How do I contact the Clarion University Foundation, Inc.?

You can contact the Foundation by calling 814-393-2572 or by emailing giving@clarion.edu.

Where is the Foundation office located?

The Foundation Office is located in the Seifert-Mooney Center situated at the corner of Greenville Avenue and Corbett Street.

What is the mailing address for the Clarion University Foundation, Inc.?

Clarion University Foundation, Inc.
Seifert-Mooney Center for Advancement
840 Wood Street
Clarion, PA  16214-1232

I'm writing a check to the Foundation. To whom should it be made payable?
All checks should be made payable to Clarion University Foundation, Inc.

What is the relationship between Clarion University and Clarion University Foundation, Inc?

The Clarion University Foundation, Inc. organized in 1969, is a not-for-profit corporation and charitable organization of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Foundation is further described as a tax-exempt charity by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

As reflected in its articles of incorporation, the Foundation was formed to "promote educational purposes in connection with or at the request of Clarion University." Designated by action of the University Council of Trustees, the Foundation is the organization designated to receive and manage private sector gifts provided for support of the activities and programs of the University. The operation of the Foundation, establishment of policies, acquisition of resources, stewardship of assets and management of endowment funds are directed by the Board of Directors of the Foundation and are carried out by the staff of the Foundation.

Clarion University and Clarion University Foundation, Inc. have established a fee-for-service partnership, secured by an outline agreement. The agreement details the two organizations' mutual fundraising goals and objectives, as well as the financial arrangements agreed upon to accomplish such goals.

Recent findings by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) have shown that the number of institutionally related foundations now receiving some form of institutional support has climbed above 50 percent.
Since 2000 Clarion University's investment in its affiliation with the Clarion University Foundation, Inc. has provided a return in excess of 10:1.

What are the reasons for a separate foundation?

As separate tax-exempt corporations, institutionally related foundations can perform many functions more effectively than state offices. The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) has articulated reasons why public colleges and universities establish institutionally related foundations:

- Provide a means of clearly separating state and private funds. Many donors prefer to make a gift to a private rather than a state entity. In this way, they can be assured that their gift will be invested profitably, distributed for the intended purposes, and not become confused with state appropriations or other funds.

- Can invest beyond the low-risk, low-return strategies often mandated by states, thereby increasing the opportunity for greater investment return and, consequently, the revenue available to the primary institution.

- Are not subject to regulations governing the sale or purchase of real property by the State and can perform these and other business transactions in a competitive and expeditious manner.

- Can develop for-profit subsidiaries such as research parks or real estate foundations that contribute to the mission and resources of the college or university while shielding the primary institution from the risks associated with such investments.

- Donors often feel more secure making a major gift to a foundation governed by individuals with extensive legal, business, and financial management skills. Foundation boards can operate in a businesslike manner and provide an engaging role for powerful and successful individuals who want to advance an institution.
Foundations can also serve to safeguard the privacy of donors who may not want the details of their personal finances to become a matter of public record.

What are the benefits to Clarion University?

The partnership holds extraordinary financial benefits for Clarion University. Since 2000, the University has invested $3.126 million in the Foundation and received $32.287 million back in operational support over the same period of time. This is a greater than 10:1 return on the University's investment in the Foundation—a very wise and profoundly advantageous investment for Clarion to make.

The real beneficiaries are the students and the faculty. Due to declining state budget support nationwide, public universities depend increasingly on the ability of their institutionally related foundations to carry out the universities' missions. The Clarion University Foundation, Inc. has been and will continue to be an extremely productive partner for the University.

Are the Foundation's donor records open to the public?

The Clarion University Foundation, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit corporation, not a public agency. This separate foundation structure, which is utilized successfully to support public universities nationwide, legally preserves the private nature of gifts received in the same manner that donor privacy is ensured in the case of most charitable institutions.
An independent Foundation can better serve the University and donors if its private nature continues to be respected. It accomplishes this in a number of important ways:

- It assures donor anonymity when requested, as well as the confidentiality of donor information.
- It receives gifts from donors who prefer not to have their contributions placed in state accounts.
- It provides donors with an extra level of assurance that their gifts will be used in accordance with their wishes.
- Gifts made to the Foundation on behalf of the University provide program enhancement, rather than replacement of state support.

Does the Foundation have an independent board of directors?

The Clarion University Foundation, Inc. has an independent volunteer Board of Directors. Board membership consists of up to 24 persons, including one representative from the Alumni Association and one representative from the University Council of Trustees.

The University President and Vice President for Student and University Affairs are ex-officio members of the board. Ex-officio membership is the norm among institutionally related foundations and arises from the fact that, by their very nature, institutionally related foundations take their mission and funding priorities from the university with which they are affiliated. Ex-officio members have a voice in Board deliberations, but no vote.

The Foundation Board of Directors executes its fiduciary responsibilities under the strictest of guidelines. Many members of the Board hold executive levels positions in businesses. They understand the need for transparent and ethical dealings in all matters so as not to
jeopardize our status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Many also happen to be Clarion alumni and major donors to the Foundation.

What is the difference between restricted and unrestricted gifts?

The vast majority of gifts the Foundation receives are designated for specific purposes at the University. Since 2000, more than 86 percent of the gifts accepted were "restricted" by donors to support a particular scholarship, program fund, or building project.

The Foundation has a fiduciary responsibility to comply with donor intentions with respect to the charitable gifts it accepts and may not expend funds in a manner inconsistent with the terms of the gift provided by the donor.

Annually the University receives a report from the Foundation's independent auditors. As a part of the audit process, tests to confirm compliance with donor intent are conducted through a review of Foundation expenditures.

How does the Foundation pay its administrative costs?

Though private support continues to grow, unrestricted giving continues to decline as a result of donors choosing to designate gifts for specific purposes. The result is that the Clarion University Foundation, Inc. can not fund operations solely on unrestricted contributions.
Other sources of income for the Foundation in addition to the fee-for-services payment from the University are: management fees assessed on the endowment for overseeing the investment of these assets; property management fees; investment earnings on non-endowed funds; other unrestricted income, such as laundry, vending and logo/licensing commissions and a fund raising cost recovery fee. Cost recovery fees are disclosed to donors through pledge agreements and other gift documents.

Is the Foundation serviced by University personnel?

The Clarion University Foundation, Inc. employs its own staff. These employees are recruited, hired, trained, and managed subject to the Foundation's human resources policies and procedures. They are housed on Clarion University's campus.

As a part of the "fee-for-services" partnership, the University provides services related to Foundation employees' presence in University space including, without limitation: office space, storage space, office furniture, equipment, utilities, mail, photocopying, and telephone services.

What control is exercised over disbursements?

Established guidelines require signatories on Foundation accounts to represent to the best of their knowledge that disbursements from Foundation accounts comply with all donor imposed restrictions; support the University's mission and programs; represent reasonable, legitimate and arm's length business transactions; comply with Foundation
disbursement policies; comply with the Council of Trustee guidelines and comply with applicable laws.

What is the level of public disclosure?

The Foundation's financial dealings are subject to public disclosure in the following ways:

The agreement between the University and the Foundation is signed by the President of the University, the Chief Financial Officer, the President of the Foundation Board of Directors and the Foundation CEO. It is then sent for approval by Legal Counsel of the PA State System of Higher Education.

The Foundation retains an independent certified public accountant to perform a full audit of the foundation's books and accounts. The firm of Brooks and Rhoads is currently contracted to conduct this audit.

The audit results are reviewed by the President of the University and its Chief Financial Officer and become a part of the University's annual audit. The University is required to file a copy of the audit results with PASSHE.

The Clarion University Foundation, Inc. is required by federal law to file a newly expanded annual Form 990, in the same manner as numerous other public charities across the country.

The Foundation, in accordance with its board-approved information disclosure policies, voluntarily discloses a number of documents and other information related to its activities, including a conflict of interest policy for our Board of Directors and a whistle blower policy to encourage staff reporting of any corruption, unethical practices, violation of state laws or regulations, mismanagement, waste of funds, abuse of authority or danger to public safety.
Conclusion

All public and private universities raise funds from their alumni and friends, and every one of their budgets carries an expense for this purpose. Most public universities elect to delegate fundraising to their affiliated foundations—one of the reasons is in order to separate their gift assets (private funds) from their public assets (state appropriations). The institutions would not make these investments if their foundations did not generate a reasonable return, and Clarion’s $10 return on a $1 investment in the Foundation is excellent by any standard.