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Student Life

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Student Leadership Awards

By Brenda Torres
Editor-in-Chief

On Friday, April 22, 2016, GSU hosted the Student Leadership awards, in the E-Lounge.

Students, staff and faculty gathered to recognize student organizations, club advisors and outstanding students.

The event started by Provost Dr. Deborah Bordelon thanking the students for being involved outside classroom and being leaders even though they have busy lives.

Before the Student Leadership awardees were called, other departments awarded their students with certificates. Such as Admissions, The Office of Dual Degree Program and Prairie Place.

Next were the Student Leadership Awards. The winners are as followed:

- Male Student Athlete of the Year Willie Lipsey - Men’s Basketball
- Female Student Athlete Dominique Hunt - Cross Country
- Outstanding Undergraduate Student - Gwen Medrano
- Outstanding Student Organization of the Year -ASAL
- Outstanding Graduate Student - Matthew Gentry
- New Student Organization of the Year - The GSU Media Society
- Civic Engagement Fellow - Sharrin Walker
- Rising Star - Ju’Juan Day
- Jennifer Giadino, Kings Drag, Keena Garner, Ryan Boyer, Estellita Sides, Elizabeth Lopez, Elexis Margarid, Brian Stone, Hillary Cardare
- Outstanding Graduate Student - Matthew Gentry

The Elaine P. Maimon Award -

- Male Student Athlete of the Year - Willie Lipsey
- Female Student Athlete - Dominique Hunt
- Outstanding Undergraduate Student - Gwen Medrano
- Outstanding Student Organization of the Year - ASAL
- Outstanding Graduate Student - Matthew Gentry
- New Student Organization of the Year - The GSU Media Society
- Civic Engagement Fellow - Sharrin Walker
- Rising Star - Ju’Juan Day
- Jennifer Giadino, Kings Drag, Keena Garner, Ryan Boyer, Estellita Sides, Elizabeth Lopez, Elexis Margarid, Brian Stone, Hillary Cardare
- Outstanding Graduate Student - Matthew Gentry

At the end of the night, President Maimon thanked the students and donors for their hard work and dedication. She also thanked the staff and faculty for their support.

Finally, President Maimon mentioned the conversation that she had with Dancy during lunch on the donors, “the incredible importance of the investment of philanthropist like you, in changing both of our lives and now moving forward, with the lives of our students,” she said.

Ending the ceremony the Distinguished Philanthropist Award was presented to David Barr, Secretary, GSU Foundation Board and Attorney at Law and Bimba Manufacturing.

Foundation Scholarship Luncheon

By Brenda Torres
Editor-in-Chief

On April 29, Governors State University Foundation hosted their annual Scholarship Luncheon 2016 program. It took place on the stage of Center for Performing Arts (CPA).

Before the ceremony, Provost Dr. Deborah Bordelon thanked the students for being involved outside classroom and being leaders even though they have busy lives.

Then came time for the attendees to step on to the stage, to have lunch and for the ceremony to begin. The Master of Ceremony was Niema Dancy, Field Producer and Assignment Editor from WBMM CBS Channel 2. She stated, “I do know the joy of receiving a scholarship.”

Next was William Davis, Vice President of Development and CEO of GSU Foundations. He expressed the Foundations gratitude to donors and partners.

Afterwards, the attendees had lunch. They had opportunity to listen to Emmy-Award winning trumpeter Orbert Davis as well as the Legacy Jazz Band while eating.

When lunch was over, Carney Barr, Treasurer of the GSU Foundation, also explained the importance of scholarships for students.

Not too long after student scholarship recipients, had a spotlight shine on them. Each student mentioned the scholarship they had been awarded and why it was important to them to have that particular scholarship.

The students were, Nicole Ames, Bridget Dray, Jeremy Frierson and Carolina Serrato.

...
Dear GSU Campus,

The semester is over in five days. To the students this is considered the last minute crunch time, studying for that last final and writing that last final paper. For many students this may be their last semester. For others it may be the beginning of many more semesters.

To the professors, grading must be piling on or maybe you are done with grading papers and finals. Many professors might be preparing for their summer classes. Whichever the case may be, the campus is winding down, along with The Phoenix.

Throughout the semester, the campus community approached us with a variety of story ideas and we highly appreciate the pitches we received.

In fact, The Phoenix had a professor Dr. Stache, who incorporated us into her curriculum, MCOM-2451. Dr. Stache had her class write articles for The Phoenix. Her class wrote on The Center for Performing Arts, Visual Gallery, even the Response to Violence movement on campus.

The Phoenix, also had a few contributing writers who came on board this semester. Contributing writers are a great assistance to the newspaper. The grad columnists always giving advice to the graduate and future students. The Phoenix has an outstanding staff, who are committed to the newspaper. Each being a team player and stepping up to the plate when needed, because of them we are able to have newspaper on the racks every Monday.

This semester The Phoenix had two new advisors, Tammara Winn and Randall Weissman. Both have been there for The Phoenix with their experience to guide and help us grow in our positions.

Student Life has been very supportive throughout the semester as well as other departments, such as Career Services.

The professors who were interviewed for our Feature, Professor Profile, is always a pleasure to get to know and see how you are helping students based on your prior experiences. Interviewee’s working with our schedule is always appreciated.

It is a great feeling to receive that “pat on the back” from people in the corridors or via email, for a doing good job with the newspaper.

Due to the contributions The Phoenix receives, we are able to produce a newspaper. That being stated, thank you for supporting The Phoenix this Spring Semester.

Sincerely,

Brenda Torres
Editor-in-Chief

By Brenda Torres
Editorial-in-Chief

This will be the final issue of the semester for The Phoenix. Now we look forward to the future of the newspaper.

We have expectations that the campus will continue to contact us with article ideas, as well as letting us know when events need coverage.

If the campus would like to have more contributing writers; The Phoenix hopes to have more contributing writers to come on board with the staff.

The newspaper always has space for advertisements. Therefore, our goal is to continue to receive and increase advertisement. We also hope to receive advertisements from outside the university as well.

For the following semester, The Phoenix would like to have in every issue space reserved called “Letters to the Editors,” where students write about an issue or concern.

Recently, our advisor, Randall Weissman, has worked with computer programmers to have an online presence. Therefore, come the Fall semester we will have our website up and running. We hope to have a tab on the GSU website so that it may be easy for readers to find us. With our online presence hopefully we increase more readership. It would also be wonderful to keep our hard copy on the racks.

The Phoenix has collaborated with This Week at GSU (TWAG). We want to continue this collaboration.

Most importantly we want to inform the campus on worldwide news and continue to provide coverage of the campus.

Letter from the Editor

By Matt Gentry
Grad Columnist

The spring semester has flown by. Congrats to all those who are graduating this semester, and for those of us returning in the fall, we have a much needed summer break approaching. Here are some suggestions to take advantage of your break and to prepare for the summer or fall 2016 semester.

Graduate school is tough work and takes daily, consistent motivation to be the best student you can be. For me, the most important thing I am looking forward to is to mentally recharge for next semester, especially if you are getting a little burnt out on the grind of school.

Everyone is a little different in regards to what makes them recharge. Spending some quality time with family will be important for some, while others it will be binge watching every season of Game of Thrones (Season 6 is going to be awesome). Regardless of what your guilty pleasure is, plan ahead to make sure it happens so you take a mental break away from school.

The break is also a great time to remind yourself why you are going to grad school in the first place- to better your career, your future, and your family.

For many of us, getting a job during break is a reality. Many seasonal jobs are hiring for summer. Doing a little advertising now, on social media that you need a job, is an easy way to start a job search, by tapping into your network now without taking much effort away from schoolwork. Although outside jobs are great for income, completing an extra project that furthers your resume could benefit you more in the long run. Talk to your professors to discover if they have any opportunities to benefit your education over break. It could be attending a conference, a shadowing opportunity, or helping conduct research with faculty in your department.

Breaks from grad school are a great opportunity to tackle those things that you have been putting off, like catching up on emails. I know I have a ‘honey-do’ list prepared that involves painting the bathroom and organizing the basement. If you will be graduating, hopefully you have a job lined up, but if not you better make sure your resume is ready to go. The Office of Career Services is open throughout the summer for appointments and is open to alumni as well.

You can do all or none of the suggestions above. If you have time for only one thing, then I encourage you to relax and enjoy the season with family and friends so you are ready for next semester.

Have any comments? Email Matt Gentry, co-Chair of the Graduate Professional Network at mgentry@student.govst.edu. Enjoy your break and congrats on being one semester closer to your goals.

The PHOENIX is published twenty four times annually. We welcome articles, suggestions, photos, commentary, cartoons, and letters to the editor on issues that concern you or the GSU community. We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity, legality, and interest to our GSU readership. All submissions must be credited, and include the submitter’s full name, graduate status, and field of study.

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I was working in the physical therapy profession and was interested in a career in physical therapy. Getting interested in a career in physical therapy and graduate students at GUS was a developing leadership skills in students, to promote service learning through community outreach programs, to enhance students’ and the public’s knowledge of the physical therapy profession and GUS’s physical therapy program. The PTSA student club welcomes all new members, especially undergraduates who are interested in a career in physical therapy. Getting started early can greatly enhance one’s knowledge of the profession as well as provide invaluable networking opportunities. The Phoenix was able to catch up with club advisor Ms. Maryleen Jones and the current club president, Jose Godinez, Jr. to get an inside look at the PTSA. For President Godinez, the PTSA has “been a great networking tool, and a great opportunity for community involvement. I have really enjoyed taking a leadership role in community outreach, such as participating in falls prevention or injury screenings and having a direct impact to make our community better, which is what physical therapy as a profession is all about.” For Advisor Jones, the PTSA is a “fabulous forum for students to uphold the vision of the APTA which is to ‘transform society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience’.” The University’s vision is about promoting opportunity and accessibility to students so that they may be catalysts and stewards of global society so that the quality of life of all individuals is improved, which is very similar to the mission of the PTSA.” A perfect example of the outreach that the PTSA performs is the upcoming Run, Walk, Roll for Rehab on Saturday, May 21st at 9 a.m. which benefits the Illinois Brain Injury Association. PTSA students are collaborating with the University to showcase our beautiful campus to participants while promoting advocacy and inclusiveness for persons with various types of brain injuries. As part of the Run, Walk, Roll for Rehab activities, physical therapy students have organized a free “Desk 2 5k” training program that started April 20 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 3:30 p.m. to get you ready for race day. This fun event is open to all ages and experiences, and organizers can accommodate almost any special considerations. If you would like more information, contact student organizers at gusptsas@gmail.com or register for the race online at http://runrace.net/findarace.php?id=161421L3.

Club Spotlight

Physical Therapy Student Association (PTSA)

By Matt Gentry
Grad Columnist

This issue’s club spotlight is focused on the Physical Therapy Student Association (PTSA), which is a student club open to all undergraduate and graduate students at GUS. The mission of the club is to familiarize and enhance the students with knowledge of and participation in professional organizations such as the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), to develop leadership skills in students, to promote service learning through community outreach programs, to enhance students’ and the public’s knowledge of the physical therapy profession and GUS’s physical therapy program. The PTSA student club welcomes all new members, especially undergraduates who are interested in a career in physical therapy. Getting started early can greatly enhance one’s knowledge of the profession as well as provide invaluable networking opportunities. The Phoenix was able to catch up with club advisor Ms. Maryleen Jones and the current club president, Jose Godinez, Jr. to get an inside look at the PTSA. For President Godinez, the PTSA has “been a great networking tool, and a great opportunity for community involvement. I have really enjoyed taking a leadership role in community outreach, such as participating in falls prevention or injury screenings and having a direct impact to make our community better, which is what physical therapy as a profession is all about.” For Advisor Jones, the PTSA is a “fabulous forum for students to uphold the vision of the APTA which is to ‘transform society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience’.” The University’s vision is about promoting opportunity and accessibility to students so that they may be catalysts and stewards of global society so that the quality of life of all individuals is improved, which is very similar to the mission of the PTSA.” A perfect example of the outreach that the PTSA performs is the upcoming Run, Walk, Roll for Rehab on Saturday, May 21st at 9 a.m. which benefits the Illinois Brain Injury Association. PTSA students are collaborating with the University to showcase our beautiful campus to participants while promoting advocacy and inclusiveness for persons with various types of brain injuries. As part of the Run, Walk, Roll for Rehab activities, physical therapy students have organized a free “Desk 2 5k” training program that started April 20 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 3:30 p.m. to get you ready for race day. This fun event is open to all ages and experiences, and organizers can accommodate almost any special considerations. If you would like more information, contact student organizers at gusptsas@gmail.com or register for the race online at http://runrace.net/findarace.php?id=161421L3.
Clothesline Project

By Suzette Shepherd
Business Manager

Governors State University in conjunction with the YWCA Metropolitan Chicago hosted its 4th annual Clothesline Project in the Hall of Governors on April 25.

The purpose of the project is to increase awareness of the impact of violence against women, to celebrate a woman’s strength to survive and to provide another avenue for a woman to courageously break the silence that often surrounds her experience. It is a time to encourage and support sexual assault survivors and remember women who have lost their lives to sexual assault.

The Clothesline Project was created four years ago to bring awareness to the issue of violence against women. It is open to women survivors of violence or anyone who wishes to participate. The idea of women expressing their emotions through decorating a T-shirt is not only powerful, but also a truly moving experience.

After the shirts have been decorated, they are hung on a clothesline in an effort to make connections with other survivors; hence displayed in the Hall of Governors for public viewing. These efforts are critical to the healing process and ultimately, to ending the cycle of violence.

Denim Day

By Holly Britton
Staff Reporter

Denim Day was marked on April 27 this year, which was supported by many students, staff and faculty. Denim Day is a day to invoke awareness and change in the justice system about sexual assault and rape culture. According to denimdayinfo.org, Denim Day began as a result of a rape conviction being overturned.

In the 1990s in Italy, an 18-year-old girl was going out to do her driver’s class with her married, 45-year-old instructor. The instructor pulled her car to the side of the road and forced her to have sex without her consent. He said he would kill her if she told anyone, but she told her parents.

He was tried and convicted of rape and sentenced to jail time. The verdict was appealed to the Italian Supreme Court where it was overturned. “Because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them, and by removing the jeans it was no longer rape, but consensual sex,” the Chief Judge’s opinion said.

This overruling enraged women who worked within the Italian Parliament leading to a call to action that was to spread throughout the world. These women all wore a tight pair of jeans to work following the incident.

This action by the Italian Parliament women motivated the California Senate and Assembly to do the same, which in turn inspired Patricia Giggans, Executive Director of Peace Over Violence, and she launched the first Denim Day in LA in April 1999, and it has continued every year since.

The Denimdayinfo gives an overview of the case but additional details can be found at The New York Times. A few students were willing to talk about their reasons for their support, two wishing to remain anonymous for privacy.

The first anonymous student stated, “I chose to participate in Denim Day because I wanted to support the sexual assault survivors. I do not know how Denim Day started, but I think it is important to bring awareness to sexual assault because it could happen to anyone. I know someone who has been assaulted, including myself, and rape culture definitely exists.”

Rape culture, according to Google, is defined as, “It was designed to show the ways in which society blamed victims of sexual assault and normalized male sexual violence.”

Keena Michon, a student, explained, “I participated in Denim Day because I’m a survivor, and I wanted to bring awareness to Sexual Assault.”

Michon describes rape culture as follows: “Rape culture is the secret we hide from the world. It’s filled with desert heat that smoothers victims, wet dirt and grime that reminds them of their violation, and darkness that cause a door marked guilt and shame. Awareness is what opens this door.”

The second anonymous student said: “I wore jeans because it shows that it doesn’t matter what you are wearing, there is no excuse or acceptable reason to rape someone. Girls should be able to wear what they want and not have to worry. They can be nacked for all I care, but that still does not give reason to rape us. As a victim myself, I should not have to worry about dressing not to attract others or attract an assault.”

“In safe zone trainings at Governors State we are taught that at any given time someone says no consent has been revoked,” she said. “It doesn’t matter if someone started out saying yes then said no. People can change their minds.”

Denim Day is supported to make all of these issues open to the public and inform people on the facts of sexual assault. Awareness to the situation is why Denim Day was created.

Earth Day volunteer project

By Misturat Ganiyu
Associate Editor

“Earth Day is a day where we all need to take a step back and observe our environment and how we are impacting it—whether it’s a positive or negative manner in which we are doing so and if we all pitch in to make it better then what it currently is,” Alex Gonzalez, chemistry undergraduate student.

The Chemistry Club celebrated Earth Day by cleaning the main entrance of The Environmental Field Station on Drullil Road in University Park. Some of the biology students noticed the dirtiness of its entryway. According to Gonzalez, biology students and faculty conducted experiments in the area. Seven people participated in the clean-up: Four undergraduate students, one graduate student and two faculty members.

“I was impressed with the plot of land that Governors State has for their students to be able to go back there and conduct research, to take time out of their day to do some school activities but that main entrance that we focused was awful,” said The President of The Chemistry Club and Chemistry undergraduate student Chandler Moore.

Continued on p.5
Doggies at the Library

By Misturat Ganiyu
Associate Editor

Last Tuesday, GSU students, faculty and staff got to visit with dogs and puppies in the library balcony in order to ease their stress during the final weeks of school.

In the first hour and a half, there were a 4-year-old Newfoundland named Sophie, a 4-year-old Border collie and Siberian Husky Mix named Shiloh, and a 5-year-old Golden Retriever named Heather. Later, we pet Peter, a 1-year-old Cocker Spaniel.

All four dogs work for Pet Partners organization, that sends trained dogs out to comfort people via petting.

Those teenage dogs stood up gleefully whenever someone new opened the nearest door to see them.

“I really enjoyed seeing the effect the dogs had on students and staff that came by,” said Library Operations Associate Sarah Wegley. “You could see their bodies being affected—their shoulders relaxed, after a while a huge smile came out on their faces and just wouldn’t go away.”

The University community approached the dogs to pet them as well as to take photos with them. Some people sat next to the dogs for 10 minutes or longer. The dogs’ presence encouraged laughter and relaxation.

“As a student, it [PAWS and De-Stress event] was really fun for me because that was the night of my next to last class where I had to turn in my final assignment. I had my paper done, so for me it was like getting to celebrate a little in advance,” said Wegley.

Paws and De-stress originated with American Corps. VISTA Ricca Louisaint who contacted the library to do a partnership with PetPartners.

Everyone walked toward these puppies with smiles and every few seconds the dogs did something that made people sigh “aww”. “Just really happy because he’s so cute and you can’t help yourself but smile” said Caitlyn Mattes, a first-year student said about Peter, the Cocker Spaniel.

Paws and De-stress were the first of several events planned for the 2016 Library Jam. Other events were the tutoring sessions led by Academic Resource Center tutors and writing assistance in room D2401D.

The library dean has not officially announced whether or not this program will return next year, but she hopes it will happened near final weeks of each semester.

Earth Day volunteer project (cont.)

By Brenda Torres
Editor-in-Chief

Do you know we have a broadcasting student team at GSU? They are called, This Week at GSU (TWAG). They are located in the in Digital Media in Wing D.

According to Felice Kimbrew Assistant Producer at TWAG, “TWAG is GSU’s campus news show, student run and produced entirely by us students. We have daily episodes that we post on our Facebook and YouTube Channel that outlines at least three main events happening throughout the day.”

Kimbrew has held many positions with TWAG, “My experience is shorter than everyone else’s. I started my first semester as a Digital Learning Production Assistant shooting the basketball games in Fall 2014,” she said. Kimbrew has a long experience with producing sports; she was Assistant Editor and Cinematographer of the Sports Media team.

“It has been quite the ride. I’ve learned a lot of valuable lessons and inherited a lot of skills in this field, and with these people,” expressed Kimbrew.

The Twaggeres have supervisor Mark Kundla, Media Producer and Director, faculty of Digital Media. He is the student supervisor who oversees the students of DLML. “I give them assignments and make sure that everything goes smooth from start to finish. I am their liaison between faculty and staff members.”

Another individual who makes TWAG possible, is Arika Rogers, she is one of the Producers at TWAG as well, “I research content to include in our episodes, and make sure that everything runs smoothly on the day of production. I also shoot and edit when needed, and come up with new ideas for projects.”

Kimbrew and Rogers will be graduating, but suggest that students should get involved with TWAG.

“It will open up a lot of opportunities for you, as a student looking to develop in this field, as it has for me. Getting the hands on experience is one of the most important things to remember when aspiring for a position in the professional world as well as for when you step out the door, you are a whole lot more marketable in the corporate world,” stated Kimbrew.

To watch TWAG’s broadcastings check them out on their YouTube page, https://www.youtube.com/user/ThisWeekatGSU.
Thorn Creek Preserve, right around the corner

By Donna Gordon
Contributing Writer

Did you know that GSU is located next door to one of Illinois premier nature preserves? Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve is a 985-acre Oak-Hickory woodland located off old Monee and Stuckenkel Roads. The preserve is open to the public daily from dawn to dusk for exploring and hiking along the trail. The Thorn Creek Preserve Nature Center, located on site in the former Immanuel Lutheran Church, is open Friday to Sunday, noon – 4.

Thorn Creek, for which the preserve is named, and its tributaries dissect the preserve in two locations. Other bodies of water dotting the preserve include vernal ponds, which are temporary wetlands that fill after the snowfall each spring and 

marshy Owl Lake.

There are over 3-1/2 miles of trail in the preserve meandering through woodland, floodplain forest, scenic ravines, and pine plantations. The trail leads past a vernal pond to Owl Lake and on to a wetland overlook. It also shelters the historic Hornicek Farm old-field habitat, and restored prairie.

Workdays are a fun way to give back to Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve! Join the Thorn Creek Trail Work crew in building and repairing boardwalks and maintaining the trails throughout the preserve.

Trail workdays are planned for Sunday, May 15; Saturday, June 25; Sunday, July 24; Sunday, August 14. Workdays are 9 a.m.–4 p.m. and for ages 15-adult.

Campus

Student Senate advocate for the student body

By Brenda Torres
Editor-in-Chief

The GSU Student Senate will be going through changes because majority of them will be graduating. Do you know what Student Senate is? Many students are not aware of what the Student Senate does on campus or that they exist. According to David Gethers Vice President of the Student Senate, “Student Senate is the governing body of all the students here at Governors State University. Our primary role as senators is to put in place the bylaws that govern all organizations.”

In fact, if students want to start a organization they must go through Student Senate, “They will be voted on, we look at all their criteria’s to make sure they are not duplicate clubs, and things of that nature,” said Vice President Gethers.

However, Student Senate is not only focused on organizations, “On campus outside of organizing clubs, is to be an advocate for all the students. If we feel issues are not being addressed that benefit the students, it’s our responsibility to fight on behalf of the students,”

Recently, Student Senate has gone through elections and has sworn in new Student Senators. All of the E-Board on Student Senate, Mychael Vanarsdale, Marie Penny, and Darren Heldt including Gethers are graduating. On May 6, Student Senate will be electing a new e-board. The new Student Senators have the opportunity to run for e-board position.

Currently, Student Senate meets every other Friday, “We chose Friday because there are not many classes. So it’s easier for everyone’s schedule to meet up every other Friday,” said Vice President Gethers. During Student Senate meetings we discuss many topics are discussed such as, “what issues we are going to take on, what is happening in the school, what our focus is going to be to continue to move the school forward. We sit there and discuss everything school related and how it benefits the students.”

Another responsibility Student Senate has is allocate budgets to the organizations. Budget hearings are occurring in the final weeks of the semester, expressed Vice President Gethers.

There are many benefits from being apart of Student Senate, “The biggest benefit of a part of Student Senators, career wise it looks good on your resume. The greatest benefit of the Student Senate is it puts in the position of leadership,” stated Vice President Gethers.

Penny, Student Senate Secretary stated more benefits of Student Senate, “The Senate also helps to develop personality by improving communication skills, balancing education and organizational work while maintaining a focus on your goals, building leadership skills and alumni networking.”

Even though Student Senate elections are over, students can still be a part of it, “Student Senate meetings are always open to anyone to come. We have committees; anyone can sit on the committees and be a member of the committees. That is a great way for students to have a taste of what Student Senate life is like, without actually having to be a Student Senator,” said Vice President Gethers.

Assistant Dean Sanderson and Student Senate. Photo courtesy of Student Life.

Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve! Join the Thorn Creek Trail Work Crew in building and repairing boardwalks and maintaining the trails throughout the preserve.

Trail workdays are planned for Saturday, June 25; Sunday, July 24; Sunday, August 14. Workdays are 9 a.m.–4 p.m. and for ages 15-adult.
In 2014, Governors State University, had its first-ever freshmen class of students. Until then the university had always been an upper-level institution, which meant you had to either enter with an associate’s degree or the equivalent amount of credit hours. This is a wave of students has changed the tone of the school.

Prior to the freshmen class, the median age of a student at GSU was in the mid-30s. Also, majority of the classes only met once a week, with most starting after noon and only a few morning classes. Now, most of the classes in each field of study meet at least twice a week, and there are many more morning classes.

In addition to the course changes, GSU introduced Prairie Place, the on-campus living units. With the school adding dorms, it gave the students a more authentic college-life feel. Although the university is changing in population, a large amount of the students are still non-traditional students. These are the students who came to GSU with at least 60 college credit hours from other institutions. Many of these students work during the day, have families and have other obligations besides their educational one. The university still offers evening and online courses that can help cater to their schedules.

There are differences between the traditional students and the non-traditional students. One of the main differences is age. Most of the traditional students have graduated from high school within the past three years and started at GSU as a freshman. The non-traditional students vary; some may have gone to another institution prior to Governors State, fresh out of high school, received a certain amount of credits or a degree and then decided to come to GSU to complete their education. Other non-traditional students may have waited several years after graduating high school before stepping into a college atmosphere; still others are people who needed to get post-graduate degrees in order to further their careers.

Kenya Gavin and Johnnie Ware are two good examples of the differences between a traditional student and a non-traditional student at GSU.

“I started in August 2011, and since then I have received my Bachelors in Psychology and I am graduating with my Masters in Addiction Studies May 14,” said Gavin. She is a graduate student who is in her mid-30s who has two teenage daughters. Gavin says that when she first came to Governors State she loved the environment because there was an older presence and more people in her classes that she felt she could relate to.

“Now that there is a younger generation in the school, I don’t feel as connected as I once did,” said Gavin. When she was asked, “what changes have you noticed in your courses over your time of being at GSU?” Gavin replied, “I have noticed that within my classes we have to work online more often, before if you were in class you did in class work, now they are asking for us to be more active online for on-campus courses.” She was also asked, “What do you see as far as the future for Governors State?” “I see it being a much younger crowd in comparison to when I first started here,” Gavin said. “I believe the university will have very few non-traditional students attending here within the years to come.”

The last question was, “Would you recommend people to come to the university?” “I would definitely recommend and encourage people to come to GSU,” Gavin said. “I would recommend this because the school still is very affordable and even though the age groups in the school are becoming lower, the university still has a great environment with good professors that will teach you efficiently. I even plan on getting my doctoral degree from here next.”

Ware expects to graduate in 2018. He said he plans to continue in the graduate program at GSU and receive his MBA. As far as his experience overall Ware says, “There are so many great people here from the faculty, staff and the students. Everyone has truly been a blessing to me by giving me great advice and helping to mold me into the person that I am today, so my experience overall has been excellent.”

Ware was also asked, “What do you see as far as the future for Governors State?” He answered, “I believe if the school continues to push the students to succeed but also allows us to express ourselves creatively and present our visions to our fellow students, I can see a bright future for this university.” He also added, “I believe to enhance our experience at GSU the university should have more activities on campus for the students after classes, so that the students won’t get bored and not enjoy themselves in their college years.”

The two different perspectives from a traditional and a non-traditional student show how the environment of GSU is evolving toward a more classic university setting as seen in institutions around the world. With these changes the one thing that is not changing is the quality education you will receive at GSU. Even though both parties had different outlooks on the evolution of the school thus far, they both agreed that the university is a place they would recommend people attend. Even with the changes to the school and the budget crisis still in effect Governors State is still quality in education and affordable.

Bottom line, GSU is becoming an institution that caters to both traditional and non-traditional students.
The Division of Chemistry and Biological Sciences

Congratulates the

Spring and Summer 2016 Graduates*

in

BS Biology / BS Chemistry / MS Analytical Chemistry

Grover Barnes (Chem)         Michelle Lapenas (Bio)  
Anthony Bennett (Bio)        David Nee (Chem)   
Melissa Daviakis (Bio)        Kristen Newberry (Bio) 
Sean Dwyer (MS Chem)         Shenique Payne (Bio)  
Tanya Ghanam (Bio)           Axel Rutter (Bio)     
Muna El-Natour (Chem)        Alyssa Semenits (Bio) 
Charles Fleming (MS Chem)    Anupama Somayajula (Bio) 
Kelly Howell (MS Chem)       Megan Soto (Bio)     
Sam John (MS Chem)           Mustafa Turshani (Bio) 
Steven Kolo (Bio)            Vic Volcovici (Chem) 
Gemma Kozulinski (Bio)       Jan Wazio (MS Chem)  
Lynette Krup (Biology Teachers Ed) 

We wish you the best in your future endeavors and careers!
John R. Sowa, Ph.D., Chair BCS

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