

UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION WELCOME
Karen M. Whitney
Sunday, August 3, 2015
Marwick-Boyd Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

Welcome, Class of 2019, to Clarion University's annual University Convocation and to your first official university event as new college freshmen!

Give yourselves a hand.

We come together this evening to celebrate not only the beginning of a new academic year but also your entry into our university community. As you may know, the word "convocation" means an assembly of fellow students, faculty, and staff welcoming you to an order of scholars. Tonight is a beginning and it is also a conclusion. This event concludes a series of activities that each of you has undergone - you have prepared for years to enter college, from your many college choices -you chose Clarion, you have attended orientation, registered for your first set of college courses and had a very busy Discovery Weekend.

I do want to ask you to help me thank the many faculty, staff and fellow students who have been here for you over the summer by meeting with you at orientation, advising you on your courses, helping you move into housing this Friday, and for the many meetings, talks and emails along the way. I thank them for their commitment to you and ask you to help me thank them now.

(Applause)

This convocation represents a beginning - a beginning of new friendships, new learning, new dreams, new opportunities for exploration and self discovery. In joining our academic community, you have joined your fellow students, as well as the faculty, staff, and alumni of Clarion University who hold very specific values that I now ask you to live by every day as a member of our community. Our students, faculty, staff, and alumni value:

- learning;
- accomplishment;
- encouragement;
- diversity;
- civility; and
- civic engagement.

In talking about our core values, I am reminding you that with the opportunities of being a college student at Clarion come many responsibilities. First and foremost, your life is in your hands. Your love and pursuit of learning is up to you. You will have to take the initiative to seek out and construct your college life. It's all around you but you will have to step up and seize the opportunities.

So, this night, which is on the eve of your first day of your first week of your first semester, of your first year as a Clarion University college student, there are three things I encourage you to do in order to be successful. Here goes:

- Go to class every day. Don't miss a day. Going to class is Job One.
- Be ready for every day. Reading assignments, tests, papers, projects - no excuses.
- Dare to care. Make friends and be a friend. You will need them and they will need you.

You are the Class of 2019. Over the next four years you will be part of a university community that is growing and building upon a 150 year legacy of learning and service. For in 2017 --- when you will be Juniors we will be celebrating our 150th anniversary. It will be one heck of a birthday party.

We are a university that appreciates our history and builds upon our past to the future needs of the state and region. This semester we re-opened one of our historic buildings Becht Hall which was built in 1906 and now hosts a variety of services and programs that are here for you to be successful. We are also pleased to have opened brand new student housing, the Suties on Main St.

Academically- we have a proud past and a very exciting future. Our education program was the first academic program at our founding in 1867 and defined the university for most of our first 100 years. We are known nationally for our teacher preparation program. At the same time we have continuously offered new and renewed academic programs which are of interest to you as students and in demand by industry and society. This semester we are offering several new degree programs in criminal justice, nutrition and fitness, sport management, paralegal studies, and data analytics.

Clarion has a proud past and a courageous confident future of which you have now joined.

In closing, I would like to recognize many folks who are with us this evening and the many who have worked hard to make this event so special. My sincere thanks to the University Convocation Planning Committee, co-chaired by Ms. Erin Schuetz and Mr. Shawn Hoke; Mr. David Katis, our master of ceremonies; Mr. Rob Hoover, who manages this wonderful auditorium; and Dr. Stephen Johnson who worked with our students to provide our own wonderful vocal performance this evening. In particular I would like to thank Dr. Martha Robinson, who led our procession with a wonderful bagpipe rendition. I also thank all the faculty and staff who have joined in this celebration.

Finally, to you our newest students who have now joined the Clarion University Golden Eagle Family, your success is our number one goal. Now is the time to take flight, soar high to live your life's dreams, work hard, have fun and . . . Fly, Eagles, Fly! Repeat with me . . .Fly, Eagles, Fly!

Congratulations, Class of 2019!