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For immediate release
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Macon State College Graduates Pay Off for Central Georgia's Economy

The higher salaries earned by graduates of University System of Georgia institutions who live in Bibb and Houston counties translate into an economic impact of nearly \$43 million - the highest in Georgia outside of metro Atlanta, according to a study released Wednesday, Nov. 5. The study revealed that recent Macon State graduates earned, on average, nearly \$8,000 more in 1998 than those with no education beyond high school. This figure does not reflect the impact of Macon State's seven baccalaureate degrees introduced since 1997 in business, communications, health information management, health services administration, information technology, public service and, coming soon, nursing. These programs have produced some 400 graduates with bachelor of science degrees that will add significantly to the impact in future studies.

Macon State College is the only University System school serving both Bibb and Houston counties with permanent campuses.

"Does a college degree pay off financially? Absolutely," said Dr. David A. Bell, Macon State's president. "This study indicates that graduates of Macon State and other University System schools will earn, over a lifetime, significantly more than workers without college degrees. Since most Macon State graduates remain in Central Georgia, that is a huge economic impact on this region."

The study was commissioned by the University System's Intellectual Capital Partnership Program and conducted by Georgia Tech researchers. They analyzed the earnings of nearly 90,000 University System students who graduated between 1993 and 1997 and found that for 1998 (the most recent year complete data was available) the increased earnings resulting from their college degrees added \$1.25 billion to Georgia's economy.

Among the findings specific to Central Georgia:

- The Macon State College graduates whose wages were examined earned a total of \$32.1 million in 1998. Of that total, more than \$8.3 million can be attributed to their higher education.
- Counties with the greatest economic impact as a result of higher wages earned by University System graduates included Bibb (\$26.2 million) and Houston (\$16.7 million). The economic impact on Bibb and Houston combined was the highest outside of metro Atlanta.
- Academic programs with the greatest total economic impact in 1998 based on educational value included: management, Registered Nursing, accounting and general business. Macon State offers bachelor's *and* associate degrees in all of these areas except professional nursing, for which an associate degree is available. The College will launch an RN-to-BSN completion degree – a baccalaureate program for practicing RNs – in Fall 2004, pending Georgia Board of Nursing approval.
- Professional jobs in Georgia that require college education and will grow through 2010 include Registered Nurses, systems analysts, network administrators, database administrators, accountants/auditors and health information technologists. Macon State offers bachelor's and associate degrees connected to all of these fields.

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>.