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Prairie Place a hallmark of GSU’s new living and academic experience

By Bob Meyers
Staff Writer

Prairie Place, the new residence for GSU students, was welcomed with open arms with an official ribbon cutting in front of the main entrance at 4:30pm on August 22nd. For the first time, GSU student tenants can immerse themselves in an on-campus living and learning environment that features all the comforts of home, including two-to-four-bedroom living areas, free WiFi, cable television, residence shopping, onsite laundry, controlled access entry, and many other amenities.

GSU President Elaine Maimon, in her Welcome Letter to freshmen, praised Prairie Place and Governors State’s unique freshman experience. “Our freshman program is high touch: small classes taught by full-time faculty members working together to illuminate connections among structured courses.”

“Making connections is the prevailing concept at Prairie Place, GSU’s first living/learning community,” said Maimon. “We don’t call Prairie Place a “dormitory” from the French word “dormir”—to sleep. Prairie Place is predominantly a place to learn and to realize that there is nothing more exhilarating than education, guided by three full-time faculty members living on site. Sleep is important, no doubt, but only after a full, stimulating day and evening.”

Assistant Vice President in charge of Marketing and Communication Rhonda Brown said that she was pleased to see the reactions from students and faculty that attended the August 22 ribbon cutting. “The incoming freshmen who were there were amazed at the sophistication, beauty, and layout of Prairie Place,” said Brown. “The layout is like a painting.”

Prairie Place’s rooms are spacious and include modern living areas, kitchenettes, shared and individual bathrooms, and a variety of rooming options for students and faculty.

Don’t Shoot!

By Bob Meyers and Jon Bulthuis

Governors State University’s Social Work and Social Organization Club held a peace gathering on August 26, 2014 at 3:30 pm in the GSU Gymnasium to draw attention to violence in our communities and in the Chicagoland area, and to the continuing protests in Ferguson, MO in the wake of the Michael Brown shooting. About three dozen of the approximately seventy assembled peace protesters wore t-shirts bearing the words “Don’t Shoot.”

The gathering opened with a moment of silence for all those who have been affected by gun violence in our community and our nation. “Police don’t shoot, black men don’t shoot; just put the guns down,” said Dr. Phyllis West, Senior University Lecturer in Social Work, during the demonstration. “Just put ‘em down. Show some peace, and show some love,” said West.

During the silent protest, SWASO Public Relations Officer Latesha Newson shared the following quote by former US President John F. Kennedy: “Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process; gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures. And, however undramatic the pursuit of peace, the pursuit must go on.”

The “Don’t Shoot” demonstration exemplified these sentiments, as protesters quietly filed into the gymnasium and silently followed instructions from photographer and SWASO official Addison Jackson. The event closed with the protesters posing silently for a final photo.

Jackson spoke passionately after the demonstration about the need to subvert violence in our communities and in the global arena. “The purpose of this whole event was to show that we have solidarity,” said Jackson, “not only in Chicago and St. Louis, but the whole world, to end violence. Violence is a plague that has spread over the whole world, and we need to end it, period.”

Newson echoed these sentiments and described a growing need for new leadership in the youth community. “It’s important for us to stand up,” said Newson. “We are the next generation of emergent leaders,” said Newson, “and if we don’t stand up for this generation, what will be said? What will be told about this generation? We have an obligation and a responsibility to stand up.”

“The time is now, we can’t wait,” said Jackson. “We can’t wait to see what happens next on TV, and we can’t wait to see what happens next in the newspaper. We have to act now.”

GSU students who are interested in joining SWASO or participating in demonstrations or activities in the future should contact Addison Jackson at ajackson12@student.govst.edu.
Dear GSU Students,

We hope this message finds you well and engaged in your studies. As we approach the end of another academic year, we wanted to take a moment to recognize the challenges and accomplishments of the past year.

Firstly, congratulations to our fellow students who have graduated. Your hard work and dedication have paid off. We hope you find the next chapter of your lives as rewarding as the college experience.

Secondly, we want to acknowledge the resilience of our student body. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, you have continued to support each other and the university. Your efforts in the face of adversity have been inspiring.

As we look towards the future, we encourage you to continue to be proactive and engaged. There are many opportunities for you to make a difference in your community and beyond. Whether it's through campus organizations, community service, or your own initiativies, your voice matters.

We hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer, and we look forward to seeing you refreshed and rejuvenated for the fall semester.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
Student Trustee
Orbis

Fight for $15

an historic protest for fast-food workers in the GSU community, Chicagoland, and the U.S.

By Gregg Greer
Contributing Writer

On September 4, 2014, in the Chatham neighborhood of South Chicago, low-paid workers took part in a historical 150 city sit-in at McDonald’s, Wendy’s, Burger Kings and other chain locations. Their fight began at 7:30 am with an estimated 400 fast-food workers marching on the South side of Chicago, an impressive show of support which is also scheduled to be the first of many multinational campaigns for higher wages.

The strategy, to “Fight for $15,” pushes for a $15 hourly wage for fast-food workers and the ability to unionize, versus the current federal minimum wage, which remains at $7.25 an hour. The group of protesters contained college students, labor organizers, and community activists; all whom expressed support of a wage increase. Dozens of people participating in fast-food protests were arrested in New York, Chicago, Miami and other cities Thursday, according to police and political organizers.

“It’s becoming clear that when conditions deteriorate for the lowest paid workers, the standards drop for all workers,” said a GSU student who attended the rally.

Organizer Byron Hobbs stated “I believe it is important to stand in solidarity with this cause because these folks have to have a decent working and living wage.” According to the United Students against Sweatshops (USAS), it is the nation’s largest youth-led, student labor campaign organization.

“Our generation is constantly reminded that we are the first generation to be financially worse off than our parents,” said Hobbs. “The biggest concern for many university students is not whether they’ll be able to find good jobs, but any jobs after graduating.”

Also present was Organizer Charles Austin from the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, to represent homeless and low paid workers. “This cause is serious,” said Austin, “because these workers need to survive, and the current living wage, now is just not working. Many of the workers are a step from being homeless and we want to prevent that.”

President Obama renewed his call to raise the federal minimum wage and to protect the right to equal pay for women, on Labor Day, at a rally in Milwaukee.

“If your member of Congress doesn’t support raising the minimum wage, you’ve got to let them know they’re out of step, and that if they keep putting politics ahead of working Americans, you’ll put them out of office,” said Obama. “Tell them to reconsider. Tell them it’s time for $10.10. You can tweet at them — use hashtag #1010Means. Let them know how raising the minimum wage would help you, or your family, or somebody that you know. And while you’re at it, tell them to restore unemployment insurance for Americans.”

Midwest World History Association Conference Fall 2014

To be hosted by author, “Democracy Now!” anchor Juan Gonzalez

GSU will host the 2014 Midwest World History Association Conference on September 26 and 27. The 8thannual conference will include a panel discussion with keynote speaker Juan Gonzalez, co-host of the independent news program “Democracy Now!” And the author of “Harvest of Empire, a History of Latinos in America.”

“This is the first time the MWHLA conference is being held at GSU,” said Dr. Andre Marak, Division Chair of the department of Humanities and Social Sciences, and GSU’s representative on the MWHLA executive committee. “The theme of the conference is Civil Rights and Human History, recognizing the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act,” said Marak, “and we’re trying to expand the discussion beyond just black and white themes, to include Latinos, Native Americans, the Gay Rights Movement, and other minorities.”

About a hundred people working in history or global studies from around the Midwest will attend the conference, including K-12 teachers, college students, and members of the public. The conference will feature presentations by students from the Alpha Phi Theta History Honors Society, and will be the subject of a class by University Lecturer Tamara Winn. Attendees may also attend a tour of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park and an art exhibit entitled I’m American, curated by Sergio Gomez. A major theme of the conference is how bi-cultural people understand their belongingness in the United States. “One of the most important claims that Gonzalez makes,” said Marak, “is that one of the major causes of undocumented immigration is U.S. imperialism in those sending countries.”

“For example, the U.S. invaded Cuba and took it over,” said Marak. “The U.S. also intervened in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, and Mexico a number of times. These are countries that the U.S. has either invaded repeatedly, or overthrown governments there; in Guatemala, for example.”

“These aren’t direct interventions where the U.S. sends the marines ashore, but they’re ones where governments are toppled,” said Marak, “and we can argue how much responsibility the U.S. has for the overtum of those governments; some people say a lot, some say less, but it’s clear that [the U.S.] is involved.”

One of the biggest injustices facing Latino immigrants in the U.S. is the paradox of resources that they contribute to by working, but do not benefit from. “A lot of these folks get regular paychecks and pay into Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare, but they can’t access those things,” said Marak. “A pertinent issue right now is that the number of Latinos in the U.S. has skyrocketed with the passage of the Immigration Reform Act of 1986,” said Marak. “The reform act gave immigrants amnesty here, and also allowed for Family Reunification, which has had a major impact on immigration. That meant that it wasn’t just the single worker that ended up in the U.S., it was the entire family.”

“History never repeats itself, but sometimes it provides a mirror for other times,” said Marak. “[Latino immigration] is similar to what the Irish did. One argument that people make is that Latino’s may be part of the next white middle class in the 2050’s.”

If anything is clear about our evolving sense of national, cultural, and ethnic belongingness, it’s that our conceptions of those ideas are still being defined. “There’s more inter racial marriages now than ever,” said Marak, “but there’s no guarantee that that will be the outcome. It may be that people now will maintain biracial and bicultural identities. They may say that I’m part Thai, and part African-American.”

“Social constructions of race change over time,” said Marak, “and so the suggestion is that it’s possible that instead of us becoming a majority- minority nation, that we’ll become a nation that has a new white majority by people being absorbed into it.”

Professor Tamara Winn’s Interdisciplinary Studies class will focus on Gonzales’ book. IDSS students will attend the conference for two days, attend various panels and the keynote speech, and then create a final project online. All GSU students may attend the event without receiving credits. The MWHLA Conference will begin at 8am on Friday, September 26, and will adjourn on Saturday, September 27.
GSU Library Reopens, Unveils Improvements

By Brian Bock
Contributing Writer

Governors State University students may have noticed that the Library and ACS Lab have undergone some drastic changes. These improvements took place over the summer vacation, and helped to give the library a more modern look and enhanced features. This improvement is keeping with GSU’s commitment to changing and evolving with its students.

The remodeling took all summer, with construction beginning just after finals of Spring 2014, and the grand reopening taking place August 25, 2014. The most apparent change to the Library is the new placement of the doors, and new windows. The library’s entrance has been moved from its previous place, perpendicular to the main staircase, to directly parallel with the staircase. Aside from the more accessible doorway, the West facing walls have been replaced with large windows, evoking a modern aesthetic.

Inside the library, more cosmetic changes have helped improve the atmosphere. New carpeting, a brand new GSU logo, modern furniture, and a new wooden trellis have been added to the new Library layout as well. These new changes also include the combining of the ACS lab with the Library. The ACS lab is now the Computer Connection Central Lab, or The Cube, and is adjacent to the Library. The Cube and the newly renovated Library will also contain classrooms, helping students become more familiar with the new design. Returning students will also notice that the suspended hallway that leads from D building to E building has become larger, and lined with new furniture.

Aside from the new cosmetic changes to the Library, there is also some new resources that students can utilize. The new library has an Information Desk, managed by students, to help with navigating the library, aside from the Circulation Desk and Reference Desk. A charging station has also been constructed, allowing students to power up electronic devices easily.

GSU provides first freshman class with ASUS laptop

By Sean Johnson
Contributing Writer

GSU issued Laptop PCs to qualifying freshmen this year as part of what was described by President Elaine Maimon as “an historical educational development process”. GSU’s push to immerse incoming freshmen in a fresh, comprehensive, redefined academic community setting.

The ASUS Transformer Book (T-100) is a touch-screen tablet with a detachable keyboard. It operates using Windows 8.1 and contains a complete Microsoft Office software package. This latest high-performance tablet-computer is equipped with a vivid 1280 x 800 IPS display and a lightweight (optional) keyboard dock with USB.

“Do I like my new laptop? Well, yes! It provided me with Internet resources and allows me to access my GSU portal and Blackboard. The storage space is sufficient for my needs. The Microsoft Word program and Internet Explorer are helpful for my school work. “The computer is conveniently lacking in size (it’s a little too small). I installed software programs on the laptop myself and the laptop does run these programs. I can most definitely use my new laptop in class and the professors allow it. I’m able to access my books that I have purchased online.”

Justis Walton (Freshman):

“I really appreciate GSU for giving me a new laptop! It’s really useful. This new laptop meets my needs both academically and recreationally, although the storage space isn’t sufficient for my needs. All the software and programs installed on the laptop are helpful for my school work. There is nothing I haven’t worked with...”

“I installed software and other programs on the laptop and I’ve had no additional problems. The laptop runs the programs just fine. [Pertaining to using the laptop in class]...it really depends on who the professor is and what class. Mostly, it’s only when we’re working where a laptop is needed. The computer is convenient.”

Marshae Willis (Freshman):

“I like my new laptop because I didn’t have to buy one a new one! Does the computer meet my needs academically and recreationally?”

Continued on pg. 7
Open Mic night a hit

The Fall 2014 schedule for Open Mic Night started off with a bang at 6pm on August 28 in the Cafeteria Annex. The open stage event is an opportunity for GSU students and members of the community to show off their talents; whether it be through spoken word poetry, song, dance, or performing an instrument. The first open mic of the semester saw a significant turnout, with over a dozen students performing and a growing number of people in attendance. Refreshments were served to the attendees and performers, the lighting was dimmed and augmented by disco balls and lighting effects.

In order to become a part of Open Mic Night you just sign up and wait until your name is called. If you have a talent that you want to display, don’t be shy; drop by the Cafeteria Annex on the last Thursday of every month after 6pm.

By Brittney Woods
Assistant Editor

Fall 2014 Student Employment Fair

On August 27 GSU’s annual Student Employment Fair was held in the Hall of Governors, inviting all students to come out and seek employment. Upon entering the fair, each student had to give their Student ID, which was scanned to make sure they were in good standing. Students were able to inquire about and apply for federal work study student positions on campus, in the Financial Aid and Recreation and Fitness departments, the Library, Cafeteria, and CPA, as well as other departments and locations on campus. Many employers there were seeking workers for a federal work study although some were seeking regular student workers. Many employers had applications on sight for student submittal. The GSU fair experienced a good turnout. Freshmen, upperclassmen, and representatives from GSU’s various departments were in attendance.

By Brittney Woods
Assistant Editor

GSU students who attended the event were able to speak with representatives from various campus organizations at the Student Employment Fair.

Open Mic night performers showed off their stuff at the Aug. 28 event.

By Brittney Woods
Assistant Editor

“Raisin in the Sun” auditions

Stage Manager Sherry Nolan (left) and Professor Tony Labriola (right) assist and look on as Dr. Patrick Santoro (center) makes the difficult decisions at a competitive casting call for the TAPS production of "Raisin in the Sun." Showtimes for the play are November 5, 6, 8, and 9 in the CPA.

GSU students crowded into the Hall of Governors on August 27 to inquire about student work positions, check their eligibility for on-campus jobs, fill out applications, drop off resumes, and chat with GSU faculty and staff.

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to aid in the organization and writing of a Research Paper

Must have above average Word Processing skills
Knowledge of APA format
Experience writing Research Papers

Qualified individuals should contact Gina at
708 546 8041
PHOENIX: What influenced both of you to come to GSU?

RC: “I went to Western Illinois University, and got my Master’s in Communication. While at Western, I gained experience working in various areas from Multicultural Affairs, Leadership Development Programs, campus activities, and Greek life. Here, I came to Governors State University because I’m excited about the opportunity to build community and really represent the Latino community through programs and services that speak to the intersection of identities. At Governors State, we’re really in a transition mode where we’re going from mostly non-traditional age students to include more traditional age college students.”

“Now we have more intergenerational diversity taking place to really create a community where all people are welcomed and appreciated, representing multiple identities, whether it’s their race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, veteran status, so on and so forth. So, that’s my role here at the university to ensure that all students feel welcome and have access to resources but ensure their experience is holistic reflecting what their specific needs are, and that we’re always able to come together as a community to really value their uniqueness here. This is why it is important that cultural heritage months such as Latino Heritage Month takes place.”

DV: “For me, my job description is a little bit different. I serve as the Graduate Assistant for Intercultural Student Affairs to support the programs and services out of the department, but I also have a great opportunity. I get to really work with what I’m passionate about, because what I really care about is helping others. It’s my obligation to give back and to help others.”

“I come from the southwest side of Chicago and it’s a predominantly Latino community. It might slightly be somewhere between low middle class to poverty level, so I’ve seen what some of the neighborhoods can be like. It’s kind of tough. I made it out, but there were people I went to school with, unfortunately, that didn’t make it out. So, now, this is my way of just giving back through my parents, through my religion, through my school, somehow, I got out of it; I was able to find some success and education, and now I totally feel that it’s my obligation to give back and to help others.”

PHOENIX: Tell us about some of the events that you’re planning for Latino Heritage Month.

RC: “So, part of my responsibility here is to aide in developing campus-wide diversity awareness programming, and part of that includes Cultural Heritage Month. As stated earlier, Cultural Heritage Months allows us the opportunity to really celebrate the contributions of different groups here at the university, as well as globally, in different capacities. So, starting off we’re going to have Latino Heritage Month, which is celebrated September 15–October 15, due to the independence day for several Latin American countries starting September 15th.”

“We’re going to kick off this year with a program on Monday, September 15th at 4:00 pm in Sherman Hall with an engaging lecture by Mr. Michael Benitez, Jr., who is a nationally-renowned social justice educator with Speak Out, as well as Chief Diversity Officer, Dean of Diversity & Inclusion at the University of Puget Sound. He is going to talk about the usage of the terms Hispanic vs. Latino and how they are used with the sociopolitical background, how it impacts that community as well as how it impacts how we engage to ensure that we’re able to speak to their cultural heritage and understand it from a historical, post-colonial aspect as well.”

“Then, we also have a couple movie discussions taking place. We have one to talk about the great political activist Caesar Chavez on September 23rd at 7pm in F1622 with a discussion led by Dr. Elliot Walsh, Assistant Professor of History. We’re also going to have a movie and discussion about Undocumented Children and Students, and I’ll let Danny talk a little bit more about that as well.”

“On September 26th at 5pm there is a reception for the I AMERICA Exhibit curated by Sergio Gomez. A multimedia exhibition exploring what it means to be an ‘American’ from the perspective of bi-cultural artists living in the United States followed by a keynote address at 7pm by Mr. Juan Gonzalez, the founder of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists as well as a political activist which are all part of the Midwest World History Conference. Food services will be showcasing different Latin American dishes, throughout the month on various days in the Cafeteria. The library will be highlighting literary works from their resources pertaining to Latino heritage and authors. There is also an exhibit sponsored by the art gallery called I AM American, emphasis on the I AM part, which is an exhibit. There will also be a fun filled event called El Grito Celebration on October 15, which is the closing event for Latino Heritage Month. There’s going to be food, dancing, live music, very festive and fun just to get folks to come celebrate and have a good time. As always, the Hall of Governors will be decorated with the Latin American country flags, you know. I want Danny to speak about a great program we’re having regarding undocumented children.”

DV: “OK, So, I’m about a year and a half into my graduate program right now, and I would say most of it I have spent really advocating awareness for undocumented children and undocumented students. So, on October 14, we will be hosting a film called Which Way Home? Along with a coworker of mine—she is a clinical mental health therapist—it’s a great documentary, I saw it a couple years ago, an HBO documentary about the journey that children from Central America make from Central America to the United States. It’s a 2,000-mile journey you’re doing by themselves, by themselves, so it’s among eight but a majority of them are 14, you know, they’re teenagers, you know. So, they’re coming to the U.S., they’re undocumented, most of them are trying to find their families that are already here in the U.S. It’s a very powerful documentary. I invite everyone to come check it out because, for me, it really opened up my eyes to, you know, other worlds and what it’s like to live outside the U.S. You know, the stuff that we have here that we just take for granted, to them, it’s just, they could never even imagine the stuff that we have here. So, it’s certainly very powerful for me. And, like I said, these kids are really trying to escape poverty and violence that are going on in their country. The biggest thing is it’s, it’s bravery, you know, they’re hoping on freight trains and they’re travelling—sometimes it’s just one night, sometimes it’s a couple of days, from Central America to the U.S. border just so immigration can detain them and send them back. They end up doing it again because, just, where they’re coming from, it’s a lot worse than anything they can go through on their journey here.”

RC: “And we have 2 more programs that are happening later this month. On October 2nd there will be a Brother to Brother, which is a opportunity for a conversation amongst Black and Latino males to connect and share their personal journeys, define manhood and establish brotherhood to really build community and ensure there are support systems to aid in their success in and out of the classroom. Then, we’re going to the Logan Square Neighborhood Association on October 18th for National Immigration Service Day to help out, volunteer and learn more about the process that a lot of folks go through to really become citizens in this country. GSU is committed to collaborating on such efforts.”
What's Up with GSU Sports

By William Wright
Contributing Writer

In this modern age, mental health is still widely misunderstood, and something that many people feel silence because of societal stigmas that are associated with mental illness. According to a 2007 study by the CDC, of the respondents diagnosed with a mental health disorder, only 24.6% agreed that most adults are caring and sympathetic towards people with a mental illness. In a world of ice-bucket challenges, and a national need for awareness, this doesn’t seem up to scratch.

GSU’s Counselling Center is trying to do something about that. Each year, the Counselling Center recognizes Recovery Month, which aims to educate people on a particular theme regarding various health issues. This year, September’s Recovery Month theme is “Join the Voices for Recovery: Speak Up, Reach Out.”

The program aims to shed light and spread knowledge about issues which nobody seems to want to talk about and spread the positive message that when it comes to mental and substance abuse disorders, “prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.”

“Raising awareness for recovery month is a small step toward reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and addiction,” said Petkus. Nearly 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. has a mental illness, and Recovery Month takes aim at various issues: including suicide (from which over 22 million people die each year) and substance abuse issues (which affects over 30 million people) to issues such as self-care and college stress. The events will conclude with RAiNN Day, the Rape Abuse and Incest National Network’s annual day of action.

It is important for communities like Governors State University to make prevention, treatment, and recovery support available,” said Petkus. “We can be influential in creating that environment in an effort to promote and enable the positive realities of recovery.”

During recovery month, various events will be held, beginning with the Warning Signs of Suicide workshop on September 8th, held during observation of national Suicide Prevention week. This will be just the first in a series of events and workshops, beginning with the Warning Signs of Suicide workshop on Monday September 8th, and followed by a Self Care workshop on September 9th, the World Suicide Prevention Day workshop, also on September 9, Managing College Stress on September 15, Substance Abuse as an Escape on September 18, and RAiNN Day on September 25.

All events will be held in the ARC workshop room, B1215 at 3:30 on the days announced. Petkus went on to say that she hopes students who have been impacted in any way by these issues might feel supported by the GSU community, and she is hopeful that through Recovery Month, the GSU community can let students know that resources and counselors are available to them at no cost. “There are people on campus who understand the struggles [students] are facing,” said Petkus, “and wish to offer them encouragement.”

The Counselling Center is in the Academic Resource Center in B1215.

Shedding Light On Reality: Recovery Month encourages openness about Mental and Substance Abuse Disorders

The Jaguar Jamboree, a men’s and women’s exhibition basketball game that begins at 9pm September 25, is a part of six late night campus programming, to engage students and students on campus,” according to Student Life Program Coordinator Dennis Dent. Glorified State’s Men’s exhibition basketball schedule officially begins October 9th with a match against Trinity Christian at 6pm, preceded by a prep rally where the Jaguar mascot name will be revealed.

The Womens Basketball team will also begin their exhibition schedule on October 30 against Trinity Christian at 7pm that night. TWAG and the Digital Learning department is also looking at the potential and possibilities of broadcasting sports games on game night, on the web and all through the campus on the big screen.

Recreation and Fitness Program Director Dean Jennings also informed the Phoenix that the Bowling Club begins against IIT on September 25, the women’s Volleyball Club is currently practicing, and the GSU Table Tennis team begins their collegiate competition in November. The Table Tennis team is also actively looking for participants. Interested students should contact Dean Jennings in the Recreationand Fitness Center for further details.

The recreational outdoor facilities are also available for student use, the International Student Association is looking to begin Cricket as a GSU sport, and in the Spring, the Recreation and Fitness Center is hoping to initiate Golf and Cross Country as collegiate sports as well.

Conquering Group Work

By Katrina Koltz
Columnist

Group projects are an inevitable reality for most students, which can turn into a beautifully organized project or a root ridden disaster. No doubt, these group assignments can contribute to a student’s success or failure in their coursework.

Clarify expectations, creative problem solving, and effective communication help to provide a framework that enables all group members to have a voice and equal stake in the project. In your group, take time to clarify personal goals and expectations for the assignment. This will help to identify each group member’s strengths and weaknesses so that tasks can be delegated accordingly.

It is wise to break the project up into smaller components. Assigning early due dates for each component allows everyone extra time to think and critique each other’s work. This will allow each member to feel less crushed for time when the final due date rolls around. When conflict does arise, it is important to maintain a team mentality of working together rather than individually.

As a team, brainstorming can facilitate creative problem solving and generate ideas that may diffuse a stressful situation between group members. It is important to not let emotions cloud one’s judgment when feeling passionate about a position or idea. Remember, it is simple to say that acknowledges others feelings can help to calm strong emotions. This is when active listening comes in handy.

When you see a conflict arising between group members, do not immediately pick sides or align with either one. Instead, serve as an impartial party that can look at the conflict without a biased view. After utilizing active listening, or clarifying your own words to opposite parties so that each party is heard and recognized. This may also frame the disagreement in a different manner and result in a new perspective on the other’s opinion.

Effective communication throughout the project can help to stave off conflict and facilitate accountability. One way to stay in touch with group members is to communicate through Google Docs, which is a resource for compiling and collaborating in various formats simultaneously. Upload documents, spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations. This allows you to collaborate, post comments, and chat with group members in real time. It also streamlines large projects where the new work is broken up to enhance continuity of the material.

When the project is completed and submitted, it is important to remember to recognize others for their hard work and commitment to the project. Taking time to individually recognize people for their contribution is very important in affirming their role in the group and can help to ensure cooperation and accountability in future group projects.
Meet and Greet
Interviews with a few of GSU’s new Fall 2014 Freshmen

Samaria Hendricks, 18
Economics
P: What made you choose GSU?
S: “It was cheap.”
P: “How do you feel about the diversity of the GSU student body?
S: “It’s more diverse than I thought it would be.”
P: What would you like to see more of at GSU that you haven’t seen yet?
SH: “More sports.”

Fred Hamilton Jr., 18
Computer Science
P: What made you choose GSU?
F: “I saw that they were opening the campus up to freshmen, and I saw that that would mean great horizons for GSU. It’s very diverse, but it’s very limited as well.”
P: What would you like to see more of?
F: “A music program.”

Jeremy Frierson, 18
Economics
K: “Don’t get me started on [the store]. I’m glad they changed the hours. I think if people want breakfast, that’s going to be a problem, and the food prices are ridiculously high.”
P: How do you feel about being in school with upperclassmen?
JF: “I feel equal.”

Kierra Johnson, 18
Biology
K: “I feel welcomed. GSU is family oriented. Right now I have an interest in the Civic Engagement Council, but I hope to get involved in a Biology club.”
P: What would you like to see more of at GSU?
KC: “More organizations and programs, and more people involved in them.”

Kevin Dorsey, 18
Undecided
P: What made you choose GSU?
K: “The atmosphere; I feel comfortable and I have family and friends that go here. Prairie Place is a real comfortable environment; they have places where you can sit and do your homework.”
K: “I play basketball, that’s very interesting to me.”

Patrick O’Leary, 19
Psychology
P: How do you feel about the diversity of students at GSU?
P: “It’s a great university. Everything at Prairie Place is beautiful. Currently I’m a part of civic engagement, and I’d like to join more clubs.”
P: What would you like to see at GSU?
S: “A football team.”

Calvin Brooks, 18
Physical Therapy
P: How do you like Prairie Place?
C: “I love all my roommates, it’s really nice. The only problem is the WiFi. I was interested in the basketball team, and I heard it’s like the first one, so you’re like a pioneer, you’re the first.”

Shaquana, 18
Accounting
What made you choose GSU?
S: “It was closer to home, and I heard that we were going to be the first freshman class. I do not find the prices [at the store] reasonable.”
S: “I’m interested in civic engagement, and I’m dedicated to what I like to do.”

Jamal Gails, 18
Graphic Design
P: What made you choose GSU?
J: “I feel welcomed. Honestly, I feel there’s a lot of different ways that people could take our being here. I see a good, even mixture of kids and adults.”
J: “I think with us being here, the place just got a lot louder, and you can tell it’s just full of youthful energy.”

Shavell Crawford, 18
Business and Marketing
What made you choose GSU?
S: “I see a good, even mixture of kids and adults.
S: “I think with us being here, the place just got a lot louder, and you can tell it’s just full of youthful energy.”

Dionna Gordon, 18
Social Work
P: How do you like Prairie Place?
P: “It doesn’t have that big of an impact on me since I don’t see that many people who are diverse here. I met a foreign exchange student from China, that was interesting, but I haven’t seen them since.”

Jian Rutledge, 19
Early Childhood Education
P: What made you choose GSU?
J: “It’s not a big university, it’s in my price range, and they had my major. I’m interested in Student Life and the Criminal Justice Society.”
P: What would like to see at GSU?
JR: “GSU has it all!”

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