

“The Role of the University in Revitalizing City Centers”
REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
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I'm pleased to join with Dr. Carl Patton and Dr. Thomas Cole on this panel to examine the role of the university in revitalizing city centers. You probably don't think of Atlanta as a college town, but this city has one of the nation's largest clusters of institutions of higher education. Georgia Tech's contribution is reflected in the fact that Atlanta ranks second in the nation in producing engineers.

Let me begin with a thumb-nail sketch of the Georgia Institute of Technology. We have about 14,000 students, with just over half of them housed on campus. 10,300 are undergraduates; 3,700 are graduate students. They are under the tutelage of 700 full-time academic faculty.

Georgia Tech has six colleges. The College of Engineering is the largest and includes some 55 percent of our students. *U.S. News & World Report* recently ranked it third in the nation behind only MIT and Stanford. We also have the College of Architecture, which includes city planning; the College of Computing; the College of Sciences; the DuPree College of Management; and the Ivan Allen College of policy and international affairs. So you can see that we are focused not only on science and technology in themselves, but also on the broader issues of managing and directing them.

We are a Carnegie Research I institution. Last year we did \$255 million in sponsored research. That total has been increasing each of the past five years, and we are on track to set another new record this year. Research takes place in the six colleges, at more than 60 interdisciplinary research centers across campus, and in the Georgia Tech Research Institute, which employs about 500 full-time researchers.

Georgia Tech opened its doors in the fall of 1888, 50 years after Atlanta was born and only two decades after Atlanta suffered its first experience with urban renewal at the hands of General William Tecumseh Sherman during the Civil War. So Tech has been involved in shaping Atlanta throughout all of its life and most of the city's life.

The most literal expression of Georgia Tech's influence is Atlanta's skyline. Many of Atlanta's dominant buildings have been designed and/or built by Georgia Tech alumni.

That practical, hands-on influence continues in an even broader sense today. In addition to graduating Atlanta's architects and developers, our College of Architecture and its city planners serve as midwives and handmaidens to help Atlanta define its needs and solve its problems. We also provide expertise in civil engineering and environmental sustainability, as this city wrestles with transportation and air quality problems.

The 1996 Olympics created a major surge in the revitalization of Atlanta's city center, with many of the venues downtown. Georgia Tech was both the Olympic Village and a venue for several

sports. Preparing for the Olympics gave us an opportunity to refocus our campus around issues of livability and sustainability in an urban setting.

The Olympics also dramatically changed the neighborhood between our campus and downtown. Georgia Tech is one short mile from the heart of Atlanta, but prior to the Olympics, it might as well have been ten, because the space between was an urban blight. As we prepared for the Olympics, Georgia Tech was a partner in creating an attractive, new multi-income neighborhood in that space.

In addition to shaping Atlanta's physical landscape, Georgia Tech also helps to drive its economic development. Over the years, Tech alumni have started and run many of Atlanta's businesses. But as our economy has become increasingly dominated by technology, Georgia Tech's role has taken on new, more far-reaching dimensions.

In creating Silicon Valley, Stanford University had the advantage of large tracts of undeveloped land nearby. In contrast, Atlanta's major universities are right in the city, where redevelopment requires collaboration. So here you will find strong working partnerships between higher education and business that are deeper and more strategic than a project here or a problem there. In this city, business and higher education sit down together and agree on long-term economic thrusts, then work together in strategic ways to move in those directions.

The result of this strategic collaboration, as last month's *Georgia Trend* magazine pointed out, is that Atlanta is not really experiencing a revitalization or even a renaissance, but rather a reincarnation. Atlanta is not returning to its former glory; it is turning into something new.

Let me mention three examples of collaboration. We on this panel represent three of the six universities that are part of the Georgia Research Alliance, which serves as an important forum for leaders in business and higher education to work together. State government is the third partner, and in Georgia you will find that state government often works closely with both industry and higher education.

The Research Alliance focuses its efforts on three high-tech fields – advanced telecommunications, biotechnology and environmental technology. These fields were chosen because Georgia has the strength, both in university research and in critical numbers of companies, to become a major national and international leader.

The Research Alliance represents an \$800 million investment in research, development and commercialization in these three fields. State government has provided roughly 30 percent of the money up front to establish endowments for 31 chairs for eminent research scholars, and to build and equip the labs where they work. This seed capital from the state helped to leverage the remaining 70 percent of the funding from federal and private sources.

We also recognize that research scientists are seldom skilled in business management, so Georgia Tech nurtures start-up companies in two incubators. One is general in nature and the other is part of the Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology. We are now

planning a third incubator in conjunction with Emory University to house start-up biotechnology companies.

But cutting edge R&D and the commercialization of new discoveries are not enough in themselves to drive economic development; you must also have a skilled workforce. Again, the same three partners – higher education, business and state government – are collaborating in the Yamacraw Mission.

The Yamacraw Mission began with a six-month study to define Georgia's unique high-tech strengths. The study indicated three areas of emerging technology where Georgia was strong compared to other places: broadband technology, content control and optical networks.

These three areas are not tied to a particular technology, but rather underlay a variety of technologies that will be needed in commercial electronics, computers, telecommunications and entertainment. Thus, our strengths match up with the requirements for several essential components of a new economy built on technology.

However, to build on these strengths we need a sizable workforce of design engineers and computer scientists who have specially tailored skills. So the goal of the Yamacraw Mission is to produce 2,000 of these specially tailored design engineers and computer scientists per year by the year 2004. Georgia Tech is the lead university in this effort.

Georgia Tech has a second workforce education partnership with state government and a group of Atlanta computing companies that will enable us to double our computing graduates by the spring of 2001. And because this program expansion is designed with Atlanta companies as partners, a large percentage of our computing graduates will stay here.

Partnerships like these, that generate research, spin off new firms and educate a high-tech workforce, are driving the revitalization of the areas that surround our campus. New high-tech business projects and parks have been announced or are underway on all sides of our campus, where there once was mostly urban blight.

Of course, Georgia Tech has its own mission in life, which is to become a world-class technological university. But we know that we will never achieve it without also protecting and promoting Atlanta's quality of life. So our goal is to build an urban version of Silicon Valley that brings in-town Atlanta to a new level of quality as a community.