

Faculty Presentation  
August 10, 2011  
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It is great to be in Spivey Hall, even as I love our Theatre.

I do have a few sheets of paper. I do recall a recent Prairie Home Companion News from Lake Wobegone. It was the case that Pastor Liz was quite adept at knowing well her material and thus going to the podium without notes. And like the members of the Lutheran Church in Lake Wobegone, there should be greater anxiety to be created if Pastor Liz was without notes, since notes at least provided some time limit. And so I rise with sheets of paper—because with sheets of paper, there is at least some end in sight to the presentation.

So welcome to the beginning of the 2011-2012 academic year. Thanks to each one of you for being here and committing yourself to the task of creating the conditions for learning at Clayton State—for our students, for ourselves, for our colleagues, and for our community.

I want to focus on three things in this president's report. First, I want to outline just a few of the accomplishments for the institution since we last met as a group. And I apologize in advance that I may miss a few highlights, because the activity of our faculty and staff during the summer months has been nothing less than impressive. Second, I would like to make some comments about my take on the current landscape of higher education presently, noting that many of the issues facing Georgia have their counterparts even in places in which the state earns a good deal of money from oil wells. Finally, we need to talk a bit about strategic planning at Clayton State, acknowledging that this will be but one of many discussions both campus wide and at the individual department level over the next five years. As has been the case since this process was started, it must be to focus on institution wide action.

When we begin with accomplishments, we cannot help but acknowledge the challenging times within which they were made. We are still in the midst of the most significant economic downturn since the great depression. State support for higher education has decreased nearly 25% over the last three years, and some of that expense (although far from all of it) has been passed to our students and their families, some 55% of whom were Pell eligible during the Spring. State, as opposed to institutional, salary support for state employees, including universities, has been a casualty of state budgets that have fallen to levels not seen since the turn of the decade. But in spite of that, our institution and its faculty and staff have not reduced in the slightest their commitment to learning which advances students, faculty, staff, and our wider community. And our role as a steward of place and a touchstone for the southern metropolitan area has grown and will prosper. And so once again I say thanks.

First--Accomplishments—I start with the budgeting process—we worked hard to make the process open—it's often challenging to do so. Even the Harvard program for Presidents (I did pass, by the way) spends nearly a day discussing the complex nature of university budgets. But out of our processes, came the allocation of nearly one million dollars in new funds—nearly 20%

of which was devoted to addressing significant salary concerns for staff and faculty alike. It is nowhere near enough, but was a clear indication of our matching of budget with values. Additional faculty positions to support some of our enrollment needs, as well as earmarking of dollars to begin to address the strategic mandate of better communicating who we are as an institution, attracted the lion's share of the remaining dollars. All of this came without new state dollars.

The School of Nursing received its second federal grant this summer, making the total awarded during that period of time at \$1.5 million. Pass rates for national boards stayed above 90%. Four SIMS students in math and computer science received NSF support through faculty mentors Professors Krop and Hudacheck-Buswell to attend national conferences in undergraduate research. Professor Peter Fitzpatrick of Health Care Management was elected Board Chair for the Association of University Programs in Health Administration. Dr. Joe Johnson began his two year tenure as President of the Southeastern American Society for Eighteen-Century studies. . Professor Alex Hall with three sets of works demonstrating his scholarly excellence in the theology of the middle ages. While finished in April, we became aware that our own accounting students helped local citizens file 179 federal and 144 state returns (1/4 million in refunds, using round numbers). This work has recently attracted grant support from the Atlanta Prosperity Campaign. In the area of facilities and operations, it has been an incredibly busy summer. Bookstore renovations were completed, creating a wonderful space, while simultaneously expanding access to students for used and ebooks as one of many potential opportunities for them to reduce costs. Renovations in BHS have been completed—well, done by Monday—and once again our colleagues have created classroom space, office space, retained lab space, and provided a new home for our advising center so important to support student success. CSU East renovations are moving more rapidly toward completion, allowing for office space but also creating additional and needed instructional space. We acquired Clayton Place—and added 16 acres of new land for the university, and 852 beds at a cost ½ that paid per bed previously. Candidly, questions posed monthly over the last year by the faculty senate about that project made it better. Traveling elsewhere in the system, I am reminded about the extraordinary talent of our facilities colleagues. One thing we did not accomplish was funding for the new science building—but as Kevin Costner advised Al Capone in the Untouchables, “Never stop fighting til the fighting's done.”—NCAA women's national championship happened before May—but the women's tennis team's final four appearance in NCAA D II and the second place award for overall athletic success in the Peachbelt Conference did not. Additional universities in France and Turkey signed formal agreements with us, adding to the foundation for international programs that contribute to one dimension of diversity—so central to us. Ms. Pat Barton, Director of Financial Aid, was mentioned by name yesterday by Chancellor Huckaby as one of six people who contributed to the enormous task of getting HOPE calculators ready in time to be used by the system to accommodate changes made by the legislature in the spring and to begin July 1.

I know I have missed several accomplishments, and hope that if you were not recognized, you will share that with me this afternoon at the faculty welcome back reception in the Continuing education building at 5:30. I am honored to have the chance to support exceptional colleagues.

This leads nicely to the second area of my remarks—a selected sketch of the landscape for higher education. It goes without saying that the current economic conditions have created challenges for higher education even if no other changes were underway. But they are. And there is good reason to believe that these changing conditions make it imperative for us to adapt well if we are to continue to be a place in which learning opportunities for a diverse set of students attempting to access the American Dream can continue to be successful. I point out two areas of such change, even as I admit that there are other complex social and political drifts happening.

There is growing skepticism about how much value added higher education provides for our students, and there are growing economic and competitive factors that may move students away from us. Put another way, if we can't give people what they perceive to be their money worth, they can go some place that can. And to admit a prejudice, I believe that change is upon us, and that together we must address that need for change strategically.

A brief anecdote can begin the conversation about the first. In recent months, the work **Academically Adrift** has attracted considerable attention both in and outside the academy. Chancellor Huckaby had copies of the work left on the chairs of all university presidents at his first meeting in July—a couple of colleagues asked me if I knew of the book—I had to admit to them I had read it, that Provost Crafton had gotten copies for all the deans already, and that for our own retreat, all members of the extended cabinet read the book. And as Chancellor Huckaby observed at the time of his meeting, while one may not agree with all the conclusions of the text, several members of the general assembly had read the work. In sum, the work concludes that Higher Education has not done a very good job of giving students appropriate written and oral communication skills; using tests of critical thinking, there is evidence that some 35% of their sample made no progress, and in some instances regressed, in their ability to draw inferences from data found in texts. In close reading of the text, I and others believe that we have changes underway here that may very well address this concern with student learning. And I share the view found in a response to **Academically Adrift** from Gary Rhodes, former general secretary of the AAUP in ACE's **The Presidency**: “There is a desperate need for joint efforts among our presidents, faculty and professionals, as well as students staff, community groups and business leaders...Accountability will trump learning unless presidents and faculty work together to develop learning enrichment activities and instruments attuned to the particularities of their campuses, fields, students, and communities. To channel accountability in productive directions, presidents must see themselves less as captains of the ship or as CEOs of the firm, and more as joint partners leading in a shared effort.” (p. 30) And here I believe this institution is poised to be successful.

The second area in which changes will come reflects disruptive factors, and cost pressures on the state, students, and families to access higher education. In yet another work that has attracted considerable attention both within and outside of the academy, Clayton Christensen has described higher education as an institution facing disruptive technologies. (He mentions on-line education and health care costs) And like other such institutions facing disruption, the largest and the most established members can avoid change for a very long period of time, and the early manifestations of the disruptions were not particularly good, thus lulling individual parts of those institutions into the false belief that the changes would not affect them. And time and again in areas outside higher education, they did affect huge numbers of those institutions. Nonetheless, I

believe we at Clayton State have an opportunity to prosper if we make strategic responses to these conditions.

From Christensen and Eyring in the **Chronicle of Higher Education** July 29, 2011 “The key is to measure...partners...against standards consistent with the institution’s mission and strategy. For most colleges and universities, that will mean defining scholarship more broadly than traditional research and publication. The scholarship of teaching, in particular, has been overlooked for too long.” And, I would add, whose pursuit is made more likely by our strategic plan that focuses on active student learning, of revisions of our curriculum, of looking across and beyond traditional disciplines for objects of learning, and on innovative ways to generate learning for students. “Institutions willing to innovate in these ways have a bright future. Most young students will continue to prefer going to college over fully on line study, as long as it is affordable. Increased attention to students and student serving scholarship will win the favor of policy makers, and greater focus on subject matter and increased on line instruction will make traditional higher education easier to pay for. Yes disruption looms—but institutions willing to change from the inside out can get back to winning ways.” Put another way—Harvard will survive any changes that take place—Ohio State football will survive any number of scandals—but institutions like ours will survive because we are intentional and because we will discover the correct mix of permanence and change. And this leads to my third area for comments—strategic planning.

Planning (include technology planning) will define what better means on our campus; define excellence on our terms. We will fail only if we aim only toward defining excellence in terms created by flagship institutions, or we fail to define and commit ourselves to excellence on our own terms.

The new mission, vision, values and strategic goals of the institution are posted on the SWAN, on my page, and on the Academic Affairs web page—which also includes the many iterations benefiting from campus wide comments.

There will be announcements on time lines and activities in the next week or so. Jim Flowers, who has recently come to us from Georgia State University, will have leadership responsibilities for the implementation and execution of this plan. Other announcements will involve a request for volunteers to serve on a campus wide implementation committee, that will reflect student, faculty, staff, administrative, and in some instances community perspectives. There will also be requests for volunteers to participate in technology planning, so much a part our other strategic planning efforts. There will also be announcements of a public “kick off” celebration that will provide means for both internal and external audiences to get a perspective on how this plan guides our immediate future and structures us for the long term. And finally, planning will help create shared responsibilities—with outcomes and public metrics--for action steps that will provide measures for public accountability of all of our individual and collective responsibilities for making this plan result in real actions.

As I shared with the campus earlier, there are five touch points that authentically frame strategic actions for this university.

**Celebration of Diversity**—Diversity is a concept greater than race or gender. We must include age, national origin, income, class, diverse ways of knowing in the academy—different ways to make and sustain knowledge claims and understanding. As is always the case under conditions of diversity, some frictions develop as differences come to be understood. But our unique strength comes from our conviction that diversity and differences and the energy so derived must inform and advance our actions.

**Innovation** –We must do more than celebrate the diversity that informs and advances our actions. We must take advantage of that diversity to continuously review the design of our learning strategies, and find new and innovative ways to create learning opportunities and the services that support them. We must apply to those innovative strategies rigorous ways to assess student learning, faculty and student scholarship in a diversity of forms, and other areas of learning success.

**Active learning**—In every learning situation, students will be asked to take actions that contribute to their own learning. Such learning will lead to persistence in reaching academic goals, including graduation. Students will be supported in their efforts to be prepared for the marketplace, as well as through multiple forms of engagement, prepared to find relationships among learning and all other parts of their lives. And out of this demand for active learning we believe will come measureable improvements in retention and graduation rates for our students—and area for which we will all be held accountable in coming years.

**Partnerships**—Much more can be accomplished in work with others. Whether in improvements in career services with potential employers who can help in the design of academic and support programs, in community engagement with other institutions to foster learning success in shared students, in the creation of an environment in which students work together to support their own learning, and in finding potential financial supporters for our learning activities.

**Communication**—we must get much better at communicating to a variety of audiences-- to ourselves, to potential students, to potential partners, to friends, including friends who do not yet know who we are.

Based on discussions during the development of our strategic plan, it is clear that new and current academic programs must look to opportunities to collaborate across programs, departments, and colleges, and where possible and beneficial to student learning, with other institutions and some of their faculties, with business and service organizations sharing some of the same learning needs. And our programs will increasingly be asked to provide evidence of the learning that has occurred, and of the models we have examined to achieve that learning. To be very clear, we will have metrics that are public, identify contributions each of us make toward the plan, and will provide constant reminders that this plan will not stay on a shelf.

Drew Faust, President of Harvard observed that planning that is successful brings this work under very challenging times from being described as impossible to being thought of as imperative to being accepted as inevitable. We will do so here.

The Atlanta Journal Constitution series on Board of Regents Institutions caught the attention of a lot of people recently—the limits of current actions, including the relatively challenging graduation rates for Clayton State were among items discussed in that coverage—although it is also the case that we have experienced the second largest percentage growth in the system in baccalaureate degrees earned—from 558 in 2005 to 949 in 2010. Even in the face of much to do, our plans authentically rooted in our mission and values point us in the right direction, and reflect the choice of who we are and where we are going that has been the consistent call of the faculty and staff of this institution.

And the parallel work in the AJC on **Forward Atlanta** points to higher education as both a key to economic and political growth, as well as a strength to leverage for the future of the state. That work identified Hartsfield Jackson International Airport and the emerging requirements for logistics as an opportunity for the area—even as we are threatened by other areas who seek to develop those same strengths. And our institution, whose diversity can drive innovation, and drive learning for the emerging populations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which takes seriously our responsibility to produce 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens, and whose instinct for success under challenging circumstances, can benefit and prosper as long as we are driven by our planning, and guided by our mission and values.

Our value proposition is that of an institution committed to adapting learning to immediate and greater social needs—to provide all students with active learning opportunities, all programs with examples of innovations in learning, and all activities accelerated by the diversity of people and perspectives that is Clayton State.

Thanks for all you do, and for the privilege of serving with so many great colleagues and leaders.