

Special IT HR Policy Statement

Item from Minutes of University Systems of Georgia Board of Regents Meeting, November 10 – 11, 1998 held at Dalton State College. This special policy was continued through November 2002 by the vote of the Board at its November 2001 meeting.

2. Approval of Changes to Personnel Policy to Address Emergency Needs in Regard to the Recruitment and Retention of Information Technology Professionals

Approved: The Board approved a series of changes to personnel policy to address emergency needs in the recruitment and retention of information technology professionals, as follows:

- 1) That the earnings limitation on rehiring of retirees be changed to allow retirees to be employed up to one-half of a full-time schedule. (This would make the current policy consistent with Teachers Retirement System requirements and provide greater incentive for experienced retirees to return to work. Institutions would be required to meet additional costs within existing operating budgets.)
- 2) That institutions be given greater flexibility in relation to the Board's annual salary administration policy to redirect internal funds and make salary adjustments based on market and employee turnover considerations.
- 3) That institutions be allowed to make mid-year salary adjustments on an exception basis and without prior approval to retain personnel in strategic/critical positions. (Institutions would be required to fund adjustments within existing operating budgets.)
- 4) That the current policy allowing for extra compensation to faculty be extended to information technology personnel using similar criteria for determining eligibility. The current policy provides that faculty may earn extra compensation for work in addition to normal duties where no other qualified person is available to carry the work as part of his/her normal load. Additional work may not interfere with regular work duties.

Regent Coleman asked that the staff draw tight guidelines on item 4 above to avoid abuse. The Committee amended this item by requiring that the policy changes be reviewed in two years.

Procedures necessary for the implementation of these changes will be developed by Central Office staff and incorporated into personnel procedures.

Background: The problem of recruiting and retaining information technology services personnel has reached a critical stage in the University System of Georgia and appears to be worsening. A recent Wall Street Journal article highlights Georgia's plight with respect to this issue by reporting that State agencies in Georgia are experiencing a 27% vacancy rate in information technology openings. The same article reported that the State Merit System asked for supplements of 10% to 30% on top of base salaries for information

technology positions. Both the University System of Georgia and the State of Georgia are in the process of implementing major new software systems as well as attempting to meet year 2000 compliance. This has increased competition for key information technology personnel across the State, which may already be a factor in Office of Instruction and Information Technology's ("OIIT") recent high staff turnover.

In Spring 1998, the Task Force on Recruitment and Retention of Technology Service Personnel issued a report which describes many of the problems associated with recruiting and retaining qualified information technology personnel. It highlights a recent study by the Gartner Group, a nationally recognized consulting organization in information technology, which indicates that employee turnover rates in information technology now hover between 12% and 20%, up from the traditional 6% to 10% rates of a few years ago. This trend is evident within the University System. According to the task force report, the University System of Georgia experienced 124 employee resignations or terminations in 1996-1997, with the majority of those leaving accepting employment in the private sector. The task force report states that 21% of all information technology personnel who resigned in 1996-1997 were employed by OIIT.

While OIIT and the University System of Georgia institutions have made efforts to address this issue within the limits of their administrative authority, existing personnel policies inhibit the flexibility of University System member institutions to resolve major recruitment and retention issues, particularly in the area of compensation.

The Human Resource Advisory Committee is charged with evaluating and recommending changes to personnel policies and has reviewed this issue extensively, although its focus has been in the broader context of developing recruitment and retention strategies for all critical employee classifications. In order to provide relief to the emerging crisis in hiring and retaining qualified information technology personnel, the policy changes described above, which required Board approval and which would apply only to information technology personnel, were recommended for immediate Board consideration and action.