

Phi Theta Kappa at Clark College Wins Regional Awards Again

For the second year in a row, the Clark College's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the international honor society for community colleges, was ranked first place in the region and received the Distinguished Chapter Award.

Opening Day 2022

Clark College starts the new academic year with its first in-person Opening Day since 2019.

President Edwards said that although she has been at Clark College for over 2 years, this was the first in-person opening day celebration, and she was loving it!

Celebrating the Class of 2022

Clark College honored its 86th graduating class at the 2022 Clark College Commencement ceremony held Thursday evening, June 16, at the RV Inn Style Resorts Amphitheater. The college conferred over 1,900 degrees and certificates for the next generation of our community's workers, leaders, and scholars.

Phi Theta Kappa earns awards



Anne LeGrave and Jordan Peterson

Clark College's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the international honor society for community colleges, has been hard at work this year. Two of its members have been nominated to the All-Washington Academic Team, and the chapter took top honors in PTK's regional Hallmark Awards.

"I am so excited that our chapter is being recognized at the regional level and I'm looking forward to attending [the annual PTK conference] Catalyst in April to see how we rank internationally," said PTK advisor Darci Feider, who earned a regional PTK Paragon Award for new advisor. The chapter also ranked No. 1 regionally for its college project (supporting a fall return to campus) and distinguished theme, and No. 3 for

its Honors in Action project. Additionally, three officers—Isabel Henkes, Jadyn Pahlka, and Nathan Pham—were recognized with regional awards. See the full list of regional awards [here](#).

In addition to these regional awards, earlier this year Clark College President Karin Edwards was named a PTK Paragon President.

Alpha Sigma Phi (the name of Clark College's PTK chapter) has even more accomplishments to celebrate. Two of its members have been nominated to the 2022 All-Washington Academic Team. On May 12, students Anne LeGrave and Jordan Peterson will represent Clark College at the 25th annual All-Washington Academic Team ceremony, honoring 80 students from Washington State for their academic excellence and community service.

Top students from 33 of Washington state's community and technical colleges will be honored at the annual ceremony, which will be held virtually on Zoom; each receives a medal and a \$225 scholarship from KeyBank and becomes eligible for additional scholarships from private sponsors as well as transfer scholarships from four-year colleges and universities. Gov. Jay Inslee, who will be providing a video speech for the event, will also issue a signed proclamation declaring May 12, 2022 to be All-Washington Academic Team Day.

Read more about both students [below](#).



Anne LeGrave

Anne LeGrave

Anne LeGrave has had her share of challenges trying to pursue her education during the COVID-19 pandemic. A single mother, she has had to take online classes while caring for her toddler daughter. However, she hasn't let those challenges keep her from her dream of earning a college degree in business administration. Described by one professor as a "model student," she continues to earn good grades while working to build a better life for herself and her daughter.

Jordan Peterson



Jordan Peterson

Jordan Peterson is a Running Start student attending Clark College while still high school, with a passion for supporting her community. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced her school to move to remote learning, she realized some of her classmates were having trouble adjusting. She created an online study group that allowed students to connect with each other and overcome technological and academic challenges. Jordan is pursuing a degree in biology as part of her plan to become a doctor.

Dr. Edwards named a Paragon President



Dr. Karin Edwards. *Craig Mitchell* for Clark College Foundation.

Clark College President Dr. Karin Edwards was recently named a Paragon President by the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK). The award recognizes college presidents who have shown support of student success initiatives leading to stronger pathways to completion, transfer, and employment. They have taken an active interest in supporting students, including high-achieving students and developing student leaders on campus.

“This award is especially meaningful to me because I was nominated by our students,” said Dr. Edwards. “Nomination and selection for this award is recognition that PTK and other students know they have my support.”

To be eligible for this award, college presidents and CEOs must be new in their role, having served less than three years. Recipients are nominated by students on their campus and are only eligible to receive the award once. These 20 recipients were selected from among 426 college presidents, chancellors, and CEOs eligible to receive this award.

“These college presidents have students-first leadership styles and have made it a priority to keep students engaged throughout the pandemic,” said Phi Theta Kappa President and CEO Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner. “Their nomination is evidence of the gratitude their PTK students feel for supporting them and students like them—even during the most difficult times.”

All PTK Paragon Presidents will be recognized during PTK Catalyst 2022, the Society’s annual convention in Denver, Colorado, on April 7-9.

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. Learn more at www.clark.edu.

Clark College expressly prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, perceived or actual physical or mental disability, pregnancy, genetic information, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, creed, religion, honorably discharged veteran or military status, citizenship, immigration status, or use of a trained guide dog or service animal in its programs and activities. Learn more at www.clark.edu/nds.

About Phi Theta Kappa

Phi Theta Kappa is the premier honor society recognizing the academic achievement of students at associate degree-granting colleges and helping them to grow as scholars and leaders. The Society is made up of more than 3.8 million members and nearly 1,300 chapters in 11 countries, with approximately 240,000 active members in the nation's colleges. Learn more at ptk.org.

Dr. Edwards named Aspen Presidential Fellow



President Karin Edwards

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program today announced that Dr. Karin Edwards, president of Clark College, is one of 25 leaders selected for the 2021-22 class of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship. This program supports community college presidents in the early years of their tenure as they aim to achieve higher and more equitable levels of student success.

The Fellowship's philanthropic partner is JPMorgan Chase.

The 25 Aspen Fellows, who lead colleges that collectively serve more than 280,000 students, were selected through a highly competitive process. Starting later this year, the Fellows will engage over nine months in residential sessions and virtual learning to develop strategies to meet their goals for student success and equity with data to assess challenges and progress.

"We continue to learn how the best community colleges improve outcomes for students and close persistent race- and income-based equity gaps," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program. "This year's fellows have demonstrated their commitment to achieving excellent and equitable student outcomes, and we are eager to work with them as they join Aspen's network of more than 100 fellows who serve as community college presidents."

"I'm honored to join the 2021-2022 Aspen Institute New Presidents Fellowship, working with 24 other presidents nationwide to increase student success with a focus on equity and excellence here at Clark College and other campuses across the U.S.," said Dr. Edwards. "This is a tremendous opportunity."

As community colleges grapple with the impact of COVID and enrollment declines, turnover among presidents remains high. Aspen is committed to helping prepare the next generation of exceptionally capable and highly diverse leaders through its fellowship programs for new and rising presidents. This new class of Aspen Presidential Fellows is 48 percent female, and 64 percent are people of color. Located in 18 states, their institutions too are diverse, from a tribal college with fewer than 500 students to an urban college that educates more than 35,000 each year.

"Community colleges play a critical role in helping to prepare

young adults and incumbent workers for in-demand jobs of the future,” said Monique Baptiste, Vice President and Head of Jobs & Skills for Global Philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase. “Ensuring that the leaders of these institutions are equipped with the support and training they need to develop equitable student success is an integral part of building capacity over the long-run. JPMorgan Chase is proud to partner with the Aspen Institute to build the next generation of exceptional college leaders as they work to advance the prosperity of the diverse communities and students they serve.”

JPMorgan Chase funds the Aspen Presidential Fellowship as part of New Skills at Work, a five-year, \$350 million investment to prepare for the future of work and meet the growing demand for skilled workers, including support for community colleges and other pathways to great careers and economic mobility.

The 2021-22 Aspen New Presidents Fellows

- **Rebecca Ashford**, Chattanooga State Community College (TN)
- **Seher Awan**, Los Angeles Southwest College (CA)
- **Vincent Bowhay**, Independence Community College (KS)
- **J.B. Buxton**, Durham Technical Community College (NC)
- **Karin Edwards**, Clark College (WA)
- **Angélica Garcia**, Berkeley City College (CA)
- **Veronica Garcia**, Northeast Lakeview College (TX)
- **Tracy Hartzler**, Central New Mexico Community College (NM)
- **Greg Hodges**, Patrick Henry Community College (VA)
- **Stephanie Kashima**, West Valley College (CA)
- **Georgia Lorenz**, Seminole State College of Florida (FL)
- **Kimberlee Messina**, Spokane Falls Community College (WA)
- **Rachel Pokrandt**, Umpqua Community College (OR)
- **Christy Ponce**, Temple College (TX)
- **Omid Pourzanjani**, San Joaquin Delta College (CA)
- **Monte Randall**, College of the Muscogee Nation (OK)
- **Anton Reece**, West Kentucky Community and Technical

College (KY)

- **Ángel Reyna**, Madera Community College (CA)
- **Claudia Schrader**, CUNY Kingsborough Community College (NY)
- **Ricky Shabazz**, San Diego City College (CA)
- **Ron Slinger**, Miles Community College (MT)
- **Willie E. Smith**, Baton Rouge Community College (LA)
- **Russell Swagger**, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College (WI)
- **Justina Wilhelm**, Iñlisagvik College (AK)
- **Jermaine Williams**, Nassau Community College (NY)

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The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices and leadership strategies that significantly improve student outcomes. Through the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the Aspen Presidential Fellowship for Community College Excellence, and other initiatives, the College Excellence Program works to improve colleges' understanding and capacity to teach and graduate students, especially the growing population of low-income students and students of color on American campuses. For more information, visit highered.aspeninstitute.org and follow us on Twitter at @AspenHigherEd.

The Aspen Institute is a global nonprofit organization

committed to realizing a free, just, and equitable society. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States and the world. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the Institute has a campus in Aspen, Colorado, and an international network of partners.

About JPMorgan Chase

JPMorgan Chase & Co. (NYSE: JPM) is a leading global financial services firm with assets of \$3.7 trillion and operations worldwide. The Firm is a leader in investment banking, financial services for consumers and small businesses, commercial banking, financial transaction processing, and asset management. A component of the Dow Jones Industrial Average, JPMorgan Chase & Co. serves millions of customers in the United States and many of the world's most prominent corporate, institutional and government clients under its J.P. Morgan and Chase brands. Information about JPMorgan Chase & Co. is available at www.jpmorganchase.com.

Three new Career Launch programs



The welding technologies program is one of three Clark College programs to receive certification as Career Launch partnerships.

Clark College recently received certification of three new Career Launch programs at the college.

The programs join six other Career Launch at the college. Career Launch is a Washington state program that provides students with opportunities to “earn as they learn” through partnerships between public educational institutions and local employers that provide meaningful, high-quality, and paid on-the-job experience as well as classroom learning.

Clark College’s new Career Launch programs are:

- a partnership with Beaches Restaurant, Bar and Catering to provide students with paid work experience as they earn an Associate in Applied Technology (AAT) degree in Cuisine Management
- a partnership with PeaceHealth to provide students with paid work experience as they earn a Bachelor of Applied

Science (BAS) degree in Cybersecurity.

- a partnership with Madden Fabrication to provide students with paid work experience as they earn a degree in Associate in Applied Technology (AAT) degree in Welding Technologies.

These two programs join Clark College's six already-existing Career Launch partnerships:

- an AAT in Mechanical Instrumentation (part of the Mechatronics program) in partnership with SEH America, Silicon Forest Electronics, Analog Devices, Inc., and Kyocera International, Inc.;
- an AAT in Toyota T-TEN Automotive in partnership with Toyota America Corporation;
- an AAT in HiTECC Automotive in partnership with Dick Hannah Dealerships;
- an Associate in Science – Transfer Track 2 (AST2) in Engineering in partnership with SEH America.
- an AAT in Professional Baking & Pastry Arts Management with Eurobake Bakery
- an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Surveying & Geomatics with MacKay Sposito

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About Career Launch

Career Launch is a program of Career Connect Washington (CCW), an organization founded to bring industry and education together to provide pathways for young people to succeed in college and career. There are already 10,000 students enrolled in Career Launch programs, including Registered Apprenticeships. The recently passed 2021-2023 biennial budget provides additional resources for Career Connect Washington to reach more young people, especially those furthest from opportunity, at a time when they are so impacted by COVID-19.

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.



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."

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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.