



The Clark Journal

FALL 2008



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THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

At Clark College, it's all about the student and it's all about The Next Step.

Clark students lead busy lives. Many of them have families and may work one or more jobs in addition to attending classes. With their needs in mind, we have created new degree programs that students can earn on weekends or by attending classes two days a week. I want to thank everyone who worked so hard to make these programs available to our students.

We're also introducing new, electronic services to support our students. Our Academic Early Warning system enables us to reach out to students and help them stay on track. Student e-mail is a tool that will enable us to communicate electronically with our students, sending important college information and news. We believe that students will like this new service because communicating by e-mail is fast and easy. It's also green, because it reduces the use of paper and the cost of mailing.

If you've driven on east Mill Plain Blvd. lately—past 164th Avenue—you know that construction is continuing at a rapid pace at Clark College at Columbia Tech Center, which will enable us to better serve residents in the eastern portion of our service district.

That new facility, which will open for classes starting in fall 2009, will offer general education classes as well as corporate training. It will enable us to provide better services to individuals and business in the eastern portion of our service district. We plan to formally dedicate the building on October 1, 2009—our 76th anniversary.

Clark College was founded in the midst of the Great Depression. We have survived challenging economic times before and we will survive the current challenges that our nation is facing.

This edition of *The Clark Journal* is designed to tell you what's new and what's next as Clark College enters the next 75 years.

It was true in 1933 and, as you'll see in this issue, it's true today. At Clark College, it's all about our students.

Robert K. Knight, Clark College President

Student success: *it's a matter of degree (options)*

Imagine being able to earn an associate degree by taking classes two days a week—or online—or one weekend a month. Clark College students don't need to imagine those scenarios. They will soon be able to take those Next Steps to success.

TWO-DAY ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE

Beginning in the winter quarter of 2009, Clark College will offer classes in the associate of arts (AA) degree program in a two-day-a-week format. In this format, the class periods are longer than a traditional five-day-per-week class, or are offered in a hybrid format that combines online and classroom sessions. Students can combine classes in the two-day AA format with Clark's other daytime, evening and online offerings to customize the schedule that works best for them. By taking classes two days per week, students cover the same material in fewer class sessions—giving them more days free for work, family or other commitments. Students who take classes full time in this format are able to complete their degree in two years.

The two-day AA program is currently offered at Clark College at WSU Vancouver and will also be offered at Clark College at Columbia Tech Center, which is scheduled to open in fall 2009. For more information on the two-day AA program, visit www.clark.edu/2dayAA.

ONLINE DEGREE

Clark's eLearning program has grown dramatically in the past three years—and it's growing again by introducing an online degree. Students are now able to earn an associate of arts general studies transfer degree (known as a DTA, or a direct transfer agreement) degree by taking all their classes online through Clark College.

"This is a great opportunity for students who are juggling work and family obligations. Some who have started their degree on campus are finding the online option a great way to finish—rather than postpone—their academic goals," said Interim Dean of eLearning Ann Virtu Snyder.



Beginning winter quarter 2009, students will be able to take classes toward an associate of arts degree two days a week at Clark College at WSU Vancouver.

WEEKEND DEGREE COHORT

Clark is on track to become the first two-year college in the region to offer a unique weekend degree option. A group of students, called a cohort, will complete the program together over eight quarters (24 months). Each quarter, students will attend class one weekend per month and complete their coursework online. Those who complete the program will earn an associate of arts (DTA) degree. The weekend degree program is currently scheduled to launch in fall 2009.

"Clark is the first in our region to offer this type of program for an associate of arts degree," said Snyder. "This model has been very effective for four-year degrees and graduate studies. Students in a cohort are more successful than students who move from class to class independent of their peers."

NEW PROGRAMS ENHANCE A DIAMOND JUBILEE

Since it was founded in 1933, Clark College has succeeded by offering classes at times and places that are convenient for students. As the college celebrates its 75th anniversary, it is "preserving the past, honoring the present, and embracing the future" by introducing new online, weekend and two-day AA degree options to meet the needs of today's students.



It's all about helping our students: Clark implements an Academic Early Warning system



“Many faculty members have jumped at the opportunity to find another way to support student success and see it as another tool beyond what they are currently doing.”

—Ted Broussard,
*Dean of Student
Success and Retention*

Whether students are coming to Clark straight from high school or returning to a classroom after several years away, the transition to college can be difficult. In support of students and their success, Clark College has implemented an Academic Early Warning (AEW) system to help students know—early on—when they may need to change their study habits or seek assistance.

AEW is a service that faculty members use to report academic behavior that may threaten a student's success. Faculty members enter information and comments into the AEW system, which then sends an early warning letter to the student. Reports may be submitted twice per quarter (during the third week and mid-fifth week), giving struggling students the opportunity to seek help before it is too late in the quarter.

Fall 2008 was the first quarter of implementation for AEW at Clark. A look at the numbers for both the three-week and five-week reporting periods reveals an increase in use of the system during the quarter:

Week Three Reporting Period:

- 44 participating faculty members
- 1,831 total reports generated
- 284 letters mailed to students regarding unsatisfactory reports

Week Five Reporting Period:

- 72 participating faculty members
- 2,300 total reports generated
- 506 letters mailed to students regarding unsatisfactory reports

“We are very pleased with the amount of interest and participation we received in this first round of introducing Academic Early Warning to the college,” said Dean of Student Success and Retention Ted Broussard. “Many faculty members have jumped at the opportunity to find another way to support student success and see it as another tool beyond what they are currently doing. We've been spreading the word to students as well and they are very pleased that Clark is taking this initiative. Our hope is that all faculty will use AEW this year so that students can receive the greatest overall benefit.”

Warnings submitted through AEW are not noted on transcripts or student records. The warning is meant to help students identify risky academic behavior early in the quarter and encourage changes in performance. A list of free college resources that support academic success was included in each letter. Many students who received

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“I found that students were stressed and overwhelmed due to illness, family situations, work, and the amount of work they had to do between high school and college. Some students were able to fix the situation by speaking with their professor, while some just needed motivation to get some help.”

*—Saundra Solis,
Running Start
Program Coordinator*

letters followed up with their instructor—something that they may not have thought possible before they received a warning letter. “Although it should seem obvious to under-performing students that they should talk to their instructor if they are struggling, many of them viewed the AEW letter as ‘permission’ or an invitation to talk to their instructor(s) about their difficulties,” said Linda Calvert, interim director of Advising & Counseling and associate director of Running Start at Clark. Chemistry Instructor Susan Brookhart also favored the AEW letters as a means of encouraging students: “Receiving AEW letters, in conjunction with in-person prodding from me, certainly seems to have encouraged most of my struggling students to seek guidance about how to improve their work.”

All full- and part-time faculty members have access to AEW through an online portal (www.clark.edu/aew) or through the Clark College Intranet. By using an electronic system, information can be reported and transmitted quickly and efficiently, enabling students to take corrective action within the quarter. Before using AEW, faculty are encouraged—but not required—to attend a training session offered by the Teaching and Learning Center. As an alternative, the Teaching and Learning Center is also developing a series of short videos as a form of self-paced training in using the AEW system. Information sessions are held before the third and fifth week reporting periods; a basic information sheet and user manual are also available on the college Intranet.

“I was able to use the AEW system without any difficulty,” said Medical Radiography Clinical Coordinator Thomas King, who also teaches medical vocabulary at Clark. “Because of the ease of use the well-thought-out AEW system provides, my workload was minimally impacted. The benefit to my class was evident by measuring the increasing class average score for each quiz.” He added, “Overall, I would have no hesitation using the AEW as a tool to ensure the success of Clark students. For the instructor who cares about student success and retention, the AEW system is a must-have tool in the educational development toolbox.”

AEW alerts students who may be facing academic challenges for a number of reasons—and allows them the opportunity to respond before it is too late in the quarter. “I personally called all of the Running Start students who received AEW letters to talk to them about why they received the warning and what their options were at that point,” said Running Start Program Coordinator Saundra Solis. “Many students were afraid to speak with their professors. One student in particular thanked me for calling and encouraging her to do this —she said she is shy and didn’t realize

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It's all about helping our students: Clark implements an Academic Early Warning system



“I use AEW as a tool to help students who have gotten in ‘over their heads.’ I try to work directly with the students, but sometimes they have other than academic needs or issues that are impacting their learning. I think the benefit to the student is to get hooked up with Student Services to get help on the challenges they face.”

*—Dr. Kathy Bobula,
professor of early childhood
education and psychology.*

that she could talk to the instructor...Several students didn't know about all the services we offer or that they could form study groups on their own. I found that students were stressed and overwhelmed due to illness, family situations, work, and the amount of work they had to do between high school and college. Some students were able to fix the situation by speaking with their professor, while some just needed motivation to get some help. In some cases, the student had moved and didn't receive the letter, so they didn't realize that there was a problem—or how serious the problem was—until I called them.”

Continued—and increasing—use of AEW in winter and spring quarters is the hope for the system's future. “I'm eagerly anticipating wider adoption of AEW amongst the faculty,” Brookhart said. “It will be so useful to be able to identify students who are struggling in more than one area of their academics.”

“We anticipate being able to continue the service throughout this year and hope that faculty participation will increase each term,” said Dean of Instructional Planning and Operations Dr. Sylvia Thornburg. “By early January, there should be data available that tell us if the faculty members who used AEW experienced any improvement in course success levels for their students in the fall in comparison to last fall (when AEW wasn't available). One thing we know already is that a number of students have been spared getting F grades in classes in which they were mistakenly still enrolled.”

Regardless the reason a student is struggling, AEW provides an easy tool for faculty members to use to notify students—and provides students with helpful information to make changes. “I use AEW as a tool to help students who have gotten in ‘over their heads,’” noted Dr. Kathy Bobula, professor of early childhood education and psychology. “I try to work directly with the students, but sometimes they have other than academic needs or issues that are impacting their learning. I think the benefit to the student is to get hooked up with Student Services to get help on the challenges they face.” It is this partnership—the partnership of academics and student support—that come together through AEW that highlight how, at Clark College, it is all about the student.

For more information on AEW, contact Dean of Student Success & Retention Ted Broussard (tbroussard@clark.edu) or Retention Counselor Eden Isenstein (eisenstein@clark.edu).



Calling all Clark students: New e-mail system fosters connection

New and returning students were greeted this fall with news of a new system designed to foster connection between students, faculty and college services: student e-mail.

Student e-mail accounts were available beginning in July; as of Nov. 20, 450 students had activated their Google mail account offered by the college. Several forms of communication about student e-mail—including an article in the fall 2008 issue of Clark College Connections, an advertisement on the home page of the Clark College Web site, and promotional videos featuring students—are being used to raise awareness and encourage students to sign up.

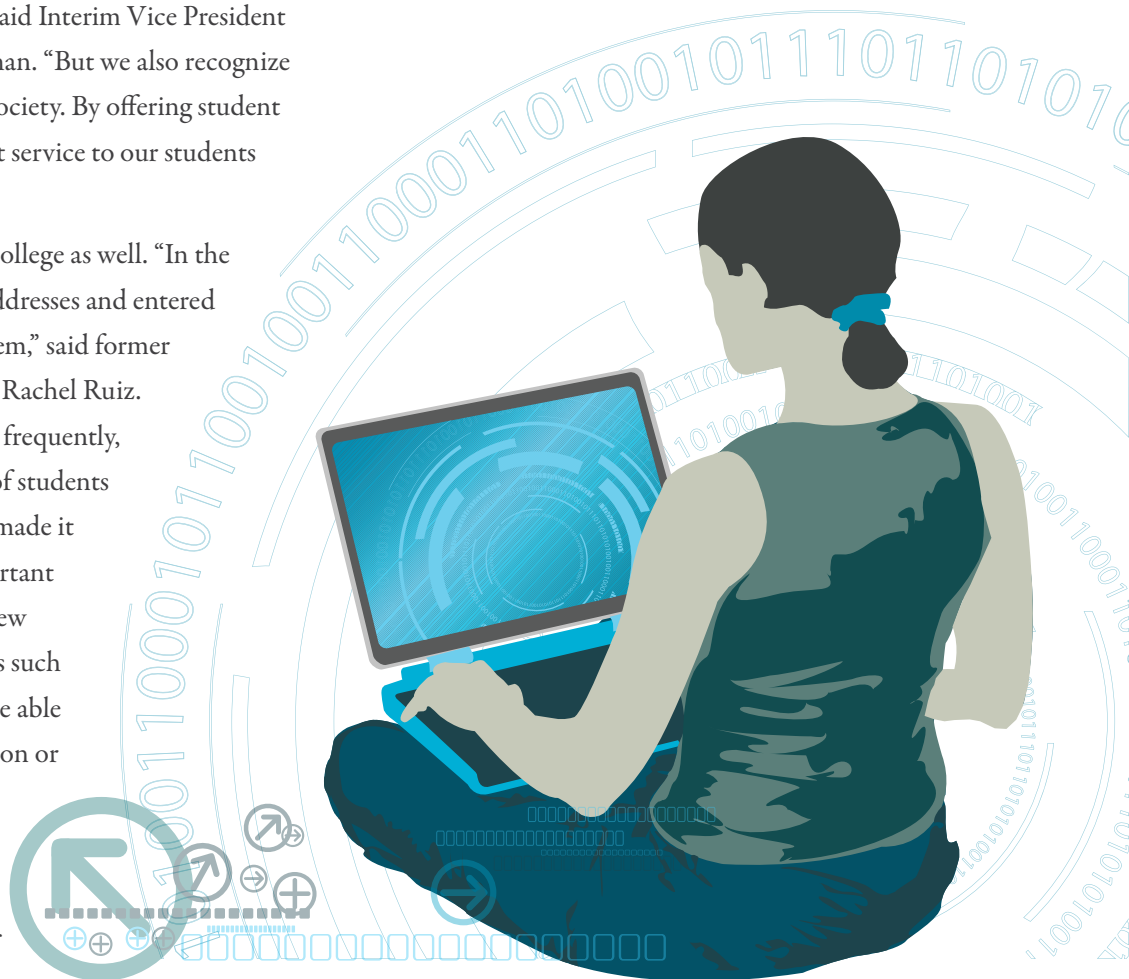
There is a dual benefit of offering student e-mail. It is offered as a service to help students connect with classmates and instructors. “We recognize that not all students have experience using e-mail before they come to Clark College,” said Interim Vice President of Administrative Services Phil Sheehan. “But we also recognize that e-mail is an integral part of our society. By offering student e-mail, we are providing an important service to our students during their time at Clark College.”

Offering student e-mail benefits the college as well. “In the past, we’ve gathered student e-mail addresses and entered them in the student information system,” said former Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Rachel Ruiz. “But because e-mail addresses change frequently, and because only a small percentage of students provided us with e-mail addresses, it made it difficult to use e-mail to convey important information to students.” With the new e-mail system, critical student services such as financial aid and registration will be able to communicate important information or changes to students quickly.

In the coming months, the college will develop a transition plan and timeline for migrating many forms of

student communication—including registration dates, financial aid application deadlines, and emergency delays or closures—to e-mail only distribution. “[Making this transition] will allow our offices to share pertinent information in a timely manner,” said Dean of Enrollment Services Alex Montoya. “This will help students receive basic and critical information as soon as it becomes available. We will also be able to remind students of things such as deadlines and upcoming timelines.”

Google Apps was selected for the college’s student e-mail system, offering features such as a calendar and document sharing, and allowing students to customize their account. Additional information on student e-mail is available on the Clark College Web site at www.clark.edu/myemail.



Clark College looks east to offer educational programming for the future



Clark College at Columbia Tech Center on December 5, 2008

Our prediction for 2009: learners of all ages will be traveling to eastern Clark County for classes, corporate training events and continuing education as Clark College at Columbia Tech Center opens its doors next fall. From the Evergreen High School student who takes a college class, to the corporate executive taking a professional training seminar, to the new retiree who has always wanted—and now has time—to learn to paint, Clark College at Columbia Tech Center will be the place to find them all.

Until then, much work—from building to instructional planning—continues on the new facility.

BREAKING GROUND WAS JUST THE BEGINNING...

Groundbreaking at Columbia Tech Center took place in November 2007. Over the past 12 months, the building has shaped from its early steel-beamed structure to its current appearance, with outer brick and windows, exterior light poles, and interior flooring, walls and lighting.

In January, contractor Todd Construction will begin installing interior items such as white boards, display cases and bathroom fixtures. Installation of smart classroom equipment is scheduled for February and March 2009. By mid-April, the building is scheduled to be substantially completed, at which time the college will begin installing instructional equipment (such as

classroom furniture and computer labs) and commissioning facility systems such as heating and cooling.

Clark College at Columbia Tech Center is scheduled to open in fall 2009. When complete, the building will house 18 classrooms, eight science and computer labs, offices for faculty and support staff and parking for 393 vehicles. The Corporate Learning Center houses several specialty features of the building, including a conference suite that can be configured into smaller classrooms or used as a 3420-square-foot event space; a kitchen classroom that will support cooking classes, corporate training involving hands-on food preparation and catering needs for on-site events; and an art classroom positioned to gather natural light.

PUTTING THE “CLASS” IN THE CLASSROOM

Just as construction on Clark College at Columbia Tech Center has been underway for months, so too has the instructional planning that will define the classes and programs offered at the new building. CTC's programming has long been described as including general education classes, professional and technical training, basic skills classes, workforce development and personal enrichment courses. Discussions will continue as the college receives information about the budget for the next

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Clark College looks east to offer educational programming for the future



Left: General education classes at Columbia Tech Center—including those with a lab component—will be offered beginning fall 2009. Right: Conference room space provides opportunities for meetings and small gatherings; those on upper levels also offer a view of the surrounding area.

biennium. To date, proposed plans include the following:

- Classes required for the associate of arts transfer degree, offered in a two-day-a-week schedule, will make it possible for students to complete the degree in two years or less. Consideration will be given to classes that are allowable for Running Start in the Evergreen, Camas, Washougal and Hockinson school districts.
- A new Business Technology certificate will combine the existing clerical assistant and receptionist certificates of achievement.
- Basic education classes.
- The one-year certificate in power utilities technology.
- The business administration certificate of proficiency and transfer degree, the accounting clerk certificate of proficiency and the account AAS degree.

In addition, Columbia Tech Center will house the Corporate Learning Center, operated by the college's department of Corporate and Continuing Education. Created to meet the needs of non-traditional students of area corporations and community groups, the Corporate Learning Center will include such activities as professional development; personal enrichment; quarterly business series programs; company, non-profit and group events; off-site retreats and meetings; trade shows; and cooking programs.

COLUMBIA TECH CENTER: EXTENDING CLARK'S MISSION

As the opening of Clark College at Columbia Tech Center draws nearer, it is important to recognize its role and place in the college's overall mission of providing educational opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to pursue their educational goals. The new facility will provide the college with the capacity to meet future growth and give students greater choices in class offerings, degrees and certificates, professional training and personal growth. In addition, this new location extends Clark College's reach in eastern Clark County—including Camas and Washougal—and beyond into Skamania and Klickitat counties (both part of Clark's service district).

"Planning for CTC has been on the books for quite some time," said Director of Plant Services Jim Green. An east county facility was identified in the June 20, 2001 facilities master plan for the college. At that time it was noted to be, "the college's highest priority after the Clark Center [now Clark College] at WSU Vancouver," with a proposed location easily accessible to Highway 14 along the 164th Ave. or 192nd Ave. corridors. In December 2001, the college submitted a project report request to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

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Clark College looks east to offer educational programming for the future



Smart technology will be incorporated into the 18 classrooms at Columbia Tech Center.

(SBCTC); it was classified as a growth project and scored high enough by SBCTC to be included in the budget submittal process in 2002.

The Columbia Tech Center construction project was originally awarded predesign funding during the 2003-2005 biennium (an outcome of the 2002 session of the Washington State Legislature), followed by design funding during the 2005-2007 biennium and construction funding during the 2007-2009 biennium. The college will receive approximately \$600,000 annually in state maintenance and operations funding when the building opens.



The “great room”—a 3420-square-foot event space located on the first floor—is part of the Corporate Learning Center.

Building “green” for the future

Clark College at Columbia Tech Center (CTC) does more than offer opportunities for students in eastern Clark County—it represents the future of environmental consciousness in building.

LSW Architects designed CTC to include increased natural lighting, large projection-screen displays, acoustics and ergonomic furnishings. The building will exceed state-mandated certification from the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) program.

LEED is a third-party certification program and the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. The LEED system recognizes five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Todd Construction of Tigard, Oregon, is the contractor for the CTC project.





Left: Work on Clark College's new facility at Columbia Tech Center began in February 2008. Middle: March 25, 2008—the first steel beam is put in place for Clark College at Columbia Tech Center. Right: By April, construction of the building's framework is well underway.

Clark College at Columbia Tech Center: A Brief Timeline



As of fall 2008—one year from its opening— Columbia Tech Center is The Next Step for Clark College and its students.

