



**THE COLLEGE OF  
GRADUATE  
STUDIES**

**GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2025**







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# THE STORY OF A NEW COLLEGE

Graduate education has always been an important part of Governors State University (GovState). In GovState's early years, its academic programs consisted of the final two years of undergraduate programs, and master's degree programs. Professional doctoral degrees began in the early 2000's with the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program and were followed with additional professional doctoral degree programs (Doctor of Occupational Therapy, Doctor of Nursing Practice) and Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) programs. Most recently, the first Ph.D. program in Counselor Education and Supervision began in 2021. Administration of graduate programs at GovState was decentralized, occurring primarily within academic programs.

With growth in the number of GovState's graduate programs, and particularly in the number of doctoral programs, came an increased need for centralized administration of some graduate studies functions, support for graduate students and faculty, and advocacy for graduate studies at GovState. To meet these needs, a proposal for a new College of Graduate Studies was presented to and approved by the GovState Board of Trustees in June 2023. The new College of Graduate Studies was then approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) in September 2023, and the new college began at GovState during the Fall 2023 semester. The administration of the College of Graduate Studies follows a hybrid model, where responsibility for much of the graduate education process (e.g., admission acceptance decisions, decisions related to acceptance into candidacy, supervision of graduate assistants, faculty academic advising, conferral of degrees) remains within academic units and administration of student records remains in the Registrar's office. The College of Graduate Studies promotes graduate education, upholds excellence in graduate studies, and addresses specific challenges of graduate student recruitment, graduate advising, and administration of graduate assistantships and graduate capstone products.

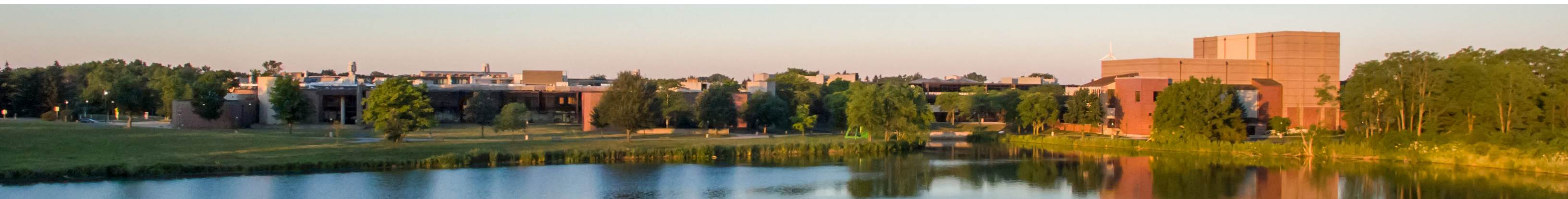
# OUR MISSION

## WHO WE ARE

The College of Graduate Studies supports graduate education as the pursuit of knowledge at an advanced level and prepares graduate students to ask and answer challenging questions in their fields of study. We work toward this mission by supporting, advising, and mentoring graduate students as they progress toward their degrees; by enabling faculty to provide compelling, accessible, and equitable graduate education; and by fostering rich intellectual atmosphere and discourse among a diverse community of graduate students and faculty.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

- Effective, dependable graduate academic advising
- Consistent recruitment, funding of graduate students
- Excellence in graduate programs through assessment and accreditation
- New graduate programs, credentials to meet the needs of students, potential employers
- Rich intellectual discourse among graduate students, faculty





# WORD FROM THE DEAN



**Dr. Mary Carrington**  
Dean of the College of Graduate Studies

**To our current and prospective graduate students:**  
Exciting developments are underway at the College to enhance your graduate experience and support your academic success. As the College continues to grow, we are actively strengthening the resources and services available to you throughout your graduate journey. You will benefit from the expertise of our Director of Graduate Advising and his team of graduate advisors who will provide dedicated guidance and support. New graduate assistants can look forward to comprehensive onboarding training from our new Graduate Funding and Outreach Coordinator to ensure a smooth start in their roles. Furthermore, we continue to offer dedicated writing support for your capstone projects through our work with Graduate Writing Fellows and with the GovState Writing Center. We are also actively working to simplify and clarify the capstone registration and submission processes, saving you time and reducing potential confusion. Look forward to a growing number of enriching academic and intellectual events, including workshops and seminars designed to enhance your knowledge and skills. Recognizing the demands of graduate studies, the College will also offer increased opportunities for socialization and wellbeing events and services to foster a supportive and connected graduate community.

## OUR TEAM



**Bryce Johnsen -Director of Graduate Advising**  
Bryce, a GovState alumnus, brought over ten years of academic advising experience with him when he started as Interim Director of Graduate Advising when the College was established in 2023. He began serving as Director of Graduate Advising in 2024.

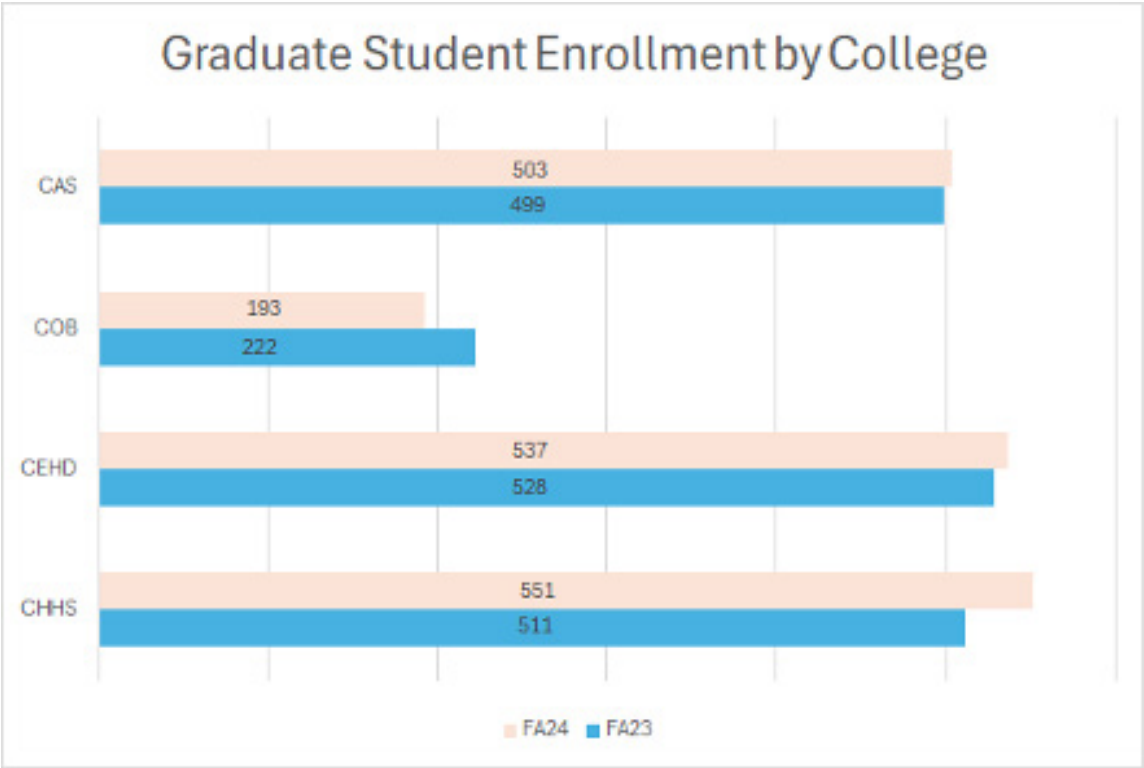


**Constance Jones- Graduate Funding & Outreach Coordinator**  
Constance, our newest team member, comes to us most recently from JPMorgan Chase, and brings with her almost 20 years of experience in higher education. “This is a thrilling endeavor for me to work as the Graduate Funding Outreach Coordinator. It combines my passion for helping and my drive for seeing students successfully fulfill their dreams through our graduate programs here at GovState. I am waiting in great anticipation to see our students become innovators and transformers of change in their homes, communities, and the world.”

# GOVSTATE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

More than 50 graduate and post-baccalaureate programs and certificates are housed in GovState’s four academic colleges:

- **The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)** offers 13 master’s degrees and 9 graduate certificates in humanities, fine arts, public administration, and science and technology disciplines. CAS graduate programs prepare students both for professions and further education, and play a leadership role in identification, investigation, and working toward solutions for current societal issues.
- **The College of Business (COB)** offers 4 master’s degrees and 2 graduate certificates in disciplines including accounting, business analytics, and business administration. All programs are fully accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).
- **The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD)** offers 5 master’s degrees in education and psychology and counseling disciplines, a School Psychology Educational Specialist degree, doctoral degrees in Interdisciplinary Leadership and Counselor Education and Supervision, and 11 graduate certificates. Graduate programs in School Counseling, School Psychology, and Educational Administration (Principal Leadership at master’s level and Superintendent in the Ed.D. for Interdisciplinary Leadership) are fully approved by the Illinois State Board of Education to offer related Illinois licenses.
- **The College of Health and Human Services (CHHS)** offers 7 master’s degrees, 3 doctoral degrees (Doctor of Nursing Practice, Doctor of Occupational Therapy, and Doctor of Physical Therapy), and 3 graduate certificates. All programs provide extensive field experiences and exposure to, or participation in, research and service activities through a large network of hospitals, medical centers, ambulatory-care facilities, long-term care facilities, private practices, schools, and social services agencies in the northeast Illinois and northwest Indiana region.







## FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

The most common sources of financial aid for graduate students are federal student loans, graduate assistantships, and scholarships. GovState employs approximately 80 students through graduate assistantships during each of the Fall and Spring semesters, and approximately 60 students during the Summer term. Scholarships are available for graduate students through GovState's Scholarship Universe platform, which provides access to institutional and external scholarships. Students are matched with scholarships for which they are eligible based on questions that they answer on the platform.

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP STORY



**Brianna Herard-Exorphe** has a graduate assistantship with the College of Graduate Studies. She currently is studying for her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling where she aspires to work with individuals who have experienced trauma. After her personal experience with mental health and realizing how stigmatized it is in the BIPOC community, she was inspired to become a counselor. While Brianna believes that traditional talk therapy can be beneficial, she hopes to utilize nontraditional interventions such as art therapy, photography, music, and walking when counseling others.

In addition to her academics, Brianna is a freelance photographer and radio station host for a new station titled "Underground Hours." Growing up, Brianna was surrounded by many talented artists who never had the opportunity to showcase or enhance their art due to limited resources. This was the driving force behind her desire to create this station and lean into her creative outlets. When Brianna is not busy, she enjoys taking walks, traveling, trying new foods, and taking naps.

# MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST



**Dr. Beverly Schneller**

Provost & Vice President  
Academic Affairs

It is with great pleasure that I offer my greetings to our graduate students and our campus community as we celebrate the achievements of our College of Graduate Studies under the leadership of the founding Dean, Dr. Mary Carrington. Since the launch of the College, we have made steady progress in designing the new academic unit to streamline and promote the graduate student experience at Governors State University.

Together, the GovState graduate students, faculty and staff have gone from ideas on paper to enhance graduate learning to the hiring of two staff members with expertise in key areas around graduate advising, funding and outreach. Through our work we have made improvements in the coordination of college level student advising, expanded learning supports in collaboration with our English Department and the Writing Fellows program, improved the processes for Graduate Assistant applications, and continue to advance the well-being of our graduate students through dedicated programming in support of student success. As an institution, we continue to evaluate the number and type of graduate student assistantships and scholarships we have to offer to allow our graduate students to focus on learning and achieving their potential in healthy and sustainable ways.

We are proud to continue to expand our degree programs, clinical and professional partnerships, faculty-student research and grant opportunities to welcome our students into a variety of careers in teaching, research, and service as professionals in a range of fields. You, our graduate students, are the key to our success as GovState. Your vision of the future, dedication to the impact of education on the community, and strengths as learners and leaders are bringing to life the importance of how we are better together in service to others. With all best wishes for your continued success.





# COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES SUCCESSIONS AND ACTIVITIES AY24-25

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## **New Graduate Funding and Outreach Coordinator hired!**

Constance Jones will oversee work related to funding graduate students, graduate programs, and the College of Graduate Studies; perform outreach to prospective and current graduate students, alumni, and potential employers including Graduate Advisory Board members; and oversee graduate student training and development including graduate student orientations, onboarding of graduate assistants, and professional development for graduate students.

## **Writing assistance for graduate students**

In collaboration with the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program, “embedded” graduate Writing Fellows in graduate courses to work with students and faculty on improving graduate student writing.

## **New Programming**

- **For graduate students:** Three workshops focusing on mental health and wellbeing, and time and stress management
- **For faculty and students:**
  - Hosted guest speaker from UIC, Dr. Daniel Morales-Doyle; title of talk “*Social Justice Science Issues: A Catalyst for Transformative Education*”
  - Hosted Research Days panel presentation: “*Perspectives on Project-Based Learning at Governors State University*”

## **Graduate Advising**

- Preparing for increased centralization of supervision and evaluation of graduate advisors, which should result in increased availability and effectiveness of advising for students.
- Working with a Graduate Advising Assessment Team on creating and conducting the first assessment of graduate advising at GovState.

## **Graduate student recruitment**

- In collaboration with Honors College, updated **GPAT** viewbook and application materials.
- Developing a Pre-Professional Advising website that will provide prospective graduate students with details on academic and additional preparation required for application to graduate or professional education, particularly for the health sciences and legal professions.

## **Funding**

- Grant proposal, titled “*TDS: Transdisciplinary Teams Doing Convergent Work in Data Science*,” submitted to NSF’s Innovations in Graduate Education program: In collaboration with a cross-disciplinary group of GovState faculty and administrators and with Northeastern Illinois University, proposed work is to offer a new graduate certificate in Data Science Applications, a transdisciplinary project-based learning approach to train master’s degree STEM students to use data science methods to address real-world issues. Students will work together as a team with community stakeholders to make progress toward the solution of an environmental problem. As our initial project, we are planning to work with University Park community members to address the issue of high lead levels in drinking water.