

ADVANCED ACADEMY OF GEORGIA

Carrollton, Georgia

Type: Coeducational residential early-entrance-to-college program

Grades: 11 and 12

Enrollment: 61

Head of School: Susan Colgate, Director

THE SCHOOL

The Advanced Academy is a residential, early-entrance-to-college program for eleventh- and twelfth-grade young men and women, located on the campus of the State University of West Georgia (UWG). One of few such programs in the country, the Academy provides opportunities for gifted high school juniors and seniors to earn concurrent high school and college credit in an environment that is supportive and conducive to personal and academic growth. The personal environment of the Academy and the vast resources of the University prepare its students for both further study in their disciplines and an accelerated career ladder. The Advanced Academy is not a high school; Academy students take regularly scheduled University classes taught by University faculty members for which they earn concurrent high school and University credit, thus allowing them to complete four years of education in two. On completion of the Advanced Academy of Georgia program, students receive both Certificates of Achievement from the Academy and diplomas from their high schools.

The State University of West Georgia, host to the Advanced Academy, is a coeducational comprehensive institution located approximately 50 miles west of Atlanta. Founded as a district agricultural and mechanical school in 1906, West Georgia was established as a four-year college in 1957 and gained full university status in 1996. A charter member of the University System of Georgia, the institution offers ten undergraduate degrees in more than fifty major fields of study.

The University sits on a safe, beautiful campus in a traditional college town. Students study, live, and work amid numerous oak and pine trees, gorgeous flowers, and lush green lawns. West Georgia has a long history of providing its local community access to world-renowned speakers, acclaimed performances, and national leaders.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Students are personally advised upon entering the Academy and are enrolled in University course work according to their levels of preparation and ability. They choose from the full range of courses offered at the University and thus are provided with flexibility in areas of study, great depth in their course work, and access to challenging and innovative classes that meet individual needs. Academy students are not limited to the liberal arts or to math, science, and technology. The State University of West Georgia is a comprehensive University offering 113 programs of study, including the University's 2+2 Regent's Engineering Transfer Program with the Georgia Institute of Technology, through three colleges: the College of Arts and Sciences, the Richards College of Business, and the College of Education.

The first priority when advising Academy students is to ensure they meet high school graduation requirements. This means that they must complete the same number of Carnegie units in English, science, mathematics, social science, foreign language, physical education and health, and electives as their counterparts in

high school. Because students in the Academy begin their college education at an early age, they receive a high level of academic support and advisement. Students may receive tutoring and academic assistance at many venues within the University: the Excel Center, the Writing Lab, the physics and math labs, and the Student Development Center. In addition, University students are available for one-on-one tutoring, and the Academy residence hall provides space and structure for informal peer tutoring. Supported by distinguished professors, stimulating courses, caring staff members, and cutting-edge technology, Academy students not only achieve educational excellence, they also mature into insightful and inspired individuals.

UWG has the only Honors College in the State of Georgia. The Academy is a component of the Honors College, and Academy students are eligible for all the benefits of the College: small class sizes offered in many disciplines, mentoring relationships with professors, a peer group of other academically oriented students, early registration for classes, and the opportunity to conduct original research, either with a professor or individually. In fact, many students at the Academy have made research presentations at regional and national conferences before graduating from high school. Academy students are automatically qualified for and encouraged to enroll in Honors courses. For most students, the intellectual stimulation and personal attention in Honors courses lead to greater interest and satisfaction, which facilitate learning. The Honors courses are small and feature lively discussions. They typically involve more class participation, and written work is often in the form of essays and individual research projects.

FACULTY AND ADVISERS

Academy students receive a high level of academic and personal support and advisement. Five professional members compose the staff of the Advanced Academy: the Director, Academy Residential Coordinator (ARC), Academy Assistant Residential Coordinator (AARC), Admissions Coordinator, and Guidance Counselor. The administrative and residence hall staff members work together to maintain a nurturing and stimulating environment that fosters both personal and academic growth in students. Honors College staff members are highly involved in meeting the needs of each Academy student. Upper-division Honors students are hired as resident assistants to mentor students in the residence hall, and professors provide academic and personal support.

The University's faculty is nationally renowned and includes several Fulbright recipients, the National Debate Coach of the Year, and other award-winning scholars. Unlike many other universities where graduate students teach courses, only faculty members are responsible for classroom instruction at UWG.

COLLEGE PLACEMENT

After completion of the program and high school graduation, students are well prepared to attend the college of their choice. As a testament to this

preparation, Advanced Academy students during the 2004–05 academic year averaged a cumulative SAT score of 1278 with a verbal score of 642 and a math score of 636. In addition, several students each year are National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists and Finalists. Academy students may opt to remain at the University of West Georgia or go elsewhere to complete their undergraduate degree. The Academy's guidance counselor and other staff members work closely with students to make post-Academy plans, select appropriate institutions, and complete college recommendation forms and letters.

Academy graduates have been accepted into many prestigious institutions, including Agnes Scott, Berry, Brandeis, BYU, Brown, Carnegie Mellon, Case Western Reserve, Colgate, Cornell, Duke, Emory, Florida State, Georgetown, Georgia Tech, Harvard, Howard, Indiana, Johns Hopkins, LSU, Marquette, Mercer, MIT, Northeastern, Notre Dame, NYU, Oglethorpe, Rice, Savannah College of Art and Design, Tufts, Tulane, Vanderbilt, Wesleyan, Xavier, Yale, and the Universities of Chicago, Rochester, and Washington.

STUDENT BODY AND CONDUCT

In the fall of 1995, the first class of exceptional high school students entered the Advanced Academy of Georgia. All of the 19 original students were from Georgia. Since then, the Academy has grown to include students from other countries such as Bangladesh, Nigeria, South Africa, Germany, Spain, and Japan. The program is greatly enhanced by its cultural, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity; increased diversity brings richer opinions, stimulating ideas, and lasting memories to the program and its students. Sixty-one students enrolled in the Academy for the 2004–05 academic year; together they represent a wide range of talents and cultures. Sixteen percent come from outside of Georgia or other countries.

The University enrolls 10,255 undergraduate and graduate students from Georgia, forty-three other states, and forty-two other countries. About 64 percent of enrolled students are women, and 28 percent are members of minority groups.

The University of West Georgia has an Honor Code that is adhered to by all students as well as faculty and staff members. Each student is expected to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and excellence. Students who violate this Code are subject to disciplinary action. In addition, the Advanced Academy expects its students to comply with its policies, which are consistent with the needs of younger students and are in place to ensure an environment that is safe and supportive. Students who violate policy are held responsible for their actions. Academy students, elected by their peers and supervised by a full-time professional, sit on a Judicial Board that hears minor disciplinary infractions and decides on appropriate sanctions. The Academy follows an educational philosophy regarding disciplinary infractions and consequences; mistakes are meant to be learning experiences. Serious or repeated violations are brought to the attention of the Academy director.

ACADEMIC FACILITIES

The Honors House is an historic two-story house that serves the Advanced Academy and the Honors College. Here, Academy and Honors students can study, work in the computer lab (Internet accessible), meet with advisers and counselors, eat and relax in the lounge, and meet with fellow students to share and explore ideas. This collaboration between the Advanced Academy and the Honors College allows Academy students to meet and interact with University honors students and build supportive relationships with them.

Academy students also have access to all University resources, including the Irving S. Ingram Library, the many computer labs on campus, and modern laboratories with cutting-edge technology. The library can meet almost any research requirement. Besides its ample collection of bound volumes, periodicals, archival material, microfilm, and microtext, the library features GALILEO—Georgia Library Learning Online—with full text articles, complete indexing, and Internet access. Unicorn online public access allows students to use their computers to check on the availability of material. The library also features CD-ROM technology and access to local, state, regional, and international library holdings.

The University is committed to providing its students with the most up-to-date computer software and hardware and scientific research equipment. All of the science departments have state-of-the-art laboratories and research equipment, including a nuclear magnetic resonance machine, a UHV (ultra high vacuum) chamber, and the West Georgia observatory. Academy students often take advantage of the University's high-tech research equipment by engaging in independent research projects throughout all disciplines while guided by professors established in their discipline.

Academy students interested in the arts, foreign languages, and the social sciences also have high-quality resources and equipment available for their studies. Art students have two gallery spaces to exhibit work, and music and theater students participate in performances in the University's Townsend Center for the Performing Arts, which includes a 450-seat mainstage theater, a 250-seat black box theater for specialized productions, and the Kathy Cashen Recital Hall. In addition, West Georgia has its own radio and TV stations.

BOARDING AND GENERAL FACILITIES

Academy students reside together in Gunn Hall, the University's honors residence hall, with men on one wing and women on another. The hall is dedicated to the program, so the rules and regulations are consistent with the needs of younger scholars. The Academy residence hall coordinator and 12 upper-division student resident assistants (RAs) reside with Academy students. The assistant residential coordinator resides on campus and has an office in Gunn Hall. All provide supervision and serve as role models in the daily residential experience. Study groups and programs to foster successful campus living, community service, and good citizenship are arranged each week by the residence hall staff to promote a healthy balance between academic and personal growth.

Students in a boarding environment learn important skills that they carry with them throughout their lifetime: leadership, human relations, and the art of compromise, independence, and self-understanding. The Academy's boarding environment provides students with the opportunity to live and learn

with a carefully selected and diverse group of individuals who are, perhaps for the first time, their intellectual peers. In a boarding environment, students are more free to develop their individuality while cultivating their passions and making close, lifelong friends. Immersion in academic studies is more readily accomplished. In addition, opportunities for socializing are prevalent in an environment that fosters a balance between work and play.

Each room in Gunn Hall is wired for computer access to the Internet and the University's internal networks. Gunn Hall also houses a computer lab for students who do not have a personal computer. The hall has a kitchen, laundry facilities, and a recreational room with a pool table, a Ping-Pong table, and a large-screen TV. The main lobby features a practice room with a piano—a perfect environment for musically gifted students to learn and practice their instruments. To help ensure that students are safe and comfortable while enjoying the camaraderie of their fellow Academy students, a security system has been installed in Gunn Hall.

ATHLETICS

The Advanced Academy fields several University intramural teams in varying sports. Academy students also enjoy organized physical and social interaction through the University's intramural and recreational department and during in-hall programs organized by the residence hall staff.

EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Special care is given to offering a multitude of extracurricular opportunities that help develop a well-rounded student. Students can choose from myriad University activities as well as a variety of activities that contribute to the unique Academy experience. Many social activities are available in Gunn Hall. The resident assistants and Gunn Hall Council provide a number of these opportunities throughout the year, including programs such as the St. Patty's Day Café (an annual program that raises money for a local charity), a Masquerade dance, PB & J in your PJs, the Decathlon, the Ultimate Scavenger Hunt, a Saturday Night Fever disco party, and social events on the deck in the spring and summer. Every week Academy students and staff members gather for Thursday Night Dinners and interact with guest speakers who come from the University community and around the state and nation to share their research and enthusiasm for their disciplines. The residence hall sponsors regular educational and social programs to enhance leadership and personal growth. The Academy also hosts an artists/lecture series available to the campus and surrounding communities. Events include the Moscow Chamber Orchestra; Robin Wright, noted journalist; Dr. Mark Plotkin, best-selling author and one of the world's leading ethnobotanists; Leon Redbone, musician and composer; Kathy Mattea, singer and composer; Carlos Rojas, artist and author; and opera star John Cimino.

Academy students are part of the fabric of University life and are able to participate in all campus activities except Greek social organizations and intercollegiate athletics. Academy students enjoy participating in intramural athletics, student government, debate, the campus newspaper, the International Club, various honor societies, College Bowl, the chess club, the Junior High Mentoring Program, and many other organizations. In addition, Gunn Hall students publish their own newsletter,

The Gunn Gazette, and their own yearbook. Academy scholars continue to be talented in the fine arts—playing the guitar, oboe, drums, clarinet, French horn, cello, bass guitar, piccolo, tin whistle, violin, viola, trumpet, piano, and flute—as well as participating in voice, chorus, and dance. Academy students have access to a music practice room in their residence hall and perform during Academy functions. Several of the students have had their poetry and art work published in the University's art magazine, *The Eclectic*, and others have acted in University productions.

Community service is required of Academy students each semester, and giving back to the local community is an important component of Academy life. Students actively participate in a variety of service projects, including tutoring programs at local elementary schools, donating time to the local soup kitchen or humane society, building homes with Habitat for Humanity, and beginning a Gunn Hall recycling program.

COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID

Georgia resident tuition (in-state tuition is \$1161 per semester), fees, and a \$150 book allowance are paid by the ACCEL Program, which is administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission to provide participating Georgia high school students with financial assistance toward the cost of postsecondary course work. Room, board, and books cost approximately \$2500 per semester. Out-of-state tuition is \$4644 per semester, and a limited number of out-of-state fee waivers are available. The Academy has been awarded several grants to fund both need- and merit-based scholarships to qualifying applicants.

The Advanced Academy of Georgia encourages all of its applicants to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA provides students an opportunity to apply for assistance under the federal student financial assistance programs (i.e., Pell Grant, SEOG, and student loans), and the information provided by this application is used when in-house scholarships are awarded.

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

The rigorous admissions process includes student essays, student and family interviews, teacher recommendations, test scores, and high school GPA. Minimum eligibility requirements are at least a 3.5 high school GPA (on a 4.0 scale) and a minimum combined SAT score of 1150 (ACT composite score of 25) with a minimum SAT verbal score of 580 (25 ACT) and SAT math score of 530 (22 ACT).

APPLICATION TIMETABLE

The priority application deadline is in early February, and applications are accepted until the class is filled. Students are encouraged to apply early.

ADMISSIONS CORRESPONDENCE

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