

President's Report

Faculty Senate

February 24, 2014

- Regrets. I am attending a meeting that was rescheduled from "snow days" that takes me away from the Senate.
- Legislative Actions relative to the University System of Georgia. Funding for equipment for the new science building was part of the house version of the state budget that passed last week. We continue to work to see that the support continues. We also are exploring opportunities for a small capital request associated with library renovations, not originally part of the governor's budget. Three additional items relevant to the system were also considered (and summarized by the board office—and pasted here from their communication) HB 516<<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20132014/HB/516>>: On Monday, Feb. 17, HB 516 – the one time opt out of ORP/opt in to TRS legislation – passed the house 92-70. However, later in the afternoon, Rep. Geoff Duncan (R-Cumming) made a motion to reconsider. House rules require that action to occur on the next legislative day, which was Tuesday, Feb. 18. On Tuesday, the Speaker recognized Rep. Duncan to make the motion. Rep. Christian Coomer (R-Cartersville), sponsor of HB 516, then made a motion to have the legislation rest on the table. In discussions with our sponsor the previous day after the motion to reconsider was made, we decided this was the best course of action to take until we can answer the questions that came up on the floor Monday by many members of the House. Even though the actuarial study states that there is no fiscal impact to the retirement systems, members stated that the taxpayers would have to cover the cost differential of the employer share between TRS (13.15%) and ORP (9.24%). HB 788<<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20132014/HB/788>>: On Tuesday, Feb. 25, House Speaker Pro Tempore Jan Jones (R-Milton) and Democratic Leader Stacey Abrams (D-Atlanta) offered an amendment to the ballot language associated with HB 788 – the property tax exemption legislation for the USG P3 concept. If passed during floor debate, the ballot language will read: "Shall property owned by the University System of Georgia and utilized by providers of college and university student housing and other facilities continue to be exempt from taxation to keep costs affordable?" On Wednesday, Feb. 26, HB 788 was slated for a vote. Due to a number of questions prior to the start of session about the legislation, the decision was made to send the bill back to Rules so that the questions could be addressed. Thursday evening, Rep. Lynne Riley (R-Johns Creek) held a listening session for those who had questions about the scope of the bill. Chancellor Huckaby, Steve Wrigley, John Brown and I attended to field questions. As a result, an amendment has been offered and the House Rules committee will reconsider the bill Monday, Feb. 24. The new language will read: "(F) All interests in property on a campus of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia primarily used for student housing or parking held by a private party that is contractually obligated to operate such property primarily for the use or benefit of a public college or university shall be considered to be public property within the meaning of this paragraph, provided that such interest of the private party resulted from a competitive procurement." If the bill is considered

by House Rules on Monday, the body will debate the bill and the amendments on Tuesday, Feb. 23.

Regarding the legislation concerning the Georgia Military College (GMC), thanks to the hard work of the University of North Georgia, Tom Daniel and Houston Davis, the following resolution has occurred: GMC will provide a letter stating that GMC has no intention of becoming a senior military college. Retract all legislation pertaining to GMC access to the North Georgia ROTC Grant Work in a collaborative manner with both USG and TCSG on any BAS proposals to make certain they are not duplicating any USG programs and are a value added to the Complete College Georgia effort. [Note: As one of those USG institutions with a very active BAS-AAS articulation program, we are anticipating working very hard to communicate our willingness to accept as many qualified transfer students as we can accommodate]

- Thanks—to the provost office, deans and faculty, working to accommodate effective student learning after the loss of class time for weather related cancellations. And to the Senate, thanks for your continued efforts to support the university
- Making things Better Awards—Feb 28, 1:00PM UC 272—please help us express our appreciation to award winners Dr. John Campbell, Arts and Sciences; Dr. Jim Braun, Natural Sciences/Chemistry; Ms. Leslie Moore, Peachtree City site; Ms. Karen Blackburn, Disability Resource Center; the Laker Angels; and the Department of Campus Life.
- Questions?—e-mail will have to work for this meeting.