



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia No. 10, March 16, 2009

“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

## FY 2009 Amended Budget Passes and is Signed

Last week, the Georgia Assembly approved and **Gov. Sonny Perdue** signed into law a Fiscal Year 2009 Amended Budget for the state of Georgia totaling \$18.9 billion – well over 10 percent less than legislators had planned to spend before the recession necessitated a series of budget cuts.

“This is a budget that focuses on the core services of government,”

said Perdue. “We have made effective use of federal stimulus dollars and the state’s rainy day fund, which we worked so hard to build up, to lessen the impact of this economic downturn and plan for next year’s budget. Through sound management by our agency leaders and wise decisions by lawmakers, Georgia will endure a challenging economy and emerge ready to prosper.”

The Amended Budget includes the pay raises for the state’s teachers that were granted at the beginning of the current school year.

There are two changes of note in the portion of the budget for the University System of Georgia (USG). The final version of the FY 2009 Amended Budget:

- restored the full \$1.2 million cut to **Georgia**

**Southern University’s** Information Technology program; and

- restored \$442,000 to the budget of the **Georgia Public Library System** (GPLS), offsetting the total recommended reduction for GPLS of \$3.3 million.

The net reduction to the USG’s FY 2009 Amended Budget totals \$238 million. ☰

## Crossover-Day Report: What Made It, What Didn’t

Thursday – Day 30 of the legislative session – was Crossover Day, one of the most important days of the 40-day law-making process, because it is the deadline by which a bill must clear at least one chamber of the General Assembly if it is to stay alive in the current session.

House and Senate calendars are generally long on Crossover Day, as each chamber attempts to pass as many

of its own propositions as possible before taking up the business of the other chamber. Thursday’s calendar did not wrap up until close to midnight.

### Stayin’ Alive

Among the bills that successfully made the leap between chambers is **House Bill 700**, which would shift oversight of the construction of all University System of Georgia (USG) and Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) buildings to the same

state agency that supervises construction of other government structures, the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC). Rep. **Bob Smith** of Watkinsville, who said the legislation aims to establish a speedier, more efficient process, introduced the bill on March 6. HB 700 passed the House on March 12 with a vote of 97-69.

Also surviving Crossover Day was **Senate Bill 169**, otherwise

known as the “Ethical Treatment of Human Embryos Act,” which has been followed closely by the USG’s research institutions. The version of the bill that passed the Senate 34-22 aims to prevent human cloning and the creation of a human embryo for any purpose other than to make a baby.

Other legislation that made the leap on Crossover Day included **House Bill 313**, clari-

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## Crossover-Day Report

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fying HOPE Scholarship requirements. This bill passed the House 158-0.

### Dead and Gone

Bills that failed to clear their originating chamber this year include:

**Senate Bill 101**, limiting liability for certain drug and medical-device manufacturers and sellers;

**House Bill 391**, waiving the sales tax on textbook purchases;

**House Resolution 166**, creating the Joint SITE TO GROW GEORGIA Alternative Financing, and Entrepreneurship Study Committee; and

**House Resolution 532**, creating a Joint Study Committee on Nursing Education in Georgia.

### Never at Risk

A number of bills being followed by USG officials passed from one chamber to the other before Crossover Day. They include:

**House Bill 149** (“Move On When Ready”), allowing 11th and 12th grade students to leave their assigned high schools to attend a college or technical school, completing graduation requirements while earning college credit. The Senate Education and Youth Committee is currently reviewing this bill;

**House Bill 157**, placing new limits on what the HOPE scholarship program may fund if lottery reserves dip. The Senate Rules Committee is reviewing this bill;

**House Bill 294**, requiring the General Assembly to 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 institu-

tions to the Board of Regents. The Senate Higher Education Committee is reviewing the bill;

**House Bill 400** (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia’s Economy or BRIDGE), giving students a choice of focused programs of study and preparing them for postsecondary studies and careers. The Senate Education and Youth Committee is currently reviewing this bill;

**Senate Bill 45** and **Senate Bill 49**, revising the requirements for nursing-education programs. The House Health and Human Services Committee is reviewing these bills;

**Senate Bill 85**, creating the Georgia Aviation Authority. The House Transportation Committee is reviewing the bill; and

**Senate Resolution 140**, creating the Senate Study Committee on Consolidation of Institutions of Higher Education. The Senate Rules Committee is reviewing the bill.

The following legislation was not subject to the Crossover-Day deadline:

**House Resolution 165**, requesting that the University System of Georgia help make Georgia the # 1 DESTINATION FOR ENTREPRENEURS in the United States by expanding education for the support of science, innovation, technology, energy and new Georgia entrepreneurs. The House Rules Committee continues to review this bill; and

**House Bill 266**, protecting years of service for employees of the former Technical College System of Georgia Aviation Technical College that transferred to *Middle Georgia College* when the two institutions merged. This legislation is under review by the House Retirement Committee and will be acted on during the 2010 legislative session. 🏠