

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Patricia Grady, President, DSC Social Work Club, cell: (423) 284-5509
Christina Trammell, cell phone: (770) 283-0639

COLLEGE STUDENTS FIGHT PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS

Current students, alumni, faculty and friends of the USG from across the state
are organizing to Maintain Equitable Access to Higher Education

The Dalton State College community was hit with a shock in an open faculty meeting late last week. In a cost-cutting measure, called for by further state budget cuts, the School of Social Work was the only academic program that the college president, Dr. John Schwenn, suggested be cut from the college. The Social Work program, the only bilingual, bicultural program in the nation, will have 12 Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) graduates this year, 9 of whom are IV-E graduates, and anticipates approximately 18 BSW graduates next year. The program is a fully accredited BSW program by the Council on Social Work Education. All of the graduates from last year are employed in the profession. IV-E graduates were the only influx of newly hired Department of Family and Children Services staff allowed in the state budget last year, giving critical staff to the public child welfare system. It makes no sense to cut the Social Work program at a time when the economy is strained, local unemployment rates are the second highest in the nation (www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/03/06/business/main4847557.shtml), and families are in desperate need of social services.

In response to a request from the State legislature, the University System of Georgia (USG) is preparing a summary of \$300 million in budget reductions for the next academic year. This \$300 million reduction is in addition to the \$264 million that has already been cut in the Governor's proposed budget. In a meeting with the joint House-Senate Budget Committee, Chancellor Davis described the magnitude of a reduction of a \$385 million cut as equivalent to cutting "the entire budget for 23 of the state's 35 universities." In total, we are looking at reductions of \$633 million over the next two years. A funding loss of this magnitude could cause: significant increase in tuition, entire academic programs to be cut completely, loss of faculty (including tenured professors), larger classes, diminished student worker positions, less classes, completing a degree will take more time to accomplish, and the possibility of entire schools closing their doors. This has dramatically affected Dalton State College.

Supporters of the USG from across the state have planned to meet with legislators after the latest session held by the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Georgia House of Representatives at the Georgia Capitol, and will hold a **press conference at 12:15 PM on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 outside of the Georgia Capitol, 214 State Capitol, Atlanta, Georgia 30303**. An announcement will be made regarding an upcoming demonstration of approximately 4,000 supporters. Local students can be reached for comment outside of the Dalton State College Student Center at 8 AM on Wednesday, March 3, before carpooling to the State Capitol.

For more information regarding local advocacy efforts, please visit:
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&ref=ts&gid=330183684020>
www.futureofgeorgia.org

###