

Affording College at GSU: Resources That Make It Possible

By: Teniyah Harris

Charles Quinniey- April 22, 2025, 3:20 p.m., 55 Gilmer St. SE, Atlanta, GA 30303

Keziah Meyer- April 15, 2025, 12:38 p.m., Virtual

At 19 years old, Keziah Meyer was faced with the challenge of balancing her studies at Georgia State while expecting her first child. She was a sophomore at the time and said she was determined to continue her education despite her new responsibilities as a future mother.

"I was afraid I'd have to drop out of college, but I'd just started, and I wasn't sure how I'd manage both. But I knew education was my priority, and I wanted to make it work," Meyer said.

She turned to her Calculus teacher, who provided her with advice on how to continue studying at the school without her pregnancy interfering with her progress. Her teacher suggested she contact the Access and Accommodations Center, which she said has changed the course of her education for the better.

Georgia State University provides support for pregnant students through Title IX of the Education Amendment. The law prohibits unfair treatment of pregnant women and parents in educational programs at the university. The Access and Accommodations Center will hand out documents explaining Title IX-required accommodations for students impacted by pregnancy after they register with them. Students cannot be penalized for missing days caused by

pregnancy-related issues or doctor visits. In addition, if they miss assignments due to pregnancy-related issues, they can make them up without teacher opposition.

For students who are struggling financially, the university offers programs and opportunities to assist them like Title IX. Another program is TRIO Student Support Services (SSS).

TRIO is a government-funded program that provides support services for first-generation and low-income college students. As part of the program, students can receive free tutoring, career counseling, and financial aid such as grants. Students who cannot afford laptops can also rent them from their services, as well as print for free. Additionally, TRIO holds workshops throughout the semester that assist students with resume building and preparing for job interviews. It is required that students prove they are U.S. citizens and struggling financially to be eligible for the program.

Charles Quinniey works in Georgia State University's Dean of Students office as an administrative specialist. When he began his job during the pandemic, he said it was especially important for students to take advantage of the university's resources. At a time when students were facing financial challenges, the Dean of Students' office was the place they could turn to for assistance. The office offers essential support, including financial assistance, food assistance programs and housing resources.

"It is our job in this office to ensure students find the specific help they need, whether dealing with housing, finding scholarship support or solving academic concerns. We are the ones to talk to, to navigate you to those services," Quinniey said.

Quinniey works at the front desk in the building, so he is usually the first contact students have when asking questions, whether through phone calls or in person. In a typical day, he answers up to 250 emails from students trying to contact other administrative offices and faculty. His role is to connect students with university administration.

"So far, there are over 30 programs at the university offering financial assistance to students in need," Quinniey said.

Panther Pantry is a food assistance program that provides small groceries and other items like toiletries. The pantry is available to all students and faculty who apply. They can receive items such as canned goods and fresh produce donated by the state. Additionally, the Panther Pantry offers ready-to-microwave meals for students and faculty on the go. The official social media page for the pantry also offers cooking lessons for students who want to learn how to prepare affordable meals. Quinniey said the program is designed to reduce stress on students, so their studies are not affected by worrying about their next meal, as well as to encourage healthy eating.

There are also programs for out-of-state and international students at Georgia State University. The International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) assist international students with any issues they may encounter while studying at the university. They provide programs such as visa assistance, cultural adjustments, and housing resources. ISSS provides students with support from the beginning, even coordinating airport transportation to campus. From there, they will

continue to extend their assistance in financial and personal matters. ISSS also organizes events and workshops like cultural festivals and language workshops to help students adjust.

Out-of-state students can also benefit from the university's resources, as they offer an out-of-state tuition waiver. With this waiver, students can switch to in-state tuition after living in Georgia for more than a year. To qualify for the tuition waiver, they must prove their residency and assure that they will remain in Georgia.

At 21 years old, Meyer is set to graduate at the end of the spring semester on May 8. She said she credits her success to the support she received from her teacher and the staff in the Access and Accommodations Center.

"If it weren't for them, I feel my entire experience would have been harder, but they made it possible for me to keep pushing, and now I'm here. When my baby gets older, I hope to show her that anything is possible."

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