

Opening Day 2023

Clark College employees gathered on September 18 to kick off the 2023-24 academic year during Opening Day festivities at O'Connell Sports Center.

Before staff entered O'Connell, they could stop by a Clark College Values table staffed by Student Ambassadors. They chose which of the values from the Strategic Plan they would like to focus on in their work this year, then attached the value card to a Clark lanyard. The six values are Social Justice, Partnerships, Innovation, Shared Governance, Continuous Improvement and Sustainability. Staff also could pick up a laminated pocket-sized Strategic Plan.



Student Ambassadors distributed college lanyards and values outside.

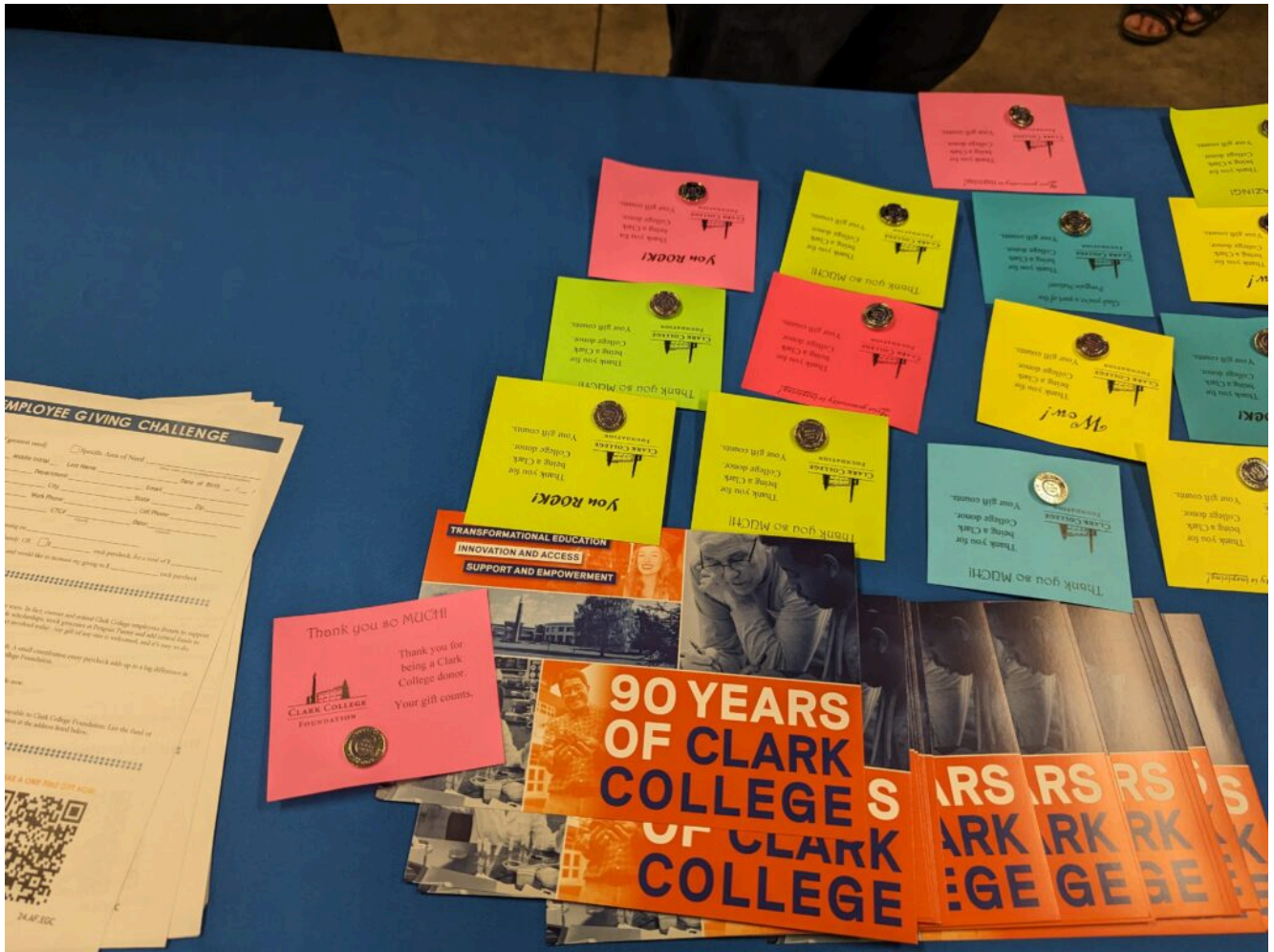
Inside O'Connell was a reunion atmosphere as faculty, staff, and board members reconnected.

The noise level rose in ever-increasing crescendos. The excitement was palpable. While staff members waited for the program to start, they:

- Enjoyed coffee and bagels hosted by IQ Credit Union.
- Stopped by the Clark College Foundation table to pick up an “O” Squad pin if they are donors.
- Got a new staff photo taken by Jenny Shadley from Communications and Marketing.



IQ Credit Union provided sustenance.



Foundation table at Opening Day 2023.



Jenny Shadley took staff photo of ESL Professor Les Rivera of Transitional Studies



Nursing Professor Angie Bailey chooses a lanyard and values card.

Welcome by Dr. Edwards

Wearing a blue baseball jersey with “Edwards” and the number “1” on the back, Dr. Edwards stepped up to the podium and welcomed staff to Opening Day. Dr. Edwards thanked IQ Credit Union for the morning refreshments. She also thanked Phi Theta Kappa students for organizing the school supplies drive, and faculty and staff for contributing to the drive.

Dr. Edwards introduced a video titled *Penguin Executive Baseball* that featured the college’s Executive Cabinet playing together as a team at Clark’s softball field. She talked about the importance of teamwork and working together to serve our students. Then she introduced her Executive Cabinet team members, who also sported baseball jerseys.



She announced two new funds Clark College Foundation is offering to our students:

- *Clark College Innovation Fund* serves as a catalyst for groundbreaking projects and transformative ideas within our campus community. Examples of potential initiatives include student-faculty research expeditions and the development of cutting-edge curricula in high-demand fields.
- *Clark College Student Success Fund* reinforces the college's unwavering commitment to student success. It supports essential programs and wraparound services that have demonstrated a tangible impact on students' well-being and educational achievements, such as financial advising, childcare assistance, rent relief, emergency grants, the campus food pantry, and transportation aid.

President Edwards discussed the equity-centered strategic plan, its tenets, and values. To learn more, visit https://www.clark.edu/about/governance/strategic_plan/.

Dr. Edwards closed by saying, “Here we are, at the beginning of a new academic year. Next week, we will welcome a new cohort of students who have put their trust in Clark College—and all of us collectively—to help them step onto a path toward succeeding in their academic goals, their careers, and in life.”

She added, “I recently came across a quote by author Michael Hyatt who said, ‘You lose your way when you lose your Why.’ I’m focused on the importance of our work and our ‘Why’ – its value in our lives, for our students, our teams, and our community. Like me, I hope you will remain sure-footed in your reason for being here and that we create a Community of Care for each other. As we begin this year, let’s not forget the joy, passion, and dedication that led us to this work and to Clark College.”

- Details of the Staff and Faculty Award Recipients
- Student Video 1: How do you define Clark College?
- Student Video 2: How does Clark College create a sense of community?
- Student Video 3: How have Clark College faculty and staff supported you?

ASCC 2023-24 President Emma Sturm introduced this year’s student government representatives.

Then she told her own story of being a returning student: “Coming back to Clark College has been one of the best decisions of my life so far. When I came back, I knew I wanted to be involved on campus and participate in clubs, which was something I hadn’t done the first time I had been at Clark.”

Board of Trustees Chair Cristhian Conseco Juarez spoke on behalf of the trustees: "We are committed to being a leader in inclusive excellence that strengthens the Southwest Washington community and is integral to our communities culturally, economic, and educational vitality. The hard and heart work that is done by our leadership team, faculty, and staff—all of you—contributes to making this tenet achievable. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank each of you for all you do and for making Clark College an inclusive and welcoming place for all."



At the end of the program, Oswald led the way for a group photo taken by Jenny Shadley, who was situated in a high lift south of Scarpelli Hall, followed by a box lunch provided by Clark College Foundation in the courtyard by Anderson Fountain.



Opening Day is part of a multi-day orientation and training for faculty organized by the Clark College Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). The keynote address was given on Tuesday, September 19 by emareena danielles, who led work related to reducing harm, rebuilding trust in the educational system, and maintaining the humanity and dignity of students in the classroom. Danielles is the author of Building a Trauma-Responsive Educational Practice: Lessons from a Corrections Classroom.

[Download a copy of the photo here.](#)

