



Be A GSU STAR

On September 19, GSU launched the GSU STAR Student Success Network, an online platform designed to improve student success and facilitate communication among students, faculty, and advisors across campus. The STAR Student Success Network provides students with the tools needed to be successful right at their fingertips.

Using the GSU STAR platform, the STAR acronym represents:

SUCCESS-Students utilizing the network are more likely to succeed.

TEAMWORK-In a student's network, faculty, the student, and staff work together as a team.

ACHIEVEMENT-We acknowledge students' achievements.

RECOGNITION-We give recognition/kudos for those achievements.

Two crucial STAR modules are "Connect" and "Early Alert." Connections are a vital part of student success. Research shows that students perform best when they spend time with the people on campus who can help them — typically their advisors and instructors. The Connect module allows students to make these meaningful connections. In GSU STAR, students are able to schedule appointments with their advisor, instructors, and get in

touch with other campus resources with a click of a button. In addition, students can use the "Raise Your Hand" feature if they have concerns about a course, academics, or other needs. In addition, students are able to connect with a wealth of resources in their success network.

The STAR Early Alert module intentionally engages students with faculty and advisors to intervene at the first sign of a problem. In GSU STAR, instructors and advisors are able to send students flags to address concerns, referrals to campus services, messages, and kudos for outstanding academic performance. When an instructor uses the "Flag" feature, the instructor is able to see which staff members are working with the student and if the issue has been resolved. Furthermore, in GSU STAR, instructors and advisors are able to see a wealth of information on a student in one place. Instructors no longer have to search for students' advisors, and the advisors automatically receive instructors' notifications.

To learn how to set up a profile, make appointments, and post office hours, please [visit](http://www.govst.edu/STAR/) the GSU STAR Student Success Network at <http://www.govst.edu/STAR/>. The STAR Student Success Network offers many resources and online tutorials to get you started.

Fall 2016

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Welcome from Dean of Students



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Despite the uncertainty caused by an ongoing budget stalemate that resulted in a 70% cut of state appropriations in Fiscal Year 16 and only a 50% commitment of state appropriations for this fiscal year, GSU is, as President Maimon famously says, “soldiering on.” Evidence of our progress is seen throughout this newsletter, recognizing the dedicated work of our committed professional staff and talented students.

This fall, our 82 student athletes competed for the first time in the Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference (CCAC), the most competitive conference in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). We’re already seeing increased talented and level of competition, with Stephanie Clarkson becoming the first runner in school history to win an individual race by outdistancing a field of 44 competitors and, consequently, being named CCAC student athlete of the week. Additionally, led by first-season coach Pedro Gonzalez, the Women’s Volleyball team finished the season with six times the number of wins. Be sure to follow all the Jaguar sports news at www.GSUJaguars.com!

Of course, there was much more happening on campus, Student Senate continued their voter registration and education campus, highlighted by a campus visit on September 1 by Congresswoman Robin Kelly. Samantha Allen, president of the Student Education Association and senior studying early childhood education, was named the 42nd annual Lincoln Laureate Award winner.

These stories, and many more, are just some of the ways we keep “soldiering on.” Please do not hesitate to visit my office, located in A-2134, if I can be of assistance. I hold open office hours each week on Tuesdays from 4 – 5 p.m. Even if you don’t need anything, stop in and simply visit!

Sincerely,

Dr. Aurélio Manuel Valente
Vice President for Student Affairs and
Dean of Students

Prairie Place Academic Success Initiative

Prairie Place houses a significant number of first and second year students who enroll at the university. As part of the living/learning initiative in Prairie Place, University Housing staff are working collaboratively with the Academic Resource Center, New Student Programs, and the two Faculty-in-Residence to help first and second year students living in Prairie Place develop a foundation of success.

One of the main learnings that was identified after the first two years of having on campus housing, was that a significant number of first year students were struggling academically, especially their first semester. A decision was made to shift some of the programmatic responsibilities of the Faculty-in-Residence position and to focus more attention on providing opportunities for residential students to develop stronger relationships with the Faculty-in-Residence or a professional housing staff member. The Faculty-in-Residence program has subsequently evolved to more of a Success Coach model, and is part of the university’s overall Student Success Team program.

This fall, every first and second year student living in Prairie Place was assigned a Residential Success Coach to engage with the student early and often so as to identify struggles and help them cope with larger transition issues as it pertains to being successful in college.

The Residential Success Leadership Team is comprised of University Housing Staff (Betsy Joseph, Mushtaq Choudhary, and Josh Baker), the Faculty-in-Residence (Dr. Alicia Battle and Dr. Patrick Santoro), New Student Programs Staff (LaTonya Holmes, Sean Smith, Roshaunda Ross), and the Academic Resource Center (Amy Comparon).

This group meets every other week and allows staff from across campus to bring up concerns about student performance, relay pertinent information from various offices to students, and create a touch point for staff to connect about what upcoming programs and workshops will be most beneficial to recommend to their students.

While midterm and semester grades will be the real indicator if these efforts are effective, anecdotally, staff has witnessed more engagement in the classroom with participation and attendance, as well as attending residential study tables and tutoring sessions within Prairie Place.

Prairie Place, our first on campus residential facility reported 100% occupancy in the 2015 fall semester. This represented a 77 bed increase (38%) over fall 2014 numbers.

Freshmen	91 (32%)
Sophomores	43 (15%)
Juniors	34 (12%)
Transfer & DDP	84 (29%)
Graduate	35 (12%)

Current students living in prairie place will be able to re-contract for 2016/2017 housing when they return to the campus in January. New applications will begin to be accepted FEBRUARY 8, 2017.

Intercultural Student Affairs Expands Programs and Facilities Towards Greater Inclusion!

Intercultural Student Affairs is committed to aiding in creating a welcoming campus community through inclusion and cultural awareness. Intercultural Student Affairs continues to serve as a great resource to members of this respective communities to ensure they see themselves reflected in all things at GSU. As always, Intercultural Student Affairs continues to produce cultural heritage month calendars. We are excited for what the future will bring as we continue to support efforts to create a campus community that is conducive for student success.

The 2016 – 17 academic year has brought about some great programs and services to enrich campus life. One of the many projects Intercultural Student Affairs is working on is the transformation of the Interfaith and Meditation Room. It is a rarity that colleges and universities provide a space for community members to pray, meditate and reflect. We are excited through efforts of Facilities Development and Management (FDM) that this pace will be getting a facelift and even a possible relocation to ensure it is vibrant and provides the privacy one needs to practice their faith traditions.

This year the Inclusive Leadership Conference will be held on Friday, January 20, 2017. The Inclusive Leadership Conference is designed to help create an understanding and appreciation for multiple identities through self-awareness while encouraging them to be free of misconceptions and prejudices through social justice education. This year's theme, Stop the Violence: Listen,

Learn, Lead, speaks to how violence impacts multiple identities of diversity through education that will empower participants with knowledge that will help them recognize how their background and skills can play an influential role in ending violence one leader at a time. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Kevin Lammaar James, a sociologist with specialization in race, ethnicity and gender. This conference is free to students.

The Male Success Initiative is off to a great start. This year more than 40 students attended the MSI Informational held following Welcome Week that was facilitated by faculty/staff members to enlighten students on the purpose of the Male Success Initiative and programming for the year. One of the first events held was the Brotherhood Retreat on September 30th – October 1st at Camp Manitoqua in Frankfort, IL. There were 20 students and 5 faculty/staff members that participated in this overnight experience to promote self-awareness, unity, academic motivation, leadership, and manhood among participants. At the retreat a student leadership team was elected to enrich their leadership development and manage the program. Additionally, we are excited that MSI will have a full time staff member devoted to the program in spring 2017 through funding from the Kresge Foundation.

For more information, visit: www.govst.edu/diversity or call 708.534.4551.

Integrating Career Preparation with Liberal Education

This past summer Governors State University submitted a grant proposal to launch a program that would integrate career preparation with liberal education. In July we received notice that our proposal had been accepted, and this fall we officially launched out Integrating Career Preparation with Liberal Education grant.

The program goal is to prepare undergraduate students for leadership careers dependent on critical thinking and communication skills. We recognized this was an important initiative, as many first-generation college students, who are in the majority at GSU, are especially vulnerable to seeking narrow vocationalism. Family, neighbors, and the media urge a guaranteed return on tuition investment and influence students to major only in those fields that “sound” like a job. Most students are unaware that all majors can lead to life-time gainful employment and, in many cases, opportunities for advancement and leadership.

The program put in place a Career Counselor, Dartina Dunlap, who will serve as the Career Counselor overseeing many elements of this program and providing a specialization in the arts, humanities, and social science areas for students seeking career guidance in these areas. The program will select five students pursuing degrees in the liberal arts, humanities, or social science areas to be placed in on-campus employment during the fall and spring in which their duties will increase in responsibility from year to year. The students will participate in a series of professional development workshops and have an opportunity to build upon their transitional skill sets and strengths over the course of their experience.

An additional five students will be extended opportunities to participate in summer internship experiences throughout campus where they will have opportunities to gain real world work experience while helping GSU work toward achieving institutional



Office of Career Services career preparation student employee Dajah White is a freshmen psychology major.

and departmental goals. This program also provides a series of professional development workshops throughout the year for all students to participate in. Last, but certainly not least, the program has a designed component with a focus on faculty development opportunities to assist faculty, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, to teach for intellectual transfer.

GSU Rocks the Vote



Since 2012, Governors State University has taken an active role in political engagement of its students to become active citizens, which is demonstrated through the political engagement of GSU's student governance to become deputy registrars to implement voter registration drives. GSU Rocks the Vote has been the signature program for student governance over the past four years.

At Governors State University we are grounded in the belief of creating pathways to ensure that students are informed and actively engaged citizens, which is incorporated into the fiber of their

academic learning. As our mission statement says, *GSU will create an intellectually stimulating public square, serve as an economic catalyst for the region, and lead as a model of academic excellence, innovation, diversity and responsible citizenship.* Students at GSU are encouraged to become politically engaged and exercise their constitutional right to vote. Votes matter: it is the construct of the country that citizens can enact change one vote at a time. Electing to not exercise your right to vote gives others the power to make decisions for you.

Voter Registration

GSU's Student Governance Body, led by Justin P. Smith, President, has trained with the County Clerk's office to become deputy registrars to register voters. These students are able to register any voters in the State of Illinois. GSU Rock the Vote Campaign is presented throughout the year to provide access to registering to vote as many people as possible, including community members in the region.

Voter Education

Students learn to become engaged citizens during the orientation process. Debate Watch Parties, designed to engage and educate students on the candidates and issues, were held by Drs. Jane Goode and Davie Rhea. The watch party discussion was interactive and led by faculty members. There were also student governance members in attendance to register students to vote. Earlier in the year, GSU students presented at the HECEC Political Engagement Conference.

The Pi Alpha Alpha and the Masters in Public Administration Club has been active consistently throughout the year, conducting roundtables and forums on local, regional and national legislators throughout the year. (Mayor's Roundtable, State Representatives, Illinois Senators, US Representatives).

2015 – 16 Financial Aid by the Numbers

The Office of Financial Aid processed over 6,000 student files for the 2015 – 16 academic year. The financial aid process can be daunting even for the returning student but is more so for new students. Because of this, we process most files within two weeks and inform students of eligible financial aid by email in order to assist them with options for paying for college. We also offer walk-in appointments with our financial aid advisors as well as prompt responses to phone calls and emails. Stop by our office and discuss your financial aid with a professional today!

GSU's Office of Financial Aid processed nearly \$60 million in funds for 2015 – 16 from federal, state, institutional, and external sources. Below are the total amounts for a few of the types of aid received by students to assist with college expenses.

2015 – 16

Federal Pell Grant \$7,660,985
State of IL MAP Grant \$2,788,164
Institutional Waivers/Scholarships \$2,196,836
Veterans Grants \$1,344,916
Federal Perkins Loans \$61,642
Alternative Loans \$817,047
Federal Direct Loans \$42,703,581

2016 – 17 (To Date)

Federal Pell Grant \$3,550,062
State of IL MAP Grant \$1,517,766
Institutional Waivers/Scholarships \$845,642
Veterans Grants \$480,532
Federal Perkins Loans \$36,464
Alternative Loans \$190,558
Federal Direct Loans \$16,633,243

GSU Jaguars are LEADers

Leadership development is an integral aspect of the GSU student experience. Various programs are offered to challenge and inspire students to be responsible citizens and leaders on campus and in their communities. Programs vary by focus area, duration, and methods of engagement. To read more about GSU leadership development programs, visit www.govst.edu/leadership.

Beginning in spring 2017, students who have participated in at least two previous GSU leadership programs will be invited to complete a 'Jaguar L.E.A.D.' capstone project. L.E.A.D. stands for Leadership Experiences Applied and Demonstrated because participants' projects will demonstrate how they applied concepts they have learned from previous GSU leadership programs.

Each participant will be paired a faculty/staff consultant who will help guide the project implementation. Jaguar L.E.A.D. will allow students to synthesize and apply what they have learned in a real-world setting. Most importantly, they will be able to make a positive impact on GSU and beyond!



Last year many GSU students lost thousands of dollars in free money for college because they didn't fill out their FAFSA. Don't wait! Fill out the FAFSA now! See www.govst.edu/FAFSA.

Third annual Family and Friends Weekend was a great success!

Governors State University celebrated Spirit Week 2016. An estimated attendance of 200 GSU faculty, staff, and students filled the Hall of Governors for the annual kick off. Hillcrest High School band supplied music on Monday to ensure the event kicked off in high gear! Men's and Women's basketball as well as Women's Volleyball teams were announced. Next, finalists of the Mr. and Ms. GSU contest were introduced to the campus community. On Tuesday, October 4, Professor Cato hosted "The Elementary Challenge." Contestants were quizzed on common knowledge questions in a fun, challenging manner. Wednesday's event was hot in more ways than one. Dream Team Spinners amazed the crowd of about 75 staff and students with their fire hooping and fire spinning talents. Jax attended Wednesday's Dusk on the Prairie to entertain the crowd. As the final Spirit Week event, Student Life hosted a Staff vs. Student Basketball. 18 students signed up to participate, along with seven brave staff members, with 85 spectators enjoyed the game.

During Friday night's Jaguar Jamboree, 200 participants witnessed the Men's and Women's basketball game. During halftime GSU's student dance club, Fatal Dance Academy, and Omega Psi Phi fraternity performed. Later that evening, Program Council hosted the Jaguar Jam After-party in E-lounge. 300 students attended. Saturday's family programming included activities such as children's stories, line-dancing, face-painting, henna tattoos, a caricature artist, a photo booth, customized dog tags, walk-a-thon, Stuff-a-Bear animals, open gym (including an open swim and volleyball) and food from Arena's Grill 'n Chill. Additionally, adults were invited to create a memorable painting at the Wine and Painting party.

Saturday's student-driven fashion show, Fashion Fusion, was a huge success. The GSU Program Council spearheaded the show, booking seven local clothing designers. GSU students modeled the latest fashion trends. Each eye-catching design stunned the audience with uniqueness and inspirational messages. During Fashion Fusion, GSU's first Mr. and Ms. Governors State University was crowned by Ms. Illinois American Elegance, Nya Brooks. Family and Friends Weekend has morphed into a massive event celebrating the success and diversity of the campus community. Visit twitter GSUStudentLife; Facebook: gsu4studentlife for additional pictures.



Jax and friends at "Dusk on the Prairie" held during Spirit Week.



Above: Ju'Jaun Day and Ashley Palacios crowned the first Mr. and Ms. GSU.

Left: Simone Townsend modeling in this year's Fashion Fusion.



Fall Highlights for Student Athletes

A commonly used sports cliché is the “sophomore jinx,” when an individual or team’s performance drops off after a successful debut season. Such is not the case at Governors State, where teams are in fact excelling during their second year of varsity athletic competition.

The volleyball team has already doubled its win total of a season ago, and recently recorded a school-record three-match win streak. The Jaguars placed second out of five teams at the Manchester University Invitational as senior Ashley Pickert earned all-tournament team honors. Under the tutelage of first-year coach Pedro Gonzalez, GSU swept the season series (3-0) from IU Northwest, including the first five-set match in team history.

Women’s cross country has been sparked by the performance of senior Stephanie Clarkson, who finished third out of 75 runners at the Midwest Classic. Clarkson also owns a best five-kilometer time of 18 minutes, 57 seconds set at the season-opening meet when she placed 12th overall in her GSU debut.

Much like the women’s squad, the men’s cross country team posted a team score for the first time, benefiting from a full roster. Head Coach Kevin Kredens brought in newcomers Alejandro Montes and David Palac who have finished 1-2 on the team on a regular basis.

Both cross country squads took part in the CCAC Championships on Nov. 5.

The GSU golf teams started their seasons by hosting the Jaguar Invitational at the Lincoln Oaks and Balmoral Woods courses.

Men’s golf set a team record for a lowest one-round score (300) at the Purdue Northwest Fall Classic. Two freshmen have made immediate impacts on the team. Casey Domke earned a podium finish with a second-place showing at Purdue Northwest. A week earlier, Matt Contey shot the first even-par round in team history. The Jaguar golfers finished in the top 10 eight times during the fall campaign.

Women’s golf achieved a team score for the first time (four golfers are needed to score) as Head Coach Mark Haines welcomed four new players to the squad.



Senior Stephanie Clarkson made an immediate impact with the Jaguar cross country team this season, shaving six minutes off the school's six kilometers record time.

The golf season traditionally is split between the fall and spring months with the conference championships taking place in April.

With the autumn season winding down, thoughts head to the hardwood where the GSU men’s and women’s basketball teams embark on their first season of conference play.

The women’s team, directed by Head Coach La Toshia Burrell, opened its season on Nov. 1. The Jaguars also took part in a community service project, assisting the Best Buddies Pet Pantry with the collecting and organizing of pet food for needy families.

Men’s basketball opened on the road on Nov. 2 and looks to add to its eight wins of a season ago, which was the most victories recorded by a GSU athletic team. Head Coach Tony Bates welcomes back his top two returning scorers from last season and will add a deep recruiting class into the mix as well.



Junior Matt Contey led the Jaguars with a 77.0 scoring average during the fall golf season.

DDP Unveils New Events, Features, and Growth

IT'S ALL ABOUT
IT'S ALL ABOUT
IT'S ALL ABOUT
THE DEGREES

The Dual Degree Program

As Fall 2016 semester approached its midpoint, the Dual Degree Program unveiled new events, features, and recent growth within the program. DDP hosted a pair of new family-friendly events: DDP's Family Fun Day and DDP's Family Pool Day. Both events were an opportunity for DDP students and their family and friends to visit the GSU campus, enjoy family fun activities at no cost, and make new memories. DDP's Family Fun Day included crafts, karaoke, face painting, coloring, and games, and DDP's Family Pool Day included pool activities and relaxation in the GSU Olympic-style lap pool.

In addition to new events, DDP also recently unveiled new program features such as the onboarding of a full Student Transition Assistant (STA) team to provide students with more peer support/guidance on a transition basis. DDP Student Transition Assistants host office hours on the GSU campus four days per week and have been trained and are ready to assist DDP students in any way that they can. DDP students can contact them about:

- campus tours
- assistance with transition issues and concerns
- student perspectives on classes and schedules
- academic advisor information
- myGSU Student Portal questions
- help with locating information on activities, events, and student clubs
- and more!

Additionally, DDP will soon launch its new DDP student staff testimonial videos and online Induction videos. The online Induction videos will be used to guide students through the DDP process from enrollment to transfer, and will highlight program benefits and opportunities.

DDP also entered the Fall 2016 semester with great growth in numbers. Along with having participants at all seventeen community college partner campuses, in the 2015 – 16 academic year overall DDP student enrollment increased 23%, DDP student enrollment at our remote community college partner campuses



DDP Student Transition Assistants at the STA Orientation Retreat, an opportunity for STAs to learn about various resources and concepts surrounding the topics of communication, diversity and inclusion, team building, leadership, and more.



DDP students at the DDP Grill & Chill, a pre-Convocation cording event celebrating the beginning of a new school year and welcoming new GSU-DDP transfer students to GSU. DDP students were presented with a DDP honor cord recognizing the completion of their associate degree from their community college and led the processional of students into the GSU Convocation.

increased 83%, and DDP student enrollment at our partner community colleges at the City Colleges of Chicago increased by 418%, all of which were achievements in our Reaching Vision 2020 Strategic Plan goals and objectives. And DDP growth does not stop there! We are proud to announce that DDP's largest

GSU transfer cohort (those students who have completed their associate degree at a partner community college and transferred to GSU) is here! These 85 students represent Cohort #9 and are already well on their way to accomplish great things at GSU!

Fall 2016 Snapshots



Sophomore Joy Thomas, enjoying the Jaguar Jamboree during Friends and Family Weekend.



(l to r) Jax hanging out with Andriana McIntyre and Lillian Brown – Go Jaguars!



No stranger to the GSU campus, Frank Birdsall, aka, The Balloon Man, having some fun during Family and Friends Weekend.



Orientation Leaders, (l to r) Dominique Hunt and Dionna Gordon welcoming new students at ROAR Orientation.

SAVE THE DATE

- January 16** MLK Celebration, Center for Performing Arts, 10 – 11 a.m.
- January 16** MLK Day of Service, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- February 18** Black Women Rock, Hall of Governors and Center for Performing Arts
- March 15** Local Alternative Spring Break: to sign up, contact civicengagement@govst.edu



For new, updates, and complete calendar of events, visit: www.govst.edu/campus_life/