

SECTION 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Provide a clear statement of the nature and purpose of the change in the context of the institution's mission and goals and provide evidence of the legal authority for the change (if authorization is required by the governing board or the state).

Nature and Purpose of Consolidation in the Context of Institutional Mission

In his September 14, 2011 report to the University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents, Chancellor Huckaby announced that a study would be conducted to determine if “any campus consolidations would further our teaching, research, and service missions in a more fiscally prudent way.” On November 8, 2011, the USG Board of Regents approved six principles to be utilized in assessing the potential consolidations:

- Increase opportunities to raise education attainment levels
- Improve accessibility, regional identity, and compatibility
- Avoid duplication of academic programs while optimizing access to instruction
- Create significant potential for economies of scale and scope
- Enhance regional economic development
- Streamline administrative services while maintaining or improving service level and quality

Excerpts from the current Vision, Mission and Goals Statement for the BOR and the USG that are particularly pertinent to the purpose of this consolidation include:

- “The University System of Georgia will create a more educated Georgia...” (Vision Statement)
- “The mission of the University System of Georgia is to contribute to the educational, cultural, economic, and social advancement of Georgia...by bringing [its] resources...to bear on the economic development of the State and the continuing education of its citizens.” (Mission Statement)
- “Each institution in the University System of Georgia will be characterized by ...a commitment to sharing physical, human, information, and other resources in collaboration with other System institutions...to expand and enhance programs and services available to the citizens of Georgia.” (Mission Statement)
- “The University System of Georgia will ensure access to academic excellence and educational opportunities for all Georgians by [achieving]...[Goal] 1. Renew excellence in undergraduate education to meet 21st century student needs.” (Goals Statement)
- “The University System of Georgia will ensure access to academic excellence and educational opportunities for all Georgians by [achieving]...[Goal] 6. Increase efficiency, working as a System.” (Goals Statement)

Both North Georgia College & State University (NGCSU) and Gainesville State College (GSC) have distinctive missions. NGCSU is a SACSCOC Level V institution with selective admissions and residential halls. NGCSU is one of six senior military colleges in the United States, and has more than 750 members of the Corps of Cadets among its 6,500 students. GSC is a SACSCOC Level II access and commuter institution, offering educational opportunities primarily at the Associate degree level and a limited array of Baccalaureate degrees. The consolidated University of North Georgia will be SACS Level V.

The mission statement for NGCSU is:

North Georgia College & State University develops and educates leaders through strong liberal arts, pre-professional, professional, and graduate programs. North Georgia College & State University is proud to be designated by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia as a state leadership institution and by the Georgia General Assembly as the Military College of Georgia.

North Georgia College & State University provides an environment of academic excellence that develops leaders who respect all people, maintain high ethical standards, continue intellectual and personal growth, and serve the community, the state, the nation, and the world.

The mission statement for GSC is:

The mission of Gainesville State College is to provide broad access to a quality liberal arts higher education primarily for the population of Northeast Georgia. Gainesville State College seeks to assure the success of its students and contribute to the quality of life in the surrounding region. The institution, with an emphasis on diversity and international issues, prepares students to function in a global society.

The consolidated University of North Georgia (UNG) will retain the major components of each institution's mission, which includes a comprehensive range of academic programs (certificate through doctoral), a military component, and an access component. The mission statement for UNG approved by the USG Board of Regents at their May 2012 meeting is:

The University of North Georgia, a regional multi-campus institution and premier senior military college, provides a culture of academic excellence in a student-focused environment that includes quality education, service, inquiry and creativity. This is accomplished through broad access to comprehensive academic and co-curricular programs that develop students into leaders for a diverse and global society. The University of North Georgia is a University System of Georgia leadership institution and is The Military College of Georgia.

The new mission statement is guiding decisions such as admissions criteria, tuition policy, and core curriculum learning outcomes as NGCSU and GSC move through the process of preparing for consolidation. It is important to note that no substantive reduction is expected as a result of this consolidation in the types and delivery locations of existing degree programs or the quality of support services currently provided to students by the partner institutions being consolidated. Any reductions noted in the combined authorized list of degree programs for the University of North Georgia have resulted from the deletion of deactivated or inactive programs or the efficiencies of consolidating two similar programs into one. To the contrary, there is an expectation that the institutional consolidation will facilitate the offering of expanded educational opportunities at some of the University of North Georgia's different campus locations.

Legal Authority for Institutional Consolidation

On January 10, 2012, the USG Board of Regents approved the proposed consolidation of North Georgia College & State University (NGCSU) and Gainesville State College (GSC). The minutes of this meeting are in [Appendix 2.1](#), and the approval of for consolidation is on page 2 of the minutes.

The Board of Regents is the governing board for the 35 institutions of the University System of Georgia, of which NGCSU and GSC are part. The Board of Regents was created by the Georgia legislature in 1931 as “Regents of the University System of Georgia” to oversee and manage all state colleges and universities. The USG Board of Regents has the legal authority to consolidate NGCSU and GSC because of authority vested in them as stated in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA), Section 20-3-31:

The board of regents shall have power:

- (1) To make such reasonable rules and regulations as are necessary for the performance of its duties;
- (2) To elect or appoint professors, educators, stewards, or any other officers necessary for all of the schools in the university system, as may be authorized by the General Assembly; to discontinue or remove them as the good of the system or any of its schools or institutions or stations may require; and to fix their compensations;
- (3) To establish all such schools of learning or art as may be useful to the state and to organize them in the way most likely to attain the ends desired; and
- (4) To exercise any power usually granted to such corporation, necessary to its usefulness, which is not in conflict with the Constitution and laws of this state.

In addition, Article I, Section 2 of the *Board of Regents Bylaws* clearly articulates the authority of the Board over its member institutions:

The charter of the Board of Regents consists of the original charter of the Trustees of the University of Georgia embodied in the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia approved January 27, 1785, and modified by a subsequent Act of the General Assembly of Georgia in 1931, as follows:

Be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, that there is hereby set up and constituted a department of the State Government of Georgia, to be known as the “Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.” The name of the corporation heretofore established and existing under the name and style, “Trustees of the University of Georgia” be and the same is hereby changed to “Regents of the University System of Georgia.”

The government, control, and management of the University System of Georgia and each of its institutions are vested by the people of Georgia exclusively with the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The Board of Regents possesses such other authority as is granted by the Constitution of the State of Georgia and by acts of the General Assembly.

As documented in Section 3 of this prospectus, although the Board of Regents exercised its authority to consolidate NGCSU and GSC, the governing board also delegated substantial responsibility and authority to the Chancellor and his staff, who in turn charged the institution’s presidents, faculty, staff and administrators to devise and take appropriate actions to implement

this institutional consolidation in a manner consistent with the Board's intent and the best interests of the citizens of Georgia. Most of the descriptions of the substantive changes that have been made in preparation for the consolidation forming UNG have emerged from collaborations among System and campus governance processes and the authorities delegated to the individuals involved in them, with the approvals of the governing board where needed.

Link to Section 2 Appendix

[Appendix 2.1 Minutes of January 2012 Board of Regents Meeting](#)

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