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Student
Edition

electronic
newsletter

E-Pulse

SUCCESS BY DEGREES

November 2009

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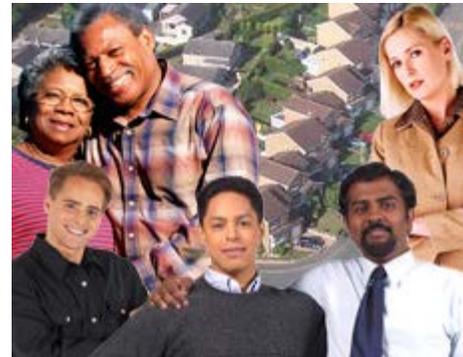
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All Systems Go for New Bachelor of Community Health Degree Program

Beginning with the Winter 2010 term, the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) will offer an undergraduate program in Community Health.

The **Bachelor of Health Science (BHS) in Community Health** degree program will offer a broad-based educational background that will prepare students to design and implement programs that increase the quality, availability, and effectiveness of health and wellness promotions.



The mission of the Community Health program is to enable students to promote health and wellness for the betterment of older adults and specific communities, especially those vulnerable to healthcare disparities.

After completing a 24-credit program core curriculum, students will have an opportunity to select from four tracks for program customization:

- Gerontology—Long Term Care
- Gerontology—Healthy Aging
- Health Promotion Education in the Community Setting
- Pre-Occupational/Physical Therapy

Prospective students are required to have a minimum GPA of 2.5 in 60 hours of transferable credit from a regionally accredited institution for admission to all tracks in the program.

Upon program completion, students will be able to plan, develop and implement community health education programs using a variety of strategies; conduct assessments of health needs and resources at both the individual and community level; identify, analyze, and interpret factors influencing people's health status; and evaluate the process and outcome of community-based health education programs and long-term care programs.

"We're extremely excited about this program," noted **CHHS Dean Linda Samson, Interim Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies**.

"Our college has always recognized the importance of developing new and innovative programs to serve the needs of our students and community. In light of our aging population and the rising cost of healthcare, our nation needs trained health educators who can teach people how to live healthy lives, prevent disease, and help them avoid costly treatments for illness. As a nation, we have to make a move toward healthier communities overall. This new program is designed to do just that," Dean Samson said.

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New Calendar Transition Coming!

Governors State University plans on converting to a new school calendar — based on semesters — beginning in the Fall of 2010.

Watch for more information on this proposed calendar conversion.

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Introducing: CHHS Advisory Board!

The College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) just got connected in 11 new and wonderful ways with the Chicagoland area it serves.

The CHHS now has an 11-person **Advisory Board** comprised of health and human service professionals from across the region. Their mission is to help CHHS achieve its goals and objectives, as outlined in the [College's Strategic Plan](#). Members will also provide guidance on marketing the college to the broader community (defined as high school students, working professionals, and other advocates from the workforce arena.)

Led by CHHS Dean Linda Samson, Ph.D., the first-ever meeting of the College's new Advisory Board was held in late May.

Members serving on the CHHS Advisory Board include:

- **Jennifer Artis**, Director of Community Affairs for St. James Hospital and Health Care Centers, Chicago Heights, IL;
- **John Cicero**, Executive Director of the Will County Health Department, Joliet, IL;
- **State Representative Elizabeth Coulson**, 17th District, Glenview, IL
- **Douglas Hoffman, R.N., COHN-S**, Occupational Health Manager, North Central Region, UPS, Aurora, IL;
- **Donald T. Mon, Ph.D.**, Vice President of Practice Leadership for the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA);
- **Michael R. Murphy**, Government Policy Advisor, Dykema, Springfield, IL;
- **Edward S. Ogata, M.D., MM**, Chief Medical Officer, Children's Memorial Hospital, the Crown Family Professor of Pediatrics, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Pediatrics and Obstetrics/Gynecology for Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago, IL;
- **Allen Sandusky**, President and Chief Executive Officer, South Suburban Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, East Hazel Crest, IL;
- **William Staub**, Principal, Axiom Integrated Services, Chicago, IL; Debra VanSchepen, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Ingalls Memorial Hospital, Harvey, IL;
- **Debra VanSchepen**, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Ingalls Memorial Hospital, Harvey, IL;
- **Scott Zeller**, Recruitment Manager, Accelerated Rehabilitation Centers, Chicago.

Also serving on the Advisory Board is Christine Radtke, Director of Development at GSU.

"I am absolutely delighted to have such a wealth of talent and expertise to draw from as we strive to reach our goals as a college," noted Samson. "Our future as a college has always looked bright, but it's certain to get even brighter with support of this caliber."

Subjects addressed at the first Advisory Board meeting ranged from the need for informatics/electronic health records and robotic nursing/training

coursework throughout the college curriculum, to telemedicine as a growing field. Advisory Board members will also be lending their expertise in terms of offering ideas for how the College can address its current challenges, including budget constraints, diminishing resources and competition for quality faculty, among other concerns.

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Hats Off to the White Coats!

Congratulations to the 19 **Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students** who were presented with their white coats during a June ceremony attended by GSU President **Dr. Elaine P. Maimon** and **Lorine S. Samuels**, Chair of GSU's Board of Trustees.



The presentation of the white coats symbolizes the passage of the DPT students into their final stage of clinical practice prior to receiving their diplomas as Doctors of Physical Therapy.

These students represent the very first set of future graduates from the College of Health and Human Services' [DPT degree program](#). The hooding ceremony will take place June 10, 2010, followed by graduation on June 12, 2010.

The 19 students include: Tanya Anders, Patricia Barker, Megan Bryce, Scott Bullard, Michelle Gibbons, Emily Harn, Kristina Jones, Shannon Kleinfelder, James Lagoni, Andrew Lange, Cheryl Luif, Cari O'Donnell, Bradley Phillips, Megan Schneider, Timothy Schultz, Joshua Velarde, Justin Vekarde, Jena Zientek and Gregory Zukowski.

After receiving their white coats, the students recited an adapted version of the Hippocratic Oath, in which they solemnly pledged themselves "to the service of humanity . . ." and to "practice my profession with conscience and dignity" . . . and to "maintain by all means in my power, the honor and the noble traditions of the health professions."

Congratulations once again!

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Onward and Upward for this Social Work Grad



Photo: GSU Social Work graduate Chasity (Chaz) Wells-Armstrong (back row, fourth from the right) is pictured with her boss, Congresswoman

Debbie Halvorson (back row, third from right) at a fundraiser that U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden (back row, sixth from right) held for the Congresswoman recently in Chicago.

Should you ever need defending or support, you'd want someone like **GSU Social Work graduate Chasity (Chaz) Wells-Armstrong, MSW, CADC**, on your side. She's a fighter, an advocate for the underdog.

As a survivor of family turmoil, a former teen runaway, and high school drop-out, Wells-Armstrong knows what it's like to be the underdog—which is why she's such an effective and outstanding Social Work professional today. And why she's doing such a great job in her current position as Constituent Services Director for Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson.

"The analogy of the underdog is really relevant in my life," Wells-Armstrong said. "When people call the Congresswoman's office in a struggle to access services, I have a lot of empathy to offer these people. I've had to rely on some of these same services. I've been unemployed; I know how humbling that is."

But all that is in the rearview mirror. Today, Wells-Armstrong holds a master's degree in Social Work, and is also a Certified Alcohol Drug Counselor (CADC); she plans on pursuing her LCSW license, as well. She was named Outstanding Undergraduate Student in Social Work by the College of Health and Human Services in 2007. That same year, she won a national competition for a policy fellowship in Washington, D.C., where she worked for the Executive Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work.

"This was a great opportunity for me to work on policy development," Wells-Armstrong said. "Lawmakers need to know how the policies they enact impact oppressed and vulnerable people. Who understands this population better than a social worker?"

While at GSU, Wells-Armstrong served as president of the Social Work Student Organization (SWSO). She currently serves on the GSU's Department of Social Work Advisory Board.

All in all, Wells-Armstrong is grateful for the "outstanding" experience she's had as a Social Work student at GSU. She credits in particular **Dr. Adelle Sanders**, Associate Professor in Social Work, for believing in her and supporting her.

Wells-Armstrong is returning the favor — ten times over — to the underdogs she encounters in her life today.

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Research Funding Awarded

CHHS faculty members **Philip Kletke, Ph.D.**, of the Health Administration Department, **Nancy MacMullen, Ph.D.**, interim Nursing Department chair, and **Kim Boland-Prom, Ph.D.**, LCSW of the Social Work Department recently received new funding for their research and program activities.

Dr. Kletke received funding from the [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#) for a one-year project designed to analyze data from the 2000-01 Physician Survey that is part of the Community Tracking Study conducted by the Center for Studying Health System Change in order to examine unevenness in physician Medicaid participation.

Dr. MacMullen received funding from the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) for the Nurse Faculty Loan Program. This program provides loans to students in advanced nursing educational programs that prepare graduates to serve as faculty.

Dr. Boland-Prom received two-year funding from the American Foundation for Research and Consumer Education in Social Work Regulation for the

study of social workers sanctioned by regulatory boards.

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Assistant Provost Mayfield to be Honored at ASHA Convention

Sandra Mayfield, Ph.D., Assistant Provost and Professor of Communication Disorders, will be honored by the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)](#) at the organization's convention in November.



Dr. Mayfield will be recognized for her work to advance multicultural infusion in Speech-Language Pathology and ASHA; for serving as an advocate in the cause of multicultural issues; demonstrating respect and value for differing backgrounds and points of view; and for having highlighted the impact of culture and/or language on speech-language pathology, audiology, speech-language, or hearing science.

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PT Professor Invited to National Research Conferences



Prisca Collins, PT, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and co-Director of Clinical Education for the Physical Therapy Department, was invited to participate in a national "invitation only" research conference hosted by the [American Physical Therapy Association's](#) Research Department.

The conference, Creating a Culture of Collaboration: Vitalizing Practice Through Research and Research Through Practice, will be held December 2-4 in Philadelphia, PA. The conference will focus on creating an infrastructure that will enable physical therapist clinicians and researchers to work together in an effort to provide enhanced care for patients.

Dr. Collins has also been accepted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Connections Third Annual Research and Coaching Clinic to be held concurrently with the [American Public Health Association \(APHA\)](#) Annual Meeting and Exposition, November 7-8, in Philadelphia, PA.

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Social Work Chair Elected to CSWE

Gerri Outlaw, Ed.D., MSW, Chair of the Social Work Department in CHHS, was recently elected to be a Graduate Dean Representative for the Board of Directors of the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#).



Outlaw's three-year term began July 1, 2009, and will continue through June 30, 2012.

The CSWE is a non-profit, national association for social work education in the United States of America. The CSWE sets and maintains standards of

courses and accreditation of bachelor's degree's and master's degree programs in social work.

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Addictions Professor Elected to State Post



Jacquie Elder, Psy.D., CADC, Assistant Professor of Addictions Studies, was recently elected as Chairperson for the Advisory Council to the Department of [Alcohol and Substance Abuse \(DASA\)](#) for the State of Illinois.

Dr. Elder has served on this council for 10 years, and was appointed by Senator Christine Radagno.

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CHHS Faculty Travel the World

At the invitation of [Operation Snowball](#), university lecturer **Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC**, from the Department of Addictions Studies, traveled to Lithuania in October to speak to teachers and administrators in three school districts on the subject of prevention.



Operation Snowball, which focuses on alcohol and drug prevention among youth, recently started groups in Poland and Lithuania. Sanders will also speak at a school of social work while he is there.

Sanders has also been busy publishing articles on a wide variety of topics in a broad range of national publications. Some recent articles include: "Fatherhood and Recovery," featured in *The Source*, a publication of the National Resource Center/A Service of the Children's Bureau, produced by the University of California at Berkeley; and "Prevention Strategies for Young Male Violence," featured in *Student Assistance Journal* (The Voice of Student Assistance Programs).

* * *

If second-year Occupational Therapy (OT) student **Amy Gervais** ever had any doubts about her chosen profession, they were quickly dispelled the moment she began working with disabled children last summer in the western Ukrainian town of Chernivtsi.



Second-year OT student Amy Gervais (left) with one of her Ukrainian clients.

Accompanying Amy on the trip was GSU Occupational Therapy Associate Professor **Melanie Ellexson, DHSc, MBA, OTR/L, FAOTA**, along with fellow occupational therapists, students from several colleges, and other rehabilitation providers from the U.S.



Professor Melanie Ellexson with young Valek, who had received no OT until RESOURCE sent a group of OTs and OT students to the Ukraine.

The trip was a project of the [RESOURCE \(Rehabilitation, Education, Service Opportunities, Retraining and Care through Empowerment\) Foundation](#).

RESOURCE is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide health care training and education to health care providers from developing and developed countries, as well as to facilitate the delivery of health care services regardless of the patients' ability to pay.

Dr. Ellexson serves on the Board of Directors of RESOURCE, and was a founding member and one of the first professional occupational therapists to visit the Ukraine for purposes of rehabilitation and education of families caring for a disabled family member.

"This was my very first time in a real therapy session, and right then I knew my decision to study OT was the right one," Gervais said. "You go to school for a career, but it's not very often that you get to see firsthand the impact you can make on someone's life. It was so rewarding."

Gervais plans on returning to the Ukraine next spring with Dr. Ellexson and several other GSU OT students.

Last summer was Dr. Ellexson's fifth trip to the Ukraine.

"I get a great deal of pleasure from seeing how we can make a difference in these families' lives with a little bit of help. Most of what we do is not what you would call traditional therapy. We go in, look at their environment, and see what we can change," Dr. Ellexson said.

Professor Ellexson loves to witness the "transformation" of the OT students while they work with the Ukrainian family members. "Not to be cliché, but it really is a life-changing experience for them," she said.

Currently, occupational therapy services are not offered in the Ukraine. The medical school in Chernivtsi with whom RESOURCE has been collaborating would like to start an occupational therapy program there, Dr. Ellexson noted. RESOURCE has turned this request over to the OT World Federation; they're working to help get it approved.

Professor Ellexson and Gervais will report on their work in the Ukraine at the [Illinois Occupational Therapy Association](#) annual convention in November.

Stay tuned for more OT updates!

* * *

Assistant Professor of Addictions Studies (and GSU alum) **Jacque Elder, Psy.D., CADC**, recently conducted five days of training for the [Centers for Disease Control](#) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Dr. Elder and her colleagues taught physicians, nurses, social workers, outreach workers, and counselors how to conduct Brief Motivational Interviewing interventions with people suffering from HIV.

The training focused on Africa's growing problem with alcoholism and the harmful effects of alcohol on individuals who are taking HIV medications.

Read more about Dr. Elder's work in the current issue of [Make Someone's Life Better](#), the CHHS magazine.

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Kudos to Social Work Students!



Students in the **Winter 2009 Social Work 530 (Urban Dynamics)** class taught by **Lorri Glass, Ph.D., LCSW, ACSW**, assistant professor of Social Work, received praise for their participation in "The Maturing of Illinois," a Community Preparedness Report developed by [AgeOptions](#) in partnership with Bloom Township and the City of Chicago Heights Mayor's Office.

Thirteen Area Agencies on Aging in Illinois are partnering with communities across the state to assess their preparedness for the aging baby boomers.

"This study would not have been possible without the time and dedication of community volunteers and the Governors State University Department of Social Work "Urban Dynamics" class. Our sincere thanks for their outstanding work," the report noted.

"I cannot say enough about the value that the student observations have added to the community preparedness initiative," noted Rebecca Burgstahler, Planning Specialist with AgeOptions.

"Dr. Glass and her students went above and beyond the initial assessment questions to evaluate how community characteristics could impact the quality of life of older residents. Their feedback and observations demonstrated an understanding of the changing needs of residents as they age. The students were willing to ask tough questions and acknowledge the factors that can really make a difference in a person's daily life," Burgstahler said.

The GSU students, Burgstahler added, "brought a variety of perspectives and an interest in looking beyond the project at hand to broader social and policy decisions that influence 'community livability' for residents of all ages. Their work and presentations showed the dedication and care they poured into this project."

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CHHS Represented at LGBTI Health Summit

Raven James, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Addictions Studies, and graduate student **Colleen Wray** recently presented at the 2009 National LGBTI Health Summit in Chicago.

Their presentation, entitled "Working with LGBT



Clients in Substance Abuse: What Counselors Need to Know," used interactive and experiential activities designed to increase awareness of the importance of developing sensitivity to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons in drug and alcohol treatment.

The training was also designed to promote understanding of how prejudice and discrimination against LGBTI persons and other identities are linked, while examining the impact of external and internal oppression on the recovery process.

Dr. James and Wray also provided an overview of assessment and intervention issues and techniques and resources for referral — with the ultimate goal of helping practitioners become more effective in working with LGBTI persons.

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Addictions Studies Lecturer Elected to National Advocacy Organization



Peter Palanca, a senior lecturer in the Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health Department of CHHS, has been elected vice chair of the [National Association of Children of Alcoholics](#).

Based in Rockville, MD, the association is a national membership organization whose mission is to advocate for all children and families affected by alcoholism and drug dependencies.

A resident of Homewood, Palanca has had a distinguished career in the field of substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery. He currently serves as chairman of the Advisory Board of the GSU Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health Department.

Palanca is also vice president of [Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities](#), a not-for-profit organization that provides services across Illinois for thousands of individuals with substance abuse problems who are referred by the criminal courts, prisons, and the child welfare system.

Palanca also served as regional vice president with the Hazelden Foundation in Chicago and executive director of Parkside Behavioral Health Services.

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OT Students Lauded by Community Organization

Two Occupational Therapy students truly exemplify the motto of CHHS: *Make Someone's Life Better*.

The second-year MOT (Master of Occupational Therapy) students, **Amy Gervais** and **Amanda Groszek**, were featured recently in the quarterly publication of [LARC](#), a private, not-for-profit, Lansing-based organization dedicated to providing supportive services for developmentally disabled adults.

Having conducted their fieldwork experience at LARC, the two students received high praise from clients and staff members alike; they were lauded for their "time, genuine enthusiasm, creativity, and the many things that they taught all of us."

According to the LARC publication, "Great strides were made during their visit and many of the programs that were implemented while they were here will be continued on a daily basis."

Nice job, MOT students!

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Social Work Professor Assists at Forum

Phyllis Bell, Ph.D., M.P.H., MSW, Assistant Professor of Social Work, participated in a forum sponsored by Health Connect One in Chicago recently.



The forum focused on how community health workers can help communities become healthier.

Dr. Bell served as a group facilitator discussing the pros and cons of professionalizing community health workers.

Dr. Bell serves on the Board of Directors of [Health Connect One](#), a national organization dedicated to helping lower-income women have healthy deliveries and healthy babies, train healthcare workers, and expand the effectiveness of the doula.

Doulas are specially trained to provide support, information, and coaching during pregnancy, labor, and delivery.

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Upcoming CHHS Degree Program Information Sessions

The **Department of Social Work** will host information sessions for the Master of Social Work (MSW) program on the following dates at Governors State University:

- Saturday, November 14, 2009 – 10 a.m. to noon – Hall of Honors
- Thursday, December 17, 2009 – 7:30 to 9 p.m. – E Lounge
- Thursday, January 28, 2010 – 7:30 to 9 p.m. – Hall of Honors
- Saturday, February 13, 2010 – 10 a.m. to noon – Hall of Honors

Reservations are not required. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Kelly Robinson at 708.235.3997, or k-robinson@govst.edu.

The **Department of Occupational Therapy** will host information sessions for the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) and the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (DrOT) degree programs on the following dates at Governors State University:

- Saturday, January 16, 2010—Room G127
- Saturday, April 24, 2010—Room G127
- Saturday, September 18, 2010—Room G127

The information sessions will begin at 9:30 a.m. with registration, followed by the program from 10 to 11 a.m. All sessions will meet in Room G127.

Reservations are not required. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Mary Tracy at 708.534.7293.

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Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students

CHHS students are encouraged to check on the availability of funding for their programs through the [Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students \(SDS\)](#).

These scholarships can make a tremendous difference in students' academic experiences by easing monetary pressures and allowing them to concentrate on their studies.

To earn the scholarship, students must complete an application, qualify, and complete both FASFA and a Parental Income Affidavit. The Parental Income Affidavit *must* be submitted no matter what age you are. This form is required even if you have children or grandchildren.

Apply today. This is an opportunity you can't afford to miss and which could make all the difference in your academic experience.

Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students are funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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The Writing Center: A Helping Hand

There's a famous "Red" Smith saying about writing; "There's nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein."

That's an exaggeration, of course. But if you feel like you could use some help with your writing skills, the [The Writing Center at GSU](#) has an excellent team of consultants who are there to help you with that term paper, research project, documentation conundrum, or even that scholarship essay.

The Writing Center helps students in three ways:

1. Writing Center tutors are on duty in the University Library from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday. Tutors can help you narrow your research focus and answer questions about documentation, such as APA.
2. The Writing Center at GSU provides online assistance as well. The online writing center offers revision suggestions for making your paper better with the promise of a response within twenty-four hours. The online writing center also offers links to resources, such as documentation styles (APA and AMA) and where to put that comma.
3. The Writing Center offers one-on-one assistance in half-hour appointments for students who prefer a face-to-face consultation. Appointments must be made in advance. To make an appointment, call 708.534.4508.

Whatever writing issues you need to work on, the Writing Center provides outstanding support. Our advice: see the University Writing Center pros early, and see them often.

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Career Assistance Available

The [Office of Career Services \(OCS\)](#) is ready and able to help you get your career off the ground. OCS meets with students and alumni one-on-one to develop resumes, cover letters, job search strategies, and more. The OCS also holds workshops and keeps postings for local employers.

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Help for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who intend to request extended time on professional licensing exams, should contact [Access Services for Students with Disabilities](#), located in the Academic Resource Center.

Registering will ensure students with disabilities receive the accommodations they need as CHHS students and, when they seek additional time on licensing exams, provide necessary documentation that accommodation was provided in their undergraduate or graduate program.

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Stressed? Need Help?

GSU's [Counseling Center](#) provides confidential counseling services for currently enrolled GSU students.

For personal counseling, contact Katherine Helm at 708.235.7334.

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