GCSU Students Prepare for Burnout as Finals Week Approaches

By: Sarah Pennix

MILLEDGEVILLE, GA. — With Georgia College (GCSU) finals week set for Dec. 9-12, many students say the pressure of studying, finishing assignments and keeping up with daily responsibilities is taking a toll. As exams get closer, reports of stress and academic burnout are rising across campus.

With the semester winding down, many students say they feel a noticeable shift in the campus atmosphere, more people are spending late nights in their study spaces and fewer social events are taking place.

For most students, the weeks leading up to finals are more stressful than the exams themselves. Papers, projects and presentations pile up at the same time. When mixed with long study hours and limited sleep, it creates academic burnout.

Burnout typically shows up as exhaustion, irritability and a loss of motivation. Across campus, burnout is setting in even before finals begin. Students have shared that they struggle to stay focused for long periods, making routine tasks take longer and adding to the feeling of falling behind.

Carla Taquechel, a sophomore at GCSU, said the workload becomes overwhelming as deadlines start to overlap.

“It feels like everything piles up at the same time; it’s hard to manage,” she said.

Daily routines of sleep, meals and time with friends dwindle during this part of the semester. Without breaks, the pressure rises. Others say that their social lives decline not just because of time limits but because they feel too mentally drained to participate in activities they usually enjoy.

Senior Jasmine Thompson faces the same challenge every December as she tries to balance studying with her job.

“During finals, I usually sleep less and study more, but that’s not the most helpful,” Thompson said. “You get tired.”

This year, the pressure feels even stronger because multiple professors have major assignments due during the same two-week period. Balancing on-campus work shifts with academics has been especially difficult as students are trying to earn extra income before winter break. For some, this means sacrificing study time to meet financial needs, which can create a cycle of increased stress as deadlines approach.

To cope with the stress, students are trying different strategies to stay organized and avoid feeling overwhelmed. One of the most common approaches is scheduling work ahead of time.

GCSU student Ava Jones said staying on top of deadlines helps her manage the pressure before it gets out of control.

“I make a schedule and break everything down into sections; it keeps me from getting overwhelmed, not just during finals week but in my normal daily routine,” Jones said.

Students who work in groups say they rely heavily on communication during this time. Study groups have become more common around campus, especially in the library and the arts and science building. Some say studying with others helps them stay focused and avoid feeling isolated during a stressful week.

Encouragement from friends and professors has also played a role for students trying to stay motivated.

Dr. Diana Diaz Gomez, a Spanish professor, said support from others can make everything feel less heavy.

“Knowing you’re not alone can make a difference for students. Professors are here to help,” she said. “I hope my students feel comfortable and confident enough to come to me with questions.”

In addition to personal strategies, GCSU offers several resources to support students leading up to finals week. Counseling Services provides mental health support and has increased appointment availability for those struggling. The Ina Dillard Russell Library is also extending its hours, giving students more time and space to study. The library provides study rooms that students can reserve for a period, and an entire floor dedicated to silent study.

The Serenity Den inside the HUB gives students a place to rest, meditate or take a break between classes. Students say it has become a popular spot during busy weeks. The Recreation Center also offers fitness classes, intramural sports and wellness programs that help students release stress after long study hours. These activities can give a short break from the constant academic pressure.

Faculty encourage students to take breaks, manage their time and reach out if they feel overwhelmed. Some professors have added optional review sessions, exam preparation materials or office hours to give students more support. These extra resources have helped many feel that professors are supporting them, even when the course load is heavy.

Even with these resources, finals week remains one of the toughest parts of the semester. The added pressure of piled-up exams, late-night studies and heavy workloads often leaves students mentally exhausted by the time finals begin.

Still, many are doing their best to maintain a healthy balance. Simple steps are recommended, like eating regular meals, taking short breaks, working ahead and getting enough sleep if possible. Even the small habits can make a big difference in productivity and mindset.

As the countdown to Dec. 9 continues, GCSU students are preparing to push through one of the busiest weeks of the year. For many, the goal is not just to pass exams but to manage stress in a healthy way and finish the semester strong.

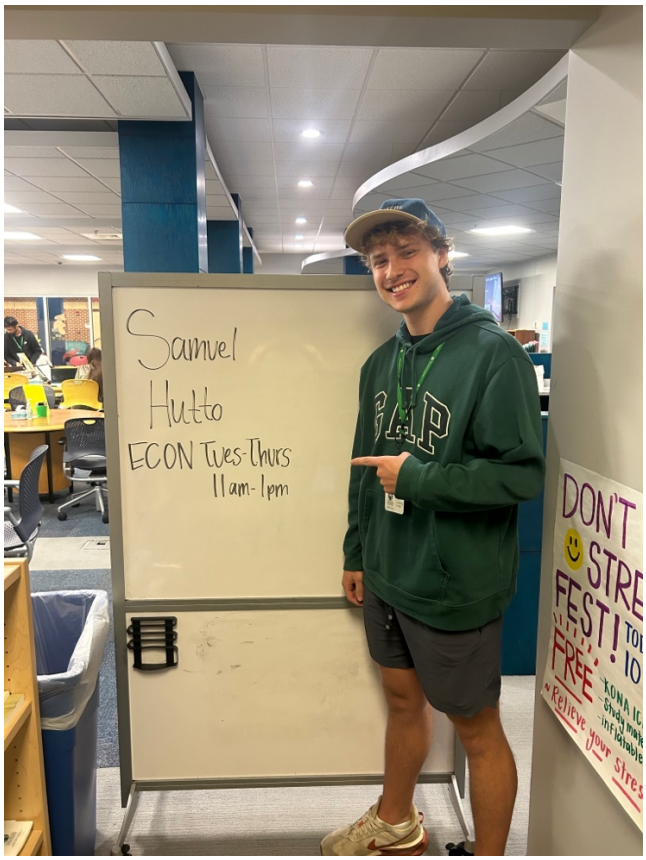

Photo 1: A tutor at the Learning Center providing his work times to help students in need



Photo 2: A photograph of the Serenity Den, Located in Magnolia Ballroom



Photo 3: Students and Tutors active during the week before finals

3 Tips For Burnout Prevention



1

Visit the Serenity Den

The Serenity Den, located in the Magnolia Ballroom, holds many sources of relaxation that are sure to create a calm, and less stressed headspace

2

Schedule Counseling

Georgia College Counseling Services open up more appointment times for a reason during finals week! Take advantage of it and schedule and appointment if you find yourself struggling





3

Make time for breaks

Making sure to set aside some time for study breaks is very important. Make time to hang out with a friend, eat your meals, or enjoy the outdoors for 20-30 minutes