

# *Liberating Arts: GGC School of Liberal Arts*

## **GGC Professor Sponsored Summer “Yoga on the Lawn at Dawn” As Part of Minority Mental Health Awareness Month**

For the fourth year in a row, GGC Assistant Professor of Psychology LaKeisha Gantt sponsored “Yoga on the Lawn at Dawn” in Athens, Georgia, in July 2023. Part of Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, the event was intended for women of color. Gantt’s motivation for starting the event was inspired by “a strong desire to create spaces where people can connect as well

as demystify and destigmatize mental health.” She cited a particularly “strong urgency for marginalized communities that are impacted by so many other social conditions.”

Kim Hawthorne, an actress who played Kerissa in the Oprah Winfrey Network’s series, *Greenleaf*, spoke at the Saturday morning session. Hawthorne and her business partner/manager agreed to attend the dinner and spend time with local students and professionals interested in film, acting, mental health, and performing arts.

Dinner guests included the mayor of Athens plus students and professionals with Athens in common. Some guests are

also involved in theatre, performing arts, music, and film. GGC psychology major Jasmine Cade and film major Chase Freeman attended the dinner. “Cade, who is interested in mental health, helped me talk through some of the planning for the Yoga on the Lawn event, and Chase and I had previously spoken about his interest in film,” Gantt explained. “I wanted students to deepen their understanding of how disciplines intersect in unique ways.”

The Athens-Clarke County Mayor’s office provided partial funding for the event. Local stakeholders and participants also contributed, and the dinner was sponsored by the Athens Downtown Development Authority. “It is quite an achievement,” Gantt observed. Gantt’s accomplishment is representative of a long list of contributions made by GGC’s SLA faculty to their communities.

*By Richard Rawls*



*Participants enjoyed friendship and outdoor activity early in the day from 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.*



*LaKeisha Gantt (left) and Kim Hawthorne (right) at a meal attended by students, including from GGC and residents of Athens.*



*Recipients of Hawthorne’s advice: GGC students Jasmine Cade and Chase Freeman.*



*GGC, Georgia State University, local high school students, and community stakeholders enjoyed time together and a dinner sponsored by the Athens Downtown Development Authority.*