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One-of-a-Kind College Experience Debuts at Governors State University

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From: [Gladstone, Lindsay](#)
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Attachments: [GSU Freshman Honors Release.pdf](#)

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For Immediate Release

Attachment: Release and Schedule of events for August 22 Celebration of the First Freshman class

One-of-a-Kind College Experience Debuts at Governors State University

New freshman experience cited as a national model – where students come first

University Park, IL – The experts have weighed in – Governors State University will be offering a freshman year that can't be found anywhere in the country, the state or Chicagoland.

“Through a rigorous planning process, we have been able to overcome some of the issues facing all universities - including budgeting – to deliver a freshman experience that has no match – in the region and the nation,” said GSU president Elaine P. Maimon.

Dr. Carol Geary Schneider, president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities agrees. “It is truly instructive to watch as Governors State now unveils a new and learning-centered approach to budgeting. By putting the learning students need centrally in view as the university sets budget priorities, Governors State is providing a much-needed model for colleges and universities across the country and for policy leaders as well.”

John Gardner, President, and Betsy Barefoot, Senior Scholar, of the Institute of Excellence in Undergraduate Education also agree: "Rarely does any university both take the opportunity and make the effort to create an ‘only one in the country’ beginning college experience quite like this: drawing from the best research findings and best practice from the most knowledgeable experts in college student success, including the University's own experts, the University has really done it! These fortunate first-year students will experience

a unique foundational experience the equal to or better potentially than any with which we have been associated—and to which it has been an honor to contribute to such an historic educational development process.”

GSU Breaks the Mold for Freshman Year

- Small classes – Freshman composition limited to 15 students; all other classes limited to 30
- All freshman classes taught by full-time faculty – No teaching assistants.
- Students will be organized into cohorts following a structured core curriculum; general education courses are infused with cross-cutting strategies: writing, citizenship, ethics, innovative thinking.
- Tuition – most affordable of any Illinois public university
- Safety – One of top ten safest college campuses in Illinois

The New Face of Honors Education

At GSU the Honors Program represents not only academic talent, but diversity. Of the freshmen who will be participating in the Honors Program, 44% are Hispanic, 44% African American, 5% Asian and 5% Caucasian. More than 60% graduated in the top 10% of their high school class.

The Honors Program invites GSU students from all academic disciplines to participate.

This forward-thinking program offers opportunities for students to be more engaged in their studies, with a variety of formal and informal learning settings. It is designed to make a difference in each student’s life and provide motivation to go a step further, as well as maintain high expectations in reaching the fullest potential.

“The GSU Honors Program couples unique honors seminars and faculty mentoring with real-world experiences to create an enhanced academic program for our diverse population of high-achieving undergraduates” says Dr. David Rhea Director, University Honors Program and Associate Professor of Communications. “In The Honors Program, undergraduate students develop leadership skills, explore challenging subject matter and develop their own special talents and proficiencies.”

A key factor in GSU university life is that honors students find the university to be

uniquely supportive of them personally. The result: many go beyond what they think they can reach and accomplish.

The celebration to welcome GSU's first freshman class will take place on August 22. For a full listing of all events see attached.

Governors State University was founded in 1969 as an upper division university. Today, as a four-year university, more than 5,500 students undergraduate and graduate students choose from 64 degree and 24 certificate programs that prepare them for success in business, industry, healthcare, the arts and education. GSU is a public university located 40 miles south of Chicago in University Park, IL offering the most affordable undergraduate tuition in the state. GSU is committed to embracing diversity and academic excellence.

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