



# The Clark Journal

SPRING 2008



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## THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

As we prepare to celebrate the kickoff of our diamond jubilee this October, we are also focused firmly on the future. This issue focuses on just a few of those efforts.

For several months, a committee has been hard at work, taking a critical look at the issue of retention – from its very definition to developing retention goals for Clark College. Their efforts to develop a college-wide retention plan are critically important to student success, which is at the heart of any college or university.

In addition, a college-wide task force has been soliciting feedback on another critically important event scheduled for this October – our ten-year accreditation. I'd like to thank each of the team members who have worked so hard on our accreditation notebooks. We still have work to do but I'm excited about this opportunity.

In keeping with the theme for our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, retention, strategic planning and accreditation all give us new opportunities to support our students as we honor the past, preserve the present and embrace the future. 

*Robert K. Knight, President*

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# COLLEGE-WIDE COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON RETENTION TO ENHANCE STUDENT LIFE AND LEARNING

*As the saying goes in business, it is easier – and cheaper – to keep a current customer than to recruit a new one. In some industries it is referred to as “churn” – the constant flow of customers in and out of a company’s subscription base. Retention may be considered the parallel concept in the educational setting. How well an institution meets the needs of its students, and what percentage of students achieve their desired goal, has a direct impact on the college’s ability to carry out its mission.*

During the 2007-2008 academic year, an intra-college team of individuals has been working to identify and address issues related to retention at Clark College. The group has been charged with the task of developing the first stages of an ongoing college-wide retention plan – the third element of the college’s overall enrollment management plan. (Plans for recruitment and marketing have already been developed.)

In this issue of *The Clark Journal*, we take a closer look at the committee’s work thus far – and its potential impact on Clark College.



## MEMBERSHIP & CHARGE OF THE COMMITTEE

Members of the retention committee were identified and began their work early in the year (see sidebar for a list of committee members). Co-chaired by Dean of Student Success and Retention Ted Broussard and Dean of Instructional Operations Sylvia Thornburg, their charge was clearly defined from the outset:

Increase retention at Clark College through the creation of a college-wide plan to improve the overall student experience at the college.

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## Clark College Retention Committee Members 2007-2008

*Susan Brookhart*, chemistry professor

*Ted Broussard*, dean of student success and retention/  
committee co-chair

*Alyssa Brownlee*, program manager, Tutoring and  
Writing Center

*Kathy Chatfield*, instructional designer, eLearning

*Mary Deal*, health services officer

*Nancy Heidrick*, assistant financial aid director

*Miles Jackson*, interim dean of social sciences and fine arts

*Gail Liberman*, professor, Teaching and Learning  
Center coordinator

*Susan Maxwell*, research analyst 3

*Tani McBeth*, counselor, human development professor

*Pat Mehigan*, ASCC president

*Becky Merritt*, eligibility programs and advising  
support manager

*Les Rivera*, professor

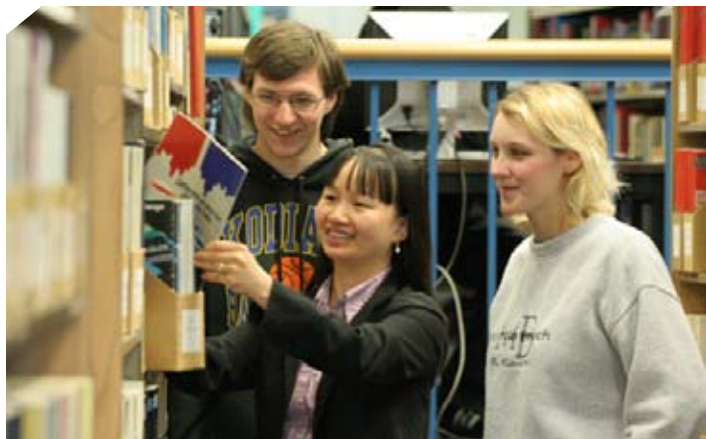
*Brian Scott*, director of marketing

*Kenny Snyder*, welding technology professor

*Sylvia Thornburg*, dean of instructional operations/  
committee co-chair



# COLLEGE-WIDE COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON RETENTION TO ENHANCE STUDENT LIFE AND LEARNING *(continued)*



Within that charge, there were three additional criteria given to the committee:

1. The committee is to be composed of students, faculty and staff. It serves as the core group in leading the college dialogue and planning regarding student retention. Other stakeholders from throughout the college will be invited to participate as needed.
2. The committee will define common language for retention-related terminology to be used in the college's planning, implementation and tracking of data.
3. The work of the committee is ongoing and will include continuous review, evaluation and modification to meet the college's needs over time.

"We have found that the whole issue of retention resonates with a broad range of college personnel who want to be involved in this work," said Broussard. "We actually had an abundance of volunteers for this committee."

## WORK & FINDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Working with its one-year time frame to develop a retention plan, the committee wasted no time beginning the retention dialogue at the college. "Assembling college leaders early in the year gave us the opportunity to develop and solidify buy-in from the outset," noted Broussard.

The fall session of the Penguin Roundtable focused exclusively on issues of retention at Clark College. Participants were given three questions, which they discussed in a conversation café format:

1. What are the benefits of student success? What is my role in supporting student success and retention?
2. What helpful student retention strategies do students, faculty, staff and administrators at the college currently use? What do I see happening [at the college] that motivates students to stay?
3. If I had unlimited resources and the authority to change policies or procedures at the college, what specific retention strategies would I add? Expand upon?

(Comments and summary documents relating to each of these questions are available for viewing as part of the Retention Committee Reports section, found under Meetings & Reports on the Clark College Intranet.)

One of the committee's first tasks was to conduct a "SWOT" retention analysis, with the purpose of identifying the college's most significant student retention strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at this time. As the influences on retention are always changing, this SWOT analysis also forms the basis and benchmark for additional studies of this kind in the future. The committee's work has also included a broad and thorough review and analysis of the college's accumulated benchmark data relating to student success and retention on a quarter-by-quarter basis. Together, the SWOT analysis and data review have helped the committee to lay the cornerstones for identifying and establishing a series of proposed retention plan goals and strategies for Clark College.

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# COLLEGE-WIDE COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON RETENTION TO ENHANCE STUDENT LIFE AND LEARNING *(continued)*



An early and ongoing sign of the retention committee's work has been the Student Success in Action reports. Distributed on a weekly basis, the reports share current student success and retention efforts and are submitted by individuals and departments across the college. To date, more than 25 reports have been shared with the college community reflecting a range of efforts. A sampling of those reports include submissions by:

- Plant Services staff, who supports classroom group assignments for service-learning projects;
- Instructors, who have created exercises for students to self-assess their progress in class;
- Secretaries, including one who has created a "cheat sheet" of resources to share with students; and
- Student Affairs staff, who offer programs to assist low-income students with financial problems or uninsured students who need medications.

Using the combined information of feedback from the conversation café, current data on student retention and the results of the SWOT analysis, the committee identified four issues around which they have been developing specific, measurable retention goals. These issues include course success rates at the college level, success rates at the pre-college level, probation rates, and the progress and retention rates for first-time Clark students.

## IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

As the academic year draws to an end, the retention committee continues its work. The committee has reviewed action plan drafts, and they continue to discuss the most appropriate methods of defining the underlying issues related to retention at Clark College.

The committee has also been actively involved in pursuing funding for the strategies established in the plan. As part of the college-wide goal setting and budget process, five budget requests totaling \$64,153 were submitted to the Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Affairs. "Obviously the college and students benefit from improvements to retention, but not only in terms of students being more likely to achieve their goals as they move through and beyond Clark," said Thornburg. "Better retention and success rates have clear financial benefits to the institution as well. Students who continue – rather than drop out – contribute to the college revenue in the form of their tuition in subsequent quarters. We have conservatively estimated that the dollars represented by reaching our retention targets should quite easily match the investment we are requesting."

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## COLLEGE-WIDE COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON RETENTION TO ENHANCE STUDENT LIFE AND LEARNING *(continued)*

Apart from establishing funding for retention efforts, the committee is also working to establish an institutional culture of supporting student success. In support of this, committee members are reviewing articles pertaining to retention and writing literature reviews, which are then shared with the college community. Explains Broussard, “We’re interested in helping all college community members see themselves as having a role in supporting student success and retention. By offering opportunities to educate each other – either through literature reviews or sharing formal and informal ways each of us support students – we as a community come to recognize that this is what Clark College is all about.”

Once complete, the retention committee will share its plan with the college community. The plan will also be incorporated as part of the college’s overall enrollment management plan.

From the outset, the retention committee has recognized that its role is ongoing. “Supporting student success is more than a buzzword or trend,” concluded Broussard. “It’s at the core of what we all do – no matter what particular role we hold. Student needs change over time, and our planning will need to reflect that. This first-year plan is merely a start. We will continue to listen to what students are telling us, identify the data on which to base solid, measurable goals and continue to revise and refine our efforts to improve the quality of student life and learning.” 🌿



# 2008 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION DRAWS TO A CLOSE

*The 2008 regular session of the Washington state legislature drew to a close sine die on March 13, 2008, with Governor Gregoire having acted upon all legislation by April 1.*

As in past years, Clark College aligned its legislative agenda with that of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). While 2008 was not a budget-setting session for the legislature, several funding requests were submitted by SBCTC on behalf of the state's 34 community and technical colleges.

In this issue of *The Clark Journal* we review the results of the session specific to the college's established 2008 legislative agenda and highlight additional actions by the legislature and governor that may impact Clark College.



## CAMPUS SECURITY

In the wake of the tragedy at Virginia Tech in 2007, colleges across the country reviewed and updated their communication systems, crisis management plans and emergency lockdown systems. Clark College was among them, convening a safety task force, establishing the college's use of the Flash Alert notification system, developing lockdown procedures and installing interior door locks.

SBCTC requested \$8.5 million to address issues of campus security throughout the system, to be shared among each of the 34 community and technical colleges across the state. While the SBCTC request was not funded, the Washington State Patrol was provided \$200,000 for the review of higher education safety plans; an additional \$1 million was allocated for mapping in the Criminal Justice Training Center budget, which is managed by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

## RUNNING START

The popularity of Washington's Running Start program – whereby high school students are able to take college classes at their local community college – is evident in its increasing number of students taking advantage of the program. As enrollments increase, the demand for course offerings and support services also increase; however, as those demands have increased, funding from the school districts has not kept pace. It is estimated that, for the 2007-2008 academic year, the amount colleges receive will cover less than 60% of their Running Start operating costs.

A total of \$7 million was requested by SBCTC to begin to close the \$35 million annual statewide deficit in funding of the Running Start program. Based on last year's enrollments, Clark College expected to receive an additional \$447,000 to help close the gap between current funding levels and the costs of providing instruction and services. Rather than funding the request, the legislature provided the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) \$10,000 to study

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# 2008 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION DRAWS TO A CLOSE

dual-credit programs (including Running Start); however, Governor Gregoire vetoed this amount and directed OSPI, SBCTC and others to develop a statewide coordinated plan for dual-credit programs.

## EQUIPMENT AND ONLINE RESOURCES

Additional funding for equipment acquisition and replacement and improved online library resources would allow students to become future employees who are prepared to work in today's job environment with minimal learning curves or transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

A \$9 million request to fund new equipment and online resources at community and technical colleges statewide was submitted by SBCTC, of which Clark would have received a much-needed portion. The legislature designated a \$750,000 allocation for digital library resources, which was vetoed by the governor.

## WORKER RETRAINING PROGRAM

Worker retraining helps unemployed workers re-enter the workforce by providing assistance to pay for tuition, books or fees and is a program created by the state of Washington. Funding for 6,200 statewide worker retraining FTEs has remained stagnant since 1997, without adjustment for inflation or tuition increases – despite an 84% increase in tuition and 20% increase in inflation in that same time period. Additional funding for the program would support student financial aid and college instruction.

Based on last year's enrollment, Clark College expected to receive approximately \$223,317 in additional instructional and financial aid support – this from the \$5.7 million requested by SBCTC for the worker retraining program statewide. This request was not funded.

## HIGHER EDUCATION BONDS

One capital budget request by SBCTC this session requested the reauthorization of the Gardner-Evans-Locke higher education bonds. The \$740 million in additional bond authority originally granted in the 2003 Washington Future Act has been fully committed. Without reauthorization, capital

projects at Clark College could be at risk, including completion of the \$27 million Clark College at Columbia Tech Center in 2009 and the \$33 million Health and Advanced Technologies building scheduled for completion in 2013.

SBCTC requested reauthorization of the act beginning in the 2009-2011 biennium to dedicate an additional \$1.0 billion over the next six years for higher education capital preservation, renovation and capacity growth to address two-year and four-year institutional building needs across the state. No action was taken this session.

## ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS IMPACTING CLARK COLLEGE

In addition to the five themes supported by Clark's legislative agenda for the 2008 session, SBCTC's budget requests included three items from which the college will benefit:

- The 2008 session confirmed the additional FTE to the state's community and technical colleges that were set in the 2007-2009 budget; of those, Clark is projected to receive 134 growth enrollment slots.
- The second-year increase of the I-732 cost of living adjustment (COLA) was funded, as well as an additional .5% COLA for I-732 employees.
- A total of \$500,000 system-wide was allocated to convert part-time faculty positions into full-time faculty positions, emphasizing faculty in math, science, adult basic education, early childhood education and English (a total of 20 conversions).

Work continues at SBCTC to finalize the allocations to each college from the funded budget requests.

Overall, state legislators and Governor Gregoire sought to maintain a reserve balance in the state's coffers in an effort to avoid deficit operation. "I appreciate the work the Legislature did to send me a budget with \$835 million in reserve," Governor Gregoire said in the April 1 news release announcing the signing of the 2008 supplemental budget. "I then combed carefully through the budget and used my veto pen to trim another \$15.1 million. This is one of the largest supplemental budget surpluses in state history and it will help us meet future needs at a time when about 30 other states face deficits. We are the envy of many states across the nation." 🌿



# PROGRESS CONTINUES ON TWO MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF CLARK COLLEGE

*Two major initiatives that will have a direct and lasting impact on the future of Clark College continue to make progress: the college's 10-year accreditation visit and the review and update of the college's strategic plan. As the final weeks of spring quarter 2008 draw to a close, leaders of both projects continue their work.*



## ACCREDITATION: FINAL STAGES OF A THREE-YEAR PROCESS

Clark College's preparations for its 10-year accreditation began in early 2006, with the appointment of co-chairs Dr. Tim Cook and Dr. Charlene Montierth in January; following this, a team of eight college representatives attended an accreditation workshop in February 2006. Standards committee chairs were selected during summer 2006.

The college-wide participation began in fall 2006. At that time, the college community was given an introduction to the accreditation process and its implications by Ron Baker, executive vice president of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Sign up sheets were circulated to all faculty, staff and administrators in attendance, giving them the opportunity to specify which standard committee on which they would be interested in serving.

Under the leadership of Cook, Montierth, and the standards co-chairs, members of the college community were convened to serve on each standard committee. From reviewing policies and existing data to compiling instructional program notebooks and conducting a survey, every area of the college has been involved in providing supporting information to document how well Clark College is fulfilling each of the standards.

Equipped with information, each standard committee reviewed the data and drafted its report, which collectively will form the final accreditation self-study report. The committee reports address the nine standards of accreditation: institutional mission, goals, planning and effectiveness; educational program and its effectiveness; students; faculty; library and information resources; governance and administration; finance; physical resources; and institutional integrity. Draft reports have been edited and posted to the college Intranet, where all members of the college community have had the opportunity to review and comment on each of the nine standards.

As final editing of each standard occurs, the detailed work of preparing the report for public distribution begins. In addition to ensuring consistency in writing, use of acronyms and other stylistic issues, the compilation of supporting documentation will take place. The accreditation site visitation team will have at their disposal – cataloged in an exhibit room – every document or report referenced in the self-study, as well as sample documents, supporting publications and other relevant information. A general session will be held during fall orientation 2008 to update the college community on final preparations for the accreditation visit.

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# PROGRESS CONTINUES ON TWO MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF CLARK COLLEGE



With its visit to Clark College on October 8-10, 2008, the accreditation site visit team will not only review documents related to the report, but also interview members of the college community including administrators, faculty, staff and students. During its January 2009 meeting, the commission will take formal action on the report of the visitation team; following that meeting, the college will be notified of the commission's findings in a formal report outlining the commendations and recommendations for Clark College.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO UPDATE VISION, MISSION

The Clark College strategic plan provides the path for the institution. It outlines the college's vision, mission, core values, strategic priorities, strategic initiatives and performance measures. It provides the framework for planning and decision-making – in short, it is the college's map for the future.

In October 2003, 27 individuals representing the college and community began work on the 2004-2009 strategic plan, which has guided Clark College since that time. In early 2008, work began on the creation of the college's next five-year plan, providing an opportunity to review the vision and mission statements, mission imperatives and strategic priorities to ensure that they support the college's ongoing commitment to student success. To guide the effort, a new task force was established (see sidebar).

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### Strategic Planning Task Force Members

*Veronica Brock*, Health & Physical Education

*Vicki Cheng*, Business and Technology

*John Jablonski*, Communication Studies

*Miles Jackson*, Social Sciences & Fine Arts

*Bob Jones*, Automotive

*Kim Largen*, Associated Students of Clark College

*Dan Overbay*, Admissions

*Kim Peery*, Board of Trustees

*Karla Rowe*, Clark College Foundation

*Sabra Sand*, Accounting

*Sandy Woodward*, English

*Bob Knight*, President

*Candy Bennett*, Planning and Advancement



# PROGRESS CONTINUES ON TWO MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF CLARK COLLEGE

## 2004-2009 Mission Imperatives

*Focus on Learning*



*Access to Education*



*Respect for Differences*



*Workforce Development*



*Broad-based Partnerships*



*Management Excellence*

“We don’t believe that we will need to completely revise our strategic plan,” wrote Clark College President Bob Knight to the college community on Feb. 6, 2008. “But this gives us an opportunity to review our mission, vision, mission imperatives and strategic priorities to be sure that they support our commitment to student success.”

To date, four internal discussion groups – including one comprised exclusively of students – have been held, providing an opportunity for feedback on the college’s six current mission imperatives. In addition, four external discussion groups with representatives from K-12 and higher education; business and industry; agency, labor and government; and community members representing diverse populations from throughout Clark County have also been held. In all, 169 people from within the college and the greater community have participated in a discussion group. Summaries containing feedback from each of the internal and external focus groups, as well as a feedback form, are available on the Clark College Web site at [http://www.clark.edu/about\\_clark/StrategicPlan.php](http://www.clark.edu/about_clark/StrategicPlan.php).

As each element of the strategic plan is revised, drafts will be shared with College Council, which will have the opportunity to provide feedback and input before final adoption. The final presentation to the Board of Trustees of the 2009-2014 strategic plan is scheduled for Monday, June 16, 2008. 