Dear Alumni, Families and Friends,

When Clark University was founded in 1887, it was the first all-graduate institution in the country. The University opened with students studying psychology and the sciences, including a department of physics whose first program chair was Nobel Prize winner Albert A. Michelson. While much has changed in the intervening century and more, graduate education remains an integral part of Clark’s mission and a key part of our future. So what is the current graduate footprint, and what is the roadmap for the future of graduate education at Clark University? At a time of profound change in higher education, and with rapid advancements in technology and evolving models of graduate education, these are significant questions for the institution to consider.

Clark University has just over 1,000 degree-seeking graduate students, making up about one-third of our total student enrollment. We offer Ph.D. programs in the departments of biology, chemistry, economics, geography, history, physics and psychology. Our top-ranked Graduate School of Geography has the distinction of having awarded more Ph.D.s in geography than any other university in the country and, along with our psychology program, represents our largest population of doctoral students. Our offerings also include a first-in-the-country Ph.D. with a focus on Holocaust and genocide studies — another pioneering landmark in Clark’s contribution to the academy. Compared with many research universities, Clark’s Ph.D. programs are small in size and emphasize close individual mentoring by our faculty, positioning our Ph.D. students to be competitive with graduates from much larger programs.

Among the most significant developments in graduate education at Clark over recent decades is the growth of master’s degree programs, offered both on our campus in Worcester and internationally through partnerships with other universities. Key to the expansion of graduate education was the opening of the Graduate School of Management in 1982. Clark offers an M.B.A., as well as M.S. degrees in finance and in accounting. Other master’s-level programs include an M.A. in teaching (M.A.T.), which is tightly connected to Clark’s pioneering and transformative work in urban education, as well as degrees in diverse fields such as environmental science, international development, public administration and information technology, among others. Students outside the United States can now earn graduate degrees in communication, public administration and information technology through University partnerships in China, Poland and Russia. Finally, we offer a popular accelerated degree where Clark students can complete both a B.A. and a master’s degree in five years — with the fifth year tuition-free for qualifying students.

We see significant opportunity to grow our graduate footprint in the coming years, expanding enrollment and adding graduate programs in areas where Clark has academic strength and where there is demand for graduate degrees. This means building on Clark’s strength in engaged scholarship — research work that is deeply embedded in the context of current problems and is often carried out in close collaboration with practitioners and policy makers. Such research, whether conducted within individual departments or in cross-disciplinary centers such as the Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise, provides an ideal platform for well-respected, professionally oriented graduate programs. We will seek, for example, to add graduate program offerings in such areas as global, public and community health, and in the interface between geographic information science and the environment.

In addition to serving students, a more robust graduate presence also will enhance Clark’s reputation and strengthen the University’s resource base. As one of this country’s leading research universities, it is important that Clark continue marshalling the ideas and talent that will deepen our impact on issues facing our country and our world.

Increasing graduate enrollment also makes sense for Clark financially. It allows us to take advantage of economies of scale and scope without losing the intimacy that is a hallmark of the University while simultaneously keeping costs down for all of our students. Investments in academic programs, facilities and support services will be needed to allow growth in graduate programs, but the net result will be a university that is stronger in both finances and reputation.

Any discussion of graduate education would not be complete without considering online education. Following excellent work by faculty and staff, we are building out a platform for offering more courses online, a new frontier for Clark. Our primary focus will be blended graduate learning opportunities, where some of the courses for a degree program are completed online and some are completed in traditional classroom settings. We anticipate that approximately half of future growth in graduate enrollments will be in the form of online courses and programs; we do not at this time anticipate significant use of online courses at the undergraduate level. I welcome your comments and questions regarding future directions for graduate education at Clark University. Please email me at dangel@clarku.edu. Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

David P. Angel
President