Dear Alumni, Family, and Friends,

At Clark University we are passionate advocates for liberal education. By liberal education we mean a transformative educational experience marked by broad knowledge, rigor of analysis, critical thinking, transferable skills, and engagement with the world locally and globally. Liberal education enables and empowers graduates for success in career, life, and citizenship. Here in the United States, we are in the midst of a national conversation about ways to improve college readiness, strengthen higher education, and increase college completion rates. You can be assured that through our work on liberal education Clark will be an influential force in these discussions.

As I connect with alumni across the country and abroad, I’m continually impressed by the level and variety of accomplishments that you, our graduates, have displayed. You have crafted successful careers; provided pioneering leadership for new organizations, businesses and industries; conducted groundbreaking scientific and social research; and confronted significant local and global problems in your post-graduate lives. You’ve greeted the world beyond Clark with passion and purpose, and the world is fortunate to have you working on its behalf. I am encouraged by the many alumni I speak with who forcefully re-affirm the lasting value of the liberal education afforded by their time at Clark University. Going forward, Clark will be doing more to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of alumni, whether in the world of finance, health care, business, education, research, or the arts.

The liberal education our alumni have received here at Clark is noteworthy. Indeed, a strong liberal education has never been more important for our graduates as they enter a world that in some essential ways is scarcely comparable to the one many of us stepped into with our diplomas in hand. Consider the demand for instantaneous action that new technology thrusts on us, the velocity with which industry is bred from innovation (Facebook comes to mind); consider our domestic political polarity and global economic instability. All point to a compelling need to provide liberal education that is more thorough in its presentation and nimbler in its execution. The world our students enter demands graduates who, in the simplest terms, can both think and do at the highest levels—in the evolving universe of liberal education there is no longer room for either/or.

In response, our mission is expanding and deepening. We are in the process of preparing the Clark University Academic and Financial Plan to be presented to the Board of Trustees this spring. The document will chart a course for Clark over the next five years as we work to become the model of a small liberal arts-based research university by producing research and scholarship that connects to issues of major social concern on a national and international scale. We will be adopting the tenets of Liberal Education and Effective Practice (LEEP), which melds the benefits of liberal education with a broader set of capacities that will enable our graduates to be thought leaders and change makers as they pursue lives of accomplishment and consequence.

Over the past months I have met with many Clark graduates and shared with them my commitment to deepening and broadening our engagement with alumni, family, friends, and other supporters of the university. Many helpful suggestions are emerging as to ways in which you are willing to help further the mission of the university and promote the success of our students. I have also listened carefully to the priority we must place on elevating the visibility and reputation of Clark University across the country and around the world. Your sense of Clark today will directly inform our strategic planning work going forward.

We intend to do even more. Your involvement will not be incidental to the success of Clark and our students, it will be critical. We will be asking you to help shape the future of the institution, engage with our research initiatives, share your knowledge and experience as mentors for students, and help provide networks of support and opportunity for our undergraduate and graduate students. We will be engaging you with more formality and specificity as we proceed, but I am extending an invitation to you to join us in this effort. As we move forward together to advance Clark University, I will be calling on alumni, families, and friends to support Clark financially as well. Please respond with your commitment to support Clark every year through the Clark Fund at whatever level is comfortable for you.

The Class of 2010 demonstrated the collective power of individual actions. Last May when 60 percent of the class contributed to their senior class gift, which they allocated to scholarship, Clark trustees responded by giving a full annual scholarship in honor of the class’s record-setting participation rate. Like many alumni, families, and friends, the graduating seniors recognized the importance of giving back and of supporting Clark for future generations of students.

How important is the work that we do here at Clark? I recall the legacy of the late Jack Adam, an insurance executive whose $14.2 million gift to Clark last year will help support Clark’s efforts to merge world-class scholarship with determined practice in high school education. Mr. Adam was a true believer in the power of a superior education to propel the individual, and the society composed of those individuals, to greatness. Our goal is nothing less.

If you are returning to Clark for Reunion Weekend, I hope you’ll stop to talk with me. I’d very much enjoy hearing your ideas about these developments. And if you won’t be in Worcester that weekend, I hope we’ll be able to meet at a welcome reception in a city near you.

Sincerely,

David P. Angel
President