

Convocation: Introductory Comments - East Georgia State College
Thursday, September 26, 2013 11am
Goal time: 5 minutes

Good morning,

Thank you Dr. Goodman, and thank you to all of the members of the planning committee who have worked so hard to make this event possible.

This assembly, our academic convocation, sets the academic theme and tone for the coming year. That theme is “educating, graduating and serving communities.” Students, that tone is our confidence that you will do that – graduate and give back to your community --- and our commitment to do everything possible to make that happen.

Today, many of us gather in the auditorium of the Luck Flanders Gambrell Center on the Swainsboro campus. This auditorium has been the location of so many special events for the College, including graduations and Vision Series lectures by notable individuals such as Maya Angelou. **The tradition continues today.** We are honored by the presence of University System of Georgia Chancellor Hank Huckaby, his wife, Amy, and our keynote speaker, Michael Thurmond.

In addition to Swainsboro, students, faculty and staff join us today by webcast from classrooms on our campuses in Statesboro and Augusta. All three locations are one academic and intellectual community.

I hope that those of you with us in Swainsboro will stop in the hallway at the back of this auditorium as you leave and enjoy the new mural. You will recognize faces from our own academic community as well as faces of the gifted performers and lecturers who have visited in the past. You will see photos of visits from President Jimmy Carter, Andrew Young, and so many others.

Today’s gathering reinstitutes an extremely important tradition of the College – the annual academic convocation. All over the county, colleges and universities bring the academic community together at the beginning of fall semester to welcome new members of the community and establish a theme for the year. Students, this year our academic theme – **Educating, Graduating and Serving Your Community – focuses on the importance of your own graduation from East Georgia State College followed by a lifetime of service to your community. You need to do this for your own economic success and happiness and the state of Georgia needs you to do this** in order to maintain and improve its economic and social climate.

This year’s academic convocation will not be the last. This is an important event and will grow and continue in the future.

Chancellor Huckaby is uniquely suited to kick off this event. Students, the Chancellor's academic experience began much like your own. He grew up in Georgia and earned his first college degree --- an associates degree in political science --- from Young Harris College. This then led him, much as we hope an associates degree from East Georgia will lead you, to a bachelors degree and a masters degree from Georgia State University followed by more graduate studies at the University of Georgia. In other words, his associate's degree led him to a lifetime of commitment to education.

It also led the Chancellor to a lifetime of service and professional success. This includes teaching at colleges and universities, serving at the top level in state government administration --- the Chancellor served as director of Georgia's Office of Planning and Budget --- elected office -- the Chancellor served in the Georgia House of Representatives -- and, it ultimately led to his appointment as Chancellor of the University System of Georgia. I had the personal opportunity to work at the University of Georgia when the Chancellor was UGA's senior vice president for finance and administration and can attest personally to extremely high level of respect which students, faculty and staff have for him at UGA.

Before I invite the Chancellor to come to the podium, what is most important is to emphasize the common thread running through these positions and accomplishments. That is the fact that the Chancellor exemplifies the **highest level of integrity in all of his decisions**. Students, I hope and trust that you will emulate that integrity throughout your careers and will join me now in warmly welcoming Chancellor Huckaby to East Georgia State College.