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Office of Marketing and Communications

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Successful All-Campus Symposium

Students, faculty members, and staff gained pivotal insight and inspiration at this spring’s all-campus symposium led by Dr. Laura Rendón, an education theorist and researcher who specializes in college preparation, persistence, and graduation of low-income, first-generation students.

The symposium’s topic, “The Inclusive, Socially Just University: Student Assets, High Impact Practices, and Inner and Outer Transformation,” continued the theme of diversity, inclusion and equity from last fall, guiding the GSU community through self-examination, reflection, and institutional assessment.
Read Rendón’s influential publications, such as her article outlining her innovative pedagogy, a monograph, “Leveraging Latin@ Strengths to Foster Student Success,” and an issue of The National Teaching & Learning Forum focusing on her work.

Introducing Dean Jun Zhao of COB

Congratulations to Dr. Jun Zhao, who recently began serving in her new role as Dean of the College of Business after serving as interim dean since November 2016. Provost Deborah Bordelon, the university’s chief academic officer, describes Dean Zhao’s leadership style as “quiet yet powerful” and credits Dean Zhao as “instrumental” in GSU’s recent AACSB accreditation. Dr. Bordelon says, “I am confident that Dean Zhao will continue to provide the leadership to move the College of Business forward as it reaches out to new markets, develops new programs and seeks out new research and grant opportunities.”

Advocating for Education

Last week, faculty and students sacrificed a valuable day of lessons to participate in a statewide union rally in Springfield. On the bus and during the rally, discussion surrounded the budget stalemate and its resulting implications to GSU.

2017 Commencement’s Honorary Degree Recipients
Two nationally influential leaders, scholar and educator Dr. Shaun R. Harper and journalist Bob Abernethy, who epitomize the values of Governors State University will receive honorary degrees for their lifetime commitment to equity, inclusion, and excellence at the university’s 46th commencement ceremony, Saturday, May 20, at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

Read more…

Student Speakers of the 2017 Commencement

Two students who embody the spirit of GSU will speak at May’s commencement ceremony. Sandra Chavez, known throughout GSU as Filly, will speak at the morning ceremony, and Sarah Hirsch will speak at the evening ceremony. For more information about each speaker, click here.

Announcements and Events

Male Success Initiative Seeking Coaches!
The Male Success Initiative is soliciting faculty and staff to serve as Success Coaches for our male students of color. Beginning in the fall, MSI Success Coaches will work with and guide students to connect their college experience to their planned careers after college. Interested staff or faculty members should attend an information session May 2, from 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. in A-2150, or contact Sean Smith at msi@govst.edu.

Put your Summer to Great Use!
There is still time to register for summer session classes. You can save some money, satisfy a Gen. Ed. requirement, and still have time to enjoy the sun by taking advantage of the many courses offered this summer at GSU. Click here to learn why summer session classes give you the GSU summer advantage.

**Fresh from the Garden!**
Gather your gardening tools and put them to good use on a plot in the GSU Sustainable Garden. To learn the details and apply for a garden plot, click here or contact the GSU Facilities Development and Management Department at 708.534.4515.

**Mother's Day Basket Sale**
Are you seeking the perfect gift for your dear, sweet mom or a special friend? The Friends of the GSU Library Mother's Day Basket Sale has just the right gift. Buy a basket on **Wednesday, May 3** from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. in the D-Wing Atrium and be ready for Mother's Day. For more information, email GSULibrarinfo@govst.edu.

**Equine Psychotherapy and Learning Day**
On **Saturday, May 6**, Dr. Raven Badger, Associate Professor CHHS, Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health, will host a free Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Learning Day.
Participants will learn the role that horses play in psychotherapy based on the *Eagala model*. The model is an alternative therapeutic approach for people to acquire insight and discover solutions through interaction with horses.

The workshop, funded by an Intellectual Life grant, will be held from 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Registration is open to GSU students, faculty members, and staff. For additional workshop and registration information, click [here](#).

**Calling All Duffers!**

Faculty members, staff, and students are invited to join the GSU Golf League. The league meets to play nine holes of golf weekly on **Tuesdays** at University Golf Club. All skill levels are welcome. For more information, email Hollie Campbell.

**Step Up for Diversity**

International Culture Organization (ICO) at GSU is a student organization committed to promoting cultural diversity in the community. ICO is currently looking for new executive board officers. Positions are open for secretary, treasurer, volunteer coordinator, and public relations officer.

To become involved in ICO, email internationalcultureorg@gmail.com.

**Highlights**

**GSU Student Receives Gilman Scholarship**
Dana Solatka was recently awarded $3,000 from the U.S. Department of State’s Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study abroad in South Korea this summer. Read more…

**COB Attends Jumpstart to Accounting Event**

Eight GSU [accounting](#) students and David Green, Division Chair of Accounting, Finance, MIS, & Economics, recently attended the Illinois CPA Society’s Jumpstart to Accounting event at UBS Tower in Chicago. The event included tours of accounting firms and companies and panels on careers in accounting.

**JJC's President Judy Mitchell Talks Community and GSU**
Judy Mitchell, president of Joliet Junior College, exemplifies GSU students’ success. After obtaining two associate’s degrees from JJC, Mitchell enrolled at GSU to pursue an undergraduate degree in Business and Technology, now known as the Business and Applied Science program. At her Business Services interview at JJC, the director asked the standard question, “Where do you see yourself in five years?” Mitchell's answer? “In your chair.”

Read more…

Workshops & Trainings

Many helpful and informative workshops and trainings for students, faculty, and staff are offered at GSU. New opportunities are added to the list every week. For example, WorkZone and CMS Training opportunities are coming up, as is the next Office of Marketing and Communications Brown Bag Lunch! Check out the complete list of workshops can be found here.

Faculty: If you have not already done so, it's time to have a new headshot photograph taken. Please refer to the schedule to find a convenient time.
University Park, IL, May 02, 2017

**Dr. Jun Zhao to Serve as Dean of College of Business**

Congratulations to Dr. Jun Zhao, who will begin serving in her new role as Dean of the College of Business after serving as interim dean since November 2016.

Provost Deborah Bordelon, the university’s chief academic officer, describes Dean Zhao’s leadership style as “quiet yet powerful” and credits Dean Zhao as “instrumental” in GSU’s recent AACSB accreditation. Dr. Bordelon says, “I am confident that Dean Zhao will continue to provide the leadership to move the College of Business forward as it reaches out to new markets, develops new programs and seeks out new research and grant opportunities.”

Dean Zhao says that she is honored to serve the university in her new role. “GSU’s College of Business has highly talented faculty and dedicated staff who are committed to providing top quality education to our students while actively engaging in research and professional services. I look forward to working with faculty, staff, students, and the business community to build the business school of choice in Chicago’s Southland and beyond.”

Before serving as Interim Dean of the College of Business, Dr. Zhao was Chair of the Division of Management, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship, where she helped steer COB toward its newly earned and prestigious AACSB accreditation. She has created study abroad opportunities for students in China, Poland, and India.

Click [here](http://www.govst.edu/cob-dean) to read Dr. Maimon’s full announcement to the university.
Advocating for Education

GSU Faculty Travel to Springfield

The concrete ribbon of Interstate 57 rolled out in front of Dr. Cyrus Ellis, associate professor in the Division of Psychology and Counseling at Governors State University, early in the morning on April 27. A 20-degree drop in temperature and rainy skies had discouraged some of his colleagues at GSU from boarding the chartered bus, leaving room for him to post up in the very front seat and let his tall frame stretch out for the three-hour ride to Springfield. He and 30 others were headed to Teach-Out Illinois, a union-planned day of protest against the 22-month budget stalemate that has left all of the state's public institutions, including GSU, without appropriation funding.

For GSU faculty, the day in Springfield was a call to arms letting those in Springfield know that enough is enough. While Illinois students advocating for higher education have voiced concerns over diminishing resources, professors have faced a unique set of struggles and concerns.

"Because of the budget, we've had curriculum changes, and we've had class changes," Ellis said. "We're losing our traditions."

During a time that some see as the fiscal strangulation of higher education, there is a fear that educators might choose to migrate out of public universities—or even the state—their hands forced by a lack of support and funding from Illinois. At Governors State University, familial devotion to the surrounding community and to the students of Chicago's South Side keeps faculty grounded and in the fight for funding.

For several weeks before the rally, GSU's halls were papered with signs letting students know that their professors would be absent that day. Even those who knew they wouldn't be able to attend the rally posted them in a show of solidarity and support.

"My students know that I need to do this," Ellis said. "I would rather be in class—thinking, writing, facilitating for my students as they grow and develop in the professional discipline of counseling. That's where my time is best spent. They are happy, though, that someone is willing to go down to Springfield and do whatever they can to advocate for them. In my case, what I can do is communicate that we need to fund higher education."

Across the aisle from Dr. Ellis, another member of GSU's faculty filled a cup of coffee. Someone else rummaged through a box of doughnuts. The breakfast came courtesy of Dr. Elaine Maimon, the university's president and a relentless defender of higher ed. The rally—organized by Local 4100 University Professionals of Illinois (UPI)—wouldn't take place until the afternoon, and no food is allowed in the capitol building.

A few seats back, Dr. Ellie Walsh talked about sacrifice.

"The decision to come today was difficult. This is the end of the semester. This is a really critical time." Dr. Walsh paused, not to search for words but to increase their weight with their measure. "My first-year students, who are working on a very big, exciting human rights project, are missing face-to-face time. I left them work to do in groups,
but they have sacrificed today."

Dr. Walsh teaches in the History (http://www.govst.edu/cas/hist/ba/) and Gender and Sexuality Studies (http://www.govst.edu/academics/colleges_and_programs/college_of_arts_and_sciences/) programs in the College of Arts and Sciences. She said that to compensate for her absence, she held five extra office hours the day before the rally. On Friday, the day after, she would hold three more.

In the capitol building, GSU faculty members broke off with small groups on the rotunda floor for "Teach-Out" sessions—eight minute conversations with students from across the state about the impact of the budget stalemate on their institutions and lives. Beneath the stained glass dome, they listened to the struggles of students from Eastern, Southern, and other public universities in the state, and they traded encouragement and reinforced camaraderie with faculty members from the same.

Shortly after 1 p.m., the rally started. Graduate student Michael Vanarsdale, an activist and former president of GSU's student senate (http://www.govst.edu/studentsenate/), waited for his turn to speak on the steps of the Lincoln statue. Throughout the speeches of gubernatorial hopefuls—Chicago billionaire J.B. Pritzker and Senator Dan Blasch both spoke at the rally—the gravity of higher education's plight reflected in Vanarsdale's face. He appeared stoic and concerned. When he took the podium, he spoke with conviction.

"The secret of freedom lies in educating people, whereas the secret of tyranny lies in keeping them ignorant. ... Students across the state are slowly but surely arriving to one conclusion: that our state leadership does not value our future and our state leadership certainly does not value our education. ... Allowing public universities to bleed out and suffer program cuts is an intellectual crime, and it's being committed by the people who represent us," he said.

The sun still shrouded, the ground still dry, the rally ended in the mid-afternoon. Signs and banners were loaded back onto buses, and the motor coaches departed the capitol.

Returning home, Dr. Elizabeth Essex (http://www.govst.edu/Site_Navigation/Contact/Directory/eessex/), associate professor of Social Work (http://www.govst.edu/socialwork/) at GSU and a lifelong political activist (she marched in Washington with Dr. King when she was just a teen), seemed emboldened by the day. She talked about the role of public education in Illinois.

"One important aspect of public education is that it creates future leaders," she said. "It creates leaders for the state. I think it has always done that, and we need it to continue."

In the back of the bus, Benjamin Ginther intermittently nodded out. One of several students who attended the rally, Ginther will graduate in May with a Master of Arts in Counseling (http://www.govst.edu/browse/psychology-degree/masters-in-counseling/). He said he hopes to obtain work with the Veterans' Administration as a counselor. The day was taxing for him—Ginther suffers from adrenomyeloneuropathy, an inherited condition that affects the spinal cord, not unlike multiple sclerosis he said. Still, it was the second day in April he'd spent in Springfield. He was one of about 100 students who had attended Advocacy Day with Dr. Essex on April 4.

"We had a choice of writing a letter to a representative for our assignment," he said, "or going to Springfield today. I would much rather be a part of this today."
Chicago, IL, April 26, 2017

Scholar and Journalist to be Awarded Honorary Degrees

For Immediate Release

Two nationally influential leaders who epitomize the values of Governors State University will receive honorary degrees for their lifetime commitment to equity, inclusion, and excellence at the university’s 46th commencement ceremony, Saturday, May 20 at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

Dr. Shaun R. Harper and journalist Bob Abernethy embody the spirit of GSU’s mission and will be honored for their commitment to the transformative power of knowledge and understanding.

“Shaun Harper and Bob Abernethy, GSU finds reflections of values we hold dear and manifestations of principles we uphold,” said GSU President Elaine P. Maimon. “Shaun Harper’s mission to explore and instill racial equity in academia is a cornerstone of the public square at Governors State University. Bob Abernethy’s devotion to educating the public on all religions and creeds mirrors GSU’s dedication to understanding our diverse world.”

Shaun Harper is a scholar and the foremost leader in the national conversation concerning race, gender, and equity in American education. His revolutionary work on race matters in higher education sheds light on inequities affecting minorities in America and impacts the opinions of policymakers. In 2015, he was appointed to President Barack Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper advisory council. From the founding of the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at University of Pennsylvania to his next venture leading the USC Center on Race and Equity in California, Harper is blazing trails on the educational landscape.

Bob Abernethy pioneered television programming that examined religion and ethics, helping his viewers better understand the roles of each in the world around them. He created Religion & Ethics Newsweekly, an award-winning PBS program that propelled mainstream spiritual dialogue, and analyzed the intricacies of morality and the characteristics of faith at the intersection of politics and culture. The show ended its 20-year run in February 2017. Prior to his work at PBS, Abernethy was a political correspondent for NBC, covering events from the assassination of JFK to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Governors State University will hold its annual commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 20 at the Tinley Park Convention Center. Shaun R. Harper will be honored during the 10 a.m. ceremony; Bob Abernethy will be honored at the 5 p.m. ceremony. Admission to the commencement ceremonies is by ticket only. Dr. Harper and Mr. Abernethy will meet with students Friday, May 19 at Governors State.

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Governors State University serves 6,000 undergraduate and graduate students with degree programs that prepare them for success in business, industry, healthcare, the arts and education. As a state university, GSU is committed to providing high-quality, accessible, and responsible higher education opportunities. GSU is located 35 miles south of Chicago in University Park, IL and offers the most affordable undergraduate tuition and fees in Chicagoland. GSU is committed to embracing diversity and academic excellence.
Chicago, IL, May 01, 2017

**Student Commencement Speakers Selected**

Governors State University continues its tradition of recognizing students who epitomize achievement and excellence in education by choosing graduates Sandra Chavez and Sarah Hirsch to give the student Commencement addresses at its 46th Commencement Saturday, May 20.

Sandra Chavez, known as Filly, will speak at the morning ceremony celebrating graduates of the Colleges of Business, Education, and Health and Human Services. As a daughter of Mexican immigrants, Ms. Chavez, of Onarga, Illinois, is the first in her family to go to college. She will earn her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with honors, a degree which will serve as a stepping stone toward her ultimate goal of a degree in Clinical Psychology specializing in Child Neuropsychology.

Ms. Chavez obtained her associates degree from Kankakee Community College before transferring to GSU. She cites her parents and three children as her motivation along with “the countless Mexican immigrants who have risked their lives in pursuit of an education.”

Sarah Hirsch, of Munster, Indiana, will speak at the evening ceremony which celebrates graduates of the College of Arts and Science. Graduating with a Master of Arts in English, Ms. Hirsch served as Editor-in-Chief of *Reconstructed*, GSU's literary journal. She has also worked as a Supplemental Instructor for the First-Year Writing program.

Ms. Hirsch completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees at GSU after a break in her education to travel and start family. She says, “My husband and two sons have been a source of continuous support throughout my studies. The opportunity to speak at Commencement will be rewarding for my entire family.”

Both ceremonies will take place on Saturday, May 20, at the Tinley Park Convention Center at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., and are ticketed events.

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Chicago, IL, April 10, 2017

5 Reasons to Take a Class (or two) this Summer

This summer you can get one step closer to graduation and still have time for yourself by taking a class at GSU.

Our flexible summer schedule accommodates your need to work– and your need to enjoy a summer break by offering daytime and evening classes. You can even save more time by taking one of our many Online Classes this summer. Need more reasons to register summer school? We’ve got 5!

1. Get ahead or catch up

Summer is the best time to fulfill general education course requirements. Take your math, English, or science gen. ed. class this summer, instead of in the fall or spring, when you’ll be juggling three or four other classes.

2. Focus on a challenging class

Say aloud the name of the one class that makes you shiver. Register for that class now and conquer your fear this summer while you have both the time to study and enjoy the sun!

3. The summer semester goes by fast

GSU’s summer session is FOUR weeks shorter than its spring and fall semesters. While you will need to stay on top of your coursework, class will be over before you know it!

4. Classes are smaller and more relaxed

Fewer students attend school during the summer. This offers you more time with your professor to ask questions, get extra help, and dig deeper.

5. You’ll save money

Tuition rates increases for graduate students and students new to GSU this fall. Taking a class or two this summer before the increase will save you money.
Chicago, IL, May 01, 2017

GSU Student Receives Gilman Scholarship

GSU student Dana Solatka was recently awarded $3,000 from the U.S. Department of State’s Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study abroad in South Korea this summer. The Gilman International Scholarship is a grant program that enables students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad, thereby gaining skills critical to our national security and economic competitiveness.

“I have always wanted to travel abroad. And when I say always I mean always,” says Solatka. “My grandmother would tell me stories about my late grandfather. About how he served our country during the Korean War, how he could speak Polish, English, and Korean, and how he was lucky enough to travel the world. I could not wait until I was old enough to do something similar. Receiving The Gilman gives me the privilege and honor to experience the same culture my grandfather experienced many years ago. I am extremely excited to study in South Korea this summer.”

The Gilman Scholarship Program is open to U.S. citizen undergraduate students who are receiving Federal Pell Grant funding at a two-year or four-year college or university to participate in study and intern abroad programs worldwide. The application period happens twice a year in October and March. For more information, click here or email Amy Schoenberg.
University Park, IL, April 25, 2017

Judy Mitchell
JJC’s President Talks Community and GSU

Stratus clouds blanket the sky outside Judy Mitchell’s window. The soft dove billows are low-lighted in a darker gray, but the newly-inaugurated president of Joliet Junior College (JJC) and Governors State alumna is all smiles. No early-spring drear dampens her mood. She stands next to her Packers memorabilia—an understandable preference (her mother is from Wisconsin) but a brave one in Chicago’s Southland—and talks about JJC’s commitment to humor.

“One of our core values is ‘Humor and Well-Being.’ We all work very hard, and there are times that you just have to relax, have fun, and celebrate all of your successes.” Her voice is earnest.

There’s no doubt that Mitchell works hard. One of two GSU graduates leading a community college in Chicago’s Southland, she sits at the helm of a community college that serves nearly 35,000 students each year via 186 credit and non-credit programs. JJC’s territory includes suburban pockets, rural towns, and Joliet itself—a small city sprawl with all of the pitfalls and boons of any other urban hub.

“The diversity of our student body keeps us all engaged,” Mitchell said.

Mitchell’s story mirrors that of so many others who have graduated from GSU. She was a returning adult student; she had children; her time was not her own.

A mother of two, Mitchell said she started working in the front office of her children’s elementary school in New Lenox just to get out and make a little extra money.

"Then I saw working parents with careers, and I started wondering what I wanted to do. So I took a few classes here at JJC, and I picked up a part-time job on campus. I graduated with two associate's degrees: one in microcomputers for business and another in computer programming," she said.

Mitchell’s department chair saw a spark in her and urged her to continue.

“I looked into Governors State—and I was very fortunate that most of my credits would transfer—and transferred. I graduated with my undergraduate degree in Business and Technology,” Mitchell said.

That program has since been incorporated in the Business and Applied Science program at GSU. As technology has diversified and expanded, the University has reorganized its approach to teaching technology, and although the Dual Degree Program was still decades in the future, GSU has always worked to create smooth pathways from community colleges to upper-division learning.

Six months later, degree in hand, Mitchell applied for a job in the Business Services Office at Joliet Junior College. During the interview, she said the director asked the standard "Where do you see yourself in five years" question.

Southland moxie shining through, Mitchell replied, "In your chair."

"My director told me that I needed to go on for my Master's degree then, so I came back to Governors State," she said.

She graduated that time with a Master's in Business Administration.

"By that time my son was in college. He was a freshman, and I would drive home from night classes at 10:30 and I’d call him, and we’d compare college stories. We had a lot of great conversations."

GSU has deep roots in its services to adult learners. Along with a commitment to affordability, Governors State has always insisted on being a place of opportunity for all. Evening classes, flexible schedules, faculty and staff who are dedicated to students—this is the GSU formula. GSU is the No. 1 place for adult learners in Illinois and is
currently ranked No. 26 nationally by Washington Monthly.

"I look back in hindsight and see how certain things helped me to grow at JJC," Mitchell said, "and I had the same experience at Governors State. I wasn't working at GSU, but as a student you created those relationships and you talked to counselors and advisers, and if you had some question, they were there to support you. Everybody was always warm and welcoming. They opened the door. It just seemed right. Everything fit."

As president of one of the largest feeder colleges in the GSU region, Mitchell said she focuses JJC's mission on community and philanthropic outreach.

"I've been very lucky. When you talk about the institutions in our community—JJC, GSU—they both mean a great deal to me. They've provided the support I've needed throughout and it's worked. I want to give back to both colleges," she said. "If you are not willing to embrace the community, you're going to have more challenges. It's very important. The community is instrumental."