Memorandum of Understanding

Georgia Southern University
Georgia Southern University Museum

The Georgia Southern University Museum has been an integral part of Georgia Southern University since it opened to the public in 1982. The University's involvement in the collection of natural and cultural history artifacts began in the 1920s, when the school was organized as the Georgia Normal School. Known as the Anderson Memorial Museum, it included shells, bones, and an eclectic assortment of artifacts. Later the library and individual departments exhibited objects and in the late 1970s, the Geology Department's collections were displayed in the Herty Building and were called the Herty Museum.

However, the primary impetus to form the current Georgia Southern Museum was the acquisition of a Mosasaur fossil skeleton by the geology department in the late 1970s. Due to the importance of Dr. Bishop's discovery, the college organized an interdisciplinary committee of faculty and staff to initiate discussions, planning, and collections activities for the development of a formal museum. In 1980 the administration determined that a portion of the Rosenwald building, which formerly held the library, would house the Georgia Southern Museum. Paleontologist Dr. Gale Bishop was named as the first part-time director. On January 31, 1982 the museum officially opened its doors to the public with a dedication ceremony a dedication address by Dr. Craig Black, Director of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and then President of the American Association of Museums. Its opening signified the institution's commitment to strengthen and expand its service to the region. In November of 1982 Dr. Del Presley began his tenure as the first full-time administrative director.

The Georgia Southern University Museum exists to foster and support life-long learning and engaged citizenship in southeast Georgia. The museum will support the University's mission of teaching, research and service specifically through collections, exhibits and educational outreach. The vision of the Georgia Southern University Museum is to be the premier institution interpreting the natural and cultural history of the southeastern coastal plain. As "The Museum of the Coastal Plain," the museum will develop facilities to support collections, exhibits and programming of national stature. The museum will meet or exceed national standards of management, sustained through continuous professional development of a highly qualified staff.

The Georgia Southern University Museum is an operational unit of the University's Division of Continuing Education and Public Service and receives support from the University's general fund for its operations. The Museum exists as a permanent depository for objects pertaining to the mission of the Museum. Georgia Southern University recognizes the educational and outreach value of its collections and their care and of the exhibitions and programs through which they are presented to the University and the public. In recognition of this invaluable learning resource, the University expresses its commitment to the continuation of its museum and agrees that the museum shall be considered an integral and permanent part of Georgia Southern University. The University agrees to continue to make available the resources necessary for the Museum's operation to the extent permitted by the University's financial resources. The University agrees to protect the Museum's tangible and intangible assets held in public trust.

The University is committed to following American Association of Museums and museum field standards with regard to managing the Museum's collections, their collection, acceptance, and possible deaccession. In regard to the latter, Georgia Southern University recognizes that the Museum's collections are essential to the Museum and the University's missions and will not consider the Museum's collections as disposable assets.

Dr. Brooks Keel, President Georgia Southern University Date

Dr. Brent Tharp, Director, Georgia Southern University Museum

Georgia Southern University

Date

Approved as to Form
Georgia Southern University
Office of Legal Affairs

Office of Legal Affairs