

Sunday, July 14, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The summer at EGSC has been, to say the very least, intense. That is good because it means that many positive and important initiatives are underway.

Here are some of the things on my mind this summer:

### **FY 2014 Budget**

As you know, our budget in large part is derived from two sources: tuition revenue plus an allocation of state funds. Tuition per student will increase in a modest amount (2.5%) in the coming year since that is the increase approved for most USG institutions by the BOR. We, of course, will not know total tuition revenue until we know how many students actually enroll for fall classes (I will share my thoughts about enrollment with you below).

On a percentage basis, the increase in our state allocation was very good. State allocations to the 31 USG institutions did not, however, include funds designated for salary increases. A significant portion of the increase in our state allocation is targeted for specific purposes. For example, we received funding for our new programs in Augusta and increased funding for new staff positions in ACE.

All of this means that, assuming a strong enrollment this fall, our total funding (tuition plus state allocation) will enable us to do even more to increase retention and graduation (see increase in ACE funding above), initiate new programs in Augusta and continue other activities at least last year's level.

I understand that it is difficult at times to embark upon another year without an overall salary increase. Should the economy continue to improve as it has in recent months, however, I think there is cause for optimism about a FY 2015 salary increase.

### **Fall 2013 Enrollment Outlook**

As you know, we experienced an enrollment decrease (and a corresponding drop in tuition revenue) in FY 2013. This drop was consistent with national and state trends. During the past year, we have discussed the multiple reasons for this trend: increased admission requirements by the USG, increased satisfactory academic progress standards to retain federal student financial aid, increased standards about timely exit from learning support, the tough economic climate, and increased admission into access programs at other institutions in the region.

All of these factors will remain in play in FY 2014. As a result, our Admissions Office has ramped up its recruiting efforts this summer in many ways: application forms and recruiting materials have been significantly updated; major efforts have been made to increase the number and quality of recruiting visits to high schools; programs were carried out to administer the COMPASS test free of charge for many students and to provide remediation for those unable to attain adequate scores; social

events have been held to encourage applications; and a structured program of personal follow up calls to applicants has been initiated.

I have been meeting personally with the Admissions Office staff early every Friday morning this summer and I can assure you that the work they are doing is intense and effective. We will, of course, not know the exact impact of these efforts until fall enrollment is final. Early indications are, however, that Swainsboro enrollment will likely increase; we will have new students in place in Augusta, and enrollment in Statesboro will likely decrease. Overall, our enrollment projection model is showing a single digit decrease to be likely.

We will continue to push very hard in this area. For example, there is significant room for improvement in our "show rate" (the percentage of accepted students who actually enroll). A major effort is underway to increase that show rate.

### **Importance of Updating Promotion and Tenure Policy**

I have spent significant time during the last year talking with many of you about our promotion and tenure policies and procedures. As I have said before, these discussions and a review of the data convinces me that an update of these policies and procedures must be a very high priority in fall. For example, I am concerned about the distribution across the ranks (i.e., numbers of full professors, associate professors, assistant professors and instructors). The number of full professors is very low and this number by itself is a reason to reevaluate our policy and procedures.

I have appointed a task force to make recommendations to me and I will keep you posted as this important work moves forward. I predict that the final outcome will be a policy providing clearer guidance to faculty about the standards and a procedure to apply for tenure which is transparent and definite.

### **Importance of Development of Degree and Certificate Programs**

I urge each of you to visit web sites of a few of our peer institutions. Take a look at the menu of degree and certificate programs offered by those institutions.

I have done this and have two principal observations: (1) We need to develop certificate programs which inspire students to begin college education and which provide them a clear and straightforward path to completing a first step in that college career; (2) We need to develop a small number of new degree programs which responds to the changing environment in which we live.

I have asked the VP for Academic Affairs and the Division Chairs to recommend new certificate and degree programs. Your input on this important question is strongly encouraged. I ask each of you to think about our current human resources. What new certificates and degrees would draw on the talent and expertise of our faculty and inspire students?

### **Importance of Early Course Scheduling**

In the past, EGSC has established course schedules for Maymester and Summer at a very late point in time. For next Maymester and Summer Semester, it is imperative that the basic schedules be established by October.

Students need to know these schedules early as they map out their path to graduation. Faculty need to know these schedules early so that they can prepare course materials and plan summer activities. In addition, we miss opportunities for transient students (e.g. students who are studying at other USG institutions and are spending the summer at home) to take our courses.

### **Center for Teaching and Learning**

As some of you know, the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Georgia played a major role in my academic life for many years. In fact, I believe that my participation in the Lilly Teaching Fellows Program at UGA (and early career mentoring program for assistant professors) was the key factor in my ability to progress through many of the major career steps at UGA (promotion to associate professor and tenure, choice to pursue an administrative position, promotion to full professor). This positive experience, of course, forms the basis for my thinking about a CTL at EGSC.

A task force which I created recommended the creation of a CTL. I strongly support that recommendation.

A key challenge, as you would anticipate, is the funding. As I envision a CTL, it would at some point in the future have a full-time faculty director, a physical location abundant with teaching resources, and staff. The reality is that funds do not exist to attain that vision immediately.

This should not, in my opinion, prevent us from making a good start. That is why we have commenced an internal search for a faculty director (stipend/course release rather than full time) and set aside space in the Academic Building for an office and teaching lab. A director and an office will be in place by fall.

Once a faculty director is in place, that director will need to converse with faculty and clearly define the role of CTL. Also, that director will need to prioritize since funding will not allow us to fully carry out the vision in the first year.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that I do not envision CTL as a technology resource center. Technology is most certainly a key tool for an excellent teacher ---- and the CTL needs to discuss with faculty the appropriate uses of technology and the balance with human interaction. Also, it needs to provide a physical location where faculty can experiment with the technology. However, EGSC has a strong history of small classes and personal interaction with students and CTL programs which build on that tradition are critical.

### **African American Male Initiative**

Since the formation of the College through the end of FY 2012, there were less than 100 African American Male graduates. The need for improvement is obvious. That is the reason from the formation of the AAMI task force.

Building on its excellent work in FY 2013, the AAMI task force will be launching our new AAMI in FY 2014. This initiative will be funded from 3 sources: a modest AAMI startup grant from the USG; matching funds from EGSC; and funds from one or two private sources (one commitment has been made and we are awaiting a final decision from another private source).

There will be a faculty director for the program both in Statesboro and Swainsboro. At each location, key faculty and staff have agreed to serve as mentors. These faculty mentors will work with a select group of African American male students serving as peer mentors. Together, this group will focus its efforts on improving the rate of academic success for African American male students.

This program holds a great deal of promise. I am confident that this new program will produce strong results in FY 2014, which will provide a basis for grant renewal and long-term continuation of the program.

### **Military Friendly Campus Initiative**

I believe that the College should provide services to military personnel sufficient to enable EGSC to be formally designated as "military friendly." A task force was created to provide advice on how to attain that status.

Based upon the recommendation of the task force created to address this issue, a physical office (known as the Military Resource Center) will be established on the Swainsboro Campus this fall. This will be directed by a faculty member selected through an internal search. As is the case with the CTL (see above), the faculty member will receive a stipend and course release (not full time role).

The Military Resource Center will become a physical location at which military personnel can meet with one another and with key campus personnel and review resource material applicable to military personnel. Hopefully, student workers can be identified to keep the center open even when the director cannot be present.

My vision is that this resource center will grow over time. As in the case of the CTL, I believe it is better to take a bona fide first step towards addressing this need rather than waiting until funds are available to address this comprehensively.

### **Recycling**

This new task force will recommend what we can do in these areas to be environmentally responsible. I hope this will, in longer run, inspire a broad effort in this area in the community.

### **Tobacco Free Campus**

What do we do to build on our declaration that we are "tobacco free"? For example, are corresponding activities and educational efforts needed?

### **Integrated Calendar**

I suspect that many of you may share my frustration in this area. You would like to quickly look online to find the date, time and place of a campus event or meeting. Perhaps, you have organized an event or called a meeting and want to disseminate the information. Currently, that information is found in multiple on-line locations and is sometimes inconsistent.

As we grow and add new locations, this is far more than a trivial matter. A new task force will make recommendations to me about this issue.

### **Student Newspaper**

Our student newspaper is the Hoopee Bird. I envision that publication as a true newspaper with editorial content.

In order for this to occur, the publication should be connected clearly to academic programs and courses. It should have a name that clearly conveys its function. Content should address important issues facing the college and should challenge all of us. It should be managed and written and published by students and widely available in paper form on all EGSC locations and online.

We will begin a conversation about the Hoopee Bird this fall. What is its role? How should it be funded? How can it be connected to academic programs and courses? Hope you will contribute to the discussion.

### **Faculty and Staff Hiring**

I mentioned salaries earlier. A closely related issue is adequacy of staffing.

As EGSC has grown, the number of staff has not been able to keep pace with the growth. Although the state budget does not provide funding for raises this year, targeted state funding will enable us to hire some new faculty and staff. For example, there will be additional staff in the ACE at both Swainsboro and Statesboro. In addition, staff will be added in Admissions, Financial Aid and the Registrar's Office.

### **The Art Explosion Continues**

The Art on Campus Task Force continues to methodically identify student, faculty and staff art produced over a period of many years. As that is identified, it is being cataloged, framed in a quality manner and placed in key places across all campuses.

In the very near future, a significant number of pieces will be hung at Statesboro. I am also looking forward to the dining room in the Student Center coming to life as photos documenting student life over the years are placed on the walls. Similarly, I am excited about the entry to the auditorium becoming a place honoring the many talented individuals who have visited EGSC over the years.

## **Changes to Physical Campus This Summer**

Almost every time an individual or group visits EGSC, their first comment to me is almost always about their surprise at the beauty of our physical campus. We are extremely lucky to have a small, talented, hardworking group dedicated to maintaining and improving that treasure.

Some of the projects underway at this time are:

### ***-Swainsboro***

- ACE - office space will be added for new personnel;
- Auditorium - If you walk into the auditorium today, you will likely be shocked when you notice all the seats are gone. They will be back soon - reupholstered brightly. Walls will be painted and lighting will be updated;
- Pottery Building - Soon, changes to the plumbing will provide a working restroom;
- Fulford Center - If you visit the center, you will notice that the beautiful outside area really needs new stain and other maintenance to be preserved. This will take place soon.
- Area behind tennis courts and near beginning of cross country course. The drainage in this area will be substantially improved. Sod will be added. A series of permanent outdoor tables will be added. This area will, I predict, become a favorite for outdoor classes, watching the finish of cross country meets and similar activities.

### ***-Statesboro***

There has been a great deal of discussion about the need for cellular service inside the building at EGSC Statesboro. Similarly, there has been concern about the clear glass allowing direct line of sight into many of the classrooms. Addressing both of those concerns required time and money. I am pleased to report that major steps forward have been taken on both of these matters. These two significant improvements at Statesboro should significantly improve both safety and convenience: Cellular Boosters to improve cellular service; and frosted panes on the front of the classrooms.

## **Housing Feasibility Study**

Simply put, increasing the housing available in Swainsboro is critical to our continued ability to carry out our mission and is a key to improvement of the livability of Swainsboro. A great deal of work, to say the very least, has gone into exploration of alternative approaches to financing this housing and generating interest in this topic.

As a result of these efforts, there is currently a great deal of interest by the USG and private developers and local government officials in this topic. Accordingly, a critical next step is the completion of a housing feasibility study. A firm has been retained to complete that study. It will likely be completed by mid fall.

If this independent study confirms the demand for housing, it is likely that a developer will be chosen by early 2014 to build significant new student housing. That housing would then be available as early as 2015. The process for choosing the developer will

assure that the housing is designed and built in a manner that is consistent with the beauty, safety and character of our current campus.

In addition to these efforts by the college to increase housing capacity, private parties are independently proceeding at this time to build housing for our students near campus. See the new units at I-80 and Anderson Rd. now under construction. Look for new units near the Lambs Bridge Rd. and Meadowlake Pkwy. to be built soon. Both of these developments have been undertaken by private parties. Although these will provide housing options for students, they are not financed, owned or managed by the college or the foundation.

### **New Programs in Augusta**

Following BOR approval in spring, the pace to put these new programs in place for fall has been exhausting and exhilarating. Georgia Regents University has been collegial and supportive at every turn. This type of collaboration is an example of the type of collaboration necessary to meet emerging needs in our region.

The presence of EGSC at the Farmers Market in Augusta this weekend is an excellent example of the community reaction to this initiative. Many residents came to the booth to express surprise and delight about this approach to assuring that access to higher education in the Augusta region is available.

### **Upcoming September 2103 Events**

I sent a message recently with some details about the September events. Some key individuals will be coming to campus to speak at those events. For example, the Chancellor, Hank Huckaby, will be here and will participate in events on Thursday and Friday. Michael Thurmond will speak at convocation on Thursday. At the Capital Campaign Kickoff Dinner on Thursday, Bill Crowe (the former longtime president of Tyler College in Texas) will speak. On Friday, Peter Shedd (professor emeritus from the University of Georgia) will serve as the master of ceremonies and President Michael Adams of the University of Georgia will deliver greetings from the community of scholars. I look forward to having a large number of our faculty, staff and students participate in these events with our visitor

The following is the summary of these events which I sent out recently by e-mail:

“This September, East Georgia State College will have a unique opportunity to build community and to showcase our students, faculty, staff and community when we host a multitude of guests from across the state over a three day span. All of these events will focus on a central theme --- EGSC’s future --- while we celebrate our enduring relationship with the community and service region:

**Education. Graduation. Serving Communities.**

Holding these events over three consecutive days (rather than spreading the events out over the semester) will give us the opportunity to build community while we focus intensely on a single theme. This, also, gives us the opportunity to communicate this theme, our passion for education and our excellence to the many visitors which these events will attract to EGSC.

What events will be included? (1) Convocation; (2) Investiture; (3) Capital Campaign Kickoff; (4) Bobcat Dash; (5) 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration; (6) Parents/Families/Alumni Day.

Planning and organizing of these events is now underway. Since the cost of these events will be primarily funded by sponsorships, the process of contacting all of our potential sponsors is key part of these organizing efforts.

***Please mark your calendar and plan to help us build for the future by participating in the planning of these events and in these historical moments of the College's history.***

The following is a quick overview of the events:

### **Convocation**

On Thursday, September 26, at 11:00 a.m., the day will begin with a formal Convocation in the Gambrell Center auditorium. Michael Thurmond will be our keynote speaker. Prior to his keynote address, Chancellor Hank Huckaby will present comments to the academic community. The entire event will be simultaneously webcast to both Statesboro and Augusta.

As I have discussed with many of you this year, I believe it is important for the college to reinstitute the important tradition of holding a convocation to set the academic tone for the year. Also, it is important that the topic of the convocation be discussed among members of the academic community before and after the event. In the near future, we will be sharing more detailed information about opportunities for incorporating the speaker's comments into class discussions, writing assignments, student activities and service projects.

### **Capital Campaign Kickoff Dinner**

On Thursday, the evening ends with the Capital Campaign Kickoff Dinner at 6:30 p.m. in the gymnasium.

Again, as we have discussed throughout the year, the landscape of higher education is changing rapidly and dramatically. In order to thrive in this period of change, it is essential for all institutions of higher education to have a robust private fundraising effort in place. This has been true for quite some time for larger institutions and private institutions. It is now the new normal for institutions such as EGSC. This dinner will represent the beginning of an important five- year effort in this key area. Bill Crowe, the former long-time president of one of the largest access institutions in the country, will be our keynote speaker and will address his personal experiences in meeting this challenge.

### **Investiture**

On Friday, September 27, at 11:00 a.m., I would be honored to have you attend my Investiture in the Gambrell Center Auditorium and the reception following in the quad.

### **Bobcat Dash with a Splash**

Currently, runs known as “color runs” are extremely popular. We are going to have an EGSC version of a color run (all of the runners will be splashed with green and yellow). On Saturday, September 28, the day begins early with registration at 7:00 a.m. at the Gambrell Center for the Bobcat Dash with a Splash. The 5K color run begins at 8 a.m. and the Fun Run at 9 a.m.

### **Celebration of the College’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The College exists, in large part, because of an extraordinary vision which became real 40 years ago when land was donated by a prominent member of the community and a bond was issued. Our strong relationship with the community we serve began at that time and is even stronger today. At 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, we will celebrate that relationship. The College’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration will kick off with an entertaining historical re-enactment in the auditorium and a dedication of the Campus Art Explosion’s Community Wall. Memorabilia will be displayed in the rotunda, and afterwards, *plan to join us for the human 40<sup>th</sup> photo shoot.*

### **Parent/Family/Alumni Day**

Since the college’s founding, almost 40,000 students have taken classes at the college. Maintaining a strong bond with this group is essential to the College’s long-term success. Similarly, it is critical that we form that bond with the parents and family members of our current students. After the 40th Anniversary celebration and continuing until 4:00 p.m., lots of food and festivities are planned for EGSC’s Parent/Family/Alumni Day. Fun activities are planned campus-wide including a student talent show and a duct tape regatta on Ezra Pond.

As the planning for these events proceeds, additional details will be posted on EGSC’s [September 2013 Celebration webpage](#) (under construction). I will send you the link to that page soon. Please check it regularly for updates, and share the information with family and friends. All events are open to the public, and everyone is encouraged to participate fully. There will be a registration fee for the Bobcat Dash and the Capital Campaign Kickoff. There will be no charge for admission to other events.

*Your participation will ensure success in presenting the very best EGSC has to offer.* As you can imagine, the success of these events will require coordination of the efforts of many. To aid in planning, Angie Russell has been temporarily reassigned as Event Coordinator and will be the primary contact for these events. Angie will be in contact with EGSC units to provide each unit with more information about the events and the many ways in which you can be involved in the events.

Committees for each event have recently been created, and *your input and assistance is needed. If you would like to serve on a committee or help with any event or*

*activity, please contact Angie or one of the committee chairs:* Convocation - Dr. Tim Goodman; Capital Campaign Kickoff Gala - Elizabeth Gilmer; Investiture - Susan Gray; Bobcat Dash with a Splash - Stacey King; 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration - Norma Kennedy; and Parents/Family/Alumni Day - Donald Avery.

I appreciate what you do in your position every day and look forward to celebrating the success of East Georgia State College, our students, faculty, staff, alumni and community with you this fall.”

### **Need for Additional Student Athletic Fee**

In my opinion, student athletics have contributed in a significant and important way to the continued enhancement of our educational environment. In order to continue that trend, we need to request approval this fall for approval of a modest increase in our student athletic fee beginning in fall 2014. If approved, this will enable us to add new sports (likely mens and womens cross country and golf).

### **Active Shooter Exercise**

Recently, approximately 70 law enforcement personnel were on campus in Swainsboro for an active shooter exercise. This is an extremely important step in our efforts to assure that our campus is safe and secure.

In the future, additional exercises will be held in Swainsboro and Statesboro. We must continually prepare to assure that we are as prepared as possible in the event that an actual event of this type takes place on campus.

As always, thanks for all you do for EGSC.

Sincerely,

Bob Boehmer  
President