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**Significant Change with High Level Quality Control**

*Dr. Elaine P. Maimon*

Our regional accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central States has the responsibility for approving major changes in universities and colleges in our region. HLC sent a team to GSU in April to give final approval to our admission of lower-division students. HLC considered this change “operational,” not a change in mission, because they understood that GSU was founded to be inclusive.

I was confident, in fact excited, to show the visiting team the remarkable plans for our first freshman class. Nonetheless, whenever evaluation is part of the agenda, a tiny bit of nervousness is unavoidable.

Well, I did more than breathe a sigh of relief when we received the HLC report, which is now a public document. Here is an excerpt from their high praise:

“The types of preparation made for this very significant change are being made in tandem with other significant changes in general education programming, assessment processes, institutional research, faculty development and other key areas. Such deep and significant change with such a high level of quality control and in such a short timeframe is rare in higher education.”

What a gratifying validation of the work being done by so many people across campus. The General Education Task Force, chaired by Professor Ann Vendrely, deserves special mention. This group decided to Think Big. They planned a first-year program that reflects decades of research on student success. But they did not stop there. They created an exceptional general education plan that imbues students, in the words of our mission statement, “with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed in a global society.”

The Lower Division Steering Committee, chaired by Dean Reinhold Hill, continues to do extraordinary work in planning and organization. The freshmen are coming, and we will be ready.

The HLC team encourages us to publish articles and to make presentations on our planning processes and on our program. We have already begun to do so. Please think about expanding your research agenda to take advantage of this distinctive opportunity. It is deeply satisfying to think that other universities will benefit from our thoughtful deliberations. It definitely takes an entire campus to prepare for such a Big Idea (a phrase that will figure significantly in my August 20 Convocation speech).

At GSU, in a great variety of ways, we are planning for Mission Forward (hint, another Convocation idea). Throughout the year, we will engage in more discussion and preparation. We are building something that will benefit our students for decades to come and sharing our innovative approaches with other colleges and universities.

I want to take a moment to thank everyone on this campus for contributing to Mission Forward. I am eagerly awaiting our next Big Idea. Our university was founded by people who looked both forward and upward. That proud heritage continues today through our collective efforts. Let’s resolve to continue the momentum.

**Convocation 2013**

**GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY**
Mindset List
Randi S. Schneider, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
On the same day In Motion: Convocation Edition is scheduled to hit your mailbox, the Class of 2017 Mindset List is scheduled to hit the mass media. While you may be familiar with this annual tradition, others may be new to the ritual. The Mindset List started as an educational venture by English and Humanities professors at Beloit College. They could not have known that their small project would start a global phenomenon.

Each year the list shows up in countless publications, hits the mass media news on radio and television, is used to orient new faculty and staff to their incoming students, and ends up a point of conversation at countless social events. In this age of Facebook and other forms of electronic communication, the list ends up on the desk tops of thousands of higher education enthusiast's minutes after it is published.

The Mindset List was created at Beloit College in 1998 to reflect the world view of entering first year students. It started with the members of the class of 2002, who were born in 1980. I am secretly hoping when you click on the link below you will find the list for the Class of 2017. If not, check back in the next day or two. It will no doubt provide tidbits to talk about for the rest of the week! In the meantime, you will find mindset lists from 2002-2016. I'm willing to bet the list will become an addiction for you, as it has been for me for many years. Enjoy!

Transformations
Dr. Deborah Bordelon, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
What makes a university a dynamic entity? At Governors State, it is clear that innovation and creativity are the driving forces behind our transformation. Our faculty, staff, and students are actively engaged in expanding academic programs, transforming student life, and preparing for the next stage in the evolution of Governors State. Our commitment to equity and access to higher education is as strong as ever. This promise applies to our incoming freshmen, dual degree students, transfer students, and graduate students.

As provost, my role is to provide oversight and coordination of all academic activities at the university. Much like an orchestra conductor is instrumental in the performance of a symphony, I must make sure all of the educational activities at the university come together in a cohesive manner to ensure a well-rounded educational experience both in and out of the classroom setting. I work closely with the areas of academic and student affairs. Through working with deans, directors, faculty and staff, we are able to ensure that our students have an educational experience that will prepare them to be productive citizens as well as be prepared for their future careers.

We are continuing to implement and expand our academic master plan. The Academic Master Plan Committee, consisting of faculty, staff and student representatives, addresses gaps in program offerings and identifies programs that will concentrate on the needs of our students and our surrounding communities. Over the past two years, we have started 14 new programs. We currently have 12 additional programs that are awaiting Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) approval and will start in fall 2014 or spring 2015. These programs are at the undergraduate and graduate levels and will generate more opportunities and interest for current and potential students.

We are eagerly anticipating welcoming our first freshman class in 2014. Faculty are actively involved in developing the curriculum for our first year freshman students. This innovative curriculum will be delivered in a cohort (learning community format) and will focus on three themes: Civic Engagement, Global Citizenship, and Sustainability. Our freshman students will be able to network with their peers and explore the connections among the disciplines. Governors State is the place where big ideas are valued and nurtured. We encourage the exchange of ideas and thoughts at all levels.

Governors State University is on the move. You have the unique opportunity to make history at GSU. Be a part of our transformation!
What’s an RA?

*Slandie Dieujuste, Assistant Director Auxiliary Services and University Housing*

When many of us nostalgically look back at our college days, we often think about the relationships and people who have impacted us. For the resident student, one of those influential people is often times an RA, the trained paraprofessional that served as a peer mentor and leader in their residence hall.

RA is one of the many acronyms used in the residence life alphabet soup of acronyms. The Resident Assistant position focuses on enhancing the quality of life in the residence halls, including fostering community, providing support, and being attentive to the health, safety and security of residents. In fact, RAs are often the eyes and ears of a residential campus. They are typically the first to see or hear of a problem involving a resident.

Amazingly, an RA wears many hats. She is a program coordinator, planning events that enrich the social, educational and emotional needs of residents. She is a mediator, helping resolve roommate conflicts. She is a community builder, documenting violations of established policies and reporting health and safety concerns. She is a first responder, as the first person a student reaches out to in time of need and she is an administrator, performing administrative tasks in the form of reports and assisting with residence hall operations.

RAs enhance the resident student’s experience by being a resource person and providing leadership, guidance, friendship and support—all of which occur within the context of creating community. The formal and informal day-to-day interactions that RAs have with their residents can often be life changing. In fact, very few student leadership positions provide student leaders with hands-on opportunities to have such a powerful impact on their peers and college community as the RA position does.

While the RA acronym is one of many in the residence life alphabet soup, the RA role is so unique and important, that it is inconceivable to envision a successful residential community without it. From providing a shoulder to cry on, to referring a student to available resources, to providing assistance with an assignment, GSU RAs’ influence will undoubtedly be far reaching. They will have the opportunity to positively impact their residents as individuals and by so doing, impact the college community and the world.

Starting in October 2013, we will begin to recruit for the first group of five RAs who will live and work in Prairie Place. In order to be eligible for the RA position, candidates must:

- have completed two (2) semesters as an enrolled student at GSU or any other institution of higher education with at least part-time enrollment status;
- be enrolled for at least six credit hours/semester;
- maintain at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average and a 2.5 semester grade point average;
- maintain good student conduct standing; and
- must have a passion for serving the GSU Community.
Orientation Leaders

LaTonya Holmes, Academic Advisor

For the first time in the history of Governors State University, we will have Orientation Leaders help guide students as they begin their journey as part of our community. In preparation to effectively work in this exciting position, the 20 selected student orientation leaders attended a full day, Orientation Leader Training on Monday, August 12. The day consisted of an interactive workshops and activities that were led by GSU faculty, staff and administrators.

Training day opened with a Welcome, Introduction and Icebreakers led by Roshaunda Ross, Coordinator of Peer Mentoring for the Dual Degree Program. The energizing activities gave the Orientation Leaders a chance to break the ice and begin team building. The program continued with Dr. Randi Schneider, from Enrollment Management and Marketing and the Dual Degree Program. Randi presented on what is expected of orientation leaders - from trusted ally to learning coach. The orientation staff were offered a new perspective on the importance of their role. An engaging Ethics Workshop by Dean Aurelio Valente was next followed by a fun GSU Jeopardy game created by Joseph Klis, graduate assistant in the Academic Resource Center. The game was a creative way to learn about the history of GSU and identify several resources and fun facts.

The afternoon activities included a workshop on Stage Presence and Public Speaking by Dr. Patrick Santoro, Professor of Communication, Visual and Performing Arts, a presentation on Group Dynamics by Professor Tammara Winn of Interdisciplinary Studies and Communication and a review of Orientation Leader duties. It is important for the orientation staff to know that they are the “face of GSU” so having strong skills on how to present information was an important element of the day!

Training day ended with enthusiasm, optimism and excitement about what to expect on Orientation Day. Congratulations to GSU’s very first Orientation leaders! The tradition will continue as we identify and develop an amazing group of students to serve as orientation leaders for FC14. This is just the beginning of great things ahead!

InMotion Invitation

Thank you for the words of encouragement and suggestions regarding In Motion. Your questions and suggestions were the basis for the development of this month’s edition! We need your continued input into the evolution of this newsletter by submitting ideas for future articles, questions for the FAQ’s or your ideas for the new feature ALPHABET SOUP. Send an e-mail message to engage@govst.edu with your questions and article ideas. Every effort will be made to get your ideas into print.