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For Immediate Release

Black Tie Latino Banquet at GSU

University Park, IL, September 8, 2007 - The Latino Center for Excellence at Governors State University will host the first annual Black Tie Latino Banquet, on September 29, to recognize Latino students' successes, their families' support, and their professors' efforts to enhance multicultural inclusiveness and academic achievement.

Dr. Elaine Maimon, who recently began her tenure as President of Governors State University, will open the event with remarks on her vision of GSU and how it can better serve the Latino community. The evening also includes special addresses by Rey Gonzalez, Vice President of Legislative Affairs for Com Ed, an Exelon Company, and Rebecca Alvin, executive director of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. Both Gonzalez and Alvin are leaders in promoting and advocating for higher education among Latinos.

The purpose of the evening, according to Dr. Catalina Ramos-Hernandez, director of the Latino Center for Excellence and coordinator of this event, is to bring together students and their families and GSU faculty and staff with the purpose to increase mutual respect, understanding, and interaction.

"Latinos hold high value in activities involving their families. Through this event, we hope to reinforce GSU's commitment to Latino students and to the Latino community at large," said Ramos-Hernandez. "This is the first step in opening our doors to Latino family members in a culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate manner. There is so much that we can learn from each other, which will enrich our experiences as scholars, faculty, and citizens of a multicultural nation."

Morton College and the GSU Association of Latin American Students (ALAS), supported by a Title V Cooperative Grant, are co-sponsoring the Black Tie Latino Banquet. The goal of the grant is to increase Hispanic/Latino students' academic success and degree completion. ALAS' mission is to enhance the educational experience of fellow students and increase awareness about Latino heritage and culture through school events and outreach activities.