



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia No. 3, January 26, 2009

“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

Chancellor to Legislators: ‘Do Not Mistake the Urgent for the Important’

Over the course of two hours on Jan. 22, Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr. presented and defended Gov. Sonny Perdue’s Fiscal Year 2010 budget recommendations for the University System of Georgia (USG) to members of the Georgia General Assembly’s Joint Appropriations Committee.

His main message to legislators, both in his presentation and in answering the many questions that followed was that, with a \$2 billion budget shortfall looming over this legislative session, “We must not make decisions that mistake the urgent for the important.

“We recognize the gravity of the situation, and we want – and we are – doing our part in these tough times,”

Davis said. “We are not a cost to the state and its citizens – we are an investment. We are not a problem; we are a solution. We are the agency of state government that brings solutions and knowledge for today and more critically, for tomorrow. The risk we are trying to manage is not for today, but for the future – Georgia’s next generation of leaders, teachers, doctors, nurses and business professionals, all of whom will serve the state.

“The decisions that you as legislators make about resources today will have an effect not so much next year, but for the class graduating in 2015. If we cannot meet our goal of [producing] 20,000 teachers by 2020, this will have negative consequences for our

economy. If we can’t produce more doctors and nurses as we have promised, this will negatively impact Georgia’s citizens, businesses and communities. To do these things in the future takes investment today.”

Davis pointed out that the USG is now supporting 33,000 more students than is provided for by the current formula funds, which were appropriated in FY 2007 and reflect the number of students being educated in 2005.

“There is no way we can support 33,000 additional students and provide the technology, quality instruction and support we do without achieving significant efficiencies,” he said, mentioning the System’s shared-services project (consolidating back-office operations) and the extent to which the USG has embraced Lean Six Sigma efficiency training.

The System is “striving to provide access and maintain academic



Chancellor Davis

quality in the face of exploding volumes and diminished resources,” Davis noted. Although the Governor’s FY 2010 budget recommendations reflect a \$147.7 million increase in the University System’s formula funding, they also include reductions of \$249.8 million –10.9 percent of the USG’s budget.

“The net change is a \$102 million reduction, even as we add 33,000 students beyond the formula funding,” he said.

The University System’s teaching pro-

A Moment of Your Time

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grams are being asked to absorb \$197 million of the System's total FY 2010 reductions. Another \$14 million will be taken from the USG's special funding initiatives, while \$31.1 million will come from reductions to line-item programs, impacting programs such as Georgia Public Libraries, the agricultural experiment stations and the Cooperative Extension Service.

The chancellor provided legislators with a sampling of the recommended cuts to the USG's teaching programs, including:

- ◆ \$184.5 million in formula funds for the USG campuses;
- ◆ a \$1 million cut to the budget of the **Georgia Tech** Regional Engineering Program in Savannah, which had a total of \$4.6 million in state support before this reduction;
- ◆ a \$1.8 million reduction to **Georgia**

USG Fast Facts – A Handy New Resource

As part of ongoing efforts to provide information on the University System of Georgia (USG) to key constituents – specifically the System's funding partners in the General Assembly – the Office of External Affairs has launched a USG Government Relations website that includes a new online resource "USG Fast Facts," ready-to-use facts related to and regarding public higher education, the University System of Georgia and its institutions.

The USG Fast Facts feature will be active for the legislative session – January through the end of April. The link to the Government Relations site is <http://www.usg.edu/government/>. 

Southern University's Information Technology (IT) Program, which would effectively eliminate all state funding for this program in FY 2010;

- ◆ \$3.7 million in cuts at **Middle Georgia College**, funds needed to support the college's aviation program; and
- ◆ \$1.4 million in cuts for the public service institutes, such as the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the **University of Georgia**, the Fiscal Research Center and the Health Policy Center at **Georgia State University**, and the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Ser-

vice and Research at **Kennesaw State University**.

The recommended cuts to the USG's special funding initiatives include:

- ◆ a reduction of \$5.8 million for all initiatives;
- ◆ a \$1.2 million reduction to the budget for **Georgia College & State University's** mission as a liberal arts college, funds which help the institution to maintain small class sizes;
- ◆ a \$0.6 million reduction to the leadership mission at **North Georgia College & State University**, Georgia's military college, which just had one of its cadets named the number one Army ROTC cadet in the nation;
- ◆ a \$1.2 million reduction to the Georgia Leadership Institute, which supports the

training of school principals and other school leaders.

The recommended cuts to line-item programs include:

- ◆ the elimination of the Student Education Enrichment Program (SEEP) at the **Medical College of Georgia** (MCG) (\$0.3 million), which provides educational opportunities to underrepresented Georgians;
- ◆ a 34 percent reduction (\$6.1 million) to the budget of the Advanced Technology Development Center;
- ◆ a 29 percent reduction (\$9.4 million) to the budget of the Research Consortium; and
- ◆ a 13.6 percent reduction (\$1.1 million) to the budget of the **Georgia Tech** Research Institute.

Turning briefly to the Governor's recommen-

Correction

A list of members of the House Higher Education Committee in last week's issue incorrectly identified **Michael Harden** of Cordele as **Buddy Harden**. *Legislative Update* apologizes for the confusion this may have created.

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Chancellor

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dations for the USG's Amended FY 2009 Budget, Chancellor Davis told legislators that the reductions would shave 9.5 percent or \$219.4 million off the \$2.3 billion base budget, leaving an amended budget of \$2.1 billion.

The recommended FY 2009 reductions outlined by the chan-

cellor in his presentation include \$1.2 million of the \$1.8 million in total state funding for *Georgia Southern's* IT program, which supports the university's faculty; \$0.3 million (all FY 2009 state funding) for MCG's SEEP program; and \$1.1 million of the \$5 million in total state funding for the advanced communications supporting USG faculty.

Next Up...

Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr. will appear before the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee to continue to address questions about the Governor's Fiscal Year 2010 budget recommendations at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 27, in Room 515 of the Coverdell Legislative Office Building.

"I understand how tough times are," Chancellor Davis said. "Together, we absolutely must understand the importance of our decisions not just for the

moment or for the next fiscal year, but for the long term. If you believe the economy will be robust in the future, then invest now." 🏛️