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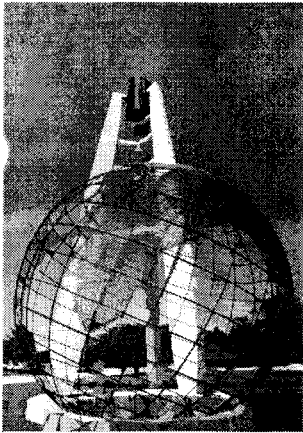
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GSU Universe

Governors State University's Weekly Newsletter

February 24 – February 28, 2003

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"Bad times have a scientific value. These are occasions a good learner would not miss." Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Axe Falls: \$2.1 Million Rescission Mandated for FY03

Governor Blagojevich informed higher education that he would require a rescission of eight percent in the appropriated budget for the current fiscal year. In the case of Governors State, that amounts to a cut of \$2.1 million. News was received very late on the evening of Thursday, February 27, only four months before the end of the fiscal year. "We had planned for a rescission all along," President Fagan said, "though not one of this magnitude and not this late in the year. We are identifying our options and will report to the community on our plans once they are finalized. Please share any cost-saving ideas with me or Jeff Slovak, or send them to our hotline, GSUfacts@govst.edu. Clearly, this is a difficult challenge, but one I am confident that we can manage without serious disruption to our academic programs or the interests of our students."

Making the GSU Case in Springfield

As reported, GSU Board Chair Bruce Friefeld and President Stuart Fagan will testify before the Senate Appropriations Committee on March 4 and the House Appropriations Committee on March 13. They will report on the consequences of the actions GSU has had to take over the past two and one-half years to meet a series of budget cuts, rescissions, and state imposed charges for health insurance costs. They will emphasize that when allocating funds, the state should take into consideration the differences among the state universities. The policy of one-size-fits-all, which the state has followed in budget matters, unfairly impacts schools such as Governors State.

Running a Tight Ship

Governor Blagojevich has criticized higher education for waste, extravagance, and tuition increases. In testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Friefeld and Fagan will present facts demonstrating that GSU is a lean organization. GSU does not charter planes for its trustees. The average cost of a trustee meeting is \$165. Each college is run by a dean – there are no assistant or associate deans. The Admissions Office does not have a full-time receptionist – there is no one in the university whose sole responsibility is to greet visitors and answer the telephone. When the Dean of Student Services left, GSU did not replace her – it reorganized. There are currently 20 open faculty positions, 16 open administrative positions, and 25 open civil service positions. Most will not be filled in the short-term.

MSW Accreditation Saga About to Come to an End

A site visitation team from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) visited the campus last week. The team indicated general satisfaction with the program. A vote on accreditation could come as early as June. "We're not just on a fast track," said President Fagan, "we're on an accelerated track. My thanks to Wanda Bracy and everyone involved in the program."

Taking the Distance out of Distance Education

Wouldn't it be great if there were a software program that could replace the clunky and impersonal nature of the Internet's virtual classroom with the dynamic of a smart classroom – keeping all of the smart classroom's technology bells and whistles? Say no more – that program is here. It is called vClass, and Lecturer Edna Fry has it. By virtue of a grant from CTI, Fry has a nine-month license that allows her to use vClass through August. Currently, she is enhancing her own online Basics of Information Technology course with the program. Fry, however, sees great potential in vClass for distance learning, and she wants to share. Says Fry, "I'd like to work with other instructors, so we can learn the program together and get the maximum benefit from it."

The immediate advantage of this program is real-time, voice communication. Instructors and students communicate by way of microphone and speakers. The text option remains in place, too. Advantage? Verbal, active students can be just that, but students who might otherwise be shy in the classroom can send private text messages to the instructor and be "heard" loud and clear. Application sharing is a huge plus, too. For example, working with Excel, instructors and students can interact with the real program, live on their screens. According to Fry, the instructor can also gain access to the student's computer to assist the student with application issues. Up close explanations and demonstrations are then seen by the entire class. PowerPoint, too, is an obvious advantage, but mute slides can be an enhancement to the professor's expert and responsive verbal instruction rather than the main instructional thrust.

There is even a "hand-raising" feature that allows students to point and click to a real-time professorial response. Quizzes can be given online, real-time, too, allowing, says Fry, the instructor to tell whether a concept has really gotten across.

To see the vClass or to arrange to work with Fry, contact her at extension 4949.

ScholarShip Sails On

Professor Rebecca Wojcik will present "From Crisis to Culture: Inspiring, Cultivating, and Guiding a Culture of Assessment" at the 108th Annual Meeting of the North Central Association, along with her co-presenters Drs. Eric Martin, assistant provost, and Joyce Kennedy, division chairperson, Liberal Arts Division of Arts and Sciences. The meeting is scheduled for April 13-16 and will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago.

Rumor Hotline Up and Running

Want to know what's going on? Send an e-mail to GSUfacts and you'll get an answer within 48 hours. It's a confidential procedure. The program is administered by Public Affairs.