

CAPITOL UPDATE

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Science and Tech Commission Update

As you know, TAG along with Senator Barry Loudermilk actively worked to see SR 68, which created the Science and Technology Strategic Initiative Joint Study Commission, passed through the General Assembly this past session. Since the creation of the Commission, they have held six meetings. On October 28, the Commission visited Macon and held a meeting at Mercer University. On November 15, the Commission traveled east, and held a meeting in Augusta at the Georgia Health Sciences University.

Macon Meeting—October 28

The Science and Tech Commission had a packed schedule when they visited Mercer University in Macon. Four panels, covering Higher Education, Traditional Industries in Technology Growth, Aerospace and Military & Defense, talked about a broad range of issues that significantly impact the industry.

During the Higher Ed panel, the Commission learned about the need for continued research and development funding and how universities were partnering with the private sector to bring about economic development in the science and tech sectors. Additionally, the need for necessary funding levels from the state in order to provide high quality education to Georgia's future workforce. They discussed the importance of keeping students that graduate from Georgia university in state to ensure our workforce is full and that the state sees a return on their investment in the students.

In the Traditional Industries in Technology Growth panel, the Commission heard about new technologies being deployed in many of Georgia's oldest industries like forestry, paper mills and mining. These new technologies being deployed are so advanced it requires a workforce that has a background in chemistry and biology, as well as software and network engineering. Georgia has unique natural resources that can be exported all over the world beneath our feet. Maximizing the impact it can have on our economy requires advanced manufacturing and mining techniques that are costly and requires a large amount of capital. However, with the right amount of funding and a trained workforce, Georgia can leverage this industries strengths to position us a global leader.

The Aerospace panel discussed how Georgia is already world leader aerospace exports. Panelist from some of our top aerospace manufacturers and air lines, discussed the challenges they have with workforce. Citing that nearly 80 percent of their employees have a two year technical degree and that they no longer have a large demand for four year degree employees. Their biggest challenge is finding students with the right certifications and training that can be airplane mechanics. In an industry that is obviously very mobile, ensuring they have the right incentives to stay in Georgia is crucial.

Military leaders and defense experts spoke on the excellent training and life skills the armed services provide our young people. With Georgia being home to number of military installations, the state can leverage these trained workers after being discharged. Additionally, the state has seen a large amount of investment from our military installments in technology development for the department of defense and other agencies. Commercializing these technologies when available is crucial.

Augusta Meeting—November 15

In November the Commission visited the Georgia Health Sciences University in Augusta. They received a tour of the campus and were able to see the new technologies being used in the state's flagship medical university. Interactive and hands-on learning technologies in the School of Dentistry allows dental students to maximize their time and improve their skills. They had video monitors at each work station that allowed the professor to give direct instructions to each student as they worked. The Cancer Research facility was using state of the art technologies to genome cancer patients to develop individualized treatment plans based on their genetic make-up. In the simulation training room, nursing students could practice on life-like dummies to simulate nearly every potential medical scenario they would see in the real world. Teachers could use a wireless computer system to modify the dummies behavior, drug reactions and other complications that may arise to ensure students were trained and repaired when entering the workforce.

The public hearing allowed the Commissioner to hear more about the Telecom Industry and their needs, the challenges and opportunities in R&D and Commercialization and how Georgia's Bio and Life Sciences Industry was working to bring new investment to the state, growing the industry and developing cures for the future.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for November 30 in Columbus at TSYS, and will focus on the Financial Technology industry, the Information Security industry and Entrepreneurs. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 1:00 pm.

For more information on the Science and Technology Commission, or to register for upcoming events please visit the website at www.scitechplan.ga.gov and follow us on twitter [@GASciTechPlan](https://twitter.com/GASciTechPlan) today.

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