

Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Academic Strategic Plan

***“Vision without action is merely a dream.
Action without vision just passes the time.
Vision with action can change the world.”***

Joel A. Barker Discovering the Future. Infinity Limited and Charthouse Learning Corporation. Producers: Ray J. Christensen, Joel Barker and Brad W. Neal Burnsville, MN Charthouse Learning Corporation. 1989-1993. (Part 2: Power of Vision.

Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Academic Strategic Plan 2006-2011

Introduction

At the Fall 2005 Faculty Assembly, President Joseph Grunenwald announced the beginning of a five-year strategic planning initiative for Clarion University that would be highly consultative through a campus-wide review of purpose, needs, and overall aims and priorities. In discussing the reasons for a comprehensive strategic planning process, the President cited needs to:

- Ensure that the university take charge of its future, and the direction in which it wished to move
- Achieve progress based on institutional goals that are defined, with clear strategies for their fulfillment, and with the necessary personnel and fiscal resources in place
- Encourage members of the institution to explore connections with other units, institutions, and external groups
- Focus institutional faculty and staff on projects and initiatives most closely related to the goals and priorities of the institution
- Provide opportunities to examine strengths, weaknesses, and threats to encourage necessary and productive linkages across the university

To deal effectively with shifts in student demographics, uncertain financial resources, and greater needs for technology, the President directed the university community to create a plan to meet these challenges by increasing student enrollment, focusing on offering high demand programs, sharing resources across departments and colleges, and diversifying the revenue stream.

Because the instructional endeavors of the Division of Academic Affairs constitute the heart of the University, goals originating from the colleges, schools, and academic departments were to serve as the focal point for all the other administrative units, including Student and University Affairs, Finance and Administration, information technology, and Libraries. These support units were directed to formulate their plans to support the colleges, schools, and academic departments.

The following Guiding Principles were presented by the President to focus the campus community on initiatives that would position the university to provide students with the best education to live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a dramatically changing world. The President's Guiding Principles were explicitly linked to the university's core values, vision, and mission.

Comprehensive University Strategic Planning Guiding Principles

Enhance Clarion University's position as a leading, high quality institution serving the students of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

Identify and develop high quality academic programs and student services focused on learning that are attractive to potential students and that serve important regional needs.

Achieve moderately growing enrollment.

Enhance diversity as a major contributor to overall high quality.

Contribute in a significant way to the advancement of the region and the community.

Presented by Dr. Joseph Grunenwald, President, Fall Faculty Assembly, 2005

CORE VALUES Clarion University of Pennsylvania

1. We believe in the learning potential of all our students who are willing to invest hard work in the pursuit of their education.
2. We are committed as faculty, staff and administration to creating opportunities for all of our students to achieve success beyond their own expectations within an environment that cultivates tolerance, civility and respect.
3. We value the individual relationship between student and faculty as central to the learning process and recognize the contributions of staff in providing the necessary support for that endeavor.
4. We believe that we exist to serve the needs of all people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to advance higher education as a public good.
5. We are committed to advancing our relationships with the larger communities of which we are a part.

*Approved by the Council of Trustees,
Clarion University of Pennsylvania, January 18, 2001*

VISION

Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Clarion University of Pennsylvania will serve the Commonwealth ever more effectively as a high quality, dynamic, technologically advanced, publicly owned university dedicated to advancing knowledge with a focus on learning and collaborating with educational and business partners. Clarion University will be accessible to students from diverse backgrounds, accountable to its many constituencies, and actively engaged in the continuous improvement of its programs, services, faculty, and staff. Above all, Clarion University will prepare students to succeed in the global economy, to contribute to the economic and social well being of the Commonwealth and the nation, to play constructive roles in their communities, and to lead productive and meaningful lives, including a passion for continuous learning.

*Approved by the Council of Trustees,
Clarion University of Pennsylvania, January 18, 2001*

MISSION

Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Clarion University seeks to excel in all that it does and challenges students to develop their talents, extend their intellectual capacities and interests, expand their intellectual capacities and interests, expand their creative abilities, and to develop a respect and enthusiasm for learning that will extend throughout their lives. The university acknowledges that learning requires a partnership demanding hard work by students, faculty, and staff, and that learning extends beyond the classroom. The university community is dedicated to helping students see in themselves what they may become by creating opportunities to develop the knowledge, skill, and attitudes necessary for both enlightened citizenship and successful participation in a technologically advanced global society.

Clarion University is primarily an undergraduate institution with selected graduate programs. Instructional programs-delivered on campus, throughout the state, and beyond via appropriate distance education technologies-range from associate degrees and certificate programs to baccalaureate degree programs in the arts and sciences and professional fields, graduate programs in selected fields, and continuing education. University programs are administered through campuses in Clarion and Oil City.

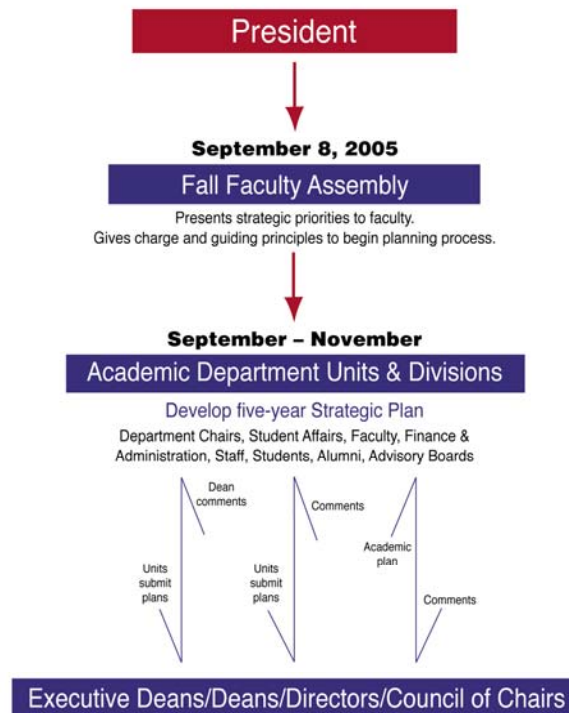
Clarion University seeks to admit, retain, and graduate students, who are qualified and motivated, and to recruit, retain, and support highly qualified and dedicated faculty and staff. The university is a learning community that seeks diversity in its faculty, staff, and study body and values this diversity as providing richness in the learning process. This community strives to treat its members with civility and respect. Students, faculty, and staff value learning, contribute to the development of new knowledge through scholarly activities, and participate in community and public service responsive to the needs of society.

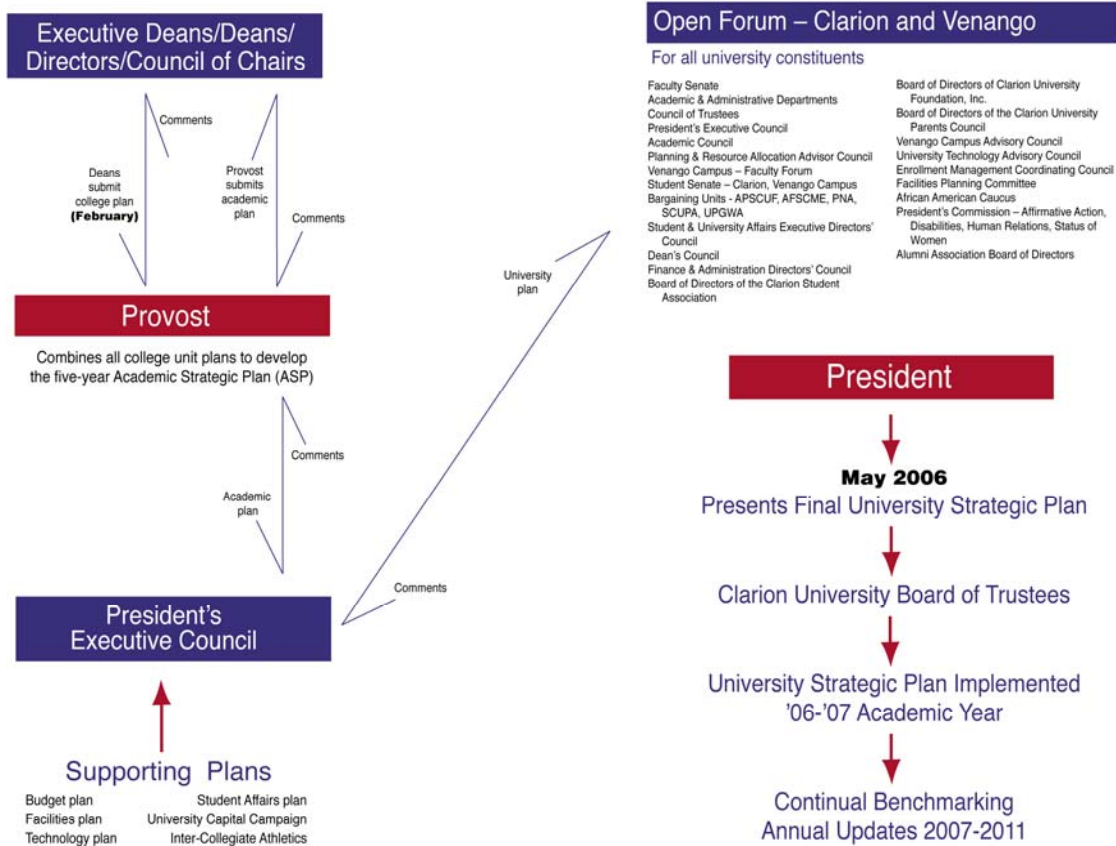
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The Strategic Planning Process

In the summer of 2005, a strategic planning committee comprising the following members was formed: Linda Nolan, Provost and Academic Vice President; Paul Bylaska, Vice President of Finance and Administration; Harry Tripp, Vice President of Student and University Affairs; Rashelle Karp, Associate Academic Vice President; Sam Puleio, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs; Christopher Reber, Venango Campus Executive Dean, and James Pesek, Chair of the Administrative Science Department. This task force suggested strategic directions to the Council of Deans and recommended development of a Strategic Planning Web Site for the posting of resource materials to assist units in the strategic planning process. By late August, the Strategic Planning Committee, Council of Deans, and the President's Executive Council approved a university comprehensive planning process for 2006-2011, which was announced by the Provost during the Fall 2005 Faculty Assembly.

Clarion University of Pennsylvania 2006-2011 University Comprehensive Planning Process





Members of the Clarion community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni assisted in formulating strategic plans at the departmental, programmatic, and college levels that articulated with the Guiding Principles set by the President. The Academic Strategic Plan, including a Vision and Mission for the Division of Academic Affairs, provides overarching guiding principles, strategic directions, and actions, based on the planning documents that were created by departments and programs, and then compiled and prioritized at the college level.

VISION

Division of Academic Affairs

The primary focus for the Division of Academic Affairs will be on providing an exemplary educational experience for students through the work of talented, dedicated and highly motivated faculty and staff.

The Division will embrace the concept of the common good for students and the university that transcends the interests of a single department or college.

The Division will maintain the highest levels of professionalism while engaging in collaborative, consultative, and transparent processes.

MISSION

Office of the Provost

The mission of the Office of the Provost is to provide high quality, responsive academic programs to students and to assist faculty in employing the best practices in teaching and learning; to engage in research and creative work; and to enrich the community through leadership and assistance in resolving community needs. The Provost, in collaboration with deans, faculty, staff, and students, is responsible for prioritizing resource needs, securing resources for campus programs, and allocating resources to units. Also in collaboration with the campus community, the Provost's Office works to develop and implement academic policy, foster new academic programs, monitor program effectiveness, and identify and establish academic priorities.

The Office of the Provost has administrative responsibility for the following broad and special academic programs and instructional units:

- General Education
- Graduate Studies
- Honors Programs
- Continuing and Extended Programs
- Summer School and Winter Intersession
- Enrollment Management
- Colleges and Schools
- Venango Campus

The Office of the Provost also has administrative responsibility for the following academic support offices and functions:

- Curriculum and Academic Policy Changes
- Faculty Development Programs
- University Libraries
- University Advisement
- University Admissions
- University Registrar's Office
- Research and Sponsored Programs
- Off-Campus Centers and Sites
- Program Articulation (with other institutions)
- International Programs
- Academic Assessment and Performance

In partnership with the Division of Student and University Affairs, the Office of the Provost has shared administrative responsibility for the Clarion *Transitions* student retention program.

Guiding Principles for Academic Affairs Decision Making

The following guiding principles will be applied consistently in strategic decision making within the Division of Academic Affairs.

- Insure that classes are in place for students to complete their general education requirements and major requirements to graduate in a timely manner.
- Maintain current accreditation and certification of programs.
- Reallocate resources from low demand areas to high demand areas.
- Consult with the President's Executive Council, Deans' Council, and the university's Planning and Resource Allocation Advisory Council (PRACC) on any fiscal implications or impacts on students of program initiation or elimination.
- Increase efforts to obtain financial resources through increased enrollment, increased retention, fund raising, entrepreneurial ventures, grants, partnerships, and other creative activities that diversify campus revenue sources.

The Academic Strategic Plan

The Academic Strategic Plan that follows provides the overarching strategic directions and actions for the Division of Academic Affairs, based on departmental and programmatic academic plans that were synthesized and prioritized at the college level.

The Division of Academic Affairs will enrich the educational experiences for students through the following strategic actions.

- Review programs for quality, centrality, regional impact, and student demand. Use institutional and national data to identify programs for enhancement, expansion, redefinition, merger, or elimination.
- Foster activities that support and enhance collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching and research.
- Target high demand undergraduate and graduate programs for enhancement and increased marketing.
- Continue to develop and strengthen joint programs between the division of Academic Affairs and the division of University and Student Affairs to increase student retention and satisfaction.
- Promote multicultural understanding by increasing the numbers of students who study abroad, engage in service learning or intergroup relations activities, and participate in co-curricular activities.
- Expand public access to educational programs through collaboration and cooperation with other institutions, organizations and agencies.
- Encourage efforts to improve academic and administrative coordination of programming delivered through distance education options and through regional centers.
- Enhance student success through curriculum, advising, academic support, and co-curricular activities.
- Encourage all programs and majors to provide appropriate capstone experiences (e.g., advanced seminars, research projects, student teaching, or study abroad).
- Increase activities in extended education by developing an on-line general bachelor's degree and specialized master's degrees.

- Enhance access to university offerings through improved and expanded distance education opportunities, including coordinating scheduling and planning of offerings, conducting systematic needs assessment and market analysis, targeting specific disciplines for distance delivery, utilizing shared resources from other institutions, and developing distance education support services and orientation for students.
- Conduct a systematic review of best practices and major program graduation requirements at other major public institutions in the region to increase the university's competitive edge by reducing excessive requirements or unnecessary obstacles to timely graduation.
- Expand assessment activities to gain further insight into learning outcomes in the major and to help ensure that learning outcomes are being met.
- Increase opportunities for applied learning by establishing a university-wide Undergraduate Research and Scholar Activities Program to encourage undergraduate students to conduct independent research or to assist in faculty research and scholarship.
- Enhance global awareness through increased recruitment of international students and faculty, internationalization of the curriculum, student and faculty exchange programs, international internships, and participation in international research and development projects.
- Enhance cultural awareness through integration of multicultural perspectives into and across the curriculum.
- Develop a culture of civility and respect for differences.
- Develop a plan and systematic process for encouraging and mentoring undergraduates for participation in prestigious post-graduate fellowships (e.g. Rhodes, Marshall, Truman, Fulbright, Mitchell).

The Division of Academic Affairs will strengthen the university's General Education program through the following strategic actions.

- Send a team of faculty and administrators to the American Association of Colleges and Universities Institute on General Education to review the university's general education program.
- Continue to develop ongoing assessment activities to ensure that the general education core curriculum is achieving expected learning outcomes.
- Publicize the rationale for university general education core requirements more effectively to students and faculty.

- Utilize the general education core curriculum to address issues of student success.
- Establish links between the general education core curriculum and co-curricular programs and activities in order to promote a greater sense of community on campus.
- Establish links between the general education core curriculum, the majors, and various applied learning options, such as internships, service learning, or undergraduate research.
- Enhance the general education experience for students and faculty by instituting forums that promote cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary communication and collaboration among faculty who teach the core curriculum

The Division of Academic Affairs will add or expand selected high demand programs through the following strategic actions.

- Initiate new certificate and undergraduate and graduate programs in areas consistent with the university's institutional role and mission, public demand, and available resources.
- Pursue systematic, university-wide enhancement of teacher preparation programs, with emphasis on high standards, additional pre-service and in-service experiences, identified outcomes, and strengthened partnerships with the public schools and public agencies.
- Expand selected health sciences programs in accord with community need and support.
- Enhance program quality and public access to programs through cooperative efforts and joint programming with other institutions.

The Division of Academic Affairs will enhance graduate education and research through the following strategic actions.

- Enhance graduate education by recruiting a greater percentage of full-time, degree-seeking graduate students, increasing the number of graduate assistantships in selected areas, and expanding access to upper-division and graduate level courses.
- Seek external funding to provide summer support for graduate assistants.
- Establish a pool of travel funds from indirect grant costs to support graduate students presenting research at professional meetings and conferences.

- Establish a competitive Graduate Scholars Fellowship Program, with nationally competitive stipends and fee waivers, to attract highly talented full-time graduate students in selected areas.
- Enhance a more comprehensive program to support and mentor faculty who apply to agencies for external funding to support graduate students and facility costs.
- Take advantage of opportunities for additional state and federal funding in targeted areas to support graduate students and their research.
- Enhance graduate education by meeting professional development needs of practitioners in the field.

The Division of Academic Affairs will enhance internal efficiencies through the following strategic actions.

- Review and, as necessary, revise administrative and departmental structures.
- Hire faculty with multidisciplinary scholarship and teaching strengths.
- Utilize temporary faculty in appropriate areas.
- Streamline processing of information and records through continued review and utilization of technologies.
- Review all vacant positions to ensure that each position is critical to support the university strategic plan.
- Reassign existing positions of low priority functions to those of high priority functions related to the strategic plan.
- Reallocate existing resources to achieve the initiatives of the strategic plan.
- Through improved advising and special targeted programs, improve the retention and timely graduation of both traditional and non-traditional students.
- Identify selected multidisciplinary areas for future targeted growth.
- Enhance and coordinate marketing of ongoing degree and certificate programs.
- Build articulations with other post-secondary institutions and high schools.
- Engage the broader faculty, staff, and student community in student recruitment and retention.

- Increase marketing of Clarion University graduate programs to Clarion University undergraduate students.
- Enhance partnerships with feeder institutions to increase undergraduate and graduate enrollments at Clarion.
- Use institutional research data and established best practices to guide institutional decision making.
- Expand the use of technology for systemic record keeping in all academic offices and programs.

The Division of Academic Affairs will support and mentor departmental chairs and program directors through the following strategic actions.

Department chairs and program directors play an extremely vital role in university administration. They hold the departments together, help establish morale, are the conduit of information to and from other members of the administration, and they work closely with students, faculty and administrators on details of the department. To encourage maximum participation by department chairs and program directors in the decision making process, the Provost, working with the Office of Human Resources and the deans will initiate a comprehensive support system for chairs and program directors addressing budgeting, faculty morale, recruiting, politics, and dealing with complex personnel issues. Retreats and special seminars on timely topics will be offered yearly.

“As we weigh our situation...we would do well to remember our founders. They too faced hard times, limited resources and formidable obstacles. But they refused to let their problems become their epitaph. We must do no less.”

*John H. Schroeder. Strategic Plan for the Future of the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, June 1996.
<http://www3.uwm.edu/Dept/Acad-Aff/archive/strategicplan96.cfm> (retrieved on 4/4/2006)*

The Division of Academic Affairs will address the university’s structural deficit to support strategic planning efforts through the following strategic actions.

- Increase student recruitment and retention.

- Reduce base expenditures permanently where possible.
- Utilize temporary resources where possible.
- Continue to diversify the revenue base of the university budget over the next three to four years and beyond.
- Make better use of technology to streamline costs.
- At the System level, seek early retirement incentives and options.
- Encourage voluntary reduction of work schedules.
- Reorganize the Division of Academic Affairs.

Additionally, as financial conditions necessitate, budget reductions and resource allocations will be made in support of the university's strategic plan, vision, and mission.

To maintain momentum toward the university's established goals, the Provost, in collaboration with the President and Deans, will recreate yearly action plans prioritizing implementation of initiatives, assigning responsibility for assessment, and indicating funding or reallocation of staff and resources for these specific initiatives. During the 2006-2007 academic year, the Division of Academic Affairs will support strategic actions in the colleges and departments through special allocations for actions that support the following initiatives:

- Development and marketing of high demand and selected five-year BS/BA and MS/MA degrees.
- Development and marketing of online general Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, and post-baccalaureate programs.
- Provision of special international, research, scholarship, and civic opportunities for students.
- Publicizing and highlighting undergraduate and graduate activities through undergraduate/graduate conferences to celebrate student accomplishments.
- Support of the Clarion Community Fellowships to promote civic engagement, diversity, intergroup relations, and strengthened community partnerships with faculty and students.
- Fostering of interdisciplinary, cross-college, cross-system, teaching and use of resources.

- Assessing the vitality of low enrolled degree programs, eliminating those that lack potential, and enhancing through development and promotion, those that serve student and regional needs.
- Reviewing the Liberal Studies degree with concentrations with an eye toward restructuring to best serve student needs.
- Sponsorship of a university-wide Deans' and Chairs' Retreat to support and mentor chairs and to assess progress toward the strategic plan.
- Sponsorship of a grant writing mentorship program to increase the number of faculty applying for external funding and increasing success rate.
- Collaborations with facilities planning to address needed structural renovations of academic buildings.

The Division of Academic Affairs will take full advantage of its opportunity to realize a science and technology vision for the future. The Science and Technology Center will be supported through the following strategic actions.

The Science and Technology Center will be planned to:

- Stimulate connections between currently isolated departments and encourage diversity of approaches to complex problems, intellectual exchange of ideas and resources, interdisciplinary research efforts, and cross-pollination among disciplines.



Clarion University Science and Technology Center. Artist's Rendering (Spring 2006)

- Increase the potential for external funding for research and student aid.
- Highlight a leading-edge university, thereby attracting the best students and faculty.
- Provide an infrastructure necessary to encourage technology transfer.
- Increase the potential for securing external funding.
- Increase the potential for collaboration and partnership with businesses to fuel the Pennsylvania economy.
- Allow faculty to achieve at the highest levels in the areas of undergraduate education, education for students in graduate and professional programs, the pursuit of original scholarship and research, and service to communities, governments, businesses, the professions, and society at large.

Conclusion

“Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of the century depends.”

--Benjamin Disraeli, speech, House of Commons, June 15, 1874. Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 3rd series, vol. 219, col. 1618 (1874).

Clarion University has been blessed with outstanding dedicated faculty and staff who have worked together collegially to provide an exemplary student-centered educational culture. Like many universities in Western Pennsylvania and across the United States, Clarion University is being challenged by declining numbers of traditional college-age students and the fiscal crisis facing states. Federal government unfunded mandates, accelerating Medicaid costs, and increasingly obsolete state revenue structures have resulted in structural budget deficits that starve many key public investments—particularly public higher education.

For students and their families, uncertainty about access and affordability for public higher education is growing at a time when they recognize the critical importance of education to their future quality of life.

Knowledge and circumstances in the world are changing at a rapid rate. For Clarion University to be competitive in today's environment, provide the best educational experience for students, and manage resources wisely, the university must be amendable and responsive to change and analysis on an ongoing basis.

The university must develop a united culture that values candid communication, collaborative ventures, creative thinking, and campus-wide collaborations that are based on teamwork among students, the divisions, and business and community leaders.

The university must control its responses to internal and external forces by engaging in ongoing planning to provide its members with clear direction and purpose, to strategically clarify goals, to assess outcomes of programs and to allocate resources to accomplish goals.

To maintain momentum toward the university's established goals, the Provost, in collaboration with the President and Deans, will recreate yearly action plans prioritizing implementation of initiatives, assigning responsibility for assessment, and indicating funding or reallocation of staff and resources for these specific initiatives.

The success and future of Clarion University will be determined by the ability to harmonize the many demands and values of diverse units and groups as they respond to their own needs and concerns. Continuation and implementation of the strategic planning process will require the efforts of the entire campus—every individual in every department and division has a critical role in enhancing Clarion University's reputation and promoting the accomplishments of an integrated community of students, faculty and staff.

Clarion University has a tradition of responding and evolving positively and creatively to challenges and opportunities. The entire community must join together to accept the responsibility to work as a team to create the university's future.