State of the University Address
Faculty and Staff Institute
North Carolina A&T State University
Harrison Auditorium
August 10, 2012
10 a.m.

Good morning. It is my pleasure to welcome you for the start of the 2012-13 academic year and I trust that each of you has taken the time to get away to your favorite places to rest and recuperate.

I want to extend a very warm welcome to all of the new members of our Aggie family – faculty, staff, and administrators - and indicate how pleased we are that you have decided to join us at this exciting juncture in the life of North Carolina A&T. Again, welcome!

Also joining us today are:

- Members of the Board of Trustees
- My wife Davida Martin; and
- Other Dignitaries

Thank you for being with us this morning as well.
This past academic year was a very successful one for the University despite the significant reductions in our state appropriations that we had to absorb at the beginning of the year.

I appreciate the remarkable contributions of faculty, staff, and administrators throughout the year – resulting in outstanding achievements for the university. I am especially pleased that such incredible efforts are yielding positive trends in such important areas as increased enrollment, student success, alumni giving, community engagement, etc.

When I arrived at North Carolina A&T State University in June of 2009, three factors shaped my thinking about the possibilities for the future of this institution. During those early months, I spent significant time and effort engaging the Board of Trustees, senior administrators, faculty, and staff; meetings with student groups on campus and alumni groups throughout North Carolina and regional states; to talk about the future of our University.

I had discussions with Triad business leaders who shared their perspectives about the institution and the needs of this community, region and this state.
Finally, during that window of time, we were also involved in System-wide discussions about the important work of the UNC Tomorrow Commission whose report summarized some of the most critical needs of North Carolina – with the expectation that each institution would respond to these needs within the framework of its mission.

As most of you should recall, the outcomes of this initiative were designed to guide and shape future priorities, resource allocations, current and future programmatic needs, and campus missions of the 17 constituent institutions and affiliated entities of the University of North Carolina System. The UNC Tomorrow Report still influences decisions and policies of the Board of Governors today.

Based on these three factors, I have shared often that:

- North Carolina A&T State University is an institution with a remarkable history and one of great traditions;

- The University’s alumni continue to make outstanding contributions to the world in a broad range of areas, including business and industry, government, education and politics; and as entrepreneurs, entertainers, sports figures, etc.;

- The University’s alumni are remarkably loyal, supportive, and passionate about the Institution – as reflected in approximately 20% more alumni contributing financially to the university this past year over the previous year, yielding 240%
more in funds contributed by alumni. Aggie Pride is very real and is shared by alumni all over the world when affectionately greeting one another;

- The University’s faculty and staff are making great contributions in the areas of teaching, research, and outreach – you are a resilient group with great resolve and commitment to building a brighter future for our Institution – despite having not received a pay raise in five years;

- The University’s broad array of academic programs are uniquely aligned with the core cluster areas of need for this Region and State – creating incredible opportunities for the Institution;

- This Community believes in this institution. All with whom I have met have expressed strong interest in our University continuing to step forward to be a much more engaged player as an important resource to assist with the efforts to strengthen the economic competitiveness of the Triad region and beyond.

I shared this with you and asked if we were going to sit idly by and allow “good enough” to be well....”good enough”, or if we were going to elect to compete more successfully with our peers.

You agreed to compete! And, I shared with you then that such a commitment would require that we make tough decisions, prioritize more critically, improve our processes,
think more boldly and positively, and act more responsibly. We have and must continue to:

- Plan more strategically

- Create more effective processes for aligning and allocating our resources

- Hold ourselves more accountable by creating clearer outcomes with appropriate benchmarks to assess our progress against our competitive peers

- Diversify and expand our resource base to provide those additional investments essential for creating excellence within the institution.

As a result, we drafted and widely disseminated in August 2011 our university’s strategic plan, *A&T Preeminence 2020*. Additionally, we established competitive and broad based benchmarks and a scorecard for measuring and disseminating progress toward goals to our constituents. We have taken aggressive steps during this first year of implementation of the *Plan*.

Listen to some of the significant achievements we accomplished during the past year:

- Faculty, staff, and students had record achievements this past year; including recognition by professional societies for contributions to the society and the profession; outstanding contributions in the areas of teaching, research, and
scholarship; outreach and engagement to the Region; success in regional, national, and international competitions; etc.

- The PhD in Nanoengineering was approved for implementation at the Board of Governors’ meeting September 2011 – enrolled approximately 12 PhD students during its first year.

- Grand opening of several new facilities for the University; including: the Academic Classroom Building, the JSNN Educational and Research Facility at Gateway University Research Park South, and the Aggie Stadium Skybox.

- New Institutional Peers approved by the BOG in October 2011 – more competitive and aligned with University’s Carnegie Classification.

- The BOG approved for planning the following PhD programs – Rehabilitation Counseling and Education; Computer Science; and Social Work (jointly with UNCG).

- Seven new deans joined us in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering, the Schools of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Education, Nursing and Graduate Studies, and Library Services.

- Administrators, Faculty, and Staff planned three significant events, among other activities, during the past year worth nothing:
  
  o Installation for President Tom Ross – October 2011
  
  o Urban Education Institute hosted by the School of Education – March 2012
- Spring Commencement – First Lady Michelle Obama as speaker – May 2012.

- Developed a new University Master Plan. The plan encompasses the tenants of the NCA&T Preeminence 2020, building renovation, new construction and expansion of university-owned and adjacent properties.

- Received the largest single planned gift in North Carolina A&T State University history - $1 million 1984 alumni and Board of Trustee member, Patricia Miller Zollar.

- Successfully created a Faculty/Staff Campaign that yielded 59% increase in faculty and staff contributing to the Annual Fund over the previous year; 96% increase in funds contributed – thank you.

- Launched the university’s new website on February 27, 2012 with over 2,000 pages of content. Phase I is completed and plans for Phase II strategies are underway.

- Chartered Tau Sigma National Honor Society that recognizes and promotes academic excellence and involvement of our transfer students: 98 inaugural members were inducted into the Society.

- Completed the Residential Wireless project providing wireless connectivity to our on-campus student population.
• Successfully initiated new Game-zone at home football games – extended the perimeter of the stadium to increase the financial support received from football patrons.

• Successfully completed first year of operation of the new Aggie Athletics Foundation.

• University’s Middle College was named a School of Excellence by the State of North Carolina – 100% graduation rate; 100% of graduates going on to 4-year colleges and universities; graduates earned approximately $1.0 million in scholarships. Special note of appreciation to Mr. Eric Hines, our principal, and Dean Harvey.

• University’s STEM Early College, in partnership with the Guilford County School System, officially opened on Wednesday August 7, 2012 in Smith Hall. I would like to extend a special note of appreciation to Dr. Wanda Lester, Dr. Daphne Rainey, Stacy Alston (our principal) and all others who helped to make this important new partnership with GCS happen.

• On Monday, August 13th, we will host the grand opening for a new professional clinic, The Behavioral Health Center; which has been developed and will be operated by faculty and students in the Department of Human Development and Services in the School of Education. The clinic will provide behavioral health care services to the general public. Dr. Maya Angelou will be keynote speaker at the event.
A special note of recognition to Dr. Miriam Wagner and faculty in her department who conceived the idea, planned, and will operate the clinic.

And the list goes on.

(Pause - encourage audience to give themselves a round of applause for a job well done.)

As you can see, we are traveling the road to preeminence - but we still have much work to do. We are aware of the impediments that continue to exist and we are going to address them.

We continue to build confidence among our constituents as a responsive and engaged graduate and research institution. We must continue to compete by driving a culture of high expectations and excellence across our Institution.

We will continue to follow the roadmap for our future as outlined in our strategic plan, A&T Preeminence 2020.

We must establish successful initiatives to continue to retain, and recruit future, outstanding administrators, faculty, and staff to our University who are expected to help
us continue to expand our community of outstanding scholars who join us in transitioning the University to greater levels of success.

We must continue to build excellence in all of our academic programs (undergraduate and graduate) and administrative areas through an ongoing systematic process of assessment of these areas, investing in those that continue to be relevant to our mission; and planning for new programs in emerging areas of opportunity that are more critical to our future success.

We must also be more intentional and innovative in the ways in which we engage our students inside and outside of the classroom, so that we stimulate their intellectual growth, curiosity, and professional development; and, so that we expose them to the endless possibilities for their future, and excite them to achieve beyond their imagination.

We must enhance our collaborations by building on our existing successful partnerships with other organizations. We have made a commitment to position the university to compete with our local, state, national and global counterparts. We pledged to make the tough decisions, plan effectively, set and meet benchmarks and to close gaps in achievement between our students and their counterparts at other colleges and universities.
Provost Alexander is currently finalizing a plan for reorganization of the Office of the Provost defined to enhance the engagement of the deans and other academic leaders to strengthen academic program planning and assessment; oversee increased expectations of accrediting agencies and UNC System performance requirements; drive student success; and more effectively manage resource allocations. The plan will be completed soon and communicated to the entire university community.

Given the current tough economy we continue to experience, like all other state-funded entities, we are going to have to tighten our belts and do more with less. This will require that we make some tough resource allocation decisions. I have challenged Vice Chancellors Pompey and McAbee, working with Provost Alexander and me, to analyze our budgeted resources, including our money, our positions, and our space — and propose strategies to effectively realign our resources to ensure that we are meeting our most pressing and critical needs. As we get deeper into these discussions, we must also broaden our strategies to diversify our resources. We will no longer be able to depend so significantly on state appropriations and tuition revenues to fund our university in the future.

This year, we will also explore reorganization of the Division of University Advancement and focus our efforts on friend-raising and fund-raising. We will
conduct a feasibility study to assess our readiness for a capital campaign in the near future.

We will also enhance our alumni relations to ensure we keep the lines of communication open to one of our most important core constituencies – our alumni. I recently appointed an Assessment Committee of National Alumni Association Board members; BOT, BOV, and AAF Board members; and staff to review the current University Alumni Relations function and the current governance structure of the National Alumni Association; explore best practices in these areas; and provide a report that summarizes their findings and recommendations. An outstanding consultant was identified to lead this effort. A report is expected from the Committee soon.

We are also developing plans to conduct a market research and a brand assessment to help refine our relevance in the marketplace so that we can provide a clear, consistent message about our accomplishments in the areas of teaching, research, and innovation; success of our graduates; outreach, engagement, and economic impact; etc. In the meantime, we will guard our brand elements by requiring University Relations’ approval on all university publications and licensed apparel. It is important to note that we must ensure that all written documents and publications that go out on behalf of the institution create the desired first impression of the university.
These are our most fundamental tools of recruitment and our university-wide priority should always be that each of us does our part to help capture a competitive market share of well-prepared students, both locally and nationally, that we are successful in recruiting to the University.

Another campus-wide initiative is to make the transition to become a paperless campus. Not only does this make environmental sense, it also makes for more efficient use of our administrative staff and time. Imagine not having to walk paperwork across campus to get signatures and to make sure it reaches its appropriate destination. Vice Chancellors Pompey, Ellis, Pierce, Burke, and McAbee are all working together to drive this effort. They will call upon faculty and staff for your input on these discussions as well.

With your help, we will be able to do all of these things and more just as we have accomplished so many of the goals we set during last year.

Let me talk a few minutes about something I think all of you have questions about and that is salary increase funds approved by the Legislature during the last session. Per the FY’ 2012-2013 Salary Administration Guidelines, the highlights are as follows:

1. The FY’ 2012-2013 budget bill provides an across-the-board Legislative Salary Increase of 1.2%, effective July 1, 2012 for employees who are subject to the State Personnel Act (SPA)
The salaries in effect June 30, 2012, of all full-time and part-time permanent SPA employees (including probationary) shall be impacted; with increases reflected in August 31st payroll checks, retroactive to July 1st.

The increase does not apply to employees separated from State service prior to July 1, 2012, or to employees hired effective July 1, 2012, or later.

2. The FY’ 2012-2013 budget bill also provides for a 1.2% salary increase for those employees exempt from the State Personnel Act (EPA) effective July 1st, with increases reflected in September 30th payroll checks.

3. Salary Administration Guidelines will be presented to the Board of Governors for review and approval at its August 10th meeting and forwarded to each campus shortly thereafter.

Through a special provision, the Legislature also awarded a one-time additional five (5) days (40 hours) of special vacation leave effective July 1st for all full-time and part-time permanent employees of the State (both EPA and SPA). This special leave has to be used between July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013; otherwise it shall expire.

The University is committed to a competitive compensation strategy in support of our strategic objective of recruitment and retention of high potential faculty and staff. The BOG Salary Administration Guidelines may permit each institution to identify an additional pool of funds; e.g., from tuition revenue, to support merit-based salary adjustments for EPA employees only. We will finalize a decision and details once we receive the BOG Guidelines.

Human Resources will provide campus-based guidelines to University Administrators for administrating salary increases and for administering the special leave in a consistent, compliant manner during the week of August 13th.
In addition to the areas of focus for this year that I have already summarized, the Cabinet and I developed during our retreat in July and subsequently discussed with the Board of Trustees during their retreat in early August, a set of strategic priorities for 2012-2013 that are aligned with A&T Preeminence 2020’s implementation during year 2. These priorities will include a more intense focus on the following:

I. Enrollment Management

1. Recruitment of Talented Undergraduate Students
2. Recruitment of Talented Graduate Students
3. Enhance Undergraduate Student Success - Retention of Students from First to Second Year
4. Enhancing Graduate Student Success
5. Academic Support for Student Athletes

II. Enhancing Graduate Education

Our focus will be in three areas: proposed new graduate programs; enhancing graduate student success; and assessment of graduate programs.

1. Proposed New Graduate Programs
   a. PhD in Rehabilitation Counseling
   b. Masters in Business Administration
   c. PhD in Computer Science

2. Enhancing Graduate Student Success
   As indicated earlier, we must do more to improve funding support for graduate students; enhance academic advisement; and improve the connection of our
graduate students with the University through improved services, programs, and activities. To assist with this process, the Graduate Student Association was recently revived on our campus and new student leadership elected to represent the interests and concerns of graduate students.

3. Assessment of Graduate Programs
The assessment will focus on the following areas:
   a. Curriculum
      ▪ Total credits required for the degree, awarding of transfer and experiential credits, consortium agreements, faculty credentials, integration of research and/or professional practice, accuracy of recruitment materials
   b. Learning Outcomes
      ▪ Ongoing assessment in response to SACS Standard on Institutional Effectiveness 3.3.1.1
      ▪ Measure student learning outcomes, evaluate data and take action to improve outcomes, determine efficacy of improvements
   c. Quality/Productivity
      ▪ Data sent to Deans in June 2012:
        o Enrollment and degrees awarded
        o Earned versus attempted hours
        o Time to Degree Completion
        o GPA
        o Indebtedness
        o Assistantships and Fellowships awarded
        o Publications
        o Research Awards; and
        o Expenditures

The process will be overseen by the Dean of the Graduate School, working very closely with the Provost and the Deans of the respective schools and colleges.
Academic programs will be asked to conduct a self-evaluation; responding such questions as:

- How well is the program achieving its objectives?
- What improvements/changes should be made in the program?
- What resources will be needed?

The Dean of the Graduate School will submit report to Provost based on an approved schedule during this academic year.

As indicated, these strategic priorities are included in the *University’s Priorities for 2012-13* that have been approved by Cabinet, which align with *A&T Preeminence 2020*. The full set of priorities will be posted to the university’s website very shortly.

This year, we are looking to build on the foundation of last year’s successes and accomplishments. We have much work to do. Central to our priorities this year is the focus on enhancing the success of our students.

Not enough of us believe in our students’ ability to succeed. As a community of scholars, we must demand the very best from our students by giving our very best to their preparation. Our students look to us to be a guide in their transition to be the graduates and professionals they wish to become. We must take a more hands on approach and demand excellence of our students, our colleagues, and ourselves.
I am confident this year will bring additional enhancements to our university for the better.

Let’s have an outstanding year.

Again, welcome to all of our new faculty and staff; we look forward to meeting each of you in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you.