The Presidential Evaluation Committee is comprised of Council of Trustees Chair Jim Kifer, Immediate Past Chair Trustee/Representative R. Lee James, Vice Chair JD Dunbar (Chair of Review Committee), Secretary Milissa Bauer, Trustees Syed Ali-Zaidi and Darren Young, Student Trustee. We consider the evaluation of the President relative to annual scope of work as well as structured constituent forums with approximately 40 individuals, including a committee meeting with the President. A compilation of questions, (now used for three years) was circulated to the Constituent Groups in advance of the meetings. The oeuvre and related questions: "vision, commitment to achieving academic and organizational excellence, leadership, communication," and queries related to "goals and contributions" provided an outline to which this committee followed in structure. We were not as tightly hewn to them this year in response to constituent feedback. Though many continued to answer the questions, the conversations this year were more candid. It is important to note that our committee has been the same for the preceding few years and it is our intention to build a trust bond with constituent forums to benefit from this exchange of authentic communication to strengthen common goals for the President's leadership and to discover avenues for improvement. In all cases, the feedback wholly demonstrated caring about Clarion University's success with immense earnestness.

Executive Summary

Following a "watershed year of challenge, planning and change," (this quote by President Whitney herself) it is clear that the President stayed on course with acceleration. The storm of "perilous funding shifts," decreased funding and the downturn in enrollment trajectories collided alarmingly. The Workforce Plan accrued collateral damage. As one individual recounted, "There were a number of positions saved through reallocation to new positions, and the bottom line is not good. But, it could have been worse." It is important to note that President Whitney was not responsible for the economy or the funding levels; she is responsible for the recovery.

In the academic arena, two new nursing programs surfaced, laudable yet contentious to some. In the wake of losing an Academic Dean at Venango College of Clarion University, that constituency, formerly the nursing degree stakeholder, is uncertain of its status with sharing this major with Clarion University campus. Even those who cite "low morale," maintain their advocacy for Clarion University. There is a passion for Clarion University, not a sense of apathy. We find this hopeful in the path of rebuilding.

Constituent Input
"Building" is an operative word at Clarion University and a part of Main Street, Clarion that formerly featured parking lots to the left and more parking and trees to the right as you enter the community on 322 West is the site of construction, new buildings and a transformation for both Main Street and Clarion University. A "Clarion Blueprint Community" marries university professionals with community leaders, will continue to engage local residents and businesses in developing a clear vision with strategic plan for change in Clarion, work to develop stronger local leadership, and attract investments to build a healthier, sustainable community. Their primary goal is to, "revitalize Clarion's commercial district." Clarion University is the primary entrance to inbound 322 West traffic and the exit to 322 East traffic.

The Community Leader Groups were in concert that the education value of Clarion University graduates are at a "high level." They give special credit to "high tech" education designations and the SBDC. They were particularly concerned about "Master Plan" and suggested more community outreach for better awareness of development fallout relative to new construction and cited "sidewalks" as an example of this. They continue to laud President Whitney's leadership and presence in community activities and in university support related to community issues. Venango College of Clarion University (Oil City) is feeling the void of strong leader Chris Reber's exit to higher education though they did assert that existing interim dean in doing a "good job." Representatives from both campuses are feeling a "communication crunch" where rebuilding is happening all around them (in Clarion) and where little seems to be a strong focus for Venango College of Clarion University (Oil City area.) Clarion University is a community benchmark in both counties and the committee's sense is that they are looking for "reassurances." The President's "vision" was described as "progressive," but there was a mixed assessment on the need for, "more communication," especially related to the Strategic Plan. There is an emphasis on President Whitney's communication style and familiarity that helps to imbend trust. "Karen is a connector. She knows my name. She knows all of our names. When she asks how I am, she genuinely wants to know the answer."

The Alumni Association and Foundation Board cite a, "student FIRST President," and commend her "approachability" and attention to diverse audience analysis when speaking. They acknowledge that she is a, "leader among her peers in Harrisburg," and credit her, "savvy for innovative ideas for excellent gain." This group is likewise worried about student enrollment and retention rates, due to the investment in all of the buildings, especially the housing project." One member summarized, "She is a gem of a President; a great and bold choice for Clarion University."

The Clarion Faculty Senate and Venango College Forum would like, "enhanced, improved communication from the President," that incorporates their input. One member said, "We need more improvement in three areas which are finances, enrollment and morale." This was countered by those who characterize morale as low. Venango College again said, "There is a disconnect between Venango College and Clarion University. There have been great improvements in advertising but we need to keep a focus on Venango as well." The Faculty Senate prepared a documented response to the questions circulated prior to the evaluation. RCM indicated a "cumbersome model of accounting, contentious in implementation." They feel, "RCM is paradigmatic of deep problems in President Whitney's leadership tone and style." Faculty Senate's recommendation for an achievable goal for the President is to, "abandon RCM" in favor of a "more centralized accounting method." It surfaced during this session that it would be helpful to be thanked for their efforts, "just a little handwritten note of gratitude." A member of the evaluation committee noted that the President continues to trumpet the success of CUP students, staff and
faculty alike, both in reports to the Council of Trustees, and in presentations to others. It was suggested that there may be a "disconnect" in perceptions of the President's communication style.

**The APSCUF Leadership Group** presented their second iteration of a survey of their membership. They submitted a comprehensive document along with survey summary results. They requested additional forums with the Council of Trustees and "spirit of transparency, in an open public forum." The survey was reported to have a 60.5% response rate of faculty who have indicated the reorganization has led to confusion, along with sense they are "not being valued, or respected." RCM is still a trigger of contention. The overall sentiment to "Resource Centered Management" is that it causes, "hurtful competitiveness among departments that discourages useful collaboration," and continues to be "ill-suited for an institution of our size." It was indicated that faculty are, "increasingly frustrated with a budgeting process that seems ill-equipped to help us tackle the crippling economic realities." There is also a raised concern on communication relative to academic affairs and to external audiences. Though there is confirmation the President has met with faculty. Those occasions are indicated as, "perfunctory window dressings." This group presented a report commending, "Clarion University has been doing a better job, despite bumps along the way, in marketing the website is clearly improved and there has been an increased effort in target marketing." This same document asserts, "APSCUF is unable to identify any major professional contribution made by President Whitney during her tenure at Clarion University." This obvious morale issue and "communication disconnect" calls for active listening at all levels.

**The Presidential Commissions Chairpersons**

President Whitney's communication style was accorded "exceptional" status by the group. "She is approachable and is open to our suggestions." There is a differing perspective on RCM herein. "RCM works for us. People who don't like RCM are in departments that are not doing as well." President Whitney's communication style and leadership is commended but the suggestion was made to "unite institutional communications" with a "strategic communication plan." The relative comment is: "The Workforce Plan is an example of bad rollout. The new strategic master plan for the university is much better. The website is much friendlier and effective." The recent forum on "use of force by police" was cited as a public issue that received exigent university response in an educational awareness mode - an exemplary standard. There is an awareness in this cohort of the President's recognized leadership among PASSHE representations.

**The Clarion and Venango Student Leadership**

Students present their own reality check. "Dr. Whitney is data-driven, open to feedback, and all about students. She sits with us in the dining hall. She approaches students she doesn't know." "She has open lines of communication directly to her office for the students." One of the students felt that he could, "tell her my truth about my first semester experience." Another student related, "I see her as personal as well as professional. She is easy to talk to, open." In comparison, "This year is more calm than last year. Both solutions for the workforce plan had to come into play." The Freshman interrupted with a welcome salvo, "This is the first I have heard about tension last year. I didn't even know there was a tension issue." These student representatives likewise praised their faculty members, and advisors. "Advisors and faculty know you and care about you. I love Clarion and I want it to succeed." They responded enthusiastically to website indicating, "Some say it's too big. Personally, I have no issues. I have an amazing time navigating through it." One of the students suggested partnering with admissions in high school recruitment. There is a sense of
continuous campus activity generated through Whitney’s Presidency. "Campus is so alive when everything else is dead outside."

**The Non-Faculty Bargaining Unit Leadership of AFSCME and SCUPA**

This representative population reported, "some positive changes; some new programs are great." "We need to change programs in order to survive." The recognition in communication style by President Whitney is recognized, "She knows me. She engages me in conversation." "There is a real personal level of knowing what’s going on with employees. She keeps track of people's personal lives." It is noted that she is, "present ‘with’ students, not just ‘at’ them." Relative to governance, they feel there is a "genuineness, but sometimes it gets lost in transit." They are open for change. "We have to give plans a chance. We all have to be responsible for budgeting." They feel that students come to Clarion for, "the college experience." Yet, "It takes every single person who works here. She (President Whitney) feels that way." There was a concern raised about number of administrators hired and suggested communication could help this issue. "How many administrators did we have before? How many do we have now?" One member felt that one aspect of Clarion University is more important than numbers, "the needs of the students."

**The President’s Executive Council met by conference call with the Chair of the Council of Trustees and the Chair of The Presidential Evaluation Committee.**

This committee is united in support of President Whitney's leadership. "She is accessible and demonstrates commitment to Clarion's mission and vision." One member indicated, "She understands that healing needs to be done." A suggestion to spend more time with disenfranchised constituencies on RCM model may help. Another member indicated, "RCM isn't the issue. A lack of overall revenue is the issue. No model would serve all at this point." There is acknowledgement, "Lots of jobs were saved but there is still some anger among faculty and staff. There hasn't been an infusion of revenue. There is a fear, may be a perception, of NEXT workforce plan." Another added, "There is a looming budget deficit. People with less seniority may be nervous. This is not irrational." When directed to questions about the President specifically, all seemed in agreement, "Her commitment to Clarion University is unquestionable."

**2013-2014 System Accountability Results (SARS)**

Clarion University admirably met 16 out of 21 performance measures. CUP launched new university brand design and logo, "Courageous, Confident Clarion" and concurrent website redesign targeting prospective and existing student interest. The "Accomplishments" section below addresses measures met, and the areas under “Measures To Address” include remedial action such as a new Dean of Enrollment Management and the increased amount and numbers of institutionally funded scholarships.

**Accomplishments (SARS)**

- Student Learning Assessments
- STEM and Health Profession Degrees
• Closing The Transfer Student Achievement Gap
• Faculty Diversity
• Stewardship

Measures To Address (SARS)

CUP did not meet the goal for "Closing The First Time Freshman Achievement Gap" in 2 out of 4 measures for Pell and underrepresented minority students. CUP missed 2 out of 4 measures in "Closing The Access Gap." We missed the number of "Degrees Conferred" by 112 degrees (1537 vs 1649) due to multi-year trend of downward enrollment across multiple disciplines.

Synthesis

"Karen clearly accents the positive while tackling tough issues." The Points Of Pride Summarizes over the last year are a dozen single-spaced pages of achievements ranging from local to national that demonstrates Clarion University hums with activities, and celebrates students first, faculty, staff, diversity, challenge and change. We trustees are especially proud of the sixth consecutive year designation as military-friendly university and urge continued development and innovation in retaining such an honor.

The President continues to organize her efforts around a "500 Day Plan" of goals and objectives which are updated quarterly and posted online to ensure a high level of transparency. The top two priorities this year are to increase enrollment and increase revenues.

The most important actions taken this year include installing new enrollment management leadership and launching a series of best practice recruitment, admissions and student financial services efforts.

During the last 12 months, Clarion has offered several new academic programs including Criminal Justice Administration and Nutrition & Fitness. "As important is we have established a process for exploring, developing and launching new academic programs for the future. There is now over a dozen academic credentials in this pipeline for the next 4 years," noted President Whitney.

President Whitney stated, "The Workforce Plan was completed ahead of schedule and this fall a post plan review and assessment will be conducted." She continued, "The most important areas of future effort will be to continue to directly engage the faculty in order to productively come to a common understanding regarding key policy issues such as promotion, tenure, and sabbatical. Additionally, I plan to engage the faculty regarding the modernization of our general education."

As noted in the last evaluation of President Whitney, a President who has been everywhere is missed when she isn't there. She has shared her travel schedule relative to PASSHE as well as Clarion University Foundation advocacy which we see as a crucial step in fundraising. It is clear in this cycle of rebuilding, some constituencies feel, "a little lost," and are in need of affirmation by the President. It is this Committee's consensus that Dr. Whitney is commended among other Presidents in the PASSHE system and serves as a spokesperson. She is well regarded in her service and leadership to other organizations such as the Center for Rural Pennsylvania. The Rural Issue Form that was hosted by Clarion University was a benchmark program that has impacted public policy relative to rural issues with certain drugs of epidemic proportions and this is a value to audiences far beyond the university constituencies.
President Whitney continues to be responsive and responsible. Communication development and a "strategic communication plan" is a recirculated area of emphasis and has been a mainstay of Presidential reviews (not solely Dr. Whitney's.) She is a lightning rod for some faculty and clearly she has indicated her intention for faculty engagement. She continues to apprise her trustees in electronic communication forums before events unfold and in unplanned exceptional circumstances, immediately thereafter. Much progress was made in this "year of rebuilding" and her leadership is duly credited for avoiding structural and academic rust though in the process, there is evidence of "rust in the trust pipes." The President is fully aware of this and hopes to address the pronounced concern.

We continue to commend the service and encourage retention of Dr. Karen Whitney as Clarion University's President.

Respectfully Submitted On Behalf Of The Committee,

James Kifer
Chair, Clarion University Council of Trustees

JD Dunbar
Vice-Chair, Clarion University Council of Trustees
Chair of Presidential Evaluation Committee