

Make Your Voice Heard: Take Clark's Climate Survey

On January 27, all Clark College employees will receive an email from Shanda Diehl requesting that they complete the Clark College Climate Survey 2015.

The information collected from this survey will allow the College to identify the positive and negative aspects of our climate. The executive leadership is committed to make improvements to climate based on the results of this survey. We cannot do this without your feedback!

The college has a proven track record to make improvements to the climate based on past climate survey results. Based on the 2011 and 2013 climate survey results, administration has made strides to improve in the following areas:

- Shared governance,
- Diversity,
- Communication,
- Compensation, and
- Food service.

Executive leadership regularly reports the improvement activities related to the climate's strengths and weaknesses to the Board of Trustees.

The results of the survey are anonymous. No login is required. Planning and Effectiveness will not report individual responses, nor will it report aggregate responses where individuals may be identified through their responses to demographic questions. Any individual names provided in the open-ended comment section will be removed before publishing the results.

The success of the survey rests with you. Every employee here

at Clark College plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning. The more satisfied employees are with the climate of their work environment and their ability to influence it, the more effective their work becomes to improve student learning.

Because each employee plays a role in student learning, each employee's perspective is equally important, including those of part-time employees, adjunct faculty members, full-time temporary and tenured/tenure-track faculty, classified staff, and administrators. We need everyone's input!

Please look for Diehl's email on January 27, 2015. The survey will be available online; a link will also be available on the ClarkNet homepage. Your time is a guaranteed investment in improving the climate of Clark College.

Presidential Coins



Engineering professor Izad Khormae receiving a Presidential Coin at the State of the College Address.

In 2007, Clark College President Bob Knight introduced a new honor at Clark College: the presidential coin.

The coin is given to faculty and staff members who provide exemplary service to Clark students, the college and the community. The honorees are decided by the president and are kept secret until the names are announced—generally on Opening Day in the fall or during the annual State of the College address.

Five Clark College employees received Presidential Coins during his 2015 State of the College Address on January 15. They were:



Carolyn Johnson

Carolyn Johnson

Carolyn Johnson has worked at Clark College in various capacities for 10 years, the past six of them in Career Services, where she currently holds the position of Employment Specialist & Co-op Coordinator. Her main focus and interests include assisting students with their job search and doing resume critiques. "I have seen her work tirelessly to help students start from a blank page, get the words on paper, develop a thoughtful summary statement, and assist with the smallest details of formatting," President Knight said in presenting her with the coin. "She does this with patience and care for the student."

Knight also cited Johnson's work with international students, helping them to understand American employment practices and job-search strategies.

Izad Khormae

Professor Izad Khormae has taught Computer Science and Engineering at Clark College since 2002. He also has teaching experience at Oregon Institute of Technology, Washington State University, and Iowa State University, as well as more than two decades of engineering and managerial experience at prominent companies such as Hewlett-Packard. He is also the founder of e1 Solutions, a Vancouver-based online business

software solution company.

Professor Khormae also organizes a quarterly exposition where Computer Science and Engineering students can present their ideas for projects, which can range from bark-cancelling noise machines that can mute a neighbor's noisy dog to mobile apps that help students with time management. "He loves working with students and helping them complete their projects," said President Knight.



Karla Sylwester with fellow dental hygiene professor Brenda Walstead.

Karla Sylwester

Professor Karla Sylwester, who is retiring later this year, has been the lead restorative instructor in Clark's Dental Hygiene program for more than 30 years. "She is regionally and nationally known for her teaching skills," said President Knight. "People call from all over the U.S. to get help from her for their board exams."

Sylwester regularly organizes group activities to help boost morale and student success, including her annual Halloween bowling extravaganza and her Monday night "Carving with Karla" sessions to help students pass their restorative board exams. Her no-nonsense demeanor has won her fans among students and

faculty alike. "Because she cares, she's tell you like it is," President Knight said. "I really appreciate that."



Audra Rowton

Audra Rowton

Audra Rowton began working in Clark's Purchasing department 13 years ago. She is now the department's secretary senior. Her work ethic began early: She earned her associate degree in secretarial science at Rio Hondo College in Whittier, California, while also working full-time.

"I love Clark College because I work with a lot of great people," said Rowton. "I really enjoy working with the faculty and being available to help the students with their questions."



Dean of STEM, Peter Williams; Vice President of Instruction Dr. Tim Cook; Jim Watkins; and Director of Facilities Services, Tim Petta.

Jim Watkins

Project Manager Jim Watkins has been responsible for managing and seeing through to completion many of the college's large capital projects, including the Clark Center at Washington State University Vancouver and Clark College at Columbia Tech Center (both of which came in on time and under budget, Knight noted). Currently Watkins is overseeing the construction of the new STEM building on Clark's main campus, after which he will begin planning Clark's new North County campus.

"He has earned a reputation for his thorough knowledge of all aspects of facility planning, design, and construction; his attention to detail; and his problem-solving skills," said President Knight. "He has taken on our biggest capital projects with enthusiasm, perseverance, and a commitment to building the best possible facilities for our students, faculty, and staff."



Sue Williams

Sue Williams

Sue Williams began her career at Clark in 1996 as a Human Resources Assistant Senior before becoming a Recruiting Manager, then Assistant Director of Human Resources, until moving to her current position as Associate Director of Human Resources. "She is the expert in HR policy and practices for the college," said President Knight. "She heads the training, recruitment, hiring efforts and the benefits team of the college efficiently and with a true team spirit."

Knight commended Williams for her "open, honest, consistent and fair" way of handling Classified Staff and Association for Higher Education discipline and grievance issues, and that "she is a huge asset to the college, supporting the students and employees without hesitation and always with a smile."

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Notice to Employees who made Insurance Changes for 2015

Employees who made changes to their health insurance during open enrollment should receive insurance cards by the end of January. If you need medical care before receiving your card, you may have your provider call your insurance plan at the appropriate number listed below:

Medical Insurance Plans

Plan Phone No:

Kaiser Classic

1-800-813-2000

Members of Uniform can create an account in regence.com and print an ID card by visiting the Washington State Health Care Authority's Uniform Medical Plan page. You will need the group number for Uniform Medical, which is 10003948. You will also need your ID number. You can get that by calling 1-888-849-3681.

Click at the top of the page where it says "regence.com Account".

1. Create your account.
2. When you have logged in to your account, you'll be on a page that says "Member dashboard."
3. Click on "My account."
4. Click on "Member ID cards" on the left and your card should pull up.

If you enrolled in Uniform Dental, ID cards are not automatically issued. You can go to Delta Dental of Washington's PEBB services page, create an account, and print a card.

Alternatively, with any dental plan you can also have your dentist's office call the following numbers below to verify coverage.

Dental Insurance Plans	Group #	Plan Phone No:
Willamette Dental PEBB		1-855-433-6825
DeltaCare #3100		1-800-650-1583
Uniform Dental #3000		1-800-537-3406

Maximum Annual Leave Accrual

The amount of vacation leave *classified employees* are allowed to accumulate is limited. Once a year, on each employee's anniversary date, Clark College's computer system checks leave balances and automatically eliminates any hours in excess of 240. For more details refer to your WPEA contract.

The amount of vacation leave that *administrative and exempt employees* are allowed to accumulate is also limited to 240 hours. Any amount in excess of 240 is removed from the system on October 1 each year.

All employees whose vacation balances (shown on paycheck stubs) exceed, or are approaching, 240 hours, should plan ahead with their supervisors to use excess vacation hours before the cut-off date.

For further information contact Human Resources.

SICK LEAVE BUYOUT – Deadline is January 31, 2015

Under the provisions of Administrative Procedure 635.025, the AHE CBA, and the WPEA CBA, eligible employees who have balances of more than 480 hours of compensable sick leave as of December 31, 2014, may choose to convert unused sick leave hours accrued in 2014 to monetary compensation. Any sick leave hours used during 2014 are deducted from the hours that are

available to convert.

Compensation is calculated at the rate of 25 percent of the employee's current hourly rate. Employees who choose to participate in the buyout must be compensated for *all* eligible sick leave hours earned in 2014, not just a portion of them.

Employees considering buyout should be aware that the College offers a VEBA program to retirees which allows sick leave buyout dollars to be transferred to a VEBA account, tax free, to be used to pay for medical expenses during retirement. To be eligible for VEBA an employee must retire from state service and meet other requirements. For more details and eligibility requirements for VEBA contact a benefits representative in Human Resources.

Sick leave buyout application forms are available in Human Resources. The deadline for submitting completed forms is January 31, 2015. Payment will be received on February 25, 2015. Please call **Thao Schmidt, x2628**, or **Guisela Eberle, x2119**, for additional information.

The Race is On!



Members of Team Penguin 2013 show off their tees. (Organizer Joe Jenkins is standing in the center of the front row.) *Photo: Clark College/Alison Pezanoski-Browne*

Once again, academic advisor Joe Jenkins is organizing a Clark College team to run in the next Shamrock Run, held March 15 in Portland. Last year, 96 members of Team Penguin completed one of the courses—which range from a 3.1-mile walk to a 13.1-mile half-marathon run—raising \$480 for the Alex Montoya Scholarship Fund at Clark College Foundation. Interested in learning more? Jenkins has created a Facebook page for team members to share information, schedule training runs, and cheer each other on.

Fall 2014 Classified Staff Excellence Award



Heather White

Congratulations to Heather White, recipient of the 2014 Fall Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award! The following is taken from her award nomination:

Heather White is the Program Support Supervisor for Disability Support Services. She has been with the college since 2002.

Heather provides a tremendous service to the community by facilitating communication between hearing and deaf consumers. Heather interprets and provides accessibility for campus events professionally and holds herself to the high standards of skill that she expects from all of her interpreters. Her performance in her work is the very definition of “excellence.”

Heather always has a great attitude. She is compassionate to everyone who comes in seeking help. She takes the time to know the specific needs of the deaf students and the interpreters, and matches the student’s needs with the interpreter’s strengths. What is important to the student is important to Heather.

Heather works to improve our community in many ways. She is involved with the Sign Language Interpreter Program Advisory Committee at Portland Community College and is on the

Washington School for the Deaf Post High School Advisory Committee as well as the State Deaf Transfer Fair Local Advisory Committee. She is also on the Commencement committee and provides the interpretation at Commencement to make it accessible to deaf students, faculty, staff and audience members. She has taken on the role of placing interpreters for Washington State University Vancouver and Lower Columbia College.

Heather is a wonderful person to work with and for. Whether someone is a new or veteran interpreter, she makes sure we all feel respected and supported. She always listens actively and attentively and looks at each person as an individual.

Congratulations to all of the fall quarter nominees:

Vanessa Meyer: Vanessa is doing a great job in the department. She pays attention to details and maintains the office and its immediate environment, including the mailroom, elegantly. Vanessa is cheerful, polite and shows courtesy to the faculty. When help is needed, she takes prompt action. Her messages are clear and precise. Everything she does is orderly.

Susan Taylor: Susan is in charge of all admissions at Clark International Programs and she always manages to get everything in order to perfection. She wants to help every person she comes in contact with. Whether it is a student or a co-worker or someone outside of our campus, she is willing to take all the time needed to make you feel comfortable and confident. Susan respects everyone. She is always the bigger person and is always polite, no matter what the situation.

Thor Tesdale: Thor works tirelessly to maintain the interior and exterior appearance of the college. He takes great pride in his work and makes sure the job is completed to satisfaction and on time. Thor prioritizes jobs so that the most pressing deadlines are met first. He is very personable and is willing to "bend" his schedule as much as possible to accommodate the needs of other individuals. Thor's calm and respectful personality is a beneficial addition to Facilities

Services. The personal thank-you notes he has received are additional evidence of his high level of service.

The College Community will celebrate all 2014-2015 nominees and recipients at the Annual Ice Cream Social.

The Classified Staff Excellence Award was established in 2005 and recognizes classified staff who have demonstrated exemplary work performance, outstanding customer service, a positive and cooperative spirit, and special achievements or contributions to the college community. Thanks to the support of the Clark College Foundation, each quarter's recipient receives a \$400 cash award.

Important Retirement Plan News



When benefits-eligible employees first enroll in a retirement plan here at Clark, they choose between plan options that are specific to their job classification. Some plans require you choose a contribution rate, and usually that contribution rate is irrevocable. In January, however, some employees (primarily faculty and classified) may have the option to make a change.

FACULTY

In January 2015, faculty employees who are participants in the Teacher's Retirement System Plan 3 (TRS Plan 3) will have the

opportunity to change their contribution rate as they have in past years every January. If you are a TRS Plan 3 member this is the LAST time you will have the opportunity to change your rate without changing employers. You can do this by completing a **TRS Plan 3 Contribution Rate Change Form** and turning it in to HR between January 1 and 31. Forms are also available on line at www.drs.wa.gov or in HR.

Most benefits-eligible faculty members are on the TRS plan or TIAA-CREF. If you don't know which plan you are on check your paystub, which you can access from <https://www.clark.edu/EHT>.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES & OTHERS

Each January, some employees who are in the Public Employees Retirement System Plan 2 (PERS Plan 2) have the opportunity to transfer to PERS Plan 3. Classified employees are most often enrolled in either PERS 2 or PERS 3. Check your paystub if you don't remember which plan you are on. You can transfer if you were hired before 3/1/2002. When you log in to your account in www.drs.wa.gov you will see a message if you are able to transfer. If you transfer, you cannot go back to Plan 2. Also, if you are a TRS Plan 2 member (very few of us are), you have the opportunity each January to transfer to Plan 3. To educate yourself on the differences between the two plans go to www.drs.wa.gov. To transfer to Plan 3, complete the **Member Information Form** and turn it in to HR by January 31, 2015.

TIAA-CREF PARTICIPANTS (Administrative/Exempt and Faculty employees)

We will be offering individual sessions next quarter on January 27, 28, & 29 on the main campus in HR. Watch your email for an invitation and information about how to register.

EMPLOYEES IN A DRS PLAN CLOSE TO RETIREMENT

The 2015 Retirement Planning Seminar Schedule is now available from the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS). If you are a

member of SERS, PERS or TRS and within five years of retirement you may want to register for and attend a seminar. The schedule of seminars in Washington for 2015 is now **online**. If you do not find a seminar near your location or on a date that is convenient for you, you may be interested in viewing our **recorded seminar** online. This seminar was recorded in Wenatchee on August 9, 2014, and is available for viewing at any time.

Farewell, Phil!



Phil Sheehan, *center*, endures some light roasting with characteristic aplomb during his retirement party.

Is there anyone at Clark College who can remember the college without Phil Sheehan? Not likely—the Director of Information Technology, who retired on September 26 after 38 years of service, was walking the campus long before he began working here. In fact, he was a regular presence even before he started taking classes here in 1966: His father, Bill Sheehan, taught psychology at Clark for 24 years, and young Phil was a frequent visitor as a child.

One way or another, Clark College has been part of Phil Sheehan's life—and vice versa—almost since he was born. So it's no wonder that PUB 161 was filled with people wishing him a fond farewell during a retirement party held September 24. The crowd included not just current colleagues, but also former colleagues who had preceded Sheehan into retirement or moved onto other workplaces—a testament to the connections he had forged with so many people at the college over the past four decades.

The speeches began almost immediately, and were long and heartfelt. Clark College President Bob Knight, who often composes "odes" to outgoing employees, recited a truly epic one in honor of Sheehan. "There aren't too many in Penguin Nation history," it read in part, "who have the makings of Phil's pedigree."

After graduating with his Associate of Arts degree from Clark in 1968, Sheehan earned his bachelor's degree in Communications from the University of Washington in 1970, then returned to Clark to earn an Associate of Applied Science. He began teaching Electronics at Clark in 1976; in 1992, he took on the newly created position of Director of Computing Services at the college, which eventually became Information Technology. He earned an M.B.A. from Marylhurst University in 2002. In 2006, he was tapped to serve as Interim Vice President of Administrative Services, a position he held from for more than two years.

“I just can’t think of anyone who has had more of an impact at the college,” said Associate Vice President for Planning & Effectiveness Shanda Diehl before presenting Sheehan with a handmade quilt made of Clark College T-shirts. “In 1992, technology didn’t rule our world. And now it does. I know we all appreciate how meticulous you’ve been.”

“You go into a classroom here and expect the technology to work, and work well,” added Vice President of Instruction Dr. Tim Cook. “And I know that’s in large part because of Phil.”

Sheehan was characteristically soft-spoken and matter-of-fact when taking over the mic. “Clark has been a great place to work,” he said to the room full of well-wishers. “When we started out, we just were using mainframe computers. Personal computers hadn’t even come on the scene. And then we started having networks. So it’s been a real roller coaster. It’s been a great job—never a dull moment.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Exceptional Classified Staff Awards



Melissa Williams receives her Exceptional Classified Staff Award during Opening Day 2014.

Opening Day is traditionally the occasion for announcing the yearly Exceptional Classified Staff Awards, which recognize two classified employees for their contributions to Clark College. Recipients receive a glass plaque and \$1,000, funded through an anonymous donor's contributions to the Clark College Foundation.

For their "exemplary work performance, outstanding service to the college, a positive and cooperative spirit, and/or special achievements or contributions to the college," Enrollment Services Program Coordinator Melissa Williams and Facilities Services Custodian Derald Richards were named the winners of the 2014-2015 Clark College Exceptional Classified Staff Awards.



President Knight presents Derald Richards with his Classified Excellence Award.

Derald Richards, Custodian

Derald Richards was described in his nomination as “consistently performing at a level above and beyond the scope of his job.”

While Richards is naturally a quiet and retiring person, those who work with him regularly at Clark College at Columbia Tech Center have learned to value his cheerful attitude, helpful suggestions, and the way he takes pride in everything that is asked of him. One nominator wrote, “He will drop whatever he is doing to assist staff, faculty, or students. No matter how busy he is, he always greets everyone with a smile and never a complaint.”

Another coworker summed Richards up with just two words: “Super Wonderful!!!”



President Knight presents Melissa Williams with her Exceptional Classified Staff Award.

Melissa Williams, Enrollment Services Program Coordinator

Whether they know it or not, probably every student who registers for classes at Clark has been supported in some way or another by Melissa Williams. Her nomination states that she “consistently goes far beyond what is expected of her job title to see that students, faculty, college staff, and the community get what they need. She earnestly engages in students’ experiences at Clark and has helped to create an environment of focused customer service, communication, and teamwork. Her communication skills have been instrumental in explaining policies and procedures, assisting new staff, keeping her coworkers in the loop when changes occur, and keeping everyone up to date on a daily basis. Her approach, keeping students as the forefront of what we do, has improved and enhanced Clark College’s ability to meet the changing needs of our student population. ... In truth, she is the very definition of an exemplary employee.”

Other nominees for 2014-2015 were: Scott Coffie, eLearning, Information Technology Specialist 4; Rose Gardner, Administrative Services, Office Assistant 3; Silvia Marinova, Business Technology, Instruction & Classroom Support

Technician 2; Vanessa Meyer, Behavioral & Social Sciences, Secretary Senior; Lynn Vanhoomissen, Security & Safety, Program Support Supervisor 1; Jennifer Vernon, Early Childhood Education, Program Specialist 3; and Heather White, Disability Support Services, Program Support Services Supervisor 2.

The Clark College Foundation instituted the yearly Exceptional Classified Staff and quarterly Classified Staff Excellence awards in 1997 to recognize exceptional staff members. Nominations may be submitted by classified, administrative and exempt staff; faculty; students; alumni; retirees; college trustees; and Foundation directors.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley