Learning leadership—GSU grads take helm in area schools
President’s Message

It is a miraculous time in Governors State University’s history. The university was founded in 1969 to reinvent higher education. And through the latter part of the twentieth century, GSU made strides in changing earlier images of universities as ivory towers. Now, in the twenty-first century, your Alma Mater is leading the way in establishing the university as a public square—a model for other institutions.

The Kresge Foundation, one of the nation’s largest and most prestigious funders of education reform, recently awarded GSU an $875,000 grant to support our innovative Dual Degree Program (DDP). During her recent visit to GSU, U.S. Under Secretary of Education, Dr. Martha Kanter, said, “We are going to shine a spotlight on the Dual Degree Program. This is absolutely the right direction in which to go.” The Kresge Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education see this exemplary community college partnership as a national model. It is a point of pride for the Chicago southland to lead the nation in providing a quality, seamless pathway from a community college associate degree to university graduation.

We are excited about the arrival of our first freshman class in 2014, making GSU a full-service public university. We can now better demonstrate to the nation that quality community college transfer pathways can—and must—co-exist with university four-year programs. Our faculty members are already hard at work developing the most exciting first-year courses anywhere, inspired by decades of research on student success.

Student housing in living/learning communities will be completed in August 2014, in time for the arrival of freshmen. First-year students will live in a stimulating family atmosphere with juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Our students will also have the unique advantage of living within the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, where, as art critic and GSU honorary degree recipient Peter Schjeldahl says, “the prairie meets the city.”

I am thrilled to report—at long last—that work is underway on the renovation of our E & F science facilities. One of the distinguishing characteristics of a university is to go beyond the study of existing ideas to participate in creativity and invention. After ten years of waiting, we are tearing down the walls of our outdated science building to make way for state-of-the-art laboratories and classrooms. This game-changer will provide our dedicated faculty researchers an appropriate setting for involving students in the discovery of knowledge.

Now is the time for you to become involved. Your participation and investment will make a difference. I encourage you to attend a theater production or distinguished lecture, tour the sculpture park, volunteer at an event like Commencement, pursue another degree, and make a contribution. Join in our positive momentum.

Sincerely,

Elaine P. Maimon
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Green Light for Freshmen in 2014

Governors State University is getting ready to admit its first freshman class, and to expand quality education offerings to deserving students across Illinois.

In December, the Illinois Board of Higher Education gave the green light to GSU to add lower division programming to the university’s upper division and graduate classes. GSU will enroll its first freshman class in August 2014.

“GSU’s decision to admit freshmen is historic and transformative,” said President Elaine P. Maimon, adding that the university plans to design a state-of-the-art freshman program. “For the first time in our 42-year history, we are now poised to serve Illinois as a full, comprehensive, regional university.”

GSU is currently the only exclusively upper-division and graduate public university in the Midwest, with coursework beginning at the junior level. GSU’s decision to become a full four-year university is an active response to the region’s need for new options in quality, affordable public higher education.

The university will develop a cohort of 270 full-time, day-time freshman students. GSU projects the eventual enrollment of as many as 625 freshman students.

New University Logo, Slogan

With a new logo and slogan, Governors State University is taking its message about life-changing education opportunities to an ever-larger audience throughout the Chicago area.

After extensive research and discussion, GSU introduced its new logo and “Success by Degrees” as its new slogan to the university community. The new elements are designed to reflect the university’s innovative and forward-thinking nature.

The new logo uses some familiar elements — most notably the GSU triad — and incorporates the color orange to provide a fresh look as GSU enters its fifth decade. The official university colors are still black and white, with the additional of orange and gray as accent colors.

“Success by Degrees” reflects GSU’s commitment to degree completion at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral level.

The slogan also complements the university’s Dual Degree Program, an innovative partnership with eight area community colleges that has been recognized as a national model for degree completion.

GSU’s new logo and slogan are at center of the university’s expanding marketing efforts via print and broadcast media, billboards, online/social media, and other evolving venues to reach its widely diverse audience.
New Alumni Relations Director Named

The GSU Alumni Association has a new leader. Cheri Garey was named the Interim Director of Alumni Relations following Rosemary Hulett’s retirement last July.

Rosemary Hulett served as Associate Director of Alumni Relations 1991-1993; Director of Alumni Relations 1997-2003; Associate Vice President Advancement and Alumni Relations 2003-2011.

Cheri is a proud GSU graduate, receiving her bachelor’s degree in Business with a concentration in Marketing in 1987. She spent 16 years in the marketing department of a large Chicago-based law firm before joining the GSU Alumni Relations department in 2004.

“My GSU education has opened many doors for me,” Garey says. “I look forward to continuing Rosemary’s fine work so that the Alumni Association grows along with the university. Many challenges lie ahead as GSU enters a new era as a four year university. I see these challenges as further opportunities to provide services to our alumni and students.”

Alumni Calendar Events

More detailed information on the events can be found at www.govst.edu/alumni or by calling the GSU Alumni Relations Office at 708.534.4128.

April 26 through May 29
Alumni Artforum Club Alumni Art Show
GSU Alumni are showcasing their artwork during the monthlong exhibit

May 3
Alumni Artforum Club Art Show Reception
4:30 to 7:30 p.m.
GSU Visual Arts Gallery
RSVP requested. 708.534.4128

May 12
Addictions Studies Alumni Club
Workshop on Opioid Dependence
Presenter: Don Pinkston LCSW, CADC, QHEIC, ATE
8 a.m. to noon
Earn 3 CEU’s
$15 (space is limited)
RSVP required - 708.534.4128

May 24
Alumni Book Club Meeting
Reviewing The Hunger Games
6:30 p.m.
GSU Cafeteria Annex
(Alumni Book Club meets the 4th Thursday of each month)

June 19
Crosstown Classic – Chicago White Sox vs Chicago Cubs
Includes pre-game all you can eat dinner buffet w/beer, followed by game
Game time: 7:10 p.m.
Box Seats in Section 111
Tickets very limited. $120 per person
Call 708.524.4128 to reserve tickets

August 4
Chicago White Sox vs Los Angeles Angels
Enjoy the game with fellow alumni
Game Time: 6:10 p.m.
Box Seats in Section 114
$44 per person
Call 708.524.4128 to reserve tickets

September 22
Addictions Studies Alumni Club Recovery Walk
Governors State University
Save the Date
Donna Simpson Leak enjoyed her job as a high school math teacher. When Leak was named math department chair at Homewood-Flossmoor High School, her superintendent “strongly suggested” that she acquire a Type 75 certificate, a requirement for school administrator positions in Illinois.

That’s when Leak enrolled in Governors State University’s master’s degree program in Educational Administration, never suspecting it would directly lead to the most significant change of her career.

“I had never considered becoming an administrator,” said Leak (MA ’95), who is now superintendent of the Rich Township High School District, with campuses in Olympia Fields, Park Forest, and Richton Park. “I thought I would spend my entire career as a math teacher.” As she proceeded through the GSU program and learned more about school leadership, her outlook started to change.

“I realized that school administration was a natural place for me, and a place where I belonged,” she said. “GSU’s program settled it for me.”

After receiving her Master’s of Arts in Educational Administration in 1995, she almost immediately began a doctoral program at Loyola University. She eventually left the classroom, taking on increasing responsibility in several administrative positions – as an education consultant, a principal, and a superintendent. Leak is also the host of Your Voice In Education each Saturday on WVON AM 1690.

Leak said GSU’s Ed Admin graduates are known for their effectiveness in facing the challenges of the modern school environment. “This is a program where you roll up your sleeves and get to work,” she said. “We had great professors who always expected us to perform better. They really pushed us.”

Hundreds of GSU Ed Admin graduates currently hold school leadership positions in the Chicago area, and throughout Illinois. GSU alumni are principals or superintendents in Frankfort, New Lenox, Joliet, Romeoville, Palos Heights, Oak Lawn, Blue Island, Orland Park, Chicago Heights, Evergreen Park, Country Club Hills, Oak Forest, Palos Hills, Harvey, South Holland, Bradley, Bourbonnais, Watseka, Grant Park, Kankakee, Manteno, and Momence.
Over the years, the Ed Admin program has turned into a priceless resource for school districts throughout northern Illinois. The long list of GSU graduates directing education efforts across the region reflects the program’s emphasis on hands-on educational leadership. Other Ed Admin graduates, like Leak, regard the program as an important turning point in their careers. They speak fondly of professors, of sharing wide-ranging ideas with fellow students, and the no-nonsense rigors of the program.

**Steve Provis** (MA ’05) is principal of Lincoln-Way Central High School in New Lenox. He is one of several administrators at the four Lincoln-Way campuses who went through the Ed Admin program. They include three building principals and four assistant principals.

“When I enrolled in the program, I was an assistant principal and needed a Type 75 certificate,” Provis said. “I had aspirations of being a principal, and the GSU program was perfect for my needs. It met in cohorts at Lincoln-Way, which could not have been more convenient. It was very accessible. We met two nights a week. It meant long days where we would start early and end late. But it was worth it. It was great for me.”

Provis said Ed Admin professors have concrete knowledge of all facets of school administration, from finances to legal matters, and from curriculum to community relations. He cited a school law class taught by Thomas Eddy, a deputy superintendent at Lincoln-Way who is also a GSU adjunct professor.

“He talked about real-life situations -- what we have to deal with on a daily basis,” Provis said. “But we also learned that there are different ways of dealing with situations. As an administrator, you have to make decisions all the time and it is extremely helpful to hear how other professionals have made them.”

Provis called Ed Admin “a top-notch, respected program.”

“**Lenell Navarre** (MA ‘99) was a behavior disorders teacher in the Kankakee school system when he entered the program. Since then, he has served as principal of a private high school in Chicago and held four posts in the Bloom Township High School District: as principal of the Bloom Alternative School and Bloom High School, assistant superintendent of the district and, since last fall, as acting superintendent.

“That happened very quickly,” he says of his latest assignment. “I had to be ready to take over. I had to hit the ground running.”

To be principal of Bloom High School, he proudly proclaims, is to have “the best job in the United States.” To be an administrator, he adds, requires a well-rounded personality. Communication skills are extremely important; he speaks with his building principals every day.

Navarre says he is grateful for what he learned in GSU’s Ed Admin program, and uses that knowledge on a daily basis.

**Dr. Lenell Navarre**
Acting Superintendent of Bloom Township High School District

**Continued on page 6**
“Educational Administration at GSU is a strong program with a fine reputation,” he said. “When I learn that someone has gone through the program, it’s an indication that they have a quality background.”

Navarre speaks highly of GSU’s Dor Fitzgerald, who has served both as a professor in the program, and as the university’s liaison to local school districts. “She taught my community relations course. She stressed that effective community relations means you work with stakeholders and keep them up to date on what is going on at the school.” Navarre said he keeps in touch with Fitzgerald and considers her a friend.

Navarre has spoken to Ed Admin classes about the challenges of school leadership. “I will always be glad to meet with GSU students,” he said. “I know what a GSU education did for me.”

Angela Crotty (MA ‘03) is business manager of the Midlothian School District. Crotty said she first became interested in the business side of education during a course on school finance. She started her instructional career as a physical education teacher and was promoted to assistant to the superintendent during the Ed Admin program’s required practicum courses.

“It was genuine on-the-job training,” she said of her practicum experiences and how they tied in with her new position. “I worked on payroll, set up meetings, analyzed school enrollment data, and helped create budgets.”

Crotty called her professors “true education practitioners” who share their knowledge of school administration with students. “Theory is important, but you have to understand the connection between theory and practice,” she said. “Many of the professors are still working in the schools. They can tell you what you can expect as a school administrator and how to deal with real-life situations.”

Ed Admin classes meet as cohorts in schools throughout GSU’s service area. The Lincoln-Way high school system, for example, has hosted regular cohorts for a number of years. Crotty said the system is a real strength of GSU’s program.

“You get to build relationships with the other students in your cohort,” she said. “We had a very diverse group from different types of schools and that was great.”

Crotty said the affordability of the GSU program is important, too. “I know there are private schools that offer educational administration programs too, but GSU is so much more reasonable. You get to have an awesome education at an affordable cost.”

Angela Crotty
Business Manager of the Midlothian School District

Principal and Superintendent
photos by Mary Compton
Your Alumni Association

Support your GSU Alumni Association with Premium Membership.

- Enjoy the many benefits associated with Premium Member status
- Take pride knowing you are assisting the Alumni Association in providing a wide range of programs throughout the year
- Join clubs or participate in other events and activities
- Reconnect with classmates, make new friends, and help promote the university to others

A donation of $50 or more entitles you to Premium Member status. Or, show your ultimate support of GSU by becoming a Life Member with a $650 donation. Use the enclosed envelope to make your tax deductible donation (be sure to check the Alumni Association box).

For a list of benefits visit www.govst.edu/alumni or call the Alumni Relations Office at 708.534.4128.

Volunteer Program

Giving, Service, Unity (GSU) – Volunteer Today

The mission of the university, in part, is to promote the social and economic development of its service region.

Show your GSU Spirit while giving back to the community in a way that is important to you. Volunteer at an organization of your choice in the name of GSU. Wear your GSU t-shirt, send us a picture, and tell us what you did. It’s that easy.

Whatever service you participate in—whether it’s with your peers, your family, your office, or even alone—get involved and make a difference.

GSU t-shirts are available to order through the Alumni Association for $15.

Call 708.534.4128 for details.
Governors State Begins $22.6 Million Science Renovation Project

Governors State University is welcoming a new era in science education with the start of a renovation project bringing world-class laboratories and classrooms to GSU’s campus.

When the $22.6 million renovation of E and F buildings is complete, new, state-of-the-art facilities will serve students and faculty in biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, nursing, communications disorders, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. A $2.3 million grant from the National Science Foundation will also fund the improvement of the biology program’s academic research labs, to be used by students and faculty.

In a ceremony signaling the start of the project, GSU President Elaine P. Maimon and Board of Trustees members symbolically “tore down the walls” of the university’s science wing. They were joined by more than 150 students, university employees, community members, and dignitaries.

Dr. Maimon thanked Governor Pat Quinn and the General Assembly for passing “Illinois Works” legislation in 2009, making the renovation project possible. Quinn signed the papers releasing the funds to the Capital Development Board in June, 2010. She also thanked other members of the GSU community – students, faculty, government officials, and business and community leaders – for their support and for never giving up on the project.

The total area to be renovated comprises approximately 76,000 square feet of space. The new space will include six research labs, 11 teaching labs, 12 classrooms, nine prep/store rooms, and a new lecture hall that seats 90 students.
Improvements Bring Safety, Beauty to Campus

GSU’s magnificent wind turbine is the most prominent among several campus improvements completed in 2011. Besides the 152-foot wind turbine, GSU added attractive, informative signage, replaced exterior lighting, and improved interior roadways and parking lots.

The wind turbine – which bears a remarkable resemblance to GSU’s triad logo – immediately changed the campus landscape. The structure is extremely pleasing, both aesthetically and as the latest symbol of the university’s dedication to environmental sustainability.

Financed, in part, by a $153,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the wind turbine will annually produce 141,650 of kilowatt hours of electricity, and about 36 percent of power at GSU’s Family Development Center. President Elaine P. Maimon said children at the FDC are in close proximity to the wind turbine every day and, as a result, are learning valuable lessons about environmental responsibility.

Other improvements on campus make GSU safer, more attractive, and easier to navigate.

The new signage offers colorful, clear directions inside classroom buildings and elsewhere on campus. Roadways on the east side of campus were completely reconstructed, with improved access at the Crawford Avenue entrance and into parking lots.

Finally, the university’s free shuttle bus service – which bring students and staff to and from the Metra station and other nearby locations – have new graphics and orange highlights that reflect GSU’s new logo and branding.
Pointing the Way to Academic Success

The Dual Degree Program (DDP), a unique partnership between Governors State University and eight Chicagoland community colleges, provides an excellent pathway for full-time students to earn quality, accessible, affordable associate and bachelor’s degrees close to home. The DDP addresses the region’s need for a highly educated workforce and the nation’s agenda to increase the number of citizens with college degrees.

In its inaugural year, GSU’s groundbreaking Dual Degree Program (DDP) has been recognized as a national model for degree completion by Dr. Martha Kanter, Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. The Kresge Foundation awarded GSU an $875,000 grant to strengthen the DDP program, saluting “the university’s efforts to develop creative pathways to increase degree completion.” More than 200 students from GSU’s eight community college partners are enrolled in the program.

DDP students are guaranteed admission to GSU. The program enables students to earn associate and bachelor’s degrees in no more than nine semesters. Students receive a locked in GSU tuition rate starting the term they enroll in the program and are eligible for GSU Promise scholarships that allow them to complete their bachelor’s degree debt-free. DDP students also receive counseling from GSU and their community colleges to ensure proper course selection and transferability.

Three DDP students—who plan to transfer to GSU this fall—recently shared their thoughts on the program.

“I signed up for the Dual Degree Program in the first semester it was offered,” says Andrew Zumhagen, a second year student at Prairie State College.

“The next semester, everyone at school was talking about it.” Andrew Zumhagen is planning his transfer to GSU this fall, after graduating with his associate degree, to pursue a bachelor’s degree in computer science. Andrew says the DDP helped him decide to transfer to GSU.
Alaa Hasan is in her second year at Moraine Valley Community College. At GSU, she plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree in communications disorders and to ultimately work in audiology, helping people who have hearing problems. Alaa found out about the DDP while visiting GSU’s website. “I was just looking at random stuff and saw the information about the Dual Degree Program,” she says.

“I thought it looked awesome—you get to be admitted to both schools, and receive help so that you can make a smooth transfer.”

Kayla Randolph-Clark, a second year student at Joliet Junior College, considers herself a non-traditional student—she is 27 and very busy, with two jobs. She typically takes 15 hours of coursework at JJC, and is also a student trustee. She enrolled in the Dual Degree Program as soon as she learned it was offered. “The DDP advisors have been very helpful,” she says.

“They’ve answered all my questions about classes I’ll need for the rest of my college career.”

After graduating from GSU, Kayla plans to attend law school.

By Tom Houlihan
Staying Connected Through Alumni Clubs

Recent club activities:

The Alumni Book Club meets the fourth Thursday of each month at GSU and review the current book choice. Recent book reviews include *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, *The Warmth of Other Suns, The Black Dahlia*, and many more. Books are chosen by the club and selections are posted on the alumni website two months in advance of each discussion.

The Alumni Artforum Club is hosting an alumni art show beginning April 16. Other events include the Drums and Rattles workshop and a visit to the Chicago Arts show at the Merchandise Mart.

The Addiction Studies Alumni Club meets monthly. On March 28, they hosted a reception during the IAODAPCA Spring Conference. Future plans include a workshop on Opioid Dependence on May 12 and a Recovery Walk on September 22.

The newly formed Alumni Health Administration Club hosted a networking reception during the ACHE Congress on Healthcare Leadership on March 20, downtown Chicago.

If you like to dance (or want to learn to dance) you might like to join the Alumni Dance Club. The club hosted a series of classes last fall for line dancing, stepping, Zumba, and belly dancing. Plans are underway for the next series of classes.

Other clubs include: Communications, Educators, Entrepreneur, Golf, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Travel.

Visit the alumni website at [www.govst.edu/alumni](http://www.govst.edu/alumni) for a full list of clubs and join one (or more) today!
Alumni Events


For the first time ever, alumni and friends attended the June Crosstown Classic, the epic annual battle between the Chicago White Sox and the Chicago Cubs. The group enjoyed a fabulous pre-game buffet and then cheered on their favorite team. Alumni and guests also watched the Chicago White Sox battle the Kansas City Royals in September.

In August, alumni took to Lake Michigan on the Mystic Blue, for a special Chicago Air and Water Show cruise. Low visibility interfered with the air portion of the show, but the lunch, party, and camaraderie were enjoyed by all.

Thriller: The Legend Continues celebrated the music of pop-icon Michael Jackson at the GSU Center for Performing Arts in October. Alumni were joined by “Michael” and his entourage after the show and danced the night away.

The National Broadway Touring Production of The Color Purple provided an electric ending to an evening that included a delicious buffet dinner and a university update from President Maimon.
Got Grandkids?
Governors State University’s Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park (NMSP) offers the chance to “let ‘em run,” with its neatly mown paths, remarkable works of art, free parking, and free admission year round.

If you’re looking for a more structured experience instead, attend one of the NMSP’s Summer of Sculpture (SOS) 2012 events:

Kids Kolors & Kites
Sunday, June 24—2 to 5 p.m.
Discover the thrill of kite flying in the park! Kite kits available for $5 and up. Chicago Kite Co. is a partner for this event.
Free docent led tours available.

Sculpture Rocks!
Sunday, July 15—2 to 5 p.m.
Park docents will assist kids in making sculpture from natural and man-made materials. $5 fee for materials.
Free docent led tours available.

For Grown-Ups Only
Looking for something more “grown-up?” Consider attending Carts&Cocktails in September.

An autumn afternoon, a glass of wine, a golf cart, and great art. What’s not to like? Details available later this summer.

Visit the www.govst.edu/sculpture, like the NMSP on Facebook or become a Pathfinder to keep up with park activities.

Ladies, Gentlemen, Boys and Girls of All Ages...

Change is in the air at GSU’s Center for Performing Arts. Theatre director Burt Dikelsky retired in the fall after nearly 17 years with CPA. He built an extremely strong and highly regarded name for the theatre and his contributions to the university, the community, and the region will be missed.

But fear not — the university recently hired another seasoned theatre professional to carry the torch. Lana Rogachevskaya will lead the GSU Center beginning in June. As a pianist, arts educator, and manager, she combines her passion for business with her love of the performing arts.

Lana became an American citizen in 1998 after her family emigrated from Kharkov, Ukraine to New York City.

During her professional career, Lana has worked with the American Russian Young Artists Orchestra and Amirus Chamber Players, the theatrical, Richard Frankel Productions, the Second Stage Theatre, the Tanglewood Music Center, the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, and Serino Coyne advertising agency where she implemented media plans for Lincoln Center Theater.

Lana notes, “I’m looking forward to working with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and patrons to create exciting cultural programs, making our community the best place to live and learn.”

GSU Center patrons can expect another fantastic season. This summer, the Southland Area Theatre Ensemble will present Legally Blonde the Musical, their fourth summer stock production. From cultural standouts like Celtic Crossroads and the Muntu Dance Theatre to crowd favorites like a sing-a-long Sound of Music, and The Nativity, the 2012-2013 season promises something for everyone.

Arts Alive
A year after a devastating earthquake leveled vast sections of Haiti, Mercedes Kane brought a film crew to the impoverished island nation. Kane (MFA ’09), an independent filmmaker, wanted to show the world heartache and hope in Haiti following the January, 2010 disaster.

Kane’s recently-completed documentary, *Today We Saw the Face of God*, focuses on a Chicago-area group that was on a medical mission in Haiti when the earthquake struck. Kane is director and producer of the 68-minute film.

“I wanted this to be shown through their eyes,” she said. Kane also wanted to show the continuing hardships in Haiti, the Western Hemisphere’s poorest country.

On the day of the quake, the medical mission, led by nursing instructor Sue Magnuson Walsh, was working in a remote clinic in Gramothe, and preparing to leave for home the next day. Kane’s sister-in-law, Sarah Kane, was a member of Walsh’s team. Although the clinic was not damaged, members of Walsh’s group felt the ground shake. Before long, hundreds of victims came to the facility looking for medical attention. For the next several days, Walsh and members of her group worked at the clinic as first responders, treating serious injuries, burns, and infections.

Kane knew she wanted to make a film about the earthquake and the medical mission’s experiences. She was also inspired by Magnuson’s book, *Walking in Broken Shoes*. Kane enlisted the help of other Chicago filmmakers, who agreed to accompany her to Haiti on the one year anniversary of the quake. Prior to the trip, she started filming interviews with members of Walsh’s group. Fifteen members of the original mission made the trip back in January, 2011.

For some members of the mission, the aftermath of the quake was still traumatic. “It was like nothing that anyone had ever seen before. No one is ever prepared for this kind of disaster. It was way beyond anything that anyone could have imagined. It changed everyone’s life.”

Kane and her film crew needed to bring all their equipment to the island, along with generators and backup generators to ensure they would never lose power during filming. At trip’s end, Kane had 90 hours of film.

Just going to Haiti changes your life, Kane says. “We were at a clinic up in the mountains. To get there, people have to walk a long distance, and many bring their children with them. They don’t have good shoes. Then, when they get there, they have to wait five or six hours to see a doctor. You think about going to the doctor here, and how it is such a big deal to wait for a half hour. The people in Haiti are so incredibly patient, and they appreciate the care they receive so much.”

With the film completed, Kane has shifted into its marketing and distribution. She is trying to get it accepted at film festivals and looking for social media support to make that happen. More information on the film is available at [www.todaywesawthefaceofgod.com](http://www.todaywesawthefaceofgod.com).

Kane, a producer of corporate stage and video producer at Kindle Communications in Chicago, praised Governors State’s MFA program in Independent Film and Digital Imaging. “(Professors) Dan Nearing and Sang-Hoon Lee are masters of their craft. I am where I am today because of them.”
On sunny days – and that’s the case most of the time in San Diego – **Gale Filter** can hop on his bike and take a short ride to the Pacific Ocean. Arriving at the beach, he’ll dismount and start looking for pollution that may have come ashore.

Filter (MA ’75) is executive director of San Diego Coastkeeper, a not-for-profit group dedicated to the preservation of waterways and coastal areas in California’s southwest corner. He was named to the post last summer after retiring as a prosecutor who was known for his tough enforcement of environmental laws.

Coastkeeper is a “waterkeeper” organization; there are now nearly 200 such groups around the world working to keep rivers and coastal areas free from pollution. They are modeled on the first Riverkeeper group, formed in the 1980s to improve the Hudson River ecosystem.

Originally from Chicago’s south side, Filter moved to California when his father took a job in the missile program at Vandenberg Air Force Base. He graduated from high school in Santa Barbara and received a bachelor’s degree from Humboldt State University in northern California.

Filter followed his parents back to Illinois when they moved to New Lenox in the early ’70s. After looking for a graduate program, he decided to attend GSU, which had opened just a few years earlier.

GSU was filled with young, enthusiastic professors, Filter remembers. “It had an incredible public policy program,” he says. “My years at GSU had a huge impact on what I have done with my life.” He graduated with a Master’s in Public Administration, then taught political science and sociology at Joliet Junior College for 10 years. After that, he moved back to California to attend law school at San Diego State University.

A lifelong environmentalist, Filter started his official environmental work in California in 1991 when he was a prosecutor in the Imperial County District Attorney’s office. Along with prosecuting murder and serious felony cases, Filter took on environmental crimes and prosecuted people responsible for harming the environment. From 1999 to 2003, Filter was the environmental project director for the California District Attorneys Association. During the Schwarzenegger administration, he served as deputy director for Enforcement and Emergency Response at California’s Department of Toxic Substances Control, part of the state Environmental Protection Agency.

San Diego Coastkeeper has an impressive environmental record since its founding in 1995. The group has worked to improve sewage and urban runoff policies; as a result, countywide beach advisories have fallen by 77 percent since 2000. It led efforts advocating for strong marine protected areas. Coastkeeper, through volunteer cleanup activities, has helped remove more than a million pounds of debris from beaches and waterways. The group also successfully fought for the closure of a power plant that damaged the San Diego Bay ecosystem for decades.

“There is a lot of work to be done,” Filter says. “This organization has many volunteers who are very committed to preserving and protecting San Diego Bay, the beaches, and the ocean. I’m proud to be part of it.”
College of Health and Human Services Profile

Providing the Best Healthcare to America’s Veterans

By Tom Houlihan

Brian Hawkins knows the VA Medical Center in Washington, D.C. is not the nation’s largest veterans’ healthcare facility.

“But it is the most visible,” says Hawkins (MHA ’94), who was named Medical Center Director of the Washington VA Medical Center last September. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs recently toured the facility and visits by members of Congress and even the President are not uncommon. Military and healthcare officials from other countries also frequently tour the facility.

“There was a delegation today from Great Britain,” he said. “They wanted to see a large, integrated healthcare system.”

Washington VA Medical Center is an enormous operation. It has more than 2,000 employees and 80,000 veterans enrolled for care. The facility has 174 inpatient and 120 nursing home beds. In addition, there are more than a half-million outpatient visits a year. It is a teaching hospital affiliated with medical schools at Howard University, George Washington University, and Georgetown University. Washington VA Medical Center pioneered computerized patient records and is a national model for the digital conversion of health records.

“The VA provides the most comprehensive healthcare under one roof,” Hawkins says. “We are responsible for primary care, for specialized care, and outpatient services. Mental health, dental, social work – we cover the whole spectrum.”

Hawkins has worked for the Veterans Administration since 1991. After graduating from Southern Illinois University, he started working at Hines VA Hospital, just west of Chicago, as a clerk typist. Hawkins said he financed his graduate education at GSU with money he earned in the National Guard. GSU offered the only state-supported Master of Health Administration program in Illinois.

“I was living in Bolingbrook back then, and I would drive up to Hines for my job,” he says. “Then I’d drive down to GSU after work. That was some commute.”

Hawkins says he is still impressed by the quality of Governors State’s MHA program.

“I talk to my colleagues, not just in the VA, but also in the private sector, about our graduate school experiences,” he says. “When we look back at our MHA programs, none of their experiences can compare with what I got at GSU. My professors headed healthcare facilities and shared their real-life experiences with us. I still draw on the lessons I learned back then. GSU gave me an outstanding foundation.”

Hawkins remembers a saying that GSU Professor James Massey shared with his class. “I tell it to my staff all time. When you think you have problems, think of your workplace as a tree. The leaves are there, and there are a lot of them – those are all the issues on the job. But there is only one root, and that’s the problem.”

After graduating from GSU, Hawkins became a Senior Budget Analyst at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago. Since then, he has served as an administrator at VA facilities in Georgia, Tennessee, Maryland, Virginia, and Oklahoma.

Throughout his career, Hawkins has remained enthusiastic about the challenges and opportunities that come with providing quality healthcare to veterans.

“My career has been dedicated to serving our country’s veterans,” he says. “It is a privilege and an honor.”
Joe Baltz (MA ’11) is one of 17 area teachers to be honored with the Joliet Area Great Teachers Award from the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Michael Bickham (BA ’11) was named one of the ABCDE honorees for 2012 by the Orland School District 135 Board of Education. This is the first time a first-year teacher has won this award.

Alena Katsnelson (MHA ’11) is the new guest relations manager at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Tracy Plesek (MA ’10) is one of four teachers selected as Teacher of the Year by Lincoln-Way High School. Tracy is the mathematics department chair for Lincoln-Way West.

Brenda Rocha (DPN ’11) recently received the Pinnacle Leader Recognition award at the 14th annual Power of Nursing Leadership luncheon in Chicago. She was among 31 nurse leaders who were nominated for the award.

Sara Schmidt (BA ’10) is the new curriculum coordinator for the Provena Fortin Villa Learning Center in Kankakee.

Farah Baqai (BA ’00; MA ’01), a Chicago police officer, is a candidate in the Illinois Third Congressional District, which includes portions of Chicago and the west and southwest suburbs.

Ken Built (MA ’01) recently authored a book entitled Glenwood.

Cindy Croce (MA ’03) is one of 17 area teachers to be honored with the Joliet Area Great Teachers Award from the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Sgt. Dominic D’Ambrosio (BA ’08) has been named deputy chief of police for Oak Forest. Dominic has been a police officer in Oak Forest since 2002 and was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 2009.

Jason Ervin (MPA ’06) was recently elected alderman for Chicago’s 28th Ward, which includes the Garfield Park neighborhood. He also serves as an Advisory Board member for the GSU College of Business and Public Administration.

Carley Fraley (MPT ’07) is the new clinic director for the Wood Dale location of ATI Physical Therapy.

Barbara Germany (MA ’09) has been named the business manager and treasurer for the Lemont-Bromberek Combined School District 113A.

Michael Hopkins (BA ’01; MA ’02) is an attorney with the law firm of Spesia & Ayers, in Joliet, and recently became a member of the GSU Promise Committee. The Promise Committee is a group of community members assisting GSU in raising awareness and funding for the GSU Promise endowed scholarship fund.

Jeff Keller (MA ’08) is one of four teachers selected as Teacher of the Year by Lincoln-Way High School. Jeff is the mathematics department chair for Lincoln-Way East.

Debbie Kopas (MPA ’07) is the executive director of the Goldberg Administrative Center for the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District.

Sharon Kriha (MPA ’05) is a trustee on the Richton Park Village board.

Dan Yovich (MA ’75, MA ’76) has worn many hats during his full, busy life – as a U.S. Army officer, chemist, small business owner, university professor, and inventor of math games.

He says attending GSU in the 1970s was a turning point in his life. “I adored the faculty,” he says. “They all could have taught anywhere.”

At age 82, Yovich shows few signs of slowing down. He is devoting much of his time to promoting his two most recent games, Mathsuex and 26! He is marketing Mathsuex to school superintendents and mathematics teachers in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. He says the games are perfect for helping young students overcome math anxiety by keeping the mind sharp and fostering problem-solving skills.

Alumni Inventor Innovates at 82
Kimberly Lechner (MA ’03) has been appointed as assistant director of student services for Kildeer-Countryside Elementary District 96.

Cheryl Luster-Klemp (MS ’94; MS ’05) has been named interim director of nursing at South Suburban College in South Holland.

Maria Nehmer (MS ’04), recently received the Pinnacle Leader Recognition award at the 14th annual Power of Nursing Leadership luncheon in Chicago. She was among 31 nurse leaders who were nominated for the award.

Amy Smith (MA ’00) has been chosen as the new superintendent at Newark Community High School District 18, effective July 1.

Priscilla Southern (BSW ’08; MSW ’09) is a case coordinator specialist in senior services for Catholic Charities.

Scott Tingley (MA ’03) is the new principal at Lincoln-Way East High School. Previously he was the personnel director for Lincoln-Way High School District 210.

Timaka Wallace (BA ’07; MHS ’09) will travel to Swaziland, in southern Africa, in May to gain international nursing experience with villagers who are infected with HIV/AIDS. She is one of only six persons chosen from a field of 50 to participate in this experience.

Lanee Walls (MA ’02) will become the new Director of Special Education at Niles West High School beginning in July 2012. Most recently she was Superintendent of Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice School District 428.

Chasity Wells-Armstrong (BSW ’07; MSW ’08) was recognized as one of four 2011 Emerging Leader by the National Association of Social Workers Illinois chapter.

Jacqueline Whitten (MS ’01) recently received the Pinnacle Leader Recognition award at the 14th annual Power of Nursing Leadership luncheon in Chicago. She was among 31 nurse leaders who were nominated for the award.

1990s

Carol Baker (MA ’94) has been selected as one of 30 individuals nationwide to serve on the Writing Team for Next Generation Science Standards. Carol is also president of the Illinois Science Teachers Association.

William Burke (MA ’96) was recently promoted to Chief of Security for the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System.

Kimberly Dryier (MA ’94) is now the assistant superintendent for instructional services for the Consolidated High School District 230 in Illinois.

Tina Governale (BHS ’93) is one of two area teachers to be honored with the Joliet Area Great Teachers Award from the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Pat Mensendike (BA ’96) is one of two area teachers to be honored with the Joliet Area Great Teachers Award from the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Dianna Granata (BA ’91; MA ’96) recently received the Chicago Bears organization’s Heroes in the Classroom award for her work as a teacher at Evergreen Park High School.

Continued on page 20
Judith Weingartner (BSW ’98) recently became a Human Rights Investigator for the State of Illinois.

Todd Wernet (MA ‘92) was recently appointed as superintendent for the Lockport Township High School District beginning July 1.

Julia Wheaton (MA ‘96) became the new principal of Sandburg High School this past fall. She was previously the school’s associate principal.

1980s

John Cicero (MA ‘87) is executive director of the Will County Health Department, which serves nearly 700,000 residents in one of Illinois’ fastest-growing counties. Cicero oversees the work of more than 350 public health, behavioral health, medical, and support professionals.

Charles Krezwick (BA ‘88) was recently appointed as Illinois State Representative for the 37th District. His government experience includes six years as village trustee for Calumet Park and two years as acting mayor of Calumet Park. Charles is also an Air Force veteran.

Ken Pozzie (BA ‘83) is adjutant and finance officer for the Sons of the American Legion, Post 217, in Streator.

Lester Stephenson (BA ‘89) has received a master of ministry from Temple Baptist Seminary in Chattanooga, TN.

1970s

JoAnn Miller (BA ’77) was recently chosen as Administrative Coordinator for Pierce County, Wisconsin. She was previously City Manager for DeForest, Wisconsin.

Deirdre Williams (BA ‘87; MA ’96), Assistant Executive Director of Student Services at Valley View School District 365U in Romeoville and Bolingbrook will receive her Doctorate in Education Administration and Supervision from Loyola University this May.

Patty Johnson Winston (MHA ‘97) recently received her doctor in philosophy in technical communication from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Alumni Entrepreneur Provides Innovative Training to Small Businesses

Trenace Pyles Pyles (MPA ’98) was introduced to entrepreneurship in a junior achievement program in her neighborhood on the west side of Chicago. She was instantly hooked.

“Organizing a business is interesting. Creating the process and bringing your ideas from abstract to the tangible is the best thing about entrepreneurship,” says Pyles. She has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Atlanta Small Business Training Consortium, Inc. for the past 11 years. The non-profit organization provides innovative training in small business development, entrepreneurship and management strategies to individuals with small businesses who are considered disadvantaged or in low income brackets.

In addition, she is owner of TC Pyles Consulting Services, helping small business owners with marketing, promotion, accounting, tax planning, and financial development.
My GSU Story

We love to talk with our alumni. Tell us your GSU story—your memories—your experiences. We want to hear from you. Send us your news. Visit www.govst.edu/Alumni.

E-mail alumnirelations2@govst.edu or mail to GSU Alumni Relations, 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484.

GSU Around the World

Show your GSU pride. Wherever you are in the world, don your GSU t-shirt, sweatshirt, or other garb and send your picture to alumnirelations2@govst.edu or mail to GSU Alumni Relations, 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484.

GSU t-shirts are available to order through the Alumni Association for $15. Call 708.534.4128 for details.

Earning a Debt-Free Degree: The GSU Promise

Degree completion is imperative in today’s competitive global economy. However, many students who enter community college intending to earn a bachelor’s degree fail to do so, in part due to the fear of burdening themselves with crushing debt.

Governors State University, with its longtime commitment to excellence and affordability, and strong community college partnerships, is uniquely positioned to ensure an affordable, seamless pathway between associate and bachelor’s degrees.

The GSU Promise Scholarship enables Dual Degree Program students (see page 10) to complete a debt-free bachelor’s degree. The first GSU Promise Scholarships will be awarded this fall as the university welcomes its inaugural Dual Degree Program students.

“With the GSU Promise, we can provide debt-free bachelor’s to qualified local community college transfer students,” President Maimon remarks. “I can think of no better way to fulfill our mission.”

The GSU Promise Scholarship program requires additional philanthropic support to meet the needs of all eligible students. To learn more about the GSU Promise or making a donation, contact the GSU Foundation at 708.534.4105 or foundation@govst.edu.
Governors State continues to rethink education on a local and national level with innovative ideas like the GSU Promise and Dual Degree Program. Your support ensures a bright future for the university, its students, and the community.

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