Dear alumni, family and friends,

Research and creative work are central to Clark’s mission and identity as a research university. Most of you are familiar with our distinguished history in these areas, from Albert Michelson to Robert Goddard, G. Stanley Hall and many other intellectual giants and pioneers. Today, Clark is forging a new model that is a powerful synthesis of research, community partnerships and undergraduate and graduate education. Our vision is of Clark as a university of consequence where research excellence empowers action on critical human concerns, and students pursue their passions with a purpose in the world. I’d like to share with you some of the distinctive features of the scholarship and creative work underway at Clark that embody this vision, and that are such a remarkable aspect of our university today.

Clark’s research programs are distinguished by their focus on addressing issues critical to societies, seeking answers to fundamental questions that often extend across disciplines, and recasting conventional questions in new and exciting ways. This approach is reflected across the breadth of the institution, in every academic department and in cross-disciplinary research centers such as the Higgins School of Humanities and the George Perkins Marsh Institute. In the sciences, research is supported by our Ph.D. programs in biology, chemistry, and physics, and by cutting-edge facilities and instrumentation. Research excellence is demonstrated by levels of research publication, grants to our faculty, and prestigious fellowships. It’s rare for a school of Clark’s intimate size to have such a deep, rich, and enduring research pedigree.

Of particular note is Clark’s growing reputation for and expertise in user-inspired research. Alongside basic research and scholarship sparked by curiosity around new ideas and perspectives, our faculty and students engage in research that is deeply embedded in the context of current problems and is often carried out in close collaboration with practitioners and policy makers. Such engaged scholarship is exemplified by the work of faculty in the Hiatt School for Urban Education at Clark, who are shaping new approaches to achieving inclusive excellence in American urban schools, and by scholarship within our newest research center, the Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise, on ways to promote economic growth, education, and health and well-being within mid-sized cities.

Clark is focused on research that connects — discipline to discipline, research to application, student to faculty and peers, and university to community. In the belief that the best way to solve problems is through collaboration among diverse teams, Clark has created communities of effective practice, a model that comprises multigenerational groups of students, faculty, researchers, and practitioners from a variety of fields. I remember well my own experience in this regard. Early in my career as a geographer at Clark I had the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary scholarship with two other members of our faculty, one of whom was trained as an environmental chemist and the other a philosopher who wrote and taught on environmental ethics. We came together with researchers in Poland to do important work on how to improve workplace safety and environmental protection in countries entering the market economy. Such innovative collaborations can lead to unconventional solutions to difficult problems, and are a hallmark of Clark University.

Clark’s status as a leading research university with the intimacy of a liberal arts college affords remarkable opportunities for student learning. Our students do much more than assist at various steps in the research process — they are involved at a fundamental level, working closely with professors, peers and practitioners on design and implementation. All Clark students — both undergraduate and graduate — have ample opportunities to establish close connections with some of the world’s top scholars, researchers and practitioners. In psychology, these research communities link faculty with Ph.D. students and undergraduates working on such topics as men’s mental health, emerging adulthood, early childhood development, and many more. In the sciences, undergraduate and graduate students have access to state-of-the-art research equipment — without having to wait in a long line to use it. Fellowship support, much of it funded through generous gifts from alumni and friends, allows students to continue their work as research assistants in laboratories over the summer. And the accelerated degree program allows many of our most talented students in the sciences to complete a research-based master’s degree in five years, positioning them for great success in career and graduate school.

Research also informs Clark University’s leadership in advancing liberal education in this country, and establishing partnerships in our neighborhood and communities around the world. Work in the learning sciences and in educational development enables Clark to make great strides in understanding how students learn, and assess ways to intentionally and effectively cultivate leadership, creativity and innovation among our students as they carry this learning out into the world. In this way, research, teaching and student learning come together as one Clark.

Fiat Lux. Thank you for your interest, commitment and support.

Sincerely,

DAVID P. ANGEL
President