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Jeff Smaltz
Governors State University

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GSU Celebrates 40th Anniversary

By Jeff Smaltz
Contributing Writer

Governors State University may be 40 years young this year, but a lot has happened in those four decades. The university is celebrating the milestone this week with a variety of events including a panel discussion, a history wall unveiling and Motown music.

"As we mark each decade, we reflect on the past, appreciate the present, and plan for future. Celebrating with a variety of events including a panel discussion, a history wall unveiling and Motown music."

A panel discussion will take place at 6:30 p.m. Friday in the Sherman Recital Hall. Former GSU faculty member Dr. Paul Green, who is now the Director of the Institute for Politics at Roosevelt University will be the moderator and will participate as a panelist too. Other panelists will include President Maimon, Prairie State College's Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Adenauga Ateowolugan, former GSU President Dr. Leo Goodman-Malamuth, and Superintendent Dr. Blondine Davis of Matteson School District 162.

Dr. Green is a lively personality who appears often on TV. This panel will definitely not be a series of speeches. You will not want to miss it," said President Maimon.

GSU's new History Wall will be unveiled at the panel discussion. This will be the installation of a permanent, commemorative history wall. This will take place at 4:30 p.m. in the D Main Entrance and Lobby.

The school was founded in 1969 as a "university without walls." Not literally, but students were given competencies rather than grades and all faculty held the same rank. Over the years many practices have changed including the institution of traditional grades. The school now has 54 degree programs and one of the most diverse faculties and student bodies in the country.

President Maimon said she is pleased with GSU's growth over 40 years. "Governors State University is committed to offering an exceptional and accessible education that imbues students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed in a global society," she said. "GSU is dedicated to creating an intellectually stimulating public square, serving as an economic catalyst for the region, and being a model of diversity and responsible citizenship."

Maimon said she has some wonderful memories in her two and half years as president. They including seeing students fulfilling their dreams, observing large increases in community college transfer students completing four-year degrees and beyond, and seeing adults coming back to school to get a second chance. She is also proud of GSU's internationally acclaimed plans for the possibility of Swine Flu Outbreak

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With flu season, and especially swine flu, hitting college campuses hard this year, Governors State University administrators have been planning and encouraging taking precautions to prevent an outbreak on campus.

GSU's Emergency Response Team (ERT) has been working the past several months to prepare for the event that there is an H1N1 virus (also known as the "swine flu") outbreak on campus.

Some of the precautions include placing hand sanitizer dispensers in hallways, posting signs and handing out flyers informing students and faculty with details of the virus, and setting up a hotline for students and faculty to use to report suspected or confirmed cases of the virus, according to Dean of Students Sherilyn Poole.

As of late October, there have been no reports on the hotline of swine flu by any faculty, students or staff, she said. "The primary goal of the ERT's plan is to provide information and data to help members of the campus community make good decisions about their personal health," Poole said.

Interim Provost David Curtis has also been encouraging faculty to develop a plan for teaching courses using technology in the event of a serious outbreak. In addition, faculty are advised to develop plans for working with students who miss an extended period of classes due to illness.

Students and faculty are strongly advised to wash their hands and stay home if they are sick. And students should check their university e-mail accounts because the school will use that service to send notices regarding the virus.

GSU's ERT team has also been working with the Will County Health Department and the Will County Emergency Management Agency in preparation of the possibility of the H1N1 virus outbreak on campus.

Swine flu vaccines are now available in Illinois and Indiana. The GSU campus is not a vaccination site, but students, faculty and staff can contact their physicians or county health departments for information on where to obtain the vaccine, Poole said.

Information about vaccines is available on all of the local county health department web sites including, Cook County www.countypublichealth.org, for Will County willcountyhealth.org, for Kankakee County kankakeehealth.org and for Lake County, IN, www.lakecountyin.org.

More information about the H1N1 virus can be found at www.govst.edu/40years. and http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm.

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