

News Release

For Immediate Release

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New Report Documents Value of a Degree from Gordon College and other University System Institutions

Barnesville, GA- According to a recently published report on higher education in Georgia, graduates from Gordon College can gross approximately \$7,207 a year more than a person with a high-school diploma. Over the course of a working career, the average graduate of a public college or university in Georgia can expect to earn nearly \$1 million more than a high school-educated neighbor.

Conducted by researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology, the study, entitled “Value of University System of Georgia Education”, shows that for recent graduates of the University System of Georgia a college degree is worth an average of \$14,000 per year in additional earnings. The authors analyzed the salaries of nearly 90,000 University System students who graduated between 1993 and 1997. Increased earnings resulting from their college degrees added \$1.25 billion to the state’s economy during 1998 – the most recent year for which data was available. These graduates had widespread impact on the state, bringing at least a million dollars per year in additional economic impact to more than half of Georgia’s 159 counties.

“This study shows, in a very detailed manner, the economic value of a University System education and how that education directly benefits Georgia,” remarked Gordon College President Lawrence Weill.

The educational value of a degree from the University System of Georgia had an economic impact in Lamar County in 1998 of more than \$700,000. A more complete cost analysis would extend these benefits over a full 40-year career. Estimated benefits could be as high as 40 times the total impact indicated, according to the study. In addition, the report points out that 759 students who graduated from Gordon College between 1993 and 1997 contributed over \$21 million to the state’s economy; and their education was valued at just over \$5.4 million.

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“As our funding partners struggle with grave budget issues, I would encourage them not to harm this generator of economic growth,” said University System of Georgia Chancellor Thomas C. Meredith. “Georgia so far has resisted the trend we see in many states to reduce substantially the state’s investment in higher education,” he noted. “Our economy has benefited from that decision, and as this study has shown, those benefits will continue to increase in the decades to come.”

In addition to measuring the value of a college education, the report also looked at the educational specialties that offer the greatest financial rewards, the demand for specific college disciplines, occupations in which shortages are anticipated and migration patterns related to occupational needs.

Not surprisingly, the programs with the greatest earnings potential are professional degrees in dentistry, medicine and law. But business administration, nursing and teaching are the programs with the greatest total economic impact, thanks to the large number of students who graduate with these majors.

Projections from the Georgia Department of Labor (DOL) indicate that occupations requiring a higher-education degree will make up 25 percent of all the state’s jobs by 2010, a figure that has increased from 23 percent in 2000. The DOL forecasts that the top three occupations requiring higher education, based on numeric employment increases, will be registered nurses, computer support specialists and accountants and auditors. All of those disciplines are offered on the Gordon College campus.

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The study confirms that the University System of Georgia is the major source of recent college graduates in Georgia — about half of all Georgians who hold recent postsecondary degrees were educated by a USG institution.

The ICAPP-commissioned study adapted analysis techniques used by the U.S. Census Bureau in its 2002 report, “The Big Payoff,” which examined the benefits of college education on a national basis. The study also relies on an analysis of U.S.

Census Bureau data, combined with Georgia Department of Labor information.

Full copies of “The Value of University System of Georgia Education” may be downloaded from the ICAPP website at: <http://www.icapp.org/publications.htm>. News releases detailing the economic impact of specific USG institutions also may be found at this address.