GSU Programs Receive Nationwide Rankings

Two GSU programs have recently received national recognition in university rankings.

The Communication and Media Studies programs are ranked 42 out of 527 programs throughout the country for the Best Communication & Media Studies Programs for Veterans. College Factual led the survey, which places Governors State in the top 50—or top 10 percent—of programs nationwide.

In addition, the online MBA program offered by GSU’s College of Business was recently ranked #18 (out of more than 400 programs) in the 2018 “Best Value Online MBA” list by OnlineMBAToday.
Black History Month: GSU Celebrates

February is Black History Month (BHM), and Governors State University is celebrating the rich heritage of African Americans with more than 20 events across campus that promise to enlighten the mind and nourish the soul.

“From faith perspectives to black excellence and health and wellness, our campus-wide celebration promises to engage Jaguars,” said Robert Clay, Director of Intercultural Affairs.

Read more...

Update Your Emergency Contact Information

When bad weather—or any other emergency—strikes, GSU wants you to have accurate updates as quickly as possible. Update your contact information so that our emergency alert system can reach you through a variety of communication channels.

If you are a student, please complete a Change of Student Information form and submit it to the Registrar’s Office. You may submit the completed form, including a copy of your picture ID, via fax to the Registrar's Office at 708.534.1640, or you may drop it off in person at C1300. If you have any questions, please contact the Registrar's Office or call 708.534.4500.

If you are a faculty or staff member, please complete a Name/Address/Phone Change form and submit it to Human Resources. You may submit the completed form to the Human Resources department in person in C1360 or via email. If you have any questions, please contact Human Resources at 708.534.4100.

Please note, if you did not receive yesterday's university closure message by email, text, and/or phone call, we do not have your current contact information.

GSU All-Campus Symposium Friday, February 23

On Friday, February 23, faculty, staff, and students will meet on the CPA stage for the Spring 2018 All-Campus Symposium.
Tom Matson, Senior Executive Leadership Strategist at Gallup Education, will give the keynote address. Matson is the strategist, architect and senior writer for CliftonStrengths for Students, and the symposium will explore the ways that GSU uses students’ StrengthsFinder results to increase student success. It will also address ways that individual can use their own assessments to build their skills.

A continental breakfast will be available at 8:30 a.m., and the lecture will begin promptly at 9 a.m. Lunch will be served and the symposium will end in the early afternoon. **RSVPs are required, and all attendees must take the StrengthsFinder test before the symposium.**

To RSVP and receive your test code and instructions, please email Penny Perdue or call x4130.

### Science Research Grant Awarded to GSU Faculty

![Dr. Xiaoyong Chen and Dr. Mary Carrington](image)

Dr. Xiaoyong Chen and Dr. Mary Carrington recently received a $3,000 grant from the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands at its 2017 Science Symposium for their project “Quantifying Soil Organic Carbon Fractions under Main Land Use/Land Cover Types in Nachusa Grasslands.”

Congratulations, Dr. Chen and Dr. Carrington!

### GUIDE Leads the Way to Change

GSU Senior Monet Jones was still in high school when both grandmothers succumbed to cancer. She thought the family had done all they could—until now.
“I wish I knew then what I know now,” said Jones who shadowed a community health worker at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) as part of the first Summer Research Fellows Cohort.

“We knew our family history; we should have done more in the area of prevention.”

Doing more to promote preventative care barriers is at the core of the GUIDE (Governors State University–UI Cancer Center Disparity Education) Cancer Research Training Project that pairs GSU students and faculty with UICC mentors to promote community-based research that will address high cancer rates and mortality in the Southland community. Jones was one of five GSU students who worked with researchers for eight weeks at UIC.

Read more . . .

Get to Know Your Student Rights and Responsibilities!

Everyone on campus has a responsibility for helping the GSU community as we strive for academic freedom, integrity, excellence in scholarship, justice, diversity, and access to education.

Our Student Code of Conduct, along with other university policies, provides clear guidance on what is expected of students as well as what they can expect from GSU faculty and staff. The handbook also provides the procedures that guide the Community Standards process, which aims to hold students accountable for violations of university policy, reflect on their behavior, and develop skills that promote personal and community responsibility.

Children of GSU Employees Eligible for Scholarship

As a member of the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce, children of Governors State University employees are eligible to apply for its annual merit scholarship competition. The Chamber offers this scholarship annually to graduating high school seniors.

For more information, click here.

GSU Votes!

The GSU community is gearing up to vote in the upcoming Illinois primary election on March 20. As you prepare to cast your ballot by mail—the surest way to make sure your vote is counted—or in person at the polls, make time to research the candidates and issues appearing on this year’s ballot.

In an op-ed for the GSU Newsroom, Dr. David Golland, Associate Professor of History, answers the
question, “Why Vote?”

Golland writes, “How can you decide for whom who to vote? For one thing, don’t vote for a candidate simply because you think that candidate can win. Vote for candidates who share your values and your beliefs.”

Read the full article here.

Bring Friends and Family to GSU at an Upcoming Open House

All are invited to attend two upcoming Open House events that will showcase Governors State to prospective students.

On Saturday, February 10, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., GSU’s Undergraduate Open house will help prospective students and their families learn more about admission requirements, academic programs, campus resources, student activities, and on-campus housing. Register here.

The annual Graduate Open House will be held Saturday, February 24 from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. in the Hall of Governors.

Meet with program advisors, coordinators, and staff. Attend breakout sessions on financial aid, housing, GRE preparation, program admission requirements, and much more. Prospective students who attend the Open House will receive a waiver code for their application fee. Programs requiring application through the Centralized Application Service are excluded. Register here, or for more information contact Julie Anderson at 708.534.4086.

Announcements and Events

Send-Off for Provost Bordelon

Join the GSU community for a farewell party for Provost Deborah Bordelon on Wednesday, Feb. 7 from 4 – 6 p.m. in the E Lounge.

RSVP to Penny Perdue or 708.534.4130.
Find the Perfect Valentine’s Day Gift in the GSU Library

You can find a special Valentine’s Day gift while helping to support the Friends of the GSU Library. In the Friends of the Library gift case, located in the GSU Library, you will find assorted pieces of jewelry and crystal for that special someone. One of the highlights is a brand new, out-of-the-box Waterford Lismore Pitcher complete with the original purchase information.

Email GSULibraryInfo@govst.edu for more information.

Interfaith Conversations

Join Intercultural Student Affairs and the Counseling Center on the first Thursday of every month from 3 – 4 p.m. for Interfaith Conversations in A1115, the Interfaith Prayer and Meditation Room. This is an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to discuss how faith impacts their lives and reflect on how it intersects with our multiple identities in current culture.

For more information, please email diversity@govst.edu.

Register for Two-Day Comprehensive Suture Workshop

GSU’s Department of Nursing is hosting a two-day (16-hour) course directed at nurse practitioners and physician’s assistants. This course provides broad exposure to various types of procedural suturing. Learners at any level of experience will gain knowledge using integrated lecture and hands-on training, following the expert guidance of experienced suture training instructors using surgical-grade instruments.

The workshop will be held February 10 – 11, beginning at 8 a.m. each day, in the G-Wing Nursing Simulation Lab. Cost of attendance is $300. Click here for more information and to register, or email Dr. Josephine McCaskill or call 708.235.7687.

Margaret Atwood’s Alias Grace comes to Netflix: Binge-watching race, class, and gender in a video on demand world
Join Arts & Letters faculty at 6:30 p.m. on **Monday, February 12** and **Tuesday, February 13** for a fun and intellectually stimulating evening of binge-watching and discussion of the new Netflix series *Alias Grace*. The contemporary (2017) production of *Alias Grace* is an iteration of Margaret Atwood’s popular novel from 1996, which was a fictionalized enhancement of the real-life story from 1843. This story has found relevance across centuries and helps to contextualize contemporary issues of race, class, and gender as consistent social issues.

- **On February 12**, in Engbretson Hall, we will watch Episodes 1 – 3 and be joined by Gina Keating, investigative journalist, documentary filmmaker and author of the best-selling book, *NETFLIXED: The Epic Battle for America’s Eyeballs* who is an expert on the political economy of Netflix.
- **On February 13**, in F1622, we will watch Episodes 4 – 6, and Dr. Lara Stache (COM), Dr. Rosemary Johnsen (ENG), and Dr. Deborah James (Media Studies) will lead the discussion.

These conversations are cross-discipline and ideal for students and faculty in Media Studies, Communication, and English, as well as Gender and Sexuality Studies, History, and Political and Social Justice, to engage and discuss these timely matters.

We invite Margaret Atwood fans, students, faculty, staff, and community members. Please RSVP to Dr. Debbie James.

**Meet Sandy the Therapy Dog**

Sandy will be on hand to greet one and all who are in the library to study, relax, or meet with friends between classes. Come to the library balcony from 1 – 4 p.m. on Mondays this semester, beginning **February 12**. Thanks to Steve Hyzny, University Lecturer, for bringing Sandy to these sessions.

Email [GSULibraryInfo@govst.edu](mailto:GSULibraryInfo@govst.edu) for more information.

**Meet the Artist: Jeanna Knowles**
All are invited to come to the Library’s Skylight Gallery on **Tuesday, February 13** at 6 p.m. to meet artist and GSU student Jeanna Knowles who created the ceramic art currently on display. Knowles will offer remarks at 6:30, and then all are invited to a Mardi Gras themed reception in E1526—the ceramics studio classroom— which will include demonstrations on the making of ceramic art with GSU Professor [Leanne Cambric](mailto:Leanne.Cambric@gsu.edu).

Questions? Email [GSUlibraryinfo@govst.edu](mailto:GSUlibraryinfo@govst.edu).

**Kenneth Johnson: I am Englewood**

Located in the Big Walls Gallery (E/F Corridor), Kenneth Johnson's exhibition *I am Englewood* will be on display through May 22.

Attend Johnson’s Artist Talk on **Tuesday, February 13** from 12:30 – 1:30 p.m., as well as the Closing Reception on **Wednesday, May 2** from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

All events are free and open to the public.

**Project Learning Tree Training Workshop**

A Project Learning Tree (PLT) training workshop hosted by the Student Education Association and Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education will be held on **February 19** from 8:30 a.m. – noon in the Literacy Zone.
Project Learning Tree is the environmental education program of the American Forest Foundation and is sponsored in Illinois by the Environmental Education Association of Illinois. Elementary and early childhood educators, as well as teacher candidates (undergraduate and graduate students), are invited to attend this hands-on workshop investigating environmental topics through indoor and outdoor activities. Educators will learn to integrate environmental education, literature, math, and social sciences into an existing curriculum with nature as the medium. Dr. Colleen Sexton (Associate Provost) is the trainer for this workshop. She was a National PLT Educator and an Ohio PLT Educator.

The cost for this workshop is $22 per person, which includes materials, an activity guide, resources, training, certification, and a snack. Seats are limited and will be first filled by members of the Student Education Association and Kappa Delta Pi. To RSVP for this workshop, please contact Dr. Colleen Sexton or Michelle Westergaard.

**S.H.E.R.O. Call for Workshops**

The S.H.E.R.O. (Sharing Her story of Empowerment, Resilience, and Opportunity) Women’s Leadership Symposium inspires women to seek their highest level of personal and professional development through a greater understanding of leadership and the acquisition of new ideas to optimize and sustain personal potential.

The 2018 S.H.E.R.O. Women’s Leadership Symposium will be held Friday, March 30 at Governors State University. We are currently looking for workshops that pertain to the conference theme “Reclaiming My Time”—a theme that encourages women to use their voices to be heard, celebrate how valuable they really are, and take ownership of their destiny without permission. It is a time of reclamation to celebrate the beauty of their multiple identities that makes them powerful leaders beyond measure.

Please submit your proposal by Friday, February 16.

**SEA to Host Disaster Relief Project**

The Student Education Association (SEA) is organizing a disaster relief donation drive from January 29 to February 21. Funded by a National Education Association (NEA) grant, this event will benefit residents of Texas affected by the hurricanes of fall 2017. This project and grant focuses on helping South Houston High School (SHHS), along with their students, teachers, and families. SEA at GSU will be collaborating with the school, retired NEA teachers, and the SEA chapter at San Jacinto College.

The project has two goals: to restore the outside area at SHHS and to collect school supplies and personal care items to be donated to school children of Texas. Items can be dropped off at the SEA office (G228) or in one of the donation boxes located in the G building on the second floor until February 21. The culminating event will take place Tuesday, February 27 from 3 – 5 p.m. in the G Building Atrium/Lobby where SEA members, faculty, and other volunteers will work together to sort items and package them for transport to Texas.

Please only donate items listed on the flyer, or consider a cash donation for the purchase of paint, trees, and shrubs.

For more information, please visit the SEA website and social media sites. If you have any questions, or would like to donate or volunteer, please contact the student officers (Jessica White or Reyna Hernandez) or faculty advisors organizing this project (Dr. Katy Hisrich, Dr. Xiaobo She, or Dr. Amy Vujaklija).

**Nominations Open for Sixth Annual Student Leadership Awards**

The Student Leadership Awards serve as an opportunity to recognize outstanding student leaders, organizations, and advisors for their contributions to the campus community. Awards are presented to student organizations recognizing leadership, programming, innovation, and creativity. Award recipients
are distinguished student leaders who have excelled academically and have made a difference through their service and leadership at Governors State.

Categories are listed, and nominations are accepted, at Jaguar Connection through February 16.

**Get to Know Your Library Liaison**

“As the Spring semester begins, I invite you to make the GSU Library and librarians your partners in achieving academic excellence,” said Lydia Morrow Ruetten, Dean of the GSU Library. “As your information and research resource 24/7, your subject liaison librarian can be very helpful to you.”

Liaison librarians are subject area specialists for students, faculty, and academic programs. Liaison librarians assist students and faculty with collection development, instruction, coursework collaboration, and research. You can find the subject area liaison librarians by visiting this link.

Questions? Email GSULibraryInfo@govst.edu.

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**Highlights**

**Sonya Lorelle**

To be emotionally well is to be on a journey, according to Governors State University (GSU) Assistant Professor Dr. Sonya Lorelle. “Mental health is on a continuum. It’s not a pathology to be fixed,” said Lorelle, a licensed counselor and registered Play Therapist whose decade-long advocacy has taken her across the globe promoting good mental health.

In Bangalore, India, Lorelle trained others to help children heal. And, in Buddhist Bhutan, she helped start a professional counseling education program and trained lay people to identify and treat commonly occurring yet potentially devastating issues such as anxiety and depression.

[Read more ...](#)

**Conversations with Leaders: Catherine Balthazar**
When Dr. Catherine Balthazar recalls the special toddler, her eyes get misty, and words stick in her throat.

Jayden* was just over two years old when Catherine, then a young speech pathologist, began working with his family. His parents were discouraged by the constant struggle to understand the needs and wants of their son who spoke only in rough sounds and word fragments.

Instead of offering hope, other specialists told Jayden’s parents to prepare for the worst—severe developmental delays and a lifetime of dependency. At the time, Balthazar’s own son was the same age as her patient, and she saw something different.

Read more . . .

**GSU Student awarded $4,500 from Gilman Study Abroad Scholarship**

GSU Honors student Athanasios (Tommy) Kolovos applied for the [Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship](https://www.gilman-scholarship.org) in October with his intentions to participate in the 3-week GSU Honors Leadership Seminar in Rome from May 22 – June 12, 2018. The Gilman Scholarship awarded him $4,500 to help fund this experience.
Tommy is the third GSU student to be awarded the Gilman scholarship. Akya Gossitt received $1,500 in the summer of 2016 to do service learning in Ghana and Dana Solatka received $3,000 to spend the summer in South Korea, learning the Korean language and Korean art.

If you are a Federal Pell Grant recipient interested in studying abroad for at least three weeks, there are two annual application periods, one in March and one in October. For more information, please visit the Gilman website.

Study Abroad Coordinator, Amy Schoenberg, is hosting a Gilman workshop on Monday, February 12 from 3:00-4:00 p.m. for those interested in applying for the Gilman scholarship in March. Please RSVP to Amy Schoenberg. Additionally, if you are interested in applying for the Honors Leadership Seminar in Rome, the deadline is February 15. Please visit the Study Abroad website for more information.

Career Workshop

The Student Education Association (SEA) along with Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor Society, Psi Chi Psychology National Honor Society, and the Psychology club, hosted a career and resume workshop on Thursday, January 25, at which students from across the university attended, including individuals within the Division of Education, Division of Social Work, and Division of Psychology and Counseling. School administrators, psychologists, graduate school representatives, and student graduates provided beneficial information regarding creating resumes, interviews, and job and graduate school applications. Presenters provided tips on when to apply for positions and how to stand out from other applicants. The second part of the workshop included small group consultations and work sessions where students were able to receive individualized help with their resumes from experienced faculty and staff.

A special thank you to presenters: school administrators Dr. LaMonica Williams and Dr. Saundra Mickles, counselors Kalyna Brumfield and Amina Dahleh, GSU Career Services representative Cynthia Staples, and recent GSU graduate Kinga Drag. Thanks also to the coordinators of this event: Dr. Alli Cipra and Dr. Sasha Cervantes (advisor, PSI CHI), and Dr. Marlon Cummings, Dr. Timothy Harrington, and Dr. Katy Hisrich (advisors, SEA and KDP).

Workshops & Trainings

A list of workshops for students, faculty, and staff can be found here, including Career Services drop-in hours and faculty and staff headshot opportunities.

Do you have a story or event you want to submit for the GSU View? Click here to learn about our submission guidelines.
University Park, IL, February 06, 2018

Black History Month: GSU Celebrates

February is Black History Month (BHM), and Governors State University is celebrating the rich heritage of African Americans with more than 20 events across campus that promise to enlighten the mind and nourish the soul.

“From faith perspectives to black excellence and health and wellness, our campus-wide celebration promises to engage Jaguars,” said Robert Clay, Director of Intercultural Affairs. (http://www.govst.edu/diversity/)

“The events are a nod to the achievements of African Americans who played central role in U.S. history.”

One such figure is trailblazing poet Gwendolyn Brooks, the first African American to win a Pulitzer Prize. The 29th annual African American Read-In, an international celebration (http://www2.ncte.org/get-involved/african-american-read-in/) will commemorate the 100th birthday of Chicago-based Brooks, who reigned as the state’s Poet Laureate for more than 30 years.

GSU event organizer Dr. Rashidah Muhammad observed that the university’s celebration—one of the university’s longest-running BHM salutes—is expected to draw Jaguars of all ages to learn and share African American literary and historical pieces.

“Last year, Provost (Deborah) Bordelon read a famous fable, and Dean Andre Marak (https://gsunews.govst.edu/conversations-with-leaders-andre-marak/) and his children read historical pieces and poetry,” said Muhammad. “Everybody from five to 80 years old participates in the spirit of a great coming together.”

This year’s Read-In will be held Feb. 26. If you would like to read this year, please contact Dr. Muhammad (mailto: muhammad@govst.edu) to sign up.

Visit Intercultural Student Affairs to view a listing (http://www.govst.edu/diversity) of events from around campus today through Feb. 28.
University Park, IL , February 06, 2018

GUIDE Leads the Way to Change

GSU Senior Monel Jones was still in high school when both grandmothers succumbed to cancer. She thought the family had done all they could—until now.

“I wish I knew then what I know now,” said Jones who shadowed a community health worker at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) as part of the first Summer Research Fellows Cohort.

“We knew our family history, we should have done more in the area of prevention.”

Doing more to promote preventative care barriers is at the core of the GUIDE (https://gusnews.govst.edu/making-connections-to-save-lives/) (Governors State University–UI Cancer Center Disparity Education) Cancer Research Training Project that pairs GSU students and faculty with UCC mentors to promote community-based research that will address high cancer rates and mortality in the Southland community. Jones was one of five GSU students who worked with researchers for eight weeks at UIC.

The project is funded by a joint four-year, $1.5 million grant from the National Cancer Institute.

In addition to removing barriers to care, project planners want to mentor and develop faculty, as well create a research pipeline of students to ultimately attract more research dollars to the university.

“My dream is for GSU to increase our capacity to do and fund research that supports our teaching and service mission,” said Dr. Catherine Balthazar, Interim Dean of the College of Health and Human Services (http://www.govst.edu/cht/) and Chair of the Department of Communication Disorders, (http://www.govst.edu/Academics-Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Health_and_Human_Services/Department_of_Communication_Disorders/) She is co-principal investigator for the grant. “Having this kind of partnership increases our ability to compete for funding and gives us more power to address some of the problems we find important.”

Now in its third year, GUIDE is celebrating unforeseen success – two professors have achieved full tenure – as planners look forward to launching a mobile application, an intervention tool that puts health risk assessments at the fingertips of patients.

Applications (http://www.govst.edu/guide-project-newsletter/) are also being accepted for a second round of summer fellows.

Dr. Rupert Evans, Sr., Chair and Program Director of GSU’s Department of Health Administration (http://www.govst.edu/Academics-Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Health_and_Human_Services/Department_of_Health_Administration/) and co-principal investigator for GUIDE, said he is hopeful about future funding and researchers.

He’s more excited about the historic grant, the first ever awarded that allows two-minority serving institutions to look at cancer research.

“The biggest win has been the collaboration. It hasn’t happened before in the United States. This is important because of the disproportionate rate that people of color are affected by disease,” Evans said. “ If you look at the how people of color are impacted—we are disproportionately represented in every major disease at every level—
heart disease, diabetes, prostate cancer, cancer. Until now, we had very few black and brown people who look like us who are trying to eliminate those disparities. GSU and UIC are uniquely positioned to do this work because we have relationships with the communities that are risk and able to develop trust to do the research."

Jones, who plans to study public health administration, wants to explore health care disparities and help eliminate the barriers to care. She said talking with community workers who shared racial background with her grandmothers could have saved their lives.

To know better is to do better, said Jones, who plans to study public health administration after graduation. She wants to remove health care disparities starting with this Public Service Announcement:

“Get screened. Go and talk with your health care provider to learn your risk factors. If you are at risk, you can see about your options.”
University Park, IL, February 06, 2018

Sonya Lorelle

To be emotionally well is to be on a journey, according to Governors State University (http://www.gouvst.edu/) (GSU) Assistant Professor Dr. Sonya Lorelle. "Mental health is on a continuum. It's not a pathology to be fixed," said Lorelle, a licensed counselor and registered Play Therapist, whose decade-long advocacy has taken her across the globe promoting good mental health.

In Bangalore, India, Lorelle trained others to help children heal. In Buddhist Bhutan, she helped start a professional counseling education program and trained lay people to identify and treat commonly occurring yet potentially devastating issues such as anxiety and depression. And, in 2013, Lorelle brought her passion for child and adult counseling, education and mental health wellness to students in the GSU College of Education (http://www.gouvst.edu/core). Today, she serves as coordinator of GSU’s Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral program (http://www.gouvst.edu/Academics/Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Education/Academic_Programs/Graduate/Counselor_Education_and_Supervision_Ed-D/), has co-authored two academic papers in recent years, and helped write a $267,000 grant providing stipends to GSU student intern counselors.

A former music major, Lorelle (http://www.sonyalorelle.com/) has released three soulful albums and performed for audiences across the country. With an earthy voice, Lorelle's songwriting soothes the psyche. "Everyone needs help," she says.

“We’re all doing our best, but we all struggle. It’s about helping people grow and be on that continuum of wellness that’s very holistic with mind, body, spirit, social connections, and nutrition."

GSU Newsroom: What inspired you to study mental health?

Lorelle: (Laughs) I started out in music, but they were teaching me to be an opera singer and I didn’t want to do that so I took a psychology class and loved it. I was always doing self-analysis for self-growth, and I found it all interesting. In my master’s program, we looked at mental health as developmental instead of a pathology. It changed how I viewed the world and people. Now, as a counselor, I get to be a part of the transformation for other people and that’s inspiring—especially when I see the light bulbs go off.

GSU Newsroom: You’ve visited Bhutan four times on mental health missions. Is the need more pressing there?

Lorelle: Bhutan is just like the rest of the world: mental health issues exist, there is a stigma, and those issues don’t get addressed. You are called crazy or said to have a bad spirit or bad luck. Yet there is a lot of anxiety and a lot of depression, panic attacks, and a lot of self-medication. In most developing countries, there is a huge need for mental health services but no one available to deliver services. The World Health Organization calls it the Mental Health Gap. I am a Master Trainer of the Mental Health Facilitator Program through the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) and helped teach a couple classes for
the first cohort to identify and provide support for mental health issues. The country has started a counseling program at Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan that will train professionals to work as counselors in schools.

NBCC also helped Bhutan to start a professional counseling organization that has created its own ethics code. They've made a lot of progress there, but they still need people. The end goal is to get mental health professionals trained in Bhutan so they can serve their own population.

GSU Newsroom: What inspired you to bring your practice to GSU, and how are you promoting mental health here?

Lorelle: I earned my master’s degree in Community Agency Counseling and my bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Missouri State University. After completing my Ph.D. in Counselor Education at Old Dominion University, I was volunteering in Bhutan and met GSU Interim Dean Dr. Shannon B. Dermer (http://www.govst.edu/Site_Navigation/Contact/Directory/sdermer/), Chair of the COE Division of Psychology and Counseling. (http://www.govst.edu/Academics/Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Education/Division_of_Psychology_and_Counseling/) Dr. Dermer shared the university’s mission to make education accessible to all. It was the same thing I was doing—making mental health care accessible in Bhutan. At the university, we are collaborating with faculty and students to start an advocacy and research group to work in the community and with students. The students will help us identify the issues we need to address. We’re planting seeds.

GSU Newsroom: You also have a passion for neuroscience. Connect the dots between the brain and emotional counseling?

Lorelle: In Neurocounseling: Promoting human growth and development throughout the lifespan (published in Adultspan Journal), we write about what happens in the brain when it is stressed.

In my Human Development class, I integrated neuroscience into the class all the time because looking at what’s happening in the brain can be very helpful to understanding the fight or flight response, the impact of trauma, and positive practices that can lead to wellness. The brain is a big piece of our understanding. Knowing how it works can help counselors and also clients effectively deal with stressors.

GSU Newsroom: How did a music major transition to mental health advocate and does one influence the other?

Lorelle: My songwriting can be somewhat therapeutic for me personally, but I keep it separate from my work as a counselor or counselor educator. I play shows a couple times a year. My fourth album, hopefully, will be released fall of 2018.

GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY

Academics (http://www.govst.edu/academics/)
Programs (http://www.govst.edu/ProgramListing/)
College of Arts
and Sciences (http://www.govst.edu/Academics/Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Arts_and_Sciences/)
College of Business (http://www.govst.edu/COB/)
College of Education (http://www.govst.edu/Academics/Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Education/)
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International (http://www.govst.edu/Future_Students/International_Students/)
Tuition (http://www.govst.edu/tuition)
Requirements
Financial Aid (http://www.govst.edu/Admissions/Financial_Aid/)

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University Park, IL, February 06, 2018

Conversations with Leaders: Catherine Balthazar

When Dr. Catherine Balthazar[1](http://www.gvsu.edu/Site_Navigation/Contacts/Directory/cbalthazar) recalls the special toddler, her eyes get misty, and words stick in her throat.

Jayden* was just over two years old when Catherine, then a young speech pathologist, began working with his family. His parents were discouraged by the constant struggle to understand the needs and wants of their son who spoke only in rough sounds and word fragments.

Instead of offering hope, other specialists told Jayden’s parents to prepare for the worst—severe developmental delays and a lifetime of dependency. At the time, Balthazar’s own son was the same age as her patient, and she saw something different.

Hidden by Jayden’s delayed language skills was a brilliant mind that helped him solve complex puzzles far beyond the abilities of most children his age.

Balthazar worked with the boy, using family centered practices—a novel approach at the time—to engage his parents in helping to teach communication skills.

Dramatic changes in Jayden, who later graduated high school with honors, changed Balthazar.

“That’s when I started to feel that I couldn’t keep this to myself. I wanted to be a warrior for effective therapy practices. I didn’t want other families to suffer that way,” said Balthazar, longstanding Chair of the Department of Communication Disorders[2](http://www.gvsu.edu/Academics/Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Health_and_Human_Services/Department_of_Communication_DISOARDERS) and an academic whose clinical practice has inspired her scholarship and vice versa for more than 20 years.

“I was fortunate to be able to go back and forth between the academic and clinical worlds. I see them as two sides of the same coin. My research interests have always been practice oriented. I don’t just want to study why a language disorder happens. I want to know how we change that. Similarly, I would get frustrated when I didn’t know how to be more effective with my clients, and so I’d go back to academics and work on the problem as a researcher.”

Scholar and practitioner are both titles Balthazar embraces. However, Interim Dean of the College of Health and Human Services[3](http://www.gvsu.edu/chhs/) (CHHS) is one that gives her pause. In late December, Balthazar assumed the role filling in for Dr. Elizabeth Cada, currently Interim Provost.

Still, it’s easy to see her path to the top of the seven-school college when you consider her impressive body of work on both sides of the “coin,” helping introduce GSU to collaborations that have generated millions in research dollars.

A Faculty Excellence Award recipient, Balthazar’s scholarship, student engagement, and service to the institution have helped guided the university’s speech pathology program, one of the strongest in the region.

As interim dean of the CHHS, where providing care is the central unifying theme, Balthazar said she hopes to continue the established trajectory, as well as expand the university’s capacity to attract research funding and engage students.
She is passionate about the role of helping those who want to help others.

“At GSU, we look for people who want to continue their educational journey though they are not traditional students. Here, I get to be part of significant life transformations.”

The daughter of a Johns Hopkins-educated pediatrician and medical geneticist, Balthazar is an expert transformer of sorts.

She grew up watching her dad and dreamed of practicing medicine herself. After a “discouraging” semester at the University of Iowa, Balthazar indulged her love of arts and morphed into a theater major—briefly. Finally, her fascination with words led her to study language pathologies.

A neighbor knew the free spirited student had studied French, German, Japanese and Spanish and encouraged her to pursue formal study of language. A linguistics major—headed toward teaching English as a second language rather than studying theory—Balthazar was a senior before she got hooked on thinking about problems with language development in a class on the theories of how people learn to speak.

“I got a peek in the black box of how language works. We learned about language by looking at problems—a cleft palate, in this case. You take a two-year old with this structural abnormality that causes speech to sound different. You sew up the cleft, and their speech should be ok, but guess what—it isn’t. You have to train them to speak differently. It’s not just a structural or mechanical problem. It’s a complicated interaction in the mind that structures language. That realization blew away all my assumptions,” said Balthazar.

Years later, a revelation about the gaps in providing for language needs in school aged children led Balthazar to collaborate with another institution—a rare move in those days. She helped secure a grant to study school age children who had previously experienced language delays. An estimated 60 percent of older children diagnosed with learning disabilities also have language development challenges, she reported.

In 2011, she served as co-principal investigator on a grant to study how to develop complex language skills in children ages 12 to 17.

Today, Balthazar is partnering with Dr. Rupert Evans, Sr., Chair and Program Director of GSU’s Department of Health Administration (http://www.govsi.edu/Academics/Colleges_and_Programs/College_of_Health_and_Human_Services/Department_of_Health_Administration), to look at cancer disparities among African American women in the Southland. The $1.5 million GUIDE (https://gsunews.govsi.edu/making-connections-to-save-lives) grant is a cross-disciplinary GSU and University of Illinois Cancer Center project to lead community-based research to reduce cancer disparities in the south suburbs.

Balthazar said the project, which lies outside her academic area of expertise, creates much needed inter-professional education, which is good for the entire university.

“I’m excited even though cancer research doesn’t directly impact my home program, it allows us to build capacity in our institution and support opportunities to funnel students to my program.”

Students, after all, are the reason Balthazar accepted a job she never dreamed of doing.

s does appeal to me because I really see—so clearly—how to