

A Message from our President



My Fellow Conferees,

Welcome to Augusta, Georgia, the city so nice, we came here twice! This year, our 56th annual conference theme is “*I Feel Good! Making it Through Tough Times.*” Never has a conference theme been truer. Personally, I am not a big fan of themes for meetings. I think the purpose of our annual conference, even our association, is to provide opportunities for networking, food, fellowship and learning. But the opportunity to build a conference around making it through tough times seemed prophetic. With budget cuts, economic slowdowns and furloughs, we must all work especially hard to make it through tough times. Coming together as a group of professionals dedicated to the needs of our students and our institutions will help us to do just that.

We are most grateful to the Marriott Hotel and Suites in Augusta for working with us last year when our numbers dropped due to the budget constraints of our member institutions, and allowing us to return this year with a smaller group.

Even though our numbers are small compared to previous years, we have a great program for this year’s conference. Clint Hobbs and his committee have worked hard to bring together our colleagues from all over the state who are ready and willing to share their knowledge and expertise. From our pre-conference workshops on *Beyond Banner 7* and *GACollege411 Control Center Basics to Providing Effective Customer Service* and *Higher Ed Moms Unite*, I believe there will be learning opportunities for everyone. GISEM will once again be offering additional opportunities for professional development. Under the leadership of Joe Head, GISEM will hold its third graduation for Registered Enrollment Professionals.

I also want to thank our vendors for being with us this year. Please take the time to visit with each of them and thank them for their support.

We are most fortunate to have Dr. Belle Wheelan, President of the Commission on Colleges for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, as our keynote speaker at our opening session. Her career spans 35 years and includes the roles of faculty member, chief student services officer, campus provost, college president and Secretary of Education. I am excited to hear her words of inspiration. Sunday is also Dr. Wheelan’s birthday, so please take the time to wish her many happy returns.

And finally, I want to thank three other groups. The first is your Executive Committee. **Clint Hobbs** (Young Harris College), **Angela Evans** (Kennesaw State University), **Mike Augustine** (Georgia College & State University), **Karen Shepard** (Valdosta State University), **Jennifer Brannon** (Middle Georgia College), **Scott Argo** (Augusta State University), **Nichole Kennedy** (Technical College System of Georgia), and **Brooka Hutcheson** (Heart of Georgia Technical College) for their tireless efforts to put this conference together when other associations have chosen to cancel events. I would also like to thank Melanie Mirande (Armstrong Atlantic State University) and Tara Askev (Columbus Technical College) for their efforts. They have played a huge part in the planning of the conference.

The second group is those of you who have given of your time and talent to put together presentations for the conference.

Most importantly, I want to thank **you**, our conference attendees, who recognize the benefits of professional development and of coming together as a profession. When you get home, be sure to thank your supervisor for giving you this important opportunity.

Thank you again for being at our 56th annual conference. Working together as professionals, I know we can leave this conference truly saying...“I Feel Good! [By] Making it Through Tough Times.”

Enjoy,
W. Mack Palmour
GACRAO President, 2008-2009