

State of the University Address

Thursday, January 17, 2008 • The Chapel

Good afternoon, and thank you for being here. Thank you, Professor Vencill, for that introduction and for your leadership on the Council.

This is a crucial juncture in the history of the University of Georgia. 2007 may very well have been the best year ever for UGA, and I will elaborate on that in a moment. But first, a cautionary tale.

The *Wall Street Journal* published a story last summer recounting the rapid rise and subsequent decline in patronage at Applebee's, which billed itself as something of an American pub – "Eating good in the neighborhood" was the slogan. Created by a husband-and-wife team in Atlanta in 1980, the chain slowly expanded through the 1980s. By the mid-1990s, Applebee's was the nation's largest sit-down restaurant chain and was adding 100 stores a year. By the early part of the 21st century, more than 1,900 stores were in operation around the world. Sales were up, use was up and the future looked bright.

The *Journal's* story detailed, however, how quickly public tastes can change. Applebee's menu, heavy on fried foods and bread, was in conflict with a trend toward more healthful eating.

Dessert sales were dropping. Same-store sales were declining, and competition from newer chains was intense. In short order, Applebee's went from being ahead of, or at least on the cusp of, the prevailing demographics to trailing them. Unfortunately for Applebee's, once the "world's largest casual dining concept," according to its investor relations website, sales, use and profits declined, and by the end of the summer of 2007, IHOP had bought the company.

I am confident in saying that the calendar year just completed was far and away the best ever for the University of Georgia. But the moral of the Applebee's story is that it is at just such a time that we must be even more vigilant about our goals and our direction.

Hear this line from the *Journal's* story: "Applebee's stayed too long with a formula that had worked for it in the past."

Woe be to the University of Georgia if it does the same. Now is not the time for this university to be satisfied with where it is; now is the time for this university to push on toward making next year the

greatest year in its history. I will speak specifically to that challenge in a few minutes.

First, I would like to review the accomplishments of the past 12 months and then comment on four areas where we have yet to do a better job if the University of Georgia is truly going to be a successful 21st, not just 20th, century institution. We enrolled the most academically prepared freshman class in UGA's history, with an SAT average of 1242 and a GPA of 3.78.

In the Honors Program, those numbers are 1445 and 4.07.

One current Honors Program student and one alumna, both Foundation Fellows – Deep Shah and Katherine Vyborny – were named Rhodes Scholars. This is the first year UGA has had two Rhodes Scholars – "a rare honor for any school," to quote the Atlanta Journal-Constitution – and brings the university's total to 21.

UGA was the only public university in America to boast two Rhodes Scholars; other institutions with two or more were Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, Columbia, Chicago and St. Olaf. That's pretty good company and speaks to the quality of the Honors Program, which challenges the students to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

Four others received either the Truman, the Goldwater or the Marshall, bringing to 49 the total number of national academic scholarships won by UGA students in the past 11 years. UGA students can, and do, compete well with students at any American university or college.

The year began with one of the most remarkable events in the recent history of the university, a conference marking the 30th anniversary of the inauguration of Jimmy Carter as President of the United States. President and Mrs. Carter, Vice President and Mrs. Mondale and a host of Carter administration officials, contemporaries and media figures came to campus for a weekend devoted to the theme of "The Carter Presidency: Lessons for the 21st Century."

It was a weekend of reminiscing, of course, but also of substantive, bipartisan analysis of the issues of the Carter presidency, with a particular focus of those issues that remain with us today – energy

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dependency, terrorism, the environment. It was the university in one of its finest hours, and I will treasure those memories forever.

Almost 30 percent of the graduating class in the spring had a residential study abroad experience, ranking UGA ninth in the country in this critically important area of 21st-century education. I remain committed to the belief that there is no more meaningful experience we can provide, both educationally and personally, than a long-term study abroad experience.

One of our challenges is to make sure that financial burdens do not limit the number of students who can take advantage of the programs we offer.

UGA played a leadership role in responding to the drought, showing significant reductions in water use over last year. I have been particularly pleased with the buy-in by students, who have shown innovation, commitment and creativity in finding ways to save water.

We broke ground for a much-needed expansion of the College of Pharmacy building, thanks to funding from the General Assembly and the Board of Regents.

This \$42.9 million expansion will help UGA address the critical shortage of pharmacists in Georgia by expanding the size of each incoming class by 50 to 75 students.

Construction topped out on the \$40 million Lamar Dodd School of Art on East Campus, and that facility will be open for classes in the fall. Bringing most of UGA's art students and faculty under one roof will lead to the natural collaboration and symbioses that arise from proximity and which are essential to the creative process.

We expanded the operating hours of the Student Learning Center and Snelling Dining Commons in response to student requests. When I hear that hundreds of students are going to Snelling between midnight and sunrise I am reminded yet again of how much things have changed since my undergraduate days.

The Odum School of Ecology, the first stand-alone ecology school in the world, honors the memory of the late scholar Eugene Odum, who created the

discipline of ecology.

The Odum School will be an important player in addressing the increasingly complex web of issues facing Georgia as the state seeks to balance the growth that comes with being a highly desirable place to live with the need to preserve and maintain what makes Georgia one of the nation's most beautiful states.

The Archway Project, under the direction of Vice President for Public Service and Outreach Art Dunning, is an effort to involve the entire university, not simply those with public service appointments, in service to the state by connecting community issues with UGA expertise. The two-year pilot project in Moultrie and Colquitt County is now permanent and so successful that two other communities – Washington County and Glynn County– are now involved.

The Fanning Institute and the Vinson Institute have been valuable resources for the state in addressing the drought and developing a water management plan. That is the role of the land grant mission – to provide resources that improve the quality of life for all Georgians.

Successes in UGA research abounded, including:

- The Complex Carbohydrate Research Center is the leader in a \$20 million federal research grant into biofuels. The UGA team will study the biofuels potential of poplar and switchgrass as part of a \$125 million national effort to develop alternative fuels from available natural resources.
- The discovery of a series of HIV integrase inhibitors holds promise for treatment-resistant AIDS patients;
- A \$1.8 million NIH grant to the College of Veterinary Medicine for the development of rabies vaccinations;
- A joint venture with Emory to help the nation prepare for a flu pandemic, supported by a \$32.8 million grant from NIH;
- A new biofuel derived from wood chips;

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- A promising step toward a cancer vaccine at the Georgia Cancer Center, where researchers have shown that a carbohydrate-based vaccine can trigger an immune response to cancer cells in mice.

Two UGA athletic teams – women's gymnastics and men's tennis – won national championships. It was the third in a row and eighth overall for the Gym Dogs and the fifth for men's tennis.

The Coliseum Training Facility, which will house men's and women's basketball and the gymnastics team in perhaps the best such facility in the country, opened in August. The facility's weight room and other training areas will be available to all varsity athletes.

The women's basketball team advanced to the Sweet 16 round of the NCAA tournament. The soccer team made the NCAA playoffs for the first time since 2003. And the football team rebounded from a mid-season stumble to finish the regular season 10-2, beat Hawaii 41-10 in the Sugar Bowl and was ranked second in the AP poll.

2007 was indeed a very good year on a number of fronts for the University of Georgia. The most significant news of the year, not only for this university but for this state, were the virtually simultaneous announcements in early summer that the Local Redevelopment Authority had voted unanimously to transfer the Navy Supply Corps School property to UGA for the purpose of establishing a public health campus that would feature the MCG/UGA Medical Initiative after the Navy moves that function to Rhode Island, and the inclusion of UGA on the list of five finalists to be the home of a new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility.

The development of such a campus on the Navy School property is perhaps the signature public service project of the early decades of the 21st century for this university. Let me share with you a little of what I told a House medical education study committee two months ago.

Among states with medical schools, Georgia ranks 35th in medical students per capita; overall, Georgia ranks 39th in the number of physicians per capita. This is now the ninth-largest state in the nation, yet

our people, particularly outside urban areas, are woefully underserved in terms of access to medical professionals.

The health of Georgians is not good. A report by the United Health Foundation ranks Georgia 40th, based on criteria including the prevalence of smoking, binge drinking, obesity, infectious disease and other factors. The MCG/UGA Medical Initiative is a significant part of how Georgia should address these needs, and the Athens area offers much in addition to the Navy School property to support expanded medical education in Georgia:

- National- and world-class faculty in the basic sciences
- Top-quality teaching facilities
- Top-quality research space
- A Pharmacy school and a Vet school
- Administrative and student support infrastructure

Over the past decade, with significant support from the legislature, UGA has focused much of its research effort on growing the biomedical and health sciences program. The Biomedical and Health Sciences Institute serves as an umbrella over the vast amount of UGA research into those areas. The Georgia Cancer Center is doing very good basic research into the causes and mechanisms of cancer.

Several new facilities – the Coverdell Center, Complex Carbohydrate Research Center, Animal Health Research Center and the Pharmacy expansion – provide the kind of collaborative research space necessary for addressing the complex issues of human health; offer support for a medical education program in Athens; and complement the strengths that MCG will bring.

The state's first public College of Public Health focuses on the broad issues of quality of life for Georgians and is symbiotic with physician training.

The faculty and facilities at a comprehensive public research university like UGA generate opportunities for the levels of extramural research funding that help offset the expenses associated with medical education.

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The research university also brings collaborative opportunities with institutions across the country and around the world. The best work being done in any research field today is being done collaboratively.

There are very few successful lone scientists – they have to work together for funding, for one thing, but also to bring new perspectives to the complex challenges of medical research.

There are numerous opportunities for collaboration both internally and externally at UGA. The growing strength in biomedical and health research here I mentioned earlier is a clear advantage.

But there are other areas of expertise that complement medical education – communications, journalism, public administration, law, public health, social work, to name a few. That is one of the primary benefits of the research university – the opportunities to work together. These UGA strengths mesh nicely with the research and clinical capacity of MCG.

Northeast Georgia is also home to several progressive and expanding hospitals, which offer the opportunity to integrate the development of new residency programs with the MCG/UGA Medical Initiative. (We have had good discussions with the two local hospitals, and Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville is also supportive.) The link between graduating from medical school in Georgia and practicing in Georgia is strong, so creating the opportunity for educating more physicians in Georgia is critical to meeting the state's need for more doctors.

UGA and MCG have a history of developing successful partnerships, and the relationships developed from those partnerships bode well for future program opportunities.

The School of Nursing at Athens (SONAT) has been a very successful MCG program in this community, as has been the UGA pharmacy program in Augusta. The state of Georgia needs the MCG/UGA partnership.

Both institutions recognize that further close collaboration is necessary if the System is to meet the state's need for more physicians and health care workers. UGA has an obligation and a duty to apply

its resources in service to the people of this state. The MCG/UGA Medical Initiative fulfills that obligation and meets that duty, and I am excited about the future of medical education in Athens.

Equally strong is the case we have made for locating the National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility here. This, too, is part of the modern land-grant mission. We must identify the greatest challenges facing Georgia and this nation, and apply the university's resources to them.

NBAF, an approximately 500,000-square-foot building, will employ an estimated 250-350 federal employees when it opens. An analysis by the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government estimates the NBAF's impact in Georgia at \$500 million in wages and salaries and \$1.5 billion overall economic output over 20 years.

In the 21st century, security in the face of faceless bioterror attacks and threats to the food supply are among the most serious challenges confronting this nation. NBAF will be the federal government's top facility for preparing for and reacting to such incidents as well as the national headquarters for research into zoonotic diseases, such as West Nile, with the capability to spread from the animal population to humans. In recent years, the rapid spread of SARS and the potential for avian flu to infect humans have raised concern about a focused response.

Georgia has become a world leader in global health, especially in the areas of infectious diseases, vaccines and food safety. The primary strength of Georgia's NBAF proposal lies in the efficiencies and effectiveness that the NBAF would gain by locating near this critical mass of assets in and near Athens. This impressive mix will provide a full complement of expertise, technologies and facilities for disease surveillance, diagnosis, prevention and treatment. Local complementary resources include:

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- UGA's nationally recognized expertise and programs in zoonotic, emerging, re-emerging infectious diseases and avian medicine.
- The Animal Health Research Center, which is the only stand-alone BSL-3AG facility on an American university campus.
- The USDA Agricultural Research Service Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory, with internationally acknowledged expertise in infectious diseases of poultry, plus molecular diagnostics and vaccine development.
- The Richard B. Russell Agricultural Research Center, with programs in food quality and safety, swine endocrinology, livestock antimicrobial resistance and poultry microbiological safety.
- \$ A strong partnership with Merial's world-class expertise and facilities for development of animal vaccines.

Other critical resources located within a 70-mile radius include:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Emory University, with superb infectious disease, vaccine development, agricultural forensic diagnostics, human medicine and public health programs.
- Georgia Tech, with the fastest growing bio-engineering program in the country.
- Georgia State University, with commitments to virology, zoonotics, infectious diseases and immunology.
- The Medical College of Georgia and the Morehouse School of Medicine.
- Additional Georgia assets include Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, other high-level biocontainment

facilities, expertise in construction and operations of high-level biosafety facilities, low costs for construction and the low cost of living.

This is a convergence of events for which we could not have planned a decade ago but for which we have been preparing. In short, what we have done in public health, in biomedical science, in animal health, in carbohydrate studies in the past decade has positioned us for opportunities such as NBAF and the medical campus on the Navy School site. In rapid succession in the spring and summer this university received more good news than many universities experience in a decade or more.

We have every right to feel, as they seem to have felt at Applebee's, smug and self-confident about our future as we bask in the successes of 2007. But really great institutions ask the hard questions about what they are doing and how well they are doing it at precisely the moment of their greatest success, and they take to heart the answers to those questions. There are four areas in particular where this institution needs to focus its efforts in order to maintain the level of progress we enjoyed in 2007.

1) Access. I am more committed than ever to ensuring that this place reflects the broadest profile of the college-prepared population of this state. We have made tremendous strides in this area in the past 10 years and began this year with the most diverse - and the strongest - student body ever.

The freshman class in the fall was 21 percent minority, the highest it has ever been. African-American students made up 8.2 percent; Asian/Pacific Island students made up 7.1 percent; Hispanic students made up 2.5 percent; and multiracial students made up 2.8 percent of the total. Those are numbers that more closely resemble the face of Georgia.

I am proud of those numbers and the progress we have made in the past decade. The results we are seeing are the product of a focused effort, substantial resources and the involvement of a broad range of campus representatives in the student identification, recruitment and enrollment process. But real success will have been achieved only when the percentages are such that, frankly, we are able to quit calculating

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them each year and fretting over slight changes. And we are not there yet.

Going forward, we must have an enhanced focus on financial aid for economically disadvantaged students regardless of ethnicity, although the reality in Georgia is that socioeconomic status and ethnicity are closely linked.

We have had substantial help in meeting this need in the past few years from a number of our supporters, the Arch Foundation, the UGA Foundation, the Goizueta Foundation and the National Hispanic Scholarship Foundation, but the fact remains that many students in this state who could succeed here do not come here because of inadequate financial support. We will do a great service to this state if we offer those students a better choice than that.

As thrilling as it is to see the physical campus change and to be able to track very easily the progress there, we must devote more time, more resources and more effort to providing financial support for students with the intellectual, but not economic, capacity to enroll here.

2) International education. For me, this is more than just a rhetorical plank in the strategic plan. An international component is an essential part of a basic 21st century education, it is preparation for an effective life in this time. Almost 30 percent of UGA students are graduating with a residential study abroad experience; we have come a very long way and have made amazing progress on the goal of internationalizing the curriculum.

But 30 percent means that 70 percent of UGA students are leaving here without that experience, and we need to take some actions to increase that number. In the fall and spring at each of our University-owned locations, we should offer more core courses to allow students from multiple majors to study abroad as sophomores without impeding their progress toward a degree in four years. This would be particularly beneficial to students in the sophomore year, virtually all of whom, in my experience, come back more mature, more understanding of the challenges facing the world and more prepared to meet the academic challenges of upper-division work at a top public university.

Beyond the impact on students' academic progress, a residential study abroad experience prepares them for being effective citizens in the 21st century workforce. We all know that today's economy is inextricably connected; an understanding of those connections is essential for success by any definition.

In addition to our facilities at Costa Rica, Cortona and Oxford, and the 40 or so bilateral agreements we have with programs at other universities and colleges, we yet need to establish year-round opportunities for UGA students in Asia, Africa and both a German- and French-speaking locale. And, while it is not a foreign country, I am pleased that we have invested further in the semester in DC program which offers cultural, governmental and academic opportunities that cannot be matched anywhere else.

3) The undergraduate experience. The progress in this area is real. Since the release of the report of the task force on undergraduate education in 2005, we have implemented a number of the recommendations designed to strengthen the academic experience for undergraduate students at UGA.

The Student Learning Center continues to function as the academic hub of the campus. Nothing pleases me more than to walk through the SLC late in the evening and see the activity there. Students have taken to that facility with an enthusiasm that has exceeded our expectations, and the faculty who have the opportunity to teach there love it as well. The expansion of the Tate Center, now well under way, will add even more energy and activity to the central precinct while expanding the student affairs programs and offerings for all students.

The provost has focused on finding more resources for the libraries, which is an ongoing challenge given the increasing costs, in particular, of journals and online subscriptions for the kinds of materials that a top research faculty needs. A great library is the heart of a great university, and we must continue to find the resources to keep the UGA Libraries well-funded and functioning in support of the academic mission.

This university is academically stronger than it has ever been. But we yet have work to do to deliver on some of our promises. We need more full-time, tenure-track faculty teaching in freshman- and

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sophomore-level classes. We need more senior faculty teaching undergraduates. We need more offerings in the Honors College and Freshman Seminars. We need more endowed faculty support.

More faculty support means better served students – the two cannot be separated. While in 10 years we have gone from 152 endowed faculty positions to 207 endowed positions, there are clearly scores – no, hundreds – of faculty who deserve similar support, and, by extension, thousands of students who deserve to benefit. There is simply no way around it – that will take mountains of cash.

4) Enhanced research. Perhaps the slight increase in the National Science Foundation FY08 budget is a portent of things to come in federally funded research. I was very encouraged by the uptick in both the number of grants to UGA investigators and the total dollar value of grants; for several years previous, those numbers had been relatively flat. As they say, if you're not moving forward, you're falling behind.

A critical component of the research program at a top university is a strong graduate student population. In the short term, those students play an important role in assisting the faculty with their research agendas; in the long term, they will become the next generation of scholars, researchers and teachers in higher education.

It is quite simple: At a research university, the faculty must be aggressively seeking and acquiring grant dollars. They must do so not just as an exercise in funding, but because the state and the nation depend on the creativity and discovery that emanate from these places. It is an obligation, not an option.

As well as we are doing at the highest levels, we must be sure we are doing the basics in a first-rate manner – that we are recruiting, accepting and supporting the best students; that we are putting them in classes with well prepared and well supported teachers; that we are developing the new learning environment; and that we are engaged in research that is truly bold.

The focus, then, remains true:

- Access
- International education
- The undergraduate experience
- Enhanced research and graduate education

Those have been important building blocks of the strategic plan for the first decade of the 21st century, and as we begin to think about the next plan and the direction it will take, I hope that they will be equally important going forward.

Where will I be spending my time in the coming year? Through April, my focus will be on the Legislature and our priorities: faculty/staff salaries, support for the MCG/UGA Medical Initiative on the Navy School site and the Special Collections Library.

We have fallen a bit in the past several years in the SREB salary scale, and I have told the Chancellor, the Governor and the legislative leadership that there is no more important issue than improving what we are able to pay the people who teach our students, conduct the research that improves the lives of Georgians and whose work, from the physical plant to accounting to administrative support, keeps this place running.

I am particularly concerned about the growing issue of salary compression for mid-career faculty and staff, and have engaged a number of people in a conversation about whether hiring additional faculty is preferable to increasing the salaries of those who are already on campus. It is a difficult decision.

Building support for UGA's role in meeting Georgia's need for additional physicians will be an important part of my conversations with legislators this session. There is virtually unanimous agreement about the need. I believe that the state has an unprecedented opportunity to use a ready-made facility as part of a strategy to improve the health of Georgians.

Finally, UGA has the responsibility for maintaining and making available three true treasures: the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library; the Walter J. Brown Media Archive and Peabody Awards Collection; and the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies. Unfortunately, we do not have the facilities to store these priceless

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collections in appropriate conditions nor the room to make them available to researchers, students and the public.

This \$45 million facility, one-third of which will be funded by private donations, will provide the technology and the space these collections deserve. The building will be sited in the Northwest Precinct near Hull Street and will be a critical component of UGA's research mission.

Helping Senior Vice President for External Affairs Tom Landrum guide the Archway to Excellence campaign to a successful conclusion at the end of June will also occupy much of my time. Nobody knows this university and its people better, or loves it more, than Tom.

Thanks to the support of our friends and supporters, as well as the very hard work of the development team, we surpassed the \$500 million goal last April, 14 months before the June 30, 2008 closing date. \$650 million is well within our reach – 30 percent above the original goal. It is worth noting, I believe, that there were those who said that the University of Georgia could not raise that much money at this time. Those people undersold the deep and abiding love that the people of this state have for this place.

In August, I plan to take some time off for rest and relaxation. After that I am looking forward to the fall semester, always a time of new energy and rejuvenation. We will welcome 5,000 or so freshmen to campus as part of the largest UGA enrollment ever.

No one does anything significant at this institution without significant help from others. I have been blessed with some real heroes in the past year, and I want to take this opportunity to recognize them.

The first is my wife, Mary Adams, who takes her role as First Lady of UGA seriously and freely gave more than 100 days and probably as many nights in support of this university. Much of her focus has been on the arts, but she is always agreeable to helping this university, and I thank her for that.

Next is Arnett Mace, who has served as my provost since 2003 and was dean of the Warnell School for 11 years before that.

I have worked with some really good provosts, but I've never worked with a better one. No one is more committed to or dedicated to this institution and what it aspires to be, and I consider Arnett not only a colleague and confidant, but also a friend.

Alan Darvill has led the Complex Carbohydrate Research Center to a place of prominence nationally in its field, burnishing the university's reputation in the process. Last year, he led the group that put together the successful biofuels grant application through Oak Ridge which will bring \$20 million to the research group that he leads. The promise of that research is staggering.

Lioba Moshi is continuing to direct the university's focus toward international study in Africa. We will explore this year the possibility of expanded programs in Tanzania and I hope to visit that country before the end of 2008.

Ralph Johnson has had his best year and has, in his own quiet way, led us through some significant physical plant challenges, the greatest of which has been the drought. Dexter Adams, who has primary responsibility for the landscaping and campus grounds, has done an equally superb job of keeping this campus as beautiful as it is while finding ways to reduce our water use in those areas.

Vice President for Student Affairs Rodney Bennett has led the effort to negotiate agreements with the Greek organizations on north Lumpkin Street, and he has handled that difficult task with style, dignity and aplomb. Thanks to his diligent work, those organizations will occupy newer, safer facilities along River Road and the university will have valuable space to meet pressing academic, research and service needs.

Finally, Kathy Pharr has become the go-to person for high-profile events and committees. In 2007 alone, she chaired the Carter Conference committee, the emergency preparedness committee I appointed in the wake of the Virginia Tech tragedy and co-chaired the water use task force with Lonnie Brown. I have promised her that I will not tap on her shoulder again, but I reserve the right to renege on that promise.

These are just a few examples of the extraordinary dedication and talent that are on display at the

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University of Georgia every day. Ultimately, all of us have a primary responsibility to our students and the parents and others who help pay the bills, for they deserve nothing less than a first-class educational experience. The expectations of our constituencies are clearly greater than they were even 10 years ago.

Ratings and rankings are simply a byproduct of consistently doing things right and doing the right things. Our support bases expect nothing less.

The worst thing we could do now is take the successes of 2007 for granted and assume that 2008 will be as good or better for the University of Georgia. We must remain diligent to new and better ways of carrying out our mission, or we will experience a fate similar to that of Applebee's.

Perhaps we can all find a time to sit down there or somewhere else to talk about being sure that we don't take our mission or our students for granted.

I don't know exactly what role each of you have played in making this the very good year that it was, but the reason we have been so successful is that each of you have played your roles and done so very well. I am still grateful to call each of you friends and colleagues and I look forward to several more years of working together with you.