



GSU Alum and Adjunct Biology Professor Libby Keyes carefully untangles birds from a net as part of GSU's bird-banding project.

Letter from the Dean



Andrae Marak
*Dean, College of Arts
and Sciences and
Graduate Studies*

Welcome to the fourth annual College of Arts and Sciences newsmagazine. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I write this letter from home where I am safely sheltered with my family and working to balance multiple and competing roles. I applaud our students' willingness to continue working on this newsmagazine in the face of all their other needs and priorities in this difficult time. That said, I am not surprised. GSU is a unique place, an incredibly diverse majority minority institution that serves urban, suburban, and rural communities with a wide range of socioeconomic characteristics. Here at GSU, we have an incredibly dedicated student body that leaps to take advantage of high impact learning opportunities like ArtSci that provide our students with the skills and experiences that employers are seeking ([see https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips](https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips)).

Once again faculty advisor Dr. Christopher White (English) and his team of dedicated students – Erik Kay (English BA), Courtney Keller (English BA), and Brittany LaFond (English BA) - provide us with a series of captivating stories. In this issue you'll read about bird banding at our Biological Field Station; the Lewis Manilow Common Ground Initiative aimed at expanding access to our nationally renowned outdoor sculpture park; and student participation in ILSAMP, a National Science Foundation effort to increase minority student participation in STEM fields. These and other stories in the issue highlight some of the many exciting events, programs, and opportunities sponsored by GSU's College of Arts and Sciences.

GSU's mission is to offer an exceptional and accessible education that prepares students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed in a global society. The College of Arts and Sciences plays a central role in achieving the university's mission. I continue to be amazed at the incredibly positive impact that GSU has on the region. Ask around and you'll find that many members of our community have their undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree(s) from GSU. You may also be surprised at how many local schools and parents come to GSU to take advantage of the Center for Performing Arts, the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, and our summer Theater and STEAM camps. But we could use your help in expanding our reach. That help can come in many forms. We would, of course, gladly accept cash donations to our foundation to support the work that we do. We also have a wide range of volunteer opportunities. Finally, if you or your employer would be willing to host student internships, we'd love to talk to you. Please contact me (amarak@govst.edu) and let me know how we can work together. I look forward to hearing from you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dean's Welcome	
Student Bios	1
Banding Together for the Birds	2
Finding Common Ground through Art	4
Stem Students Ramp Up Studies with ILSAMP	5
From the Classroom to the Capitol	6
Internship Students Score Real-Life Sports Broadcasting Experience	7
GSU Students Speak Out	8
GSU Masters IT!	9
Never Too Old for Story Time	10
Spotlight on CAS Students Accomplishments 2019–20	12



ArtSci is a student-written publication highlighting the major events and achievements of the students, alumni, and faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences at Governors State University.

Erik Kay

Writer/Editor

I am an English undergraduate and writing tutor. I love language; language loves me (hopefully). I enjoyed contributing to this publication very much!

Courtney Keller

Writer/Editor

I am an English major and Creative Writing minor who's obsessed with storytelling both on paper and on the screen. I enjoy spending my time writing poetry and watching indie films no one's heard of with my dog, Buster.

Brittany LaFond

Writer/Editor

I am an English major minoring in Human Communication. I have a seemingly never-ending list of books to read, which I tackle in between school assignments and my part time writing tutor job.

Dr. Christopher White

Faculty Advisor for ArtSci

I am an Associate Professor of English, in my 11th year at GSU. My teaching and scholarly interests are in American Literature, Cognitive Literary Studies, and Narrative. Working with students on ArtSci is one of the many things I love about teaching at GSU.

We are always interested in new CAS-related story ideas. If you have one you would like to share, please contact Christopher White at cwhite@govst.edu.

Banding Together for the Birds

By Brittany LaFond

GSU Summer Project Promotes Conservation of Birds



(Top) Environmental Biology Graduate Student Erin Schisley removes a bird from mist netting.

(Bottom) A bird shows off its newly banded leg.

Since 2015, GSU has conducted a bird banding project coordinated with the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program and the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL). MAPS and BBL are national organizations designed to help track the migratory patterns of birds and monitor a variety of factors that can influence the health and habitats of the birds. In the five years that the project has been conducted, over 900 birds have been banded at GSU.

Every summer from May 31 to August 15, the team goes out to the GSU field station over several 6-hour periods to conduct the project. The team is supervised by GSU Biology Professor Diane Gohde, who is the lead Principal Investigator (PI) for the project. Birds are captured using “mist” nets made up of fine mesh that a bird will be tangled and caught in if they fly into it. Once removed from the nets, a small metal band is placed on their leg, carefully sized to suit the bird. The bands each have a unique number, so that the bird can be identified if it is recaptured in another location. Before the bird is released, data from the birds can also be taken to measure things like stress levels. “There are a lot of things you can do with an animal . . . in hand” that you would not be able to do otherwise, said Dr. John Yunger, GSU Biology Professor, field station head and Co-PI for the bird banding project.

Beyond monitoring the health of the birds, having access to the birds is also beneficial for conducting new research. A GSU student this summer is hoping to use the bird banding project as an opportunity to study bird feather patterns under ultraviolet (UV) light. Data suggests that birds may be able to see in UV and that some may have plumage patterns not visible to the human eye—patterns that the birds might use for mating and to indicate health. According to Gohde, this could potentially open up new ways of identifying birds, particularly for monomorphic species where males and females look the same. “It’d be really cool if we could see a pattern,” said Gohde.



“The ones that get into the handling are ones that are really thinking of wildlife biology as a career.”

Gohde and Yunger often encourage students in their classes to come observe the bird banding, and one of the banding sessions is used as a workshop for students to gain exposure to the project. “I try to promote conservation,” said Gohde, “I think that by making the students aware, like when they come out and see a wild bird up close, they get some appreciation [for wildlife] . . . and that might give them some direction towards . . . working with wildlife.” Over 200 students and faculty have observed the project, but to ensure the safety of the birds, extensive training involving an online certification and observation hours are required before a person can begin handling birds. Only about 10 people have gotten to this level over the course of the project. According to Yunger, “The ones that get into the handling are ones that are really thinking of wildlife biology as a career.”



(Far Left) Students check the pockets in a newly set up mist net, which will safely catch birds that fly into them.

(Close Left) Students record data that will be used to help track and monitor the birds.

Biology majors can take Bird Banding (BIOL 4147) as a selective in the summer, where they will gain exposure to the process of bird banding and participate in the project's summer workshop. ■

Finding Common Ground Through Art

By Courtney Keller

GSU Sculpture Park Introduces the Lewis Manilow Common Ground Initiative

“The confounding nature of abstract art offers us equal opportunity for curiosity, and provides a level playing field because of its mysteries.” With this creative vision in mind, Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park Director and Curator Jeff Stevenson established the Lewis Manilow Common Ground Initiative. The Initiative is designed to expand access to the park’s 30 large-scale masterpieces in an effort to bridge social differences between local communities through arts education.

Starting now and culminating in a Summit in October 2021, the Initiative will support learning and unite diverse communities—from Frankfort to Ford Heights—by providing students with the resources to make recurrent trips to the Sculpture Park (“theNate”). Students will converge with peers from disparate environments and experiences to cultivate new relationships, ideas, and perspectives. The program will also fund performances and presentations from local and national artists alike leading up to and including the Summit. Reflecting on the virtues of the Initiative, Stevenson notes that “getting to know people who are different from ourselves is a powerful way to foster understanding, create connection, and build relationships—relationships that one by one can ultimately improve the divisive world we all experience today.”

Visitors can build these relationships through theNate’s various features, programs, and events.

Outdoors@theNate, enjoyed by over 600 students this past year, is a 4-hour educational tour of the park with activities that emphasize collaboration, critical thinking, physical activity, and hands-on learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (S.T.E.A.M).



There’s also the newly established **Butterfly Ranch**, which was developed by an Openlands Foundation’s ComEd Green Regions Grant project in 2019. It consists of 11.5 acres of the Sculpture Park now preserved as a sanctuary for monarch butterflies. Soon, photographers, bird watchers, and wildlife enthusiasts will be welcomed into an artist-designed observation area, a new acquisition for theNate. And in September, theNate is presenting a new “friendraiser” with the working name **“The Prairie Party”** targeted at reaching new audiences through a low-cost, high-fun event, taking place in the heart of the new Butterfly Ranch. Finally, in fall 2021, theNate plans to host a biennial **“Sculpture, Wine & Dine”** fundraising event in which attendees can go on tours of the park’s collection, meet its artists, enjoy a farm-to-table dinner, and stay for live music and continued festivities at the Afterglow Party.

For more information on theNate’s newest developments and a full calendar of its events, visit www.govst.edu/sculpture, or follow their social media accounts: [www.instagram.com/ thenate](https://www.instagram.com/thenate) and www.facebook.com/nathan.manilow.sculpture.park/. ■

“Getting to know people who are different from ourselves is a powerful way to foster understanding, create connection, and build relationships—relationships that one by one can ultimately improve the divisive world we all experience today.”

STEM Students Ramp Up Studies with ILSAMP

By Erik Kay

Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Program

A quick look around campus is enough to prove that GSU has a student body as diverse as its programs of study. Varied cultures and perspectives coalesce in our school's classrooms; students unite in the pursuit of an education. However, even GSU falls victim to much larger social trends—nationwide, minority students are underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields, and GSU is no exception. But for the last 25 years, GSU has actively sought to remedy this inequality. Through involvement with the Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (ILSAMP) program, GSU fosters STEM studies for underrepresented groups.

Sponsored by the National Science Foundation, ILSAMP is a consortium of 13 Illinois schools, including 9 universities and 4 community colleges. The program encourages minority STEM participation through grants, internships, book reimbursement, and research stipends. ILSAMP offers funding to Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD candidates. Each school year culminates in a late February symposium, located in Lisle, Illinois, where students present their own research and compete for awards.

GSU's current ILSAMP coordinator, Dr. Erin Grey-Avis, attests to the program's efficacy: "It's a great recruitment tool!" Dr. Grey-Avis, who specializes in genetics and ecology, has had students win 1st and 3rd place in recent years, and met with great success at the 2020 Symposium. Dr. Grey-Avis attended the symposium with 9 undergraduate students, 3 graduate students, and 3 faculty members. 5 presentations were given, 2 of which won 1st place: Gabriela Villareal won 1st place in Environmental Science for her oral presentation "Determining how Plant Soil Feedback Affects Competition and Soil Composition: A Three Plant Experiment," Eric Gomez won 1st place in Computer Science for his poster presentation "Development Using Open-Source Web Technology Stack." Congratulations to the student presenters!

GSU students need only a 2.5 GPA and a STEM major to participate in the program. ■



GSU STEM undergraduates Malik Davis, Lizbeth Aranda, Gabriela Villareal, Aaron West, Alexis Robinson, Alexis Harrison, and Makya Newson.



GSU STEM undergraduates Makya Newson, James Zumhagen, Aaron West, and Dr. Erin Grey-Avis (second from the left)

From the Classroom to the Capitol

By Courtney Keller

GSU Students Attend the Model Illinois Government Simulation

During the last weekend of February, 20 students in GSU's Model Illinois Government (MIG) course traveled to Springfield to participate in the state's annual student-led government simulation. Once there, the students joined 225 of their peers from over 20 universities across Illinois to simulate real parliamentary procedures by taking on governmental roles such as legislators within the Senate and the House of Representatives, and leaders among designated parties and committees.

Students began the trip with a tour of the Lincoln Presidential Museum before breaking off into party caucuses to determine leadership over the weekend. They then debated bills to vote on in congressional committees, gave speeches, and campaigned for executive board positions for MIG 2021. Students simulating the role of reporters also wrote news articles covering the event.

Through MIG, students gain confidence in themselves as well as hands-on experience, not only by practicing real legislative procedures, but by doing so in collaboration with their peers who come from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints.

"My favorite part of MIG is the moment I see a student doing something they believed they couldn't do, and they do it well."

Despite disparate political ideologies, students shared how connected they felt to their peers as they worked together. "Sometimes with legislation we can get caught up in Democrat vs. Republican," expressed MIG student and Political Science Major Melany Villagomez. But "[MIG] made me realize that people vote based on their own experiences. [P]eople in government are just doing what they can with what they have, and [MIG] made me see it all as a little bit more human."

The MIG simulation was a unique experience for students at GSU who can now take what they've learned about politics, working with others, and themselves into the professional world. MIG student and Political Science Major Matthew Moustis stated, "It's one thing to sit in a classroom and learn about theories . . . but to actually go out there and do what politicians do, I feel like it's just more beneficial, that type of experiential learning."

By the end of the simulation, students gained experience, connections, and memories that will last a lifetime. Many GSU students also left with their own awards. Tiffany Hannah served as a Senate Committee Chair, Kyle Bergfors served as Chief of Communications to the President of the Senate, and Matthew Moustis received the Robert Spencer Outstanding Freshman Delegate award for his role as Assistant Minority Leader in the Senate. Both Areej Samara and Alex Hutnick were appointed Vice Chair of a Senate Committee as well. Several GSU students were also elected to positions for next year's MIG event. Daniel Fogarty will serve as Senate Majority Leader and President, and Stephon Robertson will serve as Comptroller. Ruqayat Adebessin came in a close second for Secretary of State for MIG 2021. Isaiah Moore earned the distinguished privilege of serving as the Governor of MIG 2021, where he will organize and supervise the event.

Political Science professor Andrew Schott, who teaches GSU's MIG course, feels great pride in the accomplishments and bravery of his students: "My favorite part of MIG is the moment I see a student doing something they believed they couldn't do, and they do it well."

Prof. Schott will be teaching Local Government Systems (POLS 2200-02) in the fall and the MIG course (POLS 3950) in the spring. The courses will focus on government systems, writing legislation, and preparation for GSU's trip to next year's MIG simulation. ■

Internship Students Score Real-Life Sports Broadcasting Experience

By Courtney Keller



The blow of a whistle may mark the start of the action on the field or on the court, but for GSU's Sports Broadcasting interns, the action begins behind the camera. For the last four years, GSU Media Studies students have been given the opportunity to gain career-related experience broadcasting all Women's Volleyball, Men's Basketball, and Women's Basketball games here on campus.

"For students looking to launch a career in sports broadcasting, this program is an opportunity to gain experience across the different roles on a live sports broadcasting crew and to build a reel for their resume and eportfolio," remarked Dr. Deborah James, a GSU Media Studies professor who oversees the internship program. Students obtain the skills, confidence, and work experience necessary to succeed in broadcasting after graduation. Mark Kundla, a Media Professional who works with the Department of Digital Learning and Media Design (DLMD) and supervises the sports broadcasting interns, adds, "We already have a couple people who've walked out of [GSU] and have landed really great jobs!"

The interns gain skills like camera operation, engineering, live audio mixing, graphic creation and editing, technical directing, and operating replay systems through extensive training and hands-on experience. According to Josh Young, program director of DLMD, "[interns] receive invaluable, on-the-job training in a fast-paced, live production environment that boasts state-of-the-art production equipment."

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Though the program currently focuses on broadcasting sports at GSU, there are developing plans for expansion. The interns have started broadcasting soccer games off-property for the first time, and internship directors have been considering opening up the program to neighboring universities and high schools. The internship will also soon become a part of the Student Media Institute (SMI) which works with students to further develop student-produced programming for the GSU Comcast cable station, the Phoenix Online, and Orca TV, the student news and information station.

To watch student-produced broadcasts, visit gsujaguars.com and click the "Watch Now" banner to stream live events and past broadcasts on demand. ■



GSU Sports Broadcasting Interns hard at work.

GSU Students Speak Out

By Brittany LaFond

New Forensic Debate Team Provides Forum for Expression

GSU's new Forensic Debate Team had a strong start last October with its participation in Chicago Swing, a forensics tournament that was cosponsored by GSU and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Eleven schools from Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin participated in the tournament, which was held on the UIC campus. Instead of trophies, high-ranking participants received photos of sculptures in the GSU Sculpture Park. Though this was the team's first time participating in the tournament, one student from the team was awarded as a finalist in the Prose category.

Forensic Debate provides a forum for students to explore topics they find interesting and present them to an audience. They can do this through debate, public speaking (prepared or impromptu), or oral interpretation (creative storytelling or poetry). The open subject matter makes forensics appealing to students in a variety of programs, ranging from the humanities to occupational therapy to social work. According to Professor Eddie Gamboa, who coaches the team, forensics is a co-curricular, not an extracurricular activity. It is meant to enhance the work students are already doing, rather than exist separately.

"The work that you do here can have a tangible effect on the world...."



In addition to getting practice with speaking to an audience, students get real-life experience engaging with their chosen topics. Students participating in tournaments will often use their time to raise awareness for an important issue and enact change via political petitions. "The work that you do here can have a tangible effect on the world," Gamboa stated. "You get to become activists and thinkers and writers and speakers. More than learning how to speak, I think it's a really great opportunity to start making your mark."

Though the team is still finding its footing, the future of forensics at GSU is looking up. One of Gamboa's priorities moving forward is "creating opportunities for students to get some kind of material benefit" out of participating with the team. This year, GSU will begin offering a scholarship for incoming freshmen, transfer students, and continuing undergraduate students who are interested in joining the team, and practicums are being developed to allow students to receive college credit for participating in forensics.

The Forensic Debate team is currently preparing for the National Speech Championship, which is scheduled to be held at George Mason University in late May. ■

GSU Masters IT!

By Erik Kay

GSU Preparing Master of Science in IT

GSU is leading the way in Information Technology education. Hoping to implement a new Master of Science in IT by the fall 2020 term, we will be one of the first schools to offer advanced education in this rapidly expanding field.



GSU currently offers many related programs including an MS in Computer Science (CS) and an MS in Information Systems. While these would seemingly have advanced computer training covered, Professor Rich Manprasio begs to differ. Instrumental in designing the new IT program, Prof. Manprasio says there are distinct differences between CS and IT: “CS focuses more on the software aspect of technology [whereas] IT looks more into the networking side of things.” According to Manprasio, IT involves creating and managing users and groups, fostering communication between systems, and network security.



Currently, GSU’s BS in IT works closely with the Computer Science, Criminal Justice, and Management Information Systems programs. The MS in IT, however, may prove too specialized for interdisciplinary crossover, though Manprasio acknowledges that it’s possible, particularly for those with a technical background.

The MS will continue an invaluable component of the Bachelor of Science in IT program, pairing IT students with local businesses so that they may gain real-world, hands-on experience. IT students have access to CS program internships with Vision 13 LLC, Midwest Operating Engineers IT Services, TransUnion, CIT Trucks, and Federal Signal Corp. GSU is currently reaching out to additional local/national businesses.



With the advent of the MS in IT, GSU will be one of a very few universities nationwide offering advanced IT training. According to Manprasio, growing demand for IT professionals, “paired with our low cost and lack of similar schools [in the area put GSU] in a prime position to offer an advanced degree.” ■

Never Too Old for Story Time

By Courtney Keller

GSU Students Find Their Stories at Local Event

“Everybody has a story,” believes GSU Professor Novia Pagone. Last fall, Dr. Pagone took students from her First-Year Interdisciplinary Humanities course to participate in Grown Folks Stories, a monthly event held at the Green Line Performing Arts Center in Washington Park, near the University of Chicago. That trip formed part of the students’ semester-long exploration of autobiography, the theme of Dr. Pagone’s course.

Pagone’s students were concurrently enrolled in Dr. Kerri Morris’s Writing Studies I, and formed a learning community meant to teach students how to work together and explore storytelling in ways that they had never experienced before.

The idea of the learning community is to give students “a community, a distinct group of people, in which learning can take place that, hopefully, crosses boundaries,” explained Dr. Morris.

Assignments in both classes had the students write their own autobiographical stories. The students then chose a story from either class to turn into a 2-minute script to be recorded and broadcasted with the help of the Digital Learning and Media Design (DLMD) studio. Dr. Deborah James, a Media Studies Professor here at GSU, and Mark Kundla, an instructor within DLMD, also offered their expertise during the recording sessions. Prof. Pagone expressed that adding the media element to their learning community not only grounded the project, but expanded the students’ perceptions on storytelling by giving them skills that typical humanities and writing courses don’t usually provide.

“Your writing is really different when you’re going to have a real audience,” asserted Dr. Morris, “it made [students] really think about what the most important parts of a story are, and what they wanted to share.” Students discovered a renewed appreciation and importance for revision and reflection, not only in how a story was being told, but in the story itself.



The Green Line trip provided students first-hand experience with a live audience, where participants are picked to tell a story about themselves in 5 minutes or less. (The only conditions are that the story can’t be written down, and it must be true and about the speaker.)

Dr. Morris described how the students lit up on the bus ride back as their passionate discussion of the stories demonstrated the impact the evening had: “I think that it was really good for them to see people get up and tell a story where not a lot happens and it didn’t work, or someone else tells a story that’s just perfect.”

Everyone enjoyed a night of stories and delight that inspired students to share their experience with their storytelling community peers who couldn’t attend and even one who decided to make herself a frequent attendee.

The Grown Folks Stories event is held at the Green Line Performing Arts Center every third Thursday of the month, and entrance is donation-based. ■



“Everybody has a story.”



GSU students, faculty, and staff capture the night at Green Line Performing Arts Center (*from left to right below*): Dr. Novia Pagone, Professor Yevette Brown, Dr. Kerri Morris, Kayra Haywood, and Bolu Ganzallo (front); Josh Young (DMLD Director), Gary Hedberg, Rachel Beckmann, Darius Jackson, Ieshia Marshall, Trevon Gant, Marie Schelfo, and Nathan Couwenhoven (back).





Spotlight on CAS Student Accomplishments for 2019-20

- **Elizabeth Callan** (Political Science BA) was accepted into the NEW Leadership® Illinois Residential Program for summer 2020. (The 2020 program has been deferred because of the COVID-19 pandemic.)
- **Hillary Chadare** (Computer Science BS) will be completing an IT internship with Federal Signal.
- **Danuta Chlebek** (History BA) presented a paper at the Midwest World History Conference in Minneapolis. Danuta, one of only a few undergraduate students at the conference, presented a paper on “Witold Pilecki: The Forgotten World War II Hero.”
- **Malik Davis** (BS Biology) and **Aaron West** (BS Biology) presented a poster at the Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Symposium. Their poster was entitled “A multi-taxa eDNA of Calumet Marsh Restorations.” (Mentor: Dr. Erin Grey)
- **Eric Gomez** (Computer Science BS) won 1st place for Computer Science Poster at the Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Symposium. Eric’s presentation was entitled “Development Using Open-Source Web Technology Stack.” (Mentor: Dr. Soon-Ok Park)
- **Eric Gomez** also completed a fall 2019 Web Developer internship with Lights of Honor International.
- **Angel Jackson** was awarded as a Finalist at the Chicago Swing Forensics Tournament held at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Eleven schools from Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin participated in the tournament.
- **Derron Jackson** (Computer Science BS) will be completing an internship with Fiat Chrysler Auto.
- **Matthew Kearns** (History BA) has been supervising the feeding of 4,000 people a day at the Great Lakes Naval Base, where COVID-19 has infected many sailors and staff.
- **Annie Lemm** (Communication BA) was accepted into the NEW Leadership® Illinois Residential Program for summer 2020. (The 2020 program has been deferred because of the COVID-19 pandemic.)
- **Precious McKenzie** (Biology BS) presented a poster at the Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Symposium. Her poster was entitled “Effects of Soil pH on Phosphorous Availability and Growth of a Prairie Grass.” (Mentor: Dr. Mary Carrington)
- **Elizabeth Neris** (English MA) presented a paper at the Sigma Tau Delta Midwestern Regional Conference at Western Illinois University. Her paper was entitled “Identity Division and Representation: Language Hybridity in Junot Diaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.”
- **Elizabeth Neris** was also scheduled to present her paper “Language Hybridity in Junot Diaz’s *Oscar Wao*” at the 2020 Sigma Tau Delta International Convention in March. Unfortunately, the Convention was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Ishita Patel** (Computer Science BS) will be completing a Data Analyst Internship with Ingram Micro Service LLC.

- **Brandon Simmons** (Computer Science BS) will be completing an internship with American Smiles.
- **Matthew Spatz** (English BA) was accepted into the MS in Library and Information Science program at the University of Illinois.
- **Gabriela Villarreal** (Biology BS) won 1st place in Environmental Science for her oral presentation “Determining how Plant Soil Feedback Affects Competition and Soil Composition: A Three Plant Experiment.” (Mentors: Drs. Mary Carrington and John Yunger)
- **Aaron West** presented a poster at the Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Symposium. Aaron’s poster was entitled “The Effects of Microplastics on the Growth Rate and Final Niomass of *Symphyotrichum laeve* (smooth blue aster).” (Mentor: Dr. Mary Carrington)
- **Sarah Wiora** (English MA) was scheduled to present her paper “Reclaiming the Castle: *Gone Girl* as a Modern Gothic Novel” at the 2020 Sigma Tau Delta International Convention in March. Unfortunately, the Convention was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **James Zumhagen** (Biology BS), served as a panelist in a “Student Transitions” workshop at the Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Symposium. During the workshop, James shared his experience transitioning from community college to GSU.

Model Illinois Government Simulation, Springfield, IL: February 27 – March 1

- **Kyle Bergfors** (Communication, Media, and Performance) served as Chief of Communications to the President of the Senate.
- **Daniel Fogarty** (Political Science BA) served as Senate Majority Leader for MIG 2020 and was elected President of Senate for MIG 2021.
- **Tiffany Hannah** (Political Science BA) was appointed a Senate Committee Chair.
- **Alex Hutnick** (Political Science BA) was appointed Vice Chair of a Senate Committee.
- **Isaiah Moore** GSU (Alumnus 2019) served as President of Senate in MIG 2020 and was elected Governor of MIG 2021. He will organize and supervise the event next year.
- **Matthew Moustis** (Political Science BA) received the Robert Spencer Outstanding Freshman Delegate award for his role as elected Assistant Minority Leader in the Senate.
- **Stephon Robertson** (Political Science BA) served as Comptroller in MIG 2020 and was reelected as Comptroller for MIG 2021.
- **Areej Samara** (Political Science BA) was appointed Vice Chair of a Senate Committee. ■



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