Dr. Peterson
Savannah Country Day School: "Why Georgia Tech"
10:45 a.m. Monday, May 12, 2014, Pape Middle School Building

Thank you for allowing me to join you today. I was delighted to accept the invitation of Regent Waters to visit Savannah Country Day School. One of you trustees, Mark Smith, is a Georgia Tech alumnus, and a great ambassador and supporter of Tech. Just last summer Mark and his wife, Kimberly, hosted Georgia Tech area alumni at his house for a reception as part of the Georgia Tech summer tour of Georgia.

It was suggested that I talk about "Why Georgia Tech." I am always excited to young people who are thinking about and preparing for their future. What I would like to do today is to give you a challenge: Change the world.

Many young people want to change the world. Graduates from places like Georgia Tech are prepared to do it. We're committed to preparing innovators and leaders who are ready to address some of the world's greatest challenges, like clean air, water, sustainability, health, and security.

A week ago, Georgia Tech held its 247th commencement exercise, and I shook the hands of about 2,700 undergraduate and graduate students as they crossed the stage in three ceremonies in our McCamish Pavilion on our Atlanta campus.

Siobhan Gallager graduated last year with a degree in Industrial Engineering. She and her brother attended Country Day School, and then both came to Georgia Tech as President's Scholars. She works as an analyst at Home Depot's corporate headquarters in Atlanta. While at Tech she participated in our outstanding cooperative education program where you alternate semesters on campus and working. More than 3,000 Georgia Tech students earn valuable experience and money while in school in the largest voluntary co-op program in the nation. Siobhan co-oped at Gulfstream Aerospace in Savannah. Her senior project was with Delta Air Lines, creating a tool for

the Tech Ops division that is used to optimize flight routes based on maintenance needs. She studied abroad at Georgia Tech Lorraine. She was the vice president of her sorority, and was the Dance Marathon coordinator for GT For the Kids, a project to benefit Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

Included in our new group of Georgia Tech graduates this month is Bryce Ferguson. He is a graduate of Savannah Arts Academy, and his parents live in Pooler. Bryce majored in Industrial Engineering, or ISyE, and already has a job as an associate consultant with Baine & Company, a prestigious consulting firm, working in the Private Equity Group. He attended Tech on the HOPE scholarship. At Georgia Tech he won the ISyE outstanding senior award, and was selected ISyE senior design winner and won the Capstone Expo People's Choice Award. The Capstone Design Expo is held in Georgia Tech' McCamish Pavilion. Students from multiple areas of study work in interdisciplinary teams to develop protoypes for real world applications. Both industry and campus-created projects are included. Student projects have included an affordable tools suited for small scale, intensive farming, with a focus on the use by refugee farmers. They've designed a malaria detection model. Bryce was on a team sponsored by Home Depot that improved labor allocation and process flow through a simulation model and labor scheduling tool.

It's not all work. While at Georgia Tech Bryce founded the organization TechList, which allows members to suggest and participate in memorable activities. The organization was "conceived with the idea of giving students the chance to make memories that will last longer than the essentials of thermodynamics and MATLAB." I take exception to that — thermodynamics is my field! The concept behind TechList is to create a Georgia Tech "bucket list" of experiences not to miss. Last year Bryce brought students to swim with whale sharks at the Georgia aquarium, skydive, and have dinner and discussion with a Holocaust survivor. Bryce was a Buzzinga! winner, with his TechList organization awarded $10,000 of funding by the SGA. Bryce also served as a Justice on the Undergraduate Judiciary Cabinet.

The Georgia Tech campus is 400 acres in the middle of Atlanta. When I became president 5 years ago, I thought it would have an urban look and feel, and be a commuter campus. Most of our 21,000 students live on or near campus. The campus has more than 11,000 trees, and earns awards for sustainability. We've developed a live-work-learn-play environment.

We offer a number of programs to help students grow and learn outside of the classroom, including 400 student organizations. Our Campus Recreation's Outdoor Recreation engaged more than 5,000 students in experiential learning opportunities last year around the world.

The Grand Challenges Living Learning Community is part of the Leadership Education and Development Program. Students were awarded funding for 14 projects, including the design of a drip irrigation system for Burkina Faso, Africa; and the design for scalable solar photovoltaic cells ranging in application from personal device use to whole house use.

Leading Edge is a leadership development experience for undergraduate students. They work with Leadership Fellows, a masters or Ph.D. trained to coach undergraduates, to intentionally explore and improve their leadership skills in specific areas.

InVenture Prize Competition:
Designed to encourage undergraduate students' interest in invention, innovation and entrepreneurship. 560 student signed up for this year's contest. We had 6 finalist teams. (2,400 students have participated in 6 years)

First Prize and People's Choice Winner: Safi Choo Toilet is an inexpensive mobile toilet designed to address health and contamination issues in refugee camps. (could help millions of people)

2nd prize: Sucette Smarth Soother is a modernized pacifier designed to fit the growing dentition of infants. It changes color when the baby has a fever.

Others:

The Better Walk Crutch provides more comfort and support for those using crutches while rehabilitating from lower leg injury. (Already have $150,000 in support)

Enlighten Music Trainer uses interactive LED technology to change the way people learn to play the guitar.

Sleepwell Sleepwear by Lights Out is a nightshirt that reduces snoring and symptoms of sleep apnea. The garment uses automated positional therapy. (Being tested at Emory clinic.)

Upsadazy is a baby stroller that safely and quickly climbs stairs without the risk of tipping over and harming the child.

Georgia Tech has 6 colleges, Architecture, the Scheller College of Business, the College of Computing, the College of Engineering, the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts, and the College of Sciences. We have areas such as our GVU Center, GVU is an interdisciplinary research center that brings together people and expertise from all six Georgia Tech colleges in order to solve complex problems. An example of their projects is wearable computing. We have students specializing in video game design. One of our Computer Science graduates is the Technical and Lighting Director for the movie *Frozen*.

We have a strong support system to help students succeed, including a center for academic success, a communications center, an office of diversity programs and women's resource center, in addition to the freshman experience residence program. Our freshman retention rate is 96%. Many choose to take a foreign language, though not required. Emphasis on the Arts.

Over the past two decades, the Georgia Institute of Technology has grown into one of the most globalized universities in the world, with partnerships in more than 30 countries and campuses and operations in France, Ireland, Costa Rica, Panama and China.

Students represent 115 different countries. Georgia Tech has research and education collaborations in more than 80 countries. More than 46 percent of Georgia Tech students have an international experience by graduation. Students study, work or do research in 67 countries.

Georgia Tech has a campus in France. Georgia Tech – Lorraine has more than 600 students annually, as well as significant research and innovation components.

(Tell story of going abroad with students—why it changes your life—global perspective)

A Georgia Tech education is a good investment. Bloomberg Businessweek ranked us #2 in the nation in return on investment in higher education.

Georgia Tech graduates are in demand, as exhibited by the number of on campus interviews, the increasing percentage of students who report job offers at graduation, and rising starting salaries. We don't have this year's surveys yet, but let me share those from last spring. Seventy percent of spring 2013 bachelor's degree graduates reported having a job at graduation, up from 67 percent in spring 2012. Master's degree recipients are slightly higher, with 72 percent having a job at graduation,

compared to 63 percent the year before. The average starting salary for bachelor's degrees is $63,000, and $65,000 for those in STEM fields.

Georgia Tech is the 7th ranked public university in the nation, and the only technology-focused school to make U.S. News & World Report's top ten. Because you are Georgia residents, and I'm betting most of you would qualify for the HOPE scholarship, I feel safe to say a Georgia Tech education would be the best investment of your life. Because of the tremendous loyalty of Georgia Tech alumni and friends, we are able to offer scholarships and fellowships, to attract the very brightest students and the best faculty, and offer outstanding facilities for learning. What I'm most proud of is the opportunity to we offer to any qualified Georgia resident, regardless of income.

Close with Georgia Tech Promise story. Duane Carver.