



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia No. 8, March 2, 2009

“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

House Approves FY 2009 Amended Budget With Few Changes

The Georgia House approved its version of the Fiscal Year 2009 Amended Budget on Feb. 26, differing in only a few respects with Gov. Sonny Perdue’s revised recommendations.

The most significant of the recommended changes the committee made included:

- ◆ adding back \$609,000 of the \$1.2 million cut from Georgia Southern University’s Information Technology

- program, rather than eliminate the program entirely;
- ◆ restoring the \$267,000 cut to the Research Consortium;
- ◆ adding back \$401,000 to the Georgia Public Libraries to offset a reduction of \$2.7 million;
- ◆ giving \$130,000 to the *Georgia Tech* Research Institute for an agricultural workplace safety program; and

- ◆ restoring the \$98,000 cut to the Southern Regional Education Board.

The total reduction for the FY 2009 Budget stands at \$238.7 million or 10.4 percent for the University System as a whole.

The FY 2009 Amended Budget has now moved to the Senate for action. A Conference Committee will then reconcile any differences between the House and Senate versions. 🏛️

Nickel Optimistic About Impact of Stimulus Funds

Shelley Nickel, associate vice chancellor for planning and implementation, says she is “very encouraged” about the impact of the anticipated federal stimulus funds on the University System of Georgia (USG).

“There are lots of opportunities for us to not only maintain momentum in educating students but also to jump-start research projects,” said, Nickel,

who is the System’s point person on President Barack Obama’s stimulus package, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan (ARRP).

Nickel represented the University System when Gov. Sonny Perdue met with state agency heads this past week to discuss the portion of the federal stimulus funds coming to Georgia. The staff of the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB)



is still crunching the numbers to determine how much will be distributed to state agencies.

See “STIMULUS,” Page 2 ...

Bill Would Allow Multi-Year Contracts

Another piece of legislation of interest to the University System of Georgia was introduced this past week in the Georgia General Assembly.

Sponsored by Sen. Ronnie Chance of Tyrone, Senate Bill 194 amends the current Code to allow state agencies to benefit from multi-year leasing.

The Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) is working with several state agencies, including the University System of Georgia, and interested private-sector participants to pass this legislation.

Current law prevents performance contractors and investors from entering into agreements with state agencies. With the passage of this legislation, institutions will be able to enter into multi-year contracts for construction, goods, real estate, etc., which will allow for energy/performance savings.

See “BILL,” Page 2 ...

Stimulus

Continued from Page 1...

The University System’s request for stimulus funds, submitted to OPB by USG Chief Operating Officer **Rob Watts** on Feb. 18, focuses on three different areas:

- ◆ a request for State Stabilization Funds to offset funding formula reductions recommended for the USG’s Fiscal Year 2009 and 2010 budgets and also for “a long, exhaustive and shovel-ready list” of needed repairs and renovations, including energy projects;
- ◆ multiple opportunities to capture stimulus funding that will be coming to other state agencies, such as the Georgia Environmental Facilities

Authority (GEFA) and the Governor’s Offices of Workforce Development and Student Achievement, by joining forces towards a common goal; and

- ◆ multiple research opportunities in the areas of biomedicine, energy efficiency and the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields presented via grants offered by the departments of Education and Energy, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, etc.

“We are poised and ready to submit grant proposals to the appropriate funding agencies,” Watts said of the research opportunities.

“The stimulus package includes \$15 billion to intensify research in energy efficiency, biomedicine (cancer, Parkinson’s disease, heart disease) and innovation and manufacturing,” added Nickel. “Our research universities will diligently pursue these new research grants following the processes set up by the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy.”

“We stand ready to move once the funds and program requirements are available,” Watts concluded in submitting the University System’s request.

Nickel said accountability and transpar-

Bill

Continued from Page 1...

The bill was introduced on Feb. 24 and passed out of the Senate Finance Committee on Feb. 26. It is currently in the Senate Rules committee. 🏠

ency are the hallmarks of the ARRP – all stimulus funds released to the state will be coded so that they can be closely tracked both at the state and federal levels. Agencies will be required to maintain websites reporting revenues received, expenditures, jobs created, jobs retained and contracts let as a result of the funds, she noted. 🏠