**Post-Recession Claflin**

By: Jeremiah Douglas

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Claflin University has never really been in fiscal duress, because of the tireless work and dedicated service of the diligent and relentless work of the Office of Fiscal Affairs, but after such a recession – referred to by some as ‘The Great Recession’ – the financial status of Claflin deserves to be pried into.

Tiajuana Hudson – Assoc. Vice President of Fiscal Affairs at Claflin University since July 2010 – is willing and knowledgeable enough – through preparation for the SACS visit, slated for this year – to present me with relevant information about Claflin’s financial status.

Hudson has gained immense knowledge of Claflin’s financial status, both, past and present; she knows how well Claflin has done, previously, she knows how well Claflin is currently doing, and through her great post-secondary training.

For five years, before 2008, the net revenues were always in the positive, after the recession hit, Claflin, was able to maintain her positive bottom line – *net income* or *net asset* increase.

Before the recession, Hudson said that Claflin had always “operated in the black” – she accrued her viewpoint from her research. ‘Operating in the black’ is lingo used in the business world to denote the financial position of gaining money, instead of losing it – being profitable over a stretch of time. Hudson, also, mentioned that Claflin was able to maintain this “profitable” status during the recession, making them, genuinely, unique from “other corporations, and universities”.

During the height of the recession – 2008 – 2009 year when the market really fell-out – “Claflin was fortunate that they did not have to make the kinds of budget reductions that you were hearing of other institutions and even other corporations having to make”, Hudson says.

“There were no layoffs, there were no salary reductions, there were no furloughs.” Claflin didn’t have to fire anybody, amidst instability in the country, neither did they have to reduce any employee’s salary, nor ask anyone to leave for a period of time, due to economic strains.

Also, enrollment continued to remain stagnant, Claflin didn’t have to give significant tuition discounts for this enrollment increase, either.

Claflin weathered the storm, as well as could be done,” an enthusiastic Hudson said. She also said that she was proud to be working here. Claflin that long, she said that she thinks a tuition increase is enacted every year. “The board just approved a tuition increase for the upcoming year.” Claflin’s Board of Trustees has tried to work with the students, therefore hasn’t enacted a tuition increase for three years, before the 2010 – 2011 – 2.5% and for the ’11 – ’12 school year, the Board has approved a 1.5% increase.

In further comments, Hudson went-on to say, “I don’t even think it’s on par with inflation”.

Claflin was able to stay on the path as to where they were going – a huge accomplishment considering the fact that revenues were down – corporations didn’t have money for donations as they did, before the recession, endowments took a big hit along with the many of the institutions that rely on their spending policies. “Claflin was never dependent on their endowment,” Hudson said.

Just, from these facts, you can see how well Claflin University has weathered the financial storm.

Vice President of Fiscal Affairs, Joseph McDuffie, made sure that the University was only incurring expenses that were “absolutely necessities to the institution”. Hudson said that this sound and brave fiscal leadership is a premier reason why Claflin did, so well, before and during the current recession.