We Just Pitched Back-to-Back No-Hitters
The Illinois State Board of Education has formally notified GSU that the university and its teacher education programs have been fully accredited through Spring of 2009. This is in addition to the NCATE accreditation the teacher education programs received earlier this year. In both cases, the examiners did not identify any areas of weakness. “That’s objective evidence that programs at GSU now meet the standards of superior academic quality,” President Stuart Fagan said. “The good work of all the people in the education programs makes us all proud to be associated with Governors State.”

Seventeen Down, One to Go
The master’s program in Health Administration is well along in the process of receiving accreditation from the Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration. The program has completed its self-study. The university has been notified that we may have a site visit as early as March of next year. The Strategic Plan calls for each academic program to seek accreditation from an independent accrediting body in cases where there is such a body. To date, 17 academic programs have received accreditation. When Health Administration receives its accreditation, GSU will have run the table. As for the 28 other programs, where there is no independent accrediting agency, the Strategic Plan requires completion of a self-study and a review by an independent examiner.

Board of Trustees Meets, Acts
The Board of Trustees, at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 12, approved the contract negotiated with the International Union of Operating Engineers; concurred that each non-negotiated employee whose job performance was rated in the highest two categories receive a day off in Fiscal Year 2004; approved a crop-share lease with Fuller-Krapf Farms through February 28, 2005; and approved the purchase of playground equipment for the Family Development Center funded by a federal earmark. The architectural firm, LCM, the university’s master planners, presented plans for the renovation of the E and F wings. More details on the proposed plans in a future issue.

Fagan Sounds Alarm for Trustees
Given the ongoing pressures on GSU’s revenue because of cuts in state appropriations and the possibility of a mid-year rescission, President Fagan told the trustees, “Our biggest challenge going forward is to not allow concerns about the budget erode morale or distract faculty and staff. The greatest danger we face is that people may get bogged down spending more time worrying over what might happen next than on deciding what to do next.” He promised to address the systemic problems that are obstacles to progress and said he would discuss his plans for restructuring, reorganization, changes in reporting relationships, a review of academic programs, and new ways of delivering services to the university community at Convocation on October 9. Fagan also told the trustees that GSU would invest in its strategic plan and reviewed the investment priorities for the Strategic Initiative Fee, as reported in your August 15 newsletter.
The Students Speak
More than 30 volunteers telephoned students just admitted to GSU for the Fall Trimester to ask what problems they may have encountered. The phonathon is one piece of a program designed to improve retention.

"Advising was a major issue," said Larry Polselli, executive director of admission and student recruitment. "Some students complained that they couldn't reach advisors, and that advisors didn't return phone calls." Polselli added, "I'm not pointing fingers, I'm just the messenger. But advising is a problem for some programs, and it's an issue we need to address for the Winter Trimester."

Enrollment Inches Upwards
To date, enrollment for the Fall Trimester is down by only about two percent, as measured by headcount. However, credit hours are up nearly two percent. The College of Health Professions is the university's shining star, President Fagan told the trustees. Headcount is up 8.4 percent and credit hours are up nearly 18 percent.

Why the Enrollment Shortfall?
GSU has cut classes that appeal to non-degree seeking students and those who take fewer than six credit hours. As a result, enrollment for non-degree seeking students is down 28.7 percent, undergraduate very part-time enrollment is down 22.1 percent and graduate very part-time down 8.3 percent. "That tells me that the deans and the program chairs did a very good job in managing the schedule in ways that minimize the impact on students," President Fagan told the trustees.