May 9 Board of Trustees meeting

Board honors former chair Jack Beaupre and student trustee Kayla Randolph-Clark for service

Trustee Jack Beaupre’s tenure as board chair was marked with a celebratory breakfast Friday morning prior to the board meetings. Trustee Beaupre served as board chair from 2011-2014 and is credited with leading the board through a period of transition, renewal and expansion.

During his term, he dealt with the after effects of the Great Recession, requiring a great commitment for all trustees. Under his guidance, the university designed, planned and built Prairie Place. And with his support and leadership, GSU moved forward with a redesign of General Education, including the curriculum for the first freshman class.

Beaupre expressed his gratitude but also complimented the university “team” for its accomplishments. “We are on the right path. Everybody in this room should be proud of what GSU is doing. You ought to applaud yourself,” he said.

Chair Brian D. Mitchell thanked Mr. Beaupre for his ongoing service and commitment to the board. “Jack has shown us tremendous leadership over the years, tremendous guidance.”

Mr. Beaupre’s wife, daughter and son-in-law also attended the breakfast. Mr. Beaupre, who was named to a six-year term in 2011, will continue his exceptional service on the GSU Board of Trustees.

Finishing her term on the board was student trustee Kayla Randolph-Clark, who is graduating this semester with a BA in business administration – finance. She will attend law school at Emory University in the fall.

In her farewell remarks, Ms. Randolph-Clark thanked the other trustees for treating her as a colleague. She also expressed her gratitude for her
experiences on the board and at GSU as a whole.

“I learned quite a bit from everyone. I wanted to publicly thank President Maimon… you educated me even before I registered for my classes. I sat next to you after my scholarship speech and you said to me ‘A good speaker always says something about that event.’ I feel like I hold what you have taught me when I leave here. I am very honored to be a part of GSU,” she said.

**New chair begins term**

Trustee Brian D. Mitchell formally assumed duties as chair of the board.

Mr. Mitchell said years of planning will come to fruition in the next few months with the arrival of GSU’s first freshman class, the opening of the first residence hall, the renovation of the library and the academic computing services lab. He complimented faculty, staff and administration for being able to oversee such projects all the while completing the university’s everyday operations.

Mr. Mitchell also praised the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park and its director and curator Geoff Bates for being named one of the “25 Most Amazing Sculpture Gardens in the World” as compiled by www.bestvalueschools.com. “We know what a treasure this park is and how much work the university has put into making it grow. It’s nice to have someone else recognize it as well,” he said.

Mr. Mitchell said he was impressed with the work being done on GSU’s strategic plan and that he looked forward to continuing discussions. He said the forward thinking the university has exhibited as a whole must continue, especially in the wake of declining financial support from the state. The university also must be ready to meet the challenges that face higher education in the United States. He said he is confident that, with the guidance of the administration and board, that GSU is poised to meet those challenges while delivering a high-quality education to students and being a public square for the region.

Mr. Mitchell congratulated President Maimon for recently receiving the 2014 Chicagoland ATHENA Leadership Award and the 2014 Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Women of Excellence Mother’s Day award. He also expressed his happiness on seeing the increased publicity GSU is generating.

He concluded by saying that at a recent meeting of regional mayors and municipal managers in Springfield, Governors State University was a frequent topic of discussion. Governor Pat Quinn told him that the university “is the gem of the Southland. And we expect to keep it the gem. Let us know what you need to keep moving forward.” Mr. Mitchell said he reassured the governor that, with the help of the board, faculty and the administration, GSU will continue to make people of the Southland proud and fulfill the
educational needs of its students.

**Freshman enrollment and housing**

President Elaine P. Maimon updated the board on freshman enrollment and applications to Prairie Place. To date, GSU has received 640 freshman applications and has admitted 280. Most gratifying, Maimon said, were the 120 students who have confirmed they will attend GSU in the fall. She also said she was proud of the diversity of the freshman class.

“Financial aid plays a significant role in students’ decisions” President Maimon noted. “The university is processing financial aid packages as quickly as possible. We expect that our confirmed number of students will increase as packages are completed.

“These numbers are strong indications that we will reach our goal of a maximum of 270 freshmen in our first class,” she said.

President Maimon reported that the number of applications from international students has increased. “I am gratified by the numbers. We are beginning to see the payoff from our international outreach.”

President Maimon said she expects many of the international students who enroll in the fall will live in Prairie Place.

**Stuenkel Road repairs**

Stuenkel Road will be closed this week for some much-needed resurfacing. But the work being done is patch work, not the complete reconstruction and widening, including a center turn lane, that is planned for the future.

After a recent conversation President Maimon had with Ed Paesel, executive director of the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, Paesel and the association’s deputy executive director of transportation and infrastructure, Tom Vander Woude, put together a plan to make construction a reality. “It was one of the greatest examples of regional civic action I’ve witnessed,” Maimon said. “They saw this as a regional problem, not the problem of one municipality.”

For the restructuring to move forward, the project needed the support of Will County. Maimon said Will County executive Larry Walsh supported the plan and showed great leadership. She said Walsh emphasized that repairing the road was a regional problem that required a regional solution.

Complete reconstruction and widening could begin as soon as 2015. Maimon called Paesel and Walsh her “heroes” for demonstrating regional leadership.

**Full-time enrollment increases**
With GSU adding more daytime classes in the fall, GSU has seen a significant increase in the number of full-time students registering for classes.

Provost Deborah Bordelon said of the 1,646 students who have registered during the current early registration period thus far, 34 percent are registered for 12 credit hours or more. That is a 22 percent increase over last year in the number of full-time students registered.

Freshmen registering for the fall were not included in the numbers.

Provost Bordelon said in the past, students may have found it more difficult to attend school full time because of classes being offered primarily in the evening.

“We’re better serving our transfer students,” Bordelon said. “We’re still offering evening undergraduate classes and online classes. The flexibility has really allowed our students to work around their schedules.”

Bordelon said better scheduling and an increase in full-time student enrollment will have a positive impact on degree completion rates. Easier scheduling will allow students to complete studies in less time.

GSU is also using its facilities to greater capacity and Bordelon complimented the registrar’s office for facilitating scheduling.

Thirteen faculty members granted title of associate professor and tenure

The board of trustees voted unanimously to award tenure and the title of associate professor to the following faculty:

Jennifer Armstrong – College of Health and Human Services
John Cook – College of Education
Daniel Cortese – College of Arts and Sciences
Shea Dunham – College of Education
Olumide Ijose – College of Business and Public Administration
Raven James – College of Health and Human Services
Tywanda Giles – College of Education
Elizabeth Johnson – College of Arts and Sciences
David Rhea – College of Arts and Sciences
Teri Sosa – College of Education
Andrius Tamulis – College of Arts and Sciences
Stephen Wagner – College of Business and Public Administration
Jason Zingsheim – College of Arts and Sciences