I am pleased to be here with you today and have a chance to welcome you to the Technology Square complex, which is celebrating its grand opening this week, and to the Technology Square Research Building, new home of the Georgia Electronic Design Center.

Many of you have already had a chance to tour the Technology Square Research Building last evening and you will have further opportunities to get acquainted with this facility today. It is exciting for us at Georgia Tech to consider the expanded opportunities for research that this new facility offers, and I know you will realize the benefits to your companies as our industry partners.

Not only is this building an exciting resource for electronic design research, but it also offers electronic design researchers the opportunity to collaborate with researchers in other areas of computing. For example, the graphics, visualization, and usability researchers from our College of Computing are also located here in this building.

The Georgia Electronic Design Center has been a great asset for us at Georgia Tech, and it has been a great success, even as the high-tech industrial sector in general and the telecommunications industry in particular have been going through a tough time. The Center now has 38 partners, of which 19 are major corporate partners. The remainder are government agencies, industrial consortia, and small companies, including six new companies the Center has assisted through its seed capital fund. At Georgia Tech, we have attracted 46 new faculty since this initiative began four years ago, and they in turn have brought in $30 million in research funding. In fact, so far this calendar year, private industry and federal agencies have provided more than $4 million in new research investment to the Center, and the year is not over yet.

The original goal for the center was to increase the number of students graduating in computer science and related disciplines in Georgia from about 400 a year to 1,000 during the first five years of the center. This program is now four years old, and that goal was met in June. During the same time, more than 1,500 jobs were created and filled. So, as you can see, we are making great progress and positioning Georgia to run out ahead of the competition when the economy picks up steam.
We are pleased to have the Electronic Design Center as part of the mix here at Technology Square, and we believe you will find this location exciting as well. This new research building is part of Technology Square, a multi-building complex that is the bricks-and-mortar expression of some of the most important goals that we have at Georgia Tech. And what I would like to do in the next few minutes is put the Technology Square Research Building into that broader context, which makes its prospects doubly exciting.

But first a little history. For the first half-century of Georgia Tech’s history, we had a strong connection with the Midtown Atlanta neighborhood. The Biltmore was THE place to hold gala Tech events, from alumni functions to fraternity dances. Then Interstate 75/85 came through town, and our campus was cut off from our natural neighborhood constituency. After that happened, this part of Midtown declined rapidly. The Biltmore was eventually boarded up and the area became characterized by vacant lots and abandoned buildings. It was an eyesore, and it remained that way even after the resurgence of Midtown was well underway, with new office towers and residential developments springing up in other parts of the neighborhood.

On the other side of the expressway, Georgia Tech continued to grow during this time. Our enrollment increased by more than threefold. When the expressway was built, we had 5,000 students of which a few hundred were graduate students. Today was have more than 5,000 graduate students alone, and our total enrollment exceeds 16,600. Our campus expanded through the years, but when you are in the middle of a city, it gets harder and harder to find additional acreage. We started looking at the vacant property on the other side of the freeway and imagining how it might be possible to cross the divide and make it part of our campus. We began to talk with the leaders of Midtown’s growing business community and with the Midtown Alliance Neighborhood Association, expressing our desire to do something useful and productive with this property and asking their advice.

Our vision was a multi-faceted complex that would serve as a tool to achieve several goals. At the most basic, tangible level, we wanted to bridge the divide and reunite with Midtown, making Georgia Tech a partner in the renaissance that was happening in this neighborhood to the benefit both of our campus community and the residents and businesses of Midtown. Despite being in the middle of a city, Georgia Tech has not had the nearby shopping and dining opportunities of a typical college town. You couldn’t buy a loaf of bread without getting in your car and driving for blocks. Technology Square takes a big step in the direction of providing a supportive retail community around campus.
By extending our campus across the interstate and into the Midtown community, Technology Square replaces abandoned buildings and vacant lots with beautiful architecture and busy people. The restaurants, shops, and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks are designed to attract and serve people from the neighborhood as well as from Georgia Tech, and bring an extra element of vitality to this side of campus.

The Department of Transportation has made a commitment to improve the Fifth Street Bridge, and we are in the process of improving Fifth Street on the west side of the bridge. As a result, Technology Square will not only be a place where Georgia Tech is engaged with the Midtown community; it will also be an impressive new gateway to our campus.

On a more strategic level, we believe that Technology Square can help develop the Midtown business community into a signature high-tech corridor for Atlanta and Georgia. A quarter of Georgia’s economy is now high-tech, and we rank 11th in the nation in the size of our high-tech workforce. But we really do not have a core location like Silicon Valley or the Boston 128 corridor that we can point to as the heart or the visual expression of the state’s high-tech endeavors.

The emerging high-tech business community next to our campus gives us an opportunity to change that, and Georgia Tech wants to be part of that effort. So another goal of Technology Square is to gather our business and economic development programs and place on the edge of our campus and in the midst of Midtown’s high-tech business community, incorporating our faculty, students, and staff into the economic pulse of Atlanta and helping to create that signature technology corridor.

More specifically, we moved our Management College to Technology Square. Georgia Tech’s distinctive identity as a technological university allows us to offer a unique management program and an MBA degree that focuses on entrepreneurship and the management of technology. Locating the college in the midst of Atlanta’s high-tech business community further enriches the educational experience of our students and opens new avenues of collaboration with start-up companies as well as the city’s high-tech giants like BellSouth, IBM, and the Federal Reserve Bank.

But the education endeavors of Technology Square reach well beyond the traditional, full-time students in our business program. The Management Building also includes a new Executive Education Center. Georgia Tech offers an exciting executive master’s degree program in the management of technology that features international sessions in Europe and Asia. The old facility for this program was buried in the center of campus and stretched to capacity, and it did not offer nearby lodging. As a result, it was
difficult for this program assume a higher profile or to develop to its full potential. The new Executive Education Center in the Management Building across from the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center opens dramatic new possibilities.

The Hotel is also an important resource for the other components of Technology Square, including the Research Building. I hope many of you stayed there last night and enjoyed the ease of a quick step across the street to get here this morning. It also serves the Global Learning Center, which gathers our professional education programs from some two dozen rented hotel and office spaces around town and puts them together in a central, state-of-the-art facility. Professionals who come to Georgia Tech for short courses lasting a few days now have a convenient, quality place to stay.

As its name implies, onsite professional education is only one facet of the Global Learning Center. It also contains interactive satellite and Internet technology that reaches to the far corners of the world. That is an important resource for Georgia Tech, because our goal is to create a genuinely international university that educates students from around the world to be leaders in a global economy. That means developing and nurturing carefully chosen education, research, and economic development platforms in strategic locations around the world.

Georgia Tech now has four campuses on three continents. And this fall nearly 600 degree students are studying on our campuses in Savannah; Metz, France; or Singapore; or online. Most of them will earn their Georgia Tech degrees without ever setting foot on the Atlanta campus. The Internet and satellite connections of the Global Learning Center help our campuses stay connected, and enable students from one campus to participate in real time in classes that are under way on another campus.

The newest campus is Georgia Tech-Savannah, which just opened this fall, with three new buildings. It is a hub for Georgia Tech’s Regional Engineering Program, which offers programs in civil, environmental, electrical, and mechanical engineering to students in coastal Georgia. It is also home to the regional offices for our Economic Development Institute and Advanced Technology Development Center. This campus is a component of the largest technology corridor to be developed in Savannah’s history, and is designed to attract and bolster high-tech development as well as meeting an escalating demand for engineers.

Georgia Tech-Lorraine in Metz, France, is the oldest of these three remote campuses. It has been offering graduate degree programs for more than ten years, has well-established research programs, and has begun to spin off new companies. But it continues to grow and develop, and this year it has begun a year-round undergraduate
program. Singapore, of course, is the world’s hub for logistics, and that is the focus of Georgia Tech’s research and education programs there. But we will be expanding into other areas there as well.

Technology Square is also a tool for economic development. Right next door to us here in the Technology Square Research Building is the new headquarters for the Georgia Tech’s award-winning high-tech business incubator, the Advanced Technology Development Center. ATDC helps entrepreneurs from Georgia Tech and the business community launch new start-up companies, providing them with space and strategic business advice, and connecting them to the services and resources they need to succeed. This new facility allows ATDC to offer more incubator space and an expanded level of services.

Technology Square also includes an Economic Development Building. Primary among its tenants is Georgia Tech’s Economic Development Institute, which has 17 regional offices around the state and is a conduit to inject innovation and technology into Georgia’s small and mid-sized businesses and communities.

The Economic Development Building is also home to the Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development, which uses the City of Atlanta as a living laboratory to study smart, environmentally responsible growth.

Which brings me to a special facet of Technology Square – environmental sustainability. If you look at the rooftops across the street, you will see that they are white to reflect heat rather than absorb it. This is only one of many environmentally friendly features of Technology Square. In fact, the Management Building is so environmentally friendly that it qualified for LEED Silver certification. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and it is a national rating system of the U.S. Green Building Council. The Management Building is only the 13th building in the United States to qualify for LEED certification at the silver level.

LEED standards address a broad range of considerations in both the construction and the operation of a facility. They include energy use, and a computerized Energy Management and Control System continuously monitors the Management Building’s electrical and mechanical systems. The standards also address water consumption, which in this case has been reduced by 30 percent indoors and 50 percent outdoors. Other considerations are indoor environmental quality, using recycled materials, and recycling leftover materials. Easy access by alternative transportation is also considered, and you will notice that Technology Square is within walking distance of two MARTA
stations, is served by trolleys powered with natural gas, and offers wide, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks.

We believe that Technology Square will make Fifth Street one of Atlanta’s most prestigious addresses for technology companies, because Technology Square is one of Georgia Tech’s most prominent intersections of innovation – a place where people, ideas, and programs come together to interact with each other and with the surrounding community and the world. It provides not only a new complex of buildings, but also a new vision of interaction between Georgia Tech and the Midtown community, the business community, and the world.