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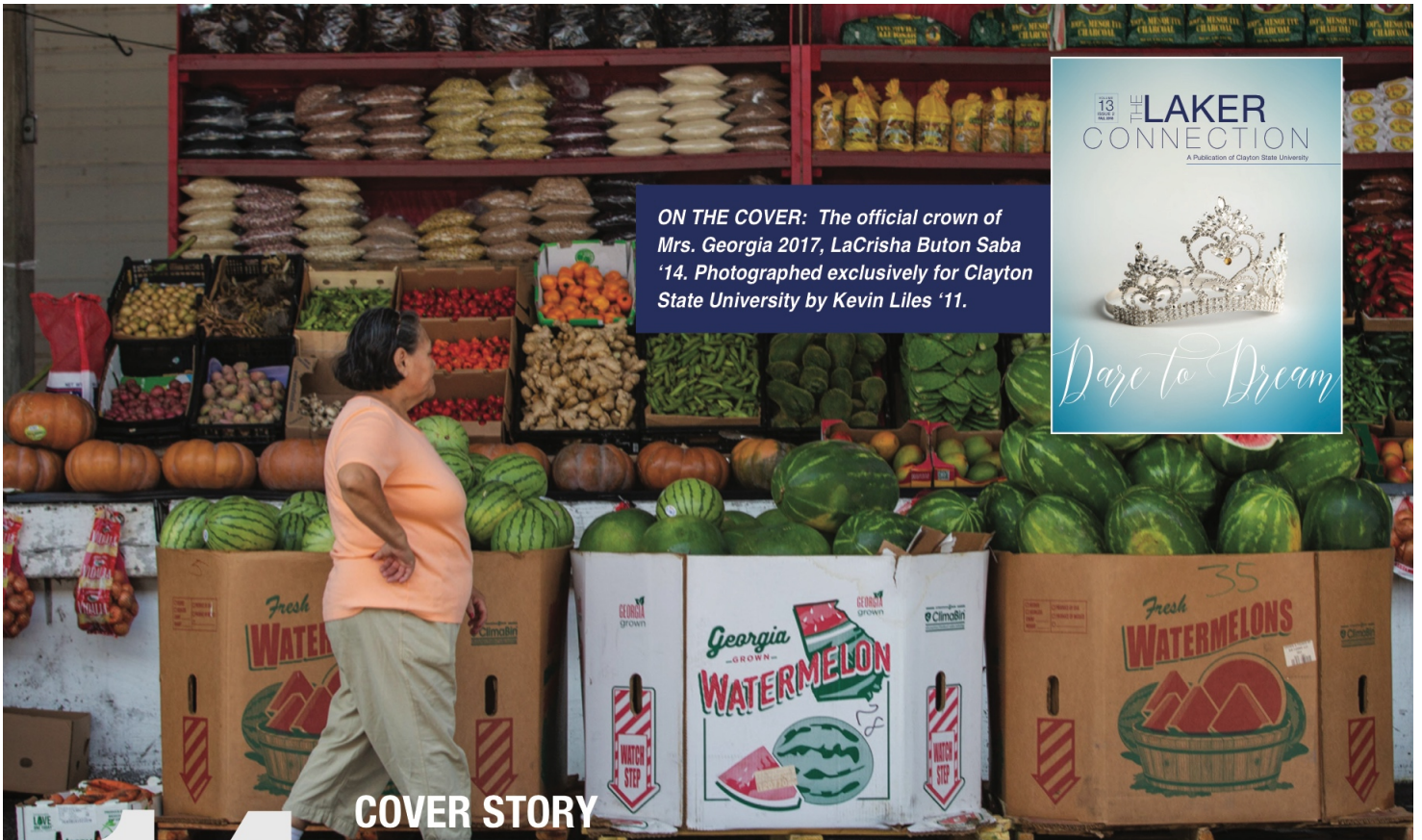
THE LAKER

CONNECTION

A Publication of Clayton State University



Dare to Dream



ON THE COVER: The official crown of Mrs. Georgia 2017, LaCrisha Buton Saba '14. Photographed exclusively for Clayton State University by Kevin Liles '11.



14

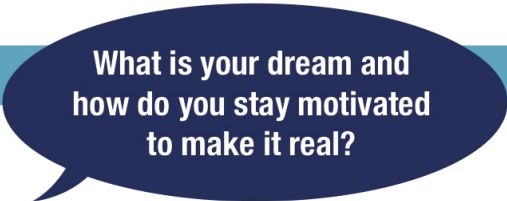
COVER STORY

Dare to Dream

A refugee driven to care for others, an educator focused on improving literacy among children, and a beauty queen that uses her platform to help the homeless—these are just some of the stories of Lakers on a mission to achieve their dreams.

FEATURES

- 6 Branding Our Dreams**
Dreams. Made Real. It's more than a tagline, it defines who Clayton State University is. In the last two years, the institution has undergone an ambitious brand campaign project to not only expand the Laker family, but also spread the word that Clayton State is where a student's dreams can be realized.
- 12 Motivate Me**
It's not enough just to set a goal. You have to put some action behind it, if you want to see it through. Experts at Clayton State say motivation is key to becoming successful in your personal and professional life.
- 38 Athletics Embarks on a Bright Future**
Fresh off back-to-back men's basketball conference tournament championship wins and record-setting academic honors among its student-athletes, Clayton State Athletics is embarking on its first-ever multi-million-dollar facilities renovation that looks to be a game-changer for the department over the next 30 years.



PRESIDENT Dr. Thomas J. Hynes Jr.

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"I dream of building strong brands. I stay motivated by working with the team to accomplish major brand building projects like the magazine, #Give4Dreams, the University's brand ad campaign, and our new podcast!"

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"Driven by the desire to ensure the voices of all individuals are heard, my dream is to tell the stories of the interesting people all around us."

"My dream is to someday trace my family's genealogy. The mystery and discovery of new information keeps me wanting to dive deeper."

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"My dream is to become a director for big time films. I stay motivated by working with great people on projects that are probably too big for us to complete."

DEPARTMENTS

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In Memoriam**

THE OFFICE OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

publishes The Laker Connection twice a year. It is distributed to alumni, trustees, faculty, staff, retirees and friends. It is also published online at clayton.edu/laker-connection.

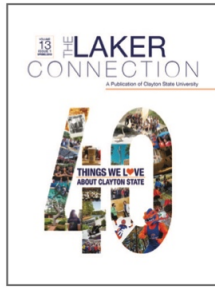
A unit of the University System of Georgia where dreams are made real, Clayton State University is located 15 miles southeast of Atlanta, Georgia.

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Visit us online at www.clayton.edu.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What are your thoughts about this issue of The Laker Connection? We want to hear from you at marketing_communications@clayton.edu



More from “40 Things We Love About Clayton State”

You all did an amazing job on the latest edition! The Top 40 list is great, and we appreciate the nod to Fried Chicken Thursday, Jazzman's, and Loch & Nessie.

Thank you for your hard work. This is definitely an issue I'm holding onto!

Norman Grizzell

Director of Auxiliary Services

Thank you very much for a vibrant, engaging magazine.

I loved the piece about reasons to love Clayton State, the individual interest stories, and the updates both on your rankings among educational institutions and your involvement in the community.

I am proud of what you have accomplished.

Rosalynne V. Price Ph.D.

Director of Business Development, MBV Properties

We received tons of submissions for the cover story for our Spring Laker Connection issue on what the Laker family loves about Clayton State. We couldn't list everyone's "loves," so here are a few more reminders about why Clayton State is such a great university.

No 41

"I love everything about CSU. As a retired military officer and senior citizen, there never appears to be a generation gap and course work and easy registration gave rise to some of the things I love about CSU. I love the layout of the campus, and the professors are always willing to work with you to resolve any problems."
-Robert Johnson '12

No 42

"Since I worked a full-time job and attended evening classes, I really enjoyed the serenity of the campus after the hustle and bustle of midtown and rush hour traffic. The campus was a peaceful relaxing place where I could think and relax before heading to class."
-Tonia Miller '08

No 43

"There are so many things to love. Perhaps the best part is the myriad of friends and future business contacts that I met. Even a decade later, I am still active friends with classmates, faculty, and staff that I met during my time there. Those years and those memories are among my most valued and cherished of my life."
-Michael Bowers '08

No 44

"For me, having taught on campus for 38 years, it was always the people. Students, staff, faculty, even the administrators always felt like friends and family. It made working a pleasure."
-Jim Braun, retiree

DID YOU KNOW?

The Laker Connection is an award-winning magazine! The publication earned multiple awards from the 2017 Collegiate Advertising Awards and the 33rd Annual Educational Advertising Awards.

From the 33rd Annual Educational Advertising Awards, the magazine won a Silver Award for the Volume 12, Issue 1 edition of the magazine featuring the supply chain program, and a Merit Award for the Volume 12, Issue 2 edition of the magazine featuring artificial intelligence. It is the largest and oldest educational advertising awards competition in the country.

The 2017 Collegiate Advertising Awards (CAA) program named the Laker Connection among the top in the nation. The CAA is an elite program recognizing higher education organizations for excellence in communications, marketing, advertising, and promotions of their schools.



New this issue! Did you know that you can find additional photos, video and podcast content for Laker Connection stories online? Visit us at www.clayton.edu/laker-connection or www.clayton.edu/thelakerlounge when you see one of the following icons!



THE LAKER LOUNGE

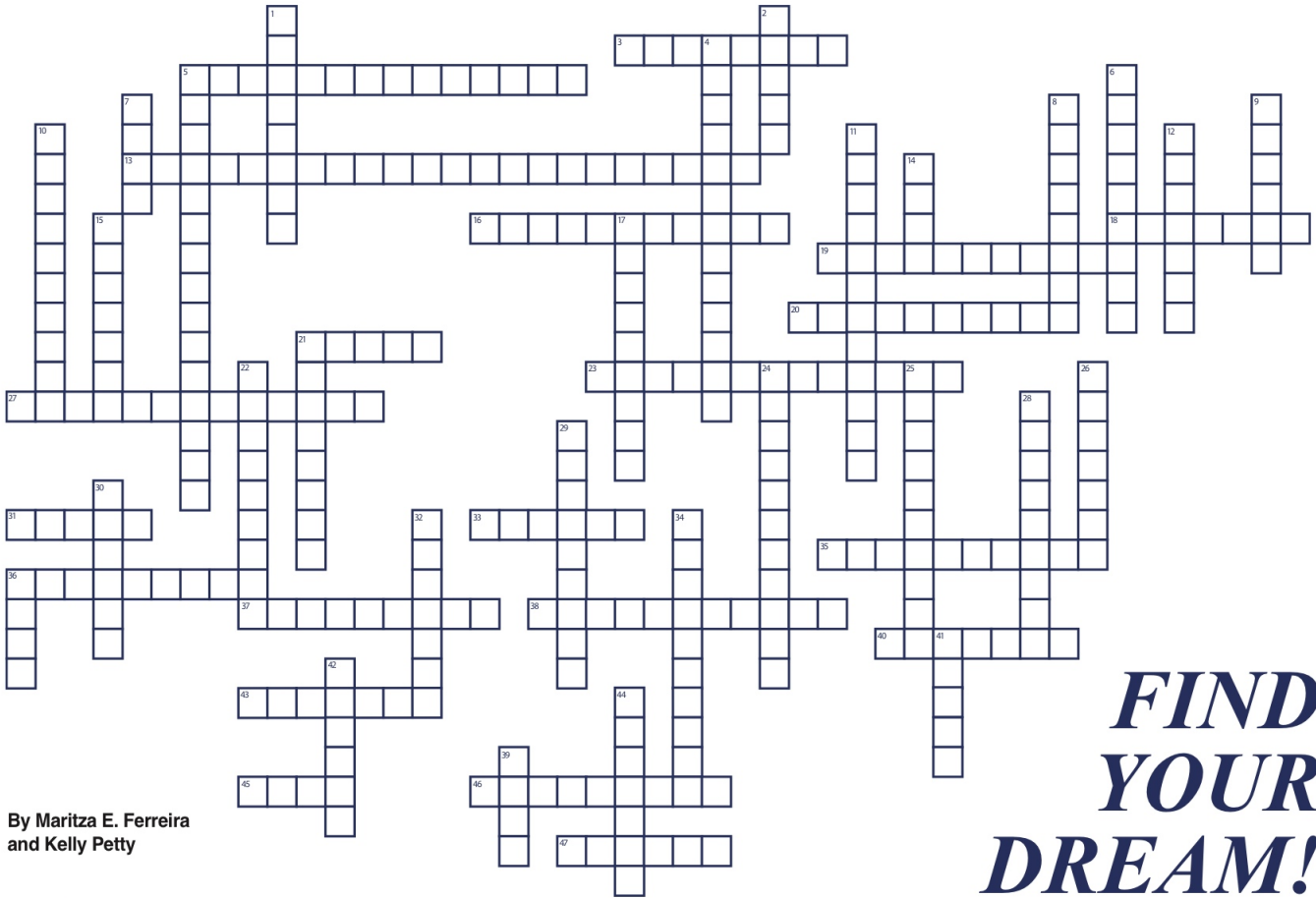
official podcast of Clayton State University

Tune into Clayton State University's new podcast, *The Laker Lounge*. We'll talk about timely topics and little-known stories featuring the best and brightest minds at Clayton State.

September's Topic
Alumna LaCrisha Burton-Saba discusses her crowning achievement as Mrs. Georgia 2017.

thelakerlounge.clayton.edu





By Maritza E. Ferreira
and Kelly Petty

FIND YOUR DREAM!

ACROSS

- 3 A popular gameshow that tests contestants' trivia knowledge
- 5 The University brand tagline
- 13 The theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human thought
- 16 Experiential learning while traveling overseas
- 18 A person who is studying at a school or college
- 19 The abstract science of number, quantity, and space
- 20 The desire or willingness of someone to do something
- 21 The particular identity or image regarded as an asset of an organization
- 23 An outdoor space in Clayton County where locals can purchase produce, meat, and other goods
- 27 A county located south of Atlanta where Clayton State resides
- 31 Clayton State University's President (Not the ketchup brand)
- 33 A group of Clayton State fans
- 35 A week of fun activities where the community comes together and welcomes back alumni
- 36 The head of a college or university
- 37 The south's version of Hollywood served up with a side of sweet tea and peach pie
- 38 Clayton State's annual day of giving
- 40 To convert waste into reusable material
- 43 Space in which plays and other dramatic performances are given
- 45 A four-letter word for the University's career readiness program
- 46 The strategy and business of promoting and selling products or services
- 47 A group of people related to one another by a common bond
- 6 A teacher of the highest rank in a college or university
- 7 Large white waterbird with a long flexible neck
- 8 A person or team who has defeated all rivals in a competition, especially in sports
- 9 A group of graduates or former students of a particular college or university
- 10 A World-class performance venue on Clayton State's campus
- 11 The desire to promote the welfare of others and good causes, generally expressed by generous donations of money
- 12 A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster
- 14 The University mascot
- 15 The study of living organisms
- 17 The anthem or song of a college or university
- 21 Curved woody perennial plant of considerable height which represents knowledge; near the University Center
- 22 A group with a feeling of fellowship as a result of sharing common values, attitudes, interests, and goals
- 24 The study of the sequence of processes involved in the production and distribution of a commodity
- 25 Knowledge or skill acquired over a period of time
- 26 The profession or practice of providing care for the sick and infirm
- 28 The head of an elementary, middle or high school
- 29 The inclusion of different types of people in a community
- 30 The University mascot's friend
- 32 Make (someone) stronger and more confident
- 34 The ceremony where students are conferred of an academic degree
- 36 Partnering Academics and Community Engagement
- 39 A flat, rectangular-shaped piece of plastic that serves as identification, payment method and library card
- 41 A circular ornamental headdress decorated with precious metals and jewels
- 42 A person's principles or standards of what is important in life
- 44 A set of clothes worn by an actor or other performer for a particular role

DOWN

- 1 Acquiring knowledge through experience, study, or being taught
- 2 Series of thoughts and images during sleep
- 4 The men and women in blue who keep us safe
- 5 A dental worker specializing in scaling and polishing teeth

Answer Key: Before you peek! Can you first find the answers in this issue or on our website, www.clayton.edu?
The answer key can be found at www.clayton.edu/laker-connection/crossword-key.

Message from the President

DR. THOMAS J. HYNES JR.

Not too long ago, I had a chance to spend an evening in the Clayton State University instructional film studio, viewing first runs of film projects from student filmmakers at the FDMC Graduate Film Premier. It was indeed a great evening.

But in commenting on the evening after the screenings, our late colleague, Glynn Beard, provided brief remarks that included references to the film and television star, as well as great American philosopher, Kermit the Frog. Among other things, Kermit the Frog is about dreams—and dreams made real.

Not unlike Clayton State graduates, faculty, staff, and students, “dreams are how we figure out where we want to go. Life is how we get there.”

This issue of Laker Connection introduces you to a few Lakers who have “dared to dream.” You will meet an alum whose life was transformed through her commitment to transforming the lives of others. Using her role as Mrs. Georgia, she advances a platform aimed at addressing hunger and homelessness, both internationally and here at home.

A faculty colleague will describe how his own passion for technical theatre has led him to share his talent with Clayton State and local students, helping them discover for themselves the wisdom of Shakespeare’s claim in *As You Like It*, “all the world’s a stage.”

One student describes ways in which her experiences in a Nepalese refugee camp led her to pursue a career in nursing in our College of Health and to dream of returning to Nepal one day to serve others now facing the same circumstances she overcame.

Several of our students have worked to advance a collective dream for Clayton County—to research possibilities and bright futures for the Atlanta Famers

Market in Forest Park, Georgia. At the encouragement of state Rep. Valencia Stovall, in conjunction with a legislative study commission, MBA students conducted research on possible futures for the market—futures that advance many dreams for the region.

A final story of an alum now serving as an assistant school superintendent in the Kansas City Public school system shows how dreams evolve and can provide hope for other generations of dreamers.

Her academic work began with studies in health and paralegal work and eventually moved to general business prior to finding a niche in education, both as a practitioner and as a leader. It is an inspiring story of how such work to pursue one’s own dreams can foster achievement for the dreams of others.

Or, as Kermit observed: “It’s the kind of dream that gets better the more people you share it with. And I found a whole group of friends who have the same dream and that makes us sort of like a family.”



DREAMS. MADE REAL.

Branding Our Dreams

By Kelly Petty

How do you stand out? How do you let others know what you are all about while staying true to your mission?

Nearly seven years ago, Clayton State University embarked on a journey to answer these questions with a clear purpose in mind—to bring greater awareness to the institution and increase enrollment.

At a time when four-year public institutions have reportedly increased advertising spending by 43 percent between 2013 and 2016, Clayton State sought to execute a multi-faceted brand advertising campaign just as Georgia's state budget was recovering from the 2008 recession.

The result—a new redesigned website, increased advertising, and a commitment by the University's faculty, staff, and students to embrace and promote the dreams being made on campus.

In search of a dream

In 2011, the University implemented its five-year strategic plan built around a commitment to community engagement, in addition to assessing how the University communicated about itself to audiences within the metro Atlanta area.

The plan prompted a complete review of communication standards including colors, typography, and conditions governing the use of institutional logos.

Recognizing the diversity of colleges, universities, and technical schools in metro Atlanta, Clayton

State officials realized the need to be a competitive player in the higher education market.

Clayton State worked with Stamats, an Iowa-based firm that conducted research and analysis on what made the University special and what values the community embraced.

These values are what now drives the messaging of the institution: empowering experiences, inclusive diversity, engaged experiential preparation, and supportive community. From these values, the University's brand tagline was born—"Dreams. Made Real."

"Research with both internal and external audiences concluded that 'Dreams. Made Real.' captured an authentic view of value Clayton State University brought to our students and our community," says Dr. Tim Hynes, president of Clayton State University. "The planning process also recognized that the University needed to become more intentional communicating with audiences—both in and out of the University—if we were to successfully expand the recognition of, and support of, Clayton State University."

Making it real

With "Dreams. Made Real." selected as the vehicle through which Clayton State would begin to express its mission and values to the community, the University made it a priority to develop a comprehensive marketing and communications program in Strategic Plan 2022, an update to the University's earlier strategic plan. This included a university-wide project to restructure and redesign the University website, again working with Stamats.

Work on the project began in 2015.

NEVER
GIVE UP,
UNTIL
YOU
JOY
MAKE
IT REAL



Additionally, work was done in-house to establish additional brand elements such as brand voice, a clear visual identity structure, and expanding the brand color palette.

“Clayton State and Stamats teams collaborated intensely and productively throughout this process. We cherish the partnership,” says Becky Morehouse, senior vice president at Stamats. “Our work together reflects a true collegiality where we all work toward the same important goal—to tell the Clayton State University story so compellingly and consistently that it moves the University, its students, and its communities forward.”

The Office of Marketing and Communications led the redevelopment of Clayton State’s website, as well as the creation of the University’s first-ever brand campaign, signaling a major step forward for the young University to highlight its place as a formidable

institution in metro Atlanta’s higher education sector.

“There is so much advertising noise in the higher education space that it’s really important to be clear and focused on what we want others to know about us,” says Maritza E. Ferreira, assistant vice-president of Marketing and Communications. “And, we need to communicate it in a way that is relevant and yet unique compared to what anyone else could possibly say.”

The messaging and media placement strategy was informed by multiple research studies including a Prizm Nielson study that analyzed the demographics, geographics, and psychographics of the current student population to identify look-a-likes in the market place. An enrollment analysis from Carl Vinson Institute of Georgia also provided additional data and insight into market potential.

“Clayton State has a good brand,” says Maritza. “From the research we knew that the market wanted to know more about us, and we also saw in some of our early

DREAMS. MADE REAL.

“Through the brand campaign, we wanted to show what our values actually look like in action and the hard work it takes to pursue a dream,”

- Maritza Ferreira, assistant vice-president of Marketing and Communications.

BRAND VALUES



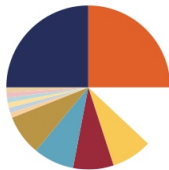
COLOR PALETTE



primary colors

secondary colors

tertiary colors



Ideal Color Proportions — Finished piece should strive for the proportions of our brand colors shown here.

TAG LINE

DREAMS. MADE REAL.

“Dreams. Made Real.” is more than just a tagline. It speaks to the heart and soul of our dynamic culture. It represents what we stand for and how we approach our work to promote learning for the purpose of student success.

FONTS

Helvetica Neue
Light

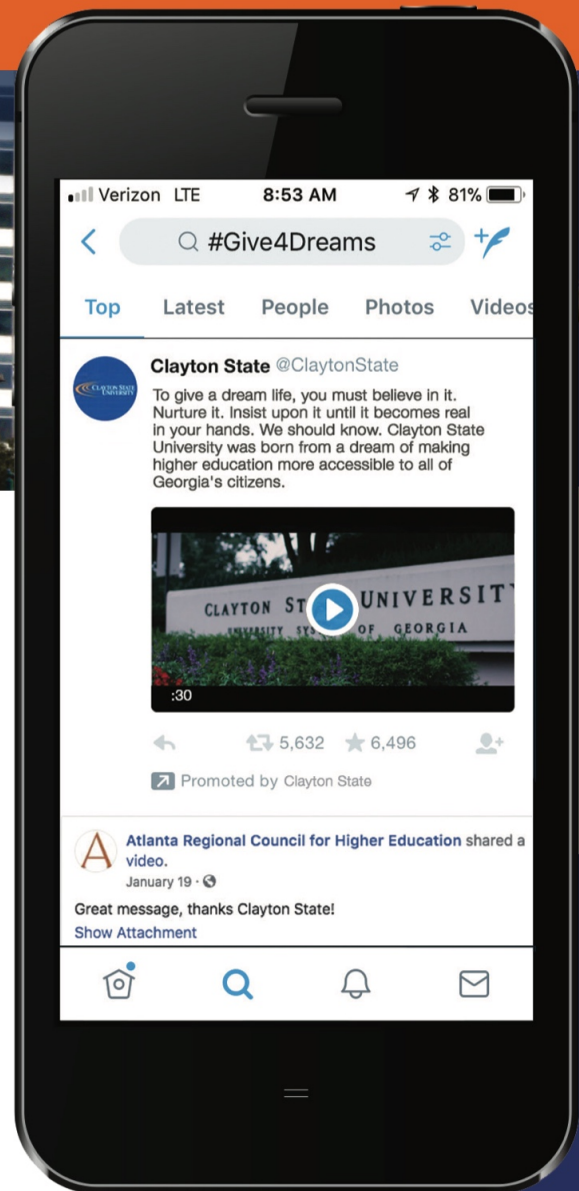
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Times New Roman
Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

“This brand campaign takes us to the next level—demonstrating the University’s relevant role in preparing Georgia’s next-generation workforce for the state’s booming industries.”

– President Tim Hynes



focus groups that even our own community wants to better understand who we are and the value we bring. This along with our other studies and data sources not only informed us of what messages would resonate with our audiences, but also where to find potential students to maximize our investment.”

Investing in the dream

Clayton State made an initial year investment of \$465,693 toward the campaign, representing a strong commitment to being good stewards of the University’s resources in addition to ensuring that the brand strategy closely aligns with the University’s goals.

Entitled “Dare to Dream,” the brand campaign was designed to invite prospective students to discover the possibilities Clayton State offers to earn a degree and begin the journey toward career success.

“Through the brand campaign, we wanted to show what our values actually look like in action and the hard work it takes to pursue a dream,” says Maritza. “Getting up early before everyone else. Pushing through a long day at work and still making it to class. The long nights to prepare for that exam. If you have a dream, Clayton State can

empower you to make it real.”

The University website launched in December 2017 and features an improved user experience, search engine optimization, branded content, ADA accessibility, and better performance to increase prospective student inquiry pools.

The brand advertising campaign launched in January of 2018 and consists of outdoor billboards, social media, online, radio, streaming TV, and mobile advertising, so people will experience Clayton State’s presence all around the greater metropolitan Atlanta area as the campaign increases awareness of the University.

Images in the campaign reflect the University’s diverse student body made up of men and women from more than 37 countries. Clayton State’s colors, Laker Blue and Georgia Clay, feature prominently, showcasing university pride.

“Each year, prospective students are consistently impressed when they learn more about Clayton State, either through our website, speaking to an admissions

representative, or by visiting the campus,” says Dr. Stephen Schultheis, assistant vice-president of Enrollment Management. “This campaign seeks to bring greater awareness to the quality education Clayton State offers and to encourage individuals to learn how we make dreams real.”

Early predictors indicate the brand campaign will be rewarding for Clayton State. To date, the number of online prospective student inquiries have increased by more than 150 percent compared to last year. And fall 2018 enrollment numbers are trending upward from the previous year as well.

“Clayton State University has set its sights on becoming a competitive player in Georgia’s marketplace of higher education. Our mission to develop diverse leaders that make a significant impact on their community reflects our goal of becoming a national model for service learning,” says Dr. Hynes. “This brand campaign takes us to the next level—demonstrating the University’s relevant role in preparing Georgia’s next-generation workforce for the state’s booming industries.”



DON'T TELL PEOPLE YOUR DREAMS. SHOW THEM.

By Kelly Petty

So, you got a dream and you've set some goals to accomplish it. But how do you get there?

You must get motivated. Yes, that urge you get to do something is what can make a big difference in how you find fulfillment on the job and around friends and family.

Newton's first law of motion tells us that an object at rest, stays at rest, and an object in motion, stays in motion.

The same can be seen in other aspects of life such as academic performance, personal relationships, health and exercise, and personal goals.

Getting motivated can be tough. Yet, the most successful people are those that motivate themselves. According to the Self-Determination Theory, people are inherently motivated to grow and possess intrinsic needs to be self-motivated without external influence or interference.

Here are five secrets to motivation from some of Clayton State's faculty and staff that can help you find success in your personal and professional life.

1. You need grit.

Oprah and Steve Jobs experienced significant challenges in their careers, said Dr. Leon Prieto, associate professor of management, but it took grit—the ability to remain determined in the face of adversity—to keep them going.

“Corporate America is indeed quite competitive, and according to research, the people who tend to be successful are those who are passionate about what they do, and those who are willing to persevere and overcome the obstacles that they may face...Failure is often an inevitable part of success. The important thing is to learn from any mistakes made.”

2. Actually, you can win for losing.

There's nothing like feeling defeated. It can cause your dreams to be derailed. But it's in those hard moments, according to Head Men's Basketball Coach James Link, that you get inspired to take action to turn a setback into a win.

“The hardest thing to do when you lose a game is to move to the next game and not let a slump happen,” the PBC Coach of the Year says. “We lost this season to UNC-Pembroke on the road after being ahead at halftime. We came back after a quick pep talk on the baseline by myself and won 14 in a row to win the regular season championship over UNC-Pembroke.”

Coach Link says you've got to be optimistic to push through tough moments.

“You aren't going to win if you can't motivate 18- to 25-year-old men to play at a high level. We won 24 games this year and there were times I needed to motivate them, whether it be a pregame speech or timeout, it had to be positive mostly. I definitely am a cooperative and transformational coach.”

3. Hard work pays off.

Dr. Prieto notes that entrepreneurs and business-people alike can find motivation by reminding themselves that there is a relationship between good old-fashioned effort and performance.

He explains, “research shows that when people spend 10,000 hours learning their craft they usually become experts in their profession and chances are they will be successful. We have to remind ourselves of past successes that involved hard work which lead to success.”

4. Sometimes, one last push can get you across the finish line.

Coach Link remembered a time when the men's basketball team was down 10 points at halftime against Francis Marion. It had been 11 years since his mother had died, and he always made his pre-game speech about her. But this time it didn't seem to work.

So, he had to switch up his motivation tactics to keep the team charged and focused on finishing strong.

“I came in the locker room and said, ‘Look man, my mom speech didn't work and maybe that motivates me now to coach as hard as I can, but your last name should motivate how hard you play. Your last name of your family and parents is your legacy so go out and play for that.’ Well needless to say we ended up winning that game and played really well in the second half.”

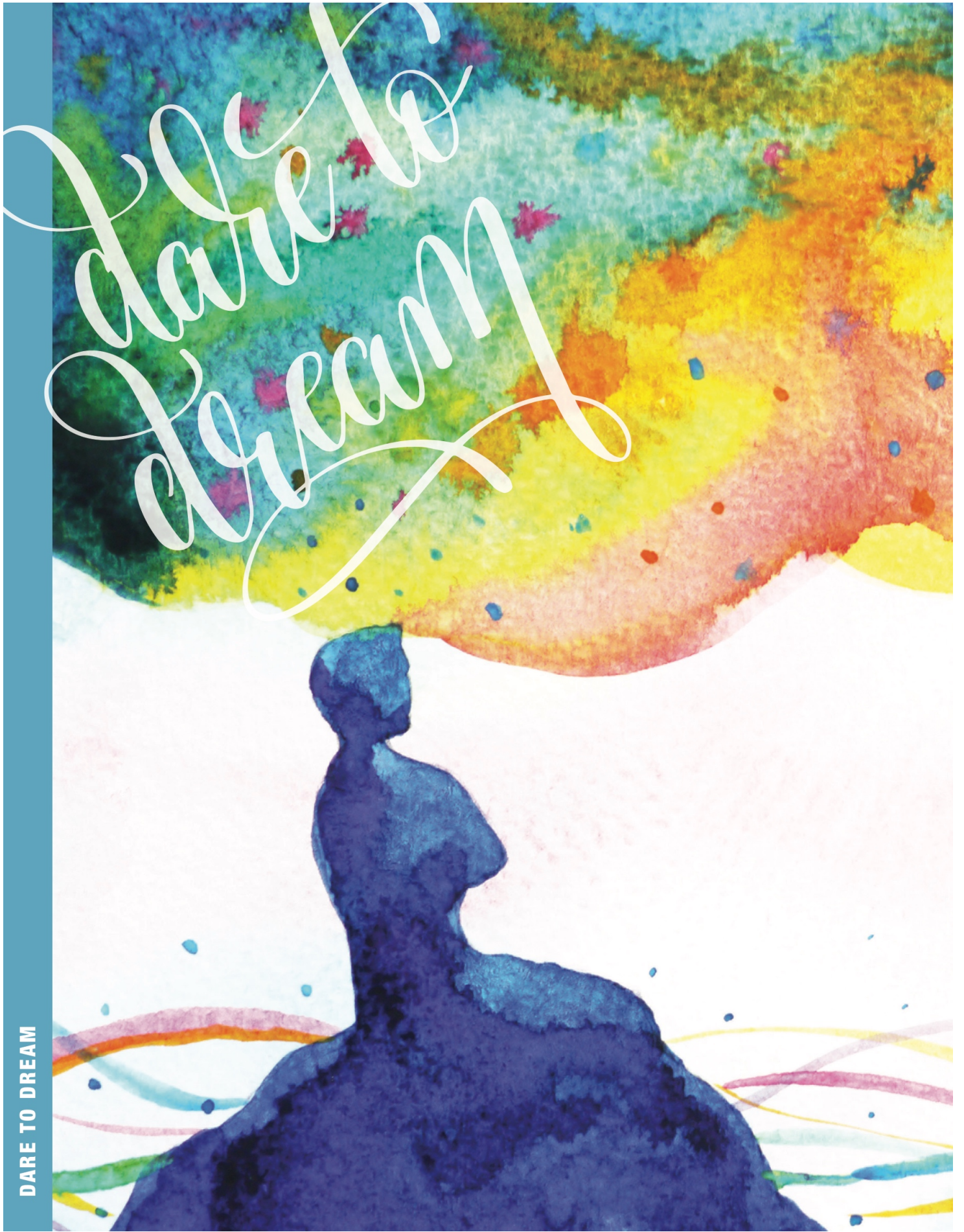
5. Write, create, and eliminate.

Dr. Prieto relies on three ways to stay motivated to achieve your dreams:


- Write down your goals and aspirations.
- Create an action plan on how you intend on accomplishing them.
- Eliminate bad habits.

“It helps when you visualize your goals and try to concretize them. You must also do your best to eliminate practices like procrastination and excuses that may derail you from achieving success in your career. It is also important that you identify the negative routines you engage in when you feel stuck and try to replace it with a more productive routine.”

Be it starting a business, winning a championship, or achieving your dream of graduating with a degree, motivation is not just about setting a goal in motion, but the work you put in to finish on top.



DARE TO DREAM



To give a dream life,
you must believe in it.
Nurture it. Focus on it.

In these pages, we
meet our faculty, staff,
students, and alumni
daring to have big
dreams and going after
them with tenacity,
hope, and the belief that
dreams have no limits.

love
Et PURPOSE

DARE TO DREAM





By Danielle Moore



Behind her sparkling silver rhinestone crown and her candy apple red trimmed sash is a woman with a noble purpose. For LaCrisha Burton Saba '14, her reign as Mrs. Georgia America 2017 was more than just a pageant title. It reflected her dream to use her voice to shed light on a cause that is dear to her heart—homelessness and hunger.

A mission is born

In 2011, while on a trip to Guatemala with her husband, LaCrisha had packed their bags to hike a volcano. On a brutally hot day in a bus with no air-conditioning, the pair journeyed through villages and towns learning about local life in the small Central-American country.

On the way to the site, they entered a village where the tour guide pulled over at a gas station for everyone on board to get water.

“We stop at this gas station and these kids are begging,” says LaCrisha.

One of the boys approached the bus as the others looked on. LaCrisha reached into her back pack and gave him a sandwich. The little boy immediately ran back to the other children.

“I watch him go back and he opens this sandwich and he breaks it off. Everyone got a piece,” says LaCrisha. “It really resonated with me. Here I am in this beautiful country and you have starving children. It’s unacceptable.”



“With the title, you’re granted so many open doors that me knocking on as myself were not opening. So once you put on the big shiny crown, people roll out the red carpet,” LaCrisha says.

In that moment, With Love Global was born – a non-profit organization whose mission is to be a hands-on advocate for those in need. LaCrisha officially established the non-profit in 2015. Locally, nationally, and internationally, the organization provides meals, clothing, and hygiene items to the homeless and conducts drives to stock homeless shelters with food and necessities.

“Guatemala was actually one of my first initiatives. I am so proud that we have been able to successfully execute initiatives in Tanzania, in Peru, Guatemala, [and] Lebanon,” says LaCrisha with a smile.

With Love Global also has a strong presence in the local Atlanta community. Every third Sunday of the month, you will find volunteers downtown at Hurt Park feeding approximately 125 to 150 homeless individuals and families.

LaCrisha believes serving a warm meal and offering words of encouragement can drastically change a person’s outlook on the day.

“It’s more than just food,” LaCrisha says. “There are people out there that have not spoken to someone all week. A lot of times we find ourselves talking to these individuals and just really fellowshiping.”

Volunteers will sometimes pray with the homeless, offer conversation, and even help them locate housing to have a place to stay.

With L.O.V.E Global also sponsors donation drives to help stock the shelves of metro Atlanta homeless shelters with food and other necessities. Most recently, LaCrisha teamed up with another nonprofit, Hope Thru Soap. Founder Jason Winter and his team operate a 12-foot aluminum trailer that provides a no-cost, private space for the homeless to shower with dignity, in addition to offering haircuts and hygiene items.

“These guys are really my go-to because I know their hearts. I know them and I’ve volunteered with them for years, and they are doing great things in the community,” LaCrisha says.

Pageantry with a purpose

Through the non-profit, LaCrisha’s focus is to bring more awareness to the homeless, hungry, and veterans. However, early on she realized that running a nonprofit is not easy.

To recruit more volunteers and others to help promote the mission, she would need to find more exposure and a bigger platform. That’s when she decided to enter into pageantry.

“I was a hot mess my first year competing, but I researched the industry and came back very prepared the following year,” LaCrisha says.

Considered a late bloomer in the pageant world, LaCrisha took the chance to compete against married women ranging in age from 18-55 and was crowned Mrs. Georgia United States in 2016.



In 2017, she earned the title of Mrs. Georgia America, allowing her to spend a one-year reign bringing positive attention to her pageant platform, homelessness and hunger.

LaCrisha also had the opportunity to compete in August of 2017 in the Mrs. America pageant, where she was a semi-finalist among 50 other contestants.

"I have been able to speak in numerous schools throughout the state of Georgia, as well as Tennessee, I have greeted our nation's heroes at the Delta Airlines Military Lounge, and I have have partnered with several nonprofits throughout the state of Georgia in the fight against hunger and homelessness," LaCrisha says.

Her journey to the crown proved to be a transformative experience, and at times, it compelled her to push herself to heights she had never attempted—both physically and mentally. To this day, she credits competing in pageantry with bringing about self-awareness, ignoring negativity, and building confidence.

"As a contestant, you are given so many suggestions and critiques that you will question yourself," LaCrisha says. "In the end, I came out victorious with the crown, as well as a new level of discipline, determination, confidence, commitment, passion, grit, strong communication skills, and even more empathy for others."

Above all, competing in pageants became the spark to bringing greater awareness to her organization.

"Most importantly, my nonprofit – With Love Global- has grown tremendously," LaCrisha says. "The title granted me a platform for unlimited exposure; I simply had to put in the work. I have enjoyed every second of the journey."

Sharing the love

On June 9, 2018, LaCrisha passed on the title of Mrs. Georgia to a new winner. But the end of her reign is only the beginning to doing more to help those in need.

She has expanded the services With Love Global provides to the local community through a back-to-school drive to gather supplies for local schoolchildren.

This past year, she launched the "Adopt-A-Senior" program that partners with local nursing homes and businesses.

"We partnered with a spa in Buckhead so [the seniors] were able to get complimentary mani's and pedi's," LaCrisha says. "It was absolutely amazing! I am planning to make it bigger this year and expand to the south-metro area," LaCrisha says.

Volunteers visit and have lunch with seniors or take them out for some fun.

Besides pageantry, LaCrisha also credits the success in promoting her nonprofit to Clayton State's marketing program. Earning her degree in marketing has allowed her to develop the organization's website, create advertising, conduct marketing efforts, and put on events. Without those skills, LaCrisha says, With Love Global would not be where it is today.

"I wouldn't have that knowledge without my marketing background," LaCrisha says. "So, I am thankful for my marketing degree and all of the education that I received from Clayton State University."



ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

By Erin Fender




“

Those who do theatre for a living are those who cannot see themselves doing anything else. We need art. Fredrick Buchner said that our calling is where 'your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.'

Theatre has to be a calling, and I am glad to answer that call.

- Prof. Vanmeter

”



Can you remember the first time you saw a play, opera, or a puppet show as a child? Do you remember the first time you sat in a theatre? For Derrick Vanmeter, associate professor of theatre, it seems like it was just yesterday.

"When I was very young, a performance troupe with puppets came every summer to my hometown. I was entranced and asked for a puppet of my own," he says.

Prof. Vanmeter spent much of his childhood collecting and performing puppet shows and would cover lamps with colored cellophane to set the mood for storytelling with his brother. In kindergarten, he saw a production of "The Velveteen Rabbit" produced by Sheree Bacon's Creative Playhouse at the Rome City Auditorium in Rome, Georgia.

"One of my friends from daycare was in the play as a 'funny bunny' that performed during the entr'acte. I remember this production so vividly, even decades later," he recalls.

That night on the way home from the play, Prof. Vanmeter told his mother that he was going to join the Creative Playhouse. He spent his childhood performing and even assisting as a performer for Story Time at the Sara Hightower Regional Library.

He continued to live his dream, performing, singing, and dancing his way through high school and into college.

"When I went to Lee University for theatre I joined their touring performance troupe and in the first semester of my sophomore year I took a set design class. I fell in love with design," says Prof. Vanmeter. "At the end of that semester, my professor asked me if I'd be interested in designing the scenery for one of our smaller shows. After that first design, I knew this was a career I wanted to pursue."

Now he does just that. Not only is he an assistant professor of Theatre Design at Clayton State University,

"I love the stylization I get to explore in opera, and Peach State has been quite obliging in entertaining my far-out ideas," says Prof. Vanmeter.

but he also is a resident scenic designer for the Peach State Opera, which brings English language opera to underserved areas.

"I come from a family of artists and educators. The two have rarely seemed separate to me. Teaching is an art and a craft just like theatre. Through teaching I am able to make my dreams communal. I bring my dreams, my students bring theirs, and together we explore the endless possibilities before us," Prof. Vanmeter shares.

He has designed Puccini's *Tosca* and Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella) along with this year's *La Bohème* also by Puccini. Through his work with Peach State Opera, he's been able to also engage Clayton State students in opportunities to explore theatre production.

"As a Georgia native who had the opportunity to see theatre because of touring companies, I find this work vital and fulfilling," Prof. Vanmeter says. "We took the show to my hometown and performed on the very stage I performed on as a child. It was so surreal watching my scenery, on my stage, with one of my students working backstage. My dreams have come full circle and I look forward to what's ahead on the next trip around."

Aside from his wife, Amanda, and his parents, Joyce and Ricky, Prof. Vanmeter has had a host of mentors and teachers that have impacted his dreams. He's thankful for those who he's met along his career journey and have supported him over the years.

"Dreams would be impossible without the people who support you in achieving them," he says.

Atlanta State Farmers Market redevelopment plan gets boost from Clayton State MBA students

By Kelly Petty



At 150 acres, the Atlanta State Farmers Market is the largest of the nine farmers markets across Georgia managed by the state's agriculture department. Located in Forest Park, Georgia, the market is a 24-hour operation where trucks from all across the Southeast file in to distribute produce and goods to consumers and to wholesalers that serve restaurants, grocery stores, and other food-related businesses.

While it is one of the largest generators of revenue for the state of Georgia, over the years, the Atlanta State Farmers Market has seen a decline in its appearance and use beyond being a major distribution hub for the state's agriculture industry.

But thanks to a local state house representative and a group of Clayton State University MBA students, the market looks to receive a second chance at life to become a burgeoning tourism destination and vibrant community gathering place for Clayton County.





“It’s so close to the city but removed enough to still be quiet,” Marria says. “If we were able to brand it correctly, I think it would be reflective of all Clayton County has to offer.”

Since moving to Clayton County in 2006, Atlanta native state Rep. Valencia Stovall (D-74) has seen the potential of the Atlanta State Farmers Market as an economic driver for the community and the state.

Known by many locals as the site of the annual bird shows and gun shows in Atlanta, Rep. Stovall believes it’s time for the farmer’s market to emerge as a multi-faceted place for community events and agritourism for those interested in knowing where their food comes from.

“Tourism is the largest amount of revenue that comes to the state of Georgia,” says Rep. Stovall. “We want to make this one of the agritourism stops that we have throughout the state.”

A year ago, Rep. Stovall enlisted the help of Clayton State University’s MBA program to conduct a market analysis of the farmer’s market to determine the feasibility of the redevelopment of the market.



“Tourism is the largest amount of revenue that comes to the state of Georgia,” Rep. Stovall says. “We want to make this one of the agritourism stops that we have throughout the state.”

“The students were supposed to research the history of the State Farmers Market and analyze the external environment,” says Dr. George Nakos, professor of marketing. “They gathered information on the historical development of large state farmers markets and the transformation of the industry in recent years. Then they offered practical recommendations on how the [Atlanta] State Farmers Market could transform itself and grow in the future.”

The marketing students broke off into about six groups to evaluate the physical market space, aesthetics, brand awareness, and marketing of the farmer’s market.

“When we first got the breakdown of the project, we didn’t even really know where the state market was. So, the first step was to GPS it,” says Marria Malik, an MBA student who worked on the project.

Marria says her team chose to visit the market at different times by themselves or with families and friends to get a feel for how different demographics experience the market.

The classmates discovered raw space currently not used that was viable for development. They also found that the market was situated in a large, ethnically diverse community, which could be a selling point for the market.

“It’s so close to the city but removed enough to still be quiet,” Marria says. “If we were able to brand it correctly, I think it would be reflective of all Clayton County has to offer.”

Results from the analysis suggested that structural improvements at the farmer’s market are necessary to improve the aesthetic appeal of the market. The students also found that the market could diversify its vendor pool to attract a greater number of consumers, as well as focus on a direct-to-consumer approach to selling produce.

Additionally, the students recommended that the farmer’s market focus on a programming strategy built around “fun” by increasing regular attendance during weekday lunch hours, as well as offering food truck featured days, cooking demos with Atlanta chefs, and visual art exhibits for those seeking early evening and weekend activities.

Increased advertising that brings awareness to the farmers market and promote the “Georgia Grown” brand supported by local producers could attract a younger demographic and increase potential customers to the market, according to the analysis.

“There’s so much potential, but, right now, they are catering to the wholesale market,” Marria explains. “But If we are selling to [consumers] we can keep them here. Creating a destination versus a pit stop makes sense.”

The potential to shift the Atlanta State Farmers Market from a mere distribution hub to a social gathering and agricultural education locale is entirely possible. The success of the food hall concept pushed by Ponce City Market and Krog Street Market in downtown Atlanta demonstrates the growth in foodie culture in the city and the need for chefs to access fresh produce for their restaurants.

The Georgia Department of Economic Development's tourism division recognizes Georgia as a leading culinary destination in the South thanks to a plethora of farm-to-table dining options, food festivals, cooking schools, u-pick farms, and award-winning chefs.

"With the market's close proximity to Hartsfield Jackson International Airport and its convenient location to interstates I-75 and I-285, it is a great stop for visitors wanting to get those unique Georgia Grown products like Vidalia onions and sweet Georgia peaches," says Beth Bailey, director of sales and promotion at the Clayton County Convention Visitors Bureau. "What is most exciting is the plan for special events and programs that will extend the stay of our visitors and add to their experience in Clayton County."

And with the state's agriculture industry generating \$73 billion annually to Georgia's economy, the redevelopment of the Atlanta State Farmers Market can build upon the state's position as an agricultural powerhouse in the Southeast.

"Redevelopment of the State Farmers Market could create additional employment and business opportunities that would create a positive benefit for the city of Forest Park, agribusiness in the state of Georgia and would serve as a major destination for locals and tourists," said Angela Redding, city manager for Forest Park.

Rep. Stovall and her colleagues managed to get a house resolution passed in the Georgia General Assembly in the spring 2018 legislative session to form a study committee for revitalizing the farmers market.

"We are pleased that Representative Stovall recognizes the potential job and economic opportunities that the Atlanta Market provides and appreciate her input and enthusiasm," says Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black. "Considered one of the largest of its kind in the world, the Atlanta State Farmers Market serves as a major marketing hub and distribution point for fresh produce in the Southeast and throughout the country. We are grateful that Representative Stovall shares our dedication in ensuring that the market continues to thrive."

Rep. Stovall says the committee will conduct community forums in Forest Park this fall inviting residents and the market's producers to provide input on how they would like the market to evolve. The committee will then present its findings to the house legislature and governor's office by Dec. 31 to begin the next steps.

"This can increase local revenue for local businesses... increase jobs, pay, and expendable income," Stovall says. We want to make sure we are maximizing the potential of the farmer's market to be best for the community and the state of Georgia."



Clayton County Tourism By the Numbers

Total economic impact: \$1.442 billion

Tourism jobs: 34,540

Local sales tax generated: \$43.63 million

State sales tax generated: \$173.19 million

Confessions of a Digital Native

By Erin Fender

Anuj Patel is a true digital native. Anuj is part of Generation Z, the first generation to grow up with technology in ways that no previous generation has had before. A generation that has always known the internet and smart phones. A generation to grow up with tablets and screen time from toddlerhood. It's no surprise that Patel has a passion for technology and a dream to work within this field.

"I chose this major because of the idea of how I can help the world with technology. I tend to help others before myself and with my passion for technology, I can help others with technological advancements to make their everyday life easier and more efficient," Anuj says.

With parents having backgrounds in medical and textile engineering, choosing computer science as a major and math as a minor was a much different path than his family took.

"At first, my family (except my sister, who's currently pursuing a medical degree) wasn't too fond of me pursuing a degree in computer science, but once they realized the vast number of things I can accomplish with this degree, they soon accepted my choice," says Anuj.

Anuj's curiosities in technology formed at a young age when a chance opportunity to help build a digital footprint for his town's local high school that allowed him to experience web development first hand.

"I was sparked by technology at the end of my eighth-grade school year," Anuj shares. "I realized that I was already ahead of the crowd when it came to building and maintaining websites."

Now in his junior year at Clayton State University, Anuj's interests are focused on data analysis and software development. With internships on the horizon, he hopes to continue to build on his experiences that have shaped his career path.

"A goal of mine through internships is to build my skills while also building my network for future job opportunities and for others," Anuj says.

"Ultimately, my dream is to be successful, by starting my own empire," Anuj says. "I want to learn and do as much as I can just to become a better role model to those who look up to me."

In addition to his fascination with technology, Anuj also enjoys connecting with others through service.

"I volunteer my time to keep myself busy. In the past, I have worked with Habitat for Humanity, as well as spent a vast amount of time with my local community back in my hometown, Cochran, Georgia," Patel says. "For the past seven years on my birthday, I have also devoted my time to volunteer for at least half of the day."

Besides academics, Anuj's schedule is packed with extracurricular activities. He is a student athlete for Clayton State's cross country and track teams, a Presidential Scholar, Honors Program participant, Student Athlete Advisor Committee member, and works as a tutor in the Center for Academic Success.

For this tech guru's future, Patel's not sweating the little things and is just taking one day at a time.

"Ultimately, my dream is to be successful, by starting my own empire," Anuj says. "I want to learn and do as much as I can just to become a better role model to those who look up to me."

Up and coming Generation Z was born between 1998 and 2016. With the oldest members at age 20, they are quickly becoming the change agents influencing how we interact with technology and each other.

1

Realistic vs optimistic

Seventy-seven percent of Generation Z expect to work harder than previous generations. Generation Z will be realistic thanks to their skeptical and straight-shooting Generation X parents and growing up in a recession.

2

Digital natives vs digital pioneers

Forty-percent of Generation Z said that working Wi-Fi was more important to them than working bathrooms. According to Pew Research, only 14 percent of U.S. adults had access to the Internet in 1995, but by 2014, 87 percent had access. Millennials were pioneers in the digital age. Generation Z did not witness these innovations, but rather, they were born into it.

3

Face-to-face vs digital-only

Seventy-four percent of Generation Z prefer to communicate face-to-face with colleagues. Equipped with their experience communicating using full sight, sound, and motion over Skype, FaceTime, Snapchat, etc., Generation Z is positioned as the ideal generation to finally strike the right balance between online and offline workplace communications.

4

Role-hopping vs job-hopping

Seventy-five percent of Generation Z would be interested in a situation in which they could have multiple roles within one place of employment. Generation Z won't want to miss out on any valuable experience and will want to flex their on-demand learning muscle by trying out various roles or projects (marketing, accounting, human resources, etc.) inside of the organization.

5

Global citizen vs global spectator

Fifty-eight percent of adults worldwide ages 35+ agree that "kids today have more in common with their global peers than they do with adults in their own country." Generation Z interacts with their global peers with greater fluidity than any other generation. As more of the world comes online, geographies will continue to shrink causing Generation Z to view themselves as global citizens.

Data pulled from Business Insider magazine. <http://www.businessinsider.com/forget-millennials-here-are-8-things-to-know-about-gen-z-2017-7>



seeking refuge in the care of others

By Erin Fender

Not that long ago in a bamboo structure with a simple chalkboard, Bhima Thapa sat on the floor to soak up all that she could learn from her teacher. For 17 years, Bhima grew up and lived in the Beldangi Refugee Camp in Nepal. She was just eleven years old when her family was forced to flee Bhutan and settle into the refugee camp.

“I held my grandfather’s hand as he passed away. All I could think was, I wish I could have done more. I wish I could have helped him,” Bhima remembers.

“The Refugee Camp in Nepal is a place where over 100,000 refugees carved out a clearing in the jungle, striving to survive,” Bhima says. “We had limited access to technology that people around the world had easy access to and kids in the camp were all basically equals. We all just went to school.”

At the camp, there was a small health services center, but Bhima and her family still saw many sick with preventable illness such as measles, scurvy, TB, malaria, and cholera.

“I held my grandfather’s hand as he passed away,” Bhima remembers. “All I could think was, I wish I could have done more. I wish I could have helped him.”

Moved by what she experienced in the camp, Bhima is attending Clayton State University pursuing her dream of becoming a nurse. She plans to graduate in fall 2019.

“I have heard and seen so many more stories about health issues in the refugee camp. These kinds of stories really make me want to make a difference in the lives others. I really need to help people who really do not understand how to take care of themselves and (get) the medicines possible for treatment,” Bhima says.



Bhima's parents, Left her mother Naina Mapchan and right her father Harka Mapchan.

“My parents still live in the refugee camp and it’s hard for them to get here. Every day as they are aging, I just wish they were here. We talk every day, but when they are sick, and so far away, it just makes me very sad,” says Bhima.



Her road to nursing school has been a long and winding path. Several years ago, Bhima started college in India on a science track. After finishing college, she returned home to the refugee camp in Nepal, where she met her husband, Man. She and some of her family eventually had the opportunity to resettle in the United States in 2008. It took time for her and the family to acclimate to their new environment and establish jobs.

“In 2012, I went back to Nepal and married Man. It took two years for us to go through the process to get him into the United States,” Bhima explains. “We were apart for about four years, but I was so busy learning how to sustain life here in America and my responsibilities kept me busy instead of thinking how much I missed him. Now that we have settled, we have two-year-old Ashwin.”

Since settling in Snellville, Georgia, Bhima has been very active within the refugee community, working as a host on a local show for Voice of New America in Sagal Radio Services. The program is focused on women’s issues and settling in as refugee. For several months, she aided with disaster relief efforts with Nepal Red Cross.

While her family and siblings have settled in America, her parents are still living in the refugee camp.

“My parents still live in the refugee camp and it’s hard for them to get here. Every day as they are aging, I just wish they were here. We talk every day, but when they are sick and so far away, it just makes me very sad,” says Bhima.

Being here at Clayton State is helping her get closer to her dream. Though still undecided about which path in nursing she wants to take, Bhima likes the idea of working as a pediatric nurse or in labor and delivery. Ultimately, she plans to return to the refugee camp as a volunteer nurse to provide the care that so many needed during her time living there.

“Beyond the classroom and the workplace, my experiences in the refugee camp are with me forever. Earning my nursing degree will enable me, to one-day, conduct medical mission work,” Bhima said. “There are things that can never be conveyed in a lecture hall—the sights, sounds and smells that never leave you.”



*Dreams for
a \$1,000, Alex*

“I TAKE HEART
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DARE TO DREAM

“Try not. Do, or do not, there is no try.” - Yoda

By Erin Fender

An avid reader, host to an Animaniacs podcast, and takes Yoda on all her travels.

Who is Kelly Adams?

For most of her life, Kelly has been an avid watcher of “Jeopardy!”, the classic tv game show known as America’s Favorite Quiz Show that has stumped millions for more than 50 years.

Like many tv viewers, she has often dreamed of sharing the stage with host Alex Trebek to showcase her trivia knowledge.

Kelly, who works as an executive assistant in the Division of Business and Operations at Clayton State University, is chasing her dream, auditioning since 2000 to be one of the selected few to secure a cherished spot as a contestant on the game show.

“I’ve watched ‘Jeopardy!’ since I was a little kid. I’d watch it in the mornings in the summer and dreamed of one day being a contestant. I remember in 5th grade my teacher would wheel in a big tv in class and let us watch Final Jeopardy, and I always took it seriously even though we didn’t wager money, rather jelly beans,” says Kelly.

The process is more arduous than one might think. In the early years when Kelly tried out, tests were held locally at hotels, and only if you passed the test could one move on to the audition.

Today, the process has been streamlined to include an online 50 question test that individuals can take every 18 months.

“I’ve read that about 70,000 take the test, 2500 – 3000 are invited to auditions, and 400 get chosen to appear on the show,” Kelly explains. “I take to heart that the recent winner of the Teachers Tournament tried out for over 15 years before finally landing a coveted contestant spot.”

During the audition process, applicants are interviewed and put through mock games. With so few contestants selected for the on-air broadcast, competition is intense. Once a person has auditioned, he or she remains in a contestant pool for 18 months. If a finalist has not been called for the show within that timeframe, then they have to start the audition process over again.

Kelly recently auditioned for the second time this past spring in Orlando, Florida and now is in the pool for potential contestants.

“It’s an amazing feeling. To know you’re in the top four percent to have gotten that far is so exciting,” Kelly says. “The auditions are supposed to be fun, and they are, but there’s also that feeling of being back in school and taking an exam.”

During her first audition, Kelly was a bundle of nerves and the producers picked up on it. For her second time, she was much more relaxed.

“I’d been through it before, and I knew they wanted people who could speak loudly and clearly, move through the clues quickly, and didn’t look terrified on camera,” she laughs.

Perhaps one of the coolest experiences of the second audition for her was the surprise appearance of Jimmy from the Clue Crew. For all the “Jeopardy!” fans, he reminisced on his experiences and working with Trebek.

Kelly’s passion for travel and books have certainly broadened her knowledge in areas of history, geography, and landmarks. She hosts a regular podcast on all things Animaniacs, a Warner Brothers animated television series that was a Saturday morning cartoon favorite for ‘90s kids.

She’s also a huge fan of Steven Spielberg and John Williams, and she’s a big aficionada of the Star Wars character Yoda. She even travels with a Yoda figurine on all her trips around the world for good luck.

“I’m also a voracious reader and at any time have three to four books I’m reading. There are also a lot of pop culture questions on Jeopardy, so my movie-watching and Netflix-binging have helped as well,” Kelly smirks.

One of perks at the Orlando audition is that she was able to visit Disney World. She even made it 10 times around the Mad Tea Party teacups, a personal best.

As for what keeps her pushing to fulfill her lifelong dream? Kelly says its the wise words of Yoda that encourages her to until she gets the call she’s been hoping for.

“Try not. Do, or do not, there is no try.”

Innovator. Doer. Dreamer.

Alumna Dr. Lateshia Woodley not only transforms schools, but the lives of young students

DARE TO DREAM



By Michael Little



Having received four degrees and certificates from Clayton State University, as well as three degrees from other universities, few in education are able to talk to students about the importance of lifelong learning as Dr. Lateshia Woodley '03. While her passion for making a difference in the lives of students is laser-focused and without question, her path to becoming an educator has been more of a winding journey.

Growing up in the small town of Eufaula, Alabama on the border of Georgia was not easy for Woodley. She was raised in the projects by her grandmother with boys sleeping in one room and girls in another.

"I actually slept in the bed with my grandmother until I was 12 years old because there weren't enough beds, so it was a very interesting childhood," Dr. Woodley recalls.

However, she was always encouraged to go to school and get an education – to be the trailblazer of the family. But dreams of college were halted when she became pregnant as a teenager. Both her grandmother and mother had been teenage mothers and she felt she was continuing the cycle.

"Now what am I going to do?" she asked herself.

She decided to move to Atlanta and found Frank McClarin Academy, which had a daycare and where she planned to finish high school a year early. After a couple of setbacks, though, she began to rebel and stopped going to class. Woodley felt her efforts would not be fruitful and decided against working hard toward her goal.

Things did not turn around until her child's father told her that he was not going to raise a child with someone who did not finish high school.

"I did not want to be anybody's dummy," she says.

Since then, Dr. Woodley has never left school behind, instead making education a central part of her life and career.

After graduating from high school, she visited Clayton State, inspired by the beautiful, welcoming campus. Though initially considering a major in psychology to

become a counselor, she began her academic journey as a medical assistant student with the thought that this would be able to give her an immediate job to provide for her and her son. After completing the one-year program, she landed a job in the office of an ear, nose, and throat physician.

For several years, Dr. Woodley returned to Clayton State a number of times racking up several degrees, including associate degrees in medical office administration and paralegal studies.

An attorney she worked for offered her a chance to go to law school, but Woodley knew that in spite of her education and experience, she needed a bachelor's degree to get into law school.

So, she set her sights back on Clayton State for one more degree.

"I came back over [to Clayton State] and said, 'Listen, I've got all these degrees. What is the fastest bachelor's degree I can get based on all these credits I have?'" Dr. Woodley recalls.

Told that would be a degree in business, she received her bachelor's degree from Clayton State in 2003.

While still working in the attorney's office as a paralegal, she was sitting in a courtroom during a death penalty case representing a 16-year old. It struck her to see that the teen on trial could not even spell the word "shot" in his written confession.

During the trial, she quickly realized that she was living someone else's dream by going to law school and it was time for her to go after her own dream.

"At that moment, I sat in that courtroom, and I said, 'You know what, I wanted to get a degree in counseling and psychology and make a difference in the lives of kids.'"

She decided to get her master's degree in counseling psychology from Troy University and began her career in education at a local private academy as a counselor. While there, she completed her doctorate in Counseling Psychology.

“ It takes a lot of sleepless nights...
I love what I do and get up each
morning excited to go to work. ”

- Dr. Woodley

DARE TO DREAM



Three-years later, she became a principal in the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) system.

In her new position, she helped lead and oversee a tremendous amount of successful transitions. Her first school saw the graduation rate increase from 40 to 90 percent in under three years. Asked to move to another school in APS, Dr. Woodley helped transform that school from a “dropout factory” to one recognized as a Model Alternative School for Georgia, as well as receive accolades from the U.S. Department of Education.

These awards allowed Dr. Woodley to travel the state talking about the transformation efforts at her schools. While at a conference, she was approached by an administrator in Fulton County Schools who asked her if she would be interested in working in their school system.

Noting she was happy in APS, the administrator made her an offer she was not able to refuse—join Fulton County Schools as the principal of Frank McClarin Academy.

Her life had come full circle. She was being asked to transform the school from which she graduated and change the lives of students walking down the same halls she had as a teenager.

While principal at McClarin, Woodley saw the graduation rate improve from 19 to 75 percent.

“We try to become the type of school the students need instead of the school students have to conform to,” she says.

Working to create an environment that adapts to the needs of the students, McClarin is open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., as well as on Saturdays. There is a daycare open the same hours, and there are a number of online classes provided for students. Furthermore, there are backpack programs for homeless students, as well as medical and dental services available at the school.

“I stay awake thinking that there are homeless students that have nowhere to go. There are teen parents going from home to home and students sleeping at MARTA stations.”

The innovator and doer that she is, she found a community partner who purchased a nearby apartment complex to make sure students had a place to stay rent-free while they were in high school.

After almost five years spent transforming her high school alma mater, Woodley accepted a job at Kansas City Public Schools to serve as an assistant superintendent.



“We try to become the type of school the students need instead of the school students have to conform to,” she says.

In addition to her career as an educator, Dr. Woodley has her own counseling practice, Dynamic Achievement Solutions, and has authored three books—Why Did You Choose to Get Pregnant?, Issues of the Heart, and Transforming Alternative Education.

“It takes a lot of sleepless nights,” she says, thinking about how she is able to balance being a parent, educator, counselor, author, and speaker. “I get up at 4:00 a.m. each morning, and I am committed to do the work I do. I love what I do and get up excited each morning excited to go to work.”

Having won numerous awards, including the Outstanding Women in Education Award, National Dropout Prevention Center Crystal Star Award, and the Indie Author Legacy Awards Author of the Year for Education, her most treasured award came from her students this past year.

“In recognition of Black History Month, my students gave me their SHERo Award, and that meant the world to me that my students felt that much love for me,” she says.

While Dr. Woodley continues to climb the ladder of success in education, she continues to be motivated by her own story to transform not only schools, but the lives of the students who need the push she got to achieve their dreams.



The old shared and open locker rooms in the back of the building were cleared out, as were the men's and women's basketball locker rooms just off of the lobby. The lobby itself was emptied out of all the trophies and their cases, concession tables, equipment, and all fixtures.

It was to make room for some tremendous improvements that would benefit not only Laker student-athletes, but also their fans and those that work to support and promote them within the department.

All the old locker room walls and ceiling tiles have been knocked down in both parts of the building. A wall adjoining the basketball suite has also been removed. Piping, duct work, office and classroom wall construction, and framing for all of the new areas were well underway in the spring.

A full-on construction zone that, come November of 2018, will see each team have its own brand new locker room that includes storage, tech, and a lobby area, will not only showcase the accomplishments of Lakers past and present, but also better serve Clayton State's loyal fans and alumni.

The new lobby will feature a much larger footprint that includes a permanent concession stand for the first time in program history. Situated along the wall that forms The Loch, and part of the area that housed the trophy cases, the concession stand will feature a roll down top and easy order, pickup, and payment options for fans.

Across from the concession area will be a seating area with a backdrop of touch video screens so fans can check out the full history of Clayton State Athletics. Highlighting that area will be brand new, standalone trophy cases near the entrance to the lobby.

These will house the trophies that represent some of the most important accomplishments in the history of Laker Athletics, including the one that no one else in the state of Georgia or the Southeast Region can lay claim to—an NCAA Division II Women's Basketball National Championship.

The lobby area will house one of two new classrooms as well as a changing area for visiting teams right off of the gym. The second of those classrooms will be located in a portion of the former weight room and will abut two new office spaces.

That end of the building will also feature two new areas that will greatly factor into the recruitment and well-being of Laker student-athletes. In part due to the \$60,000 donation made by OrthoAtlanta in September of 2016, a brand new athletic training area will be constructed and named in their honor in recognition of their generous contribution. This will aide significantly in performance recovery for Clayton State student-athletes throughout their careers.

The student-athletes will now also have a lounge just for them located in the old athletic training space. This will include couches, chairs, televisions, and gaming systems that they will be able to use in their downtime.

This project, brought about in large part by the leadership of Clayton State University President Dr. Tim Hynes and former Director of Athletics Tim Duncan, has not only leveled the playing field for the Lakers with their fellow Division II competition, it has positioned them to continue to compete—and succeed—at the conference, regional, and national level as well as carry on a tremendous legacy laid down by those that came before them in the previous three decades.

CAMPUSUPDATES

Spivey Hall finds a mate for “Clara”



Spivey Hall acquired a second Steinway & Sons D-274 concert grand piano made in Hamburg, Germany in December, which has been named “Robert.” The acquisition of “Robert” marks the successful conclusion of the Spivey Hall Friends “Clara Seeks Robert” Piano Campaign, chaired by Spivey Hall Friends Council Advisor, Dr. Michael Koch.

President Tim Hynes named among “100 Most Influential Georgians”

Clayton State University’s president Dr. Tim Hynes was recently named one of 2018’s “100 Most Influential Georgians” by Georgia Trend Magazine. This is the fourth year Dr. Hynes has earned the recognition. The list highlights the people who are making an impact in the state or have made an impression on the magazine’s staff for the year.

Students challenged to make voice heard during Clayton State Day at the Capitol



Clayton State University students got a special look at Peach state politics during Clayton State Day at the Capitol on Jan. 10. The annual event offers students an opportunity to see first-hand how government operates with a visit to the Georgia Capitol, meeting representatives, and engaging in political discussions.

College of Business offers free tax assistance to community for 27th year

For the 27th year, Clayton State’s College of Business offered free tax assistance to low- and middle-income families in February as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site. The program is offered through the Internal Revenue Service and helps eligible individuals prepare their taxes without the burden of tax filing costs.

Clayton State ranked among top 20 colleges for online learning

Clayton State University was ranked no. 16 overall among public colleges and universities for online programs, and no. 30 for its online nurse practitioner degree programs by higher education resource guide AffordableCollegeOnline.org.

Clayton State men’s basketball team named Peach Belt Conference Regular Season Division II Championships

Clayton State’s men’s basketball team claimed the Peach Belt regular season championship at the division II level with an 84-67 victory over Columbus State. This is the second straight time they claimed the championship win.



Clayton State picked as only university on AJC Top Workplaces list for 2018

The University was ranked among the “Top 150 Workplaces in Atlanta” for the 7th consecutive year, and the only college or university to be ranked among the Top 25 Large Companies at no. 21.

#Give4Dreams brings in more than \$150,000 in gifts in 24 hours

A total of \$153,939 in gifts were raised during the University’s third-annual 24-hour day of giving, #Give4Dreams. From March 1 to March 2, 326 donors gave to support thirteen projects including student travel, academic research, national competitions and scholarships.

Laker Connection wins two awards for magazine from Educational Advertising Awards



Clayton State University earned two awards for its publication, The Laker Connection. The University won a Silver Award for the Volume 12 Issue 1 edition of the magazine featuring the supply chain program, and a Merit Award for the Volume 12 Issue 2 edition of the magazine featuring artificial intelligence.

The Laker Connection magazine wins multiple national awards

Laker Connection wins two awards for magazine from Educational Advertising Awards. Silver Award for the Volume 12 Issue 1 edition of the magazine featuring the supply chain program, and a Merit Award for the Volume 12 Issue 2 edition of the magazine featuring artificial intelligence.

In addition, the Laker Connection was named among the top in the nation in the 2017 Collegiate Advertising Awards (CAA) program. The CAA is an elite program recognizing higher education organizations for excellence in communications, marketing, advertising and promotions of their schools.

Clayton State recognized for affordable master's psychology degree

Clayton State University has been recognized for offering a master's level psychology degree for an affordable price. The University was ranked no. 42 among the nation's colleges and universities for its Master of Science in Clinical/Counseling Psychology in the "Best Master's in Psychology Programs of 2018" list by Best Value Schools.

Clayton State makes U.S. News and World Report list of best regional universities in the South

The university is one of the top 142 best regional universities in the south in 2018 for its range of undergraduate and graduate degree offerings.

English program ranked among top 10 for affordable online bachelor's degrees

Clayton State University was recently listed among the top colleges and universities around the nation that offer an affordable online program for those seeking to study English. The school was ranked no. 2 for its online bachelor's degree in English among the 2018 Most Affordable Online Colleges for English by SR Education Group.

Nursing program earns top rankings by the U.S. News and World Report



Clayton State was recognized for its graduate nursing programs in the U.S. News 2019 graduate school rankings, being named among the top 154 universities in the nation with the best online nursing graduate program. It also placed no. 220 on the list of best nursing schools with a master's degree.

Arbor Day at Clayton State recognizes beauty of campus environments



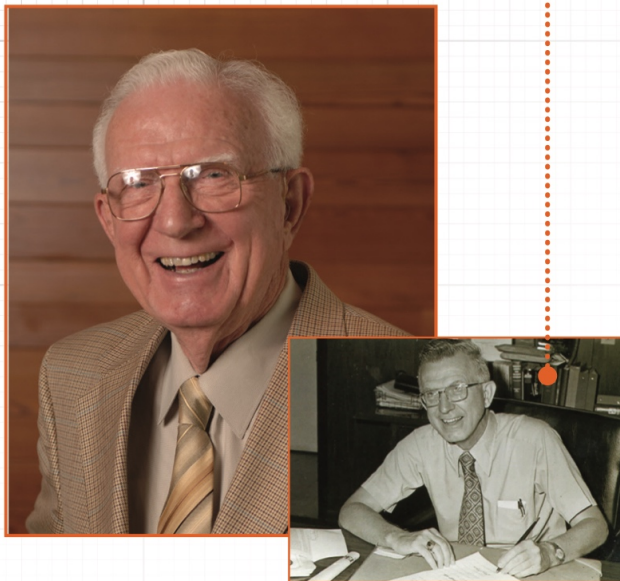
Clayton State celebrated Arbor Day on April 26 with an annual ceremony and a tree planting at the Athletics Center. This year, faculty, students, and staff planted flowering dogwood trees, the perfect choice for yards and gardens.

CAMPUS **UPDATES**

Two of Georgia's prominent attorneys awarded with honorary degrees at Spring 2018 commencement

Robert "Bob" Edge, senior counsel for leading international law firm Alston & Bird, and Alexander "Alex" Crumbley, former state senator, judicial court judge and founder of Crumbley Law Firm will both receive honorary degrees. Both men played a critical role in the establishment of Spivey Hall, Clayton State's performance art venue.

Clayton State Foundation Board of Trustee charter member James Wood passes



James M. Wood, Jr., founding member of the Clayton State University Foundation's Board of Trustees, passed away on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at the age of 91. Wood was an important member of the Morrow community and strong supporter of Clayton State University.

Commencement gowns go green

Clayton State University contracted with Oak Hall Cap & Gown to provide students with graduation regalia made of sustainable materials. The new caps and gowns are constructed of softer fabric that is wrinkle resistant and lightweight.

MailChimp awards Clayton State \$25,000 for tech scholarships



MailChimp, the world's largest marketing automation platform, has partnered with the College of Information and Mathematical Sciences to fund MailChimp scholarships for students studying computer science, information technology, and mathematics.

Clayton State University launches \$12,000 Online MBA



Clayton State University's College of Business is entering the online MBA market with a new \$12,705, fully-online Master of Business Administration program starting in the fall of 2018. Students can earn the degree in as little as 12 months.

Clayton State University SHRM student chapter receives prestigious award from Society for Human Resource Management



The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has awarded a 2017-2018 Superior Merit Award designation to the Clayton State University SHRM student chapter for providing superior growth and development opportunities to its student chapter members.

Clayton State University awarded \$12,000 to train future cybersecurity experts

The John & Mary Franklin Foundation, whose focus is supporting Georgia's knowledge economy, has awarded Clayton State University \$12,000 to help train students for careers in cybersecurity and forensic analysis.

Clayton State ranked in top 20 for student debt repayment success

Clayton State University was ranked no. 17 among colleges and universities in Georgia for giving students a strong chance at repaying debt. The University was included in the second annual Student Debt Repayment Success Indicator (SDRSI) report by The Student Loan Report.

No tuition increase at Clayton State University for 2018-19 school year



Clayton State University students will not see an increase in their tuition for the 2018-2019 school year. The Board of Regents set tuition rates for the upcoming school year at all USG institutions with a zero percent increase.

Clayton State University awarded \$5.3 million in state funding for Academic Core capital project



The state of Georgia awarded \$5.3 million to Clayton State to construct a new central heating and air facility for the Harry S. Downs Center, Athletics Building, and Spivey Hall. The funds will also purchase furnishings and equipment for all renovated spaces.

GREATER MIND

New scholarships, more philanthropy puts Clayton State closer to its goal

By Chase Moore

In April of 2017, Clayton State University launched its first-ever comprehensive campaign, Greater In Mind, with a goal of raising \$12 million in support of our students and programs. Thanks to an outpouring of generosity from friends, alumni, corporations, and foundations, we've nearly reached our goal with over \$10 million in gifts and pledges.

One such gift, made possible by the Coca-Cola Foundation, created 50 scholarships to support women in the STEM fields as well as "first gens", those students who are the first in their immediate family to seek a degree in higher education.

These scholarships provided by the Coca-Cola Foundation will radically change the futures of the recipients by not only supporting tuition, books, and fees, but also by providing funds for the recipients to take part in opportunities like study abroad, professional conferences, or even conduct field research.

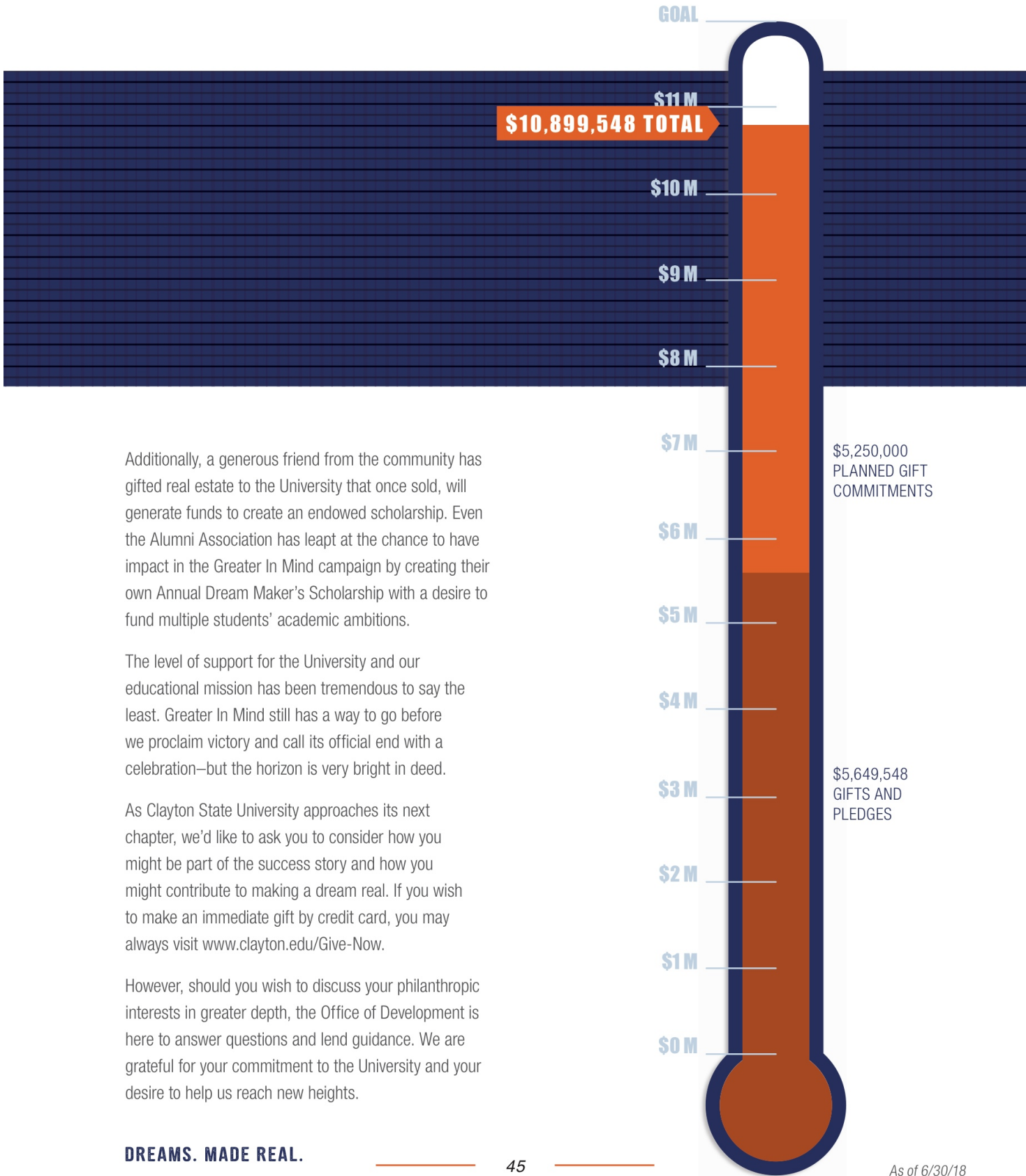
Another transformative corporate gift has been made possible by MailChimp, the world's largest marketing automation platform, headquartered in Atlanta. MailChimp has enjoyed tremendous success in a relatively short period of time. Along with business growth, they also desire to cultivate the wellbeing of surrounding communities.

In partnership with the College of Information and Mathematical Sciences, MailChimp has underwritten the creation of Launch Pad, a one of a kind program to foster a relationship flow between industry and the classroom.

A cohort of students, faculty, and professionals will migrate between the two organizations evaluating real time technology development, exchanging ideas, and engaging in the joint creation of solutions.

Launch Pad will allow participating students the opportunity to contextualize classroom knowledge in a collaborative environment, faculty to experience industry and the unique needs for talent development, and technologists to transfer life lessons and the creative process. This form of authentic exchange will allow our students to grow in ways that before were virtually impossible.

The Greater In Mind campaign has also provided individuals an opportunity to consider their legacy and the future of the institution. In addition to a number of newly endowed scholarships, two donors who wish to remain anonymous, have named Clayton State University and Spivey Hall in their estate planning to create a seven-figure bequest that will have a transformative effect once realized.



Additionally, a generous friend from the community has gifted real estate to the University that once sold, will generate funds to create an endowed scholarship. Even the Alumni Association has leapt at the chance to have impact in the Greater In Mind campaign by creating their own Annual Dream Maker's Scholarship with a desire to fund multiple students' academic ambitions.

The level of support for the University and our educational mission has been tremendous to say the least. Greater In Mind still has a way to go before we proclaim victory and call its official end with a celebration—but the horizon is very bright in deed.

As Clayton State University approaches its next chapter, we'd like to ask you to consider how you might be part of the success story and how you might contribute to making a dream real. If you wish to make an immediate gift by credit card, you may always visit www.clayton.edu/Give-Now.

However, should you wish to discuss your philanthropic interests in greater depth, the Office of Development is here to answer questions and lend guidance. We are grateful for your commitment to the University and your desire to help us reach new heights.

DREAMS. MADE REAL.

Meet Your 2018 Clayton State University Alumni Board

We are excited to announce our distinguished alumni who will serve on the Alumni Board of Advisers. The role of the Board will be to provide ideas, advice, counsel, and support with respect to growing the Alumni Association membership. And, to help develop programming and opportunities that will benefit all alumni.

"We have access to a wealth of connections and resources to aid Clayton State not only financially, but through mentoring current students, volunteering, engaging and social media, and encouraging prospective students to attend CSU. Just a little involvement can go a long way." – Crystal Billingslea



Crystal Billingslea

Alumni Association President
Graduated 2011, Middle Grades Education
Teacher, Paul D. West Middle School

"I had a deep desire to remain active in this university because it has done so much for me. I want to help ensure there is a network to connect these amazing professionals to help each other in furthering careers and success." – Scott Ashworth



Paige Lee

Graduated 2010, Psychology & Human Services
Retail Contracts Coordinator, Georgia Lottery Corporation



Scott Ashworth

Graduated 2015, Criminal Justice
Team Security Manager, Atlanta United
FC/AMB Sports & Entertainment



Claire Monroe

Graduated 2015, Nursing
Registered Nurse, Piedmont Henry Hospital Emergency Department



Lisa Conley

Graduated 2002, Integrative Studies
Associate Director of Graduate Mentoring,
Robinson College of Business at Georgia
State University

"It provides another way for me to give back to Clayton State. A strong alumni base benefits the university, alumni, and current students." – Lisa Conley



Aaron Panlilio

Graduated 2016, Information Technology
IT Infrastructure Support, ArcherPoint



Joseph Echols

Graduated 2006 & 2011, Management & MBA
High School Coordinator, Southern Crescent
Technical College



Michelle Reape

Graduated 2005, Management
Senior Marketing Manager, Revenue Analytics Inc.



Tabitha Ingle

Graduated 2016, Sociology



Xavier Smith

Graduated 2015, Psychology & Human Services
Human Resources Coordinator, Tory Burch



Ezekiel Jones

Graduated 2014 & 2015, Marketing & MBA
Pricing Analyst, Georgia-Pacific LLC

"I want to bring more awareness to Clayton State. There are so many opportunities to highlight what CSU is doing as well as help future graduates make strategic connections." – Michelle Reape

Alumni Survey RESULTS

421

TOTAL RESPONSES

Thank you to all the alumni who took the time to complete the Alumni Survey. This important initiative will help us enhance current programs and develop new ones. As promised, we want to share with you some of the results.

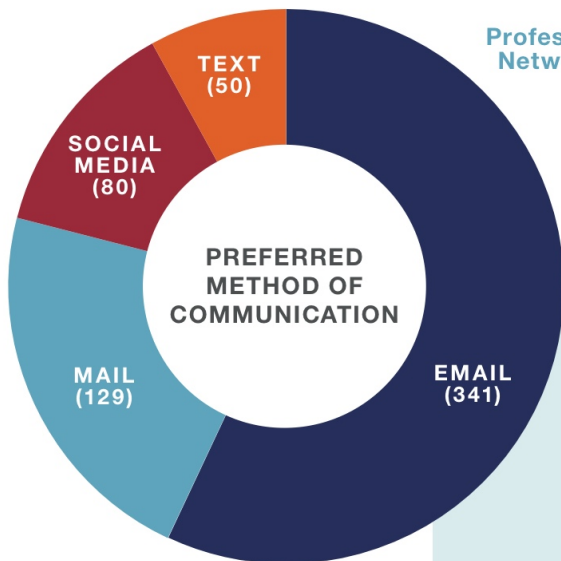
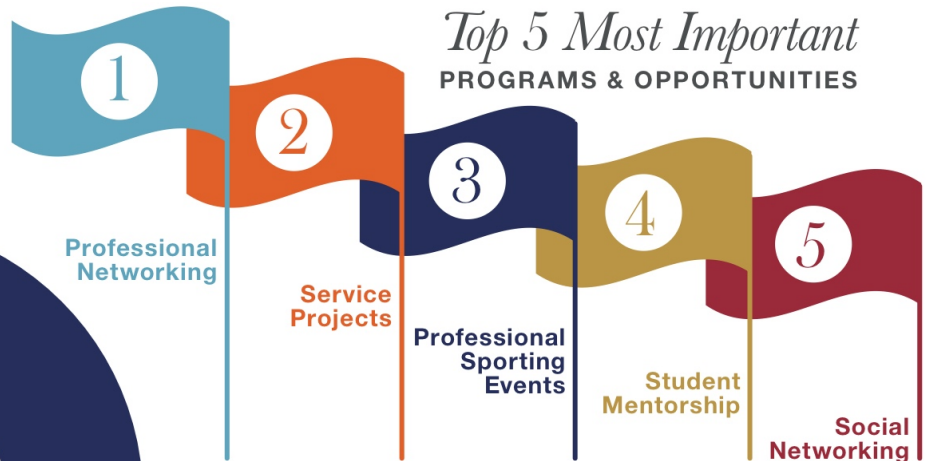


WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CLAYTON STATE, WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT?

POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE FEELINGS ABOUT THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

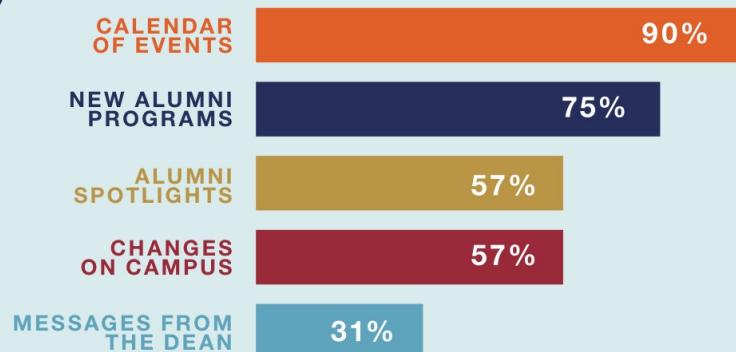
- 1 CLAYTON STATE AS A WHOLE
- 2 ACADEMIC MAJOR OR DEPARTMENT
- 3 PROFESSORS

Top 5 Most Important PROGRAMS & OPPORTUNITIES



If you did not complete the survey and would like to provide feedback to the alumni office, please email alumni@clayton.edu.

WHAT ALUMNI WANT TO HEAR ABOUT



Loch around the clock

Day and night, Lakers are mingling, socializing, and hitting the town showing off their school pride. Clayton State alumni gathered for several events over the last few months that provided great opportunities for networking. Keep an eye out for future events at www.clayton.edu/alumni/events.



Members of the Alumni Association welcomed soon-to-be graduates to the Association at the first Senior Crossing.



Several alumni found relaxation and a good workout during a Saturday morning yoga session on campus in May.



Students and alumni gathered together for great food and fun at Homecoming in February.



The Homecoming tailgate was preceded by the Loch Socks 5K with students, alumni, faculty, and staff running around campus.



Over 70 alumni and friends cheered on the Atlanta Braves to a win.



Alumni toast to a great night of networking and fun at New Realm Brewing in June

MILESTONES:

James Woodfin

B.A. History with Teacher Certification, 2017

Started a new job as a high school math teacher in Griffin-Spalding County Schools.



Alexis Nguyen Gage

A.S. Health, 1992

Flying Officer Gage graduated from the Initial Officers Course of the Royal Australian Air Force in October 2017. Her first posting is at the Air Force Headquarters Ministerial Liaison Office as a Ministerial Liaison Officer.

Andre Rall

B.A.S. Technology Management, 2007

Originally from South Africa, he joined Clayton State on a soccer scholarship. Upon graduating, he moved to Ohio and obtained a master's in Information & Telecommunication Systems and is currently working for Amazon Web Services in Seattle.

Carol Bentley

B.S. Integrative Studies, 2009

Received her Master of Education in School Counseling.

Leonardo Martinez

B.S. Psychology & Human Services, 2010

Started working in January 2017 as project coordinator for Casa de Esperanza – National Latin@ Network, a national non-profit organization providing training and technical assistance for advocates of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. In this position, he leads the Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Initiative and the National Resource Center on Reaching Underserved Victims of Crime.

Miranda Holmes

B.S. Biology, 2010

Currently working as a forensic scientist for Quest Diagnostics. Was married in 2010 and welcomed last son in 2015.

Rob Taylor

Honorary Alumnus, 1996

After retiring from Clayton State College in 1996, he and his wife became missionaries. They retired again in 2016 and now reside in Ocala, Florida.



Lisa Conley

B.S. Integrative Studies, 2002

Started new role at Georgia State University as an associate director in September 2017. In under six months, launched a successful graduate mentoring initiative in the College of Business.



Joche Heard

B.A. Communications & Media Studies, 2015

Embarked on the journey of motherhood in June 2015, started a new career with Home Depot in August 2015, got engaged in November 2017, and closed on her perfect starter home in March 2018. She is getting married in November 2018 and preparing to conquer more goals pertaining to self-care, career growth, education, and finances.



Brittany Prince Evans

M.H.A., 2015

Recently graduated from Emory Health-care's Operations Development Program. She was then offered and accepted a position as program and research manager at Emory University's Urban Health Initiative. She works to provide health disparities education and advocacy, builds collaborative partnerships, and develops best practice models with underserved communities and those who work with them in the Atlanta metro area in order to advance equity in health and well-being.

In memoriam

Torrin Greene '12

January 26, 1989 – November 13, 2017



Passed away unexpectedly at the young age of 28. A 6-6 forward that hailed from neighboring Riverdale, Georgia after growing up in Brooklyn, New York, Greene was a five-year member of the Lakers' men's basketball program under Gordon Gibbons from 2007-12. In that time, he played in 109 games, starting 43 of them, and helped lead Clayton State to a 66-48 overall record and appearances in the Peach Belt Conference Tournament all four years he was on the court. He finished his career with 542 points, 322 rebounds, 94 of which were offensive, and 75 assists but had an even greater impact off the court. Greene is remembered fondly by more than just those who were his teammates with the men's basketball program because of his engaging personality and willingness to go above and beyond. He is survived by his parents, Orin and Teresa.

Dana Reed '15

February 24, 1972 – February 1, 2018



Passed away at the age of 45. Reed earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management in May 2015. This event was a very proud moment for her son who had always been her coach, motivator, and source of encouragement. She was an employee of Bank of America since 1991, holding various positions and representing the company in a number of volunteer community outreach initiatives. She was also a gifted and talented soprano. Services were held at Bread of Life Church. Reed is survived by her loving son, Justus Emmanuel Reed; a loving and devoted mother, Ms. Ruby Steverson James; one loving brother, Pastor Tony P. James; one sister-in-law, Mrs. Letitia King James; one sister, Miss Sharonda Tigner; one nephew, William Joseph James; and a host of aunts, uncles, cousins, other relatives, and friends.

Have a special milestone you would like to share? Tell your Laker family about it now at clayton.edu/alumni/services

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Morrow, GA 30260

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