

Ralston College expands programming, conservationist takes ownership of historic campus properties

Sale to bolster and expand programming poised to transform higher education

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA (January 22, 2025) – An experienced historic conservationist will lead the restoration of two properties in the jewel box of Savannah, marking a crucial milestone in the rollout of Ralston College’s strategic plan which includes expansion of its scholarship-funded Master’s degree program as well as its many public lectures and concerts.

The sale of Noble Hardee at 3 West Gordon Street on Monterey Square and a Gothic Revival church at 115 West Bolton Street closed yesterday, confirming ownership by an American investor with a passion for and depth of experience conserving historic properties.

The demand for Ralston College’s Master of Arts in the Humanities degree, as well as its public lectures, concerts and its globally-followed podcast made the sale of the two properties—which each require extensive renovation in order to be ready for student use—an obvious next step for the liberal arts college now in the midst of assembling its fourth cohort of students, says founding President Stephen Blackwood.

“Ralston College has never been better positioned to achieve its mission of sharing the riches of the humanities with its students, with the citizens of Savannah, and with the many people around the world who have followed its lectures and podcasts online,” he says. “We are delighted to have found an owner able to restore these buildings to their original grandeur, strengthening further Savannah’s already formidable reputation as one of the most beautiful cities in the world.”

The College’s success in partnering with local entrepreneurs, including Richard Kessler and Greg Parker, to lease academic, administrative, and residential spaces (including 26 E. Gaston St, 17 W. McDonough St, and 134 Whitaker St) for its classrooms, offices for its staff as well as its student living quarters means that funds previously earmarked for the renovation of historic properties can now directly fuel the growth of its program, the support of its students, and the expansion of its vision and mission.

Upcoming public events include:

- On February 20th, the College will welcome guests at the Regina Coeli Hall in the crypt of the Cathedral Basilica of St John the Baptist for the first public concert, *Works of Wonder: A Ralston College Concert of Mozart and Vivaldi*, since its restoration by acclaimed local architect Christian Sottile.

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- The College’s annual Sophia Lecture Series, which in 2024 welcomed world-renowned author and scholar Iain McGilchrist, will host the distinguished biologists Bret Weinstein and Heather Heying on April 9th and 10th.

The three buildings which make up the College’s more than 36,500-square-foot campus provide optimal space for the continued delivery of the first phase of its graduate program.

The College has been determined to be eligible to apply for candidacy for accreditation from the New England Commission of Higher Education.

President Blackwood acknowledges how pivotal the welcome of Savannah residents and its business leaders has been to Ralston College’s success delivering a leading humanities program: “It has been an enormous privilege to receive so much support from local Savannah residents and its business leaders,” he said. “I am optimistic that, in due course, some of the College’s concerts and lectures will take place within the walls of these soon-to-be restored spaces that we are so lucky to have in our city.”

About Ralston College: Ralston College is in the midst of its admissions cycle, which will assemble the College’s fourth consecutive cohort to be admitted to their degree of Master of Arts in the Humanities in Spring 2026. The College’s intensive one-year graduate program, which traces the development of Western civilization from ancient times to the present, includes an eight-week term in Greece followed by three terms in Savannah, Georgia. Founded in 2010, Ralston College is a private, 501(c)(3) institution of higher education. The College has been authorized for operation and awarded degree-granting powers by the State of Georgia. Ralston College is also seeking accreditation from the New England Commission of Higher Education, and was authorized on November 16th, 2023 to publish the following statement: “The New England Commission of Higher Education has determined that Ralston College is eligible to proceed with an application for candidacy for accreditation within two years. A determination of eligibility is not candidacy or accreditation, nor does it indicate a likelihood of eventual accreditation. Questions about eligibility and the accreditation process should be directed to the President of the Commission.” Ralston College is devoted to freedom of thought and speech, has no political or religious affiliations, and does not accept government funds. Its mission is to revive the conditions of a free and flourishing culture by providing transformative, rigorous education in the humanities. In addition to its degree program, the College also hosts free, public lecture series and concerts which, since its first academic year in 2022, have welcomed more than 2,000 guests. To date, the College’s podcasts and online lectures—also available for free—have reached millions.

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