Enrollment tumbles at City Colleges
Edutors mystified as drops exceed rate of U.S. & state trends

Reprinted from the Chicago Tribune

Officials at the City Colleges of Chicago are scrambling to understand why fall enrollment at the school's seven campuses has dropped—in some cases by as much as 16 percent—since last year. According to City Colleges statistics, enrollment declined from 2004 to 2005 at every campus among students enrolled in credit courses and those signed up for adult education, the two largest groups of students attending City Colleges.

Among students taking courses for credit this fall, enrollment dropped 9.1 percent from the prior year at City Colleges. Kennedy-King, 8.5 percent at Daley College and 9.5 percent at Olive-Harvey.

For City Colleges students enrolled in adult classes, such as English as a second language and basic education skills courses, enrollment was off 16.1 percent at Olive-Harvey and 14 percent at Truman compared with 2004.

Kennedy-King also was down 14 percent. Among students taking courses for credit this fall, enrollment dropped 9.1 percent from the prior year at Kennedy-King, 8.5 percent at Daley College and 9.5 percent at Olive-Harvey.

For City Colleges students enrolled in adult classes, such as English as a second language and basic education skills courses, enrollment was off 16.1 percent at Olive-Harvey and 14 percent at Truman compared with 2004. Kennedy-King also was down 14 percent.

Officials at City Colleges are trying to understand the decline. "We're very concerned about the data and what it seems to show," said Jose Aybar, associate vice chancellor for arts and sciences at City Colleges.

Nationally, community college enrollment rose sharply through 2002—the last year for which national figures are available. But officials said over the last year some states have experienced dips in enrollment.

Norma Kent, vice president for communications at the American Association of Community Colleges in Washington, said enrollment trends "vary by state, and maybe even region."

As an example, Kent cited declines in California community colleges, which she said might be linked to tuition increases.

"We believe it is a combination of factors," said Kent. "Rising tuition, even small increases can make a difference for many of our students, and an improving economy, historically, when the economy is better, enrollments go down."

In Illinois, total enrollment in community colleges dropped 2.1 percent in 2005 compared with 2004, with 26 out of 48 schools experiencing a decline of 1 percent or more, according to preliminary figures compiled by the Illinois Community College Board. The number of students enrolled in credit courses at community colleges as of the end of registration for fall term 2005 was 355,684, a decrease of 7,520 from the fall 2004 enrollment of 363,204 students.

Steve Morse, a spokesman for the community college board, said until this fall, community colleges in the state had enjoyed record enrollments.

"The economy has leveled off, people have gone through that cycle and we'll see some drop-off," Morse said.

Enrollment for 2005 at area community colleges varied, with some schools such as Joliet Junior College showing small gains of 2.1 percent and William Rainey Harper a loss of less than 1 percent.

(continued on page 6)

Governor proposes tax credit for Illinois college students

Governor Rod Blagojevich announced last week during his "State of the State" address that he was proposing a $1,000 tax credit for every student who attends a college in Illinois—private or public.

The governor's proposal requires students to maintain a "B" average to receive and keep the tax credit. It only applies, however, to the first two years of college, "because when students make it through the first two years, odds are high that they'll graduate," the governor said.

He noted that it costs on average more than $7,000 a year in tuition and fees to attend a public university in Illinois, and more than $18,000 for a private institution.

"For many families, it's a tax credit that can help make the dream of college affordable and the dream of college a reality. It's a tax credit that helps parents who work hard, who love their children, and who want it better for their kids than they've had it for themselves."

Three years ago, the governor signed the "Truth-in-Tuition" law, which locks in the cost of tuition when students are freshmen so they pay the same tuition cost as seniors.

Senator Dick Durbin returns to GSU today

Senator Richard "Dick" Durbin (D-Ill.) returns to the GSU campus today to dedicate a classroom devoted to "An Adventure of the American Mind" (AAM).

The AAM project, sponsored by the Library of Congress, aims to teach schoolteachers how to access and use the resources of the Library's American Memory Program.

Durbin was instrumental in bringing the program, which began in North Carolina in 1999, to Illinois by obtaining necessary funding. Governors State became an AAM partner in June 2003.

Partners in the AAM Program provide educational opportunities to K-12 schools, colleges, universities, and home school educators.

The American Memory Website is essentially a digitization of the Library of Congress's vast historical resources, which contains over 10 million items directly related to America's past. Some national treasures being made available include letters and photos of U.S. Presidents, photos from the Great Depression, and classic folk music.

"The Library of Congress has a vast wealth of resources - resources just waiting to be tapped by students not just in Washington, but all across the country," says Durbin.

"Thanks to An Adventure of the American Mind, teachers can receive the training necessary to harness the latest Internet technology and bring the Library's digital collections into their classrooms, enhancing their teaching and expanding the universe of knowledge available to all our students," he said.
Sports: Under the influence

With the Superbowl just around the corner, the Olympics less than a month away, and the topic of substance abuse so dominant in the media, take this time to talk to your teen about what it means to be an athlete and play fair. Competitive athletes often become heroes to our nation's kids, but the pressure they are under to succeed in their sport can sometimes taint the reputations of even the most talented competitors. Teens often take these prominent news stories, and internalize the inappropriate actions of these athletes as acceptable.

Parents need to talk to your teen about what it means to harmful these drugs can be— not only to their performance on the field but to their long-term health and development.

Parents are the most important influence in their child's decision about drug use so make sure you set clear rules and expectations about not using.

You can learn more about substance abuse at:

Learn how to set clear rules and expectations at:

There are no shortcuts. To win, items must be drug-free:
http://theantidrug.com/get_involved/sports_playbook.asp

Educate yourself and underscore the risks of using drugs, steroids and alcohol:
http://theantidrug.com/get_involved/sports_risk_and_signs.asp.

Ray "Willy Wonka/Forest Gump" Nagin

The phoenix became a symbol of resurrection: burning in the fires, yet arising newborn out of the ashes.
In our ever-changing world of uncertainty and fear, the Phoenix still burns brightly as a symbol of resurrection from the ashes, and of the indomitable strength of the human spirit.

The Phoenix is Governors State University's student newspaper. It is published twice monthly during the fall and winter terms, and monthly during spring/summer.

We welcome articles, suggestions, photos, commentary, cartoons, and letters to the editor on issues that concern the greater GSU population.
If you have a question about university policy or events, please send it to us, and we will attempt to obtain an answer for you. Literary, and other artistic works are also considered.
We reserve the right to edit submissions for brevity, clarity, appropriateness, legality, and interest to our overall GSU readership.
All submissions should be signed, and include the student, faculty, or staff member's ID number, department, and phone number.

Opinions

'A day on, not a day off'
Celebration a stellar event

Commentary by Sylvia McGhee

The theme, "A day on, not a day off," marked the 7th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, which took place at GSU on Monday Jan. 16. It was a stellar event.

Illinois Congressman Danny Davis (7th Dist.) was the keynote speaker. His speech honored Dr. King and emphasized the importance of education.

The congressman spoke of Dr. King's commitment to importance of educational opportunity, a critical component in a free and democratic society and the wealthiest nation on earth. Davis said the promise of America lies in ensuring every man and woman is afforded the right to, and opportunity for, a quality education.

He stressed the 21st century need for educators, administrators, and staff to understand and live by tenents both he and Dr. King found imperative: cultural sensitivity, racial diversity, equal access to education, unlocking financial barriers through more government funding and support for education, and access to appropriate educational resources for the poor.

Davis' own commitment to education is clear through his background in teaching and his service on the Educational Committee in Washington D.C. Need I mention that he served on the Planning Committee for GSU in its infancy, and he taught several classes for a few semesters? The award-winning Crete-Monee High School Show Choir provided a moving opening for the event, which was punctuated throughout by meaningful and spiritual music. The New Faith Baptist Church Choir and Kaleidoscope Strings both received a welcoming and warm applause for their outstanding performances.

The event culminated in presenting the Dr. King Junior Image Award to the Leon Robinson Family for their community service, and the 100 Men Association pledges for donation for their male youth mentoring organization.

The afternoon was filled with outstanding performances, and many youth attended the event. I later wondered how many would become future GSU students. Here at GSU, we understand that knowledge is power and that children are the future, so we are prepared to teach them well, empowering them to lead the way.

I personally look forward to the 8th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration.

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Student editor wanted; Paid position

GSU invites applications for student editor-in-chief of the Phoenix student newspaper beginning January 2006, for the remainder of the 2005-06 academic year.

Qualifications: A GSU undergraduate or graduate student with 3.0 cumulative GPA, past experience as a reporter or editor of a student newspaper or professional publication, and ability to work within a news media environment. Ability to get along with others is imperative. The editor-in-chief will receive a stipend.

Responsibilities: The managing editor-in-chief will run the operation of the Phoenix and will be in charge of assigning and selecting stories, graphics, and photos; copy editing, laying out pages, writing headlines, and other production needs of the twice-monthly newspaper. The editor-in-chief also will be responsible for writing editorials, coordinating with columnists and writers, and contributing to news gathering and writing. Knowledge of Quark/Adobe and Adobe Photoshop software is a plus. The editor-in-chief will work in conjunction with the adjunct professor/technical coordinator to ensure the paper is published on a regular basis each trimester, and once monthly during Spring/Summer.

Review of applications begins immediately and continues until a suitable candidate is identified. Send letter of application, curriculum vita, names_Addresses/telephone numbers to the President of Student Life, Governors State University, 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60466.

'凤凰城'之重生
Commentary by Bridget Stratton

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, reporters informed Americans of the dire conditions facing those living in New Orleans and the Gulf region. We were bombarded with visions of Americans stranded on rooftops, mothers and children begging for food and water, dead bodies floating in floodwaters or covered with sheets in the Superdome, and looters stealing everything from baby diapers and food to television sets.

What Americans heard from the government were promises of food, water, supplies, and aid that didn't seem to materialize for days; a frustrated and weary governor and mayor, a President who took days before setting foot in New Orleans and the Gulf region. We were bombarded with visions of Americans stranded for days on rooftops, mothers and children begging for food and water, dead bodies floating in floodwaters or covered with sheets in the Superdome, and looters stealing everything from baby diapers and food to television sets.

In short, we saw a desperate and unlikable situation occurring in the Gulf Coast area, and government officials who looked like deer in headlights, with few meaningful actions to show for their words.

At the Superdome, which was supposed to be a safe temporary shelter, conditions rapidly escalated to critical mass. Normally stoic television reporters appeared visibly rattled as they explained the situation there. Days after the hurricane, reporters walked through the Superdome and Convention Center talking to desperate residents left without sanitary living conditions, and pointing out the rows of bodies covered with sheets just feet from where children sat. Reporters likened the situation to those they've seen from developing countries; only now they were in the richest country.

In all of this media coverage, there were few times when anyone at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or any other government agency adequately explained why aid was taking so long, or what the procedures were. It's clear from news reports days and months after the hurricane, as well as from the two congressional investigations into governmental handling of the situation, that there was plenty that went wrong. Most importantly, at a chaotic and crucial time, there was a breakdown in what should have been paramount in a crisis - communication.

Public affairs officer Marty Bahamonde was sent by FEMA administrator Michael Brown to New Orleans before Katrina made landfall. His job was to help coordinate the relief efforts and tell Brown what was going on at the scene. Bahamonde did what was expected of him. He immediately informed Brown of the situation upon arrival. He called Brown, FEMA's front office, and FEMA Public Affairs. He set up a conference call with FEMA operations and headquarters, the national emergency response team based in Baton Rouge, the regional response coordination center in Denton, Texas, and with FEMA's front office.

He sent multiple emails detailing how the Superdome was overwhelmed by the tens of thousands of people on the day Katrina hit; food, water, medicine, even toilet paper were in critically short supply. FEMA continued to direct people to the Superdome.

In response to Bahamonde's email on the conditions at the Superdome, Brown replied, "Thanks for the update. Anything specific I need to do or tweak?"

Even more disturbing is an email exchange between Brown and Cindy Taylor, FEMA deputy director of public affairs, about his appearance during a television interview on the day Katrina hit.

"My eyes must certainly be deceiving me. You look fabulous - and I'm not talking about the makeup!" - Cindy Taylor

[Brown's response]: "I got it at Nordstrom's. Email FEMA spokeswoman Lee Anne McBride and make sure she knows! Are you proud of me? Can I quit now? Can I go home?"

Not exactly the appearance of deep caring or a sense of urgency about the plight of thousands of people on the part of the leadership of this "Emergency Management" team, was it? When the emails were made public, FEMA officials only responded that Brown was just "trying to keep morale up." No apologies or even acknowledgement of the insensitivity of this witty banter in light of the ongoing tragedy.

During what many in the news media called a "hastily put together press conference" featuring Brown and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, Chertoff said "We totally understand what it's like to be sitting on top of a roof or to be sitting in a shelter where it's hot, where you're worried about when you're going to be picked up, where you're thirsty, where you're hungry, where you're afraid for members of your family."

Ya think?

Adding insult to injury, Brown often insisted that reports about lack of food and water were untrue, despite what eyewitnesses, including and his own on scene PAO Bahamonde, were reporting. Particularly in times of crisis, truthful, accurate information is essential...It is demanded. It is our right! According to FEMA's own field guide, public affairs objectives are to:

- Instill confidence in the community that all levels of government are working together to restore vital services and help victims;
- Work with the media to promote a positive understanding of federal and state response, recovery, and mitigation programs;
- Provide all target markets with equal access to timely and accurate information about the response;
- Manage expectations so that disaster victims have a clear understanding of all disaster response, recovery, and mitigation services; and
- Support state and local efforts to reach disaster victims with specific program information.

I think it's safe to say that on almost all accounts, the department failed to send the message to victims, as well as the general public, that FEMA had the situation under control. This was simply a major lack of leadership. Why wasn't anybody listening?
Sheridan was just opening when Paul Weitz graduated from GSU's Addiction Studies program. Here he conducts an “intake assessment” with a new arrival.

Some non-violent offenders with substance abuse problems can opt for treatment-oriented incarceration at the Sheridan Correctional Center. Here they’ll attend hours of substance abuse classes (above), group and individual therapy, and self-help group meetings. They’ll also get GEDs and intensive math, reading, and other instruction. The big bonus is that they will also be able to learn marketable job skills that (hopefully) will go a long way in keeping them productive when they get out. It’s certainly no picnic, though.
Joining the John Howard Association
Criminal Justice students bound for the Big House

Story and photos by Nancy LaLuntas

Students, faculty, and staff members from GSU recently got a first-hand look at the innovative substance abuse treatment program at Sheridan Correctional Center, and had the opportunity to interview the inmates there.

They were representatives not only of the university, but of a prestigious organization of citizen monitors concerned with ensuring fair and effective prisons and jails that are responsive to the needs of both offenders and the general community.

They were the first participants in a new program here, the John Howard Association Satellite Program at GSU.

Criminal Justice Professor James "Chip" Coldren and Political and Justice Studies student Benjamin Butler coordinated this trip, the first of what they hope will be many as this program develops. Butler completed his Minority Internship Program through his participation in this program.

Coldren is a former president of the John Howard Association (2002-2005), and believes the correctional facility monitoring program fulfills several important needs. "GSU faculty and staff provide an important volunteer service as part of this impressive watchdog organization," he said. "And students learn the role of citizen monitors while getting first-hand experience in corrections. It's an excellent example of the social contract in practice."

In addition to visiting monitoring prisons and jails, the Association is concerned with fair and effective sentencing, which may include alternatives to incarceration. The JHA's principal activities include advocacy, monitoring, policy development, public education, and information and referral services.

Participation in the GSU John Howard Association Satellite Program allows up-close access to the workings of correctional centers in the Illinois Department of Corrections, as well as to other correctional facilities in Illinois. Participation requires a commitment to at least one correctional facility monitoring visit per trimester, plus attendance at a three-hour training session. Individuals must undergo background check by the Illinois Department of Corrections prior to visiting correctional facilities under this program.

The next volunteer recruitment drive will take place through mid-February, with a training planned for mid-March, with the next correctional facility monitoring visit slated for early April.

Anyone interested in participating in this program should contact Coldren (jcoldren@gouvst.edu, 534-4390) or Benjamin Butler (mintroy@sbcglobal.net).

Some inmates find Sheridan's way of doing things too difficult an adjustment. Some are disciplinary problems, some are simply unsuitable for this innovative program. They're placed in "Segregation" awaiting resolution of their cases. GSU students Benjamin Butler, Natalie Cole, and Melissa Martinez, as John Howard Association representatives, want to know of their concerns, as well.
Math problems? No need to suffer

By Kim Neidermyer

Are you one of the many students who struggle with math? I not talking about trying to balance your checkbook or (heaven forbid) figuring out your own income taxes. Perhaps you live in fear of failing your required science class because there's calculations involved.

Well there's help for you here in the division of Student Development.

Math tutoring is offered in small groups, and is available free of charge to all math students at GSU. The groups are arranged according to professor. Individual tutoring may also be an option, but that depends on tutor availability.

"Students should not wait until they are already struggling," says Pam Zener, coordinator of math tutoring. "They should get help as soon as they know they are having difficulty."

Science Professor Robert Kaufman agrees. "The math tutors have been very successful in helping many of my students over the years," he said. "The key is for the student not wait, and to attend tutoring regularly," he says.

When Alex Talbert took Math 335 with Professor Kaufmann last fall, he went to the center to seek their help and advice.

"Sometimes just changing one's attitude about how they view math can help improve performance," said Zener.

"The tutors helped make my experience enjoyable and successful," said Talbert.

Counseling is also available for students who believe they are suffering anxiety over math, according to Zener. Appointments can be made by calling 708.235.3962. The Development Center is located in Room B1215 and is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Fridays until 5 p.m.

Personal counseling services on other matters are also available in the Student Development Center. There is no charge for these services because they are covered by student fees. Call 708.235.4090 for these services.

Illinois Small Business Development Association

Burkinshaw appointed to State Coordinating Council

Hilary Burkinshaw, director of the CenterPoint Business Development Center (SBDC) at GSU, has been appointed co-chair of the 2006-2007 Coordinating Council of the Illinois Small Business Development Association.

The 18-member council serves as a governing board for the Illinois Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth Association (ISBGA), whose mission is to provide support for small businesses through continuing professional development, networking, and a recognized certification program for small business professionals throughout Illinois.

In addition, she was elected as the co-chair of the council's 2006 statewide conference. As co-chair, Burkinshaw will plan all details of this year's three-day conference. The event is attended by approximately 100 business development professionals representing the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). Burkinshaw is herself a 17 year veteran with the Illinois DCEO.

"It's an honor to serve on the council, which supports immeasurable efforts to assist small businesses in Illinois," said Burkinshaw. "I'm also proud that my peers throughout the state have recognized me as a leader in business development. My work with the council will help to ensure that CenterPoint offers its clients the most comprehensive resources in the region," she said.

For more information about services available to Illinois small business owners, contact the CenterPoint Small Business Development Center at 708.534.4295 or visit www.centerpointgsu.com.

Free foreign language and culture courses

There still may be time to sign up for free foreign language and culture courses in Arabic, German, Russian, Yoruba, Swahili, or Turkish, taught by Fulbright Scholars.

These non-credit courses begin today (Jan. 23rd), sponsored by the College of Arts & Sciences, International Institute of Education, and Homewood Rotary Club.

German, Swahili, and Turkish is offered 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays; Arabic, Russian, and Yoruba is offered at the same time on Wednesdays.

Call the Arts & Sciences dean's office at 708.534.4101 to register or for more info.

Singers Wanted

To start a GSU concert choir

All levels welcome

Students, faculty, staff, and community

Contact Prof. Leela Miller

708.668.8923

College enrollments down

(continued from page 1)

The College of DuPage saw total enrollment decline 10.8 percent this fall, a dip that had been predicted because in August the college changed from quarters to semesters, school officials said.

DuPage College spokesman Bill Troller said many students, anticipating the change, rushed to complete their studies last spring so their grade transcripts would be uniform if they were transferring to four-year schools.

"We actually thought it was remarkable that we reached 30,000 this year with the conversion. There have been institutions in other states that have dropped enrollments by 25 or 30 percent" when they switched from quarters to semesters, Troller said. At City Colleges, Aybar noted, enrollment of students in for-credit programs has increased 5 percent since 2001.

"That’s on the positive side," said Aybar. "We see a one-year drop and we’re looking at the data and reviewing it as we speak."

Officials said many factors may have sparked the drop. Tuition at City Colleges has increased $15 a credit hour since 2003, and the school experienced a bitter faculty strike in 2004.

Others pointed to a decline in the number of foreign students coming to the U.S. Whatever the cause underlying the decrease, Aybar said, administrators at City Colleges are "very concerned and looking to remedy that situation."
Synergy of mind and body

Physical fitness enhances mental development

By Marilyn Turner-Mallory

Remember when Gym/PE was a part of the curriculum? When we really looked forward to running, playing, and exercise. But if you spend your days at a sedentary job, easier then.

Today, there is great emphasis on looking good, feeling good, and living longer. Increasingly, scientific evidence tells us that a key to achieving these ideals is fitness and exercise. But if you spend your days at a sedentary job, your evenings sitting in a classroom, and weekends behind a book, computer, or TV, it may require some determination and commitment to include regular activity as a part of your daily routine.

Well has GSU got a deal for you! Did you know that as a student here, you automatically become enrolled in the Recreation and Fitness Center? All you need to do is to show your current ID card to avail yourself of some great facilities.

Hours of operation are:

Monday thru Friday
6 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Sunday
Noon to 6:30 p.m.
(closed Sundays Spring/Summer term)

Physical activity offers equal opportunity benefits

Activity calories burned per hour

The following list gives you an idea of the calories used per hour during common activities. Calories burned vary in proportion to body weight, however, so these figures are general averages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Calories Burned per Hour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling 6 mph</td>
<td>240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bicycling 12 mph</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogging 5.5 mph</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogging 7 mph</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping rope</td>
<td>750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Running in place 650</td>
<td>1,280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Running 10 mph</td>
<td>1,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skiing (cross-country)</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming 25 yds/min 275</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming 50 yds/min 500</td>
<td>480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennis (singles)</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennis (doubles)</td>
<td>600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking 2 mph</td>
<td>240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking 4 mph</td>
<td>440</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Source: American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.)

No More Excuses

You can probably come up with plenty of excuses for why you're not more active. Too much homework, you're too young, too old, you're too busy at work, school, and home, you're too tired, or you're in pretty good shape -- for your age. But with few exceptions, these excuses are pretty flimsy.

Remember that by fine-tuning your body as well as your mind, you will have a greater ability to perform daily tasks with vigor and clarity. And you'll even have energy left over for enjoying leisure-time activities and meeting emergency demands. Fitness is the ability to endure, bear up, withstand stress, and to carry on in circumstances where an unfit person could not continue. Fitness is good health and well-being.

Make the commitment today, and take 30 minutes before or after class to take care of the whole you!
Continuing thru Thursday Feb. 2
Faculty art exhibit
View the works of GSU's finest at the faculty art exhibit in the Visual Arts Gallery - E lounge. Reception 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday Jan. 27; Gallery hours are 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Monday Jan. 23
'Making the Dream a Reality'
A formal program honoring the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be celebrated in music, dance, and the spoken word from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in Engbretson Hall. Free and open to the public. A "Grumpier Old Men," feature film hits. Crenshaw's credits include College of Arts & Sciences and Media Communications program. Contact Sheree Sanderson at 708.235.3956.

Wednesday Jan. 25
Cinematographer Michelle Crenshaw
Hear about the working on the smash hit TNT series "The Closer." Cinematographer Michelle Crenshaw has excelled in her craft working on everything from low budget independent films, to popular TV series, to huge feature film hits. Crenshaw's credits include "The Man Who Drove Marsella," "Homes Alone" (both I and II), "Grumpier Old Men," and "Uncle Buck." She's currently working on the smash hit TNT series "The Closer." At 5 p.m. in Engbretson Hall. Free and open to the public. A Distinguished Lecture Series event sponsored by the College of Arts & Sciences and Media Communications program. Contact Sheree Sanderson at 708.235.3956.

Saturday Jan. 28
ABBA Celebration
A tribute to one of the most successful groups in pop music history, ABBA, at 8 p.m. at the Center. Sing along with favorites such as "Dancing Queen" and "Take a Chance on Me." Tickets are $33 to $42. Call The Center at 708.235.2222.

Sunday Jan. 29
Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
'A Tchaikovsky Truffle'
Warm soothing sounds of the cello, reminiscent of a tchaikovsky and a centerstage performance at 3 p.m. at The Center by acclaimed soloist Zalil Bailey. Call The Center at 708.296.5553.

Tuesday Jan. 31
Meet with the Provost
Come share your thoughts with Provost Paul Keys from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. in the Hall of Governors. Questions, discussions, idea-sharing — all are welcome!

Wednesday Feb. 1 & Thursday Feb. 2
Arts & Crafts fair
An Arts and Crafts fair in conjunction with Black History Month is slated for 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the Hall of Governors. Call Sara Appel at 708.534.4552.

Friday and Saturday Feb. 3 & 4
'Flanagan's Wake'
Noble Fool Theatre Company presents a Chicago favorite! Experience a wake like no other with this hilarious and wacky interactive show at 8 p.m. each night at The Center. Discover your Celtic roots by participating in the ruminations on the life Flanagan lived and how he died. Tickets are $28 to $37. Call The Center at 708.235.2222.

Saturday Feb. 4
'Saturday Feb. 4
Especially for Kids:
'Little House on the Prairie'
Of one of America's most enduring authors, whose classic books have inspired young people to discover their own pioneering spirit for more than 50 years, Art's Power's popular musical tells the uplifting story at 11 a.m. at The Center. Tickets are $9 to $14. Call The Center at 708.235.2222.

Monday Feb. 6
African American Read-In
Join more than a million readers in the 17th annual National African American Read-In, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and its Black Caucus. The GSU event occurs from 6 to 8 p.m. in Sherman Hall, and is sponsored by on campus by College of Arts & Sciences and Student Life. Refreshments will be served. To volunteer as a reader/performer, contact Prof. Rashidah Muhammad at 708.534.6974 or r-muhammad@govst.edu.

Tuesday Feb. 7
Film: 'The Murder of Emmett Till'
Student Life hosts this documentary film at noon and again at 4 p.m. in Engbretson Hall. In honor of Black History Month. Call Sara Appel at 708.534.4552.

Wednesday Feb. 9 & Thursday Feb. 8
Chronicles of Our Heritage
Chronicles of Our Heritage is a display of cultural icons from early times to the present in honor of Black History Month from 4 to 8 p.m. in the Hall of Governors. Student Life hosts. Call Sara Appel at 708.534.4552.

Saturday Feb. 11
Salute to Graduates Luau
Alohas from the Hall of Governors to poolside to the Cafeteria Annex in a super-summer setting. Winter graduates can hula their hearts out from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Reservations required. Call Sara Appel at 708.534.4552.

Monday Feb. 13
President's Day Holiday
UNIVERSITY CLOSED

Tuesday Feb. 14
Coffeehouse
The Student Senate hosts a Coffeehouse for Black History Month from 6 to 9 p.m. in Engbretson Hall. Call Sara Appel at 708.534.4552.

Monday Feb. 13
Chicag College of Performing Arts Symphony Orchestra
The Chicago College of Performing Arts orchestra returns at 7:30 p.m. with this free concert at The Center. Stephen Squires conducts. Call The Center at 708.235.2222.

Saturday Feb. 18
Winter Commencement
Winter Commencement will be held on Saturday, February 18, at 11 a.m. at the Tinley Park Convention Center. Admission is by ticket only. Call 708.534.4504 for more information.

Saturday Feb. 18
Broadway Pops concert
"Come on along and listen to..." It's a salute to the best of Broadway with the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra at 8 p.m. at The Center. Veteran song and dance man Lee Roy Reams heads the bill. $28 to $48. Call The Center at 708.235.2222.