

REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
Georgia Tech African American Student Union, March 3, 2000

I had a chance to spend a little time with some of you last month at a Black History Month event that involved three of Atlanta's leading minority entrepreneurs, and I'm pleased to have a chance to talk with you again today about the master plan and diversity at Georgia Tech.

When Georgia Tech first opened its doors more than a century ago, its goal was to help Atlanta and Georgia make the transition from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy. Today we are on the threshold of a new era, and Tech has a similar responsibility. We are playing a leading role in helping Atlanta and Georgia make the transition from an industrial economy to a technology-based economy.

Atlanta also has a rich civil rights heritage, and Georgia Tech has played a role that story as well. Tech was the first university in the Deep South to integrate voluntarily without court order, and it was done calmly and peacefully with the support of both students and faculty. Today, Georgia Tech is a national leader in graduating minority engineers.

And we are a founding partner in an organization called EMERGE – Empowering Minority Engineers to Reach for Graduate Education. EMERGE brings together the historic black colleges and universities with technology powerhouses like Tech, MIT, Carnegie Mellon, and the University of Michigan. Its goal is to jump-start the next surge of minority enrollment in math, science and engineering by creating a network that shares “best practices” in building successful minority programs.

As we move into a new century, it is very important that Georgia Tech intertwine these two aspects of our heritage, and we are deliberately working to do that. During Black History Month last month, we remembered and lifted up African American heroes who were champions of the Civil Rights Movement, and that struggle was extremely important and badly needed. But on the opposite side of the same coin from civil rights is economic opportunity, and that is our challenge today.

Today African Americans can sit wherever they want on the bus, but less than half of them own their own homes, compared to three-fourths of white Americans. Today African Americans can drink from whatever water fountain they want, but only seven percent of them have individual stock holdings and only 10 percent have IRAs, compared to a third of whites with individual stock holdings and nearly 40 percent with IRAs. Today African Americans can eat in whatever restaurant they choose, but for every dollar of wealth the median white household possesses, the median African American household has about 9 cents.

We are presently enjoying America's longest peacetime economic expansion, and there is no question that African Americans have benefited from it. Since 1993, African American net household income has increased 21 percent, compared to a 12 percent increase for all American households. And African American poverty rates are at their lowest level since the Census

Bureau started tracking them more than 30 years ago. As a result, African American buying power has been increasing, and last year it topped \$440 billion.

However, for every dollar black Americans earn, they spend only 5 or 6 cents with black businesses. Here in Atlanta only 6 percent of the black workforce is employed with black-owned businesses – nationwide it is only 3 percent. Despite their increasing earning power, African Americans are still a flow-through for money that begins and ends in the white business community.

So we need to move on to the next stage of the quest for equality, which is to translate some of that increase in African American income into an increase in assets and wealth. As the saying goes, the time to strike is when the iron is hot. We need to use the opportunity provided by a strong economy to encourage minority entrepreneurs and build wealth and assets in the minority community.

Georgia Tech can help by preparing minority students for that role. We offer classes in management as well as science, math and engineering. We have entrepreneurship classes and a Center for Entrepreneurship and New Venture Development in our DuPree College of Management, as well as ATDC incubators for new high-tech businesses, which can give students first-hand exposure to the process of starting a company. Georgia Tech is also a major player in the developing world of information technology and e-commerce, where future opportunities for entrepreneurs will abound.

Beyond helping the African American community increase its wealth, there is a second reason why Georgia Tech wants to encourage more minorities to become scientists and engineers. As technology becomes ever more pervasive, scientists and engineers are gaining power and influence.

It used to be the MBAs who ran things, while the engineers tinkered in the back room, but that is changing. As society looks for the next generation of leaders, it is increasingly turning to those who can create, apply and manage technology. Today scientists and engineers can control their own destiny, and the broader leadership opportunities for experts in science, math, engineering and computing are growing astronomically. Minorities need to be full partners and participants in these opportunities, and not be left behind.

So, as Georgia Tech continues to work very hard to strengthen its programs and its reputation around the nation and even the world, two very important goals are to help Atlanta and Georgia become technology “hot-spots” and to get minorities involved in that process, so that they have an opportunity to be full participants in the economic opportunities of the future.

Now, what does all that have to do with the Master Plan? Actually, they are related. The Master Plan is a tangible expression of Georgia Tech’s personality – of what we believe is important and what we want to achieve. Its purpose to shape and reshape our campus and our facilities so that they help us move toward our goals and objectives.

One of the most basic questions that guides the development of any master plan is this: How do we want to relate to our neighbors? When you look at the master plan of some campuses, it is clear that they don't want to relate to their neighbors. They see their university as a refuge and a bastion against the world, a place where students and faculty can pursue their interests and develop their talents unencumbered by outside influences. This mindset is reflected in campuses with clear and distinct boundaries, often with walls around them.

Here at Georgia Tech, we have a historic responsibility to promote economic development, and the most obvious place to help make that happen is right here in Atlanta, around our campus. We believe in the power of technology to link people's lives in meaningful and profound ways, and we want to explore those ways, not only here within our campus community, but also with our neighbors. So our campus has tentacles that reach out into the community, and it is not always clear where the Georgia Tech campus ends and the surrounding community begins.

On our south side, the Ivan Allen College and the North Avenue Research Area reach out to Marietta Street. To the north, we leap across Home Park, with the GCATT building and some of our athletic fields along 14th Street. To the east, we are moving forward with plans to cross the expressway at 5th Street, and be a physical part of the high-tech business community that is developing there.

Directly across the 5th Street Bridge from campus is the Biltmore Hotel, which for 15 years stood empty and deteriorating until it was renovated recently by a Georgia Tech alumnus. Its office space has been snapped up quickly by high-tech firms that want to be in the middle of the high-tech community that is developing there. And our campus will expand into space between the expressway and the Biltmore.

This physical reaching out of our campus into the community is symbolic of the many ways in which Georgia Tech is involved with our neighbors and the City of Atlanta. The nineties were the fastest-growing decade in Atlanta history, and 1999 was the fastest-growing year of the decade. Atlanta now ranks third in the nation as a technology "hot spot," and Georgia Tech is a major force in making that happen.

Tech alumni have created such robust high-tech enterprises as Scientific Atlanta and MindSpring. GCATT – the Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology – on 14th Street has become a magnet for high-tech communications companies. The Advanced Technology Development Center –ATDC – has 60 start-up companies under its wing, and many of its 53 graduates are sprinkled around Midtown and up Northside Drive.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers recently announced that \$740 million in venture capital was invested in Georgia companies just in the fourth quarter of 1999 – more than was invested in any other prior year. Forty-seven new companies chose to come to Atlanta in 1999, and 18 of them were high-tech companies targeted by the Chamber's Industries of the Mind initiative. Georgia Tech is a partner in this IOM initiative, which targets high-tech companies to recruit to Atlanta, and we are a primary reason why many of them come.

But we are also keenly aware that technology can divide just as surely as it can connect, and we are reaching out to help all of Atlanta benefit. I am a member of Atlanta's Blue Ribbon Commission on Bridging the Digital Divide, which was recently created by Mayor Bill Campbell to help bring technology into the poorer areas of the city. Georgia Tech already provided a model for doing that at Centennial Place Elementary School. We helped to design the math and science curriculum at this school and stock it with computers. And a Georgia Tech co-op student works at the school, maintaining the computers and helping the students and teachers understand and use them.

Another of Georgia Tech's primary goals that is reflected in the Master Plan is to achieve world-class status in our academic and research programs. We have outstanding students like all of you; we have superb faculty. But we also need to provide the facilities that enable our students and faculty to excel.

We now require every student to have a computer that meets certain specifications, and more than 300 of our courses are web-enhanced. Yet many of our classroom buildings are old, and they are not designed or retrofitted to accommodate technology. So our Master Plan includes the major renovation of the historic buildings along Cherry Street and the construction of a new Undergraduate Learning Center between the library and the student center.

This new building will take the undergraduate student experience into the 21st century by creating comprehensive, collaborative high-tech learning environment that blends formal academic study, academic support services, and informal campus life. In addition to high-tech classrooms and labs, the Undergraduate Learning Center will bring academic support services together, offer library resources, and provide open gathering space with food and retail services.

Today's hottest research fields are in the gaps and creases between the traditional academic disciplines – biotechnology, computing and information technology, environmental technology. Georgia Tech is working in all of these areas, and we want to develop into a national and even international leader. So we need facilities that provide opportunities for sharing ideas and collaborating across the academic disciplines. That is why we are building the BEM Complex between Atlantic Avenue and the baseball stadium. Each of those letters stands for a building. The "B" building is Bioengineering and Bioscience, and we cut the ribbon on it last fall. We are about to break ground for the "E" building, which stands for Environmental Science and Technology. And we are raising funds for the "M" building, which will be Molecular and Materials Science and Engineering.

These three buildings are very innovative in design, and we have representatives from other universities calling and coming to learn about them. They are interdisciplinary from the ground up. Their design features interdisciplinary "research neighborhoods" that promote collaboration, and their configuration is flexible so that it can change to meet future research needs.

Campus safety is always an important consideration for a master plan, and many universities cite it as a reason why they try to close their campus off from surrounding neighborhoods. There is a poem by Robert Frost called "Mending Wall," in which he describes how his neighbor insists that they go out every spring and repair the damage Mother Nature has done to the stone wall

that separates their properties. Frost's own opinion is that something deep in nature does not love a wall, but his neighbor insists that "good fences make good neighbors."

Frost's neighbor has had his advocates at Georgia Tech. In November of 1896, then-President Lyman Hall put a fence around campus "to protect the property against tramps." Along North Avenue, the fence was white picket to make a good appearance, but on the backside of campus it was barbed wire to save money. But in the intervening years since then, we have come around to Robert Frost's side. We believe that a more durable and reliable way to improve campus safety than building a fence is to help make the neighborhoods around us safer. Today the old Techwood Homes housing project is gone, and our campus police work together with the police precinct in the new Centennial Place neighborhood that replaced it.

As Midtown increasingly evolves into a high-tech business center, the quality of life all around campus is improving. We are already seeing more and higher quality restaurants. And there are plans on the drawing board for about 11,000 quality housing units, which will trigger expanded retail offerings and strengthen the arts component of the neighborhood. Georgia Tech supports these efforts, because we believe that improving the quality of the neighborhoods around us helps our campus. And we are hoping that a high quality of life around our campus will encourage more of our faculty and staff to live nearby.

Which brings me to another important consideration that helps shape our Master Plan – sustainability. Metro Atlanta tops the nation with an average one-way commute of 34 miles. That has not only created a lot of traffic gridlock, it has also made us the second worst city in the nation for air pollution. Georgia Tech's vision statement calls for us to "create an enriched, more prosperous and **sustainable** society for the citizens of Georgia, the nation and the world." And the first step is to live up to that goal in the way we organize and operate our campus.

We want a campus that encourages students and faculty alike to leave their cars on the periphery and walk around campus. We have been closing off the Hill and parts of the historic core of campus to vehicle traffic. I gave up my own parking space right in front of the Carnegie Building so this area could be closed to vehicles, and I now park in a lot off North Avenue and walk to my office.

In addition to being more sustainable, a pedestrian campus also encourages community to develop. When people drive around in cars, they are isolated from each other, but when they are walking, they greet each other and sometimes stop to chat. So we also want to create and preserve inviting green spaces and plazas throughout campus – outdoor living spaces, if you will – that in addition to promoting the conversion of carbon dioxide into oxygen, also promote personal interaction among students, faculty, and staff.

And speaking of community, the Master Plan also helps us keep our facilities in balance with the various needs of our life together. On-campus housing has historically been tight at Georgia Tech, so when we got an opportunity to increase it significantly by becoming the 1996 Olympic Village, we jumped at the chance. We are now in a much better position to offer housing to our students, but the surge of Olympic dorms put us behind on other campus life amenities. Our

parking facilities, student center, and recreational facilities were stretched before the Olympics, and today they are far too small.

So we are now trying to catch up these campus life facilities and restore a better balance. A new parking deck is under construction on Atlantic Avenue. And we will soon begin major work on SAC, to renovate the existing facility and add a large new wing that encompasses the aquatic center, which will be enclosed, and also includes a parking deck.

But the Master Plan is about much more than merely providing an appropriate number of dorm rooms and parking spaces, or even classrooms and labs. The Master Plan is really a tool that helps Georgia Tech develop a livable, sustainable campus that features the innovative facilities we need to achieve our larger goals of academic excellence, leading edge research, economic development, and community out-reach.