I am pleased to welcome all of you to this inaugural gathering of the Hill Society, which is also the inaugural celebration of the successful conclusion of the Campaign for Georgia Tech.

This is the future of Georgia Tech right here in this room tonight. The future is personified in Emily Beck, who spoke with such poise and eloquence. She embodies the increasing quality of the students who are attracted to Georgia Tech. Every year, the pool of applicants gets both larger and deeper. And thanks to you, Georgia Tech will be able to give them both the scholarships and the quality educational experience they deserve. The value of a Georgia Tech degree will continue to increase, and the contribution of our graduates to society will continue to grow.

Larry Huang knows the value of a Georgia Tech degree. He is a stunning example of what a quality technological education can mean. He represents each one of you in the Hill Society, but he also represents the future, because he, like each of you, envisions Tech’s possibilities, and his investment, together with yours, is what will enable Georgia Tech to achieve its potential.

As Larry spoke, I thought of the words of Winston Churchill: “We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.” Larry and Nancy are clearly making a life even as they make a difference in Georgia Tech’s life, and so is each one of you.

There is really no adequate way to express our appreciation to each one of you for your loyalty, your faith, and your willingness to give back to Georgia Tech. But we hope the Hill Society events tonight and through the coming years will be a small token of our thanks for your gifts and more importantly for your faith in us.

Georgia Tech has a long history of making the most of its opportunities and striving for excellence. By the time I arrived here as a student, we had grown into a good, solid regional university. And we have improved even more since those days. But we have yet to reach our full potential, and we want to live up to that potential.
Georgia Tech aspires to define the technological university of the 21st century…

to create and embody the model that others want to emulate. That is a lofty goal, and it will take a lot of work to achieve it. But it is a goal that is worthy of this institution and the many individuals who give it life.

You are the ones who will enable us to achieve that goal. Your gifts give us the extra resources, beyond state appropriations and tuition, that will allow us to seize our opportunities and rise above the level of a good, solid school to become the standard by which others measure themselves.

You are our partners in shaping the young lives that come to us to be educated, in shaping the technology that will improve the quality of life for people everywhere, and in shaping an innovative campus that enables us to excel. So I want to take just a few minutes these evening to look ahead with you at some of the places where Georgia Tech is moving out on the leading edge.

We are striving to improve undergraduate education by invigorating our classrooms with the energy of a world-class research enterprise and by offering undergraduate students an opportunity for first-hand involvement in our dynamic research labs. Smaller liberal arts colleges can’t offer the exciting dynamic of leading-edge research, and most research universities encourage faculty to focus on research at the expense of the classroom. Tech is creating a new model that gives our students the best of both worlds – the attention to undergraduate teaching of a liberal arts college and the opportunity for undergraduates to participate in a world-class research enterprise.

We are also creating new models and positioning ourselves for leadership in the new interdisciplinary fields that are emerging at the leading edge of the nation’s research.

If you aspire to excellence in technological education and research, the most fundamental thing you have to have is state-of-the-art facilities. They are essential for leading-edge research, and they help to attract and hold the top-quality faculty that can conduct it.

The gifts of many of you have made possible a stunning new interdisciplinary complex at the heart of campus. The Bioscience and Bioengineering Building is alive with students and faculty. Construction is underway on the Environmental Science and Technology Building, and many of you were present for the
announcement this afternoon that it will be named in honor of Ford Motor Company, which was its leading donor.

Two more buildings will complete this complex – the new home of the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering and the Molecular Science and Engineering Building. The new Advanced Computing Technology Building, which will be named for its major donor, Chris Klaus, will be built just across the street. The unique design of these buildings was featured in the international science journal *Nature*. They include “research neighborhoods,” created specifically to promote interaction and the exchange of ideas across disciplines, and their configuration is flexible to meet the changing needs of the future.

These new interdisciplinary buildings, together with the top-drawer faculty they are helping us attract, provide Georgia Tech with the resources to lead the way in exciting new fields like bioinformatics, in which computer models are used to replicate and explore the way genes interact.

There was great fanfare about the mapping of the human genome, but that was only a first step. It was like getting a list of the players for a game you have never seen played and have no idea what the rules are. Bioinformatics is a collaborative effort among biology, engineering and computing that will enable us to figure out how the game is played.

You will also hear more about nanoscience and nanotechnology. “Nano” means the same thing here that it meant on the old “Mork and Mindy” TV show – very tiny. What we are talking about here is engineering materials at the level of the individual atoms, and creating the microscopic tools that enable us to do that. It is a collaborative effort between physicists and engineers. Georgia Tech’s faculty has already gained national and international recognition for their expertise in this new field, and as federal research funds begin to flow, we are positioned for leadership.

Another area where Georgia Tech intends to take the lead is “global technopreneurship,” which means technology-based business entrepreneurship that has a global focus. You are helping us by enabling us to take a bold leap across I-75/85 and build Technology Square.

When you arrived tonight, all you saw between the Biltmore and the downtown connector was vacant lots. But over the next two years a complex of buildings will take shape along the south side of Fifth Street between here and the
interstate. They will house our College of Management, our continuing education and executive education programs, and a hotel and conference center.

This will be the heart of global techno-preneurship at Georgia Tech – a stunning center focused on global learning, technology, and entrepreneurship, located in the middle of Midtown’s emerging high-tech corridor and serving businesses around the globe.

Georgia Tech’s version of global techno-preneurship will truly be global. We already have a satellite campus in Metz, France, as well as a joint Logistics Institute with the National University of Singapore. And keep an eye out for our expanding involvement in Singapore, because the Logistics Institute is just the first step toward greater things there.

These are only a few glimpses of the exciting times that lie ahead for Georgia Tech – unprecedented opportunities that we will be able to seize because you were willing to invest in us. The Hill Society is our way of saying thank you for believing in Georgia Tech and for sharing the vision. And we will continue to keep in touch, to express our gratitude, and to share with you the many ways we are using your gifts to shape futures through innovation at this Institute we all love so well.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this is not only the inaugural meeting of the Hill Society, it is also the very first of a number of events to celebrate the success of the Campaign for Georgia Tech. It was only the second campaign Georgia Tech has ever undertaken, and thanks to you it was successful beyond our wildest hopes and dreams when we began it.

As Pete Silas has already told you, the heart of the campaign is in this room. You are the ones who made it all possible. And we want you to be the first to view the campaign celebration video. Over the coming months, we will be showing this video on campus, at the Presidents’ Dinner in April, and at regional campaign celebrations around the nation.

I will be back to share some final thoughts with you when the video concludes. So at this time, I ask you to direct your attention to the screen at opposite end of the room.

(Video)