

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY

Having built upon the significant progress and achievements of the 2007-2008 academic year, Claflin University is pleased to provide an account of the 2008-2009 academic year in which the institution saw many notable firsts.

The University's student population remains steady with approximately 1,800 students enrolled. They come from 42 South Carolina counties and 24 states. Fifteen countries are represented through our international students. The 2008-2009 academic year marked the largest freshman class (462) in the institution's history, an 18.5% increase selected from our largest applicant pool (4,225) which is up 38.2%. The class also included 71 Honors College Scholars, up 16.4%.

In the inaugural list of "America's Best Colleges and Universities" by *Forbes.com*, Claflin University was the nation's Highest Ranking Historically Black College or University (HBCU), and ranked in the top four percent of all U.S. undergraduate institutions.

In addition to being included for the 11th consecutive year by *U.S. News and World Report*, as one of "America's Best Colleges," ranked number 13 in the Top Tier among Baccalaureate Colleges in the South, we were also ranked number seven for a second consecutive year in the publication's list of "America's Best Black Colleges."

A significant institutional achievement was the successful visit from the Commission on Black Colleges of the University Senate of The United Methodist Church in November. The University was recommended and approved for continued participation in the Black College Fund and affiliation with The United Methodist Church.

Resident Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor delivered the 2009 Founders' Day keynote address and gave a stimulating and informative speech on the early life of Lee Claflin; Claflin University is named for the philanthropist and his son, Massachusetts Governor William Claflin.

The 16th Annual Granville Hicks Academy for Laity and Clergy was held in February. Dr. Lee H. Butler of Chicago Theological Seminary and Dr. Reginald Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Va., served as the faculty for the academy. Religious Emphasis Week also was observed in February and Melody Cooper, a Claflin graduate, was among the presenters.

With our strong and committed tradition of building character and instilling humanitarian values in each of our students, we take great pride in the outstanding community service achievements of our entire student body. For the 2008 Fall Semester, our students completed more than 15,000 hours of community service. For a third consecutive year, students were awarded first place by the national Kidney Foundation for sponsoring the most walkers in the annual Kidney Walk. As a result of the outstanding community service achievement and hours rendered to the community, Claflin University students were named for a second consecutive year to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. Inclusion in the Honor Roll is bestowed in recognition of innovative and effective community service and service-learning programs. In addition, Claflin University students were recognized for having the largest number of donors among all HBCUs on the National Marrow Donor Registry.

This academic year also marked the launch of a new strategic marketing initiative, set to further position Claflin University as one of America's premier liberal arts institutions. The initiative was launched on Matriculation Day with a new brand and tagline – "The World Needs Visionaries" – leading the charge.

Our recognition for academic excellence has been in tandem with our enhanced global visibility. Our first Fulbright Scholar, Aundreta Conner Farris, a 2008 religion and philosophy graduate, traveled to Turkey this past fall to teach English and African American studies. In addition, members of the Claflin University Concert Choir traveled to China last summer as part of a three-city choral tribute to the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, and, based on its HBCU-best record, the men's basketball team was invited to participate in the inaugural Trinidad and Tobago Hoops Classic.

This year, Claflin University Panther Athletics began its first season of NCAA Division II competitive play, and its first as a full member of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC). The men's basketball team completed a 25-3 inaugural NCAA season, capturing the SIAC regular season crown, and Coach Ron Woodard was named SIAC Coach of the Year. Ranked Number Ten nationally among NCAA D-2 teams, the Panthers also competed in their first NCAA tournament and made it to the semifinal round. In addition, Claflin University kicked off the new era of athletic accomplishments by recognizing past athletic trailblazers as 21 were enshrined in the first class of the Athletics Hall of Fame.

We at Claflin University are encouraged and motivated by one of our very best years in making strides in academic achievements, faculty and student achievements and for being able to re-invest ourselves in sustaining and upholding our mission and goals by preparing our students for visionary leadership and service in a global and technological society.

Dr. Henry N. Tisdale, President