

shining the light

*A Report Card on Georgia's System of
Public Higher Education*

Executive Summary

SHINING THE LIGHT: A REPORT CARD ON GEORGIA'S SYSTEM OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION takes a close look at the University System of Georgia, focusing on four key areas of the public's interest: what students are learning; whether the marketplace of ideas is vibrant; how our universities are governed; and what a college education costs.

Applying the same grading standard used by the System's largest institution, the University of Georgia, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni offers a Pass or Fail grade in four key areas. This executive summary outlines our findings and provides an overview of the research and conclusions of the full report.

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

General Education	P
Intellectual Diversity	F
Governance	
Board Structure and Transparency of Operations	P
Board Accomplishments	F
Cost and Effectiveness	F

GENERAL EDUCATION

Institutions have strong general education requirements in most core subjects; however, large numbers of Georgia students can graduate without ever taking courses in foreign language, economics, or literature.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS BY INSTITUTION

Institution	Gov/						
	Comp	Lit	Lang	Hist	Econ	Math	Sci
University of Georgia	√					√	√
Georgia Institute of Technology	√			√		√	√
Georgia State University	√			√		√	√
Kennesaw State University	√	√		√	√	√	√
Georgia Southern University	√			√	√	√	√
Valdosta State University	√	√		√		√	√
University of West Georgia	√			√		√	√
	P	F	F	P	F	P	P

SYSTEM GRADE: P

INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY

Students report that major Georgia universities do not provide an intellectual atmosphere conducive to a robust exchange of ideas.

KEY INDICATORS OF INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY

Offering Competing Ideas, Different Perspectives, and Alternate Claims of Truth	F
Teaching Students to Think Critically	F
Offering a Safe Learning Environment for Students	F
Ensuring Professional Responsibility in the Classroom	F

SYSTEM GRADE: F

GOVERNANCE

Board Structure and Transparency of Operations

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents operates in the open and is well structured to do its work.

BOARD STRUCTURE AND TRANSPARENCY OF OPERATIONS

Names and contact information of Regents publicly available and easily accessible	P
Board meets frequently	P
Board members attend regularly	P
Effective board size	P
Periodic review of bylaws and/or policies	P
Pre-service training and/or professional development	F
Transparency of board activities and actions	P
Functioning committee structure	P
Executive and compensation committees	P
Involvement in presidential search committees	P
Renewal of Chancellor/presidential contracts based on regular evaluation	P
Development of a long-range plan	P

SYSTEM GRADE: P

Board Accomplishments

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents keeps busy but could do much more in the way of meaningful accomplishments.

BOARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Actions to improve academic quality	P
Actions to assess student learning	F
Actions to control costs and increase efficiency	P
Willingness to disagree	F
Avoiding the rubberstamp	F

SYSTEM GRADE: F

COST AND EFFECTIVENESS

The University System of Georgia has done little to contain costs and increase effectiveness; however, signs of progress appear on the horizon.

COST AND EFFECTIVENESS

Instructional vs. administrative spending	F
In-state undergraduate tuition and fee trend	F
Tuition and fees as a percentage of median household income	P
Ratio of new programs to closed programs	F
Baccalaureate graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshmen	F
Percent of first-time, full-time freshmen continuing after the first year (first to second year retention rate)	P
Performance as a criterion for funding	F

SYSTEM GRADE: F

FOUNDED IN 1995, ACTA IS A NATIONAL EDUCATION NON-PROFIT dedicated to academic freedom, academic excellence, and accountability in higher education. This report card is one of a series of publications on higher education designed to provide independent analysis for education leaders, policymakers and trustees.



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