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5-12-2022

GSU celebrates 2022 Dual Degree Program graduates

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Recommended Citation

Office of Marketing and Communications, "GSU celebrates 2022 Dual Degree Program graduates" (2022).
Newsroom. 50.
<https://opus.govst.edu/newsroom/50>

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University Park, IL,
May
12,
2022

GSU celebrates 2022 Dual Degree Program graduates



[Governors State University's](#) (GSU) [Dual Degree Program](#) (DDP) celebrated its 10th year at a historic and symbolic cording ceremony on the [Center for Performing Arts Stage](#), where 70 students were honored for their achievements.

The honorees sat proudly among their families and their colleagues, as they were celebrated by the university's leaders and supporters, including President Dr. Cheryl Green, DDP Director Jessica Specht, Dr. Linda Uzureau, a former GSU employee who played a major role in developing the program a decade ago, and Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Paul McGuinness.

Class of 2022 student representative Manuel Reza rejoiced with the graduates by sharing how impactful the program was for him as he transitioned from Prairie State Community College to GSU. He said the program not only advocated for him but also taught him how to advocate for himself.

“Because of DDP, I didn’t feel like I was undertaking this journey alone,” said Reza, who is graduating May 14 with his master’s in English, is a graduate assistant for DDP and also a first-generation student. “I got a strong sense of community from both the staff and students in the program, whether it was the multitude of resources DDP offered for my own professional development, or those opportunities to destress at the end of the semester with other students. I felt like I could succeed because DDP offered me the individualized support I needed to thrive.”



The DDP is a partnership between [GSU](#) and 17 regional community colleges which allows students to work alongside a transfer specialist as they first achieve their associate degree and then, at GSU, their bachelor’s degree. The recent ceremony ushered the 70 honorees into a group of over 1,000 students who have transferred through the program since it began in 2012.

Dr. Green, the ceremony’s cord officiant, followed Reza’s remarks, “giving flowers” to GSU’s partner community colleges in addition to GSU’s faculty, staff and students who have made the program possible.

“This program would not exist if not for the work of Dr. Uzureau, the collective community college presidents and most importantly the students,” she said. “The students who had a dream not to just go to college and earn one degree. These are go-getters. These are future leaders. These are our outstanding students, who made a decision to get two degrees and they need to be celebrated.”

After she addressed the audience, graduates walked across the stage, where Dr. Green gave them cords braided with the colors of their community college and GSU’s signature black and white. For Dr. Green, “this symbolic wrapping of the two degrees, the two experiences have become a cherished tradition and a powerful reminder of our founding principles,” she said.



With their DDP regalia, students left the CPA with their heads held high, not only ready to receive their diplomas during the official commencement ceremony Saturday but for whatever their future has to offer.