

NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION WELCOME

Karen M. Whitney

Monday, August 22, 2011

Moore Hall, 8:30 a.m.

Good morning!

It is an honor to be before you today to welcome you to Clarion University and to your new and important role as faculty. I am proud that you have decided to join the Clarion family in service to the university.

In joining Clarion University, which was founded in 1867, currently enrolls over 7000 students annually, and offers over 90 associate, bachelor's and master's degree programs, you are joining over 300 other faculty and over 400 staff who have made this institution a high quality university that is distinguished by holding the most professional accreditations of any university in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Of the 14 universities that comprise the system, Clarion University has 28 professionally accredited programs.

As new faculty I ask that you commit to our mission. The mission of 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 creative abilities, and to develop a respect and enthusiasm for learning that will extend throughout their lives.

As new faculty I ask that you commit and work everyday toward realizing our Clarion University values.

At Clarion –

- We believe in the learning potential of all our students who are willing to invest hard work in the pursuit of their education.
- We are committed as a faculty, staff, and administration to creating opportunities for all our students to achieve success beyond their own expectations within an environment that cultivates tolerance, civility, and respect.
- 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.
- 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.
- We are committed to advancing our relationships with the larger communities of which we are a part.

Please know that I believe firmly that our mission and our values speak to the core of what we are asking of you as new faculty. Your work as educators, teachers, advisors, mentors, colleagues, and campus and civic leaders is vital to achieving our mission. I can not

emphasize enough the important role you can have, not only on the campus but also in the surrounding community. My hope is that you live within 30 minutes of the campus. My hope is that you will consider becoming involved in the greater community – in the civic life of the community. This is a great community and one that needs us in our role as educators and leaders.

You may also know that Clarion University is one of one of 14 universities that comprise the PASSHE system of state universities. Clarion is the only public university for this region. We are the degree granting, civic engaging center of this region. We are the largest employer in Clarion County. We are the center of culture, arts and entertainment for the region. In sum, we have what I consider a duty to apply our teaching, research and service in ways that engage the civic and commercial life of this region. Your work will be key to these efforts.

I am going to close my remarks this morning by talking about our students. For the most part our students come from northwest Pennsylvania although you will find that we have students from over 45 states and from many other countries attending Clarion. Many of our students are the first in their family to attend college while at the same time you will find students who are the 2nd, 3rd and sometimes 4th generation to attend Clarion. You will also find that our students want what we all wanted when we went to college—to learn, to have fun, and to work hard to make a better life for themselves and their families.

You will find from your fellow faculty that Clarion University is known for being an academic community that cares deeply for its students. We expect a great deal from them and, in return, we care deeply for our students and work with them to achieve a high quality education.

Alumni will often remark that they consider Clarion University to be a magical place and a place and experience that changed their lives for the better. You will be part of that magic and you will have the opportunity to change lives for the better.

Again, as President of Clarion University, welcome, thank you for joining us and thank you for what you are about to do for our students, our university, and our community. Fly Eagles Fly!