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For Immediate Release

Energy Efficient Lights Illuminate GSU

University Park, IL, April 16, 2007 - As a result of a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, students have the opportunity to learn more, artists have the opportunity to perform in excellent light, energy is conserved, and money is saved.

The Foundation's \$83,000 grant and an additional \$23,000 from Governors State University enabled both the university's television studios and in the Center for Performing Arts to upgrade their lighting fixtures with new, energy-efficient instruments.

"This upgrade will save 138,380 kilowatts in total wattage consumption, which represents a sizable amount of energy and financial savings," explained Charles DeBrizzio, Chief Engineer at GSU. "We removed all of the old lights, broke them down into their component parts, and sold the scraps. Very little ended up in the landfill."

The lighting upgrade was necessary because many of the fixtures were installed in the television studios more than 30 years ago and in the Center for Performing Arts when it was built in 1996.

"Our two television studios are used to film telecourses, training films, and educational television products. They were built in 1974 and still had the original lights," said Charles Nolley, Director of the Division of Digital Learning and Media Design at GSU.

"This major upgrade has replaced the old lighting system with 220 state-of-the-art dimmers with computerized controls. One-hundred inefficient studio lighting instruments were replaced with designs that use 30 to 80 percent less energy and generate much less heat. This results in additional savings in air conditioning costs. The quality of our productions has improved at the same time we have become more environmentally friendly."

According to Nolley, students also benefit from the lighting upgrade. "We are now able to offer students exposure to the latest equipment and more in depth training than ever before."

The Center for Performing Arts, which hosts Broadway style productions, replaced 160 stage lighting instruments.

"While the audience and the performers do not see a difference, we see the difference in our reduced costs," said Burt Dikelsky, Executive Director of the Center for Performing Arts. "Also, we could not find replacement parts for the old lights as they are no longer manufactured."

The only components of light fixtures that could not be recycled were the lenses. The circular glass disks were not thrown away, however. The Center staff devised paperweights with the image of the center set behind the glass disks.

"Our board members and donors love the mementos and appreciate the creative way we were able to use them," added Dikelsky.

The lighting upgrade is only one of many improvements instituted at GSU to save energy and reduce costs.

Under the leadership of Susan Rakstang, Director Office of Capital Programs and Facility Operations at Governors State University, improvements and renovations are also concerned with conservation and preservation. Conservation efforts at GSU include the largest solar panel installation in the State. The panels produce energy to heat the swimming pool and one third of the domestic water used by the university. Four of the university-owned cars use E-85 ethanol and its trucks run on 20 percent bio-diesel fuel. Energy efficient light bulbs illuminate classrooms and hallways.

"We recycle everything we can and use recycled materials wherever possible. Our goal is to reduce our power use," added DeBrizzio.