



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Briefing for Faculty & Staff of the University System of Georgia No. 11, March 22, 2010

“Creating a More Educated Georgia”

Legislative Activity Picks Up as Day 30 of Session Nears

With Crossover Day – Legislative Day 30, traditionally the deadline for bills to cross over from one chamber to the other to remain alive – approaching next Thursday, the intensity of activity under the Gold Dome is picking up, and bills are in motion.

Last Tuesday, **House Bill 1128**, the tuition carry-forward legislation that will benefit the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), passed the state House of Representatives with a vote of 164-0.

The legislation permits the USG and TCSG to carry forward funds from one year to the next, plus a percentage of the annual tuition revenues they collect. **Rep. Earl Ehrhart** sponsored the bill and carried it on the floor. HB 1128 now moves to the Senate for consideration.

Last Wednesday, the Senate Higher Education Committee met and discussed **Senate Bill 496**, which would

create a lottery-funded need-based aid program under the authority of the Georgia Student Finance Commission. The bill, introduced by **Sen. Jack Hill** and supported by **Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle**, subsequently passed out of committee and will be available for consideration by the Rules Committee this week.

House Bill 1090 – legislation that would move the Agrirama in Tifton, Georgia’s museum of agriculture, under the auspices of **Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College** – passed the House Thursday afternoon 150-5. The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.

Resolutions that urge “the Office of the Sec-

retary of State and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia to work together to explore the future of the Georgia Capitol Museum and the possibility of creating a State Museum of Georgia History” were introduced Thursday in both chambers and were assigned to committee for consideration. **House Resolution 1763** by **Rep. Joe Wilkerson** was assigned to the Higher Education Committee, and **Senate Resolution 1291** by **Sen. George Hooks** was assigned to the State Institutions and Properties Committee. USG officials will work with these two legislators to support these resolutions as they move through

the House and Senate.

Another piece of new legislation introduced last week directly involves economists from three of the USG’s research institutions. **House Bill 1405**, by House leadership **Reps. Larry O’Neal, Jerry Keen, Jan Jones** and **Speaker David Ralston**, creates the “2010 Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness for Georgians.”

The legislation lists the following members of the council: economists **Jeff Humphreys** of the *University of Georgia*, **Roger Tutterow** of Mercer University, **Christine Ries** of *Georgia Tech* and **David Sjoquist** of *Georgia State*

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University; Gov. Sonny Perdue; former Gov. Zell Miller; the 2010 president of the Georgia Chamber; the 2010 state director for the National Federation of Independent Business; and two members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and two by

the Speaker of the House.

The 2010 Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness for Georgians will conduct a study of Georgia’s revenue structure and make a report of its findings and recommendations to the Speaker and the Lieutenant Governor before

the next legislative session.

In addition, HB 1405 also creates the “Special Joint Committee on Georgia Revenue Structure,” comprising House and Senate legislative leaders. During the 2011 legislative session, the Joint Committee will introduce legislation that incorporates the recommendations of the council

“without significant changes.” If the legislation passes through the House committee process, then it will be voted on by the House without amendment. If passed by the House, the Senate will vote on the legislation as it passed the House without amendment. HB 1405 is available for House Rules Committee consideration this week. 