Thank you, Bob [Stargel]. I’d also like to express my gratitude to those who’ve put together this amazing event tonight, and to our Tech Ambassadors, who we know will be a big part of this event in the future.

Bob just had us recognize the Golden Givers in the room. For just a little perspective, Georgia Tech has more than 2,000 donors with at least 50 consecutive years of giving. A total of 478 of this year’s Leadership Circle donors are also Golden Givers. That’s real loyalty!

Bob, you really nailed it. It has been an outstanding year here at Georgia Tech. We'll talk about some of the highlights in a minute, I will share my reasons for being on board with Roll Call. Before I do that, just let me say that whether you are a new member of the Leadership Circle wearing a Rat Cap tonight, a faithful member of the Golden Givers, or anyone in between, we thank you for being on board with Roll Call at the Leadership Circle Level.

My entire professional life has been spent in an academic setting. No matter where I’ve been, I have always felt a deep loyalty to the institution where I’ve worked. But there’s something very distinctive about Georgia Tech. Our alumni and supporters sincerely want to see those who follow them have as much success as they did, and they show that with their generous contributions. I personally give because I see the impact it has on making Georgia Tech one of the world’s premier institutions of higher learning.

All of our alumni who give have their own reasons for being on board with Roll Call, and every one of them is important in ensuring that Georgia Tech is strong for years to come. Thanks to your unrestricted financial gifts, we have the resources and flexibility to push for opportunities that wouldn’t be possible without the funding that Roll Call
provides. That was one reason I came to Georgia Tech, and it’s another reason why I am on board. Not many of my peers at other universities around the country are as fortunate to have this kind of support from alumni and friends.

Roll Call funds are used in many different ways. We’re sometimes asked, “Where does the money go?” Well, it goes for such things as hands-on experiences for students, groundbreaking efforts that can save lives and improve our world, scholarships for exceptional students, world-class instruction and curriculum, student-life programs and initiatives such as those available at the Campus Recreation Center, and the purchase and development of Technology Square, which has transformed Georgia Tech’s campus. Those are just a few ways we use Roll Call funds.

Your unrestricted gifts are vital in helping us sustain an environment of excellence. This is a grassroots effort, and it is one of the best in the country. The loyalty of our alumni and friends is truly inspiring. Having almost 34,000 Roll Call donors makes my job so much easier, and in particular, the leadership-level support that you provide is the envy of many other educational institutions.

We like numbers here at Georgia Tech, so please allow me to give you a few more. Some of these, you might have heard before, but they’re so impressive I think they bear repeating:

- There will be more than 2,100 donors this year that give at the Leadership Circle level.
- Roll Call will hit $9.3 million this year, a record!
- More than 50 percent of Georgia Tech’s annual philanthropy comes from alumni. That’s twice the national average and another indicator of your great loyalty.
- Our student participation is the highest it’s ever been. We have a total of 6,157 undergraduate and graduate students giving back through SAA and the Georgia
Tech Student Foundation. That is 27 percent of the student body, and a very good omen for the future!

- Our young alumni participation is also on the rise. We have more than doubled the historical Roll Call participation rate for Young Alumni.

Without your generosity, Georgia Tech would not be the top-flight university it is today. Your ongoing support at this level has been a driving force in making Tech one of the nation’s premier research universities.

Before I close, I’d like to ask everyone in this room to be advocates for Roll Call and encourage others to give. As I said, this is a grassroots effort, and we need to keep our foot on the pedal. If your friends and acquaintances already give, please ask them to consider giving at the Leadership Circle Level!

As I see the first-time donors with a gold Rat Cap on their nametags, I am reminded that in a couple of months, we’ll see Rat Caps again, worn by the more than 3,000 freshmen beginning their Georgia Tech education. The next generation of Ramblin’ Wrecks will have opportunities to become leaders and innovators, and some of them will change the world. Many of their opportunities will be made possible because of your investment in your alma mater. It is an investment in the future that will bring outstanding returns to the entire Georgia Tech community for years to come. On behalf of all of us at Georgia Tech, thank you for being on board with Roll Call at the Leadership Circle Level.