

STATE OF THE INSTITUTE ADDRESS
PRESENTED TO THE ALUMNI OF GEORGIA TECH
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BY
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Good morning and welcome to Post-Olympic Georgia Tech. I hope you're enjoying the Homecoming activities as well as the opportunity to share memories with old friends. Originally, I planned to say that I also hoped you enjoyed seeing some familiar places, but because of the many new facilities constructed for the Olympics, finding familiar places might present somewhat of a problem.

I realized how dramatic the changes were when I spoke recently at an alumni club meeting. During this event, I showed slides of some of the new facilities on campus, including the Kessler Campanile. After my talk, one of our alumni came up to me and asked where the Campanile was located on campus. I responded, "Next to the Student Center." He looked at me for a moment and then said, "Where's the Student Center?" That was a telling statement since the Student Center was built 25 years ago.

As that conversation illustrates, the physical changes on campus have been considerable, but homecoming is still what we all remember. Familiar highlights include the Rambling Wreck Parade, the Freshman Cake Race, and an exciting match-up on the gridiron. Tomorrow, our football team will be looking for its fifth victory, an exciting prospect for the players and coaches and all of us fans.

Winning has deep roots at Georgia Tech. From the football field to the chemistry lab, we have an established tradition of excellence. We are an institution on the rise, one of the few in the nation with the opportunity to ascend to the very top ranks of American universities.

Each year we mark our progress. Today, through the State of the Institute Address I'd like to share with you our accomplishments—as well as our challenges.

Looking Back at the Olympics

Throughout my conversations with alumni, one particular question often pops up: "Was Tech's participation in the Olympics worth it?"

The answer is—yes.

I will admit there were times when doubts crept into my mind—when the jackhammers were in full force at 4:30 a.m., when campus trees by the dozens were being cut down, and during one dramatic encounter when my wife and I were told to lie down on the floor while a SWAT Team searched the President's Home for what was thought to be an armed gunman—on those occasions, I definitely had my doubts. Yet the results are already clearly positive and we have yet to reap the full measure of our participation. The great track star Jesse Owens once labeled the Olympics, "a lifetime of training for 15 seconds of glory." This summer, we witnessed plenty of glory—Kerry Strug's heroic vault into history, Michael Johnson's fluid sprints, as well as the gold medal performances of two of our alumni, Derrick Adkins and Derek Mills.

But, athletes notwithstanding, I was most impressed this summer by a team that didn't win any races, earn any medals, or take a victory lap in front of thousands of screaming fans. This particular team's efforts will never decorate a Wheaties box; however, the dividends they earned through sweat, a can-do spirit, and a willingness to work through inconvenience, will benefit this institution for many years to come.

I'm talking about the Georgia Tech team of our staff, faculty, students and alumni. Because of their willingness to sacrifice and work for the greater good of the Institute, we gained infrastructure that will help us continue to build a foundation for a greater future.

In addition to the infrastructure, a benefit that is yet to be fully appreciated is the publicity and exposure received. In total, more than 1,500 stories aired or were printed or broadcast about Georgia Tech between February and August—translating into seven stories a day for seven days a week for seven months. Along with newspaper, television, and radio coverage, Georgia Tech's Internet homepage received approximately 110,000 hits during the month of July alone.

Today, the excitement of July has quietly faded into the reality of a new school year. However, unlike the Olympic athletes, our team is still very much together and ready to build on the winnings of last year for a greater future for Georgia Tech. In addition, the benefits they brought to us will last well beyond the 15 seconds predicted by Jesse Owens.

Achievements - Students, Faculty, and Staff

Although important, our Olympic preparations took a backseat last year to our main responsibility—educating the leaders of the future. As in years past, the achievements from faculty, staff, students, and alumni were substantial. The highlights I mention are illustrative of the progress occurring on this campus everyday.

I'll begin with students. After two years of hard work, this fall we implemented our Institute-wide Student Honor Code. This code is proof of the integrity and drive for excellence inherent in students who choose Georgia Tech.

Students entering Georgia Tech continue to be among the best in the nation. According to the group, Institutional Research and Evaluation, our 1995 freshman class was designated the best academically among all public universities.

Overall, our students are not only smart, they are serious about their education as indicated in the record levels of participation in our cooperative education program, with over 3,500 active this past year.

Individual student groups on campus are receiving national attention for excellence. For the 3rd year in a row, Tech's chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers won a top award from their national chapter. Likewise, four Tech fraternities also won top awards from their national chapters.

Georgia Tech's students continued their drive to excel in intercollegiate athletic endeavors. In 1995-1996, our football team experienced a winning season and fielded the 2nd most improved team in Division 1-A; our basketball team won the ACC regular season title for the first time in Tech history and traveled to the Sweet 16; our baseball team went to the NCAA tournament for the 13th year in a row, and our women's volleyball team not only swept the ACC regular season, but also won the ACC tournament for the first time in Tech's history.

Not to be outdone by our students, our faculty and staff also contributed to Tech's trajectory. Two of our senior faculty were elected to the National Academy of Engineering and six young faculty were recognized by National Science Foundation Career Awards. The six CAREER awards this year, added to the seven last year, place Georgia Tech third in the nation for numbers of faculty recognized by this prestigious award over the past two years. Research and scholarship are important elements in national rankings, and research funding expended on our campus last year reached \$200 million—an all-time Institute high and a 13 percent increase over Fiscal Year 1995. This was accomplished despite a general decline in federal research support and reflects our steadily improving posture in this highly competitive arena.

The effort of our staff during the past year was nothing short of outstanding. As I alluded to earlier, they not only handled our outsized Olympic preparations, but continued to competently complete all of the normal expectations we have for them. In addition, we did not neglect the need for administrative improvement. Throughout the administration, we continue to reorganize, placing the right people into the right department, and supporting them with the right training to see to it that our administrative quality equals our academic excellence.

Institute Achievements

Developments of note for the past year that have institute-wide dimensions include:

- **National rankings.** For the second year in a row, *U.S. News and World Report* listed us as one of the 50 best universities in the nation. *U.S. News* also ranked 14 of the 63 graduate programs we have at Tech in the Top 25, including two programs that were listed as best in the nation—the School of ISyE and the GVU Laboratory.

In addition, we were listed by both *Money* and *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the nation's 15 best educational values.

Georgia Tech was even accorded a national values ranking by a rather unlikely source—*Rolling Stone*. We were listed among the nation's top 15 values by the magazine in an article aptly entitled, "Cool Schools. Real Jobs. Rock and Roll!"

- **Funding.** Increases in funding allowed us to make measurable progress towards improving the quality of the Institute. This was made possible by the determined commitment of Governor Zell Miller, the support of the Georgia Legislature, and the wise course followed by the Board of Regents and the Office of the Chancellor. The budgeting process provided for the second in a series of 6 percent salary increases for faculty and staff, funds to allow hiring of additional faculty, and special initiative funding for new equipment and classroom improvement. Our salaries are now nearing national averages for the first time in our history. Using the new funding, we were able to undertake strategic new directions in instruction and research, while lowering our student/faculty ratio to 19:1 for the first time since the mid 1970s.

I would also like to point out though that we have a an important funding challenge coming our way from the state level. The Board of Regents has mandated that out-of-state tuition is to rise to the point where out-of-state students assume 100 percent of the cost of their Georgia Tech educations. Although this surcharge will at least in part return to our revenue stream to help enhance Georgia Tech, it also poses a challenge. Out-of-state students make up much of our enrollment, and we do not want to lose these students because of higher costs. Our challenge will be funding scholarships and other vehicles to help out-of-state students assume the cost of a Georgia Tech education.

- **Diversity.** Corporations and industries come to our campus to recruit our students not only because of their exceptional talents, but also because Georgia Tech has shown the ability to attract a diverse student body. Women now form 28 percent of our undergraduate student body and 23 percent of our graduate student population. In addition, this year saw all-time highs in numbers of women and minorities receiving B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees.
- **Facilities issues.** This year we completed a comprehensive study of the existing academic space on campus drawing on the talents of a nationally prominent team. As we have added dramatically to our housing and athletic facilities, it is easy to overlook that almost 50 academic buildings in the very center of our campus are 50 years or older and have, at best, only been partially renovated.

The results of the facilities study were sobering, but not completely surprising. Benchmarking studies were conducted to focus on peer institutions, and particularly those parts of peer institutions that compare with our mission areas. They showed Georgia Tech to fall well behind others in amount and quality of space. A severe deferred maintenance backlog was documented to the tune of \$130 million. The study also showed that in order to bring the campus up to conditions comparable to our peer institutions, we need to invest another \$350 million in new buildings and renovations over the next decade.

On a positive note, some progress on the academic facilities front was made this year. The Daniel Guggenheim Aerospace Engineering Building was renovated thanks to help from the Class of 1939; the Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology Building was officially opened; the Manufacturing Related Disciplines Complex - Phase I was completed; and construction was completed on the Sixth Street residence halls and the Curran Street Parking Deck. Planning is underway for the Manufacturing Related Disciplines Complex-phase II, a new biotechnology building which will be constructed using private funds and an additional parking deck.

- **The Capital Campaign.** In the spring, we launched our Capital Campaign with the theme, "The Threshold of a New Era." The Campaign provides the vehicle that allows us to address needs that cannot be obtained from state or other funding. It seeks to fund chairs to attract top faculty, provide scholarship support, meet our facilities needs, and improve student life. As of today, our total has reached approximately \$160 million, and contributing to this total was more than \$6 million collected in our Annual Roll Call—an Institute record.

The Campaign is being led by a talented cadre of alumni leaders including Bill Moore, Pete Silas, Larry Gellerstedt, Buck Stith, Tom Gossage, Charlie Brown, John Staton, John Weitnauer, and Charlie Yates. With these great Georgia Tech people on the watch, I am confident we will meet or exceed our Campaign goal.

- **Senator Sam Nunn.** Just a few weeks ago, I had the honor to announce the naming of our School of International Affairs for alumnus Sam Nunn. Senator Nunn's 24 remarkable years in the Senate were characterized by integrity and leadership. Our students will greatly benefit from association with Senator Nunn because he will serve in a part-time position as Distinguished Professor of Public Policy and International Affairs upon his retirement from the Senate.

When Senator Nunn accepted the appointment, he said a few words that reveal much about Georgia Tech's future directions and goals. He said, "Technology and science are outrunning the world of law, the world of religion, the world of human relations, the world of government, and the world of international relations. Bridges must be built between the world of science and the

world of human relations-bridges which can give shape and purpose to our technology and breathe heart and soul into our knowledge.

Here at Georgia Tech, in close consultation and collaboration with our other fine public and private institutions, I believe that we can build those bridges."

Looking Ahead

As a civil engineer, I am familiar with building bridges and one fact is remarkably clear: no bridge can be built safely without a plan. Likewise, no trajectory can be launched without a firm foundation and a flight plan.

I mentioned our strategic plan last year and the year before during my previous State of the Institute Addresses. Over the past two years, we have hewed close to the basic tenets of the plan, and it has served us well, demonstrating the basic value of the recommendations in it.

To help us focus our efforts on the strategic plan we have developed hard and fast criteria to measure our progress. Based on the work of a committee chaired by Associate Dean of Sciences Andy Smith, our new implementation plan creates the guidelines and metrics that characterize success or lack thereof, for each of the 48 action items listed in the Strategic Plan.

Throughout the coming years, we will follow this plan and build our bridge to the next level. Some of the goals that call for our most immediate focus:

- **Personalizing undergraduate education.** As we invest the new resources provided by the state, we plan to improve the level of faculty/student interaction and find innovative means to use educational technology to enhance communications. To coordinate these activities, we have created a new position, the vice provost of Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs. Dr. Robert McMath, a highly regarded faculty member has accepted this post and hit the ground running.
- **Capitalizing on our special opportunities in educational technology.** With the installation of FutureNet, the networking of all residence hall rooms, the installation of our own ten channel closed circuit television system, we can set a standard for use of this new environment for enhanced learning.
- **Improving academic facilities and campus conditions.** To provide a rational basis for our efforts, in the coming year we will develop a comprehensive master plan for our campus. While we are planning, we will seek the resources we need to address the most serious needs identified in our the facilities study, particularly those with safety dimensions. To help prevent deterioration of our new facilities, we will undertake a comprehensive recycling plan supplemented by creation of campus ownership teams to engender a caring attitude about our common spaces.
- **Enhancing our reputation.** In addition to more engagement in the national policy arena, this thrust requires continued success in research and knowledge creation at a time when federal support is likely to decline. We need to support our faculty in their efforts in this arena, and to remain responsive to the continually changing research support environment. We also have to capitalize on our special opportunities, such as the creation of the Sam Nunn School of

International Affairs and the new endowment for the DuPree School of Management, and for our growing initiative in bioengineering and biosciences.

- **Improving student recruiting.** Dynamics such as the HOPE Scholarship program, the Regents mandate to raise out-of-state tuition to 100 percent of cost, the need to energize our transfer programs, and increasing applications from all sectors are changing the mix of students choosing to come to campus. This year will call for strategic decisions in financing scholarships and choosing students if we are to achieve the outcomes we want as an institution.

Conclusion

As you leave here today, you may be thinking that Tech has certainly set an ambitious agenda. I agree.

Our goals and our agenda are ambitious—but eminently achievable. The people of Georgia Tech have always exhibited a can-do attitude that enables us to get the job done where others fail and to use ingenuity and intelligence to meet and surpass challenges that others find too hard to overcome.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow has a quote that I think best describes Georgia Tech's efforts to ascend to the next level. The quote states, "The heights by great men reached and kept/Were not attained by sudden flight/But they, while their companions slept/Were toiling upward in the night." One other great American has a closing quote for us. Ben Franklin once said, "Well done is better than well said."

Therefore I'll sit down and let our achievements speak for us. But, before I do, I would like to thank you for your help and support. Our alumni are truly at the heart of our enterprise and we value your continued involvement and guidance. With you at our side, success is well within our grasp.