

HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE

Since 1970, Georgia Highlands College (GHC) has served the Northwest Georgia community with a solid educational foundation of two year degree options and is steadily growing to include four-year degree options. Originally founded as Floyd Junior College, GHC is now an access-mission state college of the University System of Georgia (USG) and serves students throughout Georgia.

In 1968, the Board of Regents of the University System authorized the establishment of Floyd Junior College in Floyd County. Under the board's policy, the local community provided a campus site and funds for the construction of the initial facilities. Led by the Junior College Committee headed by Rome attorney J.D. Maddox, Floyd County citizens responded enthusiastically by approving a \$3.2 million bond issue by a margin of nearly three to one. Construction began in early 1970. The College's first classes were offered during the fall quarter of 1970 in temporary facilities. At the end of 1970, all operations were moved to the new campus on Highway 27 (Cedartown Highway), six miles south of Rome.

Dr. David B. McCorkle became the first president of Floyd Junior College on January 1, 1970 and served in that position until June 30, 1991. Following Dr. McCorkle's retirement, Dr. Richard Trimble was appointed Interim president of Floyd College and served until the November 1992 selection of Dr. H. Lynn Cundiff as the College's second president. Dr. Cundiff left the College in August 2000. During the 2001 academic year, Robert Watts served as interim president. The Board of Regents named Dr. J. Randolph Pierce the third president of Floyd College on June 15, 2001. Dr. Pierce retired in December 2011. Dr. Renva Watterson, vice president of academic affairs, served as interim president until September 2014. The Board of Regents named Dr. Donald Green the fourth president of GHC and he served from September 8, 2014 until July 2021. Dr. Dana Nichols, provost and chief academic officer served as interim president until June 2022. The University System of Georgia Board of Regents named Dr. Mike Hobbs the fifth president of GHC effective July 1, 2022.

Now enrolling students in baccalaureate, career associate, and transfer associate degree programs, Georgia Highlands College operates locations in Rome, Cartersville, Marietta, Dallas, and online. GHC has also pioneered cooperative programs with Coosa Valley Technical College (now Georgia Northwestern Technical College) as early as 1972 and offered joint programs with North Metro Technical College (now Chattahoochee Technical College). Several years ago, the College expanded its flagship nursing program by adding a cohort of 25 students in Marietta, helping to ease the nursing shortage in Northwest Georgia.

The College became a state college in 2011, and in fall 2013 accepted its first cohort of nursing students working toward a baccalaureate degree. In the summer of 2015, GHC began offering a fully online Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Hygiene. In fall 2017, GHC began offering a Bachelor of Business Administration in Logistics and Supply Chain Management and Healthcare Management. To continue to meet the demand for career-focused bachelor's degrees across the regions, GHC began offering an eMajor Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice in spring 2019, a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences in 2020, a Bachelor of Science in Building Information Modeling Management in 2022, and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental and Natural Resources in 2023.

In recent years, Georgia Highlands has become more innovative with its outreach and programming, offering more to meet the needs of its

diverse student population, and initiating programs that serve as models for colleges across the country.

In 1994, the College opened Heritage Hall in downtown Rome to be more accessible to non-traditional working students. Today, Heritage Hall is home to the Atrium Health Floyd School of Health Sciences and holds nursing and dental hygiene classes at this location.

In 1999, construction was completed on a new classroom building on the campus in Rome. In addition to classrooms, the Lakeview Building features an art lab, an art gallery, and an exhibit hall. The Floyd campus student center and Walraven building have also recently undergone extensive renovations and upgrades.

As fall semester 2005 was beginning, the College changed its name from Floyd College to Georgia Highlands College to reflect its more regional nature. That fall, GHC also dedicated a new campus and building in Cartersville on Route 20, just west of I-75. Immediately, enrollment there jumped by 50 percent. The first academic building built, which houses the library, administrative offices, student services, and classrooms, accommodates about 2,500 students. In June 2011, GHC broke ground on a student center, and the building was completed in 2012. In April 2017, GHC broke ground on the new Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (S.T.E.A.M.) academic building at the Cartersville site. This building opened in fall 2018.

Another instructional site also opened in Marietta on the campus of Southern Polytechnic State University in 2005. In the summer of 2022, the Marietta site will relocate from the Kennesaw State University-Southern Polytechnic campus to its new location at 1090 Northchase Parkway. In 2009, two additional sites opened – one in Paulding County on the square in downtown Dallas and the other in Douglasville. The Douglasville location closed spring 2022.

In fall 2012, GHC introduced its first competitive athletics program with inaugural men's and women's basketball. Baseball and softball teams began in the 2013-2014 academic year. All teams have had tremendously successful seasons with impressive records and recognition.

Georgia Highlands College, which has grown significantly in recent years, continues to offer an advanced educational foundation to its expanding student body and boasts a regional economic impact of over \$170 million.