their learning in ways that extend beyond academic achievement. Watching students grow into leaders at this event is one of the most rewarding parts of my role as an educator, as it reflects their readiness to make their mark in the world.

In my courses, I prioritize flexible and varied teaching strategies to meet the diverse learning styles of my students. I believe that a dynamic approach is essential for helping students fully engage with the material, so I incorporate various methods, such as instructional videos, case studies, and interactive projects. These methods enable students to interact with the content in ways that resonate with them, making learning an active and personalized experience. I aim to create a hands-on, practical environment where students feel they are preparing for real-world applications rather than simply completing assignments. By tailoring my approach to fit students' individual needs, I ensure that each student has the opportunity to thrive and develop skills that will serve them long after they complete my course.

At the heart of my teaching philosophy is a belief that education should be transformative. I am not content with students merely learning facts; my goal is for them to emerge from my classes feeling capable, inspired, and excited about their futures. I want them to see themselves as leaders and innovators, equipped with the tools to achieve their goals and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Whether they pursue business ownership, leadership roles, or other professional paths, I am committed to helping them recognize their potential and reach it.

The stories of former students who have gone on to open businesses, lead initiatives, or make a difference in their fields affirm my dedication to this mission. I am fortunate to guide students along their educational journey, and I am deeply invested in building a classroom environment that nurtures confidence, creativity, and resilience. My teaching philosophy is more than an approach; it is a promise to my students that, in my classroom, they will find the support, inspiration, and preparation they need to succeed.

Summary of Innovative Artifacts/Practices

At the heart of my teaching philosophy is a commitment to connecting students to real-world opportunities, inspiring them to envision their future success, and equipping them with practical skills for their careers. Each of my teaching practices emphasizes **“Preparing for Real-World Challenges through Practical Engagement”**—a theme that reflects my approach to ensuring students don't just learn business concepts but experience them. I aim to foster an environment where students see their potential, understand their place in the business world, and develop the confidence to pursue their dreams. The three teaching artifacts that embody this philosophy are the *Organizational Demonstration Videos*, the *Student Business Plans in BUSA 2700*, and *In-Person Mock Interviews*.

1. Organizational Demonstration Videos

Studies show that video learning fosters deeper engagement, increases motivation, and enhances students' ability to apply concepts in real-world scenarios. To extend learning beyond the classroom, I have developed a series of videos that connect course material to practical examples, sparking deeper conversations and reflections.

For instance, one video, created with my daughter, illustrates various types of organizational cultures. After watching, students participate in polls to identify the culture depicted, which often leads to meaningful discussions both in and outside of class. These interactions not only reinforce understanding but also allow students to connect abstract concepts to their career goals.

Another video humorously highlights contextual forces, demonstrating the inappropriateness of asking for a raise in a restroom. Through this relatable and memorable example, students critically assess professional behaviors and contextual appropriateness in the workplace.

The videos also emphasize the importance of tailoring communication. In one scenario, a supervisor drafts an email praising employees, showing how tone and wording impact message reception. Students often engage with me outside of class to discuss their interpretations, share personal experiences, and delve into how these scenarios relate to their career aspirations.

By using videos as tools for extended interaction, I ensure that learning continues beyond lectures, helping students connect concepts to real-world challenges and building meaningful connections between classroom learning and professional application.

Links to Videos:

Work Culture Part 1: <https://youtu.be/ldxX7j7hLs0>

Work Culture Part 2: <https://youtu.be/OwEgVlbDFNA>

Contextual Forces: <https://youtu.be/1yiwTNEsfek>

Audience Needs: <https://youtu.be/5a4sPSGT3jQ>

2. Student Business Plan (BUSA 2700 Small Business Ventures)

In this course, students develop comprehensive business plans, applying their knowledge to real-world scenarios in a step-by-step, immersive process. Weekly virtual check-ins provide opportunities for feedback and refinement, incorporating high-impact practices that emphasize collaboration and iterative learning. Each week, students add new sections to their business plans, covering everything from target markets to financial planning. Entrepreneurs are brought in via Zoom throughout the semester to provide real-time feedback, enhancing the practical relevance of the assignment. Additionally, students who work with mentors receive personalized advice on their business plans, giving them a unique advantage.

At the end of the semester, students present their business plans virtually to a panel of faculty and industry professionals. One student, for example, developed a plan for Bungalow Brew Hut (BBH), a coffee house designed to serve populated communities and college towns while supporting sustainability efforts for small-scale bean farmers. The business plan outlined BBH's goal to provide high-quality, unique beverages, foster community through events, and enhance the economies of smaller farming communities.

This student's plan not only impressed the panel but also led to her placing second in the Charger Innovation Challenge. After graduating from the Entrepreneurship Degree Program, she successfully opened her first business and is preparing to launch a second. She even returned to campus as a panelist for the Leadership Conference at Georgia Highlands College, demonstrating how this hands-on project prepared her for real-world success.



Through the creation and presentation of comprehensive business plans, students develop critical entrepreneurial skills such as market research, financial planning, strategic problem-solving, and persuasive communication. This assignment challenges them to think innovatively and apply classroom concepts to real-world business scenarios.

3. In-Person Mock Interviews

In my Business Communication course, I take career preparation a step further by requiring students to engage in a practical application of job-seeking skills. First, I create a realistic job posting tailored to a role they might pursue after graduation. Students then respond by submitting a cover letter and resume, just as they would in a real job application process. This exercise, however, doesn't end with a submission—each student undergoes an in-person mock interview with me, simulating the high-stakes environment of an actual job interview.

This immersive process is designed to equip students with invaluable experience, enabling them to refine their interviewing skills, improve their resumes, and receive constructive feedback on their cover letters. By conducting interviews in person, I help students practice the subtle aspects of professional communication: eye contact, body language, and self-confidence. This hands-on approach goes beyond theoretical knowledge; students often share that these interviews make them feel more prepared and confident for the real interviews they will face in their industries. Through this artifact, I aim to eliminate the intimidation factor of job interviews, turning what could be a daunting experience into an empowering one.

This exercise fosters:

Communication and Professionalism: Student's practice articulating their skills, experiences, and career goals effectively while also learning to navigate professional settings with confidence.

Industry Readiness: By interacting with tailored interview questions and scenarios, students gain insights into the expectations of their desired fields.

Key outcomes include:

Skill Mastery Metrics: Post-activity surveys show a significant increase in students' self-reported confidence and readiness for actual job interviews, with satisfaction scores averaging over 90%.

Career Success: Alumni feedback often highlights this experience as pivotal in securing employment, showcasing its relevance and effectiveness.

By combining entrepreneurial and professional skill-building, these activities empower students to succeed, whether they choose to launch their own ventures or pursue traditional career paths. The measurable success of these initiatives underscores their value as high-impact educational practices.

Building Bridges to Real-World Success

Through these practices—the BCOM Organizational Cultures Videos, the Student Business Plan in BUSA 2700 Small Business Ventures, and In-Person Mock Interviews—I aim to create a classroom environment that mirrors the complexities of the professional world. These artifacts reflect my belief that effective teaching goes beyond delivering knowledge; it empowers students to apply their learning, build confidence, and develop a vision for their future.

The success stories of my students—many of whom have launched their own businesses or achieved career milestones—affirm my commitment to making the classroom a transformative space. By providing practical tools, fostering real-world engagement, and cultivating a supportive learning environment, I help students not only prepare for challenges but also envision and achieve their dreams.

Student Letter of Support, Avery Pope

My name is Avery Pope, and I am writing this letter as a former student of Professor Shanika Wright Turner to express my enthusiastic support for her candidacy for this esteemed honor. Professor Turner has been a remarkable mentor and an inspiration not only to me but to countless classmates throughout her career.

I first became a student of Professor Turner in 2021, and from the outset, her dedication and innovative spirit stood out. She played a key role in designing and continually improving the entrepreneurship pathway at Georgia Highlands College. Thanks to this hands-on and forward-thinking program, I was able to earn my degree while launching my own business, an accomplishment that would not have been possible without her guidance and encouragement.

What I most admire about Professor Turner is her intentional and engaging approach to teaching. She fosters meaningful connections with her students, creating a dynamic classroom environment that goes far beyond traditional instruction. Her commitment to our growth is evident in the numerous opportunities she provides, such as organizing events and hosting podcasts where students can hear firsthand accounts from successful entrepreneurs.

Throughout my journey to open my store, Professor Turner was a constant source of support, offering invaluable mentorship and practical advice. Even two years later, she went out of her way to attend my store's grand opening and arranged for the opening to be advertised in the school paper. This act of genuine care and support exemplifies the passion and dedication she brings to her role every day.

Professor Turner's accomplishments and commitment to her students continue to inspire me. I wholeheartedly believe there is no one more deserving of this honor than her.

kind regards,
Avery Pope

Student Letter of Support, Demetris Smith

I am writing this letter to wholeheartedly support and congratulate Professor Wright Turner on her well-deserved nomination for an USG Award. It is truly an honor to share my experience as one of her students and express my deep appreciation for her guidance and mentorship.

Professor Wright Turner is more than just an exceptional teacher; she is a phenomenal mentor who has had a profound impact on my academic and personal growth. Her teaching style is not only engaging but also incredibly patient and understanding, making even the most complex concepts feel approachable. I came into her class uncertain about the direction I wanted to take in my business journey, but thanks to her, I was able to clarify my vision and align it with my desired lifestyle.

There were times when I felt completely lost and unsure of my next steps. In those moments, Professor Wright Turner was a beacon of support, helping me to rediscover my purpose and guiding me toward a clearer path. I can confidently say that without her wisdom and encouragement, I would not have the knowledge or confidence I have today to pursue my business goals.

I am truly grateful for her dedication to her students' success and her commitment to fostering an environment where we can explore our potential. Her nomination for this prestigious award is a testament to her remarkable impact on her students, and I could not be more thrilled to show my support.

Congratulations once again, Professor Wright Turner. Your passion, patience, and mentorship have made a lasting difference in my life, and I am honored to have had the opportunity to learn from you.

Sincerely,

Demetris Smith
AS-Entrepreneurship
BBA- Log & Sup Chain Mgmt

Evidence of Teaching Excellence

Fostering Student Success Beyond the Classroom

As the creator of the Entrepreneurship Associate Degree Program, one of my greatest joys is seeing students transform their classroom learning into tangible, real-world successes. Nothing exemplifies this more than the journey of Ms. Pope, a recent GHC graduate whose entrepreneurial spirit and dedication have led her to launch *Ginny Bird*, a thriving boutique in Dallas, GA. Throughout her time in the entrepreneurship program, Ms. Pope demonstrated the passion and drive that I aim to ignite in all my students. From her first business plan draft in *BUSA 2700 Small Business Ventures* to her final presentation, she consistently sought guidance and pushed herself to refine her ideas.

As her mentor, I provided her with constructive feedback, connected her with local resources, and encouraged her to dream big while keeping her plans practical.

After graduation, Ms. Pope didn't just stop at having a well-crafted business plan—she turned it into reality. The opening of *Ginny Bird* marked the culmination of her hard work, creativity, and determination. Today, the boutique is thriving, offering customers unique products and a warm, inviting shopping experience that reflects Ms. Pope's vision and values.

My involvement didn't end with Ms. Pope's graduation. I continue to mentor her as she navigates the complexities of running her business. Whether it's discussing inventory strategies, brainstorming marketing ideas, or simply being a sounding board for new initiatives, I am committed to supporting her success. This ongoing relationship not only underscores my dedication to my students but also reflects the essence of the program I built—one that prioritizes long-term growth and real-world application over mere theoretical knowledge.

Ms. Pope's journey is the best example of student success I could ever ask for as the creator of the Entrepreneurship Associate Degree Program. Her thriving business is not just a reflection of her hard work but also a testament to the transformative power of education when paired with mentorship, encouragement, and practical application.

My passion for teaching extends beyond the classroom walls. I strive to help my students see their potential and provide them with the tools to realize it—whether they're crafting their first business plan or managing their own enterprise years later. Supporting students like Ms. Pope and watching them flourish is not just my profession; it's my purpose. Through their successes, I am reminded of the profound impact that education, mentorship, and a shared belief in their dreams can have on shaping a brighter future.

Article of business opening: <https://sites.highlands.edu/ghctoday/2024/06/10/ghc-alum-grows-boutique-business-in-downtown-dallas/>

The real-world application at the heart of the entrepreneurship pathway I designed has delivered powerful, measurable results that speak to its effectiveness:

Business Launch Success: Over the past two years, more than five student-led businesses have been successfully launched as a direct result of this program. These businesses showcase students' ability to turn their ideas into viable, functioning enterprises.

Student Feedback: Reflections and evaluations indicate that students leave GHC with increased confidence in their ability to conceptualize, plan, and execute business ideas. Many express their gratitude for how the program has clarified the pathway to entrepreneurship.

Student Leadership Conference

In partnership with GHC's Student Engagement Department, I have proudly created and facilitated the "Charge into Leadership" conference for the past four years. This conference represents my unwavering commitment to teaching and learning by offering students a unique opportunity to engage with leadership concepts and experiences that connect directly to their personal, academic, and professional growth. The conference is designed to help students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and global perspectives, all while bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world application.

One of my primary goals with this conference is to empower students to see the connection between the work they do in their courses and the careers they aspire to pursue. Leadership is not just a topic; it is a skillset, a mindset, and

a pathway to lifelong success. This belief guides the structure of the event, from inviting keynote speakers who share inspiring leadership journeys, to curating panels and breakout sessions that equip students with practical tools and knowledge.

Each year, I organize and moderate an entrepreneurial leadership panel featuring business leaders, many of whom are national or regional influencers in their fields. This panel is a highlight for students, offering firsthand insights into the challenges and triumphs of entrepreneurship and leadership. Breakout sessions provide additional opportunities for students to learn from GHC faculty, nationally recognized entrepreneurs, and a Women in Leadership roundtable featuring GHC administrators. These sessions reflect my commitment to using effective teaching strategies by exposing students to diverse perspectives and fostering active engagement.

Planning and executing a conference of this scope requires a significant investment of time and effort, but it is a labor of love. I am involved in every detail, from identifying keynote speakers to coordinating breakout rooms and handling the intricacies of logistics. This effort reflects my deep dedication to fostering student success not just in the classroom, but also through meaningful interactions outside of it. These connections help students envision themselves as leaders in their fields, equipped with the tools to tackle complex problems and embrace global and multicultural understanding.

What makes this conference truly special is the feedback from students. They consistently express how the event has inspired and motivated them, opening their eyes to new possibilities for their future. Seeing students leave with renewed confidence and a clearer sense of direction is one of the most rewarding aspects of my work.

Below, I have included data on student attendance, testimonials highlighting the value of this conference, and recordings of the keynote presentations and panels. These materials showcase how this co-curricular activity has become a cornerstone for enhancing student learning and success at GHC.

Charge into Leadership Conference Data	
Year	Total Attendance
2021	81
2022	103
2023	113
2024	127

Charge into Leadership Conference-Student Feedback

- *One of the most memorable moments was hearing from a speaker/Owner of Renegade Lemonade, who emphasized not being afraid of hearing “no.” They spoke about how rejection is just part of the process and shouldn’t hold anyone back. This message truly connected with me because I often worry about setbacks. Their advice made me realize that facing challenges is what builds strength and resilience.*
- *The panel was my favorite part of the day and I wish I could sum up every comment that hit home with me from each speaker but I just cannot. Every single person up there answered your questions like they were talking directly to me. I teared up multiple times with this feeling of “wow, I am actually good enough for this path I am on and yes, it is scary but it’s the right thing to do”.*

- *My favorite part of the conference was the panel at the end. I was moved and inspired by all the women up there all with different backgrounds, diversity and career fields, including you Professor Turner.*

Past Presenters and Panels

2024 Keynote Alexander Reiter- <https://youtu.be/G97SKI5GHpQ>

Keynote Georgia Mitchell- <https://youtu.be/OdzfpnVJbYk>

Entrepreneur Speaker Panel- <https://youtu.be/1CWqVL9-Mwg>

Women in Leadership Panel- https://youtu.be/yL_rVYwOWPw

Entrepreneurship Speaker Series (ESS)

The Entrepreneur Speaker Series (ESS) is a unique initiative I developed to foster student success by creating opportunities for meaningful interactions with successful business owners and leaders. This series connects students directly with accomplished entrepreneurs, offering them the chance to ask questions, gain feedback on their own ventures, and build connections beyond the classroom. Through these interactions, students are able to see the real-world application of their studies, whether it's learning how to create their own ventures or understanding the risks involved in entrepreneurship. Speakers have included influential business leaders, such as the owner of the first Chick-fil-A in Brooklyn, New York, and Simba's singing voice from *The Lion King*. By exposing students to diverse success stories and industries, the ESS broadens their perspective on what is possible in their own entrepreneurial journeys.

Students also engage with the material by creating reflections on each speaker's presentation, helping them solidify their learning and connect it to their personal goals. Feedback from students highlights the impact of these sessions, with an average satisfaction rating of 4.8 out of 5. Over **548 students** have attended the series, and its influence continues to grow through shared recordings that have garnered over 1,200 views. Beyond the numbers, the ESS is a testament to my commitment to supporting students' academic and professional growth through intentional, high-impact interactions outside the traditional classroom setting.

Student feedback

- *I enjoy the set-up of these events and the speakers that are brought in. They always spark my interest about things I did not know I would be interested in.*
- *The thing I liked most about this event was the way the speakers spoke. They both spoke in a way that made it easy to follow and made the atmosphere comfortable even though it was online. This was an event that people who do not have any experience or much interest in entrepreneurship could be comfortable listening to and not feel out of place as well as follow with what was being talked about.*
- *I relate to the speaker as an actor and musically inclined entertainer and business person. Hearing he has worked with some big names and them making an impact to him in that moment, I felt all of it. He shared a very passionate experience. To us born entertainers things like that mean more than people will actually know.*
- *I liked Casandra's candid answers about her process towards entrepreneurship. It wasn't an overnight decision. Clearly, she planned out her departure from her normal day job and that made her risk taking more sensible. I respected that part of the discussion. It is frequently absent in the business world.*

Past Speakers

Matt Friedman | Wing Zone Founder, Entrepreneur, Professional Speaker and Coach- <https://youtu.be/FXc0nxQBq5o>

Dr. Dena Turner, D.C| Founder of The Chiro Place and Marcus T. Turner| Agency Owner, Entrepreneur
https://youtu.be/_adP9c0lpFw

H.A.N.K Music| Drummer, recording artist and NYLA XO| Songwriter- <https://youtu.be/tF57PKUwlgg>

Candace Walker | Director, Entrepreneur- https://youtu.be/AMT_P-6TVIs

Becky Gabany | Director of Community Health- <https://youtu.be/Wf3u440dNQo>

Cade Joiner | Entrepreneur, Board Member- <https://youtu.be/nemJS2bulkQ>

Jason Weaver | Actor, Singer- <https://youtu.be/l9Rb2-RqKMg>

Casandra Austin-McDonald | CEO, Speaker, Author- <https://youtu.be/KlTgOYjGuz4>

J. Carter | Writer, Entrepreneur, Creator- <https://youtu.be/c1PcJFgJYR8>

Carl Ulysses | Master Tailor, Entrepreneur- <https://youtu.be/TgGzkC9TAaY>

Pat Manna | Entrepreneur- <https://youtu.be/Y8h3grtQ4Ak>

Brandon Hurst | Brooklyn, NY, Chick-fil-A Owner- <https://youtu.be/srveJBQVCPM>

Entrepreneur Speaker Series				
Rating 1- Lowest 5- Highest				
	Rating	Attendance	YouTube Views	
<i>Matt Friedman</i>	5	44		160
<i>Dr. &Mr. Turner</i>	5	46		31
<i>HANK Music/Nyla XO</i>	4.7	37		47
<i>Candace Walker</i>	4.6	44		206
<i>Becky Gabany</i>	4.5	32		103
<i>Cade Joiner</i>	5	41		140
<i>Jason Weaver</i>	4.6	63		127
<i>Casandra McDonald</i>	5	34		38
<i>J. Carter</i>	4.8	42		68
<i>Carl Ulysses</i>	5	80		137
<i>Pat Manna</i>	5	40		79
<i>Brandon Hurst</i>	4.8	45		86
Total	4.83 (Avg)	548		1222

Entrepreneurship Mentorship Program

I created the Virtual Entrepreneurship Mentorship program and developed all materials to pair GHC students interested in the Online Entrepreneurship Pathway with volunteer mentors from around the world. The mentors may

be GHC alumni, entrepreneurs, investors, or professionals who advise entrepreneurs. As a participant in the program, students will be paired with a mentor who is an experienced changemaker. Mentors and mentees meet virtually at least once a month, and the mentors will guide the mentees through their mentorship journey.

For students, the mentorship program provides an opportunity to obtain "real-world" advice and feedback on startup business ideas or advice on how to launch a new venture. Budding entrepreneurs will also gain access to the correct variant of exposure, visibility, and talent that would further enhance their skills and improve their entrepreneurial awareness.

For mentors, the program provides an opportunity to meet and interact with innovative and passionate students, guide students in evaluating their ideas and concepts, and share stories of your successes with entrepreneurship classes and at events. The program currently has eight mentors and eight matched students.

Below you will find testimonies from a mentee and current mentors in the program.

Michelle Douglas (Mentee 2021-2023)

"The mentor program had an influential role in my Entrepreneurship journey. Professor Turner took the time to match our mentors to our specific businesses, needs, and financial guidance. My mentor encouraged me weekly and was always available for questions and advice on what to research to be prepared for any obstacles that may come up. The program helped keep me on track and accountable for reaching my goals for school and for my business."

Tara Spencer (Mentor 2021- Spring 2024)

The mentorship program Professor Shanika Wright-Turner curated has been a wonderful opportunity to experience a rewarding and potentially life-altering connection for both myself and my mentee.

Sharing keys to success and longevity, but also failures and personal experiences was an eye-opening process. Shanika did a wonderful job of matching me with an aspiring entrepreneur who could relate to my experience. We made an instant connection!

She also has done a phenomenal job of ensuring that the group of mentors remained engaged not only with their mentees, but with the program as a whole. There have been several opportunities for us to engage with students and offer guidance on the development of their projects and presentations. I'm honored to be connected to such a well-run program.

Brandon McCrimmon (Mentor 2021- Current)

The GHC Mentorship Program was an amazing experience! During my time, I was able to mentor someone on their path of entrepreneurship, which also helped me develop refreshing ideas within my own business. I'm excited to continue my journey in this program going into the fall season. Thank you for providing this great opportunity!

The Loop Podcast (2022- Current)

Building on the success of the Entrepreneur Speaker Series (ESS) at Georgia Highlands College, I launched a podcast, "The Loop", as another avenue to foster student success through meaningful engagement outside the classroom. "The Loop" provides students and the public with monthly episodes on topics such as business, entrepreneurship, and leadership, offering in-depth conversations that connect directly to the creation and management of various

ventures. Much like the ESS, this initiative aligns with the principles of High-Impact Practices (HIPs) and serves as a common intellectual experience that encourages students to connect academic theories with real-world applications.

Students are not just passive listeners—they actively engage by reflecting on each episode and articulating how it relates to their learning and personal goals. This reflection process deepens their understanding and enhances their ability to connect academic concepts with professional aspirations. One past guest was Chad Conley, an award-winning film composer making waves in the local film community with works featured at film festivals and on streaming platforms. Since its launch in 2022, “The Loop” has already accumulated over 300 downloads and views, demonstrating its growing impact. This podcast exemplifies my dedication to extending learning opportunities beyond the classroom, offering students accessible, engaging, and practical insights that support their academic and professional growth.

Spotify- <https://open.spotify.com/show/4SE0BRVmgWjibtlcxtosBb?si=ad76e99826114dd0>

Student reflections:

- *I greatly enjoyed listening to the podcast, The Loop, and the episode, Following Your Passion. I feel as a college student this podcast offered some great advice and insight into finding your passion and continuing to pursue it. I think what stuck out to me the most was when Professor Turner mentioned something along the lines of, people in your life help move you forward into your ‘place’. I 100% agree with that, I think we meet people in our lives for a reason and everyone in our life helps us in one way or another, whether we are learning from their advice, action, or mistakes.*
- *The thing that I found most touching and useful from this podcast that I could also improve on is gratitude. Mr. Conley speaks about taking a moment to look back and appreciate the progress made and enjoy the journey along the way.*
- *I feel like the episode was a very great episode to help me as an entrepreneur to keep going no matter the circumstances. As an entrepreneur, I feel that I have changed my hobby into a business.*

The Loop Episodes
"Turning Your Hobby into A Business"
"Following Your Passion"
"Employee Job Satisfaction"
"Self-Discipline"
"The Journey of Fulfilling Your Vision"
"Friendship Therapy"

Letter of Support from Joy Hambrick – Dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies

Dear Awards Committee Members,

It is my honor to recommend Shanika Turner for the Felton Jenkins, Jr, Hall of Fame Faculty Award. I can think of no candidate more deserving.

I have worked with Professor Turner for over five years now, first as a colleague, then as her Division Chair, and now as her dean. Having known her in all these roles and for this many years, I have had the opportunity to see her do many great things for GHC and our students.

The first of which I'd like to mention is her complete design and development of our Entrepreneurship pathway and program. She has devoted countless hours to providing a high impact experience for these students, including developing a mentorship program, a "shark tank" style pitch competition, and many others. She has built relationships with these students that extends after graduation, with several coming back to participate in these programs to mentor new students. There is not a class she teaches, whether it's entrepreneurship or general business courses, that is not conducted with excellence, and includes one or more high impact practices to enhance her students' education. She is the first one they call when they achieve their goals, whether it's opening their own business or landing that dream job, and she celebrates with each one of them.

Additionally, she has co-created the Charger Leadership Conference, currently in its 4th year, which brings keynote speakers, panel discussions, and breakout sessions to teach leadership skills to high school and college students. This conference has grown from around 60 students to over 125 and counting this year. Its reputation has grown to include many high schools and the local Chamber of Commerce promoting and bringing attendees. Both this and the Entrepreneurship program are legacies that will continue at GHC, and make Professor Turner unique among her peers.

While those accomplishments mentioned above are exemplary on their own, Professor Turner does not stop there. She is continually seeking to improve her teaching skills and pedagogy and while doing so, shares what she learns with her GHC colleagues and also others in Academia, having been invited to participate in numerous teaching conferences throughout the years including the Online Learning Consortium OLC Accelerate 2024 and the USG Teaching and Learning Conference. She is also regularly asked to participate in CETL workshops designed to help other faculty with their pedagogical improvement, especially in the areas of RSI and Online learning.

In summation, while I'm sure there are other outstanding candidates for this award, there are none who have the dedication to student success and care as much about their students as Shanika Turner. Every decision she makes takes their future into account, and makes sure she provides them with the skills to solve problems, think critically, and succeed in whatever they choose to pursue. She is there for them during their journey, celebrates with them when they reach their goals, and they all call her their friend. I am grateful to have the opportunity to count her among my faculty, and look forward to seeing what future ideas she has, and how our students (and other faculty!), benefit from it.

Best Regards,



Dean, School of Business & Professional Studies