

Georgia's public university presidents getting pay raises



Credit: Steve Schaefer

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Counting his deferred compensation, Georgia Tech President Angel Cabrera will be paid the most next fiscal year of all the state's public college and university presidents. He spoke at Tech's commencement ceremony on May 6, 2023. (Steve Schaefer/steve.schaefer@ajc.com)

The presidents of 13 public colleges and universities in Georgia will receive \$3,000 pay raises this summer, but several will get much bigger bumps in compensation.

Jere Morehead at the University of Georgia and Don Green at Gordon State College will see some of the largest increases, in the neighborhood of \$30,000 each.

Most of Morehead's increase comes from a roughly \$20,000 increase in his housing allowance after UGA decided to [sell the historic president's house](#) there. He will now get \$43,300 annually, along with the presidents of Georgia Tech and Georgia State. All the other presidents get a slightly smaller allowance of \$41,200 except one: Christopher Blake of Middle Georgia State University gets \$54,200 a year.

The compensation for Michelle Johnston, named [earlier this month](#) as the president of Georgia Southwestern State University, will be \$50,000 more than she earned as president of College of Coastal Georgia this past year. She is taking over a school with a slightly larger enrollment. As Georgia Southwestern president, her compensation package of \$339,200 will be \$28,000 more than that of her predecessor, Neal Weaver.

The Georgia Board of Regents recently approved these compensation amounts for the leaders of 24 campuses in the University System of Georgia. Two presidents of two other universities, Albany State and Augusta, are leaving their roles, one for a different job and one for retirement.

Earlier this month, Gov. Brian Kemp signed a \$36.1 billion budget for the next fiscal year that [features pay raises](#) for 300,000 educators and state workers. Rank-and-file state employees are getting 4% raises of up to \$3,000.

State university presidents for four Atlanta area campuses — Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Clayton State University, Kennesaw State University and Georgia State University — will see \$3,000 raises, as will the leaders of nine other public institutions around the state. Jann Joseph, president of Georgia Gwinnett College, will see nearly \$12,000 more. Four others will get raises of between \$6,000 and \$15,000.

Georgia Tech President Ángel Cabrera will be getting a little over \$12,000 more, counting \$250,000 in compensation that is deferred until he's vested.

The University System said in a statement that the pay packages included “adjustments to retain some of the nation’s best college and university presidents. In a competitive market for leaders in higher education, we compete for the best and want to keep them.”

The presidents of the state’s top research universities — Georgia Tech, UGA and Georgia State University (the presidency of the fourth, Augusta University, is unfilled as Brooks Keel retires) — take in far more each year than their counterparts.

Assuming Tech’s Cabrera gets his quarter-million dollars through vesting, he’s at the top, with total compensation of over \$1.2 million next fiscal year. Morehead, who has led UGA since 2013, will also earn over \$1 million, with Brian Blake at Georgia State getting just under \$1 million.

A couple of others, Kathy Schwaig at Kennesaw State and Kyle Marrero at Georgia Southern, will be just under half a million dollars each. The rest will earn less than \$400,000, with six in the \$200,000s.