Class of 2020,

Summer orientation and fall semester are coming up and the Georgia College faculty and staff are eager to meet you! June and July orientation sessions will introduce you to exciting opportunities at Georgia’s Public Liberal Arts University. One special event for all new students is a summer reading assignment that will coincide with your first year convocation.

The Summer Reading Program provides you and your classmates an opportunity to share a common intellectual experience. As part of the First Year Convocation Experience, the Summer Reading Program is a campus tradition that provides new, incoming students with a common experience that can be shared with faculty, staff and returning student leaders. The program provides an intellectual kick-off to your first year as part the Georgia College community of life-long learners who value cultural diversity, critical thinking, and community engagement. In addition, the Summer Reading Program allows you to meet faculty and staff within your college and from across the university. We hope that discussions of this book will help awaken you to the joy of learning for its own sake, outside of the processes of grading that have become so important for most college students.

This year, Georgia College’s summer assignment for the class of 2020 is *This I Believe*. This compilation of essays features eighty contributions by individuals who share the core beliefs and values that guide their lives. The submissions express not only what they believe, but also how they arrived at those conclusions. It is a powerful representation of diverse perspectives that offers a glimpse into the power and complexity of the human experience.

A liberal arts education facilitates our exposure to multiple perspectives with as much compassion and objectivity as possible. The college setting provides a platform for our exposure to diverse perspectives in a way that encourages respectful understanding of differences and recognizes those differences as strengths. As you read *This I Believe*, please think about context, communication, commitment and culture.

You will receive a copy of the book during summer orientation and be asked to read it before you return in August. During GC’s Week of Welcome, the First Year Convocation will take place on August 12, 2016 at 9 a.m. in the Centennial Center. Immediately following the Convocation you will discuss the book with faculty and classmates within your college.

Be prepared for a new experience. First Year Convocation, a bookend to Commencement, is Georgia College’s official welcome for all first year students. As the one and only time all 1435 members of the class will convene, this celebrates the class of 2020’s entry into higher education and inducts them into the community of learners here at Georgia College. Our first-year students will not only realize their identity as a class but be reminded of the privilege they have to share their passion and purpose and in making where they live, work and play a better place as a member of the Georgia College community.

Welcome to Georgia College!

Sincerely,

Costas Spirou, Ph.D.
Interim Provost