

# UWG CENTERS REPORT



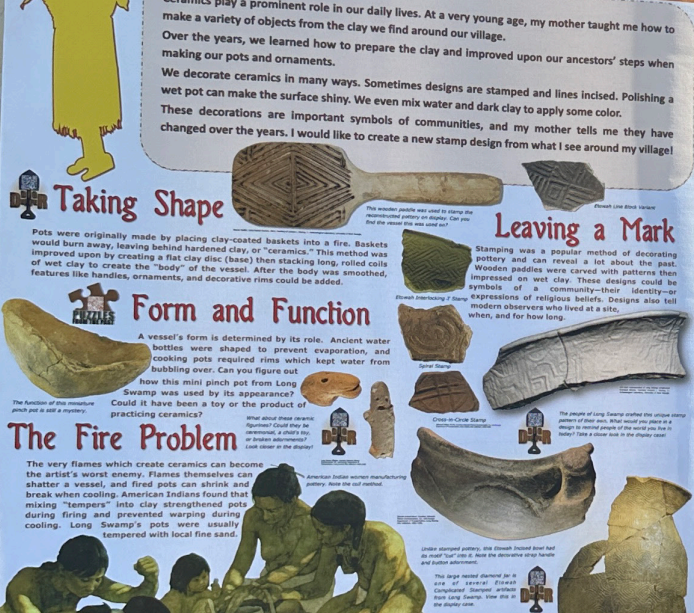
The Etowah Mounds site is located in present-day Bartow County, GA. This large regional urban and ceremonial center rests along the Etowah River and was occupied between 1000 - 1500 CE. It is a 64-acre town that has revealed a number of earthen mounds, (six total) and a variety of artifacts, including pottery, stone tools, and human remains. Also present are a number of prehistoric structures.

## Highlights from Fiscal Year 2026



UNIVERSITY OF  
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## ANTONIO J. WARING JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Fiscal year 2026 was a year of significant achievement and growth for the Waring Center for Public Archaeology. Guided by its strategic goals of increasing revenue generation, expanding community engagement, and growing research output, the center made substantial progress across its four primary operational areas: curation, community engagement, exhibit development, and research.

The curation program achieved several notable milestones during the year. By the end of FY2026, the center had completed 38 curation projects that contributed to the long-term preservation of archaeological collections and successfully completed the NISI (Ninety Six National Historic Site) project, resulting in the transfer of a collection to the National Park Service. The center also developed new partnerships and contracts with local governments and organizations to support future growth. In addition, the center exceeded its revenue-generation goal, invoicing \$124,521.22 by the end of June 2026, more than 41.19% above FY2025 revenue and well beyond the targeted 10% increase.

Community engagement remained one of the Center's greatest successes in FY2026. The Waring Center participated in 83 outreach events, ranging from classroom visits to major public programs, engaging 8,699 community members by the end of June 2026 - an increase of nearly 70.36% over the previous fiscal year and far surpassing the projected 10% growth target. New partnerships with metro Atlanta schools and expanded collaborations with the West Georgia Regional Library System broadened the center's reach and impact.

The center also made important contributions through exhibit development and research. The Journey Through Georgia's Archaeological Past exhibit was completed and delivered to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, while several additional exhibit projects continued to advance. Research initiatives remained active throughout the year, producing conference presentations in experimental, public, and community archaeology and laying the groundwork for future scholarly publications, including a manuscript nearing submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Collectively, these accomplishments reflect a productive and impactful year that strengthened the Waring Center's leadership in archaeological preservation, public education, research, and community engagement across Georgia.







## CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE WELLNESS

The Center for Integrative Wellness (CIW) continued to expand its impact across West Georgia in FY26 through innovative wellness initiatives, strategic partnerships, and increased community engagement. The center secured more than \$165,000 in external funding to support programs focused on community wellness, student basic needs, workforce development, and training accessibility. These investments enabled initiatives such as the Resilient Roots Community Wellness Pop-Ups, Student Assistant Mobile Unit Screen Team, support for the UWG Cares Team and Student Basic Needs Center, and efforts to reduce educational and training costs for students.

Community collaboration remained a cornerstone of CIW's work throughout the year. Through its leadership role in the Resilient WEST Coalition, the center partnered with 28 new organizations across Carroll, Coweta, Heard, Meriwether, and Troup counties, strengthening regional networks focused on health and well-being. CIW also expanded educational opportunities by introducing Bloodborne Pathogens Training and continuing to offer evidence-based wellness and preparedness programs to both university and community audiences.

As a result of these efforts, the center reached more than 4,100 individuals through its community and corporate partnership initiatives, representing substantial growth from the previous year by 495%.

CIW also prioritized access and affordability, ensuring that wellness education remained available to a broader audience. Grant funding helped significantly reduce the cost of trainings such as Adult Mental Health First Aid and CPR certification while allowing other programs, including QPR and Connections Matter, to be offered at no cost. These efforts removed financial barriers for students, while reinforcing the center's commitment to fostering healthier, more resilient communities throughout the region.







## STONE CENTER FOR FAMILY BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INNOVATION

During the 2025–2026 academic year, the Stone Center continued to invest in faculty development by supporting participation in the internationally recognized Babson Symposium for Entrepreneurship Educators and awarding three \$3,500 grants for faculty-led experiential learning and research projects. The center also expanded its Design Thinking initiative, partnering with Dr. Danilo Baylen to incorporate LEGO® Serious Play into its day-long workshops. Since the program’s launch, nearly 75 faculty and staff members have completed the training, helping to bring entrepreneurial and innovative thinking into classrooms and campus operations.

The third annual Start-Up Boot Camp engaged 38 undergraduate and graduate students from nine disciplines in a 10-week entrepreneurial learning experience designed to help them identify and address real-world business and social challenges. Through Design Thinking and the Lean Canvas model, students developed skills in customer discovery, qualitative data gathering, storytelling, prototyping, identification of financial and nonfinancial resources, and development and delivery of an investor-grade presentation. The program culminated in the 2025 Wolf Den Pitch Competition, where 10 student-led ventures competed for \$5,000 in awards, showcasing the center’s commitment to hands-on, interdisciplinary learning and entrepreneurial skill development.

The Stone Center strengthened its role as a regional hub for entrepreneurship and innovation through a series of impactful community programs. Highlights included hosting the statewide Innov8GA Conference, organizing the inaugural UWG Entrepreneurship Week, and convening the annual Family Business Retreat that attracted leaders from multiple industries across West Georgia. In partnership with the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, the center also continued its successful Coffee & Conversations series, connecting students, faculty, entrepreneurs, and business leaders through meaningful dialogue, networking, and collaboration. Together, these initiatives expanded community partnerships, elevated entrepreneurial engagement, and reinforced the center’s mission of connecting the university with the broader regional ecosystem.







## SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The University of Georgia Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of West Georgia continued to make a significant impact on regional Economic development through its confidential consulting services for entrepreneurs and small business owners. As part of the Richards College of Business and the statewide Georgia SBDC Network, the center provides expert guidance in management, marketing, and financial planning to established and emerging businesses. In 2025, the UGA SBDC at UWG served more than 200 clients across the region, assisted small businesses in securing over \$15 million in capital acquisition, and supported approximately 19 new business starts. The center anticipates continuing its strong level of production in the next fiscal year.

The center also demonstrated strengths in continuing education. In September 2025, Area Director W. Troy Vollenweider again presented his commercial loan class at the national America's Small Business Development Center's Conference in Orlando, Florida. The session aimed to empower other business consultants to assist clients with the loan process. The center successfully held a Launch Your Year Business Summit at the UWG-Newnan campus in December 2025. The summit was attended by more than 50 small business owners in the region and learned from 12 expert speakers and panelists in different areas and expertise of business leadership.

The center also celebrated notable professional accomplishments among its leadership. Vollenweider received the prestigious 2025 Flewellen Award for Consulting Excellence in March 2026, marking the third time he has earned this distinction. As a result of this achievement, he was designated a UGA SBDC Senior Business Consultant effective January 2027. Vollenweider received his first University of Georgia Public Service and Outreach faculty promotion in February 2026, advancing from assistant to associate.

Staff excellence was further recognized through the accomplishments of Amber Holcomb, program coordinator, who received the Richards College of Business Best Team Player Award in May 2026. Her recognition reflects the collaborative spirit and commitment to service that contribute to the center's success. Together, these achievements highlight the UGA SBDC at UWG's dedication to supporting both the growth of small businesses throughout the region and the professional development of its team members.





## THOMAS B. MURPHY CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

The Thomas B. Murphy Center for Public Service continued to advance its mission as a nonpartisan hub for civic education, community engagement, and public dialogue during the 2025–2026 academic year. Guided by the values of Speaker Thomas B. Murphy—liberty, justice, equality, civility, and service—the center expanded opportunities for student leadership, strengthened community partnerships, and promoted informed civic participation. Through hands-on experiences, public programming, and mentorship, the center prepared students for meaningful involvement in their communities and professions.

The Murphy Center’s Distinguished Lecture Series hosted three public lectures that explored the intersection of technology, education, humanitarianism, and democracy: Tim Golden, former member of the Georgia State Senate and the Georgia House of Representatives; Chris Bennett, global vice president, AI and HPC at Unisys; and Elena Mityushina, People for Free Russia Coalition. These events attracted strong participation from both the campus and the broader West Georgia community, reinforcing the center’s role as a catalyst for informed public discourse.



A cornerstone of the center’s work, the LeadershipUWG/Murphy Fellows program experienced continued growth, serving 15 student fellows during the academic year. Participants engaged in leadership training, professional development workshops, conversations with nonprofit and business leaders, and a visit to the Georgia General Assembly, where they observed the legislative process and met with elected officials and UWG alumni serving in state government.

Throughout the year, Murphy Fellows gained valuable insight into public service, nonprofit leadership, entrepreneurship, and community engagement. The program concluded with a graduation ceremony recognizing students’ leadership development and civic growth. Together, the Distinguished Lecture Series and LeadershipUWG/Murphy Fellows program continue to cultivate informed, engaged, and service-oriented leaders prepared to make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.







## CENTER FOR PUBLIC HISTORY



For the past 26 years, the Center for Public History has been a central supporter of student-led research, professional development, and community engagement in public history and museum practice. It supports both graduate and undergraduate programs, enhancing students' engagement with regional history, providing experiential learning opportunities, and preparing them for careers in public humanities, nonprofits, arts-focused organizations, and museums.

In FY 26, the center supported graduate assistants and numerous undergraduate projects, including the Local History project, the Regional Music project, and the West Georgia Textile Trail. Its alumni hold positions at institutions such as the Atlanta History Center, the Center for Puppetry Arts, the Newnan-Coweta Historical Society, and the Aviation History and Technology Center.

Key partnerships include collaborations with the Georgia Department of Transportation, Newnan Main Street, and regional institutions like the Georgia Association of Museums and Georgia Humanities. Notable projects include work with Georgia History Day at LaGrange College, led by graduate research assistant Hayleigh Sebaugh, and the Local History project, led by graduate research assistant Camden Robinson. The center also established new cooperative agreements with regional organizations, including the Haralson County Historical Society.

The second annual UWG Summer Institute in Museum Studies and Public History welcomed participants from around the region for professional development and advanced training. The institute and its partners provide students, faculty, and regional participants with critical experiential learning opportunities, foster career readiness and development, and strengthen regional and historical cultural initiatives.







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