Dear colleagues, it is good to see each of you this evening. I love the start of the academic year. The air is crisp and full of the wonderful potential. The students are nervously excited and we are all at our best. It’s truly a time to celebrate and be hopeful.

It is also a time to be resolved to the challenges that lie ahead. If you do not already know you will learn this evening and again tomorrow, if you are able to attend the state-of-the-university address, that we have several challenges to overcome in order to thrive and advance our mission.

Challenge: We had an 18% reduction on state funding, which was a $9 million reduction in funding.

Challenge: We have an approximate 5% decline in enrollment.

Challenge: We are re-engineering how we manage our funds through Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) while at the same time dealing with these first two significant challenges.

Challenge: Particularly during these challenging times, we are committed to acting with integrity, civility, and transparency as we move at a rapid pace of changing what we do and how we do it. To be sure, we will do less with less and we must be sharply focused upon achieving our desired results.

To this end, one of my major commitments in my 500-Day Plan is the recruitment and development of leadership that earns your confidence. You will recall in February 2011 we successfully recruitment Dr. Susan Turell as our associate provost. In July we were joined by Dr. Ronald Nowaczyk as our new Provost.

In my opinion, a university’s chief academic officer is its most important leadership position. I believe the job of provost can have more impact and be a more challenging job than that of president. In our new Provost Dr. Ron Nowaczyk, we have, I believe, someone who, in a short period of time has, together with Dr. Turell, Dr. DeDe, Dr. Acton, and the deans, department chairs, and faculty governance, engaged in the difficult and rewarding task of leading the academic enterprise of this university. This year will be a defining year for the university and one that will provide us with great opportunities and challenges. I am confident that Dr. Ronald Nowaczyk as our Provost will work with the entire faculty to define our academic enterprise in ways that will ensure the vibrance and relevance of our core efforts of teaching and learning, applied research, and public engagement in ways that
matter to our students, their families, our community and economy of Northwest Pennsylvania.

Let me tell you why I have such enthusiasm and optimism regarding Dr. Nowaczyk. He comes to us with over 30 years of experience in higher education. He has prepared himself broadly for this position. He holds a doctorate in psychology and is an accomplished teacher, researcher, and civic oriented scholar and administrator.

Ron is an academic’s academic, working his way through the academy earning the rank of full professor, serving as department chair, as dean, and now as our Provost. He possesses an impressive record of academic publications and professional contributions. He has a distinguished career spanning over a 30 years at a variety of major research, regional, private, and public universities.

Ron is a planner with a deep knowledge of academic administration. He has experience with planning and accreditation as well as growing and strengthening student enrollment. He has experience designing programs and services that shape and enrich the student experience. He also has strong budget skills, is goal oriented, a data driven decision-maker, a good listener, and communicator.

Ron Nowaczyk is decisive, smart, experienced, entrepreneurial, personable, and hard working.

I think you will come to see as I have that he is a champion for Clarion academics. He is truly the chief academic officer for this university and someone who is providing leadership and stewardship for our academic values.

I look forward to working with Ron as we work with you to chart the future course of this great university. In collaboration with the deans, chairs, directors, and faculty governance, he will lead the Clarion University academics to be truly eagletastic!

Please help me welcome our Provost, Dr. Ron Nowaczyk, to the podium.