

Athens Rotary Club

Holiday Inn · January 18, 2006

Good afternoon. It is always a pleasure to meet with you, and I look forward to this opportunity to talk about the University of Georgia and its relationship with its home community.

But before I talk about us, I want to talk about you. As you know, I am a life member of both the Rotary Club and the Kiwanis Club, so I know that service is what this club is about. Civic clubs prove that together, we can do more for our communities than we could alone, that our collective impact is far greater than our individual impact could be.

I know that every year you participate in the Day of Caring, that you support Habitat for Humanity, that you work for improved water quality, that you work with literacy projects, that you mentor students. The list goes on and on, and in the spirit of Rotary, you don't do those things for the credit or recognition, but simply because doing those things is part of being a member of a community.

When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, and Hurricane Rita followed shortly thereafter, this Rotary Club, like hundreds across the country, responded above and beyond what you had already committed to service projects for this year. So, while you did not do that for recognition but because, in the words of the Four-Way Test, it was "beneficial to all concerned," I want to thank you for what you do here in Athens-Clarke County and around the world. You set a good example for our students.

And I am proud to tell you that our students are following your example. We often talk about the academic quality of the UGA student body, and that is important. This year's freshman class was the best prepared in our history, with a 1241 SAT average and a 3.74 GPA. Over the past few years, UGA students have won some 30 national academic awards, such as the Rhodes, the Truman, the Goldwater, the Marshall and the Gates-Cambridge scholarships.

(As an aside, there are currently seven Rotary Scholars enrolled

at UGA this year, and I am told that some of them are with us today. International students such as these are an important part of what it means to be a truly great public university, and I am pleased to see them here today.)

The academic quality of our students is very strong. But they are not only great students; they are great people.

UGA students are eager to serve this community, and they, too, responded magnificently in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. They contributed financially to the Red Cross, the United Way and other relief agencies. They volunteered, doing the hard work of providing service to those in need. I was especially heartened when I learned that a number of UGA students have continued to volunteer at the Northeast Georgia Food Bank long after the initial period of hurricane relief efforts. That is the spirit of lifelong service that UGA students are developing.

Let me tell you about some of the ways in which UGA students are having a positive impact on this community. First is Volunteer UGA, a unit of the Student Affairs office which manages 10 community service programs.

Here are some of the statistics that tell the story of Volunteer UGA:

- In response to Hurricane Katrina, UGA students quickly recognized that a consolidated effort would be more effective than a variety of individual efforts. Working with the Student Government Association, they developed a plan for "Three Weeks of Relief," a campus-wide fundraising project. They purchased 10,000 T-shirts to sell, with proceeds going to the Red Cross; during the three-week period, 8,300 T-shirts were purchased and more than \$14,000 in donations was collected.
- Subsequent T-shirt sales and donations brought the total Red Cross donation from this effort to almost \$73,000.
- Alternative Spring Break, which organizes service-related

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spring break trips for UGA students, had 231 applications for the 2006 break, accepted 161 and is planning 13 trips for later this spring.

- More than 90 UGA students are Big Brothers or Big Sisters for Athens children aged 6-11.
- First Book, a program which gives books to children in low-income families, awarded more than 2,500 books last semester and collected more than 1,200 through a campus book drive. (I know that this Rotary Club also participates in this program, and that you provide dictionaries for all Clarke County third-graders each year.)
- In 2005, Relay for Life raised more than \$220,000 for cancer research.
- Students Helping Teachers has more than 30 volunteers working in 10 Clarke County schools, and there are more than 50 UGA students working with young people at seven different tutoring sites.

UGA's students are actively involved in the community in other ways as well. Of the 710 people in the Clarke County Mentor Program, 335, or almost half, are UGA students.

Last summer, we created the Office of Service Learning to try to foster an integration between the desire of our students to serve and the academic life of the university. Service learning is a method by which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community. In short, they put what they are learning to work for the benefit of the community and to improve the academic experience.

At present, there are some 100 courses at UGA with a service learning focus.

And you may not know that every Greek organization on

campus has a community service project or philanthropy.

I truly believe that UGA students understand that the opportunities they have bring with them an obligation to serve, and I am very proud of them for what they are doing in this community.

I also want to take this opportunity to tout UGA's role in the recently announced Partners for a Prosperous Athens. As a land grant university, we are specifically charged with applying the vast resources of the faculty and staff to the needs of society, and by participating in this program – which you are scheduled to learn more about next week, I understand – we will be doing just that.

This program grew out of a year-long community discussion involving all of the parties about how best to address this issue, which impacts all of us. This community cannot be all that we want it to be if some of its citizens are relegated, generation after generation, to a life of poverty.

I know that Steve Jones and Red Petrovs, who are leading that group, are here today and I want to thank them for their commitment. I am reminded of the Teddy Roosevelt quote: "It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena."

These two gentlemen and the five conveners – Heidi Davison, Lewis Holloway, Larry McKinney, Tim Johnson and Pat Allen – have stepped into the arena and are doing something about it.

Let me also publicly thank Art Dunning, not only for his role in UGA's participation in Partners for a Prosperous Athens, but his leadership in positioning the Public Service and Outreach function at UGA for effectiveness in the 21st century.

There is an ongoing, national debate about what it means to be a land grant university in this century, given the historical roles

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that those institutions have played and the dramatic changes in American society over the past few decades, and Art Dunning is at the forefront of that debate.

I would also like to talk with you today about the economic impact of the University of Georgia. You may have read last week that the University System of Georgia, which comprises 35 institutions and of which UGA is the flagship, have a combined economic impact of \$23 billion on Georgia's economy and are responsible for creating more than 130,000 jobs.

In a language I think many of you will understand, that is a 15 to 1 return on the state's \$1.6 billion higher education appropriation for fiscal year 2004.

Locally, the University of Georgia had a \$2.05 billion impact on the Athens regional economy, and was directly responsible for 22,458 jobs both on and off campus. Student spending alone totals almost \$350 million annually.

Of the \$1.3 billion UGA budget for this fiscal year, approximately \$700 million goes to payroll and benefits, the vast majority of which stays in the Athens region. According to the latest report I have seen, of our 9,000 or so total employees, 4,999 live in Clarke County, 1,148 live in Oconee County, 526 live in Madison County, and about 450 live in Jackson and Barrow counties combined. Those people do a lot of shopping and dining and spending in Athens.

And I'm going to steal a tidbit from Pat Allen's speech: Many of our faculty and staff will receive a two percent pay increase this month, which represents an additional \$9 million in new money. Given that the average industrial wage in Athens is \$37,000, this increase is the equivalent of a new industry locating here and hiring 243 people at that wage.

The Association of University Technology Managers recently ranked UGA 28th among all U.S. universities in terms of

intellectual property licensing income for 2004, with \$28.4 million, ahead of institutions like Johns Hopkins University, the University of Virginia, the University of Texas at Austin and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This revenue, of course, comes from the commercialization of technologies, processes and products developed by our researchers, and is a direct economic benefit of having a comprehensive research university in the neighborhood.

And the good news is that intellectual property revenue is up again this year.

But the true value of the relationship between the University of Georgia and Athens-Clarke County is much, much greater than can be expressed in dollars alone. We share a long history – this year Athens will celebrate its bicentennial, and we marked the bicentennial of the first UGA graduation ceremony last year.

We have grown together. I love the old maps showing North Campus with two or three buildings close to Broad Street, and across the street the proposed layout for downtown Athens. I have said here before that I prefer to think of the Broad Street interface not as a boundary, but as a place where Athens and the University embrace all that the other has to offer.

Having UGA in its service area places particular requirements on Athens-Clarke County that other similar-sized municipalities don't have to address, and I want to thank the Police Department and the Fire Department in particular for the heroic manner in which they carry out their duties. The fire at the Main Library in the summer of 2003 was a perfect example. The quick response of the fire department minimized what could easily have been a total loss.

Six times a year, the police department is called to what is truly extra-ordinary duty when 100,000 of our closest friends come to town for a football game. We could not get those people in or out safely without their help.

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I think that Police Chief Jack Lumpkin and Fire Chief George Iby are here today. Please join me in thanking them for all that they and their departments do for our community.

We try to reciprocate. Several years ago, we leased the land for Fire Station #3, on Barnett Shoals Road, to Athens-Clarke County for a dollar per year; by comparison, the city paid \$320,000 for property for the new station on Oglethorpe Avenue. The Barnett Shoals Station improves the response time, should we need it, to our South and East Campus facilities, which range from highly technical science labs to residence halls to the Ramsey Center, and we rest easy knowing that the fire department is nearby.

We have worked together on hazardous materials training and response, and the UGA Police Department is the designated bomb response unit for all of Northeast Georgia.

I could go on and on, but I won't. The message I want to leave with you, though, is this: The relationship between Athens-Clarke County and the University of Georgia is both broader and deeper than many people recognize. We have far more in common than we do things about which we disagree, and we are continuing to work together on those issues of mutual concern and opportunity.