Thank you Jose (Marquez) or Robert (Rodriguez, the speaker before you). I would like to add my welcome to all of you. You have a full agenda today, but if you do get a few moments, I hope you will explore the Georgia Tech campus. It is 400 acres, beautifully landscaped with some impressive facilities. But the most impressive aspect of Georgia Tech is our people — the students, faculty and staff who are doing some incredible things ranging from designing robots for new applications in manufacturing and health, to applying expertise to address and answer questions about how the brain works.

Georgia Tech has 21,000 students from every state in the nation and 118 countries. Our students and faculty collaborate not only with each other, but also with learners across the globe, addressing problems of regional, national, and global significance. We are very fortunate to have professors like Jorge Breton who mentor students and invest their careers in helping them to succeed.

We embrace diversity as a community value, and inclusion, equity, diversity and justice are the core of our academic mission. The office of the vice president for Institute Diversity leads our efforts for inclusive excellence, to help all of our students, faculty, staff reach their full potential. We believe that our success is dependent on how well we value, engage and include the rich diversity of our campus community.

While at today’s conference you’re focusing on utilizing new technologies, I can tell you that we have no problem getting students to not only embrace those technologies, but to design new ones. There’s a video on you tube by one of our May graduates, Daniel Chase Hooper, demonstrating a new software program he’s designed to make editing easier on the iPad. Now, he just has to convince Apple to buy it! We have students who are designing devices for open heart surgery and software-assisted home-use hand assessment and rehabilitation devices. To showcase Georgia Tech’s expertise,
this spring we launched Amplifier, a multi-contributor news blog pairing current issues with commentary from Georgia Tech experts. A companion Twitter feed strategically targeting journalists has also been created to highlight new posts and other Georgia Tech news.

We strive to create a culture of innovation, where we can prepare the leaders who will be able to address some of society’s greatest challenges. I believe you have a session this afternoon to explore how leaders create and maintain a spirit of innovation. When I came to Georgia Tech three years ago, one of the first things I did was to begin the process to involve the campus community in the development of a 25-year Strategic Plan, which we called “Designing the Future.” One of the main goals outlined in Tech’s Strategic Plan is to ensure that innovation, entrepreneurship, and public service are fundamental characteristics of our graduates. I frequently tell our students that the technologies that are in use when they begin as freshmen will be out of date by the time they graduate. How many of you can remember the first cell phones? They were a brick, and cost a fortune. Students are encouraged to design, to work in interdisciplinary teams, to explore, and to ask “What if?” They’re not waiting until they graduate to change the world.

Even before we started designing our 25-year plan, we knew that there would be no way that we could foresee many of the changes we’ll experience during the next quarter of a century. It’s almost impossible to predict what will be the next “disruptive technology” that will change the way we live and work. We do know, however, that we need to plan for constant change as we pursue excellence. We also know that if we are going to succeed, it will take all of us working together. To practice inclusiveness is excellence.

Thank you and again, welcome to Georgia Tech.