



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**  
Student Government Association



## Joint Statement on USG Chancellor Appointment

Dear Board of Regents and University System of Georgia,

April 1, 2022

In light of Sonny Perdue being appointed Chancellor of the University System of Georgia (USG), we want to highlight some of the greatest, most pressing concerns of the signatory universities and broader USG student body. The beginning of a Chancellorship is always a unique and opportune time; we sincerely hope our concerns will help inform and guide policymaking in the near future and long-term. Specifically, we hope that Chancellor Purdue and the Board of Regents will focus on best serving the 26 schools, 48,000 faculty, and over 340,000 students within USG by:

1. **Promoting greater engagement with USG's constituency and creating more forums for communication between students, faculty, and state institutions.** We commend USG for existing initiatives such as the Student Advisory Council (SAC), which facilitate conversations between student governments, the Chancellor, the Board of Regents, and other relevant institutions. However, hosting additional forums such as town halls and focus groups could (1) aid in further closing the communication gap between USG students, faculty, and leadership, and (2) facilitate policies and decisions that are more informed by the needs of students and faculty.
2. **Providing funding and programmatic support for continued student success and enrollment.** Under USG precedent, Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) have been underfunded, and they do not have the designation of being research universities or having professional degree programs; we fear this promotes inequality in educational outcomes for undergraduate students. As such, we hope that our funding will continue being prioritized to expand access to higher education for marginalized populations. Similarly, we hope imperatives such as the USG Mental Health Initiative, career development programs, and campus improvement projects continue to be supported to ensure the health and success of our campus communities.
3. **Promoting sustained faculty & free speech protections.** In the context of recent changes to USG's tenure policy, it is more important than ever to consider faculty input and wellbeing in university proceedings. Faculty serve as the backbone for research and academics, and they should have the freedom to continue innovating, inspiring, and educating countless students. Given the incredibly politicized environment surrounding education policy, we hope USG will preserve the integrity of higher education and academic freedoms in our classrooms.
4. **Promoting college affordability.** Low income students make up around 48% of our state's undergraduate population, but only 42.5% were HOPE scholarship recipients and 21.3% were Zell Miller scholarship recipients. Though low-income students are increasing in number in our university system, they are underrepresented in non-need-based scholarships. Likewise, the percentage of PELL grant recipients has at least doubled over the course of the last decade, emphasizing the growing necessity for need-based scholarships to be made available to USG students.



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Additionally, mounting costs of tuition, student health insurance, parking, and reduced university housing are substantially increasing the financial burdens that students experience. As a result, when choosing between USG schools and other institutions, many students often choose to go elsewhere because of better financial aid packages. This, and several USG institutions reporting declining enrollment, make it imperative to minimize the financial barriers to university education in the state of Georgia.

**5. Pursuing adoption of an USG-wide test optional policy or providing USG schools with the choice to adopt individual test-optional policies.** Holistic admissions practices have made it clear that there are better indicators of college success than standardized testing, such as classroom performance, extracurricular involvement, and previous job experience. Additionally, the costs of tutoring, the exams themselves, and preparation materials place undue financial burden on prospective students and their families during the application process. As such, we hope USG moves forward with pursuing or promoting test-optional policies.

We appreciate Chancellor Perdue and the Board of Regents for taking our concerns into consideration. As student leaders, these concerns impact us on a daily basis and are imminent to the success and wellbeing of the students we represent. We hope that USG will continue to make higher education more accessible and expand the scholarship, research, and educational opportunities available to all students. We look forward to working together in pursuit of these goals.

Signed,

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