I want to thank you for inviting me to be here this afternoon, I think what I would like to do is to talk a little about some of the incredible things we’re doing at Tech, and how they link with what you’re doing here in Gwinnett County. But before I do, I would like to take this opportunity to salute your former CEO of the Gwinnett Chamber, Richard Tucker. I don’t know if he is here today, but we really appreciate his work now as a Regent in the University System of Georgia.

Also, we are honored to partner with several of the leaders of Waffle House, headquartered in Norcross. Their CEO Joe Rogers serves on Georgia Tech’s Foundation Board and his wife Fran on our GT Advisory Board. Waffle House retired president and COO Bert Thornton has served as president of our Alumni Association. And State Senator Don Balfour serves on Georgia Tech’s Advisory Board.

There are numerous others who generously give their time to Georgia Tech and to the University System, and we are grateful for all that all of you do to support higher education and Georgia Tech.

This afternoon, I want to focus on three things:

- the partnership Georgia Tech has with the Atlanta community,
- touch on some of the incredible things we’re doing at Tech,
- and what we’re doing to plan for the future.

But first a little about Tech and our students. This fall we welcomed the largest, most diverse, and best qualified freshman class in Tech’s history. To give you some perspective, incoming students this fall were born in 1991 - the same year the Web Browser was invented.

- They have never used a card catalog to find a book
- WWW does not stand for “World Wide Wrestling”
- They have never used an 8-track, VHS, or a music LP
- To them a Blackberry is not a fruit, and
- The only typewriter they have ever seen was probably in a museum.

This freshman class pushed our total enrollment to over 20,000 for the first time in Tech history, including about 1,900 from Gwinnett County— and women make up about a third of the student body, yet occupy 42% of the leadership positions for our student groups.

We are ranked seventh among all public universities in the country and this fall for the first time every one of our undergraduate engineering programs is ranked in the top ten nationally. We are a national leader in graduating minority and female engineers, ranking number one in the number of women and African American engineers, and number two in the number of Hispanic engineers graduated.

In addition to engineering, we also have outstanding programs in architecture, computing, liberal arts, management, and the sciences.

Our students are smart with an average SAT of 1365 and an average GPA of 3.85 and they add a fresh perspective to our campus. They are used to fast-paced change and they are tomorrow’s leaders who will help solve some of society’s most pressing problems.
Economic Engine

At Georgia Tech, we believe that Innovation and technology are going to be the drivers of a diverse and thriving 21st century economy. Georgia Tech’s commitment to cutting-edge research, cultivating dynamic new businesses and providing the intellectual capital required to meet these challenges, continues to ensure that it will be a force for prosperity in metro Atlanta, our nation and the world.

This reputation for vision, knowledge and ambition, while assisting in the difficult economic times and providing momentum to the recovery, will prove even more important as the economy continues to grow.

We have some pretty incredible things happening on our campus. Through our research and partnership with business and industry, we’re an economic engine for Georgia and the Southeast, with an annual impact of more than $2 billion. In 2008 alone, Georgia Tech programs helped Georgia companies save or create 20,000 jobs.

Georgia Tech will continue to continue to develop and strengthen partnerships and programs that support and drive high-end economic development in Atlanta and Georgia.

Programs

We offer a comprehensive array of economic development programs and in fact, we are a national leader among research universities in collaborative research with industry. Georgia Tech research labs produce more than 300 invention disclosures annually and Georgia Tech ranks second in the State of Georgia behind AT&T in terms of the number of patents issues.

Georgia Tech spins off an average of ten new companies a year – significantly more than you’d expect from a university of our size and in fact, the 2009 Universities Patent Scorecard ranked Georgia Tech number eight in a ranking of 124 of the top universities according to the strength of their patent portfolios.

Georgia Tech’s resources are a powerful selling tool in helping us attract new business and industry to the state, and we are a leader in innovation.

Through our VentureLab, we identify discoveries and technologies in Georgia Tech’s research labs that have commercial potential and begin the process of steering them into the marketplace.

Through our Advanced Technology Development Centers, known as ATDC’s, we have developed the nation’s first university-based business incubator, widely regarded as one of the best.

Our Technology Enterprise Park extends this effort as a biotechnology park aimed at second-stage companies. TEP filled a void that was causing these companies to leave Atlanta.

The Georgia Tech Procurement Assistance Center helps Georgia companies at no charge to identify and compete for contracts with local, state, or federal government agencies. Companies in the metro Atlanta area won new contracts worth more than $238 million during calendar year 2008 as a result of help from the procurement assistance center.

Georgia Tech’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership program helps companies become more competitive in world markets through assistance with such services as lean manufacturing, quality, energy management, environmental issues, and strategies for business growth.

Our Enterprise Innovation Institute, EI², has conducted more than 700 projects for metro Atlanta companies and organizations over the past four years, helping nearly 400 different companies and organizations improve their operations. This assistance helped companies grow their sales by more than $14 million, retain $34 million in sales, save more than 400 jobs, and reduce operating costs by nearly $10 million.

In the summer of 2009, EI² merged ATDC, VentureLab and the SBIR Assistance Program into a single unit focused on assisting technology startups and entrepreneurs. It also opened ATDC membership to companies from around the state.

This change created an integrated assistance program that greatly extended its reach to serve more technology companies along multiple growth paths and at all stages of development.
To date, ATDC has incubated more than 120 start-up companies. Since 1987, its companies have generated about $13 billion in revenue and more than $100 million in profits, and in just the past decade, ATDC companies have attracted more than $1 billion in venture capital and incubated a number of companies.

One of these is the Southeast’s first photovoltaics company. Suniva is an early-stage company assisted by Georgia Tech, right here in Gwinnett County.

Using technology developed at Georgia Tech, Suniva became the Southeast’s first solar cell manufacturer in early 2009. The company, which is based on long-term research funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, has opened a 73,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Norcross and has more than $1 billion in outstanding orders.

Suniva’s founders received initial assistance from EI² in formation of the company before being incubated at the ATDC. Suniva uses a patented technology it calls “Star” to extract maximum performance from wafers of monocrystalline silicon, a material often used in photovoltaic systems.

Beyond these entrepreneurial endeavors, Georgia Tech helps manufacturers of all sizes access the technology they need to become more competitive and create new products to fuel their growth.

For instance, access to Georgia Tech was an important factor in the decision by the NCR Corporation to relocate to Georgia, right here in Gwinnett County.

Tech has had some involvement with NCR for about 15 years, and in fact, their CEO Bill Nuti will be speaking to our graduates this spring. Not long ago we began working with the Georgia Department of Economic Development in support of their recruitment of NCR’s worldwide headquarters from Ohio to Georgia.

Our Strategic Partners office in EI² met with their senior leadership and research and innovation experts to determine areas for collaboration.

When they announced last June that they were moving their corporate headquarters to Duluth, NCR said they would partner with the Georgia Research Alliance (GRA) and Georgia Tech’s College of Computing, Health Systems Institute, Industrial and Systems Engineering School and the College of Management to keep its management, products and services on the leading edge of innovation. Now, Georgia Tech is working with the company to set up its new manufacturing plant in Columbus to be as efficient as possible. This new facility will allow the company to manufacture a new line of advanced equipment in the United States instead of overseas.

Local Community Impact

Georgia Tech impacts the Gwinnett community in a number of other very important ways. Here are a couple:

- GTRI’s Severe Storm Research Center supports the state through research that aims to improve response time to weather emergencies like tornados.

- Georgia Tech’s Center for Education Integrating Science, Math, and Computing (CEISMC) helped implement a Distance Calculus program for high school students. Students are joint enrolled at Georgia Tech and work alongside on-campus student in Calculus II and III. Eleven students in Gwinnett County participate in the program.

- CEISMC sponsored K.I.D.S. (Kids Interested in Discovering Science) Club activities, and science, math and computing enrichment summer workshops for 64 Gwinnett County students interested in math and science. Five math and science teachers in Gwinnett County participated in a paid, four to seven week summer internship, called GIFT (Georgia Intern-Fellowships for Teachers).

Research

Another very important aspect of what we do is our research. Through breakthroughs and new discoveries we’re able to help business and industry, and help society solve some of its most pressing problems.
Last spring we opened the Marcus Nanotechnology Building. It is one of the largest facilities of its kind in the world, already attracting companies such as Intel, Hewlett-Packard, and Kimberly-Clark. Nanotechnology is predicted to be as transformative as silicon chip development was in the 1980s and 90s. With this facility, Georgia Tech will be an epicenter for this technology, redefining the status quo for everything from electronic storage to cancer drug delivery, while shepherding spin-off companies into the surrounding area.

Funds that come into Tech help grow businesses and foster growth in the community. Georgia Tech has more than $525 million in annual research expenditures of a $1.2 billion annual budget, which help the Institute consistently rank among the top ten nationally among research programs without a medical school.

Let me share a couple of examples of what we’re doing:

- Several dozen researchers are finding clues and developing solutions to fight the war on cancer. They are contributing expertise in multiple disciplines, including basic cancer biology, the design of new intervention methods, and development of detection and monitoring technologies in bioinformatics, biosensing and bioimaging. Their efforts are being combined with clinicians at Emory University and other medical institutions, such as Memorial Sloan-Kettering in New York—working with all types of cancer patients.
- We’re working on another step toward repairing spinal cord injuries. Georgia Tech researchers have developed an improved version of an enzyme that degrades the dense scar tissue that forms when the central nervous system is damaged. The new enzyme could facilitate recovery from central nervous system injuries.

Planning for the Future

Our place among the best universities is continually being challenged and we will be judged not by how well we have done in the past, but rather by how well we can meet the evolving needs of the world around us. We are preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist, using technologies that have not been invented, to solve problems that we don’t know are problems yet. We have to make sure we continue to build an enterprise that can be sustained in a changing environment.

That’s why we have initiated a strategic planning process to develop a 25-year plan, a strategic vision that will identify what Georgia Tech should be like on its 150th anniversary.

The process is comprehensive and inclusive. Through workshops, forums, and the Web, we’re asking people for their big Ideas: long-range statements of the future that are consistent with our vision and culture, but which may be outside of our comfort zone. These ideas need to be so compelling that they ignite our passions and strengthen our resolve to achieve them. The work will continue throughout the year, and the new plan will be introduced next fall. You can stay informed on our Web site: www.gatech.edu/vision/

Close

In closing I want to say that Georgia Tech will continue to be a powerful force in shaping the economic future of our state, country, and in preparing tomorrow’s leaders. We are cultivating the infrastructure of a new economy and technologies that will revolutionize every aspect of our lives and we are eager and excited to share our success and ambitions with Georgia and beyond.

Thank you.