By Dwaylon Bledsoe
Contributing Reporter

On Monday, Mar. 20, Student Senate held the Tuition Free Illinois Conference with Illinois Representative Will Guzzardi (D) in Engbretson Hall. Tuition Free Illinois is a statewide campaign focused on fighting for fully funded public higher education for all two and four-year college students in Illinois, regardless of income or immigration status. Students across this country are graduating buried in debt from public institutions, and we see that as a major problem that needs fixing. This campaign presents to students the proposal of tuition being free at public colleges and universities across Illinois. The educational and informational event was attend by students and staff. Illinois Representative Will Guzzardi discussed how free tuition would work and the effects it would have for Illinois.

Representative Guzzardi stated that Tuition Free Illinois would be a long process and requested others to help and support to make Tuition Free Illinois a reality.

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By Lester Van Moody
Contributing Writer

Chat with the President

On Tuesday, Mar. 21, President Elaine P. Maimon held a “Chat with the President” session in the Hall of Honors. The main subjects discussed included the impact of the lack of state funding on the university, subsequent program restructuring and eliminations, and tuition hikes.

President Maimon and Provost Deborah Bordelon gave updates concerning the program restructuring, stating that while budget constraints are forcing some programs to be phased out due to low enrollment, there are also new offerings being explored and developed to bring more in-demand programs to the university such as Exercise Science.

President Maimon also discussed the tuition hike that will take place starting in the fall of 2017. Tuition will go up 15% for incoming freshmen, transfer and most graduate students, and 30% for the Masters of Business Administration program. Tuition remains frozen for currently admitted students at their incoming rate.

Regarding the effect of program eliminations on current students, Provost Bordelon explained that the students in the programs that are slated for elimination will have three years to complete their degrees, in the form of a teach out program.

One question was asked by a student concerning the availability of scholarships. Dr. Randi Schneider, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, said that students should actively seek scholarships both from GSU as well as from external sources because large amounts of scholarship monies go unclaimed every year due to the fact that students simply don’t apply for it.

Schneider further explained that the GSU Financial Aid office website now features links to many external scholarship search engines that students can apply to. Additionally, the GSU Foundation is accepting applications for internal scholarships through Friday, April 14, 2017. Those scholarships can be accessed through the GSU Foundation page at http://www.govst.edu/foundationscholarships.
Editorial

S.H.E.R.O.: Sharing Her Story of Empowerment, Resilience, and Opportunity

By Donnica Gordon
Associate Editor

On Friday, March 31, from 10:00am - 3:00 pm, women from the GSU Community will gather to share stories of Empowerment, Resilience, and Opportunity in a fitting close to Women’s History Month.

The annual S.H.E.R.O. Women’s Leadership Symposium is a daylong affair which students, faculty, staff, and women of the larger GSU community are invited to share, honor, and celebrate the lessons learned, and wisdom gained from our life experiences.

No matter how young, or old we may be, whether we have walked inches or miles on our journey, we all have a story to tell, and there is someone who can be blessed by the telling.

In the increasingly uncertain and tumultuous climate that exists in our communities and nation, it behoves us as women and sentient beings to share with one another our truths, our fears, and our remedies for moving forward with clarity, purpose, and resolve despite whatever obstacles may confront us.

By sharing our stories of struggle and triumph with another, we can encourage, inspire, and uplift each other to be of good courage, to persevere, to overcome, and to lift as we climb.

An appropriate close to Women’s History Month, S.H.E.R.O. is a celebration of women’s diversity as well as our oneness, and our together-ness as well as our individuality. It is an acknowledgement of how far we have come, and an embrace of how far we still must go.

This year’s symposium is a special call for women to journey forward, to take a holistic approach to tapping the power within ourselves as we endeavor to grow person-ally, professionally, and collect-ively. Our presenters will lead us in exploring various themes including the Mind-Body-Spirit connection, Self-Love and Self-care, as well as mental health and professional growth and development.

The symposium will open with an uplifting Yoga session to encourage a deep and sacred embrace of our whole selves led by holistic yoga instructor and lifestyle coach, Rashidat Boston. Erika J. Kendrick will share her inspiring story as a suicide survivor and mental health champion, and Sabrina Schot-tenkamel will share motivat-ing insights of successful entrepreneurship.

All are invited to come dressed in loose, com-fortable clothing so that we can bend and stretch together towards our highest heights. Come to be inspired as well as to inspire. We all are S.H.E.R.O.S. We all have a story to tell.

For more information about S.H.E.R.O., call 708-534-4551 or email diversity@gsu.edu.

Register is open on-line until March 2Wednesday, March 29th at https://www.surveymonkey.com/z/ZPX-55VW.

This event is free and open to the public.

Grad Column

Graduate Student Spotlight: Preparing a Master’s Thesis Project on Math & Education

By Brittany Godsey
Grad Columnist

In this issue, the Graduate Professional Network features mathematics grad student, Barbara Belin.


Barbara Belin is a graduate student in the mathematics program who is in the process of finishing her thesis. The title of her thesis is “Teaching Statistics to High School Students.” Her goal is to give new AP Statistics teachers a useful reference of ideas on how to get through the first year of teaching.

The resources Belin reported she has used for her thesis include math and statistics journals, other’s research papers, the College Board website for AP Statistics, and Statistics books. She is hoping to be finished by May 1st. If submitted to OPUS, her references could be available for viewing this summer.

Belin reported that during her first year of teaching AP Statistics, she had no idea what she was doing. Like many first year teachers, she was spending 8-10 hours every weekend planning and working out what assignments she would be giving her students.

Before teaching, Belin had only taken one Statistics class in college, and she felt ill prepared for teaching Statistics. It’s common for teachers to feel ill prepared their first few years of teaching while they build up materials and ideas to use within the curriculum.

Advanced math courses like AP Statistics could benefit from having a resource of numerous materials for teachers. Many school resources are used to build binders and reference books for interventions to use for students receiving RTI. Creating more resources for advanced classes is also important.

High school teachers are hired under their specific endorsement, but depending on the need of the school, they might be asked to teach classes they aren’t completely familiar with. Having the ability to look at one single resource for multiple ideas would relieve stress and eliminate the time it would take teachers to collect all the resources on their own.

Belin is working on her graduate thesis while working full time and raising her children which is something to be commended.
Taylor Smith: A Jaguar’s Semester Study Abroad Experience in Italy

By Hannah Carroll
Contributing Writer

This week’s OIS article is about GSU student, Taylor Smith, who is currently studying abroad in Italy for the semester.

H: What is your major/what are you studying in Italy?
T: My major is Public Relations with a Minor in Gender Studies. I am doing a few core classes for my major and filling a few elective requirements. They do not have a lot of communication courses at the school I am at, but I was able to get into all of the ones I needed. Every student who studies at Lorenzo de’ Medici has to take an Italian course. It has been helpful when speaking with locals, but I am finding it incredibly difficult.

Other than that I am taking “Intercultural Communication”, “Love and Natural Selection”, “War and Media”, and “Advertising Principles”. All of the professors here are great and it is exciting to learn communications from the point of view of a different country.

H: Was the transition difficult?
T: Personally I did not find the transition too difficult. It took me about a week to adjust my sleep schedule, which definitely took a toll, but the transition itself went smoothly. Prior to leaving, I did a bit of research into Italian culture so I would not be too shocked when I arrived. I think this helped quite a bit.

A lot of the things that were stressing some of my fellow classmates out, I was prepared for by looking into it at home. If there is anything I can recommend to students looking into studying abroad, or really traveling in general, is to look into the culture and customs of the country you are visiting. It will allow for a smoother adjustment and gives you the opportunity to be respectful to locals.

I am, however, having a hard time while walking down the street. In the states, we put a huge emphasis on smiling to people while walking down the street and making eye contact, but in Italy that does not happen. Smiling and making eye contact with men here in Italy, holds an entirely different meaning than it does at home.

H: What has been most challenging experience studying abroad so far?
T: The street signs! One of the most important things when being in a new place is being able to figure out where you are supposed to go. But, it is hard to know where to turn if you can’t find the street sign. They have them on cement blocks built into the buildings, and sometimes they aren’t even there. I know my way around Florence pretty well now, but there are still a few places where I don’t feel as comfortable.

I have learned to just use landmarks as a means of directions. Florence is a small city, in terms of height. The landmarks however, are much taller, making it easy to find them and turn yourself back around.

H: What has been your favorite part about studying in Italy?
T: I enjoy living in a place that is so old. The United States is such a new and young country where the oldest structures are only a few centuries old. I live right down the street from the Duomo, which has been standing since the early 1400’s. The states were not even discovered at that time.

Everything here has a history and that history is visible while just walking down the street. There are buildings still standing from the Medieval Ages, and then if you walk a bit more you see beautiful Renaissance buildings. Of course, Florence keeps up with the trends, so there are modern buildings as well. I really do love it here, and then from what I have heard from other students, the best place to study abroad is Italy.

H: What is something you miss most about home?
T: I miss my dogs, a lot. There are so many dogs out that it makes me miss mine.

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Taylor Smith: A Jaguar's Semester Study Abroad Experience in Italy

Continued from p. 5

The dogs here are allowed to go in stores and eat with you in restaurants, so it will be really sad for me when I go home and no longer see so many dogs out and about. Other than that, I miss the food options.

I love Italian food, do not get me wrong, but there is only so much pasta and pizza you can eat. We are spoiled in the states since we are such a melting pot, we have endless food options. The second I get home I am finding Mexican food.

H: What advice would you offer to a student who is considering studying abroad?

T: There are plenty of programs out there that can fit, or be tailored to what it is you are looking for. They offer semester programs, summer sessions, and even winter break programs. I am studying abroad through Athena Study Abroad. I chose them because they had the program that best fit what I needed, and the people who work for them are wonderful.

Governors State holds study abroad fairs, make sure you go to them and speak to all of the different ambassadors to pick the option that is best for you. Once you are there, take advantage of every opportunity you have. I know this sounds cliché, and you have probably heard it countless times during your life, but that is because it is solid advice.

The school I’m at offers weekend trips to places around Italy and nearby countries, and I am sure many other international schools have similar options. My school also has a wide variety of clubs to join. I personally am in a ceramics club and a volleyball club. They have yoga, soccer, cooking, and art clubs. You will truly regret not getting involved or staying put.

Work hard before you leave and save up as much as you can, the world is big and there is so much to see. Like I said previously, research the places you want to visit. This is both for your mental well-being, and giving you the ability to meet locals and be respectful to the beliefs they hold dear.

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Dr. Joao Salm: Working with United Nations in Guinea-Bissau

Creating sort of a resistance movement in that country that has led to a lot of violence and destruction,” stated Dr. Salm.

According to Dr. Salm, as a result of the forty years of history of violence in Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Human Rights Commissions and United Nations Peace Building Fund has been installed in the country.

Both groupings are, “Looking at helping strengthen the order of law and the country as a democracy. They are both interested in addressing some of the harm that was caused, that was done in those forty years of violence in the country,” stated Dr. Salm.

Furthermore, Dr. Salm stated that even though Guinea-Bissau is a democracy, it is very fragile. “It is a country that not only struggles with political issues, but it definitely struggles with economic issues [as well].”

Dr. Salm continued to touch on the struggles that Guinea-Bissau has such as not having consistent supplies of energy, water and food.

Dr. Salm did some work with the United Nations Development Program in the South Pacific in 2014 and is now doing similar practices in Guinea-Bissau. “We worked there with some non-profits and the police in implementing restorative justice in Fiji. We also worked with rebels from Solomon Islands, building their competency and helping them implement some projects, like the Sycamore Tree Project,” said Dr. Salm.

According to Salm, the Sycamore Tree Project is a victim-offender mediation practice, that promotes mediation, “They used that to address and try to reconcile rebel leaders and communities they harmed.”

Dr. Salm explained they are now trying to replicate similar practices used in the South Pacific Islands to restore justice in Guinea-Bissau. “They use, not necessarily the Sycamore Tree Project, but they are using either that or other practices such as circles to try to reconcile people who lost family members in the atrocities in Guinea-Bissau.”

Salm was invited to Guinea-Bissau by The United Nations Peace Building Fund in order to work in partnership with the Guinea-Bissau government and the United Nations (UN) “to engage in this reconciliatory, truth seeking dialogue, through practices of restorative justice,” he said.

Towards this end, Dr. Salm gave talks to Guinea-Bissauan community leaders. According to Salm, community leaders there have a very important role in the process of constructing justice informally. “Because the state and the formal judicial system is not present in many of the areas. They have three courts in the whole country. The local leaders, called “regulos”, are responsible for providing their communities with some short of justice,” stated Dr. Salm.

Dr. Salm and the UN, spent three days with community leaders to share what they know about restorative justice and restorative justice practices. They also spoke to the judiciary branch, victims of families of people disappeared because of military violence, as well as with military forces.

“We spoke to generals of the country to try to talk to them about the importance of engaging in these dialogues. We shared with them the positive outcomes where this sort of practice and engagement have occurred, the success stories,” said Dr. Salm.

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Not only did they speak with authority figures, they also spoke with law students. Dr. Salm met with the attorney general of Guinea-Bissau who subsequently stated that he is open to working with community leader and the UN on implementing restorative justice practices.

“What we are doing right now at this moment, what I submitted to the UN was a resolution, that will be presented to the attorney general, so he can forward it and advocate for it in that country,” stated Dr. Salm.

Dr. Joao Salm: Working with United Nations in Guinea-Bissau

By Mychael Varnarsdale
Contributing Writer

On March 20th, Former Illinois Representative Debbie Halverson spoke with students in the Hall of Honors about the importance of advocating and lobbying, and how to do so effectively. This event was sponsored by the Student Senate and hosted by the Center for the Junior Year. Halverson emphasized the need for students to create grass rooted efforts that will explain and convey the message of what’s important to them to their district legislators. Halverson went on to say that one of the main problems with our leadership in Springfield is “Bad Communication”. Bad communication hurts progress, so Halverson offered some do’s and don’ts when reaching out to legislators.

Halverson also stated the importance of personalizing all emails and calls with legislators so they can feel the personal connection with their constituents. Halverson offered key insight into the student budget fight saying “the Higher Education Budget Appropriations Committee is the most important committee for school budgets”.

Halverson’s final advise was to do your homework before talking to legislators. After convincing a legislator to support one’s cause, then encourage that legislator to encourage other legislators to do the same.

There was an estimated 55-60 people in attendance. Students signed up to be a part of future advocacy events occurring across Governors State and the State of Illinois.

This event was an effort to encourage future advocacy initiatives from Governors State University students, staff, and faculty.

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The Library Archives clip for this Issue focuses on the tuition hike of 2013.

By Matthew DiGrispino
Library Intern

For three years, the State of Illinois has been without a budget. Many of the state’s social services have been paralyzed by the lack of a budget that is largely a result of the political conflict between the different factions who disagree on what social services should be cut and which ones should continue to exist.

However, these economic problems aren’t new to GSU. According to OPUS, GSU’s online archives, there was a tuition hike by the GSU Board of Trustees for the academic year of 2013-2014. The article says that there was a small number of responses from the students was because many of them didn’t have the proper information to know how a simple tuition hike could affect their daily lives at GSU.

If there is any lesson to be learned from this, we should be more involved within our democracy, otherwise our leaders will make decisions that will make full decisions without the full input of constituents as with the 2013 tuition hike.

In addition, the article shows that the Board of Trustees spent a good amount of time reviewing the student survey pertaining to the tuition hike.

What is interesting is that of the 7,000 students enrolled at the time of this article being written, only “215 responses were received with approximately 86.83 percent stating that fees should remain with no increase.”

One Trustee, Erin Fletcher, states the reason why there was a small number of responses from the students was because many of them didn’t have the proper information to know how a simple tuition hike could affect their daily lives at GSU.

If there is any lesson to be learned from this, we should be more involved within our democracy, otherwise our leaders will make decisions that will make full decisions without the full input of constituents.

As with the 2013 tuition hike.

The Library Archive Feature
Why Funding for Higher Education Matters: Lessons from the Past

By Dana Solatka
Staff Reporter

Very rarely does Hollywood give attention to racial minorities, let alone LGBT racial minorities. Moonlight is something special and should be celebrated.

The film is split into 3 acts detailing the life of our protagonist, Chiron. Act 1, “Little”, details Chiron’s life when he was, well, little in both a literal and figurative sense.

Little in both physical presence and personality, Chiron deals with issues at home. His mother is a crack-head, the kids at school bully him, and he basically has to take care of himself.

Juan, a local dealer, finds little Chiron in an abandoned crackhouse hiding from bullies. Some stuff happens (Chiron’s mom calls Chiron a faggot). Juan tells him there’s nothing wrong with being gay just don’t let anyone call you a faggot. Juan tells Chiron you’ll just know your sexuality, etc.) and Chiron asks Juan if he’s been selling. Juan replies yes, Chiron leaves Juan’s home, and the act ends.

Act 2, “Chiron”, depicts Chiron’s high school days. He gets beat up constantly by his classmate Terrel and has more struggles than ever with his sexuality. Frank, the only friend Chiron has at school, brags about how he was having sex with a girl. This obviously makes Chiron uncomfortable.

Again, some stuff happens in the middle (I don’t want to give away too much) and Chiron and Frank end up making out on the beach and get into some heavy petting (wink-wink, nudge-nudge) and Frank ends up beating up Chiron because Terrel told him to.

Chiron busts into the school the next day and busts a chair over Terrel’s head. Chiron goes to Juvy.

Act 3, “Black”, shows Chiron as an adult. He has gotten into the drug dealing business in Atlanta while his mother went to a drug treatment center. Kevin calls him up and tells Chiron to come visit in Miami. He obliges.

Some more stuff happens (again, it’s very emotional and a synopsis won’t do the gorgeous cinematography and editing justice) and Chiron and Kevin end up visiting Kevin’s grandmother. Kevin’s the only person who has ever touched him. Kevin comforts him, and the movie moved me to tears.

Moonlight deserves to be celebrated not just because of the story told, but because of the way the story is told. Through exquisite editing and one of the best casts Hollywood has ever seen, Moonlight is a once-in-a-lifetime extraordinary film that is an exemplary telling of an highly affective story.

The movie’s editing and writing allows viewers to see, to feel, how nothing about life or sexuality is so clear-cut or black and white as people assume.

Never before has a coming of age story been executed so well. Moonlight is a treat and should be enjoyed for years to come.
**Sports**

It’s Golf Season!

By Jeremy Manthey  
Sports Reporter

The 2016-2017 Golf season is nearly ready to start up again after being on hiatus since Oct. 7, 2016. On Mar. 31, the men’s golf team will play in the IU South Bend Tournament at 9:00 AM, while the women’s team will play in the Olivet Nazarene Spring Invitational at the Kankakee Elks Golf Club in St. Anne, IL, at 9:00 AM.

The men and women have utilized the break to get prepared for the slew of tournaments coming up in March and April. Both teams are hoping to put together a couple good rounds to collect their first team win of the season.

Since Sept., the men have finished 7th of 8, 5th of 6, 10th of 12, 3rd of 4, 7th of 11, 4th of 6, and 6th of 7 in their team tournaments. Meanwhile, the women have finished 3rd of 3, 8th of 8, 2nd of 2, and 4th of 4 in their respective team tournaments.

The men’s team is comprised of three freshmen, one junior, and two seniors. Jack Calderone, Casey Domke, and Mike Rosinia are the freshmen. Matt Conety is the junior, and John Ciscato and Kevin Stoffle are the seniors. The women’s team is comprised of three juniors and four seniors. Emily Bell, Toi Bowers, and Megan Kim represent the juniors. Anne Best, Nicole Brusich, Hollie Campbell, and Ava Marciniak represent the seniors.

Both teams are coached by Head Coach Mark Haines and Assistant Coach Scott Hogan.

More information about the women’s and men’s golf teams’ spring slates can be found on the Governors State website. Stay tuned for more updates on how the Governors State Golf teams play in their future tournaments.

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**Orbis**

News Briefs

By Mychael Vanarsdale  
Political Science Reporter

National News: How Does the GOP Plan to Change Healthcare?

Whether you want to call it Trump-Care or Ryan-Care, the American Health Care Act (AHCA) will definitely have an impact on American society once it’s voted into law. The new health plan will help reduce the federal deficit by $337 billion dollars over a ten year span, but not before spending less on subsidies that help low-income people, eliminating healthcare taxes for wealthy Americans, and eliminating taxes on medical companies imposed by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Under the AHCA, the Medicaid expansion would be phased out and the program would change so that the federal government only pays states a set amount per person. The mandatory tax imposed on individuals for failing to purchase healthcare insurance will be eliminated. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that under these changes 24 million additional people will be without health insurance by 2026.

Source: Republican Health Care Vote: Everything You Need to Know - NBC News. (n.d.).

State News: Illinois Lawmakers Propose Legalizing Recreational Marijuana

Illinois Senator Heather Steans and Representative Kelly Cassidy introduced a bill to the general assembly on March 22nd which sponsored several bills regarding recreational marijuana. The bill proposals include making it legal for adults 21 years or older to possess, grow and buy unlimited amounts of marijuana. In addition, the state would be authorized to license and regulate businesses to grow, process and sell marijuana under established safety regulations. The Marijuana Policy Project, a national marijuana advocacy group, estimates sales in Illinois could generate $350-$700 million dollars in revenue per year.


Chicago News: Red Light Camera Changes

According to a report released on March 20th by the Northwestern University Transportation Center, enforcing violations that occur within fractions of a second after the light turns red might not provide significant safety benefits. The Chicago Department of Transportation agreed to enforce violations that occur within fractions of a second after the light turns red and increase the moment a ticket is issued from 0.1 to 0.3 seconds. Extending the grace period for red light tickets is an effort to eliminate the “dilemma zone” drivers face when approaching a yellow light. It’s estimated the city of Chicago will lose $17 million in revenue by increasing the shutter speed by two frames of a second.

Source: Chicago to lose $17M in revenue through revised red-light camera policy: City - Washington Times. (n.d.).

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**Arts**

There is a Tempest brewing in GSU’s Sculpture Park

By Alexander Gallinaro  
Contributing Writer

The worst of winter is behind us, and hints of spring are in the air. But, there is a fearsome storm coming to the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park at Governors State University. April showers have a whole new meaning this year as Shakespeare’s The Tempest arrives on campus for 3 exclusive performances on April 6, 8, and 9. The show will be presented by the Theater and Performance Studies program for one weekend only. Don’t miss out on a chance to participate in one of a kind preforming art experience as the sculpture park on campus is transformed into a remote deserted island where adventure awaits.

Tickets are just $15 dollars to see Shakespeare’s classical tale of magic, romance, and the endless pursuit of vengeance. This epic story takes place on a desolate island so anyone who has ever visited the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park will know that it is the perfect environment for an exciting departure from reality.

As if the show wasn’t enough entertainment on its own, the sculpture park itself is quite the spectacle. It features 29 contemporary sculptures sprawled across 100 acres of natural prairie landscape. After just a few minutes of walking through the park’s winding paths, the campus buildings vanish from sight and you become totally immersed in a place of hidden beauty.

There is no better place to see The Tempest this coming April than at the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park right here on campus. For more information on this event please visit the GSU Center for Performing Arts website, or http://www.CenterTickets.net.
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