

Theme: Your Vision for Tech

Length of Speech:

20 minutes

Good afternoon. I am very pleased to welcome all of you back to campus. I consider it an honor to speak to those of you who have made Georgia Tech the successful Institute that it is today.

Today, I'm going to speak to you about Georgia Tech's vision for the future. Whenever I speak, it seems like people all want to hear about my vision for the future. So, before I begin, I should explain that's it's not my vision. The vision that will lead Georgia Tech into the 21st century is a shared vision — created by Georgia Tech faculty, staff, students, alumni, and former faculty and staff like yourself.

### Perspective Story

Vision is vital to an organization's success. Take major league baseball — a vision gone wrong. Last year, both the players and the owners had a vision of what major league baseball should be. This year, we're seeing how sometimes too many visions add up to a total lack of vision.

For baseball players and owners, the game changed — and everyone lost.

In recent years, the world of higher education has also begun to change. Our research universities have been affected by the globalization of industry and business, the changing demography of our citizenry, the mores of families and values transmitted to students, and the way in which our young people

are taught to think and learn. Specific to the future of Georgia Tech has been the changing and growing importance of technology on the day-to-day lives of all Americans.

We are also affected by the needs of businesses and industries who can only compete if they have employees who can work in teams, are adaptable, are resolute in the face of difficulty, understand ethics, and are "street-smart" and at the same time simply brighter than the others. We have to help produce students with these talents.

Yet another element where the game is changing is in the research arena. Federal government research funding, which fueled the amazing development of the modern research university, is shrinking and changing focus. On the positive side, we see industrial and corporate funding increasing for those who are able to adapt to this development. Power is shifting to those who can address issues of national competitiveness and team with government and industry.

Unlike the baseball players and owners who seem to be locked in mortal combat, Georgia Tech is perfectly positioned to take advantage of the new game plan in higher education... if, and this is a big if, we make the necessary adjustments in our system, find the resources needed to let us sprint and not walk, get the skilled players we need to take us to the next level, and continue to emphasize the basics that make it all possible.

To accomplish our goals, we need to understand the context (the game plan), how change is coming, develop a strategy we all can believe in, and work as a team with ourselves and those we serve.

As we move toward the next century, our squad is looking like

World Series material. Through the years due to visions many of you created and built, we have built the foundation that is needed through a team of faculty, staff, students and alumni. This year's freshmen are examples of our blue chip recruiting process. They bring with them the highest average SAT score of any public university with a 1233 average score; they also ranked number one in the number of freshmen National Merit Scholars attending a public university.

Georgia Tech is also fortunate to have a built-in home field advantage. In Georgia we have a governor committed to education. Evidence is found in his funding of the HOPE program and support for significant increases in faculty and staff salaries. Chancellor Portch is also dedicated to improving Georgia's schools through increasing our support levels and implementing technology into the way we deliver education to our students.

We also make a strong showing due to our link with the industries, new and traditional, that represent technologies important to its disciplinary initiatives. Thirty percent of our research funding comes from industry, and there is evidence that is growing.

But being ahead in the sixth inning won't do us any good at all if we're not still ahead in the ninth or even the twelfth inning. That's where strategy comes in. Since I arrived at Georgia Tech, I've spent a lot of time working with faculty and staff to formulate a plan and vision for the future.

We could not have selected a better time to begin strategic planning — Chancellor Portch and the Board of Regents are also working on strategic planning for the University System. It is our goal to align our plan with that of the Board of Regents'

plan and design a strategy that complements the statewide vision. By aligning our plans, we can make sure to ask for money in a way that appeals to the ones who control the purse strings.

By the end of this academic year, we must complete Institutewide strategic planning and begin implementation of the effort to achieve strategic goals. We must boldly move from the planning to the action stage.

How are we going to achieve our vision? Here are some of the issues and opportunities facing Georgia Tech as we move toward the 21st century — and some of our strategies for moving forward and hitting the ball out of the park.

- Build on our historical and institutional commitment to serve students and state. Thomas Jefferson once said of Virginia: “Our biggest strengths are our traditions. Our biggest weaknesses are also our traditions.” We must therefore be careful as we shore up our future — and build on the traditions that have made us what we are today, such as commitment to technology, learning by doing, and academic excellence. However, we must keep our eyes open for strategies and new technologies that can likewise give us a strong tomorrow.
- Recognize mega-trends and be adaptive:
  - 1.) Electronic teaching and learning technology
  - 2.) Interdisciplinary thrusts -- telemedicine and the Packaging Research Center
- Take full advantage of the Olympic opportunity.
  - 1). Single largest building project in the school’s history
  - 2). Futurenet, campus cable

- 3). Expand the Institute's national and international reputation and sphere of influence including expanding the programs at Georgia Tech Lorraine.

1995 and 1996 will be important years for Georgia Tech. Our visibility will be higher than it has ever been -- and it is our goal to make the most of it.

- We will continue to work closely with our industrial and business partners.
- In accordance with the goals of the chancellor of the University System of Georgia, I'd also like to develop stronger working relationships with fellow institutes of higher education within Georgia. The Georgia Research Alliance offers a useful vehicle for this aspiration particularly with the increased funding that is proposed for it. Achieving this goal will enable us to deliver engineering education statewide, thereby strengthening bonds with the non-research universities and building up our statewide presence.
- One important action will be the initiation of the formal phase of our new \$300 million capital campaign. This campaign is vital to our future and will act as the fuel that will drive our improvements.

Those are some of the more salient points of our strategies to achieve true national stature. I'd now like to close with a quote from that immortal sports figure, Yogi Berra. In his homespun way, he spoke of the importance of vision. He said: "If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else."

We know where we are going, and if we all continue to work

together, we can get there. Thank you.

Questions?