

# Welcome, Professors!



Cuisine professor Aaron Guerra, seen here at the beginning of fall term, was one of eight faculty members to receive tenure on March 11, 2020.

Eight outstanding educators are the newest members of the tenured faculty at Clark College. Rhea Becke (career and academic preparation), Chris Boucher (diesel technology), Amy Laurel Bratton (communication studies), Alison R. Dolder (professional baking and pastry arts), Becky Engel (American Sign Language), R. Earl Frederick Jr. (cuisine), Aaron Guerra (cuisine), and Dr. Nick Macias (computer science and engineering) were all granted tenure during the Clark College Board of Trustees meeting on March 11. They will be honored at a college reception in fall 2020.

Tenure is awarded by the college's Board of Trustees based on professional excellence and outstanding abilities in their disciplines. The granting of tenure is based on the recommendations of tenure review committees to the vice

president of instruction, which are then forwarded to the president, who presents a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Recommendations are based on self-evaluations, tenure review committee evaluations, student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, and peer evaluations. The final decision to award or withhold tenure rests with the Board of Trustees.

## **About the faculty members**

### **Rhea Becke, Career and Academic Preparation**

Rhea Becke holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry and molecular biology from Marquette University and a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from University of Alaska Southeast. Before entering the teaching profession, she worked at the Juneau Alliance for Mental Health. She has experience teaching in public schools in both Alaska and Oregon, teaching English in Japan, teaching chemistry at Clark College, and teaching pre-college courses at both Mt. Hood Community College and Clark College.

Becke joined the faculty of Clark College in 2012. She currently serves as lead instructor for her department's Math Applications course, a member of the Transitional Studies Standards Committee, and the Transitional Studies' liaison to the Mathematics Department. Additionally, she is part of the first cohort of the college's BUILD program, a yearlong employee development program providing intensive training in power, privilege, and inequity.

Rhea Becke described her teaching philosophy in the following terms: "My classroom is a learning community where students come as they are to actively engage with math in contextualized situations in order to become critical thinkers and problem solvers."

## **Chris Boucher, Diesel Technology**

Chris Boucher earned his associate degree in diesel technology from Bates Technical College in Tacoma, Washington. He also studied criminal justice at Santa Rosa College in Santa Rosa, California. He has industry-specific work experience at Peterson Caterpillar, Cummins Northwest, Pacific Detroit Diesel, Cummins Intermountain, and Smith Detroit Diesel.

“My teaching philosophy is fairly straightforward, in that I believe we learn by doing,” said Boucher. “Putting our hands on a task forces our mind to focus on the task at hand. As a teacher you must also demonstrate credibility to the student, which will reinforce their confidence in your qualifications. If the student doubts your experience, it will reduce your effectiveness.”

## **Amy Laurel Bratton, Communication Studies**

Amy Laurel Bratton graduated summa cum laude from the University of Memphis with a bachelor's degree in communication studies. She earned her master's degree in communication from Portland State University. Her teaching experience includes Portland State University, Portland Community College, and Clark College, as well as being a certified yoga instructor who trains other yoga instructors in public speaking and communication skills.

Bratton joined Clark College in 2005 as an adjunct and began a full-time position in 2011. She served as facilitator of the college's Service and Leadership in the Community (SLIC) Club and is currently active in assessment work at the departmental and program level. She regularly engages in professional development opportunities at the college, especially on the topics of eLearning education and power, privilege, and inequity.

“My teaching philosophy highlights the play between theory and practice,” Bratton said. “I encourage students to discover new communication concepts and to see how these concepts apply to their daily lives. As an educator, I am continually inspired by the opportunity to empower community college students with their own communication skills.”

## **Alison R. Dolder, Professional Baking and Pastry Arts**

Alison R. Dolder is an alumna of Clark College, where she earned her associate degree in baking management. She has a long professional career in the baking industry, including positions at multiple bakeries in Massachusetts and New Hampshire as well as the award-winning Pearl Bakery in Portland, Oregon.

Since joining the faculty at Clark College, Dolder has become active in the local community, participating on the Fort Vancouver High School Advisory Committee and teaching cooking and baking skills at the Boys and Girls Club of Vancouver. In 2015, she was received the college’s prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award.

Dolder says she strives to “engage, encourage, and support” her students: “I try to get the students excited about what they are learning and encourage them to dig right in and get their hands wet. I observe their learning styles and tailor my instruction to suit each students’ style.”

## **Becky Engel, American Sign Language**

Becky Engel holds a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology from Oregon State University and a Master of Education degree in Deaf education from Western Oregon University. Prior to joining Clark College as an ASL instructor, she taught at the Washington School for the Deaf.

Since coming to Clark College, Engel has served as the advisor to the ASL/Signing Penguins student club, ASL Advisory Committee for Southwest Washington high schools, a judge for the Washington School for the Deaf's Flying Hands ASL Literature Competition, the Emergency Building Coordinator Committee, and the Social Equity Task Force. Additionally, she participated in the creation of the college's 2015-2020 Social Equity Plan and is a member of the first cohort of the college's BUILD program, a yearlong employee development program providing intensive training in power, privilege, and inequity. In 2017, she received the college's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award.

"Due to my background in Deaf Education, I'm fortunate to have experience working with students from a wide background," said Engel. "As a result, I adapt my teaching style to fit students' needs. I am always willing to stop, circle back, and try a different teaching approach, knowing the other students would most likely benefit as well."

## **R. Earl Frederick Jr., Cuisine Management**

R. Earl Frederick Jr. earned his Associate in Applied Science degree in culinary arts from Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island, his Associate in Applied Science degree in baking and pastry arts from the Oregon Culinary Institute, and his Bachelor of Science in business administration from Warner Pacific College in Oregon. A Certified Executive Chef through the American Culinary Federation, he has held chef positions in the culinary services of Walt Disney World, Club Med, Job Corps, Nike, and Intel.

Since coming to Clark College, Frederick has helped launch the college's Cuisine Management program and provided input on the design of its new McClaskey Culinary Institute. He serves as

the program's ServSafe Certified Instructor and Registered Proctor, ensuring students meet the rigorous requirements of this national food-safety program.

"I lead by example and lecture from facts," Frederick said. "I tell my students that you'll receive exactly what you put into the class. My motto: Don't talk about it, *be* about it!"

## **Aaron Guerra, Cuisine Management**

Aaron Guerra has decades of experience as an executive chef, instructor, and education and restaurant consultant. After graduating from the Western Culinary Institute with an associate degree in culinary arts, he worked as an executive chef at Portland's Harvest Grill and The Restaurant at the Historic Reserve in Vancouver, Washington. He was nominated for the American Culinary Federation's "Chef of the Year" in 2007, 2011, and 2014, and was named ACF Pro Chef Oregon's Chef of the Year in 2014. His teaching experience includes Le Cordon Bleu/Western Culinary Institute in Portland, Oregon; Northwest Culinary Institute in Vancouver, Washington; and Clark College.

At Clark, Guerra helped launch the college's Cuisine Management program and provided input on the design of its new McClaskey Culinary Institute. He serves as department chair and is active in his community, founding a nonprofit called the Culinary Champions for Charity that raises money for local organizations. He also participates in a national group of leaders in higher education called the Deans and Directors Retreat.

"My teaching philosophy and approach is simple," said Guerra. "I am a conduit of my experience, skills and knowledge from 30 years of being a chef to my students, fellow instructors and campus. My job is to help prepare the next generation of cooks and chefs and to help make myself, my coworkers and those I interact with on campus better with

every opportunity.”

## **Dr. Nick Macias, Computer Science & Engineering**

Dr. Nick Macias earned both a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering and a master’s degree in computer science from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; a master’s degree in mathematics from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina; and a doctorate degree in electrical engineering from Virginia Polytechnic University. Along with his industry-specific work experience in both the private sector and as a civil

servant, he has teaching experience at Duke, George Washington, Virginia Tech, Northwest Academy, Portland State University, Washington State University, and Clark College.

Dr. Macias joined Clark College in 2011. Within his department, he is actively involved in Guided Pathways, course assessment, community outreach, and student advising. He serves as faculty advisor for the Computer Science and Engineering Club; outside of Clark College, he volunteers with the Regional Arts and Culture Council. In 2017, he earned Clark College’s prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award.

“I believe learning happens through the search for answers, so I teach by raising questions in the material, in the subject, in ourselves,” said Dr. Macias. “I encourage students to make and embrace mistakes, as these raise the exact questions best suited to one’s own learning.”