Thank you for joining us this evening for our Southern Social. As Mid-Westerners who have lived in the South for about three and a half years now, we are enjoying Southern style hospitality, and we hope you will as well this weekend. It is my pleasure to introduce Tech’s first lady, Val Peterson.

We applaud you for your engagement in your student’s life, and in Georgia Tech. Their college education is one of the most important investments that they, and you, can make — not only to prepare them for successful and fulfilling careers, but in helping them to become responsible adults who will contribute to society in numerous ways.

A Georgia Tech education remains one of the best investments a student can make.

The value of a Georgia Tech degree was reaffirmed in the spring when Bloomberg/BusinessWeek ranked Georgia Tech number two in the nation, and first in the state of Georgia, in annualized return on investment, or ROI, based on the financial returns graduates earn from their degree. Georgia Tech was one of 24 schools whose graduates earned a net ROI in excess of $1 million over 30 years for their tuition investment.

Last week’s Fall Career Fair is a perfect example of the corporate demand to hire our students. Three hundred and sixty corporations representing virtually every industry participated in the career fair which lasted over two days at the Campus Recreation Center. Those companies saw a record number of students, and more than 1100 interviews were conducted in the two days following the fair.

Corporations also provide job opportunities for our students through the cooperative education program, which celebrates its 100th Anniversary this year. Students can help defray educational costs through programs like cooperative education, and because of the generosity of Georgia Tech parents, alumni, and other supporters, we are able to provide numerous academic, athletic, and needs-based scholarships, including the G. Wayne Clough Georgia Tech Promise.
• We remain sensitive to costs for students, and continue to develop ways to help make a Georgia Tech education within reach of every qualified student.

• Because of the generosity and support that you and others provide, we are able to offer a level of education that would not otherwise be possible. You are making a difference in not only your student’s life, but in the lives of other students at Georgia Tech. On behalf of Georgia Tech, we thank you. Now I would like to turn the program back to Bill Schafer.