

General Faculty Meeting
Fall, 2012
August 8, 2012
Comments
Dr. Tim Hynes, President

Let me begin with a few introductions. Consistent with strategic planning commitments, we identified a new Vice President for External Affairs. And we are pleased to introduce today Ms. Kate Troelstra, who comes to us from Clemson University. I would acknowledge the exceptional service of Mr. Steve Stephens, who retired this June after 10 years of dedicated service to Clayton State University.

For only the second time in our history, we identified a new athletic director, Mr. Carl McAloose, who comes to us after extensive experience as an AD, a Conference head, and a widely respected consultant. Let me express my appreciation to Mason Barfield for his incredible career of service to the university. Thanks are also in order for Mr. Mike Mead and Ms. Kristen Davis, who served in leadership roles during this last transition year.

I am also delighted to introduce Professor James Keebler, the New Chair of the Faculty Senate. Thanks are very much in order for the excellent work of our colleagues Professor Antoinette Miller, who led that group so well this past year.

And I also want to say that even with otherwise sobering budget news at yesterday's Board of Regents' meeting, I will say that the Board Office included a request for nearly \$20 million for our science building project in yesterday's Board of Regents' state budget request. I look forward to starting this week to gather support for the project from other state funding partners.

During the course of the next few minutes, I want to briefly share three premises I hold about the current state of higher education in general, and our institution in particular.

Premise One: The nature of higher education and its interpretation is a matter of framing.

In truth, each of the elements discussed here will be an important part of a future of higher education—but the frame one brings at a particular point in time of higher education determines those things about higher education that our audiences will find important.

So let me give three examples of ways to frame what we think of higher education, knowing that these frames are by no means exhaustive.

First, higher education can be considered a commodity—learning is done to achieve particular ends-- Here there will be a discussion of on-line with higher education as a commodity and the MIT, Harvard and Stanford, UVA, Georgia Tech consortium work. Coursera allows no credit, but provides certificates associated with learning. I do believe that there are other critical parts of that commodity of learning than just the content—and it is in defining and advancing those additions that I believe we at CSU must and will provide our students, ourselves, and our community—some progress in that area I believe will be part of Dr. Crafton's presentation—and if not, part of materials we all provide later. But if on-line

content alone is seen as the defining feature of higher education for the future, the value we bring to learning here will unfortunately be missed by “our publics.” That would be a loss to both to them and us.

A second area of framing: Higher education as defined as either a private benefit or a public good. K-12 systems over the last century have been seen as a public good (post Horace Mann). The GI bill post WW II made some portion of higher education public good. There have been some challenges to that thesis based on the claim that “... not everyone needs college.” We believe that it is likely all will need continuous learning opportunities, many of which will require skill sets identical to those needed for access to college—and skill sets learned through traditional baccalaureate education. But again, this frame is essential to current and future debates about funding for higher education.

There are challenges to access that make this frame a constant concern. Financial issues portend future challenges, although not as wild as imagined - Georgia has a relatively low end level of graduate debt- but it does ask many to reflect on an old adage that one should go the best school possible, damn the debt and regardless of program. For us, a review of that premise may lead students and families to understand that nursing or healthcare or philosophy might be equally excellent at a regional comprehensive state university. This may well serve to benefit Clayton State if we are successful in using our strategic plan and our technology planning process to help us articulate why we will be even more of a value tomorrow as we are today. But there is no question that we will continue to serve financially challenged students in the future.

And our ability to continue to provide access and excellent education during times of financial challenges continues to be an adventure. It cannot go without saying that what we are able to do to foster learning and thus foster the realization of dreams, accomplishments, and other new horizons would not be possible without the faculty and staff of this institution. But the means to accomplishing all of this and more will involve the framing question—should higher education be largely seen as a public good or a private benefit?

A third area of framing: Higher education as a safeguard to democratic institutions—civil disagreement possible in context of university—and so for example, you will hear more about the American Democracy Project and Jim Flowers in my office efforts to bring Former Governor Barnes and current Attorney General Olsens to our campus for Constitution Day to discuss federalism in our current times—or hear Ambassador Andrew Young speak to our spring graduates just a few months ago—or we serve as a host for the Clayton County Economic Development Steering Committee, of which Dr. Crafton is a member—or as a location for local negotiations over the Clayton County local option tax revenues—a subject where there is always a need for a safe place.

We are committed to doing more to influence the framing applied to our institution. Many of you have been part of a process that has heretofore been referred to as our “Branding.” If there was one consistent message that I received when starting on an interim basis three years ago, it was a plea to tell the rest of Georgia and elsewhere who we really are at Clayton State. And so the results of months of work with colleagues and Stamats—and their systematic inquiries to a wide array of internal audience—were the outline of a strategy to create authentic perceptions of others about who we are as an

institution. This is not a Don Draper/ Mad Men 1960's creation —like the selling of Richard Nixon as a nice guy. It identifies a clearer story—that Clayton State has a history of bringing many things for our students and our community to reality. For some, it has been dreams realized - access for those without access, or early access for dual enrollment students. It may be a history of economic success realized—or a history of active student learning realized—or a history of support of progress in south metropolitan Atlanta realized.

While you may hear this referred to as branding, it is much more than an artificial presentation constructed by present day Don Drapers. A frequently repeated definition of brand: “Your brand is the truth about you, well told.” Or as David D’Alessandro observed: “A brand is more than just advertising and marketing. It is nothing less than everything anyone thinks of when they see your logo or hear your name.” And so we will continue on this path, led by Kate Troelstra and Dolores Cox and their colleagues.

Institutions need to develop different value propositions to warrant continued support. Our responsibilities as stewards of place allow us to benefit from the framing of our institution as a driver of economic as well as community contributions. As I have shared on a number of occasions, I believe that if Harvard were to close tomorrow, the Harvard faculty would have offers elsewhere by the end of the week, and Yale would have already begun asset transfers of the Harvard Corporation’s endowment. If an institution like Clayton State were to end operations, the area around us and our students would likely be forever harmed—and that is the frame through which I view the value of your work.

Second Premise—we must continue to act strategically—that is, to make wise choices—about the directions we take for our students, our faculty and staff, and our community. We will be sharing more about our progress in strategic planning as well as next steps we will be taking. Publically I thank Dr. Gary May for his help in helping many of our campus leaders frame some exceptional discussion about where we go next. We are at the beginning of a broader systematic survey matching educational needs identified outside the university with imbedded outcomes for our educational programs. And our extensive survey of current activities demonstrates some exceptional work already under way in innovation, active learning, and faculty directed student research. Dr. Crafton will be sharing more about a whole array of exceptional faculty activities—with the intent to design our actions to do different things, and not do more things—to achieve more areas of success for our students, our faculty, our staff, and our community.

To be able to open those strategic choices broadly to the campus community, we will be making even more steps to make transparent ways in which budgets are developed and allocated; in which facility investments are identified, reviewed, given a full hearing, and supported when justified. Using the processes already in place, there has been air conditioner replacement for our server room, building smart classrooms for teacher education, changing out windows across campus for increased energy efficiency, in network upgrades. Work is being done as we speak in addressing the wear and tear in Downs Hall to allow us to continue to make that a space for which the campus is proud. In Fiscal Year 11 we were able to renovate Faculty Hall, bringing back to life a building that was almost unusable, we purchased a Tandberg video conferencing unit for our Nursing department to use and again upgraded

some very old network switches. And we were able to allocate nearly 10% of new funds available last year from tuition and formula funding to adjustments to salaries for some faculty and staff positions—not enough, clearly, but a reflection of our commitment to invest in our colleagues as well as in new colleagues—whose addition is wonderful.

We will be having campus meetings during this term on a wide array of issues—on budget of course, but on technology futures, on SACS and our reaffirmation, on refinements of our strategic plan—and of course this afternoon over food and beverages in the music building.

Third Premise—regardless of frame, Clayton State University will make contributions to the state and regional and national higher education environment. Here are a few examples. *James* magazine identified Clayton State as Georgia's best buy in higher education

As you likely know—the *Atlanta Journal/Constitution* identified CSU as among the top 100 workplaces in metro Atlanta, and 15th among institutions with more than 500 employees—and more will be circulated later about a celebration some of our colleagues are planning to say thanks to everyone here for creating the conditions that made this possible. I have indicated that I do not do dunking booths.

The economic impact of Clayton State was summarized as recently reported by UGA research-- Third in economic impact among state universities, at \$252 million and 2,311 jobs—and that does not include the value educating our students brings to all of us.

<http://www.payscale.com/college-education-value>

At the above URL, one may see the following data: a 5.7% ROI per annum over 30 years for Clayton State graduates—7.4% if one includes the value of financial aid—a better rate of return for students than those experienced by a number of other in-state institutions.

Some of you may remember that the last time this analysis was done, we were measured to be one of the 50 safest campuses of over 6000 in the US.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2010/09/14/50-safest-colleges.html>

We continue to be reported as a Top-tier institution in the South by *US News and World Report*.

So let me close with a note of thanks—to each of you first. It is an honor and a pleasure to be a member of this campus community. You continue each day to create the conditions in which I find myself believing that every day is excellent. Second, I say that it is an honor to work with an incredible group of vice presidents, deans, and directors who are dedicated each day to build the conditions for an excellent Clayton State University—not just tomorrow, but many years from now. And a special thanks to Valerie Lancaster and Brenda Carr in my office—I am always amazed at how talented they are. And so welcome back!!