



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia No. 7, February 23, 2009

“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

Status of Key Legislation of Interest to the University System of Georgia

The General Assembly passed the halfway point of the 2009 Legislative Session this past week – Thursday was Day 21 of the 40-day session.

University System of Georgia (USG) officials are monitoring the progress of dozens of bills that are of interest to the System. The following list presents a progress report on those bills.

University System of Georgia Legislation

House Bill 266 – This legislation will protect years of service for a group of employees of the former Technical College System of Georgia Aviation Technical College that were transferred to Middle Georgia College as part of the merger of the aviation program with MGC and thus transferred from the Employees’ Retirement System to the Teachers Retirement System.

Sponsor: Rep. Jimmy Pruett of Eastman

Status: Retirement bills must be introduced in the first year of the legislative biennium term to provide time to conduct an actuarial study. This legislation is under review by the House Retirement Committee and will be acted on during the 2010 legislative session.

Other Bills and Resolutions of Interest

Senate Bill 45 – This legislation seeks to revise the requirements for the nursing-education programs required for licensure as an advanced practice registered nurse, registered professional nurse, or licensed practical nurse.

Sponsor: Sen. Seth Harp of Midland

Status: The House Health and Human Services Committee is reviewing the bill.

Senate Bill 49 – This bill seeks to revise certain provisions relating to nursing-education program requirements for registered professional nurses.

Sponsor: Sen. Lee Hawkins of Gainesville

Status: The House Health and Human Services Committee is reviewing the bill.

FY09 Funds Take Additional 1 Percent Cut

With Georgia tax collections dropping precipitously, **Gov. Sonny Perdue** announced on Feb. 17 that an additional \$131 million will have to be cut from the state’s current year budget, but the 1 percent cuts he ordered for all state agencies would have been much worse if not for the federal stimulus funds Georgia will be receiving.

Perdue reduced his recommendation for the Board of Regents’ Fiscal Year 2009 Amended Budget by an additional \$20.4 million, bringing the cumulative cuts to the University System of Georgia (USG) for FY 2009 to 10.5 percent, or \$239.2 million.

Faced with a 14 percent drop in tax collections in January, Perdue scaled back the state’s revenue estimate for the remainder of FY 2009 by \$450 million. However, on the strength of the stimulus-funds infusion, the Governor elected to use \$150 million from the state’s FY 2010 reserves to soften the impact of the additional spending cuts on state agencies.

He will announce adjustments to the FY 2010 budget once state officials have had time to analyze the effect of the federal stimulus legislation on Georgia. ☰

Key Legislation *Continued from Page 1...*

Senate Bill 85 – This bill will create the Georgia Aviation Authority. The USG is monitoring this legislation as Middle Georgia College owns planes that could be governed by this authority.

Sponsor: Sen. Bill Heath of Bremen

Status: The House Transportation Committee is reviewing the bill.

Senate Bill 101 – This bill, which is supported by the USG’s four research institutions and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, limits liability for certain drug and medical-device manufacturers and sellers.

Sponsor: Sen. Bill Cowser of Athens

Status: The Senate Economic Development Committee is reviewing the bill.

Senate Bill 169 – This legislation would make it unlawful for any person or entity to intentionally or knowingly create or attempt to create an in-vitro human embryo by any means other than fertilization of a human egg by a human sperm. It also provides for standards for physicians and facilities performing in vitro fertilizations.

Sponsor: Sen. Ralph Hudgens of Hull

Status: The Senate Health and Human Services Committee is reviewing the bill.

Senate Resolution 140 – If passed, this legislation will create the Senate Study Committee on Consolidation of Institutions of Higher Education, which is tasked with examining proposals calling for the Board of Regents to merge Savannah State University with Armstrong Atlantic State University and Albany State University with Darton College.

Sponsor: Sen. Emanuel Jones of Decatur

Status: The Senate Rules Committee is reviewing the bill.

Senate Resolution 173 – This study resolution urges the Board of Regents to establish and offer a teacher education program at each of its universities offering four-year degree programs.

Sponsor: Sen. Lester Jackson of Savannah

Status: The Senate Rules Committee is reviewing the bill.

House Bill 149 – (“Move On When Ready”) This legislation creates a program for 11th and 12th grade students to attend postsecondary colleges and schools for high-school credit and allows K-12 funds for full-time-equivalent students to follow the child if the postsecondary institution accepts them.

Sponsor: Rep. Jan Jones of Alpharetta

Status: The House Rules Committee is reviewing the bill.

House Bill 157 – This legislation places new limits on what the HOPE scholarship program may fund if lottery reserves dip. If, during a fiscal year, the lottery fund receives less than 92 percent of the “highest” year-end balance, then allotments for book purchases may not exceed \$150.00. If the amount is less than 84 percent, then all book-purchase allotments will be eliminated. Finally, if the lottery fund receives less than 75 percent, then all mandatory fees allotted by the benefit program will be eliminated.

Sponsor: Rep. Ben Harbin of Martinez

Status: The Senate Rules Committee is reviewing the bill.



Key Legislation *Continued from Page 2...*

House Bill 294 – This legislation states that the General Assembly must approve the creation, consolidation, suspension, or discontinuation of a technical college or institution under the State Board of Technical and Adult Education and the transfer of such technical college or institution to the Board of Regents.

Sponsor: Rep. Butch Parrish of Swainsboro

Status: The Senate Higher Education Committee is reviewing the bill.

House Bill 313 – This legislation clarifies eligibility requirements for the HOPE scholarship. Specifically, it changes the language regarding eligibility to reflect the fact that the Department of Education no longer issues college-prep or career/technical diplomas, just a single high-school diploma.

Sponsor: Rep. Bill Hembree of Winston

Status: The House Rules Committee is reviewing the bill.

House Bill 391 – This bill would waive the sales tax for a limited period of time on the purchase of any required textbooks for any accredited public or private postsecondary institution in Georgia.

Sponsor: Rep. Bill Hembree of Winston

Status: The House Ways and Means Committee is reviewing the bill.

House Bill 400 – (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy or BRIDGE) This bill gives students a choice of focused programs of study and prepares them for postsecondary studies and careers. If passed, guidance counselors and graduation coaches would be trained in the available opportunities for students in all areas, including going to a four-year college or tech school. Parents and guardians would be involved in their child's graduation plan starting in the eighth grade.

Sponsor: Rep. Fran Millar of Dunwoody

Status: The House Education Committee is reviewing the bill.

House Resolution 165 – This resolution requests that four-year colleges and universities of the University System of Georgia help make Georgia the # 1 DESTINATION FOR ENTREPRENEURS in the United States of America by developing and expanding education for the support of science, innovation, technology, energy and new Georgia entrepreneurs.

Sponsor: Rep. Bob Smith of Watkinsville

Status: The House Rules Committee is reviewing the bill.

House Resolution 166 – This resolution creates the Joint SITE TO GROW GEORGIA, Alternative Financing, and Entrepreneurship Study Committee. The author states that science, innovation, technology and energy (SITE), as well as alternative forms of investing public funds and greater support for the growth of entrepreneurship, are essential elements for making Georgia the #1 DESTINATION FOR ENTREPRENEURS in the United States of America.

Sponsor: Rep. Bob Smith of Watkinsville

Status: The House Economic Development and Tourism Committee is reviewing the bill. 

