GSU Student Killed in Auto Accident

By Laura Casal

On Sat., June 21, Kiran Muktha decided to go out for dinner with three friends to his favorite place on Devon Ave. in Chicago. They stayed there for over two hours tasting good Indian food and talking about their lives and future plans. Muktha was a Computer Science graduate student at GSU and wanted to get his master's degree as soon as possible in order to start working.

On the way home, he decided to sit in the back seat because he was too tired to drive. One of his friends, Nagaras Kosagi, took over. But around 5:45 a.m., Kosagi lost control of the car and he and Muktha were killed in a crash that followed. Authorities are not sure exactly what happened to the car that morning.

The accident happened on southbound Interstate 57 just before the Vollmer exit. Two more exits and they would have reached home. Abhilash Katepally was sitting in the passenger seat that day. He still cannot make sense out of it. "Everything happened so fast, I don't remember much. When I woke up, the car was upside down and my friends were still unconscious," he said. "There was fire and

Not Your Typical University Students

Laura Casal (center), a GSU student and Spanish professor, helps local Latino students through Project HOPE. Get the whole story on Page 9.
Honors Program Rehabs House for Learning Experience

By Laura Vetrinaite

For the first time students joined a rebuilding program to help low-income families. The program is known as Rebuilding Together - the largest volunteer home rehabilitation program in America. Its mission is to preserve and revitalize houses and communities.

The University Honors Program initiated the student volunteer work at the end of winter trimester. As part of an honors seminar class "Global perspectives of poverty," students were required to think of a way to contribute to the community.

"In the beginning of the trimester I offered to do a social service project as the social service component of the honors seminar," said Dr. Larry Levinson, the University Honors Program director at GSU. "This was the time, because we were dealing with poverty."

As part of the program, Levinson, together with his students, their spouses, family members and friends, joined the house-rebuilding project on April 26.

Volunteers painted ceilings and walls, tore the old carpet from the floor, painted a staircase and window frames inside the house. Some of the outside activities were installation of a chain link fence, garage painting, fixing the roof and clean up activity in the back yard.

"It was a fun experience," said Jennifer Giordano, majoring in Social Science. "I would definitely do it again."

Students agreed that the hardest part was not the work itself, but finding a day they all could sacrifice to volunteer.

GSU's house sponsorship is part of the Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago effort which is an affiliate of Rebuilding Together with Christmas in April, says David Needles, coordinator of the program.

To qualify for this assistance, the homeowners must be of low income and elderly, disabled, or families with children. They must be unable to do the work themselves.

The site selection process takes place locally, within broad national guidelines. Criteria differ slightly from house to house. Individual families are referred through neighborhood associations, churches, synagogues, community organizations and service groups, or by self-referral.

The Honors Program students stand with adviser Dr. Larry Levinson in front of the house they helped to renovate.

Theft or Sloppy Inventory?
Disappearance of Electronics Raises Questions

By Jean Biba-Brown

Several small electronics such as lap tops and LCD projectors have turned up missing on campus during the last few months. Has there been an increase in theft at GSU or is it a fluke?

Neither, according to GSU Police Chief Albert Chesser. Rather, thieves like to prey on the most recent technology, such as LCD projectors, because they can be sold for the most money. Twenty years ago electronic typewriters were disappearing from desks. Now, according to Chesser, a typewriter could be left unattended in a deserted hallway and no one would take it.

Increased efforts by the university to inventory equipment have also led to a perception of increased theft. "There's not a rash of things happening," said Chesser. "Rather, there's been a rash of things being reported because there's a push for inventory."

Faculty and students need to remain vigilant about securing valuables.

"People are prone to leave things open," said Chesser, adding that the honest nature of many people at GSU makes them too trusting.

The items that have been stolen in recent months have been "small and electronic," said Chesser. Only one desk computer has been reported stolen in the last six months, and it turned up in another department.

Most of the thefts were from areas that were supposed to be locked. Doors have not been broken down, according to Chesser. Instead, the thief sees something left out and simply takes it.

The Department of Public Safety has recommended implementing a quarter mastering system, where electronic equipment is checked out through a central location. This would decrease sloppy inventory methods that contribute to items getting lost or stolen.
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News Briefs
SSN No Longer Needed for Web Use
Responding to student needs, effective with Fall registration students no longer use their social security number as their student identification number, for use in such things as viewing their records, registering via the web and for use in the library.

Instead of the SSN, students will use their GSU assigned I.D. number. A postcard was mailed to over 7000 students, an email message was also sent, in addition to posters at each entrance the university, notifying students of the change.

Students may use their old I.D. cards, but can also acquire a new I.D. at no cost after Sep. 4 in the Student Life Service Office, A1120.

However, by Fall 2006 the new cards will become mandatory.

Students have inquired about a better way for identification, instead of using their SSN. Many are currently worried about identity theft. This change makes students more comfortable using the Internet to view their records.

Library Newsletter
Seeks Testimonials
The Library is interested in soliciting testimonials for their library newsletter, “Information Please.” They want to hear how the electronic resource, NetLibrary, has helped university and community users.

If the testimonial is used in the newsletter, a gift will be awarded to the submitter.

Anyone wishing to offer a testimonial can send it to Lydia Morrow Ruetten in the Library or at L-Morrow@govst.edu

Weight Watchers
Program on Campus
The Human Resources Department Wellness Program sponsors Weight Watchers. Currently meetings are held on Wednesdays from 12 p.m. -1 p.m. in E-Lounge.

They are also considering starting another Weight Watchers Meeting to accommodate students and faculty in the evening, beginning at 6 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. Interested parties may call Lillian Jung in Human Resources at 543-5000 ext. 5305 for more information.

Workshop Opportunities
There will be three workshops this month sponsored by the Division of Extended Learning:
How to Counteract the Cumulative Effects of Stress by Dr. Michael Gorman on Tues., July 15, from 12 p.m. -2:30 p.m. in the Hall of Honors.
Frugal, But Effective Marketing by Marge Wilke, a marketing consultant, on Fri., July 18, from 9 a.m. -11 a.m. in the Hall of Honors.
Get Your Master of Public Administration at the James R. Thompson Center, Information/Registration Sessions Thursdays, July 10 and July 31, 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. in the Atrium.
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Verdict Thrown Out in Innovator Censorship Case
Case Will Be Reviewed by Full Appellate Court

By Carole Schrock

On June 27, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals decided to vacate an earlier ruling by the appellate court in the case of Margaret Hosty vs. Patricia Carter, former dean of Student Affairs at GSU. The Illinois Attorney General, representation for the defense, won their bid for a rehearing en banc. This means the earlier verdict will be thrown out and the full appellate court of the 7th Circuit Court will re hear the case and render their verdict.

Hosty, former managing editor of the Innovator newspaper of GSU, filed suit along with former editor-in-chief Jeni Porche and former reporter Steven Barba, in January of 2001. The plaintiffs alleged the university, President Stuart Fagan, and Carter, along with several other parties, violated their First Amendment to free speech when they removed them from their positions on the Innovator and shut the paper down in December 2000.

Charges against all defendants except Carter were dismissed on the grounds of qualified immunity. The legal definition of this defense statute reads that it protects "government officials from liability for civil damages insofar as their conduct does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known."

A three-judge panel ruled on April 10 that Carter was not immune to prosecution. They say she knew it was a violation of the students' rights when she allegedly called the Innovator's printer in October 2001, demanding they not print the Innovator until it was reviewed by administrators for purported "grammatical and spelling errors."

The defendants claim they were censored in other indirect ways, such as email tampering and some computer hijacking. They say their office was broken into and files were missing from hard drives. This came after the Innovator printed articles critical of university faculty and administrators.

The case is being closely watched by the Chicago Tribune and the college press community, since many fear a ruling against the students would set a clear precedent against freedom of speech on college campuses. Currently, college journalists enjoy the same anti-censorship protections as their professional counterparts. In the same vein, they are also held liable for what they choose to write and publish.

No date is currently set for the rehearing.

Controversy Continues in the Student Senate
Reactions of Dismissed Senators Bash Senate President

By Laura Casal

Only three months after being elected by students, Senators Maher Assaf, Kim Allen and Tanya Griffin lost their seats in the GSU Student Senate in June. The decision was disputed and split the senate between those in favor and against.

Now no longer a Student Senator, Assaf, says, "I felt very sorry when I found out. As a senator I wanted to connect the students and the university. You come to help students, you don't come here to kick people out."

Maher Husseini, Senate vice president, opposed the final decision of Assaf's dismissal and alleged that some of the senate members were racist. Troy Roseborough, the Senate secretary, agreed with the dismissal of the three senators and cited a lack of involvement and interest in senate events. "When you don't inquire about the senate, when you don't even check your mailbox, it's pretty clear that you aren't involved," Roseborough said.

Assaf argues that he was unable to make it to the meetings because he studied in Moraine Valley Community College five days a week until noon. He says Student Senate President Linda Williams was aware of his academic schedule. According to Assaf, she promised him he would be able to work in the afternoon instead. However, he says he left her a few messages in order to arrange his new work schedule but she never answered him back.

"I have evidence of every word I am saying. She lied to me."

-Maher Assaf, dismissed student senator

"I have evidence of every word I am saying. She lied to me."

-Maher Assaf, dismissed student senator

See SENATE, page 11

Media Professor Wins Prestigious Fulbright Grant

Muchnik to Travel to Australia

By Dawn Ladislas

Dr. Mel Muchnik, professor of Media Communications at Governors State University, has been awarded a Fulbright Senior Specialists Grant for Communications and Journalism. He will spend the fall of 2003 at the University of South Australia (UNISA) located at Adelaide, in South Australia.

"Fulbright is an international exchange program for qualified scholars. The United States Government created it in 1946. The Fulbright Senior Specialists Program will focus on programs dealing with distance learning, fostering international relationships with staff and students at UNISA, and studies in emerging technologies.

"Muchnik will also be an advisor to the new UNISA Division of Education, Arts, and Social Sciences Online T &L Working Group. Acceptance into the program is a two-step process. Muchnik was requested by name from UNISA to the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES). He was approved in December of 2002 by CIES, but had to apply in order to be included in the official roster. At this point, Muchnik sent a Peer Review of Application to be eligible. Final approval was granted March of 2003. "It's a wonderful opportu-
The Inside Ticket: A Guide to Chicago and Suburban Nightlife

By Troy D. Roseborough

Being a student can take a toll on your finances, especially if your education is coming out of your own pocket. If you happen to fall in this category, let me suggest participating in the Johnnie Walker Social Toast. This toast is held once every four or five months at different locations in the city. The last social that I attended was across the street from Club Chromium.

When I was first introduced to this event, I was invited by a friend of mine. The only ways to attend these events are by invitation, to be a guest of someone, or to register at the Johnnie Walker Web site. For those of you unfamiliar with Johnnie Walker products, they are whiskies, but very smooth and tasty whiskies that can be consumed straight, on the rocks, or even with a variety of soda and juices. I personally enjoy Johnnie Walker mixed with pineapple juice and occasionally on the rocks.

At every event there is a live band which vary by group and genre of music. At the first toast there was a rock band, and an afro-soul funk jazz group at the second one. Nine times out of ten the locations are dimly lit, which I also enjoy.

All products by Johnnie Walker are free throughout the evening and there is no limit on the number that you can consume (unless your stomach tells you differently).

If you become hungry there is food provided at no cost. Like the music the food selection varies also. Some of the items on previous menus have included shrimp, beef, or vegetable shish-kabobs, roast beef, potatoes, exotic deserts, salads and finger foods. After eating you can stroll onto the dance floor and work some of the food and drinks out of your system, or you can find a few people and socialize.

Three of the best features of this toast are that when you leave you receive two complimentary bottles of Johnnie Walker (black which retails at $27.99 and red which retails at $21.99). Second and most importantly, the entire social is absolutely free.

Third, there are always some interesting people that you will encounter. There are a lot of professional businessmen and women, models, entertainers, and sometimes politicians.

If you're the type who enjoys networking, this is the place to be. Finally there is a dress code, business casual or better. If you ask me that's a small price to pay for an event that is free.

If you're looking for something more fast paced, then let me suggest the Prop House. When I walked in I instantly fell in love with this club.

There are two dance floors, one as you walk in and another located in the rear of the club. In this section expect to hear nothing but house music. The sound quality is excellent, and the atmosphere is dark as a club should be. In the rear, the music flavor consists of reggae, hip hop, and rap. In this area of the club there is more light, but it's extremely humid due to all of the people there. For you old school people out there, the scene reminded me of the painting (which shows people dancing and having fun) that is shown at the end of the television show Good Times.

There are also two additional bars located here and a lounge. Upstairs you can view the entire dance floor and the ambiance that it produces. I always enjoy the upper level because there are usually fewer people there, and since there is another lounge and bar, it makes for the perfect chill out spot.

The cover ranges from $10 to $15. The drinks are expensive and start at $5 for bottled beers and $8.50 for mixed drinks. At each bar there is a board that indicates the bartender's favorite. You don't always have to order the bartender's pick, but if you do, you'll find yourself with a drink that is made to perfection.

Well that's a wrap. Next month I'll be on the concert circuit, visiting the All-Star Game, and visiting some of the local clubs in the area.

Prop House
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Chicago
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Saydak and BeBop Café Jive Perfectly

By Stephanie N. Blahut

Ken Saydak is no newcomer to the blues music scene. In fact, Saydak has enjoyed a 30 year career as a musician, vocalist and performer. On July 9, Saydak played to a packed crowd at Joe's Be Bop café on Chicago's Navy Pier and I was fortunate enough to be in attendance. Seated in the back corner of the café, right off the stage, gave me the ability to not only enjoy the music, but feel it as well.

Saydak's swinging piano compositions grabbed your attention and kept you swinging the whole way through. His talented piano sound was not to be drowned out by the bluesy guitar riffs - the sound meshed perfectly. His deep smoky voice belted out some of the most original and descriptive lyrics I have heard in a long time. His lyrics speak in a common language with the absence of everyday clichés.

"Love without trust is like bread with no crust; it's kinda messy" - Ken Saydak, "Love Without Trust"

The perfect backdrop for this musical catalog was Joe's Be Bop Café on Navy Pier. The wait was proclaimed to be 15 minutes but in all actuality we waited about a half hour. But never fear, the food and music are well worth the wait. We started off with the rib tips, which were covered in a sweet barbeque sauce. For dinner we had jambalaya and the salmon salad. The salmon was complimented in a bed of fresh greens, avocado, and onions with a very light vinaigrette dressing.

To complement the meal, I ordered a glass of the house pinot grigio, which was the smoothest white wine I have ever had. The lush entrees and variety adds a distinct flavor to the atmosphere at Joe's. Good food, summer heat and the sound of Saydak's soulful piano melodies set the night on fire.

Joe's Be Bop Café and Jazz Emporium
700 E. Grand Ave.
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Hours are:
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For more information on Ken Saydak and his music visit http://www.ken.saydak.com
For more information and an online menu for Joe's Be Bop café at Navy pier visit http://www.joesbebop.com

Club News

Criminal Justice Club to Resume

After a short absence, Lambda Pi Eta will be resuming meetings on Thurs., July 17.

The criminal justice club will meet in the Student Commons, A2140, around 11:30 a.m., directly after the White Collar Crime class. Dr. Jagan Lingamneni, university professor, will be adviser for the club.

Lambda Pi Eta is intended to be a fellowship for students to enhance their education and awareness of criminal justice issues and events.

Club officers will be elected at the meeting, and a regular meeting schedule will be set up.

The meeting is open to all students. For more information, contact Lingamneni at ext. 4686.
Television Studios Get Beamed into the Digital Age

By Carole Schrock

It took a lot of scrapping and saving, but Communications Services is close to the completion of the renovation of its two television studios on campus.

"We started out doing a partial renovation of Studio A," said Director Charles Nolley. "It has become a complete overhaul of both studios."

Studio A is used by Communications (MCOM) students to learn about television production. Both studios were in need of new equipment to move into the digital era.

"The upgrades to Studio B provide the last step in bringing GSU entirely into the digital age," said University Professor Dan Nearing. Nearing is GSU's MCOM production professor, teaching courses such as documentary filmmaking and video editing. Since he started at GSU two years ago, he has made several curriculum updates. Interest in the program has soared. This jump in enrollment has made the studio upgrade even more vital.

Bringing the studios on line was no small task. A huge amount of money, funds that were not readily available, was needed to truly fulfill Communications Services' vision of studios of the new millennium.

"It looked like renovating the studios was going to be a million dollar project."

-Charles Nolley, director of Communications Services

DPS Sponsors Special Olympics Torch Run

Bad Economy Impacts Donations

By Bev Barnes

Officers of the GSU Department of Public Safety (DPS) raised $5,500 of their goal of $15,000 at a Torch Run held on June 11 to raise awareness for the Illinois Special Olympics Summer Games.

"We were far off the mark," said Sgt. James McGee, who attributes low donations to the weakened economy. "Getting donations was almost like pulling teeth this year. We reached out as best we could."

McGee means it when saying that DPS officers did their best. Of the 20 full and part-time officers working for DPS everyone donated their time to the event. The three-mile run began at GSU's east entrance and ended at Governors Highway and Stunkel Road.

About 30 DPS officers, GSU staff and faculty and members of the community lined up to walk, jog, bike or run the route. Guardians of the flame carried the "Flame of Hope" torch signifying hope and peace.

Immediately after the run participants attended a barbecue. Meeting up with fellow attendees, they enjoyed hamburgers and hot dogs donated by Moo and Oink, a Hazel Crest grocery chain.

When asked about the donation, Naomi Lee, director of human resources and public relations manager of the Moo and Oink stores, said it wasn't that much.

McGee says the importance of the Torch Run is to signify awareness of the Special Olympics World Summer Games. McGee added the event was leg nine of 26 Torch Runs held by law enforcement officials statewide. The 26 runs are part of the Illinois Special Olympics Torch Run that began on June 8 and ended six days later at Illinois State University.

The 11th Special Olympics World Summer Games that began on June 4 in Athens Greece was marked by a universal Law Enforcement Torch Run. Some 7,000 athletes from 150 countries competed in the 21 Olympic-type sports events that ran from June 21 through June 29.

Special Olympics was started by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who serves as honorary chairperson. The international organization provides Olympic-type sports competition for children and adults with mental retardation. Currently 1 million persons with mental retardation benefit from 200 coached programs.

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt," said McGee, who feels awareness is found in the self-confidence and positive self-image the Special Olympic Athlete Oath exemplifies.

To make a donation to Special Olympics or purchase a t-shirt, hat or pin, see any GSU police officer. One hundred percent of donations go directly to Special Olympians.
Second Coffee House a Groovy Time
By Carole Schrock

The days of Dylan Thomas and the bongo drum may be gone, but people felt free to go beatnik at the Student Life sponsored Coffee House on Tues., June 24. Audience members sipped coffee, water and wine, and snapped their applause at this second celebration of art, music and poetry.

Malcolm Greene, the evening's emcee, sported a black beret and dark sunglasses as he introduced each of the several performers. Poets read, sometimes accompanied by the vivacious band Soul People.

Vanessa Newby, director of Student Activities and Services, and Lisa Meredith, director of Project SOAR, organized the event and believe it was a great success. It was also Newby's and Meredith's birthday celebration, which for them made the night especially fun.

"We had just as many people this time that were at the first Coffee House," said Newby. "That's good, considering this is Spring/Summer trimester."

The event offered free food and beverages to the university community, along with the opportunity to witness some of the talent that exists on campus. Many of the audience members stayed for the entire time, from 5 p.m. until 9 p.m.

Student Senator Pamela Thompson's daughter Tina mingled around the room, drawing small pencil portraits of audience members for them to take home.

English professor Todd Rohman had the audience laughing during his reading of a Tom Wait's song, "What's He Building." Student Senate Secretary Troy Roseborough displayed his poetic side in the presentation of original works.

Meredith's mother, Laroux Meredith, provided the artwork on display for the event. Much of the artwork depicts Meredith herself throughout the years.

Ronald Skertich, a university student, entertained the crowd with his solo acoustic guitar performance. Student Life Pool Lifeguard Albert Shorey read a few short poems, as well.

As of right now, Newby and Meredith are not planning another Coffee House. The task of planning the party will now fall on the Student Senate.

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE

The Phoenix is now offering free classified advertising space to the university community. A faculty member, staff member or student can place a classified for no charge.

Advertise your small business, sell a car or your old textbooks.

For more information, or to place an advertisement, call ext. 4517, email phoenix@govst.edu or place your ad in Carole Schrock's mailbox in the Student Life, second floor of A-Wing.
Project HOPE Helping Latino Students Over Summer

By Jean Biba-Brown

Walk by D2444 on a Tuesday morning and you'll find a group of energetic elementary and junior high school students occupying the desks. Students in grades five through nine take classes in English, math, science and study skills three mornings a week on the GSU campus. Sponsored by Project HOPE (Hispanic Opportunity Program Enhancement), the program serves Latino students from the surrounding community.

Due to the recent university budget cuts announced in April, the program risked losing its funding. However, GSU has agreed to fund the program for at least another year, according to Director Jose Reyes. "We are very grateful to Dr. Fagan and the GSU administration for their support in continuing to invest in the Latino community," said Reyes.

Started in 1997, the goal of the program is to increase Latino graduation rates from high school and assist students in the transition to college. The GSU campus provides the perfect backdrop for several components of the program, including Saturday Whiz Kids and Summer Whiz Kids. Students attend a six-week Saturday session during the winter, and then continue their course work during a month-long summer session.

Reyes recruits many of the teachers from GSU. "I try to give GSU seniors or graduate students the opportunity to work with our students whenever possible," said Reyes.

The teachers are creative and innovative, dedicating their time to designing meaningful lessons for the students. Laura Casal, who teaches English in the program, uses music to inspire her students to write essays.

A recent assignment involved listening to an instrumental CD with the sounds of city trains. The students then wrote a descriptive essay based on the sounds. "They come because they want to learn," said Casal, adding that teaching the students was fun.

Relieved that the program will continue, Reyes instructed the students to write a thank you letter to University President Stuart Fagan, asking for another five years of funding. "I just finished reading the essays, and they all wanted the program to continue," said Casal. "Most wrote about their brothers and sisters and how they wanted their little sisters to come next year."

In addition to the Saturday and summer courses, the program sponsors after-school tutoring, student leadership and alumni clubs, and a parent information network. Serving students in grades five through twelve, these programs take place in south suburban elementary and high schools. "For many of the students, we are the only source of information about how to best prepare for college," said Reyes.

Servicing 350 students, the program boasts a 97 percent promotion rate for students to the next level and 92 percent graduation rate for seniors.

Seventy-one percent of the seniors who graduated in 2002 enrolled in college.

Sandra Carvajal is a fourteen-year-old student who has been attending the Saturday and summer courses since she was in sixth grade. She will begin Bloom High School in the fall, where she will take honors-level algebra. "You learn things you don’t learn in school, and it makes you more advanced," said Carvajal.

With the continued support of the program, Carvajal hopes to be sitting in a college classroom in a few years.

A Closer Look at Student Development Reveals Many Roles

By Stephanie N. Blahut

Recently the Student Development Center was awarded funding through the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. The total funding allocated is $174,798 per year for a cycle of four years.

This funding will help improve programs that prepare undergraduate students of underrepresented groups for their doctoral studies. Jobs within Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Biology and Chemistry will be the focus. The department also hopes to hire a coordinator to oversee day-to-day activities and recruitment. Some of the future goals of the department may also come closer to realization.

"Retention and getting students through to graduation are our goals," said Kelly McCarthy, co-director of Student Development. The funding may help bring the staff closer to achieving these goals.

This year the Student Development Center pioneered the school’s first online orientation program. As of May 2003, it was a mandatory part of registration.

So how many hats does the department wear? Everything from tutoring services to counseling on a personal, career and academic level. No matter how many positions they fill, first and foremost they say they are here to help students in any way they can.

Students who are interested in becoming a tutor, reader or note-taker, please stop by the Student Development offices at B1215 for more information.

For more information on Student Development log on to http://www.govst.edu/users/gsd/index.htm or call 708-235-3969. You may contact McCarthy at K-McCarty@govst.edu or by phone at 708-235-3966.
Though Anxiety May Plague Graduates, Keep Your Pants On

By Carole Schrock

JULY 2003
COMMENTSARY

Though Anxiety May Plague Graduates, Keep Your Pants On

By Carole Schrock

Figure about 30 research papers. Fifty midterms and 50 final exams. Pages and pages of notes. The collective learning of seven years. When I look back at my journey to earning my master's degree this August, sometimes it doesn't seem like it amounts to much. Sometimes it seems like the world.

The transition from college life to the purported "real world" won't be an easy one necessarily, but there's every reason to be hopeful. Many questions have come to mind recently when considering this step. One stands out, as it probably does for many graduates. Am I prepared?

Professors and courses have streamed by in a seemingly endless quest for knowledge, skill, training for the future. It is a scary prospect to think it might have all been stashed in your brain in a place that's very expensive, but not all that helpful. At points during the blur of the speeding years, you start to wonder if the information is being crammed your cranium at all, or just fluttering past somehow over your head.

Then the dreams start, those akin to the nightmares you had before the first day of school each year when you were young. You walk into your new classroom and realize you're only in your underwear. Everyone laughs and points as you run out, humiliated. Or, worse yet, you can't get your legs to work. So you're stuck there mounted in concrete, feeling your face turn red as beets.

Except the dream is more mature this time. Instead of a classroom, it's a meeting room at Corporation X. The boss is waiting for you to start your presentation, but your brain won't function. You know the information is in there somewhere, you learned it in college, for crying out loud!

It's anxiety. The thought of not being able to make it in the 'real world' is a terrifying concept. However, the more I consider it, I really feel ready. Certainly I've had my fill of school. The prospect of anything else at this point looks pretty appealing.

I'm not sure how much more 'real' the world can get, since it's pretty palpable to me right now. But whatever it is, I keep telling myself that I really am set to face it.

Now all I have to do is finish my master's thesis.

I shied away from writing an "end of the year" column, since those always have a tendency to come out like so many Academy Award winner speeches, rife with teary thank-yous and reminiscence.

However, I couldn't help adding this endnote to express what a joy the Phoenix has been in my life for the past year. I may have jump-started it, but its supporters have helped add the fuel all year to keep it chugging along at a steady clip.

I only hope the newspaper continues to be published and can grow in popularity as a voice for the community of Governors State University.

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Phoenix
Editorial Policy

The Phoenix encourages letters to the editor and other editorial comments. Please feel free to drop us a line at x4617, phoenix@govst.edu, or in Carole Schrock's mailbox in student life.

If there is a concern you would like to voice about the university or the Phoenix, please feel free to voice it. While all comments are worthwhile, it is the policy of the Phoenix not to print any letters to the editor or any other editorial opinions anonymously.

Beliefs are important, and the pride to stand up next to them is equally as important. Please help the Phoenix let your voice be heard.

The opinions and viewpoints expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of Phoenix staff or the Governors State University community.
Administrators Take Active Look at Student Retention

By Victoria Hosey

On July 1, the Retention Committee met in the Hall of Honors to address the serious concerns of student retention. They considered a six-point strategic plan that was proposed by Larry Polselli, executive director of Admissions; Joyce Harris, lead academic advisor, BOG; Lorriane Sibbet, executive director of Student Life; and Marlene Castellanos, Admissions Counselor.

Last fall, 690 students withdrew from all classes. That is about 12 percent of the student body. In the winter, 10 percent left. "We want to increase enrollment, but we also want to retain students," said Polselli. "We want to make them happy and give them what they want." The Retention Committee was formed to help accomplish that goal. The committee is comprised of about 12 faculty and staff representatives.

After some deliberation and adjustments, "the committee unanimously approved the plan," said Harris. Implementation is expected in the fall with the exception of one item that must go to the President's Cabinet for approval.

The new retention strategies are for enforcement of the study plan policy, to increase advisor availability, design of a pilot mentoring program, to make use of telephone intervention, to institute student convocation and to make use of survey tools.

The Retention Committee would like to hear from you. The Retention Committee requests students complete the following survey and submit it to the Admissions Office, or see any of the Committee members.

---

Student Retention Survey

1. What is your current status?
   - graduate
   - undergraduate
   - major

2. Have you met with your academic advisor?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Have you and your advisor completed a student study plan?
   - Yes
   - No

4. How often have you been unable to register for the courses you needed?
   - Very often
   - Often
   - Sometimes
   - Rarely
   - Never

5. Rate the customer service you have received at GSU.
   - Excellent
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor

Do you intend to enroll for a subsequent trimester?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

Please comment on your experience at GSU to date.
(Good points? Bad points? Problems?)

---

Senate,
From page 5

due to illness. "Linda Williams, the Senate President, knew about that," she says. "Linda has no heart."

Assaf claims that he had a good relationship with everyone at the Student Senate.

But after these events, he said, "I feel sorry for having shared and worked with some of the people at the Senate and I wouldn't work with the president and the secretary again." He exclaimed, "I was elected by the students the same way they were, who are they to kick me out?"

More relaxed this time, Husseini said he regrets the issue went public. He said, "I hope the members of the Senate can work their differences together in order to accomplish what we are committed to, which is to work for GSU students."

"There are good changes occurring in the Student Senate," said Williams. "We are headed in a new direction, a direction that challenges us to give more of ourselves as we took an oath to do."

According to Husseini, at an executive session of Senate on July 10, Williams asked him to resign. Husseini refused.

"I didn't do anything wrong and I can prove it," he said. "I need a full investigation and I want my rights to be protected by the Provost and the administration."
Fireproof Bridge Reconnects Metra Electric Line
Reconstruction Efforts Cause Major Travel Problems For Students

By Victoria Hosey

Construction was completed on July 2, one day ahead of schedule, on the Metra Electric line after fire destroyed a wood trestle and overpass at the Riverdale station on June 22. The trestle, a framework composed of vertical slanted supports and horizontal crosspieces that hold up the bridge, was allegedly burned on accident by welders working below it. The wooden structure was over one hundred years old, according to a Metra spokesman.

Riverdale fire officials have closed the case, but Metra will continue the investigation according to Riverdale Fire Lt. Kevin Flick. "I'm not going to be pointing fingers," said Flick. "I'll leave that up to them."

Over 13,000 Metra Electric commuters were displaced when a fire destroyed a bridge on the line. Many were GSU students.

By Thurs., June 26, construction crews were securing new steel beams in the ground as a base for the new bridge. The next day, gravel was poured into the steel foundations. Construction crews worked around the clock to build the new bridge and have it ready for travel on July 2.

Over 13,000 commuters were displaced because of the fire, including some GSU students. One of them, Claude Hill, took a three-hour bus ride from Chicago to get to class. "It was a major inconvenience," he said.

Another student, Angela McDaniels, had difficulty traveling between work and classes. "I live and work in Chicago, but I take the Metra out here three times a week to go to school. It was very inconvenient, especially since I don't have a car right now. I had to carpool with friends to get out here and back home.

"Under the McNair Grant we'll have the resources to tell students 'Yes, you can do this,' and show them how to as well."

-McNair Grant Awarded to Student Development

By Stephanie N. Blahut

The GSU Student Development Department knows first-hand the importance of good proposal writing. It was the reason they were awarded funding through the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program for 2003.

The McNair Program is a federal program within the Federal TRIO Program. The goal of the program is to prepare low-income, undergraduate students from underrepresented groups, and first-generation undergraduate students for doctoral studies.

"We serve a primarily adult population at GSU," said Dr. Becky Nugent, Writing Center coordinator. "They usually have families and work full-time. They have the ability to continue into post-baccalaureate study but haven't necessarily thought they can do it. Under the McNair Grant we'll have the resources to tell them, 'Yes, you can do this,' and show them how to as well."

The McNair Program is named after Ronald E. McNair, the second African-American astronaut to fly in space. He was one of the seven people killed in the Challenger shuttle explosion on Jan. 28, 1986. McNair studied Physics at Carolina A&T State University, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. He then pursued his PhD in Physics from MIT. He was one of 35 applicants chosen from a pool of 10,000, to join NASA's space shuttle program. He was a mission control specialist aboard the space shuttle Challenger.

After his death, Congress named the newly-established program after McNair to encourage undergraduate students to enroll in doctoral studies with the intention of earning their doctorate degree. That remains the main goal of the McNair funding today.

"We are thrilled!" said Kelly McCarthy, co-director of Student Development and co-writer of the McNair proposal, of receiving the grant. "We still can't believe it. The competition is so stiff."

Only 156 awards were given out according to the 2002 McNair, with the average award totaling $245,880. The same report shows that the total amount of funding given through the McNair program was $38,357,300.

According to McCarthy, the funding is a great opportunity for GSU to achieve status among the other colleges in the nation.

"GSU will become more recognized," McCarthy said.

For more information about the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, log on to http://www.ge.gov/offices/OPE/HEP/trio/mcnair.html.

You may also email questions regarding this and other Federal TRIO programs to OPE_TRIO@ed.gov.

Thank God for kind friends, but I can't trust this Metra system."

Many riders agree with McDaniels and were annoyed by Metra's initial reaction to the fire incident. The agency would not provide shuttle bus service to other stations at first, but officials reconsidered.

Due in part to the shuttle service, Metra spokeswoman Audrey Renteria said, "We have seen a significant increase in ridership at the Kensington [115th St.] station since the fire. We also have noticed a significant amount of commuters being dropped off at the station."

Metra attempted to make the transitions as convenient as possible. They provided several hundred extra parking spaces at and near other stations to help alleviate travel concerns. They gave out free water bottles to commuters at the Rock Island Line Oak Forest station. There were extra weekend services and CTA honored Metra tickets and passes.

As of July 1, the new fireproof bridge at Riverdale and the Metra Electric Line connected the south suburbs with Chicago again and all is running smoothly. "We hope that passengers will continue to ride with us," Metra spokeswoman Ruth Anderson said. "It still is 'the way to really fly.'"
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Chemistry Student Finds the Right Mix
Graduate Balances Family Bonds, Love for Chemistry
By Laura Casal

She would make the same trip every day and at exactly the same hour. At 5 p.m., she would leave her job at Ecolab, a chemical company in Joliet, to head for the university lab. There, among chemical compounds, she would spend most of her time during the last eight months working on her final graduate thesis. Now, more relaxed and with a big smile, Soretta Patton has graduated from Governors State University with a degree in Analytical Chemistry.

"There were plenty of days when I just wanted to go outside and sit on a bench," she said. "But I stayed focused."

During her long hours of research for her graduate thesis on "The synthesis and photolysis of a thiocarbamate," the chemistry lab became her private little world. She faced her problems and anxieties working and studying there. She was testing chemical compounds and wanted to prove they could be used for industrial or other commercial applications. Patton says she really looked forward to coming up with the desired chemical findings, but in the meantime her family was being put aside.

"My husband was very understanding," she says and explains that it was very important to talk daily on the phone with him to keep their relationship going. Her priority was to get her degree, but at the same time to keep their love alive. Her four children, two daughters and two sons, supported her from the beginning and were a strong source of inspiration for her in the process of getting her degree.

While conducting her study, she dealt with very dangerous chemicals, preparing compounds to perform chemical reactions and tests.

"I got used to taking high respect for the chemicals I was dealing with because they can be very caustic if handled irresponsibly," she says. After spending eight-month in this stressful and time-consuming task, the final day arrived: her graduation. Her entire family was present, her husband and children, and even some relatives she had not seen in a long time.

"That was the best day of my life," she exclaims.

Soon after her graduation, Patton presented her thesis at GSU Student Research Conference May 28. Shyly, she stepped up to the podium and started describing her topic to the audience.

"There were plenty of days when I wanted to go outside and sit on a bench. But I stayed focused."

-Soretta Patton, GSU graduate

Soretta Patton

She told the audience that she proved some chemical compounds she had been working with, such as thiocarbamates, would be useful for industrial or commercial application and in household products mainly as herbicides and fungicides.

University Professor Dr. Shelley Kumer said the conference provided GSU students with an opportunity to present the results of their work in front of peers and professors at the university's most prestigious student research conference.

"It is a professional setting and it allows students to gain experience to attend bigger conferences," Kumer said. According to Kumer the conference is successful because of the students' hard work, enthusiasm and great desire to excel in their chosen field of study.

Patton was among the 20 selected students that were awarded a certificate of merit by GSU President Stuart Pagan.

"I enjoyed learning here. We definitely have caring and good instructors in GSU," she said.

When asked why she liked chemistry, she passionately answered, "because it is not difficult. How can it be difficult if you are working with old chemical elements that have been the same for ages?"

Now, at 42, with a master degree and more free time, Patton spends her days with her family, listening to jazz music and going to church. While looking for a challenging job, Patton admits she would like to pursue a doctoral degree at Loyola University. However, she knows her priorities and reassures that her family comes first.

"You cannot be married and do research," she says.

But she said she has no regrets because the support of her family was instrumental in her academic achievements. In the end, she is a family woman.

"These improvements provide further evidence that we're serious about growth and about competing with the best schools in the state."

-Dan Nearing, media communications professor
PRESS RELEASE

CPA Holds Theatrical Summer Camp

Children from park districts throughout the south suburbs will spend the entire week writing, and rehearsing for their performance on the 1st. Jane Senesac, Recreation Supervisor from the Frankfort Park District, is excited about this project for her campers. Call one of these park districts for enrollment information in the summer camp.

Dragons Don’t Sing Opera: will perform at The Center for Performing Arts University Friday, Aug. 1, at 10 a.m. Tickets are $6. For ticket information call 708-235-2222 or visit www.govst.edu/center.

GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OFFICE CENTER, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Room Assignments as of July 9, 2003

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Accident,
From page 1

smoke everywhere. I tried to put out the fire but it was impossible so I broke the glass and was able to get out of the car.

Once outside, he desperately shouted to his friends, but none of them answered. He rushed to the car to try and help. He managed to pull one of them, Pravin Katepally, out before the fire spread around the car.

A. Katepally knew Muktha from India. They had been friends for seven years and they also had lived and studied together in this country.

"Because of him, I came to GSU," Katepally remembers.

"We were really good friends. Muktha started at GSU in the fall of 2001. "My honest desire is to continue further studies in Governors State University," he wrote on his application form.

Vreni Mendoza, the coordinator of International Office, remembers Muktha fondly:

"He was a delightful person that embraced life," she said.

"He was also pretty independent and he adjusted quite fast to the new environment when he started at GSU."

Muktha was a Computer Science student and was planning to graduate next trimester. He also worked as a graduate assistant at the GSU computer lab.

"I could not react, I did not do what to do when I heard about his death," said Nilesh Kaniganti, a friend of Muktha. "I was shocked because he had called me from his cell phone that very same night."

Two months before the accident on April 20, Muktha turned 24 years old. He was in India at the time. He had traveled to visit his parents, a sister and two brothers and celebrated his birthday with them. His future plans were to return to his country and stay there for good.

"He was a good student. He was also a fun-loving guy, loved to cook and hang out with friends," Nilesh remembers.

Muktha wanted to finish his graduate courses in order to apply for a work permit that would allow him to gain some professional experience here before going back to his homeland.

Two weeks ago, his remains were sent home to his family in India.
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