Tonight: Reverend Albert Sampson Returns to GSU

Reverend Albert Sampson—among the first GSU alumni, noted HistoryMaker, and the last minister ever ordained by Martin Luther King Jr.—returns to share highlights of his journey with GSU on Tuesday, February 26, beginning with a reception in the Visual Art Gallery at 6:30 p.m. The Rev. Dr. Sampson’s talk will begin at 7:30 p.m. in Sherman Hall.

The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III will introduce Sampson, and GSU Professor Dr. Rashidah Muhammad will lead the discussion.

Register for the event.
Conversations with Leaders: Corey Williams

Long before terms like “diversity” and “inclusion” were trending in our lexicon, Afro Latino college freshman Corey Williams joined a Jewish fraternity to set a new course of conversation on campuses across the state.

Williams, now Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at Governors State University, was attending college in New York when Michael Griffith, a black man in his twenties, was struck and killed by a car while trying to escape an angry mob of white teenagers.

That was 1986, and years later, race-based tensions were still heavy throughout the city and on the Brooklyn College campus, where Williams was taking classes. He and a friend made a pact to join a fraternity that did not typically reflect their race or ethnicity.

Williams took up the crest of Zeta Beta Tau, while his White friend joined Alpha Phi Alpha, a historical organization that mostly serves the African American community.

“They didn’t know what to expect, but it was good. I used the opportunity to bridge cultural gaps and to create a new narrative on the misconceptions about ethnic groups. Eventually, I became chapter president,” said Williams, who later graduated from Stony Brook University with a degree in Sociology. He also served as Zeta Beta Tau president there.
Now, he’s leading the larger diversity and inclusion conversation across campus at GSU, as the recently named inaugural Chief Diversity Officer. Williams will serve in an interim capacity through June 30, 2020.

In this role, Williams is responsible to foster a culture of respect within the Jaguar nation, and advocate for diversity and equity initiatives to help students succeed.

The duties are a natural addition to Williams’ relatively new role as Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, which he began in 2018, bringing nearly 20 years of experience in higher education leadership and administration at institutions across the Chicago area.

With an impressive portfolio that includes a mix of public and private institutions, two- and four-year schools, Williams seeks out first-generation students—nearly 42 percent of GSU undergraduates—who need extra support to succeed.

Providing systems and resources to assist students is part of the Dean of Students’ high profile position, which touches the lives of every student, from directing campus activities and university services that govern conduct, to providing health and wellbeing resources, including GSU4U.

But the personal connections are what Williams holds closest.

He’s created mentoring programs on two campuses which are now being replicated across the state. One recent model even boasted a 100 percent college graduation rate. Moreover, Williams is an expert in securing funds and creating initiatives through the federally backed TRiO program that provides Student Support Services.

“It’s important for me to give back—to allow students to see people in leadership who look like they do. Students need to see people who look like them. It motivates them.”

That’s why Williams makes it a point to lunch with students and attend campus activities like basketball games. You may have seen him ice skating in the Hall of Governors during Welcome Week.

As an immigrant who grew up in a single parent household, Williams likes to say he meets students where they are in life.

At nine years old, Williams and his mother immigrated to New York from Panama. He grew up a latchkey kid while his mom worked three jobs to provide for the family.

After high school, he went to work and to college, paying for classes as he went.
A human resources consulting position brought him to Chicago in 2000, but he quickly switched his career focus to higher education when he took a grant coordinator position at Chicago State, where he later earned a master’s in Higher Education Administration.

Today, Williams is a doctoral candidate at DePaul, completing his thesis for a degree in Educational Leadership.

Seated in his office at GSU, it’s clear Williams is passionate about two things: students and fine art. Young men and women smile from photos on his desk and walls, dotted with the colorful works of Afro Latino and African American artists. His taste in fashion and fabric reflect an artist’s palate, and he compares the landscape of GSU to a painter’s workspace.

“Governors State is a work of art with the canvas colors highlighting the strength and beauty of the institution. It’s a working piece—I’m adding my strokes.”

While the artist is busy creating, his thoughts have turned back to Greek Life, as he leads an initiative to bring Greek organizations to GSU’s campus for the first time. And like his experiment as an innovative student in New York—which he said ultimately resulted in more people of color pledging White fraternities at Brooklyn College—this project is going to be an inspiration.

“We are creating an inclusive model that will offer something for everyone. It’s going to be a model that will take GSU to the next level.”

First Generation Student: Nekia Driver

Nekia Driver likes to reflect on the words of actress Stella Adler: “The play is not in the words, it’s in you.” Driver, a Theatre and Performance Studies major and student athlete at Governors State University, says Adler’s quote inspires her on stage. Meanwhile, the first-generation college student is inspiring others in real life.
Driver discusses her journey at Governors State with us:

“That quote, from actress Stella Adler, is something I have applied to my life. Anything that I do—whether it’s acting, studying or working with youth—comes from within. Her quote is something I take don’t take lightly because it has helped me realize that anything I do is not based on a script, but it’s what comes from my heart.

When I started doing theater in high school, I knew I wanted to continue down this path because I fell in love with inspiring people so much that I decided to be the first in my family to pursue a college degree. What I didn’t realize, was the impact I would have not just on my own younger siblings but on some of the youth I work with at my church.

I keep in touch with my little brother and sister to see how they’re doing, and they do the same for me. We have conversations about studying and school a lot, and at church the students that I work with talk to me about school as well. They tell they want to go to college because I am in college. When I see how much of an impact I have on them and how open they are with me, it blows my mind every time.

My mom never went to college. Throughout my college career she has reminded me how proud she is of me. When things get tough, she tells me to stay motivated because she wants better for me.

When I first arrived to Governors State University, I had this vision that college would be the best years of my life. And while it really has been, that doesn’t mean there haven’t been some challenges. I have had to learn how to balance social activities and clubs with classes and study time.
A strong support system on campus has helped me throughout my four years. I’ve learned to ask for help when I need it, and I’ve been blessed to find some wonderful mentors and friends who have helped me stay focused on what’s important.

While balancing my classes, I’ve become the voice of GSU—working as an anchor on our weekly news program, serving as color commentator for sports events and doing voiceovers for promotional videos. I have joined the Transformation Gospel Choir, became a dual athlete in cross country and golf, joined the GSU Dance Company and worked as an orientation leader and box office assistant. I continue to be in various plays and productions through the GSU Center for Performing Arts.

Thanks to God, I am grateful for the opportunities I have had, the professors who have influenced me, the various productions I’ve been a part of and for the people I have met along the way. Governors State has helped shape me and my future.”

Honors Program Students Present at HCIR Symposium

Congratulations to the following Honors Program Students that participated in the Honors Council of the Illinois Region (HCIR) Spring Symposium at Harper College this past weekend of February 25th. Their research was selected to present, facilitate discussions, or develop a poster presentation.

- Kiara Johnson
- Joel Willis
- Rachel Beckmann
- Halina Kennedy
- Sarah Shur
- Daniel Gonzalez
- Colton Krska
- Melanie O'Connell
- Shelby O'Connell
- Mia Anderson
- Imani Brazzleton
- Mia Hubbert
- Keisha Liggins
- Anyinniana Little
- Lauren Cleary
GUIDE Project Internships Available for Juniors and Seniors

Are you looking for a summer research opportunity? Consider becoming a GUIDE Project Scholar!

GUIDE stands for GSU-UICC Disparities Education and is a cancer research training grant between GSU and the University of Illinois Cancer Center. The GUIDE project is focused on cancer health disparities and has paid summer research internships available for juniors and
seniors. Some of the research activities include attending workshops or conferences, conducting literature reviews, and preparing research poster presentations.

If you’re interested in this amazing opportunity, please contact Dr. DeLawnia Comer-HaGans for an application and more information. Be sure to request your application early, as applications are due February 28.

**RSVP Now for March 29 Spring All-Campus Symposium**

GSU’s spring all-campus symposium will be held **Friday, March 29** on the stage of the CPA. This semester’s symposium—Action Plan: Removing Obstacles for Adult Learners—will continue our work from last fall.

Last fall’s symposium discussion focused on the barriers adult learners face. Since its founding in 1969, GSU has been dedicated to meeting the needs of adult learners. On March 29, we will explore action plans that will help us increase the opportunities and successes of this nationally underserved population. Pam Tate, formerly of CAEL and now chief national partnerships officer at Strada Education Network, will be our facilitator.

A continental breakfast will be available at 8:30 a.m., and we will begin promptly at 9 a.m. A working lunch is planned to ensure an early afternoon conclusion.

RSVPs, required for this event, should be sent to Penny Perdue (x4130).
Legal Empowerment Brigade Symposium

On **Tuesday, February 26**, at 5 p.m. in Engbretson Hall, stop by the annual Global Brigade symposium to learn about GSU students’ unique experience volunteering abroad in Darien, Panama.

[RSVP for the event.](#)

Study Abroad Fair
Explore new study abroad opportunities on **Wednesday, February 27** from 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. in the Hall of Governors. Discover exciting study abroad programs and even learn about ways to finance your trip!

[Learn more.](#)

**Salute to Grads: Commencement Preparation**

Stop by Salute to Grads on **Wednesday, March 6**, from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. in the Hall of Governors to take care of all of your graduation needs. Jostens will be on hand to measure you for your cap and gown. You may also order announcements, GSU class ring, diploma frames, and more. LifeTouch Event Photography will also be available to take professional graduation photos (with regalia) as well as business portraits.

You will also receive important information regarding the ceremony, and assistance will be available from the Commencement Office, Career Services, the Alumni Association, the Recreation and Fitness Center, Follett Bookstore, Student Life, and Veteran's Affairs.
Business Careers Forum and Alumni/Students Reception

On **Thursday, February 21**, the College of Business and GSU Alumni Association co-hosted a *Business Careers Forum and Alumni/Student reception* on the CPA stage. Panelists from BKD CPA Advisors, Deloitte, Gallagher, Panduit, and Wintrust Financial shared their career journeys and lessons learned that are valuable to today's business students and recent alumni.

About 80 COB students, alumni, and faculty/staff attended the event. Guests networked with the panelists and other attendees after the forum.

Open House
Learn more about Governors State at an upcoming Undergraduate and Graduate Open House on Saturday, March 23. Information will be provided about admission requirements, academic programs, campus resources, student activities, and on-campus housing at Prairie Place.

Learn more and register.

**Spring Fest 2019—Host an Event**

Spring Fest is an end-of-semester celebration recognizing the hard work and dedication of students prior to the week of final exams. Student Life invites GSU departments, divisions, and student organizations to host a Spring Fest event during the week of April 22 – 28. Event requests are accepted via a Doodle poll, an online calendar tool, through March 1.

Steps to submit an event via Doodle:
1. Click here to submit your request
2. Select a date that you would like to host your event
3. Type your name and GSU email address in the participant field
4. Click Send

Once submitted, Student Life will follow up to discuss the specifics of your event. Spring Fest is an exciting time of the year for the GSU community. Although departments are not mandated to program an event, please consider hosting an event that helps manifest memorable experiences for GSU students. Requests are due by this Friday, March 1.

**Announcements and Events**

**2019 Spring Open Market**

Come out and shop with Vendors and Crafters at the Annual Spring Open Market, sponsored by the GSU Civil Service Senate. The event, open to the public, will be held March 13 – 14 from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. in the Hall of Governors.

For more information, contact civilservice@govst.edu or 708.534.4481.
Superhero Literacy Night with Families

The Student Education Association (SEA) and Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society (KDP) are taking part in a Literacy Night on **Wednesday, February 27** from 5:30 – 7 p.m. at Monee Elementary School District 201. The theme for the literacy activities for the event is “Superheroes.” The activities will give students the opportunity to use their reading and writing skills in an engaging and fun way.

Click for more information.

Respond to Violence "Speakers Corner"

Do you have a story about how violence has impacted your life? If so, we encourage you to share. The Respond to Violence initiative is taping student stories as a part of our ongoing “Speakers Corner,” designed to give voice to those affected by violence.

Some of the final videos will be shared on the [Respond to Violence webpage](#). Taping will take place **Monday, March 4**, from 9 a.m. – noon and **Wednesday, March 6**, from 1 – 5 p.m. in Digital Learning and Media Design.

For more information or to sign up for a taping slot, please email [Yevette Brown](#).
Chicago Style Steppin'

An urban dance that originated in Chicago, Steppin' is a variation of swing dance which continues to evolve. Want to try Steppin'? Bring your dancing shoes to a FREE session with instructor Celeste Sutton on Tuesday, March 12 at 3 p.m. in the GSU Racquetball Court. RSVP with Michelle.

If you find you love it, join us for a four-week session on Tuesdays (April 16, 23, 30, and May 7) from 6 – 7 p.m. in the GSU Racquetball Court. Fee $60 per person. Register with Michelle.

Physicians Approval Recommended, Waiver Required.

SHERO Women’s Leadership Symposium

The S.H.E.R.O. 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. S.H.E.R.O. stands for Sharing Her Story of Empowerment, Resilience and Opportunity.

The annual SHERO Women’s Leadership Symposium has been rescheduled to Friday, April 5. Register here by Friday, March 22.
GRE and LSAT Preparation Courses

Hosted by the School of Extended Learning, the GRE and LSAT Preparation Courses will begin Saturday, March 30 from 9 a.m. – noon at GSU. Registrations are still being accepted and the deadline is March 18.

Register here for the GRE Preparation Course.

Register here for the LSAT Preparation Course.

For more information, please contact Dr. Felicia L. Townsend, Director of Corporate and Community Education at ftownsend@govst.edu or 708.534.3044.

Nurse Practitioner Skills Day

Advanced Practitioner Skills Day will be held Saturday, April 6, at 8 a.m. in (lower-level) Nursing Classroom #G015. Attendees will learn to suture: covering all common outpatient techniques, when and what to suture, and to select best practices for anesthesia; interpret 12-Lead EKG: covering all fundamentals of heart attack identification, rapid interpretation of injury patterns, and advanced diagnostics; X-Rays: chest and abdominal course covers all common
findings from plain-films that would routinely be identified in family practice, and includes audience polling for real-time anonymous feedback.

The enrollment fee of $175 includes 8.0 ANCC-approved nursing contact hours; all materials needed for course completion, and suture trainer for home-use. Contact Dr. Josephine McCaskill, or Dr. John Russell with Skills On Point, LLC.

**Avoiding Pitfalls in Public Speaking**

*Instructor*
Jeanne Sparrow

Hosted by the School of Extended Learning, the Avoiding Pitfalls in Public Speaking workshop will take place **Wednesday, April 10**, 9 a.m. – noon at GSU. During a recent Training News interview with Dr. Felicia L. Townsend, workshop instructor, Jeanne Sparrow highlighted topics that will be covered during the workshop. Register for the workshop [here](#). GSU staff, faculty, students, and alumni use discount code GSU55 during checkout. For more information, please email Dr. Felicia L. Townsend, Director of Corporate and Community Education or by calling 708.534.3044.

**Team Jaguar Fit Camp**

Team Jaguar Fitcamp is a 5-week class beginning **Monday, April 1**, that will focus on a variety of ways participants can maintain and improve their physical health and body composition. Each class will include strength training, cardio intervals and more.

[Learn more . . .](#)

**Workshops & Trainings**

A complete list of workshops for students, faculty, and staff can be found [here](#).