



A Report on the **Presidential Commissions** **2020-2021**

Prepared by:
The Office of Social Equity
Amy Salsgiver, M.A.



CLARION
UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON **DISABILITIES**

Co-Chair: Lynne Fleisher

Co-Chair: Erin Lewis

Members:

Amy Love, Christina Hearst, Stephen Gendler, MaryPat McCarthy, Young-Gyoung Kim, Juanice Vega, Jennifer May, Kristina Dworek, G. Chad Thomas, Trobe Barnitz, Melanie Lahr, James Maccaferri and Shayne White

Student Representative - Sonya Eckert

Community Members - Lynn Smith, Jeanne Drayer

Activities

30th ANNIVERSARY



The commission partnered with Disability Support Services to sponsor an Oct. 14 Zoom presentation, “Celebrating the 30-Year Anniversary of the ADA-Americans with Disabilities Act.” More than 130 participants joined to hear guest speaker Shona Eakin from Voices for Independence in Erie.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

During the spring 2021 semester, the commission highlighted mental health resources during an April 21 panel discussion held via Zoom.

Facilitated by Dr. Mark Lepore, professor of rehabilitation sciences, the panel included: Ron Radaker, director, Disability Support Services; Tom Crissman, student support advocate, Center for Wellness; David Delvaux, director, Clarion Psychiatric Center; and Sonny Eckert, student advocate.

The Presidential Commission on Disabilities is excited to serve students, staff and faculty through new programs in fall 2021 and spring 2022. The commission plans to work with integration partners Edinboro and Cal U to present an autism awareness program and seeks suggestions for a speaker.



PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Co-Chair: Rachel Newbury
Co-Chair: Paul Klenowski

Treasurer: Ronald Radaker
Secretary: Meredith Karg

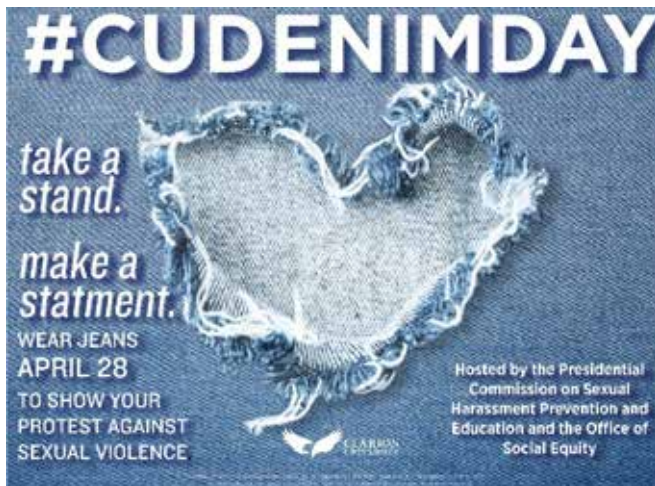
Members:

Jennifer Barch, Natasha Dias, Jennifer Graham, Jason Hendershot, Tina Horner, Andrew Keth, Cristin Ketley, Jamie Koshak, Jim McGee, Ewing Moussa, Corey Negley, Kate Overmoyer, Kelly Ryan

Activities

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

The commission co-sponsored a virtual Take Back the Night event Oct. 21. The event featured speakers from Pennsylvania Commission for Women and Clarion County SAFE, Inc., and concluded with a virtual candlelight vigil.



DENIM DAY

The annual Peace Over Violence Denim Day campaign was held online for the second year on April 28. Over the past 20 years, Denim Day has become a symbol of protest against destructive attitudes about sexual harassment, abuse, assault and rape.

Faculty and staff were encouraged to wear denim in support of victims of sexual harassment and assault, and share photos of themselves with the Office of Social Equity and on social media with the hashtag #CUDenimDay.

DR. KEITH BELL

The commission welcomed Dr. Keith Bell, director of West Liberty University's undergraduate criminal justice and graduate criminology programs, as keynote speaker for an April 14 program about Sexual Assault and Harassment on College Campuses. Bell's talk focused on recognizing signs of campus sexual assault to provide early intervention and support for victims. The commission hopes to work with Bell on additional training opportunities in the future.



PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN

Co-Chair: Carol Brennan Caplan
Co-Chair: Kaersten Colvin-Woodruff

Secretary: Jamie Phillips
Treasurer: Cate Stiller

Members:

Jane Walsh, Jeffery Diamond, Naomi O'Neil, YooJin Ha, Sandra Trejos, Jamie Phillips, Kaersten Colvin-Woodruff, Cate Stiller, Laurie Bladen, Laurie Pierce, Jeffery Diamond, Briana Steele, Maria Crespo, Janet Knepper, Carol Brennan Caplan, Jin Qu, Cahndice Matthews, Renae Shawgo

2020 Newly Appointed Members:

Alawya Alawami, Kristina Brzoza-Lewis, Jessica Crespo Dworsky, Natasha Dias, Lacey Fulton, Emily Meyer-Stewart

Activities

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The Presidential Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW) hosted a Zoom event to celebrate International Women's Day on Monday, March 8, 2021. Ten members of the PCSW highlighted the accomplishments of women in various fields. The presentation began with a brief history of the positive impact that women have had over the years. The presentation then focused on specific fields including STEM, economics, athletics, technology and more. This event was well attended and will likely be offered again next year. The PCSW is grateful to all members of the Clarion University community who took their time to attend this event.



WOMEN'S HISTORY DAY BIOGRAPHIES

For many years in March, the PCSW has celebrated women by sharing biographies of both local and international women. This year, the biographies written by members of the PCSW were converted into short videos that are now available on Clarion University's YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/ClarionUniversity1/videos>.

Diane
Roberts



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsIXVwyDIwY>

Reba
Whittle



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ji3SLe-VHsM>

Jane
Addams



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4iKTK-jCfc>

Carla
Hayden



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pS8OnvmBLA>

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON **LGBT+ CONCERNS**

Co-Chair: Ronald Radaker
Co-Chair: Corey Negley

Secretary: Jessica Thomas
Treasurer: TBA

Members:

Scott Courtney, Melissa Brydon, Ellen Foster, Shawn Hoke, Jana Ashley, Mark Lepore, William Naugle, Elizabeth Pelesko, Ronald Radaker, Kurt Regester, Todd Spaulding, Jessica Thomas and Peggy Apple

Activities

MISSION

The mission of the Presidential Commission on LGBT Concerns is to ensure and strengthen a visible, safe, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming community for students and employees of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions at Clarion University through education, advocacy, assessment, community engagement, and activism.



The academic year was an interesting one with the COVID-19 pandemic. All commission meetings were held over Zoom. Even though we were not able to meet in person, the commission was still able to get some work done to promote diversity, equity and inclusion for our campus community. The commission was able to increase visibility and provide education and engagement during the academic year.



During the 2020-21 academic year the commission participated in the following benchmarks:

- Established a D2L site, LGBT+ and Allies, to promote communication among our students and colleagues.
- Increased visibility through the redesign of a new Safe Zone logo, which was launched during the fall 2020 semester.
- Reviewed and provided insight to the updated Preferred Names Policy.
- Renewed the Campus Pride membership to promote visibility and the commission's commitment to diversity.
- Held the fifth Annual Lavender Graduation Ceremony via Zoom, with our very own Coach Jana Ashley providing the keynote address. We had 13 graduating seniors receive their honors cords and pin.



PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON RACIAL EQUITY

Co-Chair: Rachel Newbury
Co-Chair: Jeffrey Tienes

Treasurer: Nripendra Singh
Secretary: Isaac Leonard

Members:

Vasudeva Rao Aravind, Helen Baker, Leah Chambers, Kaersten Colvin-Woodruff, Joseph Croskey, Phillip Frese, Stephen Gendler, Hope Lineman, Sharon Montgomery, Cahndice Matthews, Ewing Moussa, Jim McGee, Rich Lane, Uraina Pack, Ron Radaker, Amy Shannonhouse, Marcy Trombetta, Jane Schuchert Walsh, Shintrika Weibel

Activities

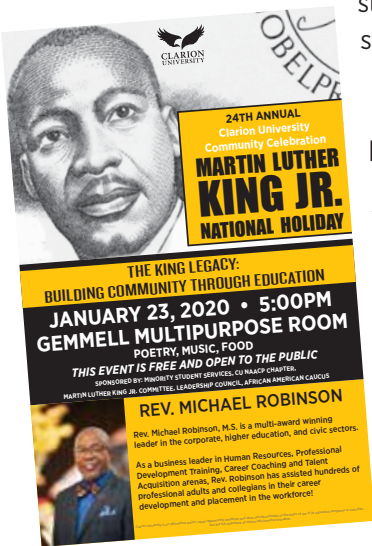
Presidential Commission on Racial Equity has been meeting about once a month during the 2020-2021 academic year to discuss racial equity concerns and develop policies and strategies at the university level to promote an inclusive environment at Clarion University.

21-DAY RACIAL EQUITY CHALLENGE

In the fall, the commission organized a 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge from the Michigan League of Public Policy (found [here](#)). The challenge saw participation from over 40 members of faculty and staff during September, engaging via the website or through daily emails about the topics covered on the website. At the conclusion of the challenge, participants gathered for a Zoom discussion about racial equity and how the material within the challenge could best serve Clarion. We discussed how this challenge could provide a jumping off point for larger campus discussions, trainings and workshops. As a result of the response to this challenge, the Commission on Racial Equity formed a sub-committee on training to explore future options.

CONSIDERING RACE

The Presidential Commission on Racial Equity hosted “Clarion Conversations: Considering Race,” which was postponed last year due to the pandemic. The grant-funded event featured four workshops (three for students, one for faculty) held April 14 and 15. Facilitated by Dr. Kathleen Gray and Dr. Ronald Gray, “Making Space: Building Inclusive Community on Campus and Beyond” featured discussions that explored how race and racism shape our lives and impact our communities. Participants – 260 students and 40 faculty – learned strategies for navigating difficult conversations about race and strengthened the skills needed to create a more inclusive campus community.



NOT JUST A GAME: RACE, POWER AND AMERICAN SPORTS

As part of “Clarion Conversations: Considering Race,” the Commission co-sponsored two viewings of the film “Not Just a Game: Race, Power, and American Sports.” In the film, cultural historian David Zirin is interviewed by Sut Jhally to examine the ways sports culture has worked to both reproduce and challenge the wider culture’s dominant ideas about race and racial difference. Participants engaged in a fruitful discussion about race and sports after the conclusion of the film.

PATRICE D'ERAMO TALK

The commission and Clarion Consulting Center co-sponsored “Being a Successful Female in a Male-Dominated Industry” by Clarion graduate Patrice D'Eramo. She discussed her experiences working in marketing and communications.



WEBSITE RESOURCES

The commission continues to update its web page to provide several resources for faculty, staff, and students at the university to talk about race. Resources include books and articles, films, links to TED talks addressing issues of race and racial inequality, websites providing information about local and regional government alliances on race and equity, links to tools designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity, and podcasts focusing on issues relating to race. The website also contains helpful LibGuides for recommended readings and anti-racist resources. You can see the Racial Equity Resource page [here](#).

MLK BREAKFAST

The Presidential Commission on Racial Equity co-sponsored the 2021 MLK Breakfast, held January 19. Alicia Shropshire was the keynote speaker.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

Co-Chair: Suzie Boyden
Co-Chair: Jess Thomas

Treasurer: Cristin Ketley
Secretary: Andrew Keth

Members:

Alawya Alawami, Abigail Barrett, Diana Brush, Zackary Condron, Frank Connelly, Duane Farnsworth, Debra Flaherty, James Geiger, Clint Hartle, Brian Hoover, Valentine James, Sheila Kazar, Katelyn Kister, Paul Klenowski, Jacqueline Manno, Jeff MacTaggart, Ewing Moussa, Joyce Overly, Brandon Packard, Frank Remmick, Brianna Shepherd, Nripendra Singh, Cate Stiller, Philip Terman, Chad Thomas, Anthony Vega, Jessica Zacherl

Activities

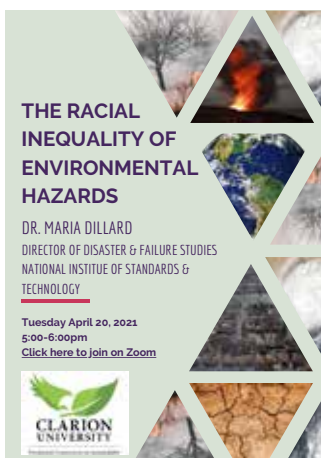
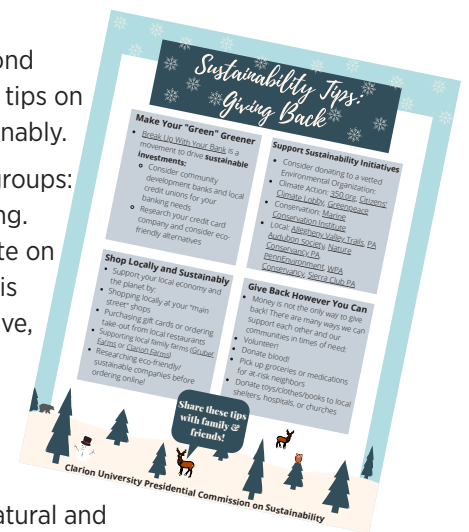
Mission: The mission of the Presidential Commission on Sustainability is to advocate issues of sustainability both on and off campus by coordinating and promoting educational opportunities and programming through collaboration with the various stakeholders toward the goal of reducing the university and larger community's consumption of natural resources to a sustainable level.

At the end of the fall 2020 semester, the commission created and shared its second Sustainability Newsletter. With the theme "Giving Back," the newsletter included tips on sustainable investments, supporting sustainability initiatives and shopping sustainably.

At the start of the spring 2021 semester, the commission formed three working groups: Paper Reduction Initiatives, Commission Webpage and Earth Week event planning. Paper Reduction Initiatives will identify mechanisms for reducing paper use/waste on campus. This is particularly relevant with the return of face-to-face operations this fall. The Commission Webpage team seeks to make the webpage more informative, interactive and useful, relative to surveying and collecting sustainability data.

The Earth Week Planning team focused on virtual events for Earth Week 2021. Virtual Earth Day speaker Dr. Maria Dillard, acting director of disaster and failure studies of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, presented "The Racial Inequality of Environmental Hazards." She drew on existing research on natural and technological hazards as well as climate change and cited examples of differential impacts and outcomes across populations.

During Earth Week, the commission initiated the Small Choices, Big Impacts campaign which encouraged university members to make conscious choices during Earth Week (and beyond) and to share on social media using #Green-Clarion. Suggestions included: Meatless Monday – Reduce your meat consumption; Transportation Tuesday – Use an alternative to your personal vehicle (walk, bike, carpool, public transportation); Water Wednesday – Minimize water waste; Thrifty Thursday – Set a goal for one or more of the 5 R's (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Re-purpose, then Recycle); Fresh-air Friday – Spend time in nature.



PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON
VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Chair: Jamie Phillips

Treasurer: Jason Heavilin

Co-Chair: Paul Klenowski

Secretary: Laurie Bladen

Members:

Jennifer Barch, Mark Conrad, Laura Delbrugge, Josh Domitrovich, Lynn Fleisher, Stacy Hall, Shawn Hoke, Deb Kelly, Mark Lepore, Xiaofeng Li, Rod Raehsler, Matt Shaffer, Dan Siegel, Jay Stull

The PCVM was established by President Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson in September 2020 after years of foundational work by multiple individuals. An initial meeting of interested faculty, staff and administrators was called Oct. 27 via Zoom by Amy Salsgiver, director of Social Equity, on October 27 via Zoom, who subsequently sent out a call for nominations and self-nominations from this group for the core administrative positions on the PCVM.

Salsgiver then called for an organizational meeting with the elected officers that took place Dec. 8, where she explained the Presidential Commission structure and basic expectations for the PCVM in the spring.

SPRING 2021

The PCVM held its first formal meeting Feb. 10, 2021, via Zoom. This was generally an introductory meeting. Members agreed to:

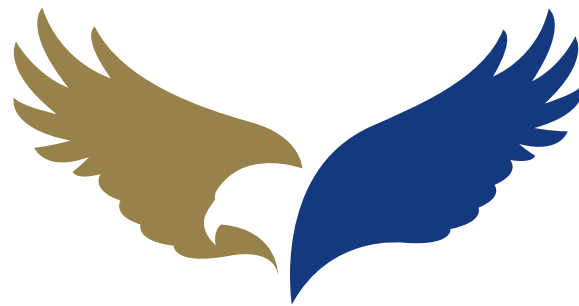
- solicit a student member(s) this semester,
- ensure that we sponsor or generate an activity for Veteran’s Day in November 2021,
- ask for data on current veterans at the University,
- work to develop a relationship with the ROTC and the Venango Campus Veteran’s Club, and
- ensure that Western PA integration plans include a focus on veterans—especially the need for a full-time Director for Veterans Affairs.

The PCVM held its second meeting March 10, 2021, via Zoom. Jim Reisinger was unanimously nominated to serve as a student member of PCVM and was subsequently appointed to the commission by President Pehrsson. Members reviewed and discussed a report on the activities of Venango Campus Veteran’s Club. PCVM member Josh Domitrovich actively advocates for veterans and has advocated in a relevant integration work group for a full-time director of veterans affairs. PCVM adopted two additional goals:

- Stand up the Clarion Student Veteran’s Association.
- Change second bullet to: Investigate potential Green Zone training for faculty, staff and administration.

Actions taken at PCVM’s third and final meeting of the year, held April 28, included:

- Incentivize new student membership and promote the commission by presenting an annual Student of the Year award. The initial award will be presented in spring 2022.
- Determine a speaker for Veteran’s Day.
- Develop and distribute a survey to student veterans and ROTC students.
- Adopted a final goal to follow-up on knowledge and use of Clarion University’s M-grade for veterans who are deployed.



**CLARION
UNIVERSITY**

It is the policy of Clarion University of Pennsylvania that there shall be equal opportunity in all of its educational programs, services, and benefits, and there shall be no discrimination with regard to a student's or prospective student's gender, gender identity, race or color, ethnicity, national origin or ancestry, age, mental or physical disability, religion or creed, genetic information, affectional or sexual orientation, veteran status, or other classifications that are protected under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other pertinent state and federal laws and regulations. Direct inquiries to the Title IX Coordinator/Director of Social Equity, 210 Carrier Administration Building 16214-1232; Email asalsgiver@clarion.edu or phone 814-393-2109. Inquiries may also be directed to the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education, 330 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20201.