President Chace, Bill Todd, Paul Citron, Gail Naughton, faculty of both Georgia Tech and Emory University, members of the Petit Institute Advisory Board, ladies and gentlemen.

I join with Dean Chameau, Pete Petit, and Dr. Nerem in welcoming you to campus to celebrate the inauguration of the Georgia Tech/Emory Center for the Engineering of Living Tissue.

This research center represents a new frontier for Georgia Tech in a number of ways. The most obvious new frontier is in its research. This is the first and so far the only National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center in the nation to address tissue engineering.

The decision by NSF to fund this center is a reflection of the unique strength and high quality of Georgia Tech and Emory University in the fields of engineering and medicine respectively. More specifically, it recognizes that this center has brought together a faculty “dream team” of research expertise in tissue engineering that simply is not available anywhere else. Georgia Tech and Emory University have become the undisputed national headquarters for this new, emerging medical field.

The Tissue Engineering Center represents another new frontier in its structure. The future of higher education is going to involve more and more partnerships among institutions, across disciplines and between higher education and industry.

This new center is just one facet of a multi-faceted and ongoing partnership between Georgia Tech and Emory University in bio-engineering. Georgia Tech is proud to be Emory’s partner in pioneering models of collaboration in both research and education. And I want to recognize and thank Emory Vice President Mike Johns and Dean Tom Lawley of Emory for their role in bringing this center to fruition.

The Tissue Engineering Center is also a partnership between higher education and industry. The support of private industry has been crucial to the establishment of the center, and the continuing advice and counsel of industry will help to keep the research focused and productive. So I want to recognize and thank our industrial partners for joining with us in this important undertaking.

Finally, this research center is part of a new frontier for Georgia Tech, as we continue to mold and shape this institute in response to the changing needs of the state of Georgia. We want to do everything we can to help make Georgia a world center for biotechnology. Toward that end, we are in the process of developing a major initiative in bio-engineering and bio-science research and education.
The Center for the Engineering of Living Tissues is an important component of that initiative. It will be housed together with the other major pieces in a new building for bio-engineering and bio-science, which is now under construction.

We hope to see all of you again at the dedication of that building next October, and you will have an opportunity at that time to see the Tissue Engineering Center in its new, permanent home.

Dr. Bill Chace is a literary scholar and I am an engineer, but we have more in common than you might think. For most of my life, I’ve been following Dr. Chace around, admiring his accomplishments.

Both of us got our PhDs from U Cal at Berkeley. But Dr. Chace got his a year ahead of me. We were both on the faculty at Stanford University. But Dr. Chace got to be vice provost of academic planning and development. We both came to Atlanta in the same year – 1994 – to assume the presidency of two of Georgia’s premier educational institutions. But Dr. Chace arrived in May and I didn’t get here until September.

So you can imagine my enormous delight to discover that today, on this program, I finally got to be ahead of him. In addition to the privilege of speaking first, that also gives me the honor of presenting to you a valued colleague and collaborator on institutional partnerships, a respected leader and a personal friend… Emory University President William M. Chace.