I’m glad to welcome all of you to our second Minorities in Management Forum. And I want to thank my executive assistant, Dr. Gary May, for his hard work on my behalf in developing this Minorities in Management initiative, which is now in its second year.

Friedrich Nietzsche once said that the craving for equality can express itself in two ways. It can be negative – belittling, excluding, and tripping others up – which achieves a degree of equality by dragging everyone down together to a lower level. Or it can be positive – acknowledging and helping others, and rejoicing in their success – which promotes equality by lifting everyone up together to a higher level. At Georgia Tech, we want equality that lifts everyone up. We want Georgia Tech to be an equal opportunity employer in the most literal sense in that we want it to be fact, not just a slogan.

We met for our first Minorities in Management session last October, and our goal was to think together strategically about how to make sure that Georgia Tech’s minority staff have a level playing field and also have opportunities to acquire the education and skills they need to compete on that field. Your advice and counsel helped us a lot, and now that a year has gone by, we wanted to get you back together again to report our progress and get further input from you.

Science, technology, business, and policy have traditionally been the bastion of white males, and unfortunately, these fields still can look unfriendly or unwelcoming to minorities. That is a general perception out there in society that we as a technological university have to work hard to overcome as we try to attract quality minority candidates for positions at Georgia Tech. And if you look at the ethnicity of our senior administration, it is also a reality that exists on our campus and we have find ways to address it.

The survey we took of our minority employees last year demonstrated that while most of them felt they personally had been treated fairly in the hiring process and had been provided with opportunities to expand their skills and advance their careers, they had some suspicions about the broader picture. Some suspected that candidates for senior management positions were already identified before the hiring process began. Others wondered whether minorities might need to be more qualified than whites to get the equivalent position.

So last year, you took a look at the results of that survey with us and gave us some outstanding advice on how to improve things. The agenda for this year’s Minorities in Management Forum is largely a response to the recommendations you gave us last year. You asked for data on salaries, so we performed a salary equality study. And James Rolen will be reporting back on the results of that study this morning.

You asked for information on how employment searches are conducted, so we have prepared a set of guidelines. And Chuck Donbaugh will be presenting that to you this morning. You asked for more opportunities for training and upward mobility, so we created an Executive
Development Program. And Pearl Alexander, James Nelson and Nicole Stephens are here to describe this new program.

As you can see, we value your input and we have taken your advice very seriously.

I am also proud to report that we have made progress over the past year at the place where the rubber hits the road, which is the hiring process. This is a tough time for Georgia Tech to try to change the overall look of our workforce, simply because we are not doing a lot of hiring. Most of our salary money comes from state government, and state tax revenues have really taken a hit during the past few years. At Georgia Tech, we have experienced cumulative cuts of more than $24 million in state funding through the end of the past fiscal year. By the end of last year, our state appropriation was back down to about the same level where it had been in 1999. But there is an important difference between 1999 and now. In 1999, we had only 10,250 students. Today we have more than 16,600.

We are looking at a further 5 percent cut in this year’s budget, and another 5 percent cut on top of that next year. By June of 2005, our cumulative cuts in state funding could total as much as $45 million, sending us back to where we were in the mid-90s, when our enrollment was only a little over 9,000. So we have been asking fewer staff to do more work and not hiring very many new staff.

Despite those difficulties, however, I am very pleased to report we have managed to double the number of minority managers in the target pay grades that this group looked at last year, which are grades 115 and above. Last year we had 108 minority employees in these pay grades. This year we have 208. Among those 208 are some high-profile administrative positions that are now occupied by minorities. For example, Ingrid Hayes is our new Director of Admissions, and Anthony Purcell is the new deputy policy chief – the top-level assistant to our police chief and director of campus safety, Teresa Crocker. So we are making good progress despite the fact that our hiring situation is pretty tight right now.

Of course, we cannot fire any valuable Georgia Tech staff simply to be able to replace them with minorities, but if you look around at our present management staff, you will see a lot of gray hair. Many of them have been in the workplace for a while, and they are going to be retiring in the next five to ten years. This will open up new opportunities for Georgia Tech to achieve greater levels of diversity at the senior levels of our staff, and it opens up opportunities for our middle managers to advance in their careers. It is to your advantage and to Georgia Tech’s advantage if you are ready when the time comes. So I encourage you to take advantage of opportunities to improve your education and skills.

Increasing the diversity of our campus community is one of seven goals in Georgia Tech’s strategic plan. Specifically, the plan says, “Building a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff enriches Georgia Tech and the society in which we live. In a global environment that thrives on innovation, diversity is also a competitive advantage, providing a broader, richer, more fertile environment for creating thinking and problem solving. Georgia Tech must continue to build a campus that understands that ‘diversity’ reaches across racial and socioeconomic boundaries and embraces the live experiences of each individual.”
That statement articulates a big picture that all of us agree with. But as the saying goes, the devil is in the details. We are working hard to get the details right so that they will fit together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to create the big picture our strategic plan describes. You are an important part of that process. You are a helpful sounding board for how we are doing. You are helping us to identify problems and solve them. You are helping us to think innovatively and come up with new ideas to help minorities improve their skills.

Quality has always been central at Georgia Tech. Quality is what put us up there among the nation’s top ten public universities, and our goal is to continue to increase the caliber and excellence of our programs and operations. To do that, we are going to hire the very best and the most qualified individuals that we can find for every job on this campus. But we also want to increase the diversity of our management team at the same time. And that means giving you the professional development opportunities you need to prepare yourself for higher levels of responsibility. And it means strengthening Georgia Tech’s image and reputation as an institution that welcomes minorities and offers them a level playing field and opportunities for professional development, so that we can attract quality minority candidates for management positions.

Those are the goals behind the topics that are on the table for discussion today. We look forward to your participation, your comments, and your suggestions. And I am going to start that process by opening the floor for any questions you might have.