Charter School Update: GSU Keeps Fighting for the Kid’s Best Interests

The Governors State University Charter School will not open on September 3, as planned. The charter has been revoked, and the children have been returned to schools in Crete-Monee District 201-U. The District has rebuffed offers from charter school teachers to help in the transition. The District has also turned its back on an editorial proposal from The Daily Southtown to keep the school open one more year. Rather, the District has launched a program of disinformation, alleging that performance of the Charter School students is below expectations. The charter school teachers were outraged by those allegations. The Daily Southtown published their letter to the editor. Their letter is attached as a separate document to GSUniverse. In their letter, the teachers quote Mel Webb, an educational consultant, who said, “The fact that your students observed scores [TerraNova 2nd Edition test scores] are much higher than their anticipated scores [In View Ability test scores] indicates that these students have learned more and are achieving at a rate higher than expected -- your school is doing a good job.” The university is preparing to return to court to seek an administrative review of the revocation of the school’s charter.

Enrollment Up After a Five Year Decline

For the first time in 5 years, enrollment for the Fall Trimester is up over the preceding year (see table.) Why the enrollment increase this year? Larry Polselli, executive director enrollment services, said, “We’re focusing on basic blocking and tackling, like contacting each prospect three times, by mail, e-mail, and telemarketing. We’re building closer relationships and partnerships with the community colleges. For example, we’re planning a special event this fall for the ‘influencers’ and the presidents of our partner community colleges. And we’re being creative in offering off-location and distance learning programs.”

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<th>TABLE: Fall Trimester Activity (1998-2002)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1998 - 6,164</td>
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<td>1999 - 6,150</td>
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<td>2000 - 6,105</td>
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<td>2001 - 5,860</td>
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<td>2002 - Up 1.24%</td>
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Student Newspaper Returns to GSU

The first issue of the new student newspaper was published this week under the leadership of Carole Sharwarko, editor-in-chief, with support from Faculty Advisor, John DeYounge. Reaction was overwhelmingly positive. “We’ll begin with a monthly schedule, but we hope to go bi-monthly as soon as possible,” Sharwarko said. She was annoyed that the first issue contained an error in fact, and immediately sent an e-mail to students, faculty, and staff correcting the story. The e-mail read:

“The staff of the new GSU student newspaper hopes everyone is enjoying the first issue.
“Unfortunately, in the story regarding the tuition increase, there was an error. It was reported that enrollment was expected to be down 29.9% next fiscal year. This number actually relates to another aspect of the budget. “In fact, enrollment is currently up for the Fall trimester. Through 8/25/02, enrollment was up by 1.49% from the same day last year, while registered credit hours are up by .58%.
“The student newspaper apologizes for any confusion because of this error.
“We want to get the facts right,” she said, “and if we make a mistake, we’ll correct it immediately. That’s the only way to have any credibility.” (As an aside, GSUniverse notes that one of the world’s great newspapers, The Washington Post, routinely carries four to six column inches of corrections everyday.)

Name That Paper
There’s a contest to name the student paper. Winner will receive $100. Faculty and staff as well as students are eligible. GSUniverse offered some of the rejects from its own contest several months ago, including: GSU Penguin, and Gazoo Gazette. “No thanks,” Sharwarko told us. She can be reached at the Media Lab, ext. 5277.

GSU ScholarSHIP Sets Sail
This summer, Dr. John Yunger, CAS, arranged for six students to take part in a study tour of Belize in Central America. They spent eight days in rainforests, three days on a barrier reef, and one day in an underground cave. The students, working with local farmers and naturalists, collected data on bird populations, contemporary citrus farms, and areas designated for tourism. The goal was to assist indigenous people in developing economically viable land use and management guidelines.

September 3 Townhall Meeting on Fee Hikes
On Tuesday, September 3 at 3 p.m., the GSU Student Senate will hold a townhall meeting to discuss the upcoming referendum on increasing student fees. President Stuart Fagan and Jeffrey Slovak, assistant director, University Planning, will discuss the referendum. The referendum vote is scheduled for September 4 and 5. Students will vote on raising mandatory fees from $87 to $96 a trimester, and for a strategic academic enhancement fee of $10 a credit hour up to 12 credit hours. Some mandatory fees have remained the same for more than 10 years. The Student Senate supports the increases.

9-11 Remembered
The university will hold a special ceremony on September 11 at noon to honor the victims of last year’s terrorist attacks. The ceremony will be held in the Hall of Governors.

First Fridays
The Office of the Provost and Student Life are hosting a “First Friday” Social Hour on Friday, September 6 from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. in the Student Life Commons. As always no speeches, no program. Just conversation and good food.

Today’s Special: Windows XP
Information Technology Services (ITS) has installed the Windows XP Professional Operating System and Office XP Desktop Applications in the ACS Lab* and the Library Training Room (D2401-B). ITS is currently developing a plan to migrate the colleges and departments to Windows XP and Office XP throughout the academic year. * The ACS Lab classrooms and open lab, D2438, D2430, and D2431, are running Windows XP technologies. Other classrooms in the lab will remain on Windows 98 and Office 2000 until the PCs are upgraded to accommodate an XP installation.