

Talking Points

Ms. Serena Wilson

Clarkson College Student Senate President

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Clarkson College. My name is Serena Wilson, and I am a senior undergraduate nursing student. I am also the Clarkson College Student Senate President and the Nebraska State Student Nurses' Association President. I also work part time as a Student Nurse Technician at another healthcare system in the area.

We have a special culture, and it is important that everyone knows that the news the past couple of weeks has been disturbing. Anyone that knows our students, faculty, and staff at Clarkson College; also knows we will stay focused on what is best for our students and our patients.

The news on January 2nd was a shock and confusing on how this could be affecting a school with a 137 year legacy as the first school of nursing in Nebraska. Colleagues that I work with have been assuming that my school would change and were asking me why the University would do this. It continues this week, to be frustrating to see on social media, people insinuating that Clarkson College will not exist and that I would become a University of Nebraska student. I am proud that Clarkson College holds itself to a higher standard of professional behavior and this is something that I have heard said on my clinical rotations, across multiple health systems. It is unfair to have Clarkson College have to suffer unforeseen consequences to its name and reputation because of the confusion this announcement and the continued news stories have caused.

I chose Clarkson College because it was recommended for its reputation. The culture is truly unlike any other schools I have attended. Everyone says "hello" which makes faculty, staff, and other students approachable. They are there to help you reach your dreams and goals and are excited to see you achieve success. They do not make students feel like they have to fit a certain persona, but you can truly be whatever you want to be.

An example, is a recent nursing student shared with me, that she decided they did not want to be a nurse anymore, but Clarkson College was there to help them join the radiography program instead of just letting them withdraw. The Student Advisors and Professors support students along their journey and get to know us well. You are not just a number, and I truly feel like Clarkson College is a family.

Clarkson College provides so many resources for students, from food pantries to tutors, and it is sad to me that this proposed transaction is how money would be spent, when there could be so many better ways to support future healthcare professionals and patients. As a student worker in the emergency room, because of the cuts already to healthcare insurance for so many people, they cannot afford medicine to fight even a basic infection. I witness how patients overly rely on emergency room preventive care because they cannot go or do not have access to a primary care provider. At Clarkson College, all academic programs are in healthcare fields to help close this gap for Nebraska.

I will graduate this spring, and work as a nurse, but love Clarkson College so much that I want to become a Family Nurse Practitioner. I want to assure everyone that Clarkson College will not change who we are and will stay mission driven. I urge the board of regents to oppose this transaction and refocus their energy on continuing to support student choices in higher education, as well as, avoid our medical systems from becoming monopolized under state control.