Thank you so much, Debbie, for that wonderful introduction. And thank you again to the Campaign Leadership Team, Foundation Directors, and Community Partners for helping to ‘Create the Magic.’

First, let me say, happy April 15th or happy Income Tax Deadline Day. Since this is the last day to officially file, just in case you still need more time to get that completed and submitted, we will not keep you very long this afternoon (smile).

To begin, I want to welcome our guests to Clover Park Technical College – and to the Eighth Annual Scholarship Banquet. As you might know, the purpose of today’s Banquet is not only to celebrate our Scholarship Recipients - but honor the donors who made it all possible!

But before we do, there are some in the audience who need to be acknowledged:

Clover Park Technical College is governed by a five-member Board of Trustees. I see three (3) of them here. When I “call” your name, please stand and be recognized:

Lua Pritchard (Chair)
Mary Moss
Bob Lenigan

In addition to our wonderful Board of Trustees, we have a cadre of 359 amazing faculty and staff who are single-minded in their devotion towards student success. They make the magic happen!

- For those faculty/staff who are present, would you please stand and be recognized.
- For those volunteers who helped with the planning of this event, please stand.

Lastly (and perhaps most importantly), I want to thank our Culinary Arts students who expertly prepared lunch. They are under the faculty-leadership of Dean Massey and William Jolly. Let’s give them a round of applause.

As the new President, in fact, this very day begins my seventh month on the job. But I still feel the need to acknowledge the amazing efforts of my predecessor, Dr. John Walstrum. John did an outstanding job building a solid foundation for us to “take this institution to the next level.” And for this reason, I say that there’s never been a better time to be at Clover Park Technical College.

As I walk across the campus, I’m often stopped by faculty/staff/students who tell me about their renewed sense of excitement and enthusiasm. This is because our strategic direction is clear, more inclusive, driven by accountability, and based upon three (3) measurable institutional objectives:

(1) Increase Student Success and Educational Access.
(2) Being more Responsive to our local Community and Business & Industry.
(3) To become more Entrepreneurial.
This Strategic Direction will not only help Clover Park become a trendsetter in Pierce County and in Washington State — but it will propel us to become a ‘tour de force’ on the national educational landscape. We just opened a 55,000 square-foot Health Science Center and last month received State approval to offer a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Manufacturing Operations (Fall 2014).

But that’s not to say we don’t face challenges; this is where you come in. Of our 7,836 students:

- 60% Students needed Financial Aid in 2012-13.
- 63% Female Students (many single moms).
- Many grapple to find the funds for Classroom Tools and Technology.

Your contributions really do make a huge difference in helping to transform the lives of our students. My friends…student debt remains a very serious issue in America. Sometimes these students must make very difficult choices between buying a book or having food to eat; paying tuition or having someplace to live.

And this afternoon, we are blessed to showcase three (3) exceptional Student Speakers who represent the best of what Clover Park is really about. They want to share how this money and this opportunity to have a quality education has positively impacted their lives.

Before hearing from them; I’d like to tell you a little bit about these students:

Felicia Mowatt is a former Running Start student. This is a program that allows young people to take college courses for dual credit while they’re still in high school. Following some challenges, taking a few years off, Felicia is now back and enrolled in Accounting with a new sense of purpose.

Vanessa Blick knows the struggles of being a military wife. Recently returning to school, Vanessa is truly a student-scholar. She is currently enrolled in our Surgical Technology Program and is academically bright — being the president of our national honor society, Phi Theta Kappa.

Randy Holt is a wonderful person, a U.S. Army veteran, and single-father of two children. In addition to majoring in Computer Information Systems, Randy has been a leader in the Veterans Club and is currently an officer in our Student Government Association. Let’s start with Felicia…

Thank you.