

Prologue to the Clarkson Quasquicentennial

July 1, 2015

Under the leadership of President Anthony G. Collins, the Clarkson University community set out in 2003 on a deliberate [evolution to excellence](#) to define and own its destiny by establishing goals and strategies to achieve undisputed academic excellence; engagement of alumni and its community; and adroit financial management. The end result is an undeniable growing buzz about Clarkson and an unprecedented return on investment for students and alumni: remarkably successful careers and contributions to society begin at Clarkson.

During this past decade, the University shaped its academic and social core by pursuing innovative ways to leverage the vision of a Clarkson education, mission and values and arranging the basic building blocks of the institution to realize new avenues for interdisciplinary education, research breakthroughs and solutions for society. For example, new degree programs in health professions and groundbreaking programs in emerging areas of business were added. Clarkson moved into the top-tier of national research universities.

Since setting its strategic course in 2003, the University has grown its applications more than 150% to fully stabilize undergraduate enrollment, raised the number of incoming students from the top 10% of their high school class from 34% to 44% of the student body, and achieved the highest enrollment of women and underrepresented students in its history. The E2E fundraising campaign galvanized alumni and friends to step forward with their philanthropic support and surpassed its \$225 million goal to bring more than \$247 million towards the institutions' highest priorities.

For faculty, the creation of new knowledge is no longer simply an end goal, and instead the frequent driver of Clarkson's leadership in developing intellectual property and transferring technology to economic enterprises that value innovation, creativity and the creation of wealth. More than 150 new businesses are in the pipeline supported by the Shipley Center for Innovation and the Reh Center for Entrepreneurship.

Clarkson has established itself as a champion for the North Country region. The University and its administration are active players in economic development initiatives through incubation and support of new business ventures as well as a leadership role in New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council program.

The campus conducted a comprehensive review of all its financial streams prior to the economic downturn of 2008 and its prudent fund management practices place the University among the most solid schools in higher education, positioned to support its students and faculty in pursuit of their ongoing destiny. The endowment remains well-positioned for growth to serve the University's mission.

The University today represents an ambitious and enterprising community that attracts people who possess an entrepreneurial and pragmatic problem-solving spirit; an aptitude for how technology, scientific discoveries and business impact learning, teaching and research; and a collaborative mindset that embraces multidisciplinary, diverse teamwork.

The Clarkson experience remains highly student-centered, immersed in technology and focused on the development of the whole person. These attributes contribute towards the remarkably successful careers of graduates. Within the first year of graduation, more than 95% of students are placed in their field of study and/or career aspiration. Clarkson is among 12 schools with graduates who earn higher starting salaries than Harvard and its alumni mid-career salaries are in the top 5% of schools nationwide. A Brookings Institution report indicates the choice to attend Clarkson over other schools leads to a 42% increase in earnings and placed Clarkson in the top 10 institutions nationwide, just behind MIT and ahead of Stanford University.

As the higher education sector looks out over a precipice defending the value of a college degree, it is indeed Clarkson's time to respond: not by reinventing itself, but instead by bringing new scale to those aspects of the Clarkson experience which further the remarkable success of our graduates and to leverage the national reputation of this hard-won return on education.

It is this backstory of diligence and growth in Clarkson's evolution to excellence that spurs the vision for the future and positions the institution for Clarkson@125. It is the leading edges of that evolution and the persistent commitment to prepare successful professionals for their leadership role in a global society that renew the confidence and resolve for the University community to come together to create a strategic plan that propels the institution forward towards its 125th anniversary in 2021.

Clarkson is a new type of school, which is out of the ordinary line of ascent; which does not confine itself to a definite place in the educational order but which seeks out objects of its own. As a result of their freedom from obligation to the general system of education, they will not only be at liberty, but they will be strongly impelled to search out those real needs of the American people in a matter of education which are at present unsupplied. It is essential to this function that they should remain in a state of flux; open to all impressions, mobile under all influences; not too soon assuming that they have found their ultimate resting place and have taken on their distinctive character.

General Francis T. Walker at the Founding Ceremony, November 30, 1896
