



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia No. 4, January 30, 2006

“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

Full Funding of Formula Would Hire 250 New USG Faculty

The state’s lawmakers could do public higher education in Georgia a world of good by endorsing Gov. Sonny Perdue’s recommendation to provide full formula funding for the University System of Georgia, according to William Bowes, the Board of Regents’ vice chancellor for fiscal affairs.

In an interview late last week, Bowes outlined the regents’ plans for the System’s \$31.4 million in enrollment earnings, the portion of the formula that reflects a 1.6 percent

increase in credit-hour enrollment. This money fuels the resident instruction operations of all 35 institutions in the University System.

“These funds are critical in providing for additional full-time faculty, adding classes, decreasing class size, reducing part-time faculty and accommodating students’ needs for academic support and student services,” Bowes said. “The game plan is to use a the majority of this money – \$21.4 million – to hire approximately 250 new faculty to meet the demands imposed by

our recent enrollment increases,” he noted.

Another significant piece of the enrollment earnings will go towards institutional and System-wide initiatives focused on improving the University System’s retention, progression and graduation (RPG) rates, one of Board of Regents Chair J. Timothy Shelnut’s four goals this year. Among other things, these initiatives will work to reduce class size and the use of part-time faculty and provide students with additional academic support and services, Bowes said. The plan is to put \$2.2 million towards institutional initiatives and \$1 million toward the System’s strategic allocation for RPG, he said.

Another \$2.6 million of the enrollment funds would be used to upgrade technology and equipment in the USG, Bowes, added, while \$3 million would be allocated for performance funding.

The remaining \$1.2 million would be used to fund staffing for the Animal Health Research Center at the University of Georgia and animal-care facilities at the Medical College of Georgia’s Cancer Research Center, Bowes said.

In addition to the \$31.4 million in enrollment earnings, the Governor’s recommendation of \$55.3 million in formula funds for the USG includes:

- ◆ \$8.3 million to cover increases in health-insurance premiums for USG faculty and staff that took effect in January 2005;
- ◆ \$6.3 million in maintenance and operations funds to cover the upkeep of new square footage in the System;
- ◆ \$5.5 million to cover electrical-rate increases; and
- ◆ \$3.8 million to cover increases in the cost of providing fringe benefits for new USG retirees. 🏠

A Look at Legislation of Interest to the University System

University System of Georgia officials are monitoring a number of bills of interest to the USG. Here is a sampling of this legislation, provided by Jim Flowers, special assistant to the University System’s chief information officer:

House Resolution 1082 would create a study committee to review the funding formulas for the University System and the Department of Technical and Adult Education. The intent is to include a performance-based component in the funding formulas to better link resources provided by the state to outcomes.

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Legislation of Interest to the USG

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House Resolution 1085 is a proposed amendment to the Georgia Constitution that would prevent the Board of Regents from increasing tuition unless provisions for it have been included in the General Budget passed by the General Assembly for that fiscal year.

Senate Bill 446 would reinstate a student's HOPE Scholarship the semester immediately following the return of the student's grade point average to a B.

House Bill 1153 would make the same change in HOPE Scholarship guidelines.

Senate Resolution 655, known as the **Governor's HOPE Chest Bill**, is a proposed Constitutional Amendment that would limit the use of HOPE funds to pre-K and Hope Scholarship programs.

Senate Bill 440 is a companion bill to SR 655 above. This bill would set up statutory language for compliance with the proposed constitutional amendment limiting the use of HOPE funds to pre-K and Hope Scholarship programs. 🏛️