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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Mercer University, Gwinnett County Public Schools, FBI Atlanta Division
Partner to Offer Innovative New Cybersecurity Program**

ATLANTA – Mercer University, Gwinnett County Public Schools and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Atlanta Division are partnering to offer the innovative new Cybersecurity Dual Enrollment Program during the 2019-2020 academic year for students at Paul Duke STEM High School in Norcross.

The cohort program, held each Friday on Mercer’s Cecil B. Day Graduate and Professional Campus in Atlanta, is one of only four such programs in the nation, with others located in Arlington, Virginia, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Weston, Florida.

“The Mercer University Cybersecurity Dual Enrollment Program provides Paul Duke STEM students with college-level course material and opportunities to explore applications in partnership with the FBI,” said Dr. Jonathon Wetherington, principal of Paul Duke STEM High. “This program builds upon the foundational experiences in cybersecurity that these students had at Paul Duke STEM and helps transform theory into practice through the partnership with FBI Atlanta Division. Through innovative programs such as this, Paul Duke STEM High School students are provided with transformative learning experiences that prepare students for the careers of tomorrow. We are extremely grateful that Mercer chose Gwinnett County Public Schools and Paul Duke STEM for this exclusive opportunity.”

Courses will be led by faculty members in the University’s College of Professional Advancement with special presentations by FBI agents. Gary Blome, assistant professor of informatics, will teach a course on “Introduction to Informatics” this fall, and Dr. Vikraman Baskaran, associate professor of informatics, will teach a course on “Computer Privacy, Ethics, Crime and Society” in the spring.

“Cybersecurity continues to be a relevant and imperative topic of focus. Each participating partner should be commended for their efforts in providing this unique opportunity to students,” said Dr. Caroline Brackette, assistant dean for experiential learning and strategic partnerships and associate professor of counseling in the College of Professional Advancement. “In addition to earning high school and college credit, students will learn from FBI agents and engage in experiences to better understand the work of the FBI beyond what is portrayed on television and in movies.”

Students from Paul Duke STEM High School were selected for the program at no cost to the students. In addition to classroom learning, they will participate in several experiences outside the classroom, including visits to the Atlanta FBI Field Office and to Mercer’s Macon campus.

“We are thrilled to partner with the FBI Atlanta Division and Paul Duke STEM High School to help educate our community on cybersecurity with this innovative educational program,” said Dr. Kelly L. Holloway, assistant vice president for enrollment management at Mercer. “Students will have the opportunity to learn from industry and academic leaders while earning college credit at no cost.”

About Mercer University

Founded in 1833, Mercer University is a dynamic and comprehensive center of undergraduate, graduate and professional education. With more than 8,700 students enrolled in 12 schools and colleges, on major campuses in Macon and Atlanta; medical school sites in Macon, Savannah and Columbus; and at regional academic centers in Henry and Douglas counties, Mercer is classified as a Doctoral University with High Research Activity by the Carnegie Classification of Institutes of Higher Education and ranked among the top tier of national research universities by *U.S. News & World Report*. The Mercer Health Sciences Center includes the University’s School of Medicine and Colleges of Nursing, Health Professions and Pharmacy. Mercer is affiliated with five teaching hospitals – Memorial University Medical Center in Savannah; The Medical Center, Navicent Health, and Coliseum Medical Centers in Macon; and Midtown Medical Center and St. Francis Hospital in Columbus. The University also has an educational partnership with Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins. It operates an academic press and a performing arts center in Macon and an engineering research center in Warner Robins. Mercer is one of only 286 institutions nationwide to shelter a chapter of The Phi Beta Kappa Society, the nation’s most prestigious academic honor society; one of eight institutions to hold membership in the Georgia Research Alliance; and the only private university in Georgia to field an NCAA Division I athletic program. www.mercer.edu