

Students Talk, Lawmakers Listen



Clark College student Darryl Ramsey addressed guests at the Legislative Breakfast.

Clark College held its first Legislative Breakfast on December 6, inviting legislative leaders in the districts that the college serves to hear more about the college's achievements and challenges.

The event got off to a late start due to an unexpected snowfall that had begun the night before. Nevertheless, six legislators were in attendance: Washington State Representatives Paul Harris, Jim Moeller, Liz Pike, Monica Stonier, Brandon Vick, and Sharon Wylie. Clark College Board of Trustees members Jada Rupley, Sherry Parker, and Chair Royce Pollard also attended, as did many staff, faculty and

students.

As guests enjoyed breakfast fare (including pastries provided by the college's Culinary Arts-Bakery program), they were welcomed by Associated Students of Clark College (ASCC) President Dena Brill. President Bob Knight and Trustee Pollard also greeted attendees.

As a member of the Washington Community and Technical College system, Clark does not lobby the legislature directly, but Pollard laid out some of the key issues that Clark will be watching during the upcoming legislative session, including the continuing funding challenges created both by statewide budget problems and by underfunding of community colleges in particular. Also, Clark College's north county project will be back before legislators this winter, as the project has been approved but funding has not yet been allocated. The project, which will provide a new Clark College facility in the northern portion of the Clark College service area, is likely at least 10 years away.



Dr. Peter Williams,
Dean of STEM

President Knight spoke about the strong local support for the college, including some recent partnerships with business and

industry, and about student success. Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Dr. Peter Williams provided legislators with a preview of many things happening in STEM and thanked them for their support of capital funding for two-year colleges. Clark College will break ground on a new STEM building in 2014.

Some of the biggest impact in the program came from Brill and another student, Darryl Ramsey, who is transitioning from military service to a career in network technology. Both students spoke to the legislators about the importance of the college in the community and in their own lives. They thanked the legislators for their support, and encouraged them to continue to keep Clark College in their minds as they went to Olympia.

Photos: Clark College/Jennifer Kirby