

Panama Launch of Logistics Innovation and Research Center

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(As written; not necessarily as delivered)

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. President Martinelli, Vice President Varela, Secretary Berrocal and all of our other honored guests, it is my pleasure to join here today to launch the Georgia Tech Panama Logistics Innovation and Research Center.

We live and work in an increasingly global environment, and Panama and its people play a very important role in numerous areas, most notably logistics, transportation and trade. For years, you have served a critical role in the world's ability to transport goods and services, vital for commerce for many countries, and more specifically, for the U.S. as most of the cargo that goes through the U.S. passes through Panama.

Panama is the crossroads of trade for the Americas. Georgia Tech sees Panama becoming the hub of the Americas for trade and logistics research and education.

The research and innovation from this new logistics center will help not only your country, but will be valuable for other areas of the world.

The Supply Chain & Logistics Institute at Georgia Tech provides global leadership for research and education in supply chain engineering, and is part of our Industrial Engineering program that for a number of years has been ranked number one in the nation by U.S. News and World Report.

We are particularly proud of the international acclaim that our Master of Industrial and Systems Engineering degree program has received. We look forward to having more Panamanian students participate in a dual master's degree in Supply Chain Engineering taught at the Technological University of Panama, Universidad Latina, on the Georgia Tech campus in Atlanta and the Georgia Tech Panama Logistics Innovation and Research Center.

Georgia Tech's expertise in executive education provides a foundation to Panama for the further development of human capital in engineering.

Georgia Tech is an international university, with campuses and academic and research partnerships throughout the world. Included among our international research and education platforms are Georgia Tech Lorraine in Metz, France, Georgia Tech Ireland and Georgia Tech's Logistics Institute Asia Pacific in Singapore, and as well as numerous other research and education partnerships throughout the world. Panama will be able to benefit from Georgia Tech's research in global logistics and management at our Singapore location.

One of our campuses is in Savannah, Georgia. Savannah is a thriving port along our eastern seaboard, and has what many feel is the greatest growth potential of East Coast ports in the U.S. We see tremendous potential for synergy and partnerships with industry, government and university partners to enhance the relationship between the Panama Canal and the port of Savannah. Through our involvement in this new center, we are hoping to help facilitate those relationships.

Through its various programs, Georgia Tech is involved in numerous research projects that could be of immediate use for Panama. For example, through our Georgia Tech Research Institute, or GTRI, we are developing solutions for port and container security, an extraordinarily challenging global problem.

We are here today in large part because of the extraordinary support of Georgia Tech alumni from Panama.

Our international partnership with Panama began on our main campus in Atlanta, Georgia. Panamanians are increasingly coming to Georgia Tech's Atlanta campus to study. Once they become Georgia Tech graduates, many are coming back to your country, serving as leaders in business, industry and government.

They form a very strong Georgia Tech alumni base in Panama, and they are becoming "double ambassadors." They are ambassadors who are enthusiastic about Georgia Tech and the value it can offer, and they want to connect the educational and research resources of Georgia Tech with the people of Panama. They have enthusiastically shared about the opportunities for a partnership, and we have listened.

Establishing this logistics center is the first step in what we hope will be a growing relationship.

We're looking forward to future opportunities as well. This could include providing assistance and encouragement for other Panamanian students to study at Georgia Tech, including partnerships with local universities

Other future possibilities include tapping into our expertise at Tech to help you work with biodiversity and environmental issues in your country.

The new center has "innovation" as part of its name. Innovation, as distinct from invention, is central to what we do and is the process that moves ideas from their identification to their use, for the betterment of humanity.

GT is committed to supporting SENACYT's agenda for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Panama.

Last week we launched Georgia Tech's new 25-year strategic plan. One of the five main goals of our new plan is to Expand Our Global Footprint and Influence to Ensure That We Are Graduating Good Global Citizens. As part of that we will expand the world's footprint at Georgia Tech, Embrace and support globally engaged students, and Extend and leverage Georgia Tech's impact around the globe.

An innovation economy is increasingly dependent upon outstanding research, development and technology transfer. We are committed to working with research and education partners around the globe in research and education.

As part of that effort, we welcome our new partnership in Panama, and look forward to many more exciting opportunities in the future.

Thank you.