

Unanimously Endorsed -
at 13 Nov 2009
meeting of USGFC Advocates.

USG Faculty Council Position Statement

Recommendation: Two-Year Colleges Should Remain within the University System of Georgia.

Option One: Leave the two-year colleges under the USG and the technical schools under the TCSG for reasons 1-8 discussed below.

OR

Option Two: Instead of developing a two-tier system as recommended in the Tough Choices or Tough Times report, a more logical, cost-effective approach would be to transfer the technical schools to the USG, creating one strong system of higher education. The technical schools could function as one arm of the two-year institution without affecting the two-year college's academic position within the USG. If the tech schools became part of the USG, the academic status of the two-year colleges would remain intact, the transferability of credits would continue, and articulation agreements would attract a larger number of students to the USG. Furthermore, technical students and two-year college students could easily navigate between the two programs before graduating or transferring to four-year institutions. Bringing the tech schools under the auspices of the USG would also eliminate duplication of boards and administrative costs.

In both options, the **mission of the two-year college** (preparing students for success in the University System of Georgia and other four-year institutions) and **the mission of the technical school** (preparing students for success in the workforce) remain intact.

1. **Mission:** The two-year and technical colleges have different missions as noted in the Board of Regents Policy Manual, 3.3.5.1.

http://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section3/policy/3.3_curriculum/#p3.3

The missions of the two institutions are valuable but different: the tech schools prepare students for immediate entry into the workplace; they teach students a specific skill. The two-year colleges offer students a comprehensive education; they prepare students to transfer to a four-year institution.

2. **Point of Access:** Two Year-Colleges are the only point of access for some students.

The number of traditional students attending college in Georgia has increased, due in part to the two-year colleges. In 1992, only 55% of Georgia's high school graduates went directly to college; in 2006, 68%. This increase in enrollment occurred because the University System of Georgia allows students who are unprepared to enter through the two-year colleges and then transfer to one of the 4-year institutions. For these students, many of whom are from the

state's minority populations and lower income groups, two-year colleges are the only portal of entry to the University System of Georgia. Without this access, many Georgia students will be denied a USG education.

3. **Low Transference** between Community College Systems and Four-Year Institutions:

The Tough Choices or Tough Times committee has not produced evidence demonstrating that a merger would increase access to higher education, particularly for Georgia's 60,000 students who depend on the two-year colleges as their portal of entry to the USG.

In Kentucky, a merger identical to the one recommended in the Tough Choices or Tough Times report has resulted in a decline in the number of students transferring to four-year institutions from the comprehensive community college system formed over ten years ago. The University of Kentucky alone has experienced a 32% decline in the number of two-year college transfers.

Transfers between systems in Kentucky have decreased for the following reasons:

- a. University requirements make it difficult to transfer academic credits.
- b. The community college system lacks sufficient financial aid and advisors to help students transfer to the four-year institutions.
- c. **The four-year colleges and universities are reluctant to recruit community college students.** The academic value of the two-year colleges has decreased in this tech school / liberal arts hybrid now operative in Kentucky.

Willard Hom, President of the National Community College Council for Research and Planning, noted that educators in California also have concerns that baccalaureate preparation is weakened by the inclusion of technical schools in the state's community college system, the largest in the country.

4. **Negative Impact on Georgia's Four-Year Institutions:**

Merging the two-year colleges with the tech schools will hurt Georgia's four-year institutions. It will diminish the number of credit hours (the "FTE," full-time equivalent students) upon which the USG's budget is based. Two-year colleges represent approximately 60,000 students, roughly 25% of the USG's population. To remove the two-year colleges from the USG would proportionately decrease the allocation of funds from the state to the USG and place a significant financial burden on the University System. Accordingly, Georgia's reputation as a leader in higher education could be negatively impacted.

5. Expense

Mergers in academe have never been shown to decrease costs. The merging of two institutions with two disparate cultures and missions would increase expenses since an entirely “new” system would have to be created.

6. Negative Impact on Existing Two-Year College Articulation Agreements with Four-Year Institutions

Several Two-Year USG colleges have articulation agreements with four-year institutions. Georgia Perimeter College, for example, has “comprehensive articulation agreements” called TAG (**Transfer Admission Guarantee**) **Agreements** with over 35 four-year institutions, private and public, in and out of state. Many public and private four-year institutions may cancel their agreements if two-year institutions are removed from the University System of Georgia. Many of the out-of-state institutions with whom we have articulation agreements do not accept credits from technical schools.

7. “Comprehensive Articulation Agreements” already exist between USG and TCSG Institutions.

The Tough Choices or Tough Times report mandates “comprehensive articulation agreements” between USG and TCSG institutions. If such agreements do not exist, the Tough Choices or Tough Times report recommends merger. Many two-year USG institutions, in fact, already have articulation agreements with technical schools. For example, GPC currently accepts credits for **286 courses** from technical schools statewide and **75 units of transfer credits** from **DeKalb Tech** alone.

The “mini-core” (courses USG institutions are required to accept as transfer credits from technical schools since 2002 through 2009) consists of fifteen hours (three math and two English). The USG proposes an increase in the mini-core to a total of thirty hours (Principles of Economics, Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to Sociology, Public Speaking, and American Literature 2131, a **sophomore** level course).

8. Removal of Duplicative Teaching and Administrative Resources:

The increase in the mini-core discussed in number 7 contradicts the Tough Choices or Tough Times recommendation to eliminate “duplicative teaching and administrative resources between TCSG and USG institutions.”

Duplicative teaching and administrative services cannot be eliminated because the institutions are independent, **each with their own unique mission**. This recommendation

leaves the door open for the wholesale merging of duplicative services across the board between **two disparate institutions**. Once colleges start eliminating classes from one institution and administrators from another, they approach a merger.