Dear alumni, families, and friends,

In the month of April, our campus is busy with prospective undergraduate students who are making final decisions on which college or university they will attend. For these visiting students, this is both an exciting and anxious time. After a college search process that began in the sophomore or junior year of high school, and typically with offers of admission from multiple colleges now in hand, students and their families have reached a moment of truth. Our approach at Clark University is to encourage admitted students to focus on what is distinctive about the Clark experience, both inside and outside of the classroom. We foreground our talented students and faculty as the best ambassadors of Clark during the visit process.

I run a session for parents in which I speak to the power of liberal education, and why advances in learning science, cognition, and other developmental sciences make this an extraordinary moment to be attending college. Put simply, over the past two decades we have learned an enormous amount about how to improve student learning and ensure that college fully prepares students for success in career, life, and citizenship. Some of the findings from cognitive science relate to the variety of learning styles among college students. Other research speaks to broader aspects of the college experience, such as the importance of mentorship, learning that takes place outside of the classroom, and the changing pathways that link college to career.

At our open houses, I advise families to ask questions about whether the colleges they are considering have adopted these proven, research-based learning practices. Is the college organized with intentionality so all students benefit from mentorship, experiential learning opportunities, best-practice approaches to learning from difference, and classroom strategies to build leadership, creativity, empathy, and resilience?

I am confident that Clark University is taking up this challenge to systematically and comprehensively apply proven high-impact practices to the undergraduate experience. From our nationally recognized LEEP Center, to innovative curricula such as our Problems of Practice courses, and our newly launched ClarkCONNECT career-mentoring program, we are advancing liberal education for our students and the country.

Sincerely,

DAVID P. ANGEL