

The System Supplement

A report of the Georgia Board of Regents • Vol. 46, No. 5 • May 2009

“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

USG a National Leader in Increasing Production of Teachers, Especially Minorities

Though much work remains, the University System of Georgia (USG) has made great strides in its efforts to produce teachers to work in Georgia’s K-12 schools, according to officials in charge of the System’s educator-preparation program. This includes not only graduating more teachers but improving diversity and the retention of teachers in K-12 schools.

During an update to the Board of Regents’ Academic Affairs Committee in May, **Dr. Marti Venn**, senior executive director of educator preparation and program improvement in the Department of P-16 Initiatives, reported that the USG produced 4,236 teachers in 2008, an increase of 11 percent over 2007. The number of minority teachers in those ranks also increased by 31 percent during the same period.

“These are among the highest such increases in the country,” said Venn, who noted that, since 2002, when the Regents’ Principles for the Preparation of Educators for the Schools took effect, nearly 25,000 new teachers have gotten

their degrees and entered the classroom, a 59 percent increase, overall.

But quantity is just part of the teacher-preparation equation. “USG quality translates into more teachers in the classroom, higher retention rates and high customer satisfaction,” Venn said. “Teachers prepared by USG institutions are highly sought after – the overwhelming majority of USG-prepared teachers (79 percent in 2007) are hired immediately upon completion of their programs. The two-year retention rate for USG-prepared teachers is 89 percent compared to 76 percent for non-USG graduates. And 98 percent of school administrators hiring our graduates – our customers – would recommend to their peers the USG institution that prepared them.”



Referring to the USG’s ongoing commitment to meet 80 percent of the state’s need for teachers by 2020, Venn said, “Will we meet our goal simply by churning out large numbers of new teachers? Absolutely not. We will use a three-tiered approach to continue to strengthen our efforts to ensure that by the year 2020 there will be sufficient numbers of qualified teachers in every classroom in Georgia. First, we will continue to ramp up our efforts to recruit

See “*Teachers*,” Page 2 ...

Regents Approve Faculty Contract Modification

Action Grants USG Presidents Authority to Furlough Employees if Necessary

The Board of Regents approved a plan in May that gives University System of Georgia (USG) presidents the authority to furlough any and all employees, including faculty, should the need arise.

University System officials noted that there are no plans to furlough contract employees in the current fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2009. The regents’ action provides presidents another tool that could be used in meeting any future budget reductions.

“This gives our presidents the flexibility to make furlough decisions for their respective institutions, if the state revenue

situation continues to worsen,” said **Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr.**

Davis noted that the board’s action changes a situation in which one fourth of the University System’s approximately 40,000 employees are excluded by contract from furloughs, but these employees account for approximately one-half of all personnel costs.

“Currently our faculty cannot be furloughed because of legal contracts we sign with them on an annual basis,” Davis said. “The board’s action allows us to insert language into all faculty contracts that clearly outlines that furloughs are a

possibility and to which the signer of a contract agrees.”

The specific contract language approved by the regents is: “Notwithstanding any other provision of this contract, for Fiscal Year 2009-2010, the Board of Regents has authorized the president to implement a mandatory furlough program requiring employees to take not more than 10 days of unpaid leave. In the event it becomes necessary for the president to exercise this authority, employee furloughs will be implemented in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Office of the Chancellor.”

100 Percent of First Class at Carver Early College Graduate

High-school graduation is an important milestone in any high school senior's life. But for 79 students who received diplomas in May from Atlanta's Carver Early College High School, commencement will mark an achievement, not just for each individual, but also for a special program designed with them in mind.

These students are the first graduating class of the University System of Georgia's (USG) Early College Initiative, which strives to raise the high-school and college graduation rates of underserved students. Each of the 79 students has been accepted to at least one two-year or four-year postsecondary institution, including several in the University System. They graduate not only with diplomas in hand but with college credits on their transcripts. And they leave no classmate behind – every single student who enrolled in Carver's Early College program is graduating.

Launched in 2005 at Carver by the Atlanta Public Schools in partnership with *Georgia State University*, the initiative targets student populations underrepresented at USG institutions – low-income minority students, those for whom English is a second language and those who are the first in their family to attend college.

"At one time, Carver High School was rated among the lowest performing schools in the state, with a 36 percent graduation rate in 2004-05," said **Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr.**, who was an honored guest on stage at the commencement. "The students in the first graduating class at Carver Early College are 100 percent minorities and 82 percent first-generation college students. This is a phenomenal achievement, truly remarkable."

In 2004, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded the University System's Pre-School through College (P-16) Department a \$2 million, five-year grant to support the opening of five Early College schools.

See "Early College," Page 4 ...

Derrick Standifer Makes the Leap

Derrick Standifer will probably always think of his sophomore year of high school as the year that changed his life. This was the year he entered Carver Early College High School and began his serious pursuit of a college degree.

Statistics show that, as the first person in his family to graduate high school, Standifer's chances of earning a college degree were very slim, and as a freshman at Booker T. Washington High School, the first black public high school built in Atlanta, he was not very confident that he could succeed in college. But when a friend told him about Early College, where he could earn an associate's degree by the time he graduated high school, he decided to take the challenge.

When Carver gave him the opportunity to take a college course at *Georgia State University*, his lack of confidence returned. "I had some doubt," he admits. "There was so much more freedom." But crediting the Carver faculty and the study group formed at Georgia State, Standifer successfully completed his first college course.

Now 18, Standifer looks back on the past three years and marvels at how much he has accomplished. "I've taken eight more classes at Georgia State and completed a summer study program in Panama and Costa Rica. I've also continued to take some high-school courses at Carver. It's been challenging. You have to have really good study habits."

Standifer also marvels at the opportunities available in his future. "I used to think of colleges in terms of football. Now I have my sights set on some really good schools to complete my bachelor's degree." Volunteer work with Atlanta New Century Schools inspired him, and he plans to use what he's learned to help others follow in his footsteps. "I really liked my economics course, and I really like tutoring, so I plan to be an economics teacher when I graduate." 🏠



Teachers

Continued from Page 1...

and train new teachers; we will provide professional-development opportunities in order to retain good teachers; and we will retrain teachers to meet school needs."

This plan will be accomplished through "the innovative and pioneering work taking place on USG campuses throughout the state and with the help of our K-12 partners and those at the state level – the Department of Education, the Professional Standards Commission and the Student Finance Commission," Venn added.

As Georgia's need for more qualified teachers has grown along with its burgeoning population, the USG has responded by adding new teacher-preparation programs at *Dalton State College* (2004), *Georgia Gwinnett College* and

Macon State College (2005), *Gainesville State College* and *Gordon College* (2006) and the *College of Coastal Georgia* and *Middle Georgia College* (2008). In 2008, 17 USG institutions were involved in preparing educators, and work is under way to add four more to the list.

Among the 17 campuses preparing teachers, the percentage of new teachers produced in 2007 working in Georgia public schools in 2008 ranged from 66 percent to 100 percent, and at nine of these campuses, it was greater than 80 percent.

The USG has also responded to Georgia's increased need for teachers by:

◆ increasing its production of minority teachers by 54 percent since 2004. *Georgia State University* and *Albany State University* have been so

successful that they now rank No. 12 and No. 14 nationally in this regard; and

◆ developing innovative ways of delivering programs, such as offering online master's degrees in teaching through www.GeorgiaONmyLINE.org and "one-stop shopping" for teaching programs and resources at www.destinationteaching.org, which has been heavily used by career-changers considering teaching options.

For more details about the increase in the number of teachers produced and indicators of the quality of these USG graduates, the just-released 2008 Report on the Preparation of New Teachers by University System of Georgia Institutions is posted online at www.usg.edu/p16/resources/PDFs/2008_teacher_prep_report.pdf 🏠

USG Digest

■ Virgil Secasanu, a recent graduate of Georgia Tech, has been named to USA Today's All Academic Team. Secasanu was one of 20 students nationwide named to the team and presented with a \$2,500 cash reward. Judges based their selections on grades, leadership, activities and, most importantly, how students extend their intellectual talents beyond the classroom.



Secasanu's accomplishments go well beyond — the biomedical engineering major worked with a fellow student and a professor to nearly quadruple the output of a laboratory technique used to control the micrometer-scale synthesis of cell scaffolds and then publish their results. Secasanu also worked with several physicians to design and develop medical devices. In his current job as a research and development engineer at an Atlanta medical device startup, Secasanu has been able to design, patent, evaluate and submit for FDA review several novel cardiac devices.

He plans to go to medical school in the fall and hopes to use his passion for medicine and bioengineering to help treat and eradicate ailments.

■ Georgia Perimeter College alumnus Hamilton Cunningham, now a junior at Howard University, is one of only 60 students across the nation to be named a 2009 Truman Scholar. The prestigious scholarship is awarded annually to students who have excelled academically and are committed to careers in public service. The scholarship provides up to \$30,000 to students pursuing graduate degrees in public service fields.



Cunningham was recognized upon graduation from GPC with the \$90,000 Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship, which allowed him to attend Howard University on a full scholarship. A trumpeter and jazz musician, Cunningham hopes one day to start a nonprofit center for the preservation of jazz, helping educate others and foster a sense of community through this music. 🏠

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John Millsaps

ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR

Diane Payne

PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR

To Provide Feedback

write to: diane.payne@usg.edu

Linda Bleicken Named President of Armstrong Atlantic

The Board of Regents in May named Dr. Linda Bleicken, provost and vice president for academic affairs at *Georgia Southern University* in Statesboro since 2005, president of *Armstrong Atlantic State University* (AASU) in Savannah.

“Dr. Bleicken has the fortitude and compassion a leader needs in these challenging times. She has a depth of experience that allows her to have a well-rounded understanding of the direction and goals of the University System of Georgia,” said Chancellor Erroll Davis Jr. “I have no doubt that she will be a great partner for the board in carrying out its strategic goals and policies while leading AASU into the next successful stage of its existence.”

Bleicken will assume her post on July 1. She will replace AASU President Thomas Z. Jones, who will retire June 30, after nine years in office.

Bleicken's service to Georgia Southern — an institution with 17,764 students and eight colleges — includes administrative appointments as: a member of the university's management faculty since 1990; acting provost and vice president for academic affairs from July 2004 to January 2005; vice president for student affairs and enrollment management from 2001 to 2004; associate provost for enrollment

management and information technology from 2000 to 2001; acting provost and vice president for academic affairs from 1998 to 2000; associate dean of the College of Business Administration from 1995 to 1998; and acting chair of the Department of Management from 1994 to 1995.



Bleicken

In addition, Bleicken has served the University System as a member of its Health Professions Task Force (2006), Core Curriculum Committee (2007-2008), Graduation Rate Task Force (2004), Tuition Rate Task Force (2004) and the Task Force to Develop eCore®, the USG's electronic core curriculum (2000).

Bleicken holds a Ph.D. in management earned in 1990, a master of science degree in management also earned in 1990 and a bachelor of business administration degree in marketing earned magna cum laude in 1984, all conferred by *Georgia State University*. 🏠

National Tourney Brings Science Blitz to ASU

Approximately 3,000 middle- and high-school students from around the country with a knack for science and their coaches gathered at *Augusta State University* for the 25th annual National Science Olympiad May 14-17. One of the premier science competitions in the nation, the Science Olympiad seeks to bring excitement to science education and academic competition to the same level of recognition and praise normally reserved for athletic competitions. The national tournament is the culmination of more than 240 regional and state competitions and is held at a different university every year.



After an opening ceremony (left) in which each of the teams sported its own distinctive T-shirt (and, in the case of Wisconsin, cheese hats), the students got down to business, competing in 46 events ranging from astronomy and lab-skills competitions to the “Junkyard Challenge” (above right), where they were charged with constructing devices from spare parts to meet a specific need. 🏠

SAC Establishes Leadership Award

Daniel Sanchez (center), chair of the University System of Georgia Student Advisory Council (SAC) to the Board of Regents, announced at the board's May meeting the establishment of the **Regent Willis J. Potts SAC Leadership Award**, in honor of Potts' (left) outstanding leadership, service and commitment to the Student Advisory Council.



"Regent Potts has been both a leader and a public servant to the University System of Georgia, a mentor to the Student Advisory Council, and a dedicated ally of the student cause by coming to each SAC meeting since 2007," Sanchez said in reading aloud a resolution creating the award. The resolution further commended Potts for his "open, honest and enthusiastic engagement in our activities."

The council – which provides a forum for communication between University System students and the chancellor, the board, state officials and the public – is overseen by **Tonya Lam** (right), associate vice chancellor for student affairs. Sanchez is president of the Student Government Association at **Dalton State College**. 🏠

Early College

Continued from Page 2...

The Robert W. Woodruff Foundation provided an additional \$2 million in matching funds to spread over the next three years.

Including Carver, there are now 12 Early College schools throughout Georgia – each partnered with a USG institution – that essentially provide students with the opportunity to earn up to two years of college or an associate's degree while attending high school. In addition to Carver, they are: Albany Early College, DeKalb Early College Academy (DECA), Early College Academy of Columbus (ECAC), Engineering Early College Academy at Maynard Jackson High School, Georgia College Early College (GCEC), Macon-Bibb Early College, Regional Early Admission for College Hopefuls (REACH) Early College, Risley Early College Academy (RECA), Savannah Early College Academy, Sumter County Schools-Georgia Southwestern Early College (SCS-GSW Early College) and Valdosta Early College Academy (VECA).

"The Georgia Early College Initiative is an intervention strategy for students who may not be well served by traditional middle and high schools," said USG Early College Director **Dawn Cooper**. "The schools provide a rigorous course of study, high expectations and supportive, personalized learning. They strive to

remove the financial, academic and psychological hurdles that prevent too many students from entering and succeeding in college."

"The unique mission of the Early College Initiative is to raise the high-school graduation and postsecondary success rates of underserved youth, and to say we are extremely happy with the outcome at Carver is an understatement," Cooper concluded.

"At Carver Early College, we believe that the early-college model has the potential not just to change the lives of individual students, but also the lives of families and generations to come," said Carver Principal **Marcene Thornton**. "As we graduate Georgia's first early-college students, we celebrate the success of the model and the profound possibilities it holds for changing lives through higher education."

Carver's new graduates are still receiving acceptance letters and mulling over their decisions, but among the institutions they've been accepted to are the University of Georgia, Georgia State University, Howard University, Virginia State, Florida A&M, the University of West Georgia, Albany State, Savannah State, Fort Valley State and Middle Georgia College.

For more information about Georgia's Early Colleges, go to <http://www.gaeearlycollege.org/>. 🏠



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To Provide Feedback
write to: diane.payne@usg.edu