

Weekly Update
Friday, March 29, 2013

Dear friends and colleagues,

African American Male Initiative

The University System of Georgia (USG) has, for a number of years, sponsored an African American Male Initiative. The key purpose of this initiative is to encourage USG institutions to develop creative projects designed to encourage higher rates of retention and graduation for African-American males.

East Georgia State College has not been a participant in this initiative in the past. This year, the College submitted a proposal. I am pleased to announce that this proposal was accepted by the USG and received a modest start up grant.

During the next academic year, EGSC's African American Male Initiative project will be launched. In addition to the start-up funds from the USG, we will have a comparable amount of funding from private donors.

We will work closely with the Emanuel County School District on this project. Some of our students, who will be mentored at the College, will in turn mentor high school students.

I am excited that the College is now a full participant in this University System initiative. I believe it will increase retention and graduation rates which are now unacceptably low for African-American males.

Congressman Barrow to Visit Statesboro Campus Next Week

Congressman John Barrow recently visited the College in Swainsboro. On Monday, April 1, he will visit the College in Statesboro. Please join me in welcoming the Congressman to our Statesboro facility. Also, the Congressman has proposed a financial responsibility project for the College. The first step in this project will be a day devoted to education of our students about federal financial student aid and how students can manage student loans responsibility. I will keep you updated as details about this are put in place.

EGSC Day at Statesboro Farmer's Market

Saturday, April 13th will be EGSC Day at the Statesboro Farmer's Market. I hope many from the EGSC community will come to the market on that day. Joyce and I will be there as long as the market is open on that day. Hope to see you there.

EGSC - Statesboro - Cellular Phone Reception Update

Since the date of the opening of our Statesboro facility in 2011, there has been little to no cell phone coverage inside the facility. A great deal of time and effort has gone into understanding the reason for this lack of coverage and the technical solution.

Late this week, the college contracted with an independent vendor to install a cellular wireless booster system. This system is carrier specific and will provide a boost to Verizon cellular coverage inside EGSC Statesboro. The installation is scheduled to take place between May 13 and June 15.

This is, I fully realize, not a complete solution. However, it is a major step forward.

Gun Legislation Proposed in Georgia

As you know, legislation was proposed in Georgia in the last legislative session which would have allowed the concealed carry of guns on Georgia's college and university campus. The following is an update about that proposal, which was received late last week from the USG:

"The 2013 legislative session has come to a close and a more extensive report will come to you soon but we wanted to let you know the status of a very key issue – the conference committee report on SB 101, the gun legislation.

In the 11th hour, a conference committee report did make it to the desk for consideration. This compromise would have permitted concealed carry at our institutions with the exception of dorms and athletic events. If you are between the ages of 21-25 and wished to conceal carry, one would have to have a "campus carry certificate," which would be obtained after completing an eight hour course on gun safety from the Department of Public Safety.

HOWEVER – this conference committee report DID NOT PASS.

This means the conference committee report is still live and available for debate and passage in the 2014 session. There are many avenues the general assembly can take when they reconvene for the second year of the term in January 2014."

FY 2014 State Budget

The legislature adjourned on Thursday after adopting a budget. The following is a summary of the state higher education budget sent by the USG shortly following adjournment:

"As the 2013 Legislative Session comes to an end, the fiscal year 2014 budget was approved today by the Conference Committee and is pending the Governor's signature. Below are highlights of the fiscal year 2014 budget:

- The overall budget increased from \$1.828 billion to \$1.883 billion, an increase \$54.6 million or 2.98%.
- The base budget was reduced by 3% for most programs, which amounts to \$48.9 million for the teaching program.
- Received \$63 million in new formula funds to support enrollment growth.
- Received full funding for health insurance, retirees, TRS and ERS, totalling \$29.1 million.
- Received \$5.9 million for five payback projects.

- Received an addition \$2.075 million in funding to support the Graduate Medical Education (GME) initiative. This brings the total funding for this initiative to \$3.275 million.
- Received an additional \$5 million for cancer research to the Georgia Regents University Cancer Center. This brings the total funding for this initiative to \$10 million.
- No cut was made to the \$16.5 million in start-up funds for Georgia Gwinnett College.
- Received over \$300 million in funding for capital projects. The funding of these projects goes a long way in addressing the capital needs of the System.

The University System has now obtained formula funding for two consecutive years. This is excellent news and demonstrates the State's strong support for higher education, even in these difficult economic"

Degree Works

A team from the college has been working to implement Degree Works at the College. This is an online advising system, which will be available to professional advisors, and students.

I attended a demonstration of this new system earlier this week. The work our team has done is most impressive. I suspect your reaction to this new tool will be similar to mine. It is user-friendly. It enables the user to clearly and quite easily navigate the complex set of curricular requirements. I believe this will have a positive impact upon retention and graduation in the immediate future.

The test version of this new system will be available to our test users imminently. It should be fully operational by fall.

State of the College Address on May 2nd

I will be delivering a State of the College address in the Auditorium on May 2 at 11a.m. I hope you will consider attending --- not because I need an audience, but because it is important that the College community have a common understanding of the challenges and opportunities we are facing together. I plan to give my candid assessment of these challenges and opportunities. I hope you will attend so that you can hear this assessment and then share your advice with me in whatever way you choose.

I hope your week is a good one.

Bob Boehmer