

Together at last



Three nursing graduates pose for a photo at the 2021 Commencement ceremony.

On June 17, students and faculty lined up in Clark College's Red parking before crossing Ft. Vancouver Way to Christensen Soccer Field for the college's 2021 Commencement ceremony. The ceremony, held outdoors in chairs spaced 6 feet apart, allowed for no guests due to Covid-19 safety precautions. It was, in many ways, a first: The first ceremony on the soccer field, the first without guests (though some proud family members lined up on a hill above the field to cheer on their grads), and the first presided over by Clark College President Karin Edwards.

"It is an honor and privilege to stand here before you tonight," said Dr. Edwards as she addressed the Class of 2021, as well as some members of the Class of 2020 who were making up for missing an in-person ceremony the previous year. "This time last year, we could not assemble on campus or anywhere due to the coronavirus."

Many speakers at the podium remarked on the unique challenges faced by this graduating class: pandemic, quarantine, a massive switch to online learning, and a turbulent environment of political strife and racial inequity.

And yet, as novel as this year's ceremony was in many ways, there was much that remained the same: tassels were turned, caps were tossed, and the look of pride on graduates' faces as they crossed the stage was as incandescent as ever. As is tradition, the recipients of both the Exceptional Faculty Awards and the Community College Presidents' Scholarship in Honor of Val Ogden were announced. All told, more than 500 Penguins marched to receive their commemorative scrolls and celebrated their achievements together.

View more photos of Commencement 2021 on Flickr.

A fully captioned video from the live-stream of the ceremony will be available at www.clark.edu/go/grad by July 3.

A passion for education



Moses Kimeli Korir at Clark College's 2021 Commencement ceremony.

Ever since he was a 10-year-old boy growing up in Kenya, Moses Kimeli Korir dreamed of being a teacher. When he grew up, he traveled 9,000 miles to Vancouver, Washington to fulfill his dreams.

Twenty-two years later, Korir was a step closer as he attended Clark College's 2021 Commencement ceremony to receive his Associate of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE). And during the ceremony, he discovered that his journey had been given a huge forward boost: President Karin Edwards announced that he was that year's recipient of the Community College President's Award, providing full tuition for up to two years to complete his bachelor's degree at Washington State University Vancouver.

"Balancing parenthood, full-time employment, and college coursework is no small feat, but [Korir] has managed to do all of this while maintaining a high academic standard," said Dr. Edwards in her announcement. "He is a great example of our students' resilience and determination."

A musical awakening

Korir's passion for teaching is intertwined with his passion for music—both of which he discovered at age 10.

That was when he saw a piano for the first time, while attending school in a city near Mount Elgon and the Kenyan-Ugandan border. He was intrigued. He wanted to touch it, but children weren't allowed.

Shortly afterward, his family moved to a rural area. He did not see a piano again for a long time.

Finally, he discovered a neighbor who had a piano.

Korir said, "I asked permission to play it, and I taught myself to play."

He already had decided he wanted to be a teacher, but his connection with the piano was another "aha" moment.



Early Childhood Education professor Sarah Theberge congratulates Moses Kimeli Korir at Clark College's 2021 Commencement.

He explained, "When I began learning the piano, that's when I decided I wanted to become a piano teacher. I wanted to help children learn something new."

He bought his first keyboard at age 11. He worked and saved his money to buy his first piano when he was 17. He practiced the piano diligently.

After high school, Korir trained to be an elementary school teacher. He taught for a year. Next, he taught piano with an international organization in Kenya for two more years.

Then he realized the next part of his teaching dream: relocating to the U.S. to earn a teaching degree and teach in an American school. In 2019, Korir came to Clark College through its International Programs and began pursuing a degree in Early Childhood Education.

The right place

Korir said, “I found myself at Clark College. It’s the right place. The ECE path at Clark College is the best. If someone has a passion to be a teacher, it really gives you the background and knowledge to be successful.”

At Clark College, Korir was able to get hands-on experience in his field by working part-time in the college’s Child & Family Studies program, which provides on-campus child care to students, employees, and the community. He enjoyed working with children, and eventually gained enough work experience to gain a position as a full-time teacher in a Head Start preschool classroom for Educational Opportunities for Children and Families (EOCF). He was delighted to find a job that allowed him to continue working with children and more than doubled his work hours, providing enough money to pay his tuition and provide for his wife and two young children.

The new job meant less time for studying, but Korir made it work. He did his homework at night when his own young children were asleep.

Despite the challenges, Korir says his Early Childhood

Education classes at Clark have helped him excel in his preschool classroom.

“All my ECE classes are going deep on how to help children,” he said. “All are applicable in the field. I’m using them every day. Not only at work, but also at home with my own children.”

“He is a student who is hungry for knowledge and who beautifully weaves knowledge from his culture into Western practices, while thinking critically about how these things intersect,” said ECE professor Michelle Mallory. “He brings us all along on that journey.”

A calm presence in classroom



Moses Kimeli Korir brings a broad cultural perspective to his work teaching children.

Wynette Francis, Korir’s supervisor at EOCF, said, “Moses has a calming presence, a steadiness in the classroom. He’s willing to learn and grow. He exudes kindness and respect.”

Dana Taub, center director of EOCF’s program at Ellsworth Elementary, said, “Moses engages with the children. We have a child on the spectrum, and he’s very good with her.”

Noting that the Ellsworth Head Start is an all-day program, she added, "Keeping kids engaged all day, you have to be on top of your game."

Korir said his education at Clark College taught him how to help children cope with their emotions—an important skill, given the challenging situations he can encounter in the classroom.

"For instance, if a child hits another child or hits me, the teacher, I've learned how to calm them down," he said. "I talk with the child and acknowledging the situation. Acknowledge their feelings. Most of the time, it works."

And teaching brings rewards along with the challenges. "I am enjoying my connection with the children in Head Start," Korir said. "They make me smile."

Keeping the dream going

Receiving the President's Award will enable Korir to pursue his plans to transfer to WSU Vancouver and earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Development.

The Community College President's Award in honor of Val Ogden is given each year to a student who has completed their studies at Clark College and is transferring to Washington State University Vancouver. They receive full tuition and fees for two years while they finish their bachelor's degree at WSU Vancouver. The award is traditionally announced during that year's Commencement ceremony. This year, due to COVID-19, the ceremony was held outdoors on the college's soccer field, with only graduates and faculty attending.

Korir's educational goals stretch beyond his bachelor's degree. He plans to earn his master's degree in education and eventually become an instructor at a college or university.

"Education is important to me because it's an equalizer,"

Korir says. “It brings everyone on board whether you’re from a poor background or a rich background.”

And he hasn’t forgotten his piano dream—he hopes one day to open a music production studio to help others share the gift of music. He’ll be sure to let curious children who visit touch the piano keys as much as they want.



Moses Kimeli Korir, *second from left*, poses for a photo with International Programs Associate Director Jody Shulnak, fellow International Student Venant Manirafasha, and International Admissions Manager Csendi Hopp at the 2021 Commencement ceremony.

New welding partnership with

Vigor



Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Clark College has begun a new partnership with industrial business Vigor to provide specialized training for current Vigor employees. Clark College Welding faculty have created a six-credit Marine and Pipe Welding course starting in the summer 2021 term.

Instruction will be delivered in a hybrid format (on-line lectures and in-person labs) to 10 employees for one term. The signed memorandum of agreement (MOA) is the result of numerous conversations between the college and the company on how best to partner to give employees access to specialized training that will help them advance in their careers and fill a critical need in the ship-repair industry.

Caleb White, who heads Clark College's Welding and Fabrication Technology program, met with Vigor leaders and then invited them to campus pre-COVID to observe Clark's welding lab.

White said, “We are excited to work with Vigor as we better understand their specific needs and they can see our capabilities and our applications in working with pressure vessels. We were able to demonstrate that our faculty have the expertise and knowledge to design and facilitate the training that Vigor was seeking to enhance the skillset of their welders. Vigor benefits, Clark College benefits and most importantly our students benefit from the partnership.”

“Vigor is excited to partner with Clark College to train the next generation of welders,” said Hilary Pickerel, Workforce Development Manager at Vigor. “This program will be a great opportunity for current Vigor employees to pursue a career in welding and family wage jobs at places like Vigor. Development opportunities like this are core to Vigor’s Evolution value, which drives our employees to grow and master their skill sets.”

About Clark College

Founded in 1933, Clark College provides residents of Southwest Washington with affordable, high-quality academic and technical education. It is a public community college offering more than 100 degree and certificate programs, including bachelor’s and associate degrees; professional certificates; high school diplomas and GED preparation; and non-credit community and continuing education. Clark serves a wide range of students including high school students, displaced workers, veterans, parents, non-native English speakers, and mature learners. Approximately three-quarters of its students are in the first generation of their families to attend college.

About Vigor

Vigor is a values-driven, diversified industrial business operating in eight locations with 2,300 people in Oregon, Washington and Alaska. Built around a collection of powerful,

unique assets and differentiated capabilities, Vigor excels at ship repair, specialized shipbuilding, and handling important, complex projects in support of energy generation, our nation's infrastructure and national defense. With deep respect for people and the planet, Vigor strives to be a positive, regenerative force for good – environmentally, in the lives of its employees and in the community. Vigor ... Industrial Evolution. For more information, visit vigor.net.

Free bus passes for students



Photo courtesy of C-TRAN

Starting March 1, Clark College students will no longer have to pay for the C-TRAN bus pass called “BackPASS,” thanks to an interlocal agreement between C-TRAN and Clark College.

“We are grateful to our partners at C-TRAN in our shared

efforts to provide for students and improve accessibility,” said Dr. Karin Edwards, Clark College President. “Together we have removed one more barrier to help improve student retention and success.”

The new benefit applies to all enrolled students. Students need to have their Clark College ID card in order to receive the bus pass sticker. Both can be obtained through the Clark College Bookstore.

While many students are taking classes remotely and online during the pandemic, the bus pass allows them unlimited transportation on the C-TRAN’s local service area. “Many of our students rely on public transportation to get to and from work, home and school,” said Josiah Joner, Associated Students of Clark College President. “A bus pass is essential and now it’s available to everyone regardless of ability to pay.”

New faces joining health care workforce



2021 Medical Assistant graduate Cindi Clark is ready for a new career in healthcare.

Twenty-three Clark College students who earned their degree in Medical Assistant celebrated their achievement with family and friends during a virtual Pinning ceremony on January 20.

For student Candi Clark, the Pinning ceremony was the culmination of longtime family support and inspiration. As a teen, Clark attended the Pinning ceremony for her mother, Rhonda Hansen-Boyle, who earned her nursing degree at Clark College and now works at the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

During the virtual ceremony, Clark was surrounded by her supportive family—her mother, father and sister—to celebrate her graduation. She says her family's support was instrumental to her success as she navigated life's obstacles—including a global pandemic—to earn her degree.

"I've always had a calling to help people," she said. "Once I told my mother I wanted to go into the medical field, my mom was 100 percent behind me."

Medical assistants are in demand. Many will join the healthcare workforce in the coming weeks. The Vancouver Clinic hired 19 of the 23 students.

In addition to her supportive family, Clark is thankful for the help and guidance she received from WorkSource, which has partnered with Clark College to help students succeed.

WorkSource uses federal funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and provides critical support and services to workers who want to develop the necessary skills for a good job in high-demand fields such as health care services. Available services include tuition assistance, book allowances, uniforms, supplies, and career counseling.

The program is open to a wide variety of adults including those who have been laid off, displaced, or who are under-employed. Low-income adults and veterans also are eligible.

“Our goal is to get people back to work in high-demand occupations that provide stable and meaningful employment to benefit their families and the community,” said Karin LaValla, WorkSource Health Care Liaison. “By partnering with Clark College, we can integrate our services, working together to provide those wrap-around supports to help students succeed.”

LaValla and her team work directly with Dr. Sarah Kuzera, Director of the Medical Assisting Program at Clark College. They attend the orientation for new students and explain their program. In this year’s class, nearly half of the students were eligible for WorkSource services.

“They receive help with tuition, books, transportation, childcare, financial and job coaching,” said Kuzera. “This has been a stressful year for our students. We’re grateful to have WorkSource at our side as active partners helping our students succeed.”

“WorkSource has been so helpful—a combination coach and fairy godmother,” said Candi Clark. “When I needed help with tuition, supplies—even scrubs—they were there for me. It’s made all the difference in being able to complete my studies.”

WorkSource also helps students find externships and employment. The federal program provides employers up to 50 percent wage reimbursement for a student’s first 30 to 60 days on the job. Candi Clark has already interned at Vancouver Clinic doing patient care and is eager to complete her testing and get to work.

Certified Medical Assistants are in high demand right now, in part because of the pandemic. Medical assistants work directly

with physicians and patients in both the clinical and administrative settings. They maintain the daily workflow of a medical office.

“Our graduates are in high demand,” said Kuzera. “Our program is growing.”

The next class, called a cohort, begins spring term; the first day of classes is April 5. Interested students can learn more on the college’s Medical Assisting page.

During the Pinning ceremony—a tradition in many health care programs—the graduates celebrated one another via Zoom. “It’s harder to do basic things, like draw blood, during a pandemic,” said Candi Clark. “But we figured it out and we can be proud of ourselves that we didn’t give up.”



Rhonda Hansen-Boyle, *left*, congratulates her daughter Candi Clark on graduating from the Clark College Medical Assistant program during a virtual pinning ceremony. Hansen-Boyle is an alumnus of the college’s Nursing program.

Clark’s story came full circle during the Pinning ceremony, when her mother attached the pin to her daughter’s shirt. In the family photo taken immediately after the pinning, Clark proudly wears her pin. Her smiling mother is reaching out to touch her daughter’s shoulder.

“This is so exciting for me and my family,” Clark said. “It’s

been a long road to get here. I can't wait to get to work. Healthcare is kind of the family business. We gravitate to the helping professions. It's where we can make a difference."

For students interested in learning more about WorkSource Washington and its educational training opportunities for job-seekers can visit WorkSource's website.

A welcome sign for Dreamers



Design by Mia Linnik

Digital Media Arts student Mia Linnik's winning design for a Dreamer-friendly logo

Being a college student can be stressful for anyone, but it carries an extra layer of anxiety for the undocumented. Will they be able to access financial aid? Will they be asked for a Social Security Number? Above all, will talking with a professor or staff member compromise their safety and lead to

deportation?

Clark College is taking a new step to reassure these students: It is creating a new logo that faculty and staff can display to show that they are a “safe space” for undocumented students, commonly known as Dreamers.

The concept is much like the “Penguin Pride” sticker unrolled several years ago to indicate safe spaces for Clark’s LGBTQIA+ students. As with that sticker, faculty and staff must undergo specific training before receiving the sticker—in this case, “Best Practices to Support Dreamers,” offered by the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

The project is the result of a collaboration between Digital Media Arts students and BUILD (Broadening Understanding, Intercultural Leadership and Development), a yearlong employee training program that focuses on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

After completing the inaugural BUILD cohort together, **Deena Godwin**, **Marilyn Hale** and **Yusufu Kamara** proposed creating a Dreamers logo for faculty and staff to display on windows, workspaces, or online to indicate safe spaces and community support for Clark College Dreamers. And who better to design such a thing than Clark College Digital Media Arts students?

Collaborating with Digital Media Arts department head **Kristl Plinz** and students enrolled in a beginning Digital Media Arts course fall term, the three BUILD members along with Diversity Outreach Manager **Rosalba Pitkin** helped define the client needs assessment, then participated in a student-led design pitch session via Zoom. After weeks of creative development, 24 student designs were submitted for consideration. A committee of 18 faculty, staff, and students—including Dreamers—voted on the designs.



Runner-up design by Jessica Peters

The winner, student **Mia Linnik**, was awarded a \$500 tuition scholarship provided by Clark College Foundation. Her design features monarch butterflies, which have become a symbol for Dreamers because of their long migration patterns.

Here is Linnik's description of her winning design: "This design incorporates the ideas of community, support and migration. The concept was to create a warm and uplifting feeling with supportive hands and a group of flying monarchs. The Earth communicates the idea that Dreamers are from all over the world, and that we are still a community no matter where someone was born. The hands wrapped underneath the Earth conveys a message of support and care. The monarch butterflies are a symbol for migration. The group of butterflies shows community and togetherness."

One Dreamer commented on the winning design: "It shows me again that Dreamers come from all different backgrounds and we don't have a limit or where our dreams/goals can take us. We are resilient and determined to go anywhere our education goals take us."

BUILD teammate and Economics professor **Yusufu Kumara** said of the winning design: "It takes me back to the first time I came to this country as a Fulbright Scholar in 2006. I met many others like me who came here from all over the world, and we were welcomed and embraced and made to feel like we belonged here by people who barely knew us. Looking at the winning design, I cannot hold back tears thinking back to those days, which considering what is going on now, seems like 100 years

ago. I am filled with joy and very proud to have been a part of something bigger than myself. My wish is that this can carry over to other colleges and universities around the country. Let's make this a national thing."



Design by Sarah Bounds

Runner-up design by Sarah Bounds

Designs by students **Sarah Bounds** and **Jessica Peters** tied for second place. Both students were awarded a \$75 credit to the Clark College Bookstore, also compliments of the Foundation.

It's hard to know how many Dreamer students attend Clark College; by necessity, they often keep their status hidden. This has been especially true in 2020, when the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative has been uncertain. However, the college has made a public commitment to not base admission decisions on immigration status and to not share students' immigration status with others unless required to do so by a subpoena or court order. Furthermore, Dreamers who live in Washington state have an added source of hope: While they are usually ineligible for federal financial aid, they may be eligible for state aid through the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA).

Learn More

- View the Zoom recording announcing the winning designs.
- View all 24 student design submissions.

- Learn more about how Clark College supports Dreamers at www.clark.edu/cc/dreamers.
 - “*Best Practices to Support DREAMers*” will be offered February 8, 2021 from 4 to 6 p.m. via Zoom. Click to register here (must be a Clark College employee to attend).
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Exceptional Faculty Awards



The 2020 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients are, *clockwise from top left*, Dr. Don Appert, Adam Coleman, Molly Lampros, Ken Luchini, Tom Stevenson, and Lauren Zavrel.

Six outstanding members of Clark College’s faculty have been recognized for their contributions to the college with a 2020 Clark College Exceptional Faculty Award.

These awards are presented annually to full-time and part-time faculty members. Nominations can be submitted by Clark College students, faculty, classified employees, administrators, alumni, Board members, and Foundation directors. Traditionally, they are announced during Commencement; because this year's ceremony was online and abbreviated due to the COVID-19 outbreak, they were announced at a later date.

The awards are made possible through an endowed trust fund established by the Washington State Legislature and the Clark College Exceptional Faculty Endowment Fund, which was established in 1993. That fund provides recognition of exemplary work performance, positive impact on students, professional commitment, and other contributions to the college.

This year's Exceptional Faculty members are:

- Dr. Don Appert
- Adam Coleman
- Molly Lampros
- Ken Luchini
- Thomas Stevenson
- Lauren Zavrel

Dr. Don Appert, professor of music



Dr. Don Appert

Dr. Don Appert just celebrated his 30th anniversary of teaching music at Clark College. The director of the Clark College Orchestra and head of the Music Department, Appert has earned many awards over his career, including the prestigious American Prize, the ASCAP Plus, and the Clark County Arts Commission Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award.

“He doesn’t just ‘talk the talk,’” wrote one student in nominating Appert. “He truly embodies everything he teaches his students, from being punctual for class to practicing his instrument every day. He puts his students before himself and goes out of his way to create the best learning experience. He expects a lot from his students, but expects even more from himself.”

Appert earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music, specializing in trombone, from the New England Conservatory. He earned his doctorate in orchestral conducting from the University of Kansas. In addition to his 30 years at Clark College, he has teaching experience at Centre College in Kentucky and at Hampton University in Virginia. As a member of ASCAP, most of Dr. Appert’s compositions have been performed throughout the world. He has appeared as a guest conductor in Japan, Australia, Central America, and throughout Europe. In the United States, he has appeared as a guest conductor of the Vancouver (Washington) Symphony, the University of Texas – Arlington Symphony Orchestra, the Eastern Washington University Symphony Orchestra, and the University of Central Arkansas Symphony.

Adam Coleman, professor of computer technology



Adam Coleman

Adam Coleman's connection to Clark College goes back to his own student years, when he earned his associate degree with a double major in Data Networking and Computer Networking from the college. He then went on to get his bachelor's degree in Computer Technology at Eastern Washington University. He worked at SEH-America before returning to Clark College to teach, and in 2014 was named a tenured member of the college's computer technology faculty.

Coleman has been active in serving on college committees and creating partnerships with local organizations geared toward helping people build careers. He was central in developing and implementing new courses designed to help students earn their Microsoft Technology Associate certification. An avid bike rider, Coleman represented the college in the American Diabetes Association's annual Tour de Cure for years.

"Professor Coleman has been there for me since the beginning of my degree," wrote one student in nominating Coleman. "He has always been attentive. He will sit down with me and work through questions or concerns. He pushes on. He keeps going no matter what."

Molly Lampros, professor of

communication studies



Molly Lampros

Molly Lampros joined Clark College's communication studies faculty in 2010, and over the past decade she has taught classes including Introduction to Mass Media, Interpersonal Communications, and Small Group Communications. She has also given her energy and expertise to enrich the college beyond her classes, serving as a Phi Theta Kappa faculty advisor, giving presentations to colleagues on how to support students in the classroom, serving on scholarship and awards committees, and serving as a faculty mentor for student interns. Additionally, she has worked to create an Open Educational Resource for her classes—essentially, a free textbook that reduces expenses for her students. She is also certified in eLearning and Quality Matters.

"She's fun, upbeat and always brings such a positive energy into class," wrote one student in a nomination for Lampros. "She knows how to engage a class and make people want to participate, and she makes everyone feel included and heard. She makes you excited to come to class."

Lampros earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in communication studies and psychology and her Master of Science degree in communication studies and conflict resolution from Portland State University. She earned her Master of Arts in Teaching in English language education from Pacific University. In

addition to her decade of teaching at Clark College, she has teaching experience at Portland State University and the Oregon Institute of Technology. She also gets to put her communications expertise to work in a practical environment as co-owner of the Helvetia Tavern in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Ken Luchini, professor of mechatronics



Ken Luchini

Kenneth Luchini earned his associate degree in industrial electronics from Diablo Valley College in California. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in industrial electronics and computer technology from California State University Chico, and completed Master Studies in instructional processes in vocational education at the University of California Berkeley Extension. His work experience includes more than two decades as an electrical engineer, as well as 10 years as an electronics technician and eight years as a full-time college vocational education instructor in electronics and industrial automation.

Luchini earned tenure at Clark College in 2016. At the college, he serves as the faculty advisor for the MechaNerds, a student club devoted to mechatronics. He was also co-principal investigator for the Clark College Rural Access Mechatronics Program (RAMP), a program that developed “hybrid”

(combination online and face-to-face) curriculum to serve rural portions of the college's service district through a grant from the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education program.

"The amount of one-on-one time he provides is amazing," wrote a student. "While he is inexhaustible in the classroom, that is not where his day ends. He's always available after hours for discussion/clarification, and prides himself on getting you the right (or best!) answer."

Thomas Stevenson, professor of communication studies



Tom Stevenson

Thomas Stevenson has taught in the Communication Studies department of Clark College since 2010, teaching classes that include Interpersonal Communication, Small Group Communication, and Public Speaking. Before he began teaching, he had a long career as a newspaper reporter and editor.

A graduate of Portland State University, Stevenson earned a Bachelor's Degree in Community Development (with additional focus on Communication Studies) and a Master's Degree in Communication Studies (with additional focus on Conflict Resolution), both with honors. In addition to his decade at Clark, he has teaching experience at Portland State

University, Portland Community College, and Chemeketa Community College.

“I became a much better communicator after I attended both Interpersonal Communication and Small Group Communication classes from Tom,” wrote one student in nomination Stevenson. “His enthusiasm and compassion have a huge impact on students. I am grateful for the conflict-resolving skills I’ve gained to deal when I work in a group and use these skills in my family. Using perception-checking has helped me understand how to solve misunderstandings and conflicts.”

Lauren Zavrel, professor of adult basic education at Larch Corrections Center



Lauren Zavrel

While academia is full of highly specialized fields, Lauren Zavrel has built a career path that might be considered unusual even by the standards of higher education: For the past decade, she has taught in correctional facilities. She has served on the faculty of Clark College’s Adult Basic Education program at Larch Corrections Center since 2016, earning praise from her students for her inclusive, supportive teaching style.

“Ms. Z treats us as students first, not inmates,” wrote one

student in their nomination. “She works with you on an individual level. She has a lot of respect for cultural differences and is aware of how cultural differences might play out in the classroom. She is accepting of all backgrounds. She actively recruits and hires Teacher Assistants from different backgrounds so that her students see themselves reflected in teacher’s assistants.”

Zavrel first discovered a love of teaching as a motorcycle safety instructor and began her academic teaching career in English as a Second Language. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Romance languages and her Graduate Certificate in nonprofit management from the University of Oregon and her Master of Education degree in adult and higher education from Oregon State University. In addition to her time at Clark, she has teaching experience with Lane Community College, Lane County Adult Corrections, Clackamas Community College, Clackamas County Jail, the American Red Cross, and Team Oregon Motorcycle Safety Program. At Larch, Zavrel helped develop the first-ever tutoring program in a correctional facility to be certified by the College Reading and Learning Association. She also saw a record number of inmates earn their GEDs in the 2019-2020 academic year.

**Clark’s All-Washington
Academic Team**



Julisse Hopmann and Kellie Langston
Congratulations to Clark College
students **Julisse Hopmann** and **Kellie Langston**, who were named
to the 2020 All-Washington Academic Team. The students were
recognized for their achievement during the June 10 Board of
Trustees meeting.

Julisse Hopmann is earning her Associate of Applied Science
degree in Business Administration with a Certificate of
Proficiency in business management. She expects to graduate
Winter 2021. Running Start student Kellie Langston graduated
from Clark College in June with her high school diploma and
her Associate of Arts degree. *Read more about Julisse and
Kellie below.*

Julisse Hopmann

Sometimes we find ourselves in over our heads—treading water
and about to go under. But then a stranger comes along at just
the right moment and pulls us to safety. Four years ago,

when Julisse Hopmann was a 25-year-old diner waitress, a customer pulled her from the brink and changed her life.

Julisse explains, "During that period of my life, I was drinking heavily. I wanted help, but I didn't feel I could get the help I needed."

An astute customer approached Julisse, pressed a card into her hand, and told her she had turned her own life around through a 12-step program.

"She probably could smell the liquor coming from my pores," Julisse recalls. "She gave me her card and said she could help me. Sometime later, [I had] one really bad night when I was drinking so much that I didn't think I was going to wake up, and I didn't want to wake up. But I did wake up—so I called her that morning and asked her to help me."

Julisse says, "My life was one big struggle, but at age 25, I turned my life around. That was my second chance. My redemption. Now I ask myself how I can be a beacon of hope."

Today she juggles her classes at Clark, cares for her 3-year-old son, and helps others through her involvement with a 12-step recovery program.

"I try to help others the way I was helped," she says. "Some people just need to get to 12-step meetings. Some people need resources. Alcohol and addiction come with other issues, including mental health issues."

Before her alcohol addiction and recovery, she ran away from home and joined the carnival when she was 18. She had always wanted to travel. Shortly after earning her high school diploma via Clark's Running Start program, she told her parents she was joining a friend and going on the road to work at a carnival, Funtastic Traveling Shows.

"My parents told me they'd do anything they could to stop me,"

Julisse recalls. "So, I left a note on the kitchen counter and left in the middle of the night. I caught up with the carnival at the rest stop near Battle Ground. I left everything behind."

For six seasons she traveled with the carnival to state and county fairs throughout Washington and Oregon. She discovered she enjoyed the work and was good with people and at business management. The carnival owner, Ron Burback, who had earned a business degree at Portland State University, saw something in Julisse and gave her increasing responsibilities. She started out making cotton candy, but by the time she left, she was managing a burger stand and two cotton candy stands.

She recalls the 80-year-old carnival owner telling her, "This carnival is my dream. You need to go back to school and find your own dream."

She doesn't have any regrets about joining the carnival. "I picked up a lot of useful skills: leadership, communication, working with people, learning how to handle stress, working long hours," she says. "When people tell me starting your own company is hard work, I know I can do it."

Five years after leaving the carnival, she's following Burback's advice. She's back at Clark College and pulling straight A's. She's been a Clark student before. She completed her high school diploma as a Running Start student in 2009. After she left the carnival, she enrolled at Clark but didn't stay. "I wasn't in the right mental space to take care of myself," she says. "My drinking picked up. I got depressed. I couldn't do it."

Julisse grew up on Larch Mountain near Hockinson, "way out in the sticks," she says. "I was always in the woods. Nature is healing for me."

After she graduates from Clark, her career goal is to combine her love of nature with her desire to help people struggling

with addiction to find connection.

“I get a lot of personal connection from a 12-step program. Everybody needs connection,” she says. “My goal is to start a nonprofit naturopathic clinic to help people with addictions to connect with each other and with nature.”

Kellie Langston

If there’s a volunteer project to be done, Kellie Langston is likely rolling up her sleeves. During COVID-19 quarantine, the 17-year-old volunteer helped distribute meals to the students at Hearthwood Elementary, where her mother is a teacher.

Kellie has faced multiple challenges: coping with her parents’ divorce, abuse, toxic households, and going back and forth between two families. As a result, she struggled with mental health issues. She chose to use that struggle to guide her volunteerism. During her first two years at Mountain View High School, she volunteered with her school’s chapter of Youth Suicide Prevention Program, which trains youth to recognize the signs, risks, and triggers of suicide and how to get help.

“I wanted to use my story to help other students realize that they aren’t alone,” she says. “I know how someone with suicidal thoughts feels. Students pay more attention when it’s a peer speaking rather than an adult.”

Kellie served as the club’s co-president her freshman and sophomore years. She and fellow club members wrote inspirational chalk messages on the school’s walkways and opened doors for and greeted students when they arrived at school to help them feel welcome and connected.

But what Kellie enjoyed most about being involved in the club was speaking to more than 50 classes and leading discussions

about youth suicide, mental illness, stressors, helpful hotlines and how students could find extra support when they needed it. "Presenting helped me deal with my own mental health problems and my trials and tribulations," she says. "It was powerful and rewarding."

Kellie was invited to participate in a KATU News town hall on youth mental health along with other teen volunteers with youth mental health programs. She had her turn on the air answering students' questions.

During her junior year, Kellie became a full-time Running Start student. She joined Phi Theta Kappa and volunteered for service projects including distributing Thanksgiving meals to more than 100 Clark students in need.

In the fall Langston plans to continue her studies at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. If the campus isn't open for face-to-face instruction due to COVID-19 restrictions, she says she likely will stay home in Washougal and take her courses online. She plans to pursue a degree in education or perhaps business entrepreneurship.

"My dream job is to be a writer and a public speaker," Kellie says. "I hope to inspire youth to overcome their own obstacles."

About the All-Washington Academic Team

In all, 65 students from Washington's community and technical colleges were named to this year's All-Washington Academic Team. Traditionally, students are honored at a reception at South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia in late March, but this year, the COVID-19 outbreak canceled the event.

The All-Washington Academic Team is a program of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year college.

It recognizes academic achievers in the state's community and technical colleges who have demonstrated a commitment to scholastic achievement and service to their college and community. To qualify for the team, students must participate in PTK and fulfill other competitive criteria.

Each All-Washington Academic member receives a Phi Theta Kappa medallion and a \$250 scholarship from KeyBank. The top-qualifying students also will receive scholarships from Washington State Employees Credit Union and the Washington State Association of College Trustees. Additionally, students who choose to attend Washington State four-year colleges and universities are eligible to receive additional scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$12,000.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

A remarkable journey



Evans Kaame

This year's recipient of the Community College President's

Award in Honor of Val Ogden is Evans Kaame, a student who has been through much and traveled far to pursue his educational dreams.

About Evans Kaame

Evans Kaame was born and raised in a small community in northwestern Kenya. After his father died, the family was thrown into hardship and poverty. "I watched my younger siblings crying as my mom left early in the morning and came home at 9 p.m.," he recalled. "We didn't know if we were going to eat at night or not."

When Kaame was in his early teens, he decided to leave home and live on the streets to ease the burden on his mother and siblings. "The street was a new life with so many barriers ... but because tragedies happen in life, I had to do this," he said. "I had no other option. I fought cold nights in the street ... being on drugs and breaking into people's homes. I had to survive. I had no choice."

In 2009, the course of Kaame's life changed once again, when a charity called New Hope Children entered him into its program providing housing and education to street children. At New Hope, Kaame's academic potential became realized. He graduated from high school in 2016 at the top of his class. However, his challenges were not yet over: He could not afford to enroll in college in Kenya.

New Hope's founder, Rachael Swanson, lives in Vancouver and graduated from Clark College. She encouraged Kaame to apply to Clark, and in 2018, after securing a student visa and scholarship funding from Clark College Foundation, Kaame enrolled at Clark as an international student.

Kaame has thrived at Clark College. This past academic year, he has served as student government president. He has run on

the college's track-and-field and cross-country teams. He has volunteered with multiple local organizations, as well as at Clark College's Penguin Pantry and as a Peer Mentor for international students. And he has earned a Grade Point Average of more than 3.9 while doing so.

After graduating from Clark College with his transfer Associate in Arts degree, Kaame intends to continue his studies, focusing on business administration, political science, and comparative religious studies. He hopes to one day create a global initiative focused on leadership and management.

About the Community College President's Award

The Community College President's Award in honor of Val Ogden is given each year to a student who has completed their studies at Clark College and is transferring to Washington State University Vancouver. They receive full tuition and fees for two years while they finish their bachelor's degree at WSU Vancouver. The award is traditionally announced during that year's Commencement ceremony.

Clark's Career Launch putting students to work



An open house for Clark College's Automotive Technologies in 2019 showcased the college's partnership with Dick Hannah Automotive.

The State of Washington has recognized Clark College for its outstanding work in Career Launch programs that support student learning and employment. Two Clark College automotive programs have been endorsed by the state's Career Launch Initiative. That good news was announced April 1.

The **Hannah initiative for Technician Education (HiTECC)** supporting area Honda/Acura, Audi, and the Dick Hannah dealerships and the **Toyota Technician & Education Network (T-TEN)** supporting area Toyota/Lexus have been accepted into the state network of Career Launch programs.

"We have forged dealer partnerships that have helped make our programs successful. Our 'Earn and Learn' model really complements those dealers who have a desire to 'grow their own' technician," said Tonia Haney, head of Clark College Automotive Technologies. "Students completing

these programs will have the experience and certifications to start their career. Most importantly, our graduates will have a job in a dealership that is invested in helping them grow into a successful technician."

Opportunities to expand



Kristin Kepner completed the automotive program in 2017 and is currently working at Toyota of Portland.

This endorsement allows Clark College to apply for additional state grants to invest in equipment and technology. It also helps the programs expand to increase the number of the students and automotive dealership partners.

Both programs train technicians to work in the automotive industry. Clark's students enrolled in a Dealer Ready program participate in paid internships, receive factory certified training, and graduate with credentials from highly respected automotive industry organizations including the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

Students learn current automotive technology by working in a 14,000-square-foot facility on state-of-the-art simulators and late-model vehicles donated by local industry.

“Because of our collaboration with Clark College and the T-TEN program, we are able to strengthen our dealership’s core, position our company for the future, and put our people in a position to win,” said Dan Morton, Shop Manager and Diagnostic Specialist at Kuni Lexus of Portland.

High-Demand Jobs



Governor Jay Inslee meets Clark College Mechatronics students February 20, 2020 at a meeting at SEH America with Career Launch and community partners in Southwest Washington.

Clark’s graduates are in high demand by dealerships and experience an accelerated path to better pay and benefits. Clark College is certified by the Automotive Service Excellence Education Foundation and has been training

automotive technicians for more than 40 years.

Clark now has three programs that are Career Launch endorsed. Clark's Mechatronics program was certified last fall, working with business partner SEH-America. With Career Launch support, additional high-tech companies in Clark County plan to launch similar partnerships this fall.

In February, Governor Jay Inslee visited SEH-America to meet with Clark students and the Career Launch partners to learn more about the program and hear from students.

Students have the benefit of working a part-time job in the automotive industry. The company pays the student's tuition while they attend Clark to earn their certificate or degree. The partnership relies on the college's ability to work with employers ensuring curriculum is relevant to the local industry. It's a partnership that maximizes student success.

"This is a great opportunity for Clark students," said Dr. Sandra Fowler-Hill, Interim President of Clark College. "Working strategically with our industry partners, we can help develop the talent pipeline that will allow local companies to grow and will provide outstanding opportunities for our students to succeed."