



Georgia Legislative Session

STATE BUDGET
The bill always receiving the most attention by state agencies—including the University System—is the budget. Gov. Perdue will release his budget recommendations after his State of the State address on January 16 and the House will begin the budget process soon after.

Today marks the start of the 2008 Georgia General Assembly Session. We welcome the new members of the Georgia Tech Legislative Network and thank all of you for your continuing interest and assistance in state issues facing the Institute and the University System of Georgia. We are looking forward to working with you to insure that Georgia Tech receives the support it needs to serve its students, faculty, staff, and the people of Georgia.

Gov. Sonny Perdue, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, and House Majority

Leader Jerry Keen traveled the state last week to highlight their unity on priority issues such as K-12 education, water, transportation and healthcare. Those issues are expected to dominate the session and Georgia Tech representatives hope to be part of the discussions. On first glance it may not appear that Georgia Tech has a direct interest in these areas, however, we have researchers and faculty who are experts in these fields. Our hope is that Georgia Tech is the first place government officials turn when they need expertise in these and many other fields.

Of course, there will also be legislation that directly affects higher education institutions. Since this is the second year in the biennial session, bills remained in committee—or wherever they were when the gavel sounded on the 2007 session—and can be acted upon this year. The House and Senate Higher Education committees already have bills awaiting consideration and more have been pre-filed before the session. University System officials will study each and every bill to determine its impact on the state's public colleges and universities.

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Georgia Tech's Legislative Priorities Innovative Learning Resource Center

Georgia Tech has three key priorities for the 2008 session. The largest single budget request this year is \$50 million in design and construction funds for the Innovative Learning Resource Center (ILRC). The center is planned as the hub of campus for undergraduate stu-

dents. It will house core academic labs for first and second year students, experiential learning facilities, information technology, instructional technology, and academic support services. Every incoming Georgia Tech student will use this building and benefit from the services provided. The Board of Re-

gents has asked Gov. Perdue to include \$50 million in his bond package for 2008. Approximately \$25 million in construction funds will come from private and non-state sources.

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Innovative Learning Resource Center continued

The Innovative Learning Resource Center will include:

- 8 chemistry labs
- 8 physics labs
- 5 biology labs
- 3 earth/atmospheric sciences labs
- 15 general purpose classrooms
- 2 large lecture halls (250 and 500 seats)
- Information Commons
- Student services



Upcoming Dates:

The Chancellor will present the University System Budget to the House Appropriations Committee on January 23 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 240 of the State Capitol

Major Repair and Rehabilitation

Funds for basic operation are always extremely important, but this year we will also focus on funding for Major Repair and Rehabilitation funds, MRR. Last year the governor

started the process of converting MRR funds from general obligation bonds to cash by designating one-quarter of the funds as cash and the rest as bonds. This year, he is

expected to take the next step by calling for half of the MRR funds as cash and half as bonds. Georgia Tech expects to receive a portion of this allocation. These funds are essential to renovating and maintaining our capital investments.

Carry Forward of Funds

A bill that is extremely important to the fiscal health of all University System institutions is one that will authorize public colleges and universities to carry forward certain funding, such as a percentage of tuition and

continuing education funds, from one fiscal year to the next. Approval of this measure will enable institutions to better manage these funds and facilitate long-term planning.

Office of Government Relations

We will keep you informed as Georgia Tech's priority items move through the legislative process. Please take time

now to contact your House and Senate members and ask them to support the Innovative Learning Resource Cen-

ter, Major Repairs and Rehabilitation funding in the budget, as well as the carry forward legislation.

Tips for Contacting Your Legislators

Now is the best time to call or write your legislators to ask for their support of Georgia Tech and the University System. The pace of legislation speeds up and legislator's calendars fill up as the weeks continue, so now is your best chance to speak directly with them or have your fax or letter read.

Although e-mail is the fastest and easiest way to send a message to your representatives, it is not the most effective. Their inboxes are filled every day with messages they may or may not read. However, a hand-written letter or fax is much more likely to get their attention. Please take a few minutes to write a note and mail or fax it to their leg-

islative offices. (If you don't know who your legislators are, please call Betsy Jackson in the Government Relations Office or visit: <http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/FindLegislator.htm>.)

Brevity is appreciated and more likely to be remembered when you are sending a note or fax. A good way to accomplish this is a bullet-point list of Georgia Tech's priorities with very brief explanations. Also, please either open or close your note by thanking them for serving in the Legislature and supporting higher education. Sometimes we forget that they are giving up time with their families and at work to serve the State and its people.

Your contacts with legislators carry more weight than anyone else because you are their constituent and you know the important issues facing your district. We believe that an investment in higher education helps every district in Georgia and that Georgia Tech has a special mission to provide engineers, scientists, managers, and others who understand and can apply technology to each and every area of our state. You can make that connection between Georgia Tech and the unique needs of your district better than anyone else and we appreciate your willingness to do that.

Reminder:
Please notify us when you contact your legislators. A quick email will keep us informed.

Contacting the Office of Government Relations

Dene Sheheane and Betsy Jackson in the Government Relations office welcome your calls and comments. Please feel free to call with any questions you have at 404-894-1238. Understandably, we will be out of the office at the State Capitol often during the session, but

will always return your call. E-mail is also a good way to ask a question or report your contacts with legislators, so please feel free to send messages to Dene or Betsy at:

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Alumni Legislative Network Website:

www.gtlngatech.edu