



Mary Compton/Daily Southtown

Eliane P. Maimon, new president of Governors State University, celebrates her first hour as president with her granddaughter Annabelle Maimon, 2, of Las Vegas. Hundreds of guests from throughout the country came Saturday to view Maimon's installation.

President sets high goals

New leader wants more diverse, inviting campus

By Carly A. Mullady
Staff writer

As the fifth president of Governors State University, Elaine P. Maimon is starting with several main objectives.

During her installation ceremony Saturday, Maimon shared her plans with an auditorium full of area educators, administrators, students and politicians.

"I see great days ahead for Governors State University," she said. "We have the will. We have the vision."

Maimon plans to capitalize on Governors State's stance as the only public university in the south suburbs by building relationships and accommodating diversity.

This can be accomplished,

Maimon said, by making the school a public forum.

"Education is a lifelong process in a shared environment," she said. "In a democratic society, we are all members of the ruling class. A university cannot be a gated community for the elite."

She said the university will expand accessibility to the underserved.

"We will encourage more first-generation students to become learners," she said. "We understand the value of a strong liberal arts education."

Maimon and staff have been working since August to create GSU Promise, a program to provide debt-free baccalaureate degrees for poverty-level students transferring from community colleges.

"The fear of debt is an obstacle (for these students)," she said.

GSU Promise has exceeded its original \$100,000 goal, and Maimon wants the fund to reach \$1 million.

Maimon also pledged to make Governors State a student-centered university, promoting challenge and achievement with a "why not?" attitude.

Following suggestions and using imagination, Maimon and her administration plan to transform the university.

"We will be problem-solvers, not gatekeepers," she said.

Before moving to Crete for her position at Governors State, Maimon was Chancellor of the University of Alaska, Anchorage.