

Governors State University receives \$1.99 million grant to create center for increasing student retention and graduation levels

UNIVERSITY PARK, IL—Governors State University has been selected to receive a Title III grant of \$1.99 million over five years from the U.S. Department of Education’s Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP).

The GSU grant will be used to fund a program called “Integrating Pathways: Student Success and Retention through Junior Year Transition,” which focuses on student success in transitioning to the junior year and attaining a baccalaureate degree.

The program is under the direction of Deborah E. Bordelon, PhD, GSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. It will create “The Center for the Junior Year” (CJY) at Governors State, which will provide the mechanism to remove degree completion barriers, and to increase opportunities for students to participate in activities identified by research to improve degree completion.

The goal of the CJY will be to assist students in making informed choices about majors and careers. Students entering their junior year, whether from GSU, one of the 17 partner community colleges, or any other college or university, will meet in specially designed cornerstone courses in each major. “Our faculty has designed these cornerstone courses to bring transfer and native students together,” GSU President Elaine P. Maimon said.

Bordelon said the GSU CJY is much more than a conventional transfer center. “It reaches back into students’ freshman and sophomore years and forward to their graduation. The CJY centralizes mentoring, early alert notifications, advising, career and major information, and research for transitioning students, faculty and staff. These transformative collaborations increase student retention and persistence toward graduation.”

The Title III grant will help strengthen GSU’s student services and academic support. “The CJY will improve the transition of native and transfer students into the junior year and the major, increase the retention of all students, especially underrepresented students, and improve rates of students’ successful attainment of the baccalaureate degree,” Bordelon said.

The SIP program helps eligible institutes of higher education become self-sufficient and expands their capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen their academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability.

Governors State University serves more than 5,500 undergraduate and graduate students with 64 degree and 24 certificate programs that prepare them for success in business, industry, healthcare, the arts and education. As a state university, GSU is committed to providing high-quality, accessible, and responsible higher education opportunities. GSU is located 40 miles south of Chicago in University Park, IL and offers the most affordable undergraduate tuition and fees in the state. GSU is committed to embracing diversity and academic excellence.