

UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION
Welcome
Karen M. Whitney
Sunday, August 29, 2010
Marwick-Boyd Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

- Welcome to Clarion University's annual University Convocation!
- As I considered my comments to you this evening, I realized that, in many ways, I know how the students, faculty, and staff who are new to Clarion feel.
- You see, we are all freshmen—you, as new students, and I, as a new freshman President.
- I know these feelings—at the same time exciting—full of the promise of new beginnings and new growth—as well as scary and uncertain—all at the same time. There are many unknowns; there is the promise of terrific times and the likelihood of great challenges.
- We come together this evening to celebrate not only the beginning of a new academic year but also your entry into our academic community at Clarion University. As you know, "Convocation" is an assembly of graduates, faculty, and staff welcoming you to an order of scholars. This event also concludes many activities that each of you has undergone from Orientation to Discovery Weekend. This Convocation also represents a beginning—new friendships, new studies, new opportunities for exploration and self discovery.
- You have now joined the Clarion University Golden Eagle Family. Congratulations!
- All around us you will see examples of the university's commitment to high-quality facilities, technology, student involvement and civic engagement:

Campus Facilities:

I'm pleased to report that we've made good progress in completing facilities that support high-quality teaching and learning:

- We held the official opening of our new science and technology center last January. We're particularly proud of this state-of-the-art facility that was recently named in honor of former President Joe Grunenwald.
- Clarion is a leading university in the way we manage our natural resources. We achieved certification at the Silver level in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (called LEED certification) for our Campus View and Valley View residence halls.
- And we're moving ahead with the design of a new one-stop Student Success Center in Becht Hall that, once completed, will offer services related to admissions, registration, financial aid, student billing, career services,

housing, orientation, counseling and health services, academic enrichment, disability support services, student orientation, and parking permits in one convenient location.

Technology:

You'll be interested to know that over the past year we have upgraded a number of services that enhance student life and learning here at Clarion:

- We completed the transition to a new student email system that is fully web-based, offers more storage, and has additional tools that allow you to access your email account from anywhere.
- We also moved to a new learning management system called, "D2L" (or Desire to Learn), which is where you will find materials such as your syllabus, lecture notes, and readings for your courses.
- And, our University Libraries added more than 3,500 electronic books, new online databases, and more streaming videos.

Student Involvement:

As this night is all about your commitment to this academic community, I'd also like to highlight some of last year's student accomplishments—results that I hope will challenge you to become more involved and the student leaders that I know you can be:

- The Clarion University student Chapter of the National Broadcast Society (NBS) received the "Most Improved Chapter Award" and two of its members won first place in a production competition at the NBS Regional Conference at Millersville University last November.
- Clarion University's Student Chapter of the Society for Advancement of Management (SAM) earned 3rd Place Honors in the Intermediate Chapter Division for Chapter Performance at the 2010 SAM International Business Conference.
- 30 Clarion University students participated in study abroad experiences.
- 71 students participated in the first Leaders in Action Conference sponsored by our Office of Campus Life to enhance leadership development opportunities.

Civic Engagement:

I must also let you know that I am so proud of Clarion University's commitment to the community and the many ways we work together to make the Clarion community a better place for everyone. For example:

- Clarion’s chapter of the National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association was honored for its contributions in community service at the Association’s annual state conference. The chapter was also named “Recognized Student Organization of the Year” at the university’s annual Reinhard Awards event.
 - Clarion’s Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) challenged all 16 varsity intercollegiate athletics programs in a friendly competition that collected more than 10,000 non-perishable food items for the Clarion County Community Action Food Bank.
 - 203 students participated in Clarion University Service Day, providing assistance to 15 local agencies and community residents.
- In joining Clarion University, you have the opportunity to receive a quality education. To interact and work with an excellent faculty who consider teaching their first priority.
 - I encourage you to make the most of the Clarion opportunity.
 - It is an opportunity to discover yourself and to get to know others whose backgrounds and experiences are very different from your own. A unique chance to learn and to grow together in an environment of mutual respect and cooperation.
 - These opportunities bring with them certain responsibilities. A major one concerns your need to take charge of your own learning and success as a student. College is truly what you make of it. So make it the best.
 - A university has high expectations and standards. There are many resources available, but you will have to take the initiative to seek out those resources, manage your time well, and work collaboratively with faculty and your fellow students.
 - I cannot emphasize enough the importance of meeting with your advisor regularly to not only plan your class schedule but to discuss your interests as a member of this university community and preparation for your life beyond it.
 - And while life after graduation may seem a long way off at this point, the moment will come sooner than you think when you will walk across the stage to receive your diploma and embark on the next phase of a journey that hopefully will be a life-long pursuit of learning.
 - For our part, we hope to inspire you with a love for learning and guide you in developing habits of the mind and heart that will help you to choose thoughtfully what is worthy of your care and then organizing your lives to exercise that care responsibly, consistently, and effectively.

- I know that the Clarion university community is better for your membership in it and I also know that your lives will be enriched by new knowledge, new friends, and wonderful new experiences.
- I would like to recognize many folks who are with us tonight and who have worked to plan and produce this year's University Convocation. First, I would like to thank my mom, Anita Whitney, and my sister, Elizabeth Whitney, who have traveled from Houston Texas to be with us tonight. Thanks, Mom and Liz.
- I would also like to recognize three Clarion University Trustees who have joined us this evening—Dr. Syed Ali-Zaidi, Mr. Larry Pickett, and Mr. Chris Myer, who is also a Clarion University student.
- My sincere thanks to the University Convocation Planning Committee, co-chaired by Dr. Todd Pfannestiel and Ms. Erin Schuetz; Mr. David Katis our master of ceremonies; Mr. Rob Hoover, who manages this wonderful auditorium; and to Dr. Henry Alviani and Dr. Jeffrey Wardlaw, who worked with our students to provide our wonderful choir and music performances this evening. I also thank all the faculty and staff who have joined in this celebration.
- Finally, I want to recognize our new students. Take flight, soar high to live your dreams, work hard, have fun and "FLY Eagles FLY"! Repeat after me..... Fly Eagles Fly.....
- Thank you very much and have a great year.