

# TRANSITIONS

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## Welcome to Transitions



Amy Barsha

It has been nine months since our last edition of *Transitions*, and we have been busy! Amidst COVID-19 and social and civil unrest, our team—staff and community partners—has been working hard to help you get back to work, get noticed at work, or get working on something that matters to your community. We are after impact and are finding ways to help you make a difference.

Whether expanding your ways to pay for training, engaging with workforce partners in the community, launching new impact trainings, or finding ways to keep you connected during times of quarantine—on behalf of the whole team at SXL, we hope this edition leaves you hopeful about your future *and ready to make your next life transition happen.* ▲

Amy Barsha  
*Executive Director, SXL*



## SXL Extends Helping Hand

While unemployment rates in Will County sit in the double digits, Amy Barsha, Executive Director of the School of Extended Learning at Governors State University wants to help those seeking employment.

“It’s crucial that these workers gain new skills to transition to a new career path. School of Extended Learning (SXL) offers many certification courses that help individuals gain these valuable skills needed for re-entry into the workforce.”

For many unemployed individuals certification courses are out of their tightened budgets, so SXL has found more ways to help students get the training they need.

“We know that paying for courses can be a real challenge, so we have broadened our payment options and now offer multiple private loans for professional development and certification courses,” Barsha said.

SXL has also broadened the approved program options for those eligible for federal grant money through the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). SXL honors WIOA vouchers for approved training, so students can train or re-train for free if they are unemployed or under-employed. New program offerings include four career trainings for non-native English speakers

(HVAC, CNC Machinist, Medical Coding and Billing and Administrative Professional with Microsoft Office Specialist 2019). These trainings include English language instruction (ESL) in addition to career training to meet the growing demand for bilingual workers in these fields. For a complete list of WIOA-approved trainings, visit [www.govst.edu/wia](http://www.govst.edu/wia). ▲



## HOW TO PAY FOR YOUR COURSES



For more information, please contact [continuinged@govst.edu](mailto:continuinged@govst.edu), or contact Michelle Sebasco at [msebasco@govst.edu](mailto:msebasco@govst.edu). Visit [www.govst.edu/WaystoPay](http://www.govst.edu/WaystoPay) for additional details.

1. Direct pay with all major credit cards except AMEX
2. Private loans
3. Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) is available for those who meet eligibility for approved programs only
4. Loans with Affirm for Legal Studies programs
5. Payment plans may be customized on an individual basis
6. CEDA funding for those who meet eligibility for approved programs

## Teaming Up to Get You Hired

### Skills for Chicagoland Future Hiring Fair

On September 21st, GSU Career Services and SXL partnered with *Skills for Chicagoland Future* to host our first co-presented Virtual Hiring Fair via Zoom. Applicants vied for positions at UPS, National Tube Supply and BG Family. ▲



*"I must say, the fair was a success, and the format was very convenient for me. Thanks again for the opportunity."*

Julia Cox



**ADRIANA CARBONARA**, Director of Sales

*I was impressed by the GSU candidates I interviewed during the recent virtual hiring event. These individuals were professional and offered the skills we needed to meet our clients' staffing needs. Registration was easy, and the coordinating team did an outstanding job of communicating and preparing ahead of time. We brought onboard three candidates, and look forward to future events!*



## Finding Virtual Community at Any Age

We have heard a lot about the vulnerability of seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those that are part of The Knowledge Exchange (TKE), SXL's senior enrichment program, have a different view to share during this unparalleled time—strength, connectedness, and versatility. The group that has been meeting face-to-face on Fridays in GSU's B-wing classrooms for over 25 years is now staying connected virtually via Zoom—with each other, their grandkids, and the community at large.

Suzanne Patterson



TKE Director Suzanne Patterson has been actively invested in keeping her connection with this group through personal emails, curating art-inspired activities, and producing bi-monthly e-blasts sharing campus updates, a 'read-share,' and other fun virtual cultural opportunities. Some of her curatorial picks have included free virtual museum tours, links to local COVID-related art exhibits, interactive trivia games, information about ride-share programs and grocery delivery services, pre-recorded plays and musicals from Steppenwolf and Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and more.



Patterson shared, “The Knowledge Exchange community has shown great resiliency and versatility during these challenging times. Their acceptance of the spring session being canceled amid the seemingly sudden cessation of their social lives and their robust adaptability of learning a new skill set in preparation for virtual learning, is to be admired. I receive their book shares, their phone calls, their emails sharing how much they have enjoyed a virtual tour or trivia game. I see them on Zoom at the local Homewood Stories™ events, a thriving creative gathering, now

virtual, where stories reign supreme, and everybody knows your name. I love hearing about their other Zoom activities and discussions; it is so inspiring and encouraging!”

Patterson is hopeful about the future of TKE. “Our hope is that this fully virtual version of our program is just a chapter in our long history of intra-personal learning. That we will return in fuller form with in-person classes and workshops, yet with a renewed vision of extended learning as we consider the advantages our virtual programming offers more homebound learners.” ▲

### THE VIRTUAL COURSE SCHEDULE

- Foreign Policy's Great Decisions 2020 Discussion Class
- Cinema Studies: Festival Shorts (The Power of Short Film II)
- Saints in Medieval Islamic Literature
- The Supreme Court: Prequel and Season 231

Visit [www.govst.edu/tke](http://www.govst.edu/tke), or email [spatterson3@govst.edu](mailto:spatterson3@govst.edu).

## A Veterans' Must-See Film Pick

Governors State University's Chicago Southland International Film Festival (CSIFF) recently announced its top picks for showings during the third annual festival scheduled for the weekend of October 23-25, 2020. Festival co-founders Suzanne E. Patterson, Director of The Knowledge Exchange, a School of Extended Learning senior enrichment program, and Joshua E. Young, Director of Digital Learning and Media Design, hand-selected the three films. One of them showcases a story of healing for Veterans with trauma through an unlikely source—wild horses.



On Sunday, October 25 at noon, **"Mustang Saviors,"** directed by Chicago local David Glossberg, is our festival feature film pick.

The screening will be followed by a live Q&A via Zoom with the director, facilitated by SXL's festival co-founder Suzanne E. Patterson, SXL's Director of Veteran Affairs Kevin Smith, and local Dressage Musical Freestyle Designer/Choreographer, Melanie Michalak. For festival ticket and donation options, visit [www.govst.edu/csiff](http://www.govst.edu/csiff). ▲

*An uplifting and fascinating portrait of wild mustang horses, and their journey through captivity to find mutual healing when paired with our country's veterans.*

This virtual event is sponsored by School of Extended Learning, Digital Learning and Media Design, The Knowledge Exchange, and an Intellectual Life Grant from the GSU Library.

## Test-Prep Success

Mary Mancusi was overwhelmed, but not how you might think! It was not the rigorous LSAT Law School entrance exam that had her confused, but the decision on which law school to pick! This GSU alumnus and Crete-native got into not one, two, or three law schools—but TWELVE!

Letter after letter rang with good news—a YES — Loyola, DePaul, John Marshall Law, Indiana University, University of Iowa, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin, University of Pittsburgh, University of Washington, Chicago-Kent Law School, University of Illinois, and Notre Dame Law School. The last two had her in a toss-up, but she chose Notre Dame. When we checked in with her on September 8, she had been in class for a little over a month, and said...

*“This is where I am supposed to be. The sense of community at Notre Dame is amazing.”*

**She credits GSU’s School of Extended Learning (SXL) for playing a part in getting her there, after taking a comprehensive LSAT test preparation course that conveniently meets on Saturday mornings.** “We learned about the different types of questions on the LSAT and the best way to approach the test. The instructor, Professor Gardiner, was always enthusiastic and eager to explain example questions to us.



Mary Mancusi

He whittled the LSAT questions down to their simplest forms and made them seem easy and straightforward. As a result, by the time I took the real LSAT, I felt confident and prepared,” Mancusi said.

*Test day was intense.* “As soon as I started on the first section, I was focused only on the LSAT in front of me. By the end of the test, I was mentally drained, but I felt good about it and went home happy.”

And she is still happy with GSU. Her undergraduate experience studying Communication has also come in handy, she says. “Learning how people interact; the soft skills” continues to support her in law school.

### What is next for Mary?

*“I am not 100% sure what type of law I will specialize in, but overall I want to help people back home in Crete—my church family and community—being able to support them and having the knowledge and expertise to help those in need.” ▲*





Get the structured practice you need to move on to the next phase of your academic or professional journey.

## **ACADEMIC TEST PREPARATION:**

- ACT Preparation Course
- GRE Preparation Course
- LSAT Preparation Course
- SAT Preparation Course

## **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION PREPARATION:**

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- Clinical Social Work/LCSW
- Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor/CADC
- Lean Six Sigma Black Belt
- Lean Six Sigma Green Belt
- Phlebotomy Tech (clinical externship optional)
- Pharmacy Tech (with clinical externship)
- PHR/SPHR Certification
- Project Management Professional – PMP®

[www.govst.edu/test-prep](http://www.govst.edu/test-prep)

# Professional Certification Inspires Infinite Possibilities

Trevor Hoskins started as an electrical apprentice – a period which he calls “three months in the dark.” That is both a literal and figurative statement, as Hoskins recalls feeling “out of my element.” Electrical currents were not his thing. A prayer asking God for a way out led to a surprise call from a cousin in NW Indiana. “Do you want to work at Ford,” she asked. He had his way out of the dark and started as a line worker at a Ford plant in Illinois.

When talking to a co-worker on the line, Hoskins shared his desire to go to college at Chicago State University. “You should check out Governors State University (GSU); it’s more affordable for what you get,” the friend said. After looking at GSU’s curriculum and the requirements for the job he wanted as a Production Supervisor at Ford, he enrolled in GSU’s Interdisciplinary Studies program (IDSS) in May 2016. He already had an Associate degree from Oakland Community College in Michigan, where he studied finance. Through transfer and prior learning assessment credits, he was able to graduate in December 2016 (in only 2 semesters!).

It was not an easy road, but a great mentor helped. Hoskins met College of Business professor Dr. Tricia Kerns

in class. She then encouraged him to enroll at the School of Extended Learning (SXL) in a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt (LSSGB) certification program to help him learn specific quality control skills needed for his work at Ford. It was not unusual for Dr. Kerns to find him in coveralls sleeping outside the classroom door after a shift. Hoskins was dedicated and not going to let personal obstacles keep him from his career goals. And it worked. After his certification completion, Hoskins was able to produce record production numbers and show substantial improvement in the constraint of his department during the biggest launch in the history of Ford Motor Company.

*“Green Belts make \$10,000 more than people who don’t have the certification. Aside from the money, you get used to the vernacular you hear every day at work. You get comfortable with it. Lean Six Sigma forces you to touch the problem. Then you look at the processes and how they affect people,” Hoskins shared.*



Dr. Tricia Kerns

Kerns found Hoskins to be a “great student, and hardworking. I just knew he was going to be a success.”

When Hoskins heard Dr. Kerns “kind and big words,” he shared a few thoughts of his own. “I appreciate Dr. Kerns way of always helping me on my journey. She is a woman of value who has always told me the right things. I have always been transparent with her on how I have handled things at work. She’s like my business psychiatrist.”

Trevor Hoskins continues his professional journey. Trevor just began his Lean Six Sigma Black Belt certification training and is planning on enrolling at GSU for his MBA program, with a concentration in Leadership. When asked why he chose to tackle both, he said, “The Black Belt is to develop a new skill –to analyze data in a more professional way— which will give me yet another tool to be more accessible to other departments.”

The MBA was something Dr. Kerns predicted, saying “I’m letting you know you’re going to have to come back.” Hoskins says it will “allow him to see new views and perspectives.

**Education is infinite.” ▲**



**Trevor Hoskins**

*Trevor Hoskin’s goal is to be a Plant Manager at Ford Motor Company, and a Partner in an Investment Group. He attributes his success to “God’s grace, coming from a great father, and a faithful mother. Everything great I have achieved is because of my mom” (Tennessee Jones).*

**For information on upcoming Lean Six Sigma Green or Black Belt sessions, visit [www.govst.edu/lean-six-sigma](http://www.govst.edu/lean-six-sigma).**

# GSU Experience Clarifies Bilingual Education Path



Adelicia Brienzo

Adelicia Brienzo is the new Coordinator of Early Learning and Bilingual Education for Community Consolidated School District 146; a district where 33% of students call a language other than English their home language. The top four languages spoken are Arabic, Spanish, Polish and Tagalog (standardized national language of the Philippines). Altogether, 30 different languages are spoken in District 146. The ability to connect on a personal level is necessary when there are so many cultural and communication differences—an ability that Adelicia honed through her experiences at Governors State University (GSU).

“What’s special about GSU is that it is so personal. I knew all my campus contacts on a first-name basis”— professors, advisors, and staff. “Everyone was so helpful sharing advice, scholarship and career opportunities,” Brienzo said.

“I got my Associate degree at Moraine Valley, and knew I wanted to go into Education. When I met with my advisor at GSU, John Powers, he was amazing! He told me about a home visiting program in Kankakee (for birth to age 3), a state-funded grant that assists at-risk, low-income families, many of whom are limited-English proficient (LEP).”

This experience shaped the work that Brienzo does now, as it solidified her Early Childhood Education path. An introduction to the Association of Latin American Student group (ALAS) by Jose Reyes, Program Director of Project Hope, as well as growing up in a Hispanic neighborhood in Blue Island, further shaped her passion for bilingual education. She was even awarded a scholarship through this student group affiliation.

Adelicia Brienzo and the District 146 team are partnering with the School of Extended Learning to deliver a virtual ESL for Parents program. “This is the second year we have worked with District 146 on ESL for Parents,” says Akiko Ota, Director of the English Language Learning Center (ELLC) at GSU. “They are dedicated to the ESL community, and we look forward to potentially partnering with them to provide this community with language, computer literacy, and career skills.” ▲

Brienzo says,  
*"I am a big advocate of GSU. From the connections and resources, to the rich friendships I developed, I had an incredibly positive experience."*

For more information on ELLC programs, contact [aota@govst.edu](mailto:aota@govst.edu).



# Featured Training for Schools

## Schools improve parent and community relations with the QualiKEYS for Frontline Staff Training!

The QualiKEYS method helps participants learn how to effectively “listen”, create, and maintain a professional environment, and manage difficult situations. This group training may be delivered virtually to assist frontline staff in recognizing their own needs, understanding the needs and expectations of their customers, and learning how to positively impact their organization’s commitment to improved customer relations. This interactive workshop is a “must” for, receptionists, administrative assistants, clerks, etc. and includes:

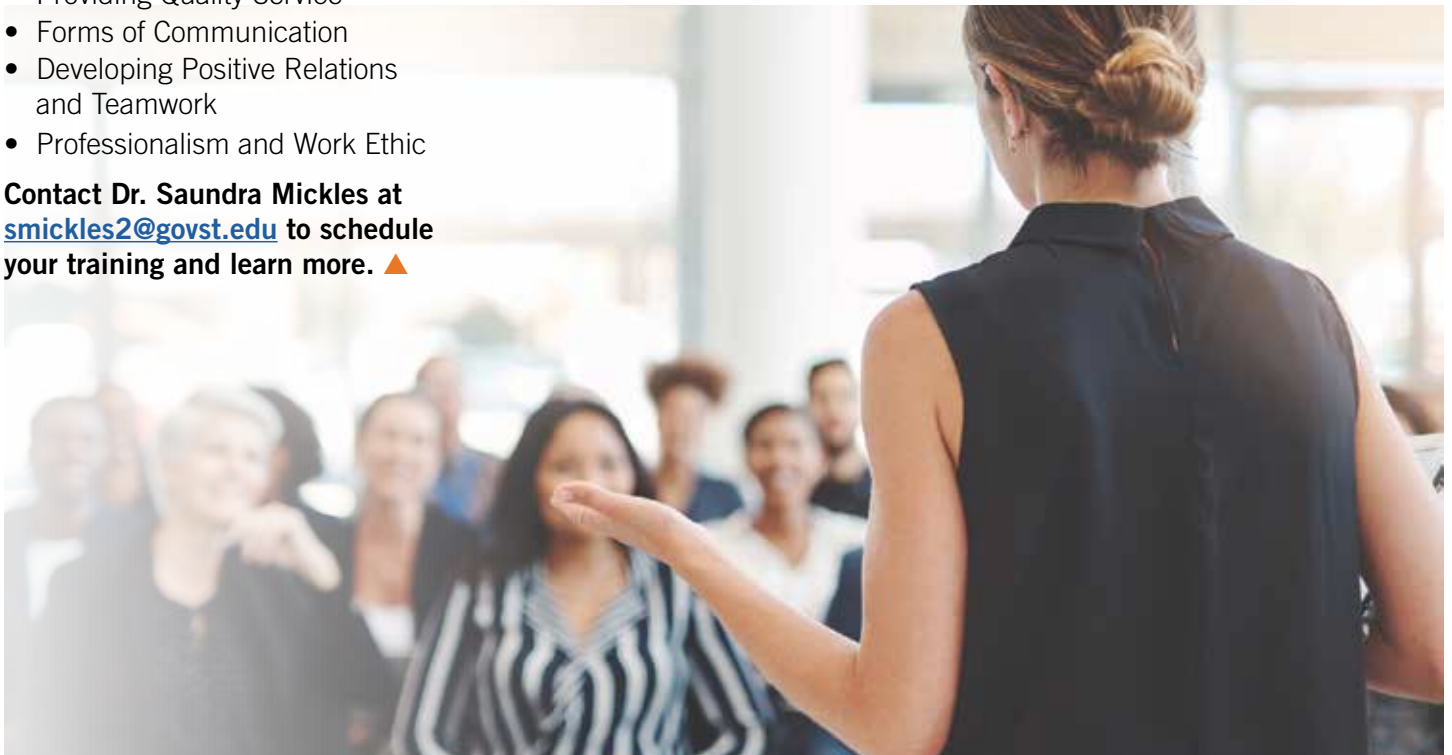
- Defining Customer Service
- Providing Quality Service
- Forms of Communication
- Developing Positive Relations and Teamwork
- Professionalism and Work Ethic

**Contact Dr. Sandra Mickles at [smickles2@govst.edu](mailto:smickles2@govst.edu) to schedule your training and learn more. ▲**



**Dr. Mickles is a Lecturer** in the College of Education (Educational Administration) and the Coordinator of the New Leaders Mentor Program at Governors State University. She instructs teachers in the Principal Leadership Program, Interdisciplinary Program and provides mentors and professional development for new administrative leaders. Dr. Mickles began her career as a Chicago

Public School music teacher and has held positions as a third/fourth grade teacher in a parochial school, Principal of a parochial school and suburban elementary school, Director of Curriculum, Assistant Superintendent, and Human resources Consultant. Dr. Mickles has facilitated workshops in utilizing state and local assessment data, project-based learning, and incorporating music into core subject areas. She has developed community partnerships, supervised, and collaborated with district administrative teams and instructional and support staff to set and achieve the highest standards of excellence. Dr. Mickles holds a Doctorate in Education (Educational Administration and Supervision and Educational Psychology).





## Meet our new Program Coordinator, Katie Karstensen!

Katie Karstensen has recently joined the School of Extended Learning at Governors State University. Katie was first introduced to QPR Training through her alma mater, the College of Education at Valparaiso University. Katie joined GSU after serving with the Institute for Leadership and Service at Valparaiso University, where she coordinated professional internships for students discovering where their passion meets their purpose, the “Pathways to Purpose” speaker series, and led the Civic Reflection Initiative, a guided intentional conversation model designed to bring communities together across differences. Ms. Karstensen is a certified QPR Trainer.

**QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Training for Suicide Prevention** is an educational, emergency mental health gatekeeper training intervention that teaches lay and professional gatekeepers to recognize and respond positively to someone exhibiting suicide warning signs and behaviors. The QPR Institute believes anyone can help prevent suicide.



School districts are invited to schedule a **FREE** group QPR educator training by emailing [kkarstensen@govst.edu](mailto:kkarstensen@govst.edu).

## Connect with SXL

[www.govst.edu/sxl](http://www.govst.edu/sxl)

708.534.4099



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# TRAIN FOR TOMORROW

## Problem=X

UNMOTIVATED  
EMPLOYEES?

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

NOT STEPPING UP?

POOR EMAIL ETIQUETTE?

CUSTOMER SERVICE

THAT'S A LIABILITY?

PROCESS OR QUALITY  
CHALLENGES?

Whatever your X, we can help you fix it.



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