

Strategic Directions 2012-2020

RISING
to the challenge

COURAGEOUS. *confident.* **CLARION.**

“ In response to current trends in student interests and the changing workforce needs of our state, Clarion University has reinvented itself, from a broadly oriented state university to a very intentional, highly-qualified, professionally focused university. We excel in preparing students to successfully enter professional careers in teaching, business, health and human services. ”

KAREN M. WHITNEY, PRESIDENT
CLARION UNIVERSITY



As Clarion University responds to those demands and the opportunities they present, we must:

Adapt to an ever-changing student population:

Clarion's prospective students are becoming more diverse in terms of age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, academic support needs and prior academic experience (credits and credentials). Students' expectations for how, where and when they learn—coupled with a demand for education built around technology—create complex challenges.

Align academic programs with real workforce and personal growth needs:

The direct connection between Clarion and the overall vitality and health of the region is clear. As such, students, parents and the region want quality in academic programs and the assurance that the knowledge and skills learned will be connected to career and community.

Provide greater flexibility in how, when and where students learn:

In addition to what is taught, it is important how it is taught, and that student learning is evaluated. Program design, transfer and articulation of credits, credit for prior learning, and increased collaboration among providers must work together to ensure academic integrity and student learning, as well as affordability and efficient degree attainment.

Preserve and promote accessiblity and affordability:

Clarion is aware that students and their parents are reaching the tipping point in their ability to absorb higher costs. In response to declining state financial support, Clarion has employed a host of efficiencies that have resulted in substantial cost savings during the past decade. With students paying 75 percent of the cost of their education – and with average debt of \$33,000 at graduation for the 81 percent of our students with loans – attention to identifying new resources and the careful use of existing revenues is of paramount importance.

Enhance accountability and transparency:

Students and families want to know that their money is well spent on an education that will serve them not only at graduation, but also decades later. They are entitled to detailed and current information on costs of a degree and career possibilities for fields of study, among other vital data. Likewise, elected leaders want to know that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is getting a good return on its investment in Clarion University, so performance data should be easy to obtain and understand.



UNIVERSITY AND SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLANNING

Intentionally aligning our efforts to ensure success

A university's *mission*, *vision* and *value* statements are central to defining the purpose of the institution.

The *mission* tells who we are, whom we serve and how we accomplish our goals.

The *vision* provides direction and an overarching goal for the university.

The *core values* establish the framework for the decisions and actions of all affiliated with the university.

CLARION UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- Encourage student, faculty and staff success
- Create equitable, diverse environments
- Thrive financially
- Expand our engagement with society

STATE SYSTEM GOALS

- Ensure academic program excellence and relevance
- Enable more students to obtain credentials that prepare them for life, career and the responsibilities of citizenship
- Develop new funding strategies, diversify resources and manage costs to preserve affordability
- Increase accountability and transparency; focus on results

UNIVERSITY DIRECTION: Encourage student, faculty and staff success

SYSTEM GOAL: Ensure academic program excellence and relevance

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Clarion University offers a wide array of programs leading to associate, bachelor's master's and doctorate degrees, as well as undergraduate and graduate certificates. To promote quality, each degree program will have clearly articulated and measurable learning outcomes that are regularly assessed.

Discovery, diversity and distinctiveness are essential for a quality student experience.

Discovery entails creativity, problem solving and critical thinking. From diversity comes innovation — the insight that comes from exposure to and interactions with different modes of thought, experiences, backgrounds and cultural heritage. Distinctiveness enables Clarion University to develop, deliver and realign programs and services to meet the unique needs of its students and region, as well as ensuring the optimum use of resources.

Clarion University is committed to ensuring programs provide graduates with the skills and competencies that prepare them for future life and career success: analytic, problem-solving and critical thinking skills; the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; the ability to work in teams; and the preparation for lifelong learning. Clarion will continue to expand opportunities for

high-impact educational practices such as undergraduate research, international study, service-learning and internships, all of which are critical to academic excellence and are designed to connect the classroom to the community.

Program relevance, demand and quality must be regularly assessed and reviewed by faculty, the university president and university trustees for continuous improvement. Engagement with state and local government representatives and community leaders is essential for determining relevance. Aligning programs to workforce needs and addressing the increasing knowledge and skills needed for lifetime employment will increase the Clarion region's economic competitiveness.

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Encourage student, faculty and staff success

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage professional development of faculty and staff
- Build and rebuild academic programs to respond to societal needs and student interest
- Encourage high-impact educational opportunities that enable graduates to demonstrate competencies
- Promote innovation through basic and applied research
- Promote a diverse student body and employee workforce

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increase the number of degrees or certificates in STEM and health-related disciplines
- Align graduate programs to the needs of the Clarion region
- Develop, implement and increase enrollments in programs designed to meet demonstrated current and emerging workforce needs
- Complete regular, comprehensive reviews of Clarion University programs, with a clear description of student achievement and success, an assessment of learning outcomes expected of every program graduate, and a process for continued improvement
- Engage in ongoing assessment of student competencies through expanded alumni and employer surveys

MISSION

Clarion University provides transformative, lifelong learning opportunities through innovative, nationally recognized programs delivered in inclusive, student-centered environments.

UNIVERSITY DIRECTION: Create equitable, diverse environments

SYSTEM GOAL: Enable more students to obtain credentials that prepare them for life, career and the responsibilities of citizenship.

According to the report of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Postsecondary Education (2012), it is estimated that "by 2018, nearly two-thirds of American jobs will require a postsecondary credential." The report also notes that 57 percent of Pennsylvania jobs will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Because only 43 percent of Pennsylvania's working age adults hold an associate degree or higher, the result is a 14 percent skills gap that must be closed in order to promote and sustain a strong economy.

To increase the success of all students, Clarion must focus on reducing gaps in access by ethnicity, region and income, while increasing retention and completion.

Many programs and courses are offered online or at off-campus locations, providing increased opportunities for students, especially the adult learner.

To address the particular needs of returning students and veterans, Clarion is providing access to programs and courses through online opportunities and recognizing the value of prior learning experiences.

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Create equitable, diverse environments

STRATEGIES:

- Adopt standards for awarding credit for prior learning
- Encourage efficient student academic progress to increase awards and minimize cost to students
- Attract, retain and graduate a diverse student body
- Provide appropriate developmental education opportunities for students to promote success
- Encourage research and scholarship that reflect an appreciation of cultural and social differences
- Encourage development of curriculum and teaching methods that support trans-cultural and global competency

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Increase the number of degrees and certificates annually conferred
- Increase the success of low-income and under-represented minority students by reducing by half the gap in graduation rates between these and other students
- Increase access to higher education of low-income and underrepresented minority students by reducing by half the difference in the entering class for these groups compared to those of all students graduating from Pennsylvania high schools
- Increase the number of working adult and transfer students enrolled at Clarion
- Increase the number of courses and programs available to students through distance education; specifically, increase the number of students in online and blended courses to 33 percent

VISION

Clarion University will be a leader in high-impact educational practices that benefit students, employers and community partners.

UNIVERSITY DIRECTION: Thrive financially

SYSTEM GOAL: Develop new funding strategies, diversify resources and manage costs to preserve affordability

Clarion University, like all universities and colleges in this country, is expected to provide increasing value to the students, their families and society. That expectation is at a time of continued declines in state funding to public higher education through direct state appropriations and through the flat funding of direct support to students through grants and scholarships.

At the same time, the university, along with most of the other state universities and many others throughout the country, is experiencing unprecedented declines in student enrollment.

Clarion is caught at a moment of great challenge. With student enrollment and state funding both in decline, it is an institutional imperative for cutting costs, achieving efficiencies through strategic sourcing, energy management, automated processes and services, reductions in personnel, and elimination of noncore and lower priority programs and functions.

Clarion's costs to students remain below the national average, and the rate of increase to attend continues to be less than national and commonwealth rates. The university must continue to be cost conscious and search for increasing public and private subsidies to offer a competitively affordable price to the students.

To thrive financially, Clarion University must continue to reorganize itself to align the organization of faculty, staff and administrators to the reality of new student enrollment. To grow enrollment, the university must provide distinctive and sought-after academic programs that are of interest to students. The university must use national best practices to ensure the efficient and effective administration of all programs and services.

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Thrive financially

STRATEGIES:

- Ensure optimal stewardship of resources
- Undertake a comprehensive campaign
- Increase private fundraising, grants and sponsored activities
- Align university and system plans

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Decrease time-to-degree as measured by credits earned at program completion to an average of 128 semester hours
- Continue to increase the four-year graduation rate of full-time, first-time freshmen
- Increase annual private support each year
- Increase annual expenditures from grants, sponsored programs and business partnerships consistent with university missions

CORE VALUES

Students, faculty, staff and alumni of Clarion

University value:

- Learning
- Accomplishment
- Encouragement
- Diversity
- Civility
- Civic engagement
- Public higher education

UNIVERSITY DIRECTION: Expand engagement with society

Clarion University encourages public service, not just for students, but for faculty, staff and administration, too. Engaging in public service is one high-impact practice in which students learn skills critical to graduates entering the workforce.

Employers agree that, in addition the content knowledge of the major, a broad set of college learning goals for all students includes educational experiences that teach them how to solve problems with people whose views are different from their own and that build knowledge, judgment and commitment to communities.

In addition, Clarion University engages with local and regional business and industry sectors to address issues, seek solutions to problems and capitalize on opportunities.

In short, civic engagement is mutually beneficial to Clarion University and its surrounding communities.

Engaging in public service is one high-impact practice in which students learn skills critical to graduates entering the workforce.

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Expand engagement with society

STRATEGIES:

- Align knowledge and resources with community partner's needs
- Promote community service and volunteerism among students, faculty and staff
- Serve as an economic engine to the region

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Creation of mutually beneficial relationships with our community partners
- Through our teaching – Promotion of learning beyond our campuses
- Through our research – Promotion of the practical application of knowledge
- Through our service – We benefit society

A PUBLICLY ENGAGED INSTITUTION

Public engagement describes the numerous ways in which the work and expertise of Clarion University's employees and students can be shared with the public with the goal of generating mutual benefit.

CLARION UNIVERSITY

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS PLAN 2012-2017

Initially approved by Council of Trustees Feb. 16, 2012

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS PLAN 2012-2020

Update approved by Council of Trustees April 13, 2017

“ In order to fully describe the extent to which the university’s strategic efforts align to the State System Strategic Plan 2020, this updated version, extending the university’s plans to 2020, was created. ”

KAREN M. WHITNEY, PRESIDENT

APRIL 13, 2017

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, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, 103 Carrier Administration Building, sfenske@clarion.edu or phone 814-393-2351, or the 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.