Students Face Financial Challenges in Pursuit of a CAU Degree
**Toward the Finish Line**

On April 29, I announced to the University's Board of Trustees, the University community and a host of external constituents, my intent to retire, effective June 30, 2015. This decision is one with which I have wrestled for some time. For the past four decades, I have been completely enthralled and fully invested in anticipating, addressing and resolving the challenges that come with a career in higher education administration. Quite simply, this is a natural, routine occurrence in the life of a university, and certainly in the life of a university president.

My career has afforded me the opportunity to work with people and within organizations I have grown to love, typically very quickly and very deeply. Clark Atlanta is no exception. For the past seven years, I have been privileged to observe this great institution from myriad vantage points. At each turn, I have witnessed amazing talent, intense loyalty, deep-seeded passion for the institution's mission and even deeper compassion for students. For all of the economic, social and political challenges that too often impede the course of progress among the nation's HBCUs, Clark Atlanta continues to be one exceptional university.

CAU today finds itself in stable financial and operational standing. That is neither by accident nor coincidence, but rather through the unrelenting diligence of many. We are well-positioned to capitalize on upcoming milestones, from our pending 2016 SACS reaccreditation, to the breakthrough research in our Center for Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development, to the development of new and exciting programs, the White House's Young African Leadership Initiative, for example. In the coming year, we will press harder and work smarter to ensure that the next president is greeted with an elevated, expanded record of institutional victories. As our board now begins to orchestrate its search, our work will focus on ensuring the institution's stability, maintaining seamlessness and continuity throughout this transition and, as always, an unrelenting press toward continued progress.

In retirement, I will return to my own scholarship, long ago sacrificed at the expense of innumerable issues and opportunities and, more important, to time with my own family. Their sacrifices in support of my career have been far greater than mine. I will never turn away from Clark Atlanta University, or the students and alumni who enliven our raison d'être.

We can ill afford to anchor our collective conscience in the harbor of apathy when more than 96 percent of our students remain heavily dependent on multiple forms of financial aid. This is especially true as traditional sources of financial aid continue to erode, the Pell Grant and the Parent Plus Loan Program, in particular. For too many, attending college is more and more akin to running the hurdles, with students having to confront one financial obstacle after another, usually in rapid succession.

In the pages that follow, you will find testimonials from four students — a mere sampling of the thousands of compelling stories we encounter annually — who share their own struggles, and victories, in navigating the ever-present gauntlet of financial enrollment. You also will hear from corporate, foundation and individual donors who have discovered what so many of us already know: CAU continues to be a smart, solid, worthwhile investment.

These days, I find myself reflecting more and more upon the race I have run over the past 43 years. I am honored that I get to cross the "finish line" here at Clark Atlanta. In fact, I consider this a Divine affirmation. But all of my experiences, and yours, are for naught if we do not continually invest ourselves in assuring that our students also get to cross their individual and collective finish lines.

That is the core of our purpose, a mission from which we must never retire…the unending race given to each of us to run.

*Carlton E. Brown*
*President, CAU*
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ON THE COVER: CAU track team members line up to run the hurdles, a symbolic exercise typifying the challenges many students face in their efforts to finance a college degree. From left to right: George Watkins Jr., sophomore; Ashley Manuel, senior; Richard James, freshman; and Cynthia Smith, sophomore. Not Shown: Coach Pamela Page.
Clark Atlanta University President Carlton E. Brown To Retire In 2015

Clark Atlanta University President Carlton E. Brown on April 29 announced his decision to retire, effective June 30, 2015, after 43 years in the education field, the past seven at CAU.

“This is a decision made carefully and with much deliberation,” Brown said, adding that he had been “blessed with a career that spans four very fulfilling decades.”

CAU Board Chairman Alexander B. Cummings Jr., noted that Brown’s decision comes at a time when, despite challenges to the nation’s higher education community, HBCUs in particular, the institution is “strong, stable and well-positioned.” The Board of Trustees will announce a formal presidential search later this year.

Brown joined CAU in 2007 as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs and was appointed president in 2008. Under his leadership, improvements were made to the University’s facilities, including two LEEDS-certified renovations. CAU achieved several years of clean audits and Brown and his leadership team sharpened the functional capabilities of many of the University’s critical business units.

The University’s 2011 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Five-Year Report passed with commendations for excellence and is used by SACS as a model report to train other institutions. The School of Business Administration’s American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business accreditation was renewed. The School of Education achieved professional accreditation renewal as well as a new accreditation. CAU is on track for a successful 10-year reaccreditation by SACS in 2016, and is preparing for reaccreditation for its social work and public administration programs.

The institution also has bolstered its research and sponsored programs infrastructure to better support grantsmanship and research efforts. Graduate enrollment has increased and CAU has established two very prestigious honor societies, Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Eta Sigma. CAU also re-established its Alpha Kappa Mu chapter.

Brown’s final year will be one of “ongoing, strategic capacity-building,” particularly in the areas of fundraising and recruitment.

“If anything,” he says, “we’re going to run even harder than we have in previous years. It’s an exciting time for us. We are poised to advance in ways that will affirm our presence as a center of enterprise and discovery, and we are geared up for the task.”

Dr. James Perkins Named Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs

Clark Atlanta University (CAU) officials on Jan. 27 named James Perkins, Ph.D., vice president for Research and Sponsored Programs and tenured professor of chemistry. Perkins has more than four decades of experience in the field of higher education and research.

“We are confident that Dr. Perkins’ extensive knowledge and experience in research administration and working with funding sources, public and private, will serve CAU well,” said CAU Provost James A. Hefner, Ph.D. “He will pursue opportunities for interdisciplinary research leading to the discovery of new knowledge, business incubations, patents, technology transfer, and community outreach to support faculty and student excellence.”

For the past seven years, Perkins served as the director of the National Institutes of Health-sponsored Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Translational Research Network Data and Technology Coordinating Center at Jackson State University. He is the architect and founding dean of the Jackson State’s School of Science and Technology.

During his long tenure there, Perkins played a key role in building the infrastructure to support research and academic programs, not only at JSU, but also at majority and other minority institutions. He has successfully secured external support for numerous research, educational, training, development and infrastructure support projects. He also directed NIH and NSF programs focused on increasing the number and quality of students from underserved backgrounds entering the science, technology, engineering and math pipeline and successfully completing doctoral degrees in biomedical and other STEM disciplines.

In addition, Perkins was instrumental in creating a multimedia program to supplement science teaching in K-12 schools. It was placed in hundreds of schools across the United States and internationally, and provided training to thousands of teachers in its effective use.

During his career, he has personally obtained and managed more than $30 million in grants and contracts and has managed more than $130 million to support research and other activities throughout his research, academic and corporate positions.

Perkins holds a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Slippery Rock State College and a doctorate degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He is a member of the American Chemical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.
CAU Presents Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author And Historian Alan Shaw Taylor

Clark Atlanta University presented the distinguished Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian Alan Shaw Taylor, Ph.D., in a discussion of his new book, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832*, on April 9. The Department of African American and Africana Women’s Studies and History and the CAU Art Galleries sponsored the event, which was held in the Thomas W. Cole Jr. Research Center for Science and Technology Auditorium.

Taylor has authored numerous books on the subject of colonial America, the American Revolution, and the Early American Republic. A graduate of Colby College and Brandeis University, where he earned his doctoral degree in 1986, Taylor is the Thomas Jefferson Professor of History at the University of Virginia. The former University of California, Davis, and Boston University faculty member is renowned for his contributions to micro-history, as exemplified in *William Cooper’s Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (1996), which won the Bancroft, Beveridge and Pulitzer prizes.

Surveying court and land records, letters and diaries, Taylor reconstructed the economic, political and social history related to the land speculation and settlement of Cooperstown, N.Y., after the Revolutionary War.

In the case of *The Internal Enemy*, reapplying this meticulous methodology, Taylor explicated how thousands of enslaved African Americans escaped their predicament during the War of 1812, and the specific nature of their service to the British. He also revealed names and narratives of the escapees and their forlorn families pulled from the archives of estate records, reparation claims, and court records.

Center For Cancer Research And Therapeutic Development Awarded $7.4 Million For Research Infrastructure Development

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) on April 23 awarded a $7.4 million renewal grant to the Center for Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development (CCRTD) at Clark Atlanta University.

“We very much appreciate this award and this vote of confidence. It once again affirms the level of excellence demonstrated in the breakthrough research conducted by the CCRTD,” CAU President Carlton E. Brown said.

The Center’s work has resulted in several patents and patents pending. Brown noted. As important, it has graduated 11 Ph.D.s since 2010 and currently has in its laboratories 19 doctoral students who have completed or are working to complete their Ph.D.s.

“Each of those candidates is required to author and publish their research as a program requirement for graduation,” Brown said. “This disciplined standard cements the Center’s reputation as one of the nation’s most competitive prostate cancer research and educational programs, and will account for a network of approximately 60 minority Ph.D.s by 2025.

The grant will enable CCRTD to continue to enhance, improve and manage research programs in prostate cancer research to increase efficient use of technologies, research capacity and competitiveness, with collaborations and research partnerships, research institutes and community organizations. Specifically, the new award will allow CCRTD to recruit additional scientists to build a competitive basic and translational research center focused on prostate cancer health disparities and to maintain and expand its existing research infrastructure within CCRTD.

Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar and CCRTD director Shafiq A. Khan, Ph.D., is the principal investigator of the five-year grant.

“This award is the result of diligent and exhaustive work by the CCRTD faculty and staff,” Khan said. “Their collaboration in the development and preparation of this application was invaluable.”
CAU Receives $40,000 Grant from Ray C. Anderson Foundation

Clark Atlanta University received a one-year, $40,000 grant from the Ray C. Anderson Foundation last September, as a part of an award to universities and environmental organizations that support environmental initiatives and sustainability.

“With this support from the Ray C. Anderson Foundation, CAU students will have the opportunity to develop new high-performance biodegradable polymer systems from environmentally friendly and renewable plant-based polymers. This research will lead to a reduction in the need for imported petroleum and provides for polymers that will not become solid waste in landfills,” said Dr. Eric A. Mintz, professor of chemistry.

The project supports CAU’s broad agenda in sustainability, which includes the upgrading of existing buildings to LEED certification, recycling and waste minimization, and educating the next generation of scientists and decision-makers to be mindful of full life cycle costs and the need to incorporate renewable materials, products, and processes.

The Ray C. Anderson Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that seeks to promote a sustainable society by supporting and funding educational and project-based initiatives that advance knowledge and innovation in sustainability.
CAU Hosts Russian Journalism Instructors and Administrators

Faculty, staff and students in the Clark Atlanta University Mass Media Arts Department in February met on campus with Russian journalism instructors and administrators as part of the International Visitor Leadership Program. It is the U.S. State Department’s Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau’s premier professional exchange program. Participants examined trends in journalism education in the United States. The visitors toured WCLK-91.9 FM Radio and CAU-TV.

The African American Film Critics Association Internship Program Launches at CAU

The Mass Media Arts Department at Clark Atlanta University has formally adopted an academic internship program facilitated by the African American Film Critics Association (AAFCA) to train future journalists in the film and entertainment industry. The program, which launched last fall and is available only to junior- and senior-level students, represents the first academic partnership between AAFCA and an institution of higher learning.

“We are excited about this collaboration with AAFCA and our campus,” said Kandace Harris, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Department of Mass Media Arts. “Members of the association have a long history of engaging our students, so we look forward to the new opportunities that this formal internship partnership will bring.”

Mass Media Arts students Ariana Pyles and Shatondra Caldwell were selected for the program and earned academic credits for their work over the course of the fall semester. Caldwell assisted the organization’s production team in creating segments shown during the annual AAFCA Awards Show in January at the Taglyan Complex in Hollywood, California. The two students also contributed movie reviews on behalf of AAFCA that were disseminated via the association’s online content relationship with Radio One stations across the country and served as award show “online ambassadors.”

“We are thrilled to begin this program at a historically black institution such as Clark Atlanta University, with its strong Mass Media Arts legacy,” said Edward Adams, AAFCA member, online manager for Creative Loafing magazine, and co-supervisor of the program. “Our support of African-American youth interested in careers in the media will give them the training, experience and confidence that will add value as they develop their careers.”

CAU Educator Named a Vulcan Teacher of the Year

Vulcan Materials Company named Dr. Ruby L. Thompson, professor of Reading and English Education, a Vulcan Teacher of the Year last September. The veteran educator has spent nearly half a century preparing reading and English teachers.

A recipient of numerous awards and honors for teaching excellence, Thompson holds a bachelor’s degree in English from Florida A&M University, a master’s degree in English from Atlanta University, and a doctorate in reading education from Pennsylvania State University.

School of Business Administration Presented Michael Grant in Dean’s Lecture Series

Michael A. Grant, J.D., president of the National Bankers Association, was the guest lecturer in the 2013 Dean’s Executive Lecture Series, presented by the School of Business Administration on Nov. 7, 2013, at the Thomas W. Cole Jr. Research Center for Science and Technology.

Formed in 1927, the National Bankers Association is a trade organization for minority- and women-owned financial institutions. Members have profited by collaboration on various mutually beneficial business ventures.

Grant is president of both the NBA and its foundation. One of 17 children, he is a 1983 graduate of the Howard University School of Law and the author of two books: Beyond Blame, Race Relations in the 21st Century and Your Marvelous Mind.
Jazz 91.9FM WCLK Launches “The Call to True Beauty” Call-In Radio Program

Jazz 91.9FM WCLK on April 2 launched a new, monthly call-in radio show, “The Call to True Beauty,” which airs every first Wednesday, from 6-7p.m. The program also streams on wclk.com.

“The Call to True Beauty” radio show elevates Clark Atlanta University’s considerable focus on preventing and eradicating dating and domestic violence. The University addresses the issue year-round and annually hosts the “The Call to True Beauty” weeklong education and advocacy campaign in October, which is also National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The University took up the mantle of domestic violence advocacy in 2010 and has been designated by the Atlanta City Council as a community resource zone for education and prevention every year since.

Sponsored by Verizon Wireless on the occasion of WCLK’s 40th anniversary, the program is hosted by Daphne Walker, J.D., president and CEO of Partnership Against Domestic Violence, Georgia’s largest nonprofit domestic violence organization. A former judge, private criminal defense attorney, and senior district attorney in Fulton County’s Crimes Against Women and Children Unit, Walker brings more than 15 years of legal expertise and frontline service to the on-air conversation.

During the inaugural broadcast, Walker welcomed Jennifer Bivins, president and CEO of the Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault. Callers can join in the conversation during each broadcast by calling 404-880-9255 to ask questions or comment. Counselors will be in the studio to offer assistance and answer questions.

“The Call to True Beauty” will address critical issues that are germane not only to the college-aged population, Clark Atlanta University’s primary target for the past four years, but also the entire metro-Atlanta community. According to the Georgia Commission on Family Violence/Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence March 2014 Fatality Report, Georgia now ranks 12th nationally in domestic violence — in this case, crimes in which men killed women. The state ranked 10th in 2012.

“This is a critical issue for our entire community,” said Sheryl Sellaway, Verizon Wireless executive director of public relations. “As a corporation recognized for our leadership on this issue, we are delighted to partner with Clark Atlanta University, its award-winning Jazz 91.9FM, and the Partnership Against Domestic Violence to engage citizens in this dynamic conversation in such a meaningful way. Our goal over the coming months is to educate the community on the different types and stages of dating and domestic violence and its lasting consequences, along with strategies to build healthy relationships.”

Too many people associate this crime with only physical violence, Sellaway added, “but its manifestations are more complex and far more damaging than a bruise seen in plain view.”

Verizon Wireless and CAU partnered in 2010 to establish the Domestic Violence Prevention Leadership Academy in the Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work. The initiative enabled five graduate fellows to conduct leading-edge field research on best practices in prevention and remediation of domestic violence at the community level. Since then, Verizon Wireless has been the title sponsor for the University’s annual “The Call to True Beauty” awareness campaigns.

“The Call to True Beauty” radio show brings key experts to the table. Walker noted that it “will not only educate the community about dating and domestic violence, but will also provide a forum for agency experts to educate and inform the community on how to prevent violence and, as important, how to get help in emergent situations. This strengthens our voice in exciting new ways.”
Clark Atlanta University Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary During Founders Week

Clark Atlanta University celebrated the 25th anniversary of the consolidation of its parent institutions, Atlanta University (founded in 1865) and Clark College (founded in 1869). The observance, which took place during Founders Week, from March 16-23, honored the institution's 292-year legacy. Atlanta University was the nation's first African-American graduate school, and Clark College was the country's first private, liberal arts college for African-Americans.

Highlights of the week included a lecture by alumna Pernessa C. Seele, founder and CEO of The Balm In Gilead Inc., a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization whose mission is to prevent diseases and to improve the health status of individuals who are disproportionately affected by high rates of health disparities; and the Founders Day address delivered by Rev. Mark Kelly Tyler, Ph.D.

“Our 25th anniversary is an exuberant milestone for the University. We are grateful today to have become the product of one of the most important consolidations of two prestigious and historic institutions in the history of higher education,” said CAU President Carlton E. Brown. “Our legacy has shaped the course of American history, and we owe a great debt to the visionaries who preceded us.”

CAU's interim Vice President for Institutional Advancement and University Relations Trisa Paschal joins President Carlton E. Brown in thanking double alumna Pernessa C. Seele (CC ’76; AU ’79), founder of A Balm in Gilead. The ordained minister delivered a rousing presidential lecture based upon the Parable of the Fig Tree.

Clark Atlanta University Selected to Serve as a Host School for the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Program

Clark Atlanta University is one of only 20 U.S. host schools for the Washington Fellowship For Young African Leaders Program, which will convene on campus from June 14 to July 25. It is the flagship program of President Barack Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), the purpose of which is to empower and bolster young African leaders through academic coursework, leadership training, mentoring, and networking in three distinct tracks: civic leadership, business and entrepreneurship, and public management.

CAU is the only private HBCU in Georgia and the only university in Georgia to host the prestigious program and train at least 25 young leaders.

“Given the present structure and business activities of developing countries, more specifically those on the continent of Africa, the YALI program is practical and timely, attracting support from all sectors of the economy in both the United States and Africa,” said economics professor Mesfin Bezuneh, Ph.D., the program’s director. “The program will lay the foundation for long-term business, academic and social engagements between the United States and African nations.”

The Washington Fellowship is geared toward outstanding young leaders who have several years of professional experience and a proven record of accomplishment in leading and promoting positive change in their organizations, institutions or communities. More than 50,000 applications were received for only 500 slots available.

The other host schools are: Arizona State University, Dartmouth College, Florida International University, Howard University, Morgan State University, Northwestern University, Rutgers University, Syracuse University, Tulane University, University of Arkansas, University of California (Berkley), University of Delaware, University of Minnesota, University of Notre Dame, University of Texas at Austin, Presidential Precinct, University of Wisconsin (Stout), Wagner College and Yale University.
CAU Appoints Dr. Obie Clayton as New Asa Edmund Ware Chair in Sociology

Clark Atlanta University officials announced on Jan. 13 that Obie Clayton, Ph.D., is the new Asa Edmund Ware Chair in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. He joined CAU as a distinguished professor in the endowed chair on Jan. 2, after serving as the Donald L. Hollowell Distinguished Professor of Social Justice and Civil Rights Studies at the University of Georgia (UGA) School of Social Work since August of 2011.

“Dr. Clayton has enjoyed a stellar career, having attracted more than $30 million in funding for research and training projects. We look forward to his expertise in program development and the revitalization his experience will bring to Clark Atlanta,” said CAU Provost James A. Hefner, Ph.D.

Clayton has long ties to CAU and was an assistant professor of sociology and a research associate at the Center on Health and Aging at the former Atlanta University from 1986 to 1988.

Prior to his work at UGA, Clayton served as director of Sponsored Programs and director of the Morehouse Research Institute from 2008 to 2011. He was chair and professor of the Department of Sociology and executive director of the Morehouse Research Institute from 2001 to 2008. Clayton also taught at the University of Nebraska at Omaha from 1988 to 1992 and at the University of Massachusetts-Boston from 1982 to 1986.

He has authored and edited a number of acclaimed works, including An American Dilemma Revisited: Race Relations in a Changing World and Black Fathers in Contemporary American Society: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Strategies for Change.

Clayton is a member of many professional and honorary organizations. He is president-elect of the Association of Black Sociologists and a former president of the Mid-South Sociological Association.

He holds the bachelor’s degree in religion and sociology from Millsaps College and a master’s degree and doctorate degree in sociology from Emory University. In addition, he has conducted leadership training at Motorola University and the Harvard University Institute for Educational Management.

CAU Students Host the Local Community on NANO Day

The Clark Atlanta University Student Chapter of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers, in conjunction with the Center for Functional Nanoscale Materials, on March 28 welcomed students from local schools to share the wonders of science.

NANO Day provided participants with the opportunity to explore nanoscience and its applications to everyday life to help spark student interest in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. The free, public event, attended by nearly 100 students in grades K-12, included interactive activities, demonstrations and seminars.

Founded in 2006, CAU’s Center for Functional Nanoscale Materials constitutes a concentration of researchers, teachers and resources devoted to addressing the need for increasing the pool of talented scientists and maintaining technical competitiveness in the nanosciences.

AUC Robert Woodruff Library Archivist Andrea Jackson and Reference Coordinator Kayin Shabazz carefully install exhibit cases with CAU memorabilia for “Undaunted: Celebrating Clark Atlanta University and the Legacy of Atlanta University and Clark College,” a collection of archival materials that showcases CAU’s undaunted pursuit of excellence through historical photographs, documents and memorabilia from the University and its parent institutions. Items on display include Panther yearbooks, W.E.B. Du Bois’ typewriter, and “Reign Clark Atlanta” original sheet music for the institution’s alma mater, composed by C. Eric Lincoln. The Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library is the proud archival repository of Clark Atlanta’s institutional records, and has made several collections documenting the University’s history and legacy available to the public.
Clark Atlanta University News

Clark Atlanta University Joins Inaugural HBCU Cohort for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Clark Atlanta University in February was selected to join the inaugural cohort for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Innovation and Entrepreneurship Collaborative. Funded by The Lemelson Foundation, 15 institutions will participate in a multi-year collaboration to foster innovation, commercialization, and entrepreneurship on their respective campuses.

Forty-four HBCUs submitted competitive applications for the limited number of spaces in the cohort. Each was rated on institutional commitment, institutional capacity, federal research engagement, intellectual property engagement, faculty innovation potential, and cross-disciplinary impact. The cohort will be able to access current and future funding available only to cohort members.

“Entrepreneurship and innovation across all disciplines are important areas of focus for CAU, and we are honored to be included in this initial cohort after such a competitive display from the HBCU community,” said CAU President Carlton E. Brown. “We welcome the opportunities this collaboration will bring to our students, faculty, staff and the broader community.”

Union Pacific’s CFO Robert Knight Junior Delivers Lecture at Clark Atlanta

Robert Knight Jr., chief financial officer for Union Pacific Corp., was the guest lecturer in the in the School of Business’ April 2014 Dean’s Executive Lecture Series. The topic was “Don’t Miss the Train: The Value of the Railroad Industry.”

Knight has been CFO at Union Pacific since February 2004 and is responsible for all financial activities of both the corporation and Union Pacific Railroad. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Kansas State University and a master’s degree in business administration from Southern Illinois University.

CAU Kicks Off Black Male Initiative to Support Enrollment and Retention

Clark Atlanta University officials kicked off of a black male initiative to support enrollment and retention with a keynote address by renowned educator Baruti Kafele on Feb. 19.

Launched on the heels of President Obama’s announcement of a nationwide initiative for African-American males, Male Initiative for Recruitment, Reward, and Overall Retention (M.I.R.R.O.R.), had been in development for months at CAU. The program is designed to enhance the number of African-American males who attend and graduate from college. M.I.R.R.O.R. is multi-faceted and will focus on leadership, mentoring, recruitment, and retention through a holistic (mental, emotional, and spiritual) approach to engage black males.

“It is not a secret that black males are graduating from college at a much lower rate than white males or black females. This is true for all colleges and universities,” said CAU Vice President for Student Affairs Carl E. Jones. “At many historically black colleges and universities, and CAU is no exception, the female to male student population is roughly 3 to 1, which can present challenges to maintaining a healthy academic and social environment.”

Factors, such as being unprepared for college, a lack of focus, family problems, and financial challenges, all have a negative impact on male enrollment.

“Black men need college degrees now more than ever,” said Jones. “Our society needs them to be successful to have the earning power to serve as head of households, strengthening black families, the black community, and thus our nation.”

One important component of M.I.R.R.O.R. will be CAU’s “Man of the Year” program, an annual competition and pageant that showcases some of the University’s top male scholars and role models. The students receive scholarship awards and gifts from organizations like the United Negro College Fund and the United Methodist Church, which this year awarded a grant of $10,000 to build the program and ensure its success.

Kafele is an award-winning educator, internationally renowned speaker, educational consultant, and bestselling author. As a middle and high school principal in New Jersey, Kafele led the transformation of four different schools and was selected six times to “Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers.” He holds a bachelor’s degree in management science/marketing from Kean University and a master’s degree in educational administration from New Jersey City University. Among other works, he is the author of the best-selling book, Motivating Black Males to Achieve in School and in Life.
Among the 2014 Pathways to Excellence honorees were Dr. Eleanor (’41) and Mr. Lyle (’42) Gittens, both loyal alumna for more than 70 years. CAU Alumna Tonya Cobb delivered a moving tribute to the couple who, in her words, were the heart and hands of Clark Atlanta University for so many who, without their tremendous support and encouragement, would never have completed their CAU degree. Joining Cobb and the Gittens are CAUAA President Devin P. White (L) and CAU President Carlton E. Brown (R).
Left top: President Brown and CAU Alumni Association President Devin White join Pathway to Excellence honoree Pearlie C. Dove, Ed.D. (CC ’41; AU ’43).

Left center: Rev. Anthony Motley receives the 2014 Pathways to Excellence Award on behalf of his longtime friend and colleague Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Lowery and Mrs. Evelyn Lowery (Posthumously).

Bottom right: Brown and White join National Action Network’s Janee Ingram (CAU, ’01), a 2014 Pathway to Excellence Award recipient.

Bottom left: Atlanta City Councilman C.T. Martin (AU ’76) was among this year’s Pathway to Excellence Award recipients.
CAU’s 25th Anniversary Celebration
March 16-23, 2014

Above: Annalise Fonza, Ph.D., the first Miss CAU, addresses students at the 25th anniversary Pep Rally.
Left: VP of Student Affairs Carl Jones joins in the celebration.
Left: Founders Day convocation orator Rev. Mark Kelly Tyler, Ph.D., regales the audience with reflections upon his days at CAU as members of the dais respond to his take on the University’s motto, “find a way or make one.”

Below: Professor William Boone, a member of the University’s Political Science Department, poses with President Brown during the faculty staff recognition reception.

Left: President Brown, University Mace Bearer Laurent Monye; Rev. Paul Easley CAU’s first chaplain; and current University chaplain Rev. Dr. Valerie Everett pose during the week’s torch passing ceremony.

Left center: Clark Atlanta University’s first Board of Trustees Chairman Carl H. Ware (CC, ’65) poses with Thomas W. Cole Jr., who represented his father, President Emeritus Thomas W. Cole, Ph.D., as the two are recognized by President Brown at a pre-convocation breakfast.

Left bottom: Also joining the festivities was the first president of the CAU Alumni Association, Mrs. Maurice Fitts Page. She continues to be an active and enthusiastic supporter of the University.
OVERCOMING FINANCIAL HURDLES
College graduates who survived hyper-caffeinated regimens of all-nighters, final exams, coin-operated laundries and dining hall cuisine, or alternate diets of Ramen® noodles and green tea, might catalog those memories somewhere under “Youthful Tests of Endurance.” These collegiate rites of passage once evoked reminiscent chuckles from those who successfully conquered them.

Times have changed.

Today’s college students are more likely to regale you with the challenges of financing their degrees. Students enrolled at the nation’s HBCUs, in particular, currently endure constricted federal financial aid support, tightening loan criteria, and increasingly exclusive guidelines, all hurdles in the race toward graduation.

At Clark Atlanta, more than 96 percent of our students, young scholars who have earned a place among the academic ranks, cannot afford the costs of tuition. It doesn’t matter that, at just over $30,000 annually for tuition and fees, room and board, Clark Atlanta is the fourth most affordable private institution in the State of Georgia. It barely matters that CAU’s tuition increases, adjusted solely to cover operational costs — which have been streamlined over the past five years, have been held to an average four percent annually, while some U.S. universities have raised tuition by as much as 30 percent in one year.

What matters is that across America, deserving young scholars — the individuals in whose hands our futures will be shaped — are finding it harder and harder to pay for school and more and more likely that they will graduate under burdensome loads of debt, some as much as $50,000 or more.

In the four articles that follow, CAU students Darius Bonner, Leroy Green, Shakayla Houston and Brandilynne White share their personal, financial trials and triumphs in the pursuit of a Clark Atlanta University diploma. Each has a different story, but all four share a common goal: overcoming the financial hurdles that, without determination, resolve, tremendous faith and the support of others, would render them mere observers at their own commencements.

If the ability to overcome struggle in any way indicates depth of character and the capacity for leadership, these four illuminate great hope for the future, ours and Clark Atlanta University’s.
Leroy Green was headed to culinary school when he got word that he’d been accepted to Clark Atlanta University. He’d mastered the art of making pastries at the vocational high school he attended in his native Jacksonville, Fla., and had been offered a full ride.

But when he shared the news with his father, with whom he’d reconnected after a long period of separation following his parents’ divorce, there was no question about which path Leroy would follow.

“We talked about me blazing the trail for my brothers and sisters. So though I was interested in culinary arts, college was the route we were setting up for our family legacy,” Leroy explains.

Almost immediately, however, the tuition seemed like an insurmountable obstacle. Leroy’s mother suggested that he sit out the first semester to work and save.

“I thought okay, I could do that, but what about the rest of the semesters?” he recalls.

Leroy’s father urged him to press forward. While they sought a way to come up with the first semester’s tuition, Leroy found himself on the outside looking in. His PAW card, for example, would be inactive until he became financially enrolled, so he couldn’t eat in the cafeteria or access certain areas.

“I felt kind of left out looking out across the Promenade seeing everyone interacting and I was on the other side,” says Leroy, who depended on local fast food restaurants for meals and the kindness of friends who sometimes brought him food from the dining hall.

There were moments when he felt like he was literally being water hosed, he says. The stress of trying to balance his financial difficulties, family life and full time studies adversely affected his grade point average.

But instead of feeling sorry for himself, Leroy, a supply chain management major in the School of Business, was motivated to ensure he was better prepared for the second semester.

“I saw the roadblocks and what I couldn’t do, which made me want to be a part of everything,” he adds.

Leroy built relationships with staff and faculty members that he continues to cultivate. He also became very involved in student activities, serving as his dorm’s “Mr. Pfieffer,” on the freshman step team and other clubs.

He ultimately was able to cobble together the tuition through a combination of a Sallie Mae loan, that his dad paid off during the semester, an unsubsidized federal student loan and scholarship donations ranging from $200-$500 from teachers back home.

But sophomore year, it was more of the same and Leroy had a $15,000 balance at the start of the semester. He arrived on campus two weeks early for resident adviser training and between sessions he worked his network.

“At one point, I wasn’t sure how I would do it, but I knew I would,” he says.

“I lost a lot of sleep and study time worrying, but it also helped me learn how to manage my time.”

With the help of the student accounts office, he got $12,000 in need-based scholarships and the remaining $3,000 from the School of Business. The latter reinforced how important the relationships he’d built were.

Last year Leroy, began putting his culinary skills to work by baking cupcakes and brownies that he sells to individual students, faculty, staff and University clubs. The money he made baking brownies paid for all of his books.

“Every time I get an order, I make a few extra brownies and cupcakes to give to the faculty and staff who were there for me,” he says.
Sometimes you’ve just got to have faith. That is what has gotten Mass Media Arts major Shakayla Houston through four years of economic uncertainty as she struggled to finance her college education.

When the Tulsa, Okla., native arrived on CAU’s campus, she had a $500 scholarship from a local organization back home and a direct loan that she got through the University, but still needed an additional $20,000. She couldn’t turn to her parents for help, and in the end another relative co-signed a loan for her, but it took two months to become financially enrolled.

In addition to having to stand in long financial aid lines between classes, after one month Shakayla lost dining hall privileges. Thankfully, she had some money her grandmother had given her and relatives living in the area who helped ensure she didn’t go hungry. She made good friends, but the fact that they had no financial worries made her feel a different kind of want.

Throughout that period, the thought that she might have to return to Tulsa was always present in Shakayla’s mind. She knew deep down inside, however, that her faith was stronger than her struggle and that she wouldn’t give up.

“So I just attended classes regularly as if I was already financially enrolled, but it was difficult seeing how my friends had all they money they needed for school and extras, while I had much less,” she says. “Once I received the [co-signed] loan I celebrated in the cafeteria using my student ID because it actually worked.”

Like many first-year college students, Shakayla was also surprised by the different fees required to access services like the library and participate in student activities.

“As a high school student, you think you just have to pay for tuition and are unaware of the fees and how they are. The biggest lesson I learned is the importance of looking to the future and to be smart about saving and preparing early on,” she says.

Although her freshman year was the most challenging, Shakayla’s struggle to be financially enrolled continued. When she was $10,000 short sophomore year, she seriously considered going home to regroup and perhaps even transfer to her state university. Her parents, however, encouraged her to stay at CAU.

“I’m actually a really positive person. I tend to be an optimist who tries to see the light in every situation, but I can honestly say I’m not as strong as I was before,” says Shakayla, who estimates that she will graduate with approximately $50,000 to $70,000 in student loan debt.

But it gets better as the adage goes. A combination of academic excellence and her commitment to giving back to the local Atlanta community has been rewarded with several scholarships. She also has taken work-study positions, worked in a mall and received internships that provided stipends to help make ends meet.

Most important, Shakayla won’t have to worry about how to repay her student loans. Through the University’s recruiting service, she has secured a job as an account representative in the marketing and sales department of Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha, Nebraska, and she’s confident the salary will enable her to easily afford the loan payments.

“I am definitely glad I stuck it out,” Shakayla says. “I don’t know where I would be without CAU. I have grown so much and met amazing people.”
Life has never been easy for Brandilynne White. The elementary education major grew up with a father who lived in the same city, but was never there for her, and that rejection led to major behavioral issues. One month before the end of her high school sophomore year, Brandilynne was expelled.

It turns out that being kicked out of school was one of the best things that could have happened to her. That September, the Philadelphia native enrolled in Job Corps and by January, she’d earned a GED and three Microsoft certifications. She then enrolled in and completed three semesters at a local community college.

After being accepted to CAU, Brandilynne faced a major setback. For reasons that to this day are unclear, her mother, who has a bachelor’s degree, refused to help her in any way, including providing financial information so she could apply for student loans. She was forced to declare independence so she could apply for aid on her own.

“I had to get letters from about six or seven people — relatives, family friends, a spiritual counselor, etc. — outlining my circumstances and unstable home environment,” recalls Brandilynne, who at that point was living with cousins.

For the first two years, she maxed out on every available form of aid, including subsidized and unsubsidized loans. Sophomore year, she dropped the meal plan because it was too much of a financial burden on top of tuition, books and other fees.

“I lived on tuna fish, Cheez-Its and Capri Suns,” explains Brandilynne.

Sometimes relatives helped out when they could with care packages. But when her fellow students headed home for the holidays, she stayed behind.

“I just tried to keep up my morale and my eyes on the prize. You can’t be mad that you can’t go home because some people never get the opportunity to go to college,” she says. “At least I’m here and that’s how I tried to look at it.”

By her junior year, Brandilynne could no longer afford to live on campus and had to get an apartment in Decatur, which involves spending about four hours commuting each day. She uses that time to study, all the while hoping her laptop is not stolen as she taps out assignments on the bus or train.

Despite these challenges, she kept up her grades, which has enabled her to win scholarships. Each day in the classroom where she student teaches, she works hard to give the children a strong foundation and drums into them the importance of higher education.

Brandilynne is frustrated, however, by the way students who choose to become teachers are undervalued in this nation compared to those in STEM fields.

“What really almost depressed me is how all of the science and math majors have ‘beaucoup’ federal scholarships and grant money and then there’s us, the education majors, the ones without whom there would not be those business, science and math majors and we don’t get any help,” she says. “We get the short end of the stick.”

Brandilynne doesn’t want to think about how much loan debt she’ll face after graduating in May, but believes in the end the financial ups and mostly downs of the past four years will have all been worth it.

“Once you graduate and get a salaried job, you won’t mind the struggle,” she says. “Struggle doesn’t always last. And if she’s lucky, Brandilynne adds, she’ll never eat another bite of tuna fish again.”
When then-high school senior Darius Bonner was planning his future, he toured the entire Atlanta University Center and also visited a couple of other universities to consider his options. But there was something about the faculty and staff at Clark Atlanta University that made the native of nearby McClean County, Georgia, feel as if he’d found his second home.

That feeling was reinforced at a men’s only conference held during freshman orientation week, where the leaders talked about the importance of earning a college degree, the struggles young African-American men face on the road to success, and how their CAU experience would make them better men.

Some of the participants, however, did not make it past that week, forced to drop out because of financial aid issues. “I knew I had to stay,” says Darius, who financed his freshman year with personal loans, a Federal Perkins Loan, and a HOPE and UNCF scholarship.

When he was about to return to campus for his sophomore year, however, Darius found himself scrambling for tuition money and funds to pay off a balance from the previous year. The unexpected loss of a $5,000 basketball scholarship because the head coach had departed added to the burden.

With just two weeks to go before the start of the semester, Darius, who is a social work major, needed $12,000. He sought information about different scholarships he might qualify for from Internet and human resources, to supplement the Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant and a loan he’d taken out.

“I was not only stressed, but very aggravated,” says Darius, whose heart ached over the possibility that he would have to drop out. “But I knew everything happens for a reason and this was a test of my faith in God.”

He also didn’t want to share his fears with his parents, “who already do so much for me.”

Staying in school was particularly important to him because he will likely be the only one of the children in his immediate family to complete college. His mother holds an undergraduate degree but his father never had the opportunity and has always encouraged him to achieve that goal.

Darius says he was surprised that there aren’t more organizations and funding sources available for young black men in need who are fighting to succeed. But his struggles have taught him the importance of trying to be better prepared and have been an incentive to work as hard as possible to raise his GPA, which will qualify him for more scholarships.

Time was running out, but Darius continued to diligently reach out to scholarship programs without any luck. Then, the Friday before school was to start, his prayers were answered in an email from the UNCF offering a $10,000 scholarship, which was followed by another $2,000 offer.

In addition, an entrepreneurial spirit has been awakened. Darius, who’s been tailoring his wardrobe since his senior year in high school, developed last fall a line of bow ties that he’s begun selling to students on campus. He is using the profits to pay for books and other expenses.

“The relief I felt was so strong and I was so excited when the scholarship notification came, I actually shouted,” Darius recalls. “I celebrated that whole day by walking around campus, praising God and the UNCF.”
Alexander B. Cummings Jr. has an enviable view of the local landscape from his office at The Coca-Cola Company’s global headquarters. Even more impressive, the executive vice president and chief administrative officer daily monitors a horizon that comprises more than 200 countries in the number-one brand’s worldwide distribution network.

In the wake of unending demands on his schedule, he pauses to share his perspective on the future of CAU, his thoughts harkening back to his first encounter with the institution.

“I had just completed my degree in finance and economics from Northern Illinois University and I knew I wanted to continue my education. There were a few schools on my list, but as I continued my research, I began to focus very seriously on Atlanta University.”

What Cummings found was an institution in an international city with a robust program, excellent recruitment statistics, affordable costs and, most important to him at the time, a solid record of graduate placement among the nation's top corporations.

“So many of the professors had published books, articles or both. Many of the faculty, people like Professor Ed Irons, were iconic in their fields, and graduates were pretty much assured great employment prospects. There was a great aura about the place.”

Cummings graduated from Atlanta University’s MBA program in 1982. Today, in
addition to his worldwide responsibilities at The Coca-Cola Company, he also serves as chairman of Clark Atlanta University’s Board of Trustees. He takes the mantle of leadership at his Alma Mater as HBCUs across the nation are confronting economic challenges that pose a serious threat to enrollment and, more important, students’ pursuit of higher education.

Clark Atlanta, like many of the nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities, is clenched between the jaws of nationwide economic downturn and constricted federal support for higher education. Two years ago, when Parent Plus Loan criteria changed without warning only two weeks before the start of the school year, some 17,000 students planning to enroll in the nation’s HBCUs were unable to do so. Five hundred of those young scholars had been students at CAU. According to the United Negro College Fund, last year there were 28,000 Parent Plus Loan denials nationwide. Nearly 1,600 of those were denied to CAU students.

Annually, the number of students with unmet financial need increases, as does the gap between the costs of college and their available resources.

In 2011, there were 2,125 unenrolled CAU students with an average gap of $5,747. In 2012, there were 2,555 with an average gap of $9,046. Last year, there were 2,591 students with an average gap of $9,236. Compounding the situation, Pell Grant family income thresholds were lowered in 2013 from $32,000 to $23,000. For Clark Atlanta, where students’ average annual family income is $29,000, the financial blow — an immediate $5,000 gap for those who were suddenly disqualified — impacted 765 students in 2011; 621 students in 2012; and 827 students in 2013.

For Cummings, this confluence of blows signals the need for another paradigm shift.

“The success of America’s HBCUs directly, tangibly impacts our global competitiveness,” he asserts. “Of course, our first priority is to ensure that Clark Atlanta remains competitive. “Shame on us if we allow our alma mater to become a victim of economic circumstance,” he chides.

Never without a plan, he outlines the steps he believes necessary for elevating CAU’s enterprise.

“First, we must expeditiously rearticulate the University’s value proposition and make a compelling case that distinguishes and differentiates CAU. Second, we must aggressively increase our revenue through giving, with alumni leading that charge. Third,” he continues, “we have to aggressively lobby the government to be much more sensitive in crafting legislation that affects students’ lives. This will be a slow process, one that will require a great deal of education, but it will serve our students well in the long term.”

A reserved professional who values purposeful, intelligent action over rhetoric, Cummings is fully invested in refortifying the institution.

“We must embrace that, at CAU, complacency will kill us quickly. We don’t have the luxury of waiting until all is ‘perfect’ — whatever that means to individual or collective alumni segments. Our need for support is urgent. No one knows that better than our students. They need alumni to write checks right now.”

He adds that University’s current 25th Anniversary Scholarship Drive, an effort to raise $1 million for this purpose, continues through June 30 (with pledges accepted through the end of this milestone year).
“There is no excuse for not participating,” Cummings says. Not only are students — 96 percent of whom depend on multiple forms of financial aid — in desperate need of scholarship support, but traditionally low alumni giving has long impeded the University’s ability to secure the levels of corporate and foundation support that would in fact bolster CAU’s capacity to assist students.

“Why would anyone invest in us, if we haven’t invested in our own success?” Cummings asks, confounded.

He acknowledges that some alumni are “disconnected” from the institution. He points out, however, that by investing in CAU, alumni inherently create a channel through which their voice becomes a strong, powerful element in the University’s revitalization.

Ever the pragmatist, Cummings is quick to point out that the University, too, must dramatically improve how it engages alumni. He asserts that CAU’s administration must assure consistency in communications beyond financial appeals; greater clarity and structure in engaging alumni in relevant, meaningful ways; and demonstrable benefits for association with the University, be it career counseling, life experiences such as travel or, perhaps, privileged access to alumni. He adds, too, that the visits also provide an opportunity to bring news from the front.

“We continue to progress in a number of directions, despite some very serious challenges. It is heartening to see how alumni respond when we share what faculty, staff and fellow alumni have achieved in their academic, civic and professional careers. Most of all, it is reaffirming to see how they react to student successes,” he says. “Beyond the gravitas of the situation, we are able to share the life and energy that continues to define CAU.”

“Our Center for Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development,” Cummings beams, “is poised to be the nation’s largest prostate cancer research enterprise. Our School of Social Work, after 90 years, continues to revolutionize the way we safeguard the integrity of families and communities in times that call for their constant redefinition. Our Mass Media Arts program has produced innumerable communications professionals, and continues to do so.

He adds that CAU’s assets transcend the classroom.

“Our award-winning Philharmonic Society, one of the finest college choirs in America, is revered nationwide. People around the nation — and really around the globe, thanks to the Internet — know our radio station, WCLK, as one of the keepers of jazz as a traditional American art form and, more locally, the voice of our community. And our art collection, which is far richer than Hale Woodruff’s grand murals, is one of the finest university art collections in the United States.”

CAU’s legacy, Cummings adds, is also anchored in the fact that, unlike many HBCUs, Clark Atlanta continues to provide excellent graduate education, including doctoral education, which ensures the professional, intellectual and economic progression of the African-American community, regardless of the economic climate.

“Overall, you still sense that great aura about CAU. After all these years, the sense of nurturing and support that was so evident when I was there is still pervasive,” he notes. “To have retained that over three decades of change and challenge is impressive. Our job now, as alumni, is to make sure that aura doesn’t dissolve with the times. Our job is to amplify that.”

Cummings is equally specific about the roles of parents and prospective students in this process.

“The time for parents to begin preparing for a child’s college education is at birth,” he advises. “It’s about discipline, choices and sacrifices. That pertains not only to finances, but also to children’s education. The most important tool any parent can give a child is curiosity. The more they learn from varied experiences, the more limitless a child’s aspirations. Universities help students see beyond their existing horizons. Clark Atlanta affords students the transformative opportunity to create new ones.”

Alex Cummings knows a thing or two about that. He transformed his own horizons at CAU. Now he is set on expanding CAU’s horizons for generations to come.

“This is a winnable proposition,” he surmises. “We simply have to work smart, work together and work beyond the status quo. There are new, brighter horizons on the other side.”
Jim Colon, vice president of African-American business strategy for North America at Toyota, didn’t need much convincing to join Clark Atlanta University’s Board of Trustees. Although he didn’t attend an HBCU, Colon deeply appreciates and respects their role in the education of African-American students.

As a key member of the board’s Advancement Committee and the father of two sons who will soon head off to college, he is acutely aware of the high cost of higher education today. Even families that are considered to be “well-heeled,” he notes, often need financial aid.

“Because of the expense, funds are needed to support the educational goals of people from all financial backgrounds, particularly in the case of families that really need the money, and those are the folks for whom we need to work very diligently to try to support their academic goals,” Colon says.

But in a still-recovering economy, fundraising can be a challenge. As Colon observes, “everybody’s asking for support” and many are great causes. As a result, individual donors and corporations are all asking themselves the same question: How do you decide which to support?

Luckily for CAU, Colon has been able to convince Toyota that the University is a more than worthy cause. What makes it special, says Colon, is its legacy of African-American academic achievement and a commitment on the part of students, faculty and alumni to service and helping others.

“You just want to see more of that,” he says. “You want the opportunity to continue to support that very proud legacy that we have as a people.”

In addition to supporting the University’s annual Spirit of Greatness gala, Toyota has been a proud sponsor of donor William Shack’s Close the Gap scholarship.

According to Colon, they’ve been able to “raise some pretty significant dollars” in part because it meets a need that prospective donors can relate to.

“We’re trying to help students who’ve already made a commitment and an investment in their education and were on the track to achieving their goals, but there was a shortage in funding,” he says. “I think people can understand that, when people are almost there and on the track to success but for them to not be able to continue, especially a junior or senior, for the lack of a fairly nominal amount of money, is a major loss.”

Colon would like to see the Advancement Committee significantly boost alumni giving, which he believes could make a huge difference in reaching CAU’s fundraising goals. There is, he says, no giving that’s too big or too small. The bottom line is that graduates must decide whether they’re going to make a contribution or sit on the sidelines.

Colon, like others, would like to see CAU students begin to develop the spirit of giving before they graduate.

“I think giving or awareness of giving starts when you’re a student. CAU, like a lot of colleges, is trying to encourage students, particularly seniors, to make some sort of small donation prior to receiving their diploma,” he explains. “We’re also doing everything in our power that we can to stay in contact with graduates and make sure that we’re engaged with them. If they continue to see the college they attended or graduated from as a place that served them well, we can increase the likelihood of their giving.”
Paying It Forward

Since then, Chevron has been a major supporter of various academic programs at CAU in STEM and business disciplines. In addition, the corporation has offered students internships in its engineering, finance, human resources and other divisions. Some of those opportunities have even turned into fulltime employment. The company has contributed more than $400,000 since 2012.

“We also give scholarships to students who otherwise probably wouldn’t be able to stay in school or if they did would face [financial] burdens that would be unnecessarily distracting,” Laymon explains. “And I do empathize with that, because that was me.”

CAU Trustee Carl Ware is not an easy man to turn down. So when he asked Joe Laymon, vice president of Human Resources and Corporate Services at Chevron Corporation, to join Clark Atlanta University’s board of trustees and chair its compensation committee, there was little question about what his response would be.

“First, he asked me to visit the campus, which I did, and as a graduate of Jackson State University, it was almost like going home,” Laymon recalls. “Within a month he asked me to join the board and I could not tell him no.”

He likens his experience to the turtle one sees on the top of a fence post when driving down a dark country road. How did it get up there, people stop and wonder, he says. The answer is with some help.

“I’m that turtle. So many people have helped me along the way and a few of them asked that I not forget and to give back when I was in a position to do so,” he says. “I’m just trying to fulfill the commitment that I gave the people who helped me get on the fence post.”

Being economically disadvantaged, Laymon adds, doesn’t mean that an individual isn’t smart and CAU’s campus is teeming with brilliant students. Helping them onto the fence post means they don’t have to worry about paying tuition, overburden their families or fret about whether they’ll be able to eat.

Laymon often shares the importance of giving back with the students he meets during his many visits to CAU’s campus, stressing the fact that giving back doesn’t have to mean giving money.

He encourages them to begin developing the habit while still in school by coaching and counseling each other, sharing class notes and used books and even insight about particular professors.

“I tell students to take a moment and ask themselves: Did you truly get here by yourself or is someone helping you?” he says. “Returning to the theme of the turtle crawling atop a fence post during a dark country night. That’s all part of getting to the top of that post and at what point do you pause and say, ‘I am not in a position to give back’? You are in a position right now, I say. You may not have money, but you have your time.”

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Laymon, the son of migrant workers, grew up in central Mississippi, where his father also was part of the civil rights movement. Their family, he says, was “dirt poor,” and while in college he always had one or two jobs. But the road he traveled to the success he now enjoys was paved with people who gave him a helping hand.

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The one year that William Shack spent at Clark College left a lasting imprint on his heart. His education was cut short by the impending birth of his first son, but a lifelong commitment to the University endures.

Shack is one of the nation’s most influential entrepreneurs. And as much as he wants young African Americans to replicate in their respective fields the level of success he’s achieved, he also wants them to have the benefit of a four-year university education.

Tuition was much lower when he was a student and the amount of money he would have needed to stay in school is peanuts compared to the cost of college today. Unfortunately, his family couldn’t afford it.

“I was very disappointed when I had to leave Clark and join the military,” he recalls. “Nineteen sixty-two was a very turbulent year in Atlanta with the civil rights movement and the push for equality and education and a very exciting time to be there.”

As Shack regularly tells his own children, the fear that he wouldn’t be successful without a college education was motivating, and he went on to own several Ford automobile dealerships. He is a founding member of the National Association of Minority Auto Dealers and also developed other business interests in housing development, construction, and real estate.

It is not, however, a path he recommends young African Americans take today.

“My desire is to see kids of color, primarily African Americans, stay in school. It’s my belief that education is one of the primary keys to gaining equality,” he explains. “We’ve gotten past the civil rights fight for equal public accommodations and that sort of thing, but right now it’s an economic struggle. Statistically, the more education you have, the better you can do financially.”

Each year, Shack, who was awarded an honorary degree from Clark Atlanta in 2009, celebrates his birthday by hosting a golf tournament in Las Vegas during Super Bowl weekend to fund the Close the Gap scholarship fund he created to benefit CAU students.

“The gap is the difference between what our students can get from scholarships, loans and grants and what little bit their families can contribute,” Shack says. “Everybody has a ball and we do right by the University.”

He estimates that the event on average nets approximately $160,000 each year. In addition, he has made a personal pledge of $500,000 to support the University’s Center for Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development.

“Sometimes we lose students, as was the case with myself, who don’t have enough money to stay in school and pay for basic necessities and that amount could be between $500 and $3,000,” he notes. “They don’t have to have a 4.0 average; just be in good standing and have an apparent economic need.”

Shack, who makes frequent visits to the CAU campus and has served on the board for 15 years, consistently encourages students to stay the course no matter how difficult it may seem.

“I try to do everything possible to convince them to not quit and never give up because they won’t know how important this education is until they’re down the road,” he says.

How proud his father would be. The elder Shack, was a steel mill worker who, though poor, managed to build a home for his family and send two children to college. His grandson, William Shack’s son Vincent, however, was the first in their immediate family to actually earn a degree.

“I amazingly had earned a couple of hundred million dollars, but when my son Vincent graduated, my father said it was the proudest day of his life,” Shack laughs. “That was his mission.”
After graduating from Clark Atlanta University in the early 1940s, when Jim Crow laws were at their peak and most universities wouldn't enroll black students, Lyle and Eleanor Gittens began making annual financial contributions as alumni — a 70-year legacy of giving from which all alumni can learn.

“We met there, have had 72 years of marriage and raised a family, and of course it all started at the University,” says Lyle. “It gave me the start so that I was able to earn a living.”

The Gittens say they don’t know and don’t want to know exactly how much money they’ve given over the years because the amount is not the point. The main reason they give is to provide a foundation for the University to sustain itself, grow, and prosper — doing for the University what it did for them by providing a first-class education, personal development and experiences that have allowed them to live fruitful lives.

“Clark has a history of developing raw talent, and we’re interested in giving underprivileged students the kind of benefit we got,” Lyle explains.

Lyle was out of high school five years before the Harlem native was recruited to play basketball for the University. He was drafted into the military while in college, but graduated in 1942 by completing his mathematics degree through a correspondence course before going on to have a successful career working for the New York City Department of Labor. Eleanor, a native of Bradenton, Florida, graduated in 1941 after transferring from Bethune Cookman College, to major in English and business administration. She worked as a public school teacher for many years before becoming an associate college professor at City University of New York. The couple attributes their success to attending Clark and believes all CAU graduates should commit themselves to giving back to the University in some way.

Almost immediately after graduating, they began giving back to their alma mater by consistently making small donations whenever they could. Then, “as we got higher on the income scale, we were able to give more,” Eleanor explains, “It was just that simple.” Their most recent gift to CAU was $70,000.

The couple is so committed to giving back that they travel to college fairs to help recruit candidates for the University and host a picnic for New Yorkers headed to the University so they can meet each other before they get to campus. They believe their recruitment efforts are just as important as the money they give because new recruits become successful graduates who in turn can give back to CAU and perpetuate the cycle of giving.

Ultimately, the reason the Gittens have worked so hard to establish a legacy of giving is simple. “If alumni do not give to the University, it may not be able to continue,” says Eleanor.

And, as Lyle points out, “Nobody wants to be a graduate of a school that no longer exists.”

There’s no greater incentive for alumni to give than that.
If historically black colleges want to survive and thrive in the 21st century, they must not give any excuse about why they don’t operate in excellence, says Cynthia Bond Hopson, Ph.D. (B.A., CC ’85.) Students have many options to choose from, which should motivate any college to offer the best academically nurturing experience possible.

“We're either going to do it well, or we're not going to do it,” said Hopson, an assistant general secretary, Black College Fund & Ethnic Concerns, of the United Methodist Church’s General Board of Higher Education. “We can spend money on lots of different things, but when we invest in our students we get more bang for our buck. They are some of our most important leaders in our church and community.”

Since its inception, Clark Atlanta University has had a strong affiliation with the United Methodist Church, and is one of 11 colleges it supports through its General Board of Higher Education, and through the United Methodist Commission, which is funded by gifts collected during an annual North Georgia Conference. To receive funding from UMC, partner schools must be accredited, have relevant programming, and remain in good standing.

UMC’s dedication to Clark Atlanta has truly been a blessing that has greatly benefitted the University.

Several programs and physical improvements have been achieved because of UMC’s support, including technology and infrastructural enhancements to McPheeters-Dennis Hall, directional signage erected throughout the campus, and the installation of a bust of W.E.B. Du Bois. The renowned scholar taught at Atlanta University from 1897 to 1910 and chaired the Department of Sociology from 1934 to 1944.

Hopson has worked with the General Board of Higher Education since 2005, and says the job truly is a godsend. She has had a huge heart for historically black colleges since her days participating in the Upward Bound program at Lane College in the 1970s. An alum of Clark College, Hopson enrolled at the school after moving to Atlanta with her husband, Roger, who was pursuing a degree at Gammon Theological Seminary. Meeting Mass Media Arts professor Dr. Herbert Eichelberger, she says, changed her life.

Hopson credits Eichelberger for encouraging her to dream big and investing in her with the unwavering belief that she would achieve in life. This is the type of nurturing that prevails at HBCUs, emphasizes Hopson, which is what makes them unique and very necessary even today.

College educators “treated me like I was smart and expected me to excel; and I did,” said Hopson, who remained on the Dean’s List throughout her matriculation at Clark College. “I wanted to do well because my children were watching me.”

These are the types of stories HBCUs should consistently market to students in particular, and the public as a whole, to demonstrate their viability, she added. Many are largely unaware that important prostate cancer research is happening at Claflin and Clark Atlanta universities; students are immersing themselves in STEM programs at Huston-Tillotson University, and several very successful people got their start at a historically black college.

“Without the prayers of the people, without the faith that we could do this, so many students wouldn’t make it,” she said. “I just thank and praise the Lord for the opportunity to have found Clark College in my lifetime. I knew the prayers of my ancestors were keeping me there. I was never alone.”
CAU's New Game Plan
Undertaking the role of leading an advancement program at an historically black college or university is a challenge at best. Accepting such a role at an HBCU that has the added distinction of being a Carnegie research institution with a unique history of consolidation is an arduous but tremendously rewarding task. It requires an incredible effort with limited resources, but results in the joyful and selfless outcome of service and philanthropy,” explains Trisa Long Paschal, CAU’s new interim vice president of Institutional Advancement.

She came to Clark Atlanta University in February after several years of service at higher education institutions and other nonprofit organizations. Taking on the opportunity to lead CAU’s Institutional Advancement and University Relations (IAUR) division, after working as an independent consultant, was “a no-brainer. This is truly a remarkable institution and CAU students are well-educated and socially conscious. They are our greatest selling point when it comes to raising funds for the University.”

Paschal says there are many ways to explain advancement. Her preferred definition is a strategic and collaborative process of managing relationships to increase understanding, awareness, and financial support among the University’s key stakeholders, including alumni, friends, and the various publics that have a stake in its success.

“The collaborative process,” Paschal says, “is akin to building a team that comprises the core disciplines of alumni relations, fund development,
communications, and marketing to meet strategic priorities.

“If we are serious about overcoming financial hurdles — overcoming being the operative word,” she adds, “the University has to commit to what essentially constitutes a game plan for building momentum to reach its goal of becoming the aspirant dynamic 21st century research university as outlined in the strategic plan.”

According to Paschal, whose résumé includes major fundraising successes with organizations like Spelman College and the Salvation Army, Institutional Advancement’s role in the near term is to strategically focus on six objectives to create a stable environment as a baseline from which to achieve unparalleled success in alumni participation, fundraising attainment, communications, and marketing impact.

That vision will be accomplished first by strengthening infrastructure. The goal is to reach and stabilize a minimum level of 80% attainment in clean data standards, including current contact information for alumni and donors by partnering with data enhancement services to assist with ongoing data clean-up and maintenance.

Another critical infrastructure focus is assessing and developing staff capability and capacity, including training current staff and new hires.

Like many other industries, technology in advancement is constantly changing. Our current data management system meets minimum standards for fundraising, however, it is inadequate in our effort to increase our contact with young and more senior alumni. We will be preoccupied with acquiring technology enhancement tools in advancement that are enduring and can interface with a newly designed CAU website now under development, to propel the University into a 21st century mobility environment.

“As agents for CAU, responsible for marketing and promoting the brand both internally and externally,” Paschal notes, “IAUR staff will embrace the core values of accountability and integrity outlined in CAU’s strategic plan. We will augment this commitment by adhering to CASE management standards in the advancement profession in terms of ethics and excellence in engagement and stewardship, much like the NCAA and NFL rulebooks. With these tools in place and informed data, we will work with our committed volunteer leadership and donors to build momentum.”

There has been a significant demonstration of alumni interest and engagement in recent months by the CAUAA Alumni Association under the leadership of Devin White. The University will reinvigorate this interest by partnering with new leadership to create a generational approach to engagement and fundraising to reach its goal of a minimum of 10 percent alumni participation in giving by 2018.

CAU also introduced a new concept called legacy giving during the 2014 Spirit of Greatness fundraising period to raise awareness and increase major gift giving. More attention has been given to generating small annual gifts through events and fundraisers.

“This,” Paschal says, “is how we will look to engage our alumni across the nation in the coming months.”

One of the most important components that will be added to the CAU advancement model is major gifts. It is the area that, as at other HBCUs, has been the least developed and provides the greatest return on investment. IAUR will work to cultivate and strengthen existing relationships and build new strategic alliances with corporate and foundation donors.

Finally, the goal is to execute with excellence in our professional behavior, processes, creativity, engagement and stewardship. Most people look for a model example of excellence. We will work to be the model both internally and externally as a team — a winning team — while creating a stable environment in advancement for years to come.”
Thank You to Our 25th Anniversary Scholarship Donors!

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MAIL YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY TO:
OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS, CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, 223 JAMES P. BRAWLEY DR., SW, ATLANTA GA 30314
2014 Panther Football Home Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
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<td>Paine College</td>
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All CAU HOME games are played at Panther Stadium.

Congratulations to our Panther Athletes

- **Tori Pradier** — SIAC Women’s Tennis Freshman of the Year
- **Tabia Wade** — Two-Time SIAC Women’s Track and Field Heptathlon Champion
- **Ashley Ellis** — Three-Time SIAC Women’s Track and Field Pole Vault Champion
- **Alia Williams** — NCAA Softball Statistical Champion in Batting Average and Runs per game
- **Kailyn Blackmon** — 2014 Peach of an Athlete Role Model Nominee
- **Vonnick Boyogueno** — NCAA Division II SAAC Regional Representative

More than 50 percent of CAU student-athletes were recognized as Scholar-Athletes.
We Need You to Join the Celebration!

Clark Atlanta University will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year. There is so much to celebrate, including our storied past! Still, the fact remains that many deserving Clark Atlanta students need assistance in paying for their college education. For all the possibilities a college degree created in your life, young men and women of CAU today need our help to unlock those same possibilities in theirs.

Won’t you please join this historic celebration by supporting CAU’s 25th Anniversary Scholarship Drive? Giving is easy, convenient and there is a way for everyone to participate!

Alumni:
- Make sure you give through your local chapter!
- Send your personal gift to CAU!
- Encourage your class to make a gift!
- Start a professional scholarship for your school!
- Schedule a CAU Day at your place of worship!
- Greeks can make gifts honoring pledge classes!
- Give in memory of deceased classmates!
- Give in honor of a faculty or staff member!
- Contact us for additional giving options!

Business Owners:
- Advertise in the brand new “Panther Pages!”
- Make a scholarship contribution to CAU!

Business Professionals:
- Have your company match your gift to CAU!
- Host a CAU event at your place of work!

Gifts must be received before 6/30/14. Direct all inquiries and donations to:

The Office of Alumni Relations
Clark Atlanta University
223 James P. Brawley Drive, SW
Campus Box 2030
Atlanta, GA 30314
Phone: 404-880-8892
Email: GJasho@cau.edu
Address Change Service Requested

“Now that I will officially be an alumna of the University, I have the opportunity to reach back and help others just as so many alumni reached back to help me. This is personal. I would not have been able to complete my college education without their support.”

— Bianca Chavez, CAU ’14