

# TU Insider August 2020

Important information for students about what's happening at Thomas University

## Nursing honor society donates to TPD

During spring semester 2020, Thomas University's Phi Tau Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society in Nursing held a stuffed animal toy drive to benefit the Thomasville Police Department. Even though the community service project was cut short by COVID-19, Phi Tau members collected more than 75 stuffed animals. On Wednesday, Aug. 5, honor society representatives presented the stuffed animals to the Thomasville Police Department. Officers will keep the toys in police vehicles and given them to children for support and comfort whenever children are involved in a stressful situation, such as victimization or a tragedy. Participating in the presentation inside Smith-Bonvillian Hall on TU's Forbes Campus are (from left) Officer G. McCoy of the Thomasville Police Department; Dr.



Kim Cribb, Chair of the Division of Health & Science; Judy Hornsby, Administrative Assistant for the

Division of Health & Science; and Dr. Theresa Coker, Assistant Professor of Nursing.

## Social Work degree now also available online

Beginning fall semester, Social Work majors will have the option of earning their degree in-person or completely online.

“Offering the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program online provides the opportunity for persons who cannot physically attend classes on campus to achieve their goal of completing their college degree and becoming a professional social worker,” said Dr. Debra Gresham, Program Director for Social Work. “Social Work faculty will continue to utilize existing and new online technologies to deliver a high-quality education to our students.”

TU's Social Work program has a low student-to-faculty ratio and a flexible class schedule to meet the needs of full-time students and full-time professionals. Now Social Work majors can choose from the on-campus program or the online program.



**Dr. Debra Gresham**

Work Education-accredited institution such as Thomas University.”

“Persons entering the social work profession usually have an enjoyment of working with people, a strong and sincere interest in helping these people and an interest in improving the community,” Gresham said. “Professional Social Workers adhere to ethical standards listed in the National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics. Most importantly, professional social workers possess the BSW or MSW degree from a Council on Social

**SOCIAL WORK** continued on page 5.

# The new TU Library & Learning Commons

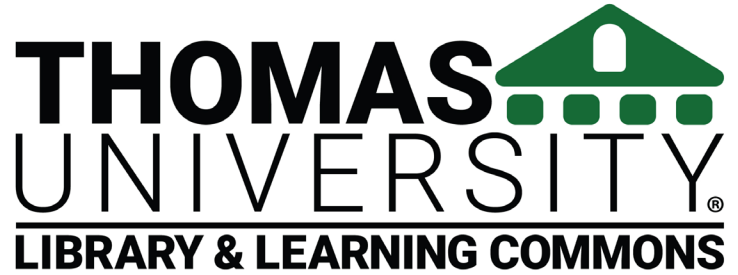
Thomas University Library is changing its look and its name beginning fall semester.

Now known as the Thomas University Library & Learning Commons, this will be a resource for students conducting research, receiving tutoring and using library resources.

"We wanted to change the name to reflect all the many different services that we offer," said Tara Hagan, Director of the LLC. "We are available to help students both online and in-person with the services they need to be successful in their classes."

Library resources are now embedded in the tutoring experience thanks to tutors who are extensively trained in how to use these resources, which are both printed and electronic publications.

At the LLC, undergraduate and graduate students can receive help in specific subjects from peer tutors by appointment or during drop-in hours. During finals, the LLC will conduct group tutoring session on a variety of subjects. These sessions are designed to answer questions for specific courses. Students can also obtain writing support for help with questions related to grammar, citations, research paper structure and the writing process. This writing support is provided using the LLC's Ask-a-Tutor chat feature online or through one-on-one tutoring using Zoom. While tutors will not edit



## Important links

**Make an appointment with a tutor:**  
[thomasu.libcal.com/appointments/tutoring](http://thomasu.libcal.com/appointments/tutoring)

**Make an appointment for research help:**  
[thomasu.libcal.com/appointments/students](http://thomasu.libcal.com/appointments/students)

**August Virtual Display**  
**National Black Business Month:**  
[libguides.thomasu.edu/LibDisplays](http://libguides.thomasu.edu/LibDisplays)

or proofread a student's paper, they will guide students through the revision and proofreading process.

For more information about the LLC, visit [thomasu.edu/student-life/library/](http://thomasu.edu/student-life/library/) or email [tulibrary@thomasu.edu](mailto:tulibrary@thomasu.edu).

## Georgia Council for the Arts awards partner grant to ACTU

The Georgia Council for the Arts recently awarded Arts for the Community at Thomas University (ACTU) a Partner Grant as part of its initial disbursement of grants for fiscal year 2021.

"This grant will enable ACTU to increase and diversify our audiences for the Friday at Noon and Sundays at Four concert series," stated Dr. Karl Barton, ACTU series coordinator and Thomas University Professor of Music. "Our outreach will continue to expand with new venues. Our recent programs via live streaming and rebroadcasting on CNS will continue throughout the pandemic and into the future."

Throughout the state, 148 organizations were collectively awarded more than \$1 million in funding for operating support (Partner Grant), arts projects (Project Grant)

*"Our recent programs via live streaming and rebroadcasting on CNS will continue throughout the pandemic and into the future."*

– Dr. Karl Barton

or an Arts Education Program Grant. Additional grants in the Vibrant Communities and Cultural Facilities program areas will be awarded in the fall of 2020.

"This initial round of funding awarded by Georgia Council for the Arts serves to support the critical work arts organizations and artists are doing in communities to foster connectivity, rekindle joy, and support lifelong learning during these dynamic times," said GCA Executive Director Karen Paty. "Knowing the challenges faced by our colleagues across the state due to the impact of COVID-19,

it was particularly hard to not be able to fund all deserving applicants. The applications we reviewed provided evidence of continued exceptional arts programs in support of education, community development and economic development offered by arts organizations throughout the state. The staff and Board of GCA celebrate that work in all 159 counties, whether or not we are financially able to support it through these grant programs."

Part of the division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Council for the Arts uses Peer Review Panels to judge and review applications following standard practices set by the National Endowment for the Arts. Panelists are GCA Council members

**GRANT** continued on page 5.

## Rines named head men's basketball coach

Thomas University officials recently named Taylor (T.J.) Rines as its new men's basketball head coach. A native of Clio, Georgia, Rines is a TU alumnus and a former member of the Night Hawks Men's Basketball Team.

"T.J. Rines will be a great fit as our new Head Coach for the Men's Basketball Team," Rick Pearce, TU Athletics Director, said. "Not only does he have outstanding coaching skills, but T.J. also has a heart for Thomas University and our basketball program. Our players will learn a great deal from him, both on and off the court."

Rines' interest in basketball began when his parents introduced him to the sport as a toddler. He began his collegiate career at South Georgia State College before earning a scholarship to Thomas University.

In his first year as a Night Hawk, Rines helped the team become nationally ranked as high as 15th and helped the team reach the final four of the Sun Conference his senior year.

"I chose TU as a student because of the family atmosphere," Rines said. "From the faculty and staff to the students, everyone was genuinely nice from the day I



**T.J. Rines**

stepped foot on campus. They really cared about me, not only as a student, but as a human being. I am extremely grateful and humbled for this opportunity that God and Coach Pearce presented to me to teach the game where I call home."

After graduating in 2017 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration, Rines served two years as a graduate assistant with the Night Hawks Men's Basketball Team under previous Head Coach Brent Crews. During that time he helped graduate nine seniors and train four all-conference players. Rines then served as an assistant coach at Reinhardt University in 2019-20, where he graduated three seniors and coached Co-Freshman of the Year for the Appalachian Athletic Conference.

By returning to TU, Rines said he wants to help Night Hawks during their time at TU and beyond.

"I hope to be a mentor to these student-athletes not only from a basketball standpoint, but from a point to help them jumpstart their careers after they graduate from TU," Rines said. "My family and mentors have always preached about helping people change their lives. Now I get to help these young men become better sons, brothers and overall better people. Being able to do that alone is a blessing by itself."

## Jeffery named new head JV men's soccer coach

Billy Jeffery recently took the helm as head coach for the Thomas University men's junior varsity (JV) soccer team. Jeffery is a TU alumnus and a former member of the Night Hawks soccer team. In his new role, Jeffery will also serve as an assistant coach for the varsity men's soccer team.

"Billy has been a great member of the Night Hawks family," said Rick Pearce, TU's Athletics Director. "I know his enthusiasm for soccer and for TU will encourage every student-athlete he works with."

Originally from Tring, England, Jeffery grew up in a family of soccer fans (or football as it's known in England). He moved to the United States in 2014 to attend Thomas University, where he played on the varsity men's soccer team for four years.



**Billy Jeffery**

"When going through the process, TU jumped out at me because of the way the process was handled, and how friendly and helpful the coaching staff and faculty members were. It was just a great feel and fit for me."

During Jeffery's time as a student-athlete, the team won the Sun Conference tournament in 2014 and was the regular season champion in 2016. The Night Hawks also made TU's first national tournament appearances in 2014 and 2016. The Sun Conference named Jeffery Defensive Player of the Week in September 2016. He went on to

serve as team captain in 2017.

Jeffery graduated from TU in 2018 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in biology and minors in sports studies and chemistry. Then he served as a graduate assistant for the men's soccer teams in 2018 and 2019. Jeffery graduated from TU in 2020 with a Master of Business Administration Degree.

"Having been here for so many years as a student, as a player, as a graduate assistant and now as head JV and assistant coach, I believe that I have learned so much from so many different people at TU and in the community where I have grown up throughout the start of my adult life," Jeffery said. "I want the student-athletes to be successful in all aspects of their lives – while they are here on campus and when they leave TU to start their lives."

# Parker named head athletic trainer at TU

Thomas University officials recently named Daniel Parker as its head athletic trainer. Parker was previously assistant athletic trainer since the fall of 2012.

“Daniel has been an incredible asset to TU Athletics for several years,” Rick Pearce, Athletics Director, said. “In this new position, he’ll do a great job leading the effort to make sure our student-athletes are in top shape.”

Athletic training at TU is designed to prevent injuries, evaluate student-athletes who may have suffered an injury, and offer aid. TU’s Athletic Training Room, located inside the Student Life Center on the Magnolia Campus, is a 1,600 square-foot facility equipped with observation tables, first aid supplies, rehabilitation equipment, and an 800-square foot cold whirlpool room.

A native of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, Parker earned an Associate of Arts Degree from Okaloosa Walton College, a Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training from Florida State University, and a Master of Education in Higher Education Leadership from Valdosta State University.

During his undergraduate years, Parker served as a student athletic



**Daniel Parker**

trainer at Florida State University. He worked with the football team (2007-2008), baseball team (2008-2009), and men’s and women’s track and field program (Fall 2009).

Prior to joining Thomas University, Parker served as a graduate assistant at Valdosta State from August 2010 to May 2012. Parker split his time between the Blazers’ football, women’s basketball and cheerleading programs.

“During my interview at TU, I felt at home,” Parker said. “TU has provided an opportunity to be a part of a growing athletic department, have an impact on that growth, and create a sense of pride for the university.”

During his tenure at Thomas University, Parker helped establish TU as a clinical site for Valdosta State University’s Athletic Training Education Program. In his role as the Clinical Education Coordinator in this program, Parker coordinated the weekly schedules, skill assessments, and evaluations of the VSU staff

while providing instruction and direction to students in their clinical practices.

“It means a great deal to be named head athletic trainer at Thomas University,” Parker said. “This felt like an acknowledgment of the dedication through the years to providing the best possible care for our student-athletes. For me this is a reminder of the journey as well as the athletes, coaches and colleagues along the way that have helped me reach this position. Fostering positive relationships will remain the goal and to continue providing more than medical coverage to our student-athletes. TU has grown into my extended family and provided a second place to call home. TU is a place I take pride in.”

Parker is a member of the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA), Southeastern Athletic Training Association (SEATA) and Georgia Athletic Training Association (GATA). He is licensed by the Georgia Board of Athletics Trainers and is certified by the NATA and the Board of Certification for the Athletic Trainer. At TU Parker also teaches courses in sports management as well as coaching theories and methods.

## TU cancels fall sports due to COVID-19 pandemic

Thomas University, which competes in the Sun Conference in the NAIA, will not participate in fall sports due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For TU those sports include men’s and women’s soccer and cross country.

“We decided out of an abundance of caution that it was not in the best interest of our student athletes to compete in sports at this time,” said Rick Pearce, TU’s Athletics Director. “The health and safety of our student athletes is what’s most important.”

All TU fall sports athletes who choose to live in one of TU’s three

residence halls moved in on Aug. 1 and then quarantined for two weeks. No guests are allowed in any on-campus housing. Those student-athletes who do live on campus or in the area will begin training after the quarantine ends. Students not involved in fall athletic teams will move in on Aug. 15.

“Even though they may not be competing, we want to make sure they stay in shape and are ready when competition does resume,” Pearce said. “Any student athlete on scholarship will still receive that scholarship as long as they are still

enrolled as students at TU.”

Classes begin on Aug. 17. University administrators decided in June that all classes – except for a few classes that require hands-on instruction, such as labs – will be held in a synchronous online format. In situations where hands-on instruction is required, students and faculty will be socially distanced and wear gloves and masks. Ten or fewer students will be enrolled in those classes.

Additional information about TU’s reopening plan is available at [thomasu.edu/coronavirus-covid-19](https://thomasu.edu/coronavirus-covid-19).

## MLS alum Wilson enrolls at FSU College of Medicine

Jodi Wilson of Thomasville, who graduated summa cum laude from Thomas University in 2018 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Medical Laboratory Science, is now a student at the Florida State University College of Medicine.



**Jodi Wilson**

Wilson worked at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital in Microbiology for four years during college and then in the laboratory at the Northeast Emergency Center. She also volunteered Big Bend Hospice and in Internal Medicine at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital.

"I loved being with the patients and felt fulfilled when I was helping others," Wilson wrote in her biography on the FSU website. "I want to value my patients like my mentors had and be the person in my community that people can trust with the most vulnerable parts of their life."

Now Wilson is on track to become a physician.

## TU alum Lopes named new softball coach at Mosely High School

Katie Lopes of Lynn Haven, Florida, who graduated cum laude from Thomas University in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, was recently named the new softball coach at Mosley High School in Lynn Haven. She is also a 2014 graduate of Mosely High School.

As a Night Hawk, Lopes was on the team that won the Sun Conference Championship in 2018. In 2016 and 2015, the Sun Conference named her a Pitcher of the Week. She was also named to the Sun Conference's



**Katie Lopes**

League and an assistant softball coach with Arnold High School in Panama City Beach.

Softball All-Conference team and to the All-Academic Team during her time at TU.

Lopes was previously the 12U Head Softball Coach for the Florida

### GRANT continued from page 2.

and fellow professionals who are experienced in the arts discipline or type of grant being reviewed, or are citizens with a record of arts activities, experience and knowledge. Grant recipients include theaters, dance companies, museums, cities, colleges and multi-discipline arts entities.

Funds awarded by Georgia Council for the Arts include appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. ACTU will also use its grant for outreach programs.

"Our continued growth is truly thanks to the Georgia Council for the Arts," Barton continued. "We plan to expand youth educational outreach by having all Friday at Noon artists conduct clinics for area youth at the local, public high schools in the coming year."

The ACTU Advisory Board includes M. Nicole Davis, Artistic Director and Conductor of Thomasville Singers since 2015; Chelsea White, former Coordinator of Community Engagement at TU and currently with Southeast Asset Advisors; Rick Ivey, Thomasville Entertainment Foundation Executive and Artistic Director; Mary Kathryn Sibley, Thomasville Entertainment Foundation Vice President of Hospitality, Production and Past President; Ann Larson, Thomasville Entertainment Foundation Vice President, Chair of Box Office and Former Chair of Education Committee, retired teacher; and JaMarcus Underwood, Jack Hadley Black History Museum Education Coordinator.

### SOCIAL WORK continued from page 1.

TU's Social Work Program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, which is considered the "gold standard." This accreditation also provides an option for BSW graduates to complete the Master of Social Work degree in one year instead of two years.

For those who hold an associate degree from another school, the Bachelor of Social Work degree at TU could be completed in as little as four semesters as a full-time student. TU also has articulation agreements with several colleges in the region so that students transferring to

TU with an associate degree in Social Work will not lose credits.

"According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for professional social workers is forecasted to increase at least 11 percent, which is much faster than the national average, in the next 10 years with a median annual salary of \$50,470," Gresham said. "Now is the time for students to enter our program, complete the BSW degree and embark on a rewarding career as a professional social worker."