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Date: November 4, 2010  
 Contact: Eric Matanyi  
 Governors State University  
 Phone: (708) 534-4044  
 Fax: (708) 534-8399  
 E-mail: [e-matanyi@govst.edu](mailto:e-matanyi@govst.edu)

**For Immediate Release**

## Governors State Wins Governor's Environmental Sustainability Award

University Park, Illinois, November 4, 2010 - Governors State University last week received the 2010 Governor's Sustainability Award for significant achievements in protecting the environment, helping sustain the future, and improving the economy.

GSU was one of 27 Illinois companies and organizations that received the award, but was the only university recognized for its sustainability efforts. The awards were presented by the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC) during a luncheon in Champaign. The ISTC is a unit of the Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability at the University of Illinois.

In recent years, GSU has made substantial progress toward realizing its goal of being the state's greenest university. GSU, located in University Park, continues to reduce pollution and its carbon footprint through innovative improvements ranging from permeable paving parking lots that prevent public waterway contamination to solar panels that heat the swimming pool and other campus areas to a new heating system that significantly cuts energy consumption. GSU has a successful, university-wide recycling program and was ranked number one among Illinois universities under the "Waste Minimization" category in the national Recyclemania competition. The university has turned to efficient lighting systems and earth-friendly cleaning materials. GSU was recently awarded a state grant that will be used to construct a wind turbine on campus.

Susan Rakstang, Associate Vice President for Facilities Development and Management, said GSU takes a holistic approach to preserve the campus' natural resources. The university's Sustainability Team meets weekly to discuss sustainable practices, and brainstorm about improved and expanded programs, budget and implementation. GSU recently formed a wider reaching Sustainability Committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and students, that will further develop educational and awareness initiatives.

"Governors State University is committed to environmental leadership and responsibility," Rakstang said. "One of GSU's institutional goals calls for provision of leadership to serve as a model of sustainable development, minimization of global warming emissions, and maintenance and improvement of environmental quality."

Governor Pat Quinn said GSU's commitment to environmental health and sustainability serves as a model for green stewardship throughout Illinois.

"Implementing energy efficiency upgrades, fuel savings, pollution and waste reductions, and other sustainability improvements requires vision, strong leadership, and the dedication of individuals throughout an organization," Quinn said. "I applaud your prioritization of these important objectives and your accomplishments."

Since 1987, ISTC has presented Governor's Sustainability Awards to Illinois companies and organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to environmental excellence through outstanding and innovative sustainability practices. GSU is a first-time award winner. Organizations that are repeat winners receive the Continuous Improvement Award.