Welcome. Glad you’re here.

Thank you for joining us today, but more importantly, thank you for choosing Georgia Tech.

You’ve been through two days of orientation, and by now you’ve heard more than you ever thought possible about our Institute.

Special welcome to the parents who are here. Success in life is seldom a one-person effort. The parents who are in the room with us today have sacrificed and cheered you on every step of the way. Val and I are parents of 4 young adults, and we also invested our lives in 9 foster children.

Cannot compare the sense of pride you have when one of your children to excel in an area.

You have excelled not only academically, but in a myriad of other areas including sports, music and community service.

I looked over the summary of your accomplishments, and am quite impressed.

You have barely stepped foot on campus and you’re already innovators.

Some of you have already done research in areas including cancer, H1N1, and eyesight restoration.

You have helped communities choose sustainable fuels and coordinated programs to clean up rivers.

Many of you have been a leader in, or even founded organizations to do things like raising money to send water filters to a tribe in Kenya, and building and shipping wheelchairs to third world countries.

Your volunteer work is equally as impressive. You have already left your mark on your hometowns doing things like coaching children’s sports teams and tutoring children, volunteering to help with Alzheimer’s patients, and serving in leadership positions in scouting organizations.
Many of you are athletes, excelling in track, cross country, swimming, fencing, gymnastics, volleyball, and football. We have a couple of black belts in this group. You are concert masters in the orchestra and accomplished pianists.

We are very proud to now include you as part of the largest, best qualified and most diverse freshman class in Tech’s history.

You are the best of the best.

Many times new college freshmen worry about fitting in. We’re not asking you to fit in. We’re asking you to lead. And don’t let the fact that you’re new hinder you from taking leadership positions. Example: Story about four BME students working with a heart surgeon from St. Joseph’s Translational Research, and Franklin Bost, BME professor of the practice and team advisor inventing a medical device called CardioScout. The device uses a minimally invasive approach for heart surgery and will be used to treat congestive heart failure, arrhythmia detection and ablation. They are integrating it with a standard bronchoscope for stability and accuracy, which is available at almost every hospital in America.

While what you’ve already accomplished is impressive, there is no limit to your potential, here at Georgia Tech and when you enter the work world or graduate school in a few short years.

We invite you to get involved on campus—there are more than 400 organizations to choose from. We invite you to explore. The study abroad program is a great way to learn while traveling. More than 40% of our undergraduate students have an international experience, either study, work and/or research abroad before they graduate, and we are working to ensure that every student has an opportunity to participate.

We also offer service learning opportunities. For example, each year students and faculty go to Africa or South America for water treatment projects as part of our Engineers without Borders program.

At Georgia Tech, we’re preparing leaders to help discover and implement solutions to some of the world’s greatest challenges.
• Personal story—just returned from Atlantis launch. Changes in space program, Georgia Tech’s involvement.

• We’ll know we’ve done our job when we prepare you and other students to using your gifts and talents to make a difference in an ever-changing world.

• You’ll find Georgia Tech is rich in traditions, one of which is the Rambling Wreck. I believe you students are scheduled to go have your picture made with it now while parents go to the auditorium. I’ll be joining the students outside.

• Again, welcome to Georgia Tech. You have a world of opportunity before you.