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Holiday Letter

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December 12, 2011

Dear Members of the GSU Community:

As fall semester grades are posted and the holidays approach, let's take a moment to reflect on our work at Governors State University. At our campus holiday party, with bright decorations and candles, we participated in the tradition of creating light at the darkest time of the calendar year. We are fortunate that our work is devoted to the light of knowledge. I want to extend my personal thanks to everyone who keeps that light alive: faculty and staff who enlighten our campus; facilities workers who literally light our pathways; and students who are open to illumination and then shine their own light on our communities.

It's an historic time for GSU. On December 6, the Illinois Board of Higher Education approved our proposal to become a full-service, comprehensive regional public university, admitting first-year students in 2014. Two weeks earlier, the Kresge Foundation endorsed our Dual Degree Program with a grant of \$875,000. At the December 9 Board meeting, the trustees approved plans for student housing—a true living/learning community. We are now poised to integrate the highest quality transfer experience with the most exciting, research-based freshman core program in the nation. I'm proud to tell you that Caroline Altman Smith, our Kresge program officer, called us a “beacon of change” in higher education.

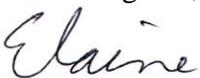
“Beacon” is a wonderful word, meaning a light source that provides guidance. A university has a special responsibility to be a beacon of light in the darkness. And, there is no doubt about the darkness around us: the economy, scandals in high office and even at other universities. I always think of something that a friend and former college president once said to me: “In university life, we have the privilege of conscience.” We work in an environment that is constructed to nurture students and to promote the open, free exchange of ideas. That privilege requires special ethical responsibilities from all of us.

I have always believed that feelings of gratitude are good for the soul. And this is the time of year to say thank-you. I deeply appreciate leading a campus infused with a sense of social justice, moral responsibility, and a strong work ethic. Many thanks to each of you for your dedication to GSU and your zest for transformative experiences. ERP, DDP, lower division, the renovation of the E & F wings—all are exciting but also demanding projects.

Mort and I hope that all of you find time during the holiday period for relaxation and reflection on both our abundance and our challenges.

Happy Holidays.

Warm regards,



Elaine P. Maimon, Ph.D.