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Date: November 20, 2006
 Contact: Eric Matanyi
 Phone: (708) 534-4044
 Fax: (708) 534-8399
 Email: e-matanyi@govst.edu

For Immediate Release

Governors State University announces formation of the University College

University Park, Illinois, November 20, 2006 – Governors State University recently announced the formation of the University College. The University College is comprised of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, the School of Extended Learning as well as the Division of Digital Learning and Media Design.

The new college offers a specialized Bachelor of Arts degree, provides distance learning courses, and lends media design support to the university's academic units.

John Stoll, dean of the University College said, "We've created the University College with the interests of our students and the GSU community in mind. Each of its entities is equally important to the success of providing an accessible education to our students."

The College's primary offering is the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies offered through the School of Interdisciplinary Learning. The degree is targeted to non-traditional and returning college students who can apply prior college-level learning and life and work experiences toward earning the degree. Students who choose this option are asked to prepare a portfolio that enables them to document and verify prior learning that is equivalent to learning in college courses.

The program is fully accredited and meets the same high standards as the university's other degrees while still allowing students to tailor general studies courses to their own needs and interests. Minors in 19 different disciplines are also available.

The School of Extended Learning's (SXL) staff, in collaboration with the other four academic colleges, works to ensure that courses are available to students studying throughout the region, across the state, and around the world. By providing courses via the Internet, on CD-Rom, as telecourses, as podcasts, and at off-campus sites, SXL adheres to the university's mission to make education accessible to traditionally underserved populations.

SXL provides regional, off-campus education to groups of students through cohort programs. These programs enable groups of students, often from the same workplace or working in the same field, to progress through a degree program together. In addition to providing classes at convenient, off-campus locations like students' workplaces, this method of degree completion also promotes a higher completion rate as students are more apt to stick with a program when they are going through the same courses with a group.

GSU recently opened its Kankakee Education Center and plans to open a similar center in Naperville this spring. With the addition of these two off-campus centers, the University College is working to make higher education as convenient as possible for students throughout the region.

"We've identified areas where there is a gap in the availability of affordable, public education in the area," said Stoll. "By opening education centers in these two communities, we're making it easier for residents who can't come to our main campus to earn a quality education when and where it is convenient for them."

U.S. servicemen and women serving in the Coast Guard, Navy, and Air National Guard are also students of the University College. As a partner provider of coursework to the military, GSU provides those courses in a variety of formats. Sailors, for instance, usually complete their courses while at sea via CD-Roms. The discs contain the same items traditional on-campus students would use to complete courses, including lectures, assignments, and tests. When students come back to port, they turn in their materials, tests, and assignments to an educational officer who processes them and forwards them to GSU for review.

In addition to its obvious collaboration with Illinois community colleges, the University College works with 20 other partner colleges in states including California, Ohio, and Texas. Students at those colleges are able to earn a baccalaureate degree from GSU without ever coming to campus. The partnership allows eligible students to take GSU courses online and via other distance learning methods to earn degrees at their home community colleges.

The University College joins the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and Public Administration, College of Education, and College of Health Professions within the university.

For more information about the University College or distance learning programs call (708) 534-4099. The School of Interdisciplinary Learning may be contacted at (708)

534-4092 sidl@govst.edu.

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1 University Parkway, University Park, Illinois 60484-0975
708.534.5000 | [E-mail Us](#)