

# The System Supplement

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*“Creating a More Educated Georgia”*

## BOR Names Corlis Cummings to Lead System as Interim Chancellor

**C**orlis Cummings, senior vice chancellor of support services for the University System of Georgia, has been named by the Board of Regents as interim chancellor of the state's 34 institutions of public higher education.

Cummings will work with departing Chancellor Thomas C. Meredith until he assumes his new post as commissioner of higher education for the State Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi on Oct. 1.

“Ms. Cummings has the full confidence of this board and we are delighted she has accepted this leadership opportunity,” said Board Chair J. Timothy Shelnut, who announced the news follow-

ing a special meeting of the board on Aug. 11. “She has the proven experience and skills to keep the System moving forward. More importantly, she works effectively with the regents, is well liked by the University System Office staff and the campus presidents, and can hit the ground running to lay the groundwork for the next chancellor. She is definitely the right person for the job and we will be counting on her a great deal.”

In addition to overseeing her current responsibilities as senior vice chancellor, Cummings will provide overall executive leadership for the University System. Her responsibilities in assisting with the transition will begin immediately.

“This is a tremendous responsibility and I am honored to have been asked by the Board to serve in this role,” said Cummings.

“I am looking forward to working with the regents and Dr. Meredith to ensure a smooth transition for the next chancellor. During this critical period, we also will focus strong attention on maintaining close contact with the Governor, members of the General Assembly, and with those state agencies whose work intersects with ours.”



Cummings

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## Regents Approve \$1.9 Billion Budget Request

*New Funds Sought to Support Students, Meet State Workforce Needs*

**T**he University System of Georgia's budget priorities for the next fiscal year were approved this month by the Board of Regents, one of the first major steps in USG officials' preparation for the 2006 Legislative Session that begins in January.

If the \$1.9 billion Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Request is fully supported by Gov. Sonny Purdue and the State Legislature, the University System's 250,000-plus students will be the ultimate beneficiaries of several proposed new programs.

The request includes dollars to accommodate enrollment growth in the System's 34 institutions, improve graduation rates and meet critical state workforce needs in the fields of healthcare and K-12 teacher education. The request also proposes funding for employee benefits-associated costs, to expand the accessibility of data on the University System and to enhance the specialized

missions of three University System institutions.

In addition to the operating budget request, the regents approved a capital budget request for new facilities totaling \$417.9 million and \$68.2 million in funding to address needed maintenance and repair for the System's existing infrastructure.

“This request better positions us to meet the rapidly increasing higher education needs of our students and the state,” said Chancellor Thomas C. Meredith. “More importantly, it will allow us to begin tackling some of our key challenges, such as improving the retention and graduation rates of our students.”

The budget request was presented to the regents by the chancellor, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academics and Fiscal Affairs Daniel S. Papp, Vice Chancellor for Fiscal Affairs William R. Bowes, and Vice Chancellor for Facilities Linda Daniels. Now it will be submitted

to the state's Office of Planning and Budget, where it will be evaluated against the needs and priorities of other state agencies.

A central component of the budget document is the \$55 million requested to accommodate enrollment increases in the System, and to properly manage new facilities that have come on-line during the past fiscal year. “The bulk of these new dollars are generated by increased enrollment and go directly to the institutions to support the core mission of classroom instruction,” Bowes indicated. “These are essential funds that are critical to our daily operation.”

“Thanks to the support of the Governor and the General Assembly for our FY06 budget, we have been able to begin hiring much-needed, full-time faculty on our campuses,” said Meredith. “The requested \$55 million in the FY07 budget will help us continue

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## Regents Ramp Up Efforts to Increase Student Success

University System officials have launched a year-long push to enhance the success of students as they progress toward graduation from University System of Georgia institutions.

Plans include expanding and implementing programs at Georgia's public colleges and universities that will increase the University System's retention and graduation rates. The board's ultimate goal is to attain national performance levels in these two areas.

"There is widespread and growing concern about low graduation rates, both at the state and national levels," said **Dr. Daniel S. Papp**, senior vice chancellor for Academics and Fiscal Affairs, who made a presentation to the Board of Regents at their August meeting. "With a collaborative approach that includes gaining a better understanding of what causes low graduation rates, we can improve our performance." Papp was joined by **Dr. Frank A. Butler**, vice chancellor for academics, faculty and student affairs.

Nationwide, an average of 54.3 percent of the full-time freshmen who entered college in 1997 graduated in 2003, Papp told the regents. The graduation rate for the University System of Georgia as a whole during that same six-year span was 50.3 percent, but the USG's institution-specific rate trailed at 43.6 percent. The rate for all Georgia institutions – public and private – was 43.7 percent, ranking the state 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation.

Papp's presentation revealed disturbing gaps of up to 30 percent between the graduation rates of various genders and ethnicities. The reasons for students failing to stay in college, progress through the curriculum and graduate are complex and not yet well understood, Papp said. Among the many factors presumed to be at play are inadequate support

after the freshman year, inadequate advising and mentoring, the quality of teaching, economics, insufficient high-school preparation and student motivation.

Papp and Butler said the University System's graduation rates have improved significantly in recent years – although not yet enough – thanks to heightened admissions standards and a strong focus on student retention. In February 2004, **Chancellor Thomas C. Meredith** appointed a task force to study the University System's graduation rates and how to improve them, and a committee began implementing its recommendations in October.

This fall, following a System-wide faculty/staff symposium on student retention, progression and graduation, the regents will ask USG campuses to submit target graduation rates and plans for achieving them. Members of the Board of Regents' staff will review these submissions and provide feedback, and implementation of the plans will begin.

If \$3.5 million in special funding is secured in the USG's FY 2007 Budget, the regents also will invite USG institutions in Spring 2006 to submit competitive proposals for the enhancement of student retention, progression and graduation on their campuses. Campuses will be able to implement their winning proposals by Fall 2006.

Other elements of the Retention, Progression, Graduation Initiative to be implemented at campuses throughout the University System during the next year include: pre-freshman contacts/orientation, freshman experience programs, learning communities, advising and mentoring, student progression tracking, mid-semester tracking of student progress, and mid-semester intervention for students found to be in trouble.

chancellor for legal affairs from 1995 to 2000, serving as an attorney for the board. She handled various legal transactions for the Board of Regents and System institutions, and worked with the staff of the Attorney General's office and other state agencies.

A native of Atlanta, Cummings earned a bachelor of science degree in microbiology from the



"Our goal is to bring the University System's institution-specific graduation rate [43.6 percent in 2003 for students who entered college in 1997] at least up to the national average [currently 54.3 percent] by 2010," Papp said in concluding his portion of the presentation. "Over a longer term, we intend to become a national leader in graduation rates."

A new study of graduation rates conducted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) was summarized for the regents by **Dr. Melanie McClellan**, vice president for student services at the *University of West Georgia*, one of several USG administrators who assisted in the soon-to-be-released study.

AASCU examined the approaches to student success used by 12 public institutions – ranging from large research universities to much smaller historically black institutions – with graduation rates that are either much higher than the national average in their category or much improved rates. The study concluded that the most important factors for student success are: campus culture, administrative leadership, special programs such as the First-Year Experience and unique locations and policies at some institutions. 🏡

*University of Georgia*. She attended Washington University School of Law, in St. Louis, Mo. and earned her juris doctor degree, cum laude, from the University of Georgia.

Cummings is the first female and the first person of color to serve as a chancellor of the University System of Georgia (interim or permanent). 🏡

### Interim Chancellor

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In her current position, which she has held since Sept. 2000, Cummings oversees the System's legal affairs office, human resources departments, and the Office of Sponsored Funds and Special Projects. Prior to her appointment as senior vice chancellor, she was assistant vice

## USG in the News

■ **Dr. Dorothy Lord**, president of *Coastal Georgia Community College*, recently was honored by the *Florida Times-Union* with the 2005 EVE Award for Education. The award recognizes women in north Florida and south Georgia whose contributions and efforts to education have resulted in lasting improvements to their communities. Lord was nominated for her leadership efforts to “construct, complete, dedicate and enroll students in a permanent CGCC facility in Camden County.” Thanks to Lord’s efforts, land for a permanent Camden County facility was donated, an operating endowment was raised and roads and utilities were added. CGCC’s Camden Center opened in May 2004, and the additional access to postsecondary education has helped to attract new businesses to the area.

■ **Dr. Portia Shields**, the newly retired president of *Albany State University*, will be honored this fall by the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund with an Educational Leadership Award. The award celebrates the achievements of the country’s foremost visionaries who are using their positions to make a difference in the lives of the next generation of leaders. The Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund carries on Justice Marshall’s legacy of equal access to higher education by supporting exceptional merit scholars attending America’s public historically black colleges and universities.

■ **Dr. Carl Patton**, president of *Georgia State University*, recently received the Higher Education Leadership Award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. The award recognizes Patton’s efforts as an urban and regional planner in sustaining and enhancing higher education through academic administration. ■

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## University System Expands Efforts to Meet State’s Shortage of Health-Care Professionals

The University System of Georgia has stepped up its already significant effort to address Georgia’s shortage of health-care professionals. This summer, USG officials announced a new \$7 million program that will add more than 300 nurses and technologists to the Georgia workforce over the next two years.

The initiative will be administered under the auspices of the USG’s **Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP®)**. It is targeted toward non-traditional students who seek a second career in healthcare and current college students who are not currently enrolled in health-care courses or degree program.

Seven University System institutions will collaborate with 22 private health-care providers throughout Georgia on the initiative that begins this fall and concludes in December 2007. State dollars for the two-year program total \$2.3 million, with private sector partners contributing more than \$4.7 million to the effort.

“Since 2002, the Board of Regents has focused considerable resources on the shortage of health-care professionals,” said University System Chancellor **Thomas C. Meredith**. “This marks the latest round in our on-going efforts aimed at ensuring that Georgia hospitals and clinics have the people needed to serve local communities with high-quality healthcare.”

The new program uses ICAPP’s® proven model that meets the “just-in-time-needs” of the state’s business community. While a separate effort, the special project is similar to the current ICAPP® Health Professionals Initiative (HPI) that matches private sector health-care providers with University System colleges and universities. In operation for three years, the HPI model provides accelerated education to produce graduates in the fields of nursing, medical technology and pharmacy.

The following University System institutions, programs, and partners have joined forces in this latest ICAPP® project:

◆ **Augusta State University LPN to RN Bridge Program:** The corporate partners for this \$906,016 program are Doctor’s Hospital,

University Hospital, and St. Joseph Hospital. The program is projected to produce 64 graduates.

◆ **Coastal Georgia Community College Associate Degree in Nursing Program:**

The corporate partner for this \$575,005 program is Southeast Georgia Health System. The program is projected to produce 36 graduates.

◆ **Dalton State College Associate Degree in Nursing Program:**

The corporate partner for this \$241,125 program is Hamilton Health Care System, Inc. The program is projected to produce 40 graduates.

◆ **Darton College Paramedic to RN Bridge and Polysomnographic Technologist Programs:**

The corporate partners for these two programs totaling \$1,254,663 in funding are Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, Archbold Medical Center, Miller County Hospital, Palmyra Medical Center, Sumter Regional Hospital, DCI, Inc., St. Francis Hospital, Albany Pulmonary and Critical Care, Inc., and Colquitt Regional Medical Center. The program is projected to produce 48 registered nursing graduates and 15 polysomnographic technologists.

◆ **Georgia Southwestern State University Bachelor to BSN Program:**

The corporate partners for this \$482,238 program are Crisp Regional Hospital, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, Sumter Regional Hospital, and Palmyra Hospital. The program is projected to produce 40 graduates eligible to qualify for RN licensing.

◆ **Gordon College LPN to RN Bridge Program:**

The corporate partners for this \$3,145,316 program are Spalding Regional Medical Center, Upson Regional Medical Center, Anchor Psychiatric Hospital, and Brightmoor Nursing Center. The program is projected to produce 54 graduates.

◆ **Valdosta State University Bachelor to BSN Program:**

The corporate partners for this \$384,151 program are South Georgia Medical Center, Smith Northview Hospital, and Archbold Medical Center. The program is projected to produce 36 graduates. ■

## FY07 Budget Request

Continued from P. 1 ...

to rebuild our faculty ranks and serve the growing numbers of students we have enrolled in recent years.”

Under the category of “Budget Enhancements,” the regents are seeking \$3.5 million in state funding to implement the recommendations of the University System’s Graduation Task Force and to develop best-practice programs on the campuses (see article, p. 2).

The FY ‘07 budget request also contain five other enhancements, including:

- ◆ \$3.5 million to expand nursing education and other healthcare programs, with funds devoted to increasing the number of nurse educators and clinical training sites;
- ◆ \$3.5 million to expand teacher education programs at the System’s 15 Colleges of Education and to expand the Georgia Leadership Institute program. This effort aims to double the number of teachers, including minority teachers, prepared by the USG over the next five years;
- ◆ \$3.5 million for mission-related programs at *Fort Valley State University* (\$1.5 million for the university’s federal land-grant match), *Georgia College & State University* (\$1 million for its position as the state’s public liberal arts university) and the new state college in Gwinnett County (\$1 million for start-up costs);
- ◆ \$2 million to continue work on the System’s “Data Warehouse,” an electronic collection of perti-

nent USG data that will be linked to other state data systems and made available to a wide variety of users; and

- ◆ \$3 million to fund technology equipment needs at the four research universities (*Georgia Institute of Technology*, *Georgia State University*, *Medical College of Georgia* and the *University of Georgia*). State dollars would be matched by private support.

The Board of Regents’ FY ‘07 capital budget request includes:

- ◆ \$201 million in construction funding for the first eight projects on the Major Capital Priority List;
- ◆ \$19 million in design funding for projects 9 through 17 on the Major Capital Priority List;
- ◆ \$128 million for 30 minor capital projects (projects costing \$5 million and under);
- ◆ \$38 million for a nanotechnology project at the Georgia Institute of Technology; and
- ◆ \$30.5 million for 22 Georgia Public Library projects.

The requested \$68.2 million for the System’s Major Repair and Rehabilitation Funding program would be directed at structural stabilization, utility replacement and upgrade, general renovations, and regulatory projects such as life safety code issues.

After the governor makes his overall state budget recommendation to the General Assembly, that body will make the final determination on the USG’s FY ‘07 budget during its annual Legislative Session, which begins in January 2006. 🏠

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