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GSU View

University Newsletters

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## GSU View, 2012-12-10

Office of Marketing and Communications

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## News and Events

### **GSU Board of Trustees Meeting – December 7**

Governors State University's Board of Trustees Friday accepted financial and compliance audits for the 2011 fiscal year. At their final 2012 meeting, trustees heard reports on the audits from Dr. Gebeyehu Ejigu, Executive Vice President, and Karen Kissel, Vice President for Administration and Finance.

The fiscal audit, from the accounting firm of E.C. Ortiz & Co., indicates that GSU is in "very good financial condition," Dr. Ejigu said. The audit showed university net assets increased by 12 percent from the previous year. The increase in equity is "a very good indicator of the health of the university," he said. Dr. Ejigu said the boost in assets can be credited to increases in tuition, fees, grants, and contracts.

Trustee Pat Ormsby said he was "very impressed" by the financial report. The audit shows that GSU's financial condition is extremely strong, he said.

During his report, Board Chair Jack Beaupre praised the university's administration for taking steps to strengthen GSU's fiscal condition. As a result, "we are probably in better financial condition than any other university in Illinois," he said.



In her report, Kissel addressed findings from the FY 2011 compliance audit, which prompted improvements in 12 areas of university operations. Steps have been implemented in 10 of those areas, involving governmental auditing standards, federal compliance, and state compliance. Two areas are still under study. One involves faculty time sheets and the other deals with membership and vacancies on the Board of Trustees, which has been an area of concern for some time now.

Kissel said the federal compliance issues are related to grant programs. In recent years, she said, GSU has made great strides in securing federal grants and the university has made a significant investment in its grant structure. Compliance questions are being addressed with improvements to the university's grant management infrastructure, she said.

**Dr. Lori Montalbano** President Elaine P. Maimon, in her report, announced what is likely to be the name for GSU's first on-campus housing, scheduled to open in Fall, 2014. The name, "Prairie Place," reflects GSU's location "where the prairie meets the city," she said.

Dr. Maimon recapped "an exciting semester" that included:

- The November 1 appearance of "Chicago Live" at the Center for Performing Arts. Dr. Maimon said she is hopeful that the live stage show, produced by the Chicago Tribune, becomes an annual event.
- "8," the play, presented by the Southland Area Theatre Ensemble on October 25 and 26. It was the first time the play was presented in Illinois.
- The November 7 appearance by Nikki Giovanni, internationally renowned poet, author, and humanitarian.
- The November 26 Chicago Tribune story focusing on planning for GSU's first freshman students in 2014, and the university's exemplary partnership with area community colleges. The article prompted a follow-up story on WBEZ radio.

Dr. Maimon said considerable progress is being made in the design of GSU's first year program. On October 19, first year specialists John Gardner and Betsy Barefoot appeared at a symposium addressing how to best construct a first year program. Gardner subsequently praised GSU's efforts in a posting on his blog. The workshop was the second symposium that is laying the groundwork for GSU's freshmen program. A third symposium is planned for next March.

Last month, Dr. Maimon established the Lower Division Steering Committee, which will create a time-line with critical implementation deadlines for the first year program, and make sure that the university is on track to accomplish all that is needed. Dr. Reinhold Hill, CAS Dean, will chair the eight-member committee, which had its first meeting December 6.

In other business, the Board:

- Awarded rank and tenure to Dr. Lori Montalbano, Division Chair of the Division of Communication, Visual, and Performing Arts, in CAS. She assumed her position at GSU in July. Dr. Montalbano was awarded tenure as a full professor of communications studies.
- Approved a request for a new unit of instruction, the Bachelor of Arts in Economics. The BA in Economics is being proposed in conjunction with a BS in Economics, via a separate proposal. Both economics degrees were proposed by the GSU Interdisciplinary Academic Master Planning Committee as a move to strengthen the university's baccalaureate degree options. Provost Terry Allison said the BA in Economics will require students to take more courses in math and business; as proposed, students would have to take 27 hours of business courses. The new degree program must be approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.
- Authorized the amending of an existing contract with the law firm of Franczek Radelet. The firm is providing services to the university in a continuing legal matter.

Beaupre recognized Dr. Ejigu as an "ambassador" for GSU during his recent six-week assignment to South China Normal University. During Dr. Ejigu's assignment to China as a Fulbright Specialist, he presented lectures and workshops designed to cover the structure, governance, financing, organization, and management of the United States educational system at all levels.

