



capitol buzz

news from the front line

T Dr. Craig Wyvill, Dr. Doug Britton and Mr. Tom Horton, of the Georgia Tech Research Institute, GTRI, were in the Capitol last week to testify before the Senate Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee. Representing the Enterprise Innovation Institute, EII, at the hearing were Dr. Stephen Fleming and Mr. Paul Lewis.

hill happenings

T SR 486 commends the Georgia Institute of Technology College of Architecture on its 100th year anniversary. It salutes the College of Architecture and Dean Alan Balfour as leaders in architectural education. The resolution was sponsored by Sen. Chip Rogers (R-Woodstock), a 1991 Georgia Tech graduate. It was read and adopted on March 5.

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Legislative Schedule

As the legislative calendar winds down, Day 30, crossover day, is behind us. With the usual last minute surge of activity to ensure a bill can be considered this year, both the House and Senate were in overdrive on Thursday with the House remaining in session until after 11:00 p.m. Day 31 will be tomorrow with 10 legislative days remaining on the calendar. Both the House and Senate adopted resolutions to end the session, sine die on April

3 instead of extending the session until late June. The federal stimulus funding provided a level of comfort that sparked this change of schedule.

FY09 Amended Budget/House Bill 118 Adopted

On Tuesday, March 10, the House and Senate adopted the conference report for the FY09 amended budget. A few days later, the Governor signed the \$18.9 billion amended budget. This budget funds state operations through June 30. The budget has been adjusted downward several times as the sliding economy continues to take a toll on state revenue collections. The Georgia Tech portion of the FY09 budget reduction is nearly \$30 million. Other institutions in the University System are experiencing

similar budget challenges. On the positive side of the ledger, the Georgia Tech Research Institute will receive \$130,000 in the amended budget for an agricultural workplace safety project.

FY10 General Budget/House Bill 119 Addressed

Last Friday, the Senate Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee met to review the University System's FY10 state budget. Officials from Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute and the Georgia Tech Research Institute presented updates on their specific budget items (referenced as B-units). Georgia Tech units were commended for efforts to leverage the state's investment with external funds.

Early this week the House Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee is expected to vote on their version of the FY10 general budget. The full House may pass the FY10 general budget later this week and then the Senate will take formal action.

Georgia Tech officials and Legislative Network members have emphasized the critical importance of \$43 million in construction funds for the Undergraduate Learning Com-

mons. The building is an \$85 million project. It includes \$25 million in private, non-state funds as well as the \$10 million which was appropriated by the State last year for design and site preparation. The remaining \$7 million is considered state equipment funding that will be secured at a later date.

With only 10 legislative days remaining, crafting the FY10 state budget will be the top priority.

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST

- T House Bill 647** is known as the Higher Education Accountability Act of 2009. It is sponsored by Reps. Bob Smith (R-Watkinsville) and Bill Hembree (R-Winston). It would require units of the University System of Georgia to publish various reports of institutional and student information. This bill remains in the House Higher Education Committee and is unlikely to move forward during this session.
- T House Bill 700** would make the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) responsible for “*all procurement, design, project management, construction, and commissioning related activities for all board of regents projects designated in a resolution of the commission authorizing the issuance of bonds for such project.*” The bill is sponsored by Reps. Bob Smith (R-Watkinsville) and Bill Hembree (R-Winston). It passed the House last Thursday night and now moves to the Senate for consideration. The University System of Georgia and Georgia Tech contend that this legislation is not necessary as the current process is both efficient and cost effective.
- T Senate Bill 169** would place restrictions on stem cell research. Biomedical researchers on university campuses are assessing the impact and providing expert testimony. The bill is sponsored by Sen. Ralph Hudgens (R-Hull). After several revisions and even a vote to table the bill, SB 169 ultimately passed the Senate last Thursday and now moves to the House. Georgia Tech and the research community are working closely to share perspective with the House. This bill should be assigned to a House committee later this week.
- T Senate Bill 194** would allow state agencies, including Georgia Tech, to enter into multiyear contracts with private energy services companies and allow the projected energy savings to be used to finance the cost of a building’s energy retrofiting. This bill, sponsored by Sen. Ronnie Chance (R-Tyrone), passed the Senate and now resides in the House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee. Georgia Tech supports this measure.
- T Senate Bill 201** would remove the restrictions currently placed on voluntary tax return contributions for research of ovarian, breast and prostate cancer. It would allow those funds to be used to research other forms of cancer as well. Georgia Tech supports this legislation as it will allow these funds to be available for other areas of cancer research conducted on our campus. This bill, sponsored by Sen. Don Balfour (R-Snellville), passed the Senate and is now being considered by the House Health and Human Services Committee.
- T Senate Bill 257** would allow University System of Georgia faculty and staff who elected to participate in the Optional Retirement Plan of the Board of Regents the opportunity to switch into the Teachers Retirement System Plan. This bill is sponsored by Sen. Don Balfour (R-Snellville). It remains in the Senate Retirement Committee and is unlikely to move forward during this session.

getting buzzy

calls to action

If you have not already done so, please. . .

T Write, call, and visit your legislators to remind them of the importance of the \$43 million in construction funds for the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons in the FY2010 Budget.

LEGISLATORS TO CONTACT

Rep. Glenn Richardson	404.656.5020	404.656.5644 (fax)
Rep. Jerry Keen	404.656.5052	404.656.5902 (fax)
Rep. Mark Burkhalter	404.656.5072	404.657.0498 (fax)
Rep. Ben Harbin	404.463.2249	404.463.2247 (fax)
Rep. Bob Smith	404.463.2249	404.463.2247 (fax)
Rep. Earl Ehrhart	404.656.5141	404.463.2600 (fax)
Sen. Tommie Williams	404.656.0089	404.463.5220 (fax)
Sen. Chip Rogers	404.463.1378	404.657.9887 (fax)
Sen. Jack Hill	404.656.5038	404.657.7094 (fax)
Sen. Don Balfour	404.656.0095	404.656.6581 (fax)
Sen. Seth Harp	404.463.3931	404.651.6767 (fax)

Thanks to the many of you who have informed us of your contact with state leaders. We love to hear how our GTLN members are making an impact around the state.

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**Georgia Institute
of Technology**

for more information:
Dene Sheheane, Director
Betsy Jackson, Assistant Director
Georgia Tech Office of Government Relations
177 North Avenue, Suite 231
Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0392
betsy.jackson@gatech.edu
404.894.1238