



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia No. 6, Feb. 17, 2005


“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

## Senate Restores Key USG Funds in FY05 Amended Budget

As the FY05 Amended Budget works its way through the General Assembly, the University System received good news on Tuesday with the Senate Appropriations Committee’s restoration of the full \$9.4 million recommended by Gov. Sonny Perdue to help institutions accommodate a shift in the payroll date.

The amended budget is scheduled for a hearing in the full Senate today and then goes to the House-Senate conference

committee.

The \$9.4 million derives from lapsed funds for a research project at the University of Georgia that included a private-sector partner. The project did not materialize due to a change in plans by the private-sector partner. Gov. Perdue decided to use the funds to assist the University System in meeting payroll obligations as a result of the decision in August 2004 to have all FY05 payroll occur in the current fiscal year. 

## Senate Passes Resolution To Create New College In Gwinnett - Moves On To The House

The Board of Regents’ plan to change *Gwinnett University Center* into a free-standing institution passed another milestone on Feb. 8 with the approval of a resolution in the Georgia Senate that would create the state’s first new public college since the 1970’s. The regents’ voted to seek the resolution last October, after discussing the booming enrollment at the facility during a two-day planning retreat.

The Senate resolution passed 50-3. The next step is to have the resolution introduced and passed in the House. It was adopted by the Committee on Higher Education on Tues., Feb. 15.

“It’s obviously a huge thing for Gwinnett County,” said State Sen. Don Balfour (Snellville), who introduced the resolution. “It gives my constituents the option of going to school down the street and getting a

## Largest Educational Partnership in Georgia History Kicks-Off This Week

Getting more Georgians to graduate from high school and attend college is the focus of a major statewide initiative to be launched this Friday (Feb. 18), which brings together the largest educational partnership in Georgia history.

“Education. GO Get It,” also known as “GO,” is the name of the new statewide public/private partnership that will be announced in a kick-off event at the Capitol Education Center before an audience of educators, civic leaders and students.


Participating in the kick-off will be: **Kathy Cox**, State Superintendent of Schools; **Ann Cramer**, Director of Corporate Relations, IBM; **Dr. Thomas Meredith**, Chancellor, University System of Georgia; **Shelley Nickel**, President, Georgia Student Finance Commission; and **Michael Vollmer**, Commissioner, Department of Technical and Adult Education

The new initiative is aimed at improving Georgia’s high-

school graduation rates and increasing the number of Georgians who earn a college degree. The program will include a multimedia engagement campaign, grassroots outreach, and an expansive partnership network.



Georgia’s current high-school graduation rate hovers around 64 percent, and only 28 percent of the state’s 18-24 year olds enroll in college. The GO alliance aims to boost the enrollment rate of these traditional college-aged students to 48 percent by the year 2020, resulting in an additional 192,000 students entering Georgia’s colleges and universities in the next 15 years.

For more information on GO, contact Go Director Brian Dominguez at (404)-463-1996 or: [brian.dominguez@usg.edu](mailto:brian.dominguez@usg.edu) 

good education.”

Speaking about the resolution’s chances in the House, State Rep. **Bill Hembree** (Douglasville) said, “I fully support the

resolution. I will make sure we have a quick hearing so it can be discussed and debated.” Hembree chairs the *See “College for Gwinnett,”*  
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## New College for Gwinnett

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House Higher Education Committee.

If approved by the General Assembly, University System officials would build upon the existing Gwinnett University Center (GUC) infrastructure to form the new institution. **The new college would become the 35th higher education institution in the University System of Georgia – the first created since *Bainbridge*, *East Georgia* and *Waycross* colleges were authorized by the legislature in 1970.**

“The transition from a University Center to a state college in Gwinnett County will increase administrative efficiency and lower the cost of educational programs,” said University System Chancellor **Thomas C. Meredith** at the time of the Board’s initial action in Oct. “The creation of a new institution with

administrative leadership based in the community is the next logical step to take in meeting the exploding demand for higher education in this burgeoning part of the state.”

The transition of the Gwinnett University Center would take place over a three-year period to allow current students to complete their degree programs and plan for their academic future.

The rationale for the new institution emanated from the Board of Regents’ “Statewide Assessment” document that explores options for meeting a projected increase of 200,000 more students in the University System by 2015.

The decision to seek a change in status for the center also was driven by the regents’ current Strategic Plan, which includes among its goals

the need to re-examine the role, structure and organization of university “residence centers” – of which the GUC is one of nine – to assure they are serving the needs of local communities.

A “residence center” is defined as a permanent off-campus location at which one or more University System institutions offer degree programs, while a state college is a stand-alone institution serving regional economic development needs through access and limited baccalaureate degree programs.

**The key factors supporting the rationale to create the new state college include: current size, the current and projected growth rate, the educational cost structure of the GUC compared to the proposed state college, and the institu-**

**tional mission of the new institution.**

Currently, the GUC offers approximately 8,000 students undergraduate and some graduate degree programs through *Georgia Perimeter College*, *the University of Georgia*, *Southern Polytechnic State University* and the *Medical College of Georgia*.

“There is a genuine and real need for this university to exist,” said State Sen. **Seth Harp** (Midland), who chairs the Senate Higher Education Committee. 🏠



## Board Of Regents Holds Three Statewide Forums On Textbook Costs

**I**n response to a growing national concern on the part of students, parents, college and university administrators and elected officials over the price of college textbooks, the **University System of Georgia is holding a series of three public forums on the issue this week.**

The forums were held

Mon., Feb. 14, at *Georgia State University* in Atlanta, Wed., Feb. 16, at *Georgia Southern University* in Statesboro and today, Feb. 17, at *the University of Georgia* in Athens.

“Our purpose in holding these forums is to provide information that will help all interested parties understand the various

factors driving the cost of textbooks,” said Vice Chancellor for Fiscal Affairs **William Bowes**. “We will utilize the information gained from these forums to develop recommendations on future textbook pricing that will be presented to the Board of Regents.”

Each of the three forums included a panel representing students, the textbook industry and university faculty. Senior

Vice Chancellor for Academics and Fiscal Affairs **Dr. Daniel S. Papp** gave a welcome and overview at all three forums. **Jim Flowers**, special assistant to the chief information officer for the University System, served as the moderator.

In addition to presentations by the panelists and a general discussion, the programs accommodated written questions from the audience. 🏠