

SCHOOL OF EXTENDED LEARNING

TRANSITIONS



The Godfather of Communication

See how family can support your education goals. – Page 3

Back to Work, Back to You

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TRANSITIONS: What They Mean



Amy Barsha

As Executive Director of the School of Extended Learning (SXL) at Governors State University, I often see first-hand the difference adult education makes in people's lives. Everyone who studies with us is striving to reach the next goal. Our mission is to connect with our community through learning at multiple stages throughout their lives—often at points of transition. When looking at all the programs we offer, there is one common denominator—our students are seeking a shift.

That shift may come in the form of a promotion at work that would not be possible without leadership training. Or it may look like an entirely new career after a layoff that could only happen with re-training using Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds (check out “Back to Work, Back to You”). For some, it might mean new-found cultural acceptance or a better job through mastery of the

English language and enhanced computer literacy skills. For others, learning keeps them young. Albert Einstein said, “The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.” In these pages, you will see how our Knowledge Exchange senior enrichment group serves adults age 55+ by nurturing curiosity.

We all have our own unique life and career goals. We have a need to re-set and refresh priorities. Now is the perfect time to think about that next life transition. The School of Extended Learning at Governors State University is here to help you finally master your resolutions, and to connect with your purpose. My hope is that this publication will inspire you to not just think about progress, but to pursue it continually. ▲

Amy Barsha
Executive Director, SXL



Snowflakes, Brains and Businesses

No two are the same. You may have heard of the snowflake analogy. At first glance all snowflakes appear similar but when placed under a microscope up close, they are seen for what they really are – 100% unique. The same is true for brain science. Studies have shown that our brains are like our fingerprints; unique identifiers though housed in a similar anatomical structure. Yale University researchers proved this using functional-based magnetic resonance imaging, studying 268 different regions of the brain. Ultimately, they determined that each brain performs in its own way*. Similarly, businesses may appear to experience the same performance challenges, by industry or region for example, but in fact, each faces unique challenges and opportunities.

Therefore, tailored training solutions are essential to growing a business or developing the potential of its human capital.

GSU's new Director of Corporate and Community Education at School of Extended Learning, Cynthia Staples, wants every potential training client to experience this customized approach. "I always start by listening and asking questions to really uncover the breadth of needs, challenges and opportunities for growth. Then, I work to pair the right instructor, format and content plan to develop training that works for all involved."



This approach has worked well for School of Extended Learning (SXL) in the past. Chief operating Officer Brian Kluge at National Tube Supply in University Park knew from his initial meeting with SXL's previous Director that he had selected the right business partner to help his supervisors reach their potential. "I wanted a program where we could not only teach basic leadership skills but also engage the employees to provide more of a one-on-one experience." At the suggestion of his Director of Human Resources Kraig Kistingner, a partnership with SXL was forged.

According to Kraig, "Not only did SXL take our suggested competency topics into consideration but they brought the individual instructors on-site for a planning session to walk through the course content and develop a multi-visit program that was not only educational and engaging, but very specific to our organization. I think our employees were a little surprised at how Governors State University made the topics and work sessions so applicable." said Brian.

For a quick no-cost consultation, visit the new "Request a Training" form online to tell us about your unique business challenges or talent development needs. **Go to www.govst.edu/request-training.** ▲

* Yale University study: <https://news.yale.edu/2015/10/12/imaging-study-shows-brain-activity-may-be-unique-fingerprints>.

The Godfather of Communication

Family can sometimes be an obstacle to study time, but it can also be the best motivation there is. The Regalado family can testify to that. The family that studies together will...graduate. That's Luis Regalado's plan. A 44-year old U.S. Navy Veteran of the Gulf War, who works as a senior manager at a financial institution, Luis attended a Governors State University workshop at Triton College in summer of 2017 entitled "What Can I Do with a Bachelors' in Communication?" delivered by Professor Dr. David Felix.

From the information he learned there, he was able to enroll in the Communication program delivered on-site at Triton College through a School of Extended Learning academic partnership agreement. Students receive their Associates Degree through Triton College, and transfer credits to a Bachelor's degree with courses delivered by faculty from GSU's Colleges of Arts and Sciences.

"It was the right fit for me as a working adult with family. I have three little ones," Luis shared. "Communication is a universal skill."

Regalado didn't stop there. He recruited his 22-year old godson, Andres to join him. A passionate advocate for youth, Luis finds time to give back and enjoys challenging children to be their best. "I told Andres, why go pay more at a university downstate, when Triton is so convenient."

Andres is now enrolled and keeps a rigorous course schedule, which will allow him to graduate in spring 2021.

"What was cool was finding that Andres and I had some of the same classes. We study together. Thursday is study time, but it's also bonding time," Regalado shared. "We go to his house, since I have the little ones."

What does Luis hope to do with his degree in Communication? "Once I finish, I will be looking for other opportunities at my current company, and if they don't align, I am considering entrepreneurship. You have to rely on networking. It's sometimes

who you know and how you communicate. The best way of communicating is listening. The Triton program is unique. I am developing relationships with the other students. We are all working adults who bring unique perspectives. Some are business owners, some like politics. We have this kind of fraternity/sorority bond which makes for a cohesive classroom. These students come to shine."

Luis continues to recruit for the program. Why?

His motto — "It is easier to guide a child than fix a young adult." ▲



Back to Work, Back to You

Heather Haynes-Jones found her niche through a forced job transition. She had been working as a General Manager at a local corporate hotel when it was sold to a franchise that had its own management team in place. Always proactive, Heather had already earned her Associates Degree from Joliet Junior College, so she visited their Downtown Resource Center for job search support. There she learned about the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA); a federally funded grant program that assists unemployed individuals in entering or returning to the workforce by providing education and training vouchers to dislocated workers. Governors State University offered WIOA-approved programs, but the one she wanted (a Bachelor's degree in Communication), was not yet approved.

To her surprise, the team at GSU's School of Extended Learning went through the process to get the degree approved, just for her. This was the fall of 2012—the start of an ongoing relationship with GSU, and the turning point in her career.

In November 2013, Haynes-Jones had been asked to speak at a meeting of the Chicago Southland Chamber's Hospitality and Education Committee. Her co-presenter was from GSU, and that meeting led to her being invited to join the committee and lend her valuable expertise.

"Soft skills training was the number one opportunity for the hotels," she told them. Shortly after she was asked to handle all the marketing and communications for the Chamber.

"Because I had the communications skills, from a human relations perspective, my network just kept expanding," Haynes-Jones shared. "After the sitting Chamber President left in 2016, I was asked to step into the role. I wanted to be the change that I wished to see. That's what WIOA gave me. It made me a better person."

Heather Haynes-Jones is now the Downtown Property Manager for the Village of Park Forest, where she recruits retail and service businesses to establish a presence in the community. Contact hjones@vopf.com for partnership opportunities. ▲

"Because I had the communications skills, from a human relations perspective, my network just kept expanding,"



Heather Haynes-Jones



SXL Team Member Joins Youth Council (2020)

Director of Academic Partnerships, Michelle Sebasco (MA) joins the Workforce Investment Board of Will County's Youth Council (2020)! She will lend her experience advising youth to help shape workforce development programs that benefit all youth and youth services providers. The Workforce Board's Youth Council is part of a comprehensive community workforce development system for Will County. The Council is currently co-chaired by Susan Flessner (Workforce Services Division of Will County) and Michele Stipe (Nustream Enterprises). ▲



Michelle Sebasco

A Different Kind of Benefit Plan



Current benefits trends says that a “comprehensive and holistic wellness program will help employees change their lifestyle and make better choices, resulting in higher productivity and job satisfaction. Millennials, more than any other group, factor in benefits like health and wellness programs in deciding whether to take or remain in a job.”

- * **61%** of employees agree that they have made healthier lifestyle choices because of their company’s wellness program
~Aflac Benefits Survey
- * Highly engaged teams show **21%** greater profitability
~Forbes.com
- * Only **34%** of employees feel engaged in their work
~Gallup

You’ve heard of workplace wellness programs where you’ve had to weigh yourself in a room full of colleagues, count points or track every meal. The Well-Being-at-Work plan is different. It capitalizes on potential, focuses passion, and directs both towards engagement in purpose-driven work. The program, being offered through School of Extended Learning, helps human resources departments cultivate an engaged workforce, through investing in the empowerment of workers and establishing a relationship of trust.

The plan includes a comprehensive look at the link between stress-reduction and weight management, convenient on-site wellness workouts that won’t damage the joints, a longevity workshop showcasing lessons from the Blue Zones (where the world’s highest concentrations of centenarians are living,) engagement activities, and more! It even offers access to a nutritional assessment APP that is as easy as going to the eye doctor and viewing an image of your typical diet to determine a baseline nutritional profile.

“Employers who invest in the plan on behalf of their employees are showing that they value employee engagement. When employees are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to manage their own health, they are more motivated and productive.

You get a team that’s invested because you showed them you care,” says Sharon Morrissey, Director of Strategic Initiatives at School of Extended Learning. **“Research shows that wellness plans do more for company morale, employee alignment with company goals and workplace productivity than other benefits do.”**

Visit
www.govst.edu/wellbeing-at-work
for details. ▲



X-ceptional Partner Thornton Fractional

"In mid-November, I took on my new role as director and immediately began working with Tammy Johnson to implement programs that were beginning in January. Ms. Johnson and other school district members were instrumental in providing all of the immediate support that was needed to get this year's class schedule up and running. The school staff in this district are a professional team that works tirelessly to keep the needs of their students first."

Cynthia Staples
Director of Corporate and
Community Education, SXL

This is my second year as Superintendent of Thornton Fractional 215 and of the external partnerships we have, I tout our partnership with Governors State University (GSU) as one of the best. Our collaboration with Governors State, through the ongoing efforts of our 21st Century Grant Coordinator, Ms. Tammy Johnson, continues to contribute positively to student outcomes. Ms. Johnson is instrumental in strengthening this partnership as she is able to work directly with the Director of Corporate and Community

Education at GSU to brainstorm how to improve program quality and create programs that are relevant to our students' interests. Because of these robust conversations, we collaborated with Governors State to offer three viable programs during the 2018-2019 school year: 3D-Printing, SAT Prep, and STEAM Exposure Mentoring. We were ecstatic to learn that students who enrolled in the GSU SAT Prep class had an average increase on their SAT performance by more than 60 points. We are confident our partnership with Governors State is impactful. Therefore, we added college writing and presentation to our three program offerings. As more pre-K-12 public institutions recognize the immeasurable importance of collaborating with higher education to create a seamless PK-16 pipeline, I cannot say enough about our partnership. They are, and continue to be, viable partners in preparing our students for life beyond high school. I look forward to collaborating and expanding even further our program offerings through Governors State University. ▲



Dr. Teresa A. Lance

Dr. Teresa A. Lance is currently the Superintendent of Thornton Fractional High School District 215 in Lansing, Illinois. Prior to serving in this capacity, Dr. Lance was a School Leadership Officer in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where she was responsible for more than 11,000 students.

Exchange: The Longevity Tonic?

Designed for the retired and semi-retired, The Knowledge Exchange is a lifelong learning program built on a peer-learning model where the class leaders are apt to gain as much knowledge from the students as they offer to them. Courses are non-credit and led by volunteers made up of community experts, GSU alumni and faculty.

On Fridays, during the lunch hour in GSU's cafeteria, you will run into Exchange students ranging in age from 55 to 90. It is clear that this seemingly forever young group must have found the secret to longevity—in each other.

Here is what students say about what The Knowledge Exchange means -to them:

With apologies to Robert Frost, The Knowledge Exchange is a chance to **follow the “roads not traveled”** because adult responsibilities once demanded all our energy. In the process, meet similarly curious, congenial seniors who share your passion.

~Joyce Semmler

The delivery is scholarly but always presented in **a spirit of congeniality**. The atmosphere is one of cooperation and collaboration. Lunch hour is a great way to meet your fellow scholars. **Conversation** ranges from topics discussed in class, prior experiences, fascinating hobbies, current events, travel,

children, grandchildren, gossip, the “old days,” and who you knew when and where.

~Cheryl Ziering

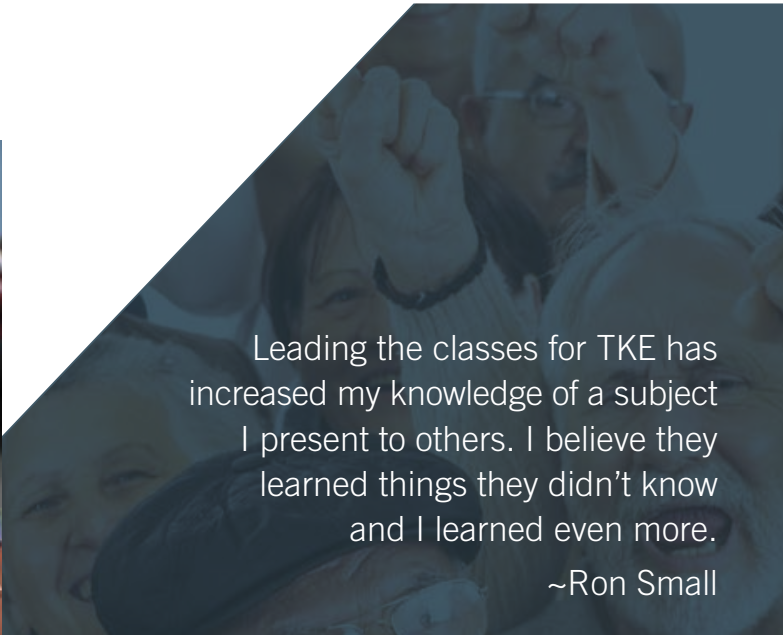
For me, The Knowledge Exchange is taking part in a **feast of ideas, exploring a range of topics**, from the fun of The Beatles and their influence, a variety of history topics, to a deeper knowledge of current events through the Great Decisions, Foreign Policy Association -- and much more. And doing this along with a large group of interesting, enjoyable and motivated lifelong learners.

~ Joan Sanders

“The Knowledge Exchange fills several needs for me. The classes stimulate questions, expose me to new and different ideas and points of view as well as giving me an opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones. I also enjoy reading the Phoenix student newspaper and attending events at the performing arts center.”


~ Izzy Simard ▲





Leading the classes for TKE has increased my knowledge of a subject I present to others. I believe they learned things they didn't know and I learned even more.

~Ron Small



For information,
visit www.govst.edu/tke.



The Knowledge Exchange is a wonderful way to meet new people and learn new things so that **my aging brain does not stagnate but continues to grow** and experience new ideas.

~Christine Small



Love for the LEP Community Spurs Advocacy

Akiko Ota has always had a heart for bilingual and International Education, but it was her own personal practicum teaching experience in Portland, Oregon that illuminated a new personal mission. That was in 2002. Ota, an immigrant from Japan, had travelled to the United States to study ESL, in the hopes of returning home. Her practicum ignited a passion for teaching here in the U.S., where the need for English learning is growing at a record pace. In Cook County, approximately one in six households have a limited-English proficient (LEP) member.

Now, eighteen years later, Ota is taking a leading role in advocating for this community. As the Director of the English Language Learning Center (ELLC) at Governors State University, she wakes up every day with one primary goal—to serve students who want to master the English language. The ELLC believes that language is the key to inclusion, community connection and job readiness. Ota makes sure that the programs she offers go far beyond the basics—she wants the LEP community to feel complete confidence when communicating, whether in writing, speaking or engaging in online forums.

With this focus in mind, she takes the programs wherever there is a need.



Currently, Ota is partnering with local school districts to teach ESL to parents of local students in their districts, because language has the power to lift entire families and communities out of poverty and into greater career opportunities. She also offers a community program that divides an Intensive English Program curriculum into manageable sections, so students can focus solely on what they need (grammar, reading, writing, etc.).

Ota's work on behalf of the LEP community does not stop with the ELLC. Her belief in advocacy has led her to run for board positions in state-level organizations: Illinois TESOL/Bilingual Education (www.itbe.org) and International Educators of Illinois (<http://ieillinois.org/iei/>).

She currently serves as Vice President and Convention Chair of Illinois TESOL and Bilingual Education, working with volunteer Board members to promote and support scholarship and professional interest, research and instruction in the teaching of standard English to speakers of other languages or dialects. In this role, she is actively planning ITBE's 45th Annual Convention held in early 2020, "Looking Back to Leap Forward". At the conference, the TESOL community took a historical look at teaching practices to find a path forward for future success.

Ota says, "English learners come from diverse cultural, linguistic, educational and personal backgrounds, and their learning needs differ greatly from native English-speaking students. My mission is to take a whole-person approach – to understand who students are as people is crucial."

To receive a copy of her latest article, "Current Enrollment Trends for Intensive English Programs," like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/GSUSXL/ ▲



English learners come from diverse cultural, linguistic, educational and personal backgrounds, and their learning needs differ greatly.

Illinois State Cannabis Certification Course: Responsible Vendor Training Led by Illinois Equity Staffing

Visit www.govst.edu/sxl for upcoming course dates.



The four hour training course fulfills the two hour requirement set by the state of Illinois for licensing dispensary agents/budtenders and those handling cannabis along that chain. Also included is an hour of intensive focus on education about the bill and its roots in social equity. Topics include Proper Cannabis Usage, Storage and Disposal, Packaging & Labeling, safety and security, inspections, inventory, and more. There is also a bonus mandatory module on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

Students will complete the required exam, earn a certification of completion, and the Illinois Equity Staffing firm will add your name to the state registry as completing this mandatory course. All materials provided. ▲

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