

Clark College Theatre Presents: "Dog Sees God"



Clark College Theatre concludes its 2013-14 season with *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead* by Bert V. Royal. A breakout hit when it debuted at the New York International Fringe Festival, this challenging work operates both as a comedic deconstruction of an American icon and as a poignant examination of the hurdles facing modern youth. The production is directed by Theatre Department Chair H. Gene Biby and runs May 2-17.

An "unauthorized parody," *Dog Sees God* imagines characters from the popular comic strip *Peanuts* as teenagers. Drug use, suicide, eating disorders, teen violence, rebellion, sex and sexual identity are among the issues covered in this drama. Royal builds on the foundation of Charles Schulz's iconic comic strip, creating a parody that's also a stand-alone play apt to resonate even with those who belong to that small population segment unfamiliar with *Peanuts*.

"Using iconic cartoon characters as his basis, Royal examines

the big questions about life, love and the pursuit of happiness,” says Biby. “Additionally, he takes a hard look at current societal issues including bullying, drug use, and sexuality. Royal provides a humorous yet often poignant look at our lives through the lens of these much-loved characters.”

The cast includes seasoned actors who are current or former Clark College students: James Martine, Elena Mack, Garrett Dabbs, JD Carpenter, Sam Ruble, Keren Garcia, Danielle Weddle, and Emily Wells. Production includes strong language and adult themes.

Show Dates: May 2, 3, 9, 10, 15, 16, and 17. All show times are at 7:30 p.m. May 10, there will be a 2:00 p.m. matinee.

Ticket Information: Students (with ID) \$9; Alumni (with membership) \$9; Senior Citizens \$11; General Admission \$13. Tickets may be purchased in person at the Clark College Bookstore in Gaiser Hall, online at http://www.clarkbookstore.com/site_theatre.asp, or call 360-992-2815.

If you need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event, contact Clark College's Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP), or visit Gaiser Hall room 137, two weeks before the event.

**Celebrating Spring and
Friendship**

As he introduced the opening ceremonies of this year's Sakura Festival, Clark College President Bob Knight called the 100 shirofugen trees whose blossoming the festival celebrates "a gift rich with symbolism." As dignitaries from both Japan and Vancouver rose to speak, it became clear how rich that symbolism is.

Vancouver Mayor and Clark College alumnus Tim Leavitt said that here, as in Japan, the annual blossoming of the cherry trees has come to mark the beginning of spring, as well as of the historic bonds between Vancouver and Japan. "The City of Vancouver has long had an affinity with Japan," he said. "We've hosted cultural exchanges, art exhibits, and have business relationships with firms headquartered here, including Kyocera and SEH America. We've also enjoyed our formal sister city relationship with Jojo for 18 years. For me, the annual Sakura Festival serves as a poignant reminder of our longstanding friendship and the meaningful opportunities that it provides."

Guests from Japan—including America Kotobuki President John

Kageyama, Joyo Mayor Toshiharu Okuda, Portland Consul General for Japan Hiroshi Furusawa, and SEH America Inc. Executive Vice President Tatsuo Ito—spoke movingly about the role that *sakura* (cherry blossoms) play in Japanese culture. The blossoms' ephemeral beauty, often lasting just a week or two, symbolizes rebirth, transformation, and the importance of appreciating each moment of life. Additionally, as Consul General Furusawa pointed out, cherry trees have been planted in many prominent locations in the U.S. to symbolize friendship between this country and Japan.

“These magnificent cherry blossoms symbolize the close friendship between the cities of Joyo and Vancouver, as well as between the U.S. and Japan,” he said. “May they continue to grow and thrive.”

Also present at the event were members of the Rotary Clubs of both Vancouver and Joyo; Clark College trustees Sherry Parker and Jack Burkman; former Vancouver mayor Bruce Hagensen; Vancouver City Councilmembers Bart Hansen, Larry Smith, and Alishia Topper; and Vancouver City Manager Eric Holmes.

The opening ceremony included performances by Yukiko Vossen on the *koto*, a traditional Japanese stringed instrument, as well as by the Clark College Women's Ensemble. Afterward, entertainment included a traditional dance performance by the Clark College Japanese Club, a drum performance by Portland Taiko, and a kimono fashion show with beautiful kimono modeled by Clark students and staff, as well as by children from Clark's Child & Family Studies program.

Begun in 2006, Clark College's Sakura Festival celebrates John Kageyama's donation of 100 shirofugen cherry trees to the City of Vancouver. The trees were planted on Clark's main campus in 1990; each year, their beautiful pink blossoms transform the campus and prompt a flurry of picnics and picture-taking. Due to rain, this year's festival was held indoors in Gaiser Student Center.

Democracy or Dictatorship?



What makes one country develop into a democracy, and another into a dictatorship? That is the question at the heart of Clark College sociology professor Carlos Castro's upcoming Faculty Speaker Series lecture, "Borderlines: Political and Economic Differences between Nicaragua and Costa Rica."

Costa Rica is one of the richest countries in Central America while its neighbor, Nicaragua, is one of the poorest. Costa Rica has a liberal democratic system, while Nicaragua is more authoritarian. What led these neighboring countries to develop so differently? Castro will offer his interpretation of why two neighboring countries with strong cultural similarities can differ so dramatically.

"Nicaragua and Costa Rica pose an interesting case study," says Castro. "They are so close and yet so different. The lessons to be drawn from them could apply to many nations and regions of the world wrestling with issues related to social, political, and economic development."

A native of Nicaragua, Carlos Castro graduated cum laude from the University of Oregon with Bachelor of Arts degrees in sociology and economics. Continuing his studies at the

University of Oregon, Castro earned a master's degree in public affairs (MPA), master's degree in community and regional planning (MCRP) and a PhD in sociology. He began teaching at Clark College in 2006 and received tenure in 2009. An essayist and poet as well as an academic, Castro's work has appeared in such publications as *Organization and Environment*, *El Nuevo Diario*, *The American Poetry Review*, *La Prensa Literaria*, *Confidencial*, and *Nuevo Amanecer Cultural*. He is currently working on a book comparing and contrasting the development of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, research for which will be the foundation of his Faculty Speaker Series presentation.

This event, which is free and open to the public, is scheduled to take place Thursday, May 8, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., in the Ellis Dunn Community Room (GHL 213). It is being held in conjunction with Clark College's *Celebración de mi Gente*.

Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services (DSS) Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP). The DSS office is located in room 013 in Clark's Penguin Union Building.

About the Clark College Faculty Speaker Series

Established by Clark College with support from the Clark College Foundation, the Clark College Faculty Speaker Series honors individual faculty members and celebrates academic excellence. The series showcases recent experiences that have enriched both the life and teaching of a Clark faculty member. Faculty members share their developmental experiences with the college community—and with members of the community at large—while addressing some of today's most intriguing issues.

Trees and Technology



President Bob Knight receives Clark's Tree Campus USA award from Ben Thompson of the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

On April 9, Clark College celebrated both the natural and digital worlds at its annual Arbor Day event, as it added two new trees to the campus's beautiful arboretum and unveiled a new, student-designed website that uses digital technology to catalog that arboretum. The new online map allows visitors to instantly access descriptions of most trees on campus through their mobile devices.

"This website is a great testament to the value of service learning here at Clark," said Computer Technology Department Chair Robert Hughes at the ceremony, which took place under sunny skies just south of the Chimes Tower. "It showcases the talent of our students, the value of our instruction, and a great part of Clark's visual landscape."

The mobile-friendly online map is the product of work done by students in instructor Gus Torres's spring 2013 Web Design II

class. The students worked with the college's Campus Tree Advisory Committee to identify trees in the campus's extensive arboretum, which includes such notable trees as a six-decade-old Scarlet Oak and 100 Shirofugen blossoming cherry trees donated to the campus by Japanese businessman John Kageyama in 1990. Students then GPS-tagged each listed tree and added it to the map with information about its genus and species. Additional students contributed to the project in subsequent quarters. Hughes was one of the faculty members who helped support the project, along with Torres, Computer Graphics Technology professor Kristl Plinz, and Computer Technology instructor Bruce Elgort.



The online map documents Clark's extensive arboretum.

The event also featured the official bestowing on Clark of Tree Campus USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation for the fourth year in a row. Tree Campus USA colleges must meet rigorous standards in five separate areas to earn this designation. The award was presented by a Washington State Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Specialist Ben Thompson and received by Clark College President Robert K. Knight.

"It's very exciting that Clark College has such enthusiasm for urban forestry," said Thompson, who noted that Clark was helping Vancouver earn a "trifecta" by being a Tree City USA with both a Tree Line USA and a Tree Campus USA. He also noted that Clark's arboretum might benefit students in unsuspected

ways.

“I don’t think it’s a coincidence that so many colleges are located on beautiful campuses filled with trees,” he said. “It puts us at ease, at rest. It makes us ready for learning.”

Clark College Bob Knight agreed. “If our students feel comfortable and our faculty feel comfortable, then it opens up their minds and creativity more,” he said, adding that the new arboretum map was a perfect example of that. “It’s exactly what we want to encourage here at Clark College.”



Children from Clark’s Child & Family Studies program get help on their tree-themed scavenger hunt from, *left to right*, Dean of STEM Dr. Peter Williams, President Bob Knight, and Campus Tree Committee members Tim Carper and Melissa Favara.

Other speakers at the event included Dean of STEM Dr. Peter Williams and Zahid Chaudry, GIS Program Manager of the U.S. Forest Service Region 6. Additionally, two trees were added to the campus arboretum: an Eastern Hemlock and an Eastern White Pine. These are the official state trees of Pennsylvania and Maine, respectively, and are part of an effort by the college to include all 50 state trees in the campus arboretum; with

these two additions, the arboretum contains 39 state trees.

Also present were two classrooms of children from Clark's Child & Family Studies program, who participated in a tree-themed scavenger hunt and received "seed bombs" filled with seeds of indigenous plants.

Photo: Clark College/Hannah Erickson

Trees and Technology



The new mobile-friendly arboretum map pinpoints and identifies trees all over Clark's main campus.

On April 9, Clark College will celebrate both the natural and digital worlds at its annual Arbor Day event, as it adds two new trees to the campus's beautiful arboretum and unveils a new, student-designed website that uses digital technology to catalog that arboretum. The new online map will allow visitors to instantly access descriptions of most trees on campus through their mobile devices.

The mobile-friendly online map is the product of work done by students in instructor Gus Torres's spring 2013 Web Design II

class. The students worked with the college's Campus Tree Advisory Committee to identify trees in the campus's extensive arboretum, which includes such notable trees as a six-decade-old Scarlet Oak and 100 Shirofugen blossoming cherry trees donated to the campus by Japanese businessman John Kageyama in 1990. Students then GPS-tagged each tree and added it to the map with information about its genus and species. Additional students contributed to the project in subsequent quarters, with faculty from both the Computer Graphics Technology and the Computer Technology departments providing guidance and support.

"I look forward to the sight of Clark College denizens and those in the community at large walking across campus consulting their phones and tablets to find the answer to 'What kind of tree is this?'" said Computer Technology Department Head Robert Hughes, who also teaches in the Computer Graphics Technology program. "Project-based client work has been a component of our graphics and web-related curriculum for a long time. These types of experiences are helpful as our students move into the workforce."

Hughes was one of the faculty members who helped support the project, along with Torres, Computer Graphics Technology professor Kristl Plinz, and Computer Technology instructor Bruce Elgort.



Members of Facilities Services proudly display

Clark College's Tree Campus USA award during the college's 2013 Arbor Day event.

In keeping with this year's Arbor Day theme, "Trees and Technology," the event's keynote speech will be presented by Zahid Chaudry, GIS Program Manager of the U.S. Forest Service Region 6. Additionally, two trees are being added to the campus arboretum: an Eastern Hemlock and an Eastern White Pine. These are the official state trees of Pennsylvania and Maine, respectively, and are part of an effort by the college to include all 50 state trees in the campus arboretum; with these two additions, the arboretum will contain 39 state trees.

The event, which will take place at 11:00 a.m. just south of Cannell Library, will also feature the official bestowing on Clark of Tree Campus USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation for the fourth year in a row. Tree Campus USA colleges must meet rigorous standards in five separate areas to earn this designation. The award will be presented by a staff member from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and received by Clark College President Robert K. Knight.

The event is free and open to the public.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Launching a New Appreciation

for STEM



Pam Peiper, a member of U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's staff, gets some hands-on practice with DNA testing.

Flanked by a pair of three-story-high yachts, more than 150 people gathered inside the Christensen Shipyards warehouse in Vancouver to have their DNA tested and taste hot ice cream during an interactive event that demonstrated how Clark College is preparing students for jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Clark College Foundation, in partnership with Christensen Shipyards, held the special event on the evening of March 15. The gathering showed local businesspeople how Clark matches the community's workforce needs with training, education and internships in STEM.



Biology instructor Ryan Kustus describes Clark's participation in Yale University's Small World Initiative, in which students do research that could help discover new antibiotics.

Jim and Kelly Maul, from the Vancouver environmental engineering firm Maul, Foster & Alongi Inc., stood transfixed as Clark engineering student Jesse Bosdell described how a water clock worked and that the clocks were part of a campus-wide competition.

"You've got to put the fun into science and engineering first, and then the passion will come later," said Jim Maul. His wife, Kelly, said she was "fired up to go back to school" after seeing the student demonstrations.

The couple has two daughters whom they hope to steer toward a STEM education. Clark is on their list of higher education options.

Guest Tim Kraft, a civil engineer and principal at the water resources company Otak Inc., said Clark College offers critical programs that aren't available at other community colleges. "I see what Clark does, and it's impressive," said Kraft, who mentors youth with interests in science and engineering in the Southwest Washington area.

Clark College President Robert K. Knight addressed the guests by acknowledging the regional businesses present and how in partnership, they drive the region's economic prosperity. "It's vitally important that the community and Clark College work together to provide an educated workforce to meet the 17,000 jobs that regional economists predict will require education in STEM by 2015," he said.



The event was part of the Ensuring a Bright Future: Campaign for Clark College. Funds raised during the campaign are aimed at enhancing scholarships, faculty professional development, technology infrastructure, STEM, and dental hygiene education.

Lisa Gibert, president and CEO of Clark College Foundation, said it was exciting to see guests clearly fascinated with the student achievements. "This evening brings me so much pride to showcase the great work Clark is doing and how that education translates to jobs in our region and beyond," she said.



Engineering professor Carol Hsu and Clark student Jessica Molner explain to guests how water clocks work. Molner is a member of Clark's NERD (Not Even Remotely Dorky) Girls, a student club devoted to promoting STEM among women and girls.

Guests had the opportunity to learn about water clocks built with coconuts and bamboo; a rocket that is part of a national NASA competition; software for mass-identifying license plates; the weight distribution of a package of Chips-Ahoy! chocolate chip cookies; DNA sampling; and more.

Some of the business community members represented included Portland Plastics, Corwin Beverage, Wells Fargo Advisors, Columbia Credit Union, Legacy Salmon Creek Hospital, Sterling Bank, Mekos Corporation, Silicon Forest Electronics, and SEH America Inc.

See more photos on Flickr

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

This article originally appeared in a slightly different form on the Clark College Foundation news site.

Creating a Home for Student Veterans



Members of the Clark College Veterans Club and Associated Students were on hand to welcome student veterans to the new Veterans Resource Center. Also pictured are Vet Corps Navigators (and VCAS advisors) Tim McPharlin, *far left*, and Josh Vance, *far right*.

Less than four months after the college announced a major grant to help create a Veterans Resource Center, that center held its first public event to welcome student veterans and other members of the college community.

“This is a major milestone for the campus community as we pull

together all the resources we have for veterans for their personal, financial, and educational success,” said Dean of Student Success & Retention Matthew Rygg as he greeted guests to the center’s open house, held March 11.



Clark College Bob Knight called the opening of the Veterans Resource Center “a proud day for Clark College.”

“As a vet myself, it is a proud day for Clark College to be opening a resource center for our student veterans,” said Clark College President Bob Knight, who served more than two decades in the U.S. Army. “To have a space where they can sit and meet with each other and get help and counseling is just a little of what we can do and should do for our veterans.”

Vice President of Student Affairs Bill Belden spoke in gratitude of the donors who had made the center possible. These include Jane Hagelstein, a longtime supporter of Clark’s student veteran community who donated \$48,000 to help construct and furnish the center; the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington, which donated \$30,000 in November to help hire and train staff at the center; and other individual donors who wish to remain anonymous. Belden also thanked Clark College Foundation for its support in making the center a reality.

Tucked into a quiet corner of Gaiser Hall's second floor, the center is not yet complete—there is more furniture and decor in the works, and the college is still in the process of hiring a staff person to run it. But already it offers student veterans a host of amenities. A comfortable couch sits near a bank of computers available for research and paper-writing; private offices allow student veterans to discuss their educational and personal needs in confidentiality. An American flag stands by the doorway.



Clark College Veterans Club and Associated Students president Megan O'Malley thanks Jane Hagelstein, whose donation helped make the Veterans Resource Center possible.

“For me personally, a lot of it is just having that quiet space that [veterans] can come to where they don't have to fight for a computer and where they can feel comfortable,” said Megan O'Malley, who is currently serving in the Army National Guard and is president of the Clark College Veterans Club and Associated Students.

About 700 veterans enroll at Clark College every quarter, about 500 of whom use GI Bill benefits to help pay for tuition, fees, housing, books and supplies. They often face unique challenges when they enter college—everything from

managing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to navigating the sometimes complex paperwork involved in accessing military benefits. And then there are the not-so-unique challenges, like time management and financial instability. The Veterans Resource Center provides veterans with guidance and help for all of those things in one welcoming, centralized location.

“It’s our way of extending a helping hand to our vets and showing that the community they experienced while in the military is still available to them now that they’re out,” said Clark student Josh Vance. Vance, who served 10 years in the Air Force, now works as one of two Vet Corps Navigators in the center, helping veterans connect with services both inside and outside the college. Additionally, the center houses two full-time staff members who previously worked in the Office of Financial Aid; they are charged with helping veterans (as well as their qualifying dependents) access, understand, and comply with their GI Bill benefits. Six work-study employees also work in the center, supporting the staff and helping student veterans with questions. All the center’s work-study students and most of its staff are veterans or active service members themselves, helping to create a comfortable and supportive environment for student veterans.



Student veteran Killian Hough and her service dog, Chekov, visit with Veterans Affairs Program Manager Michael Gibson at the

Veterans Resource Center open house.

Killian Hough, a quiet woman whose service dog bears a sergeant's stripes, came to check out the center after reading about it in her student email. She said she would return, and thought the center was a good step toward serving veterans at the college. "It shows that they're considering veterans, having a place where we can have our thoughts, separate from all the kids," said Hough, who served in the Air Force during Operation Desert Storm and currently serves in the Army National Guard. "A lot of us, both young and old, we've been through a lot, and sometimes we kind of think differently."

The Veterans Resource Center is located in Gaiser Hall room 216. Its current hours during the regular academic year are 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. on Friday. Hours are reduced during breaks in the academic year. Certifying officials are available 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The center's main phone line is 360-992-2073.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. For more photos from this event, visit our Flickr set.

Slideshow: Helping Crestline

Turn the Page

Monday, March 3, four Clark College Bookstore employees visited Crestline Elementary School's temporary location, which was created after the school was destroyed in a fire last year. Their mission: To distribute to the school's kindergarten and first-grade students the 190 copies of the Dr. Seuss classic *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* that the Bookstore had gathered through its annual Seuss-a-Palooza book drive. They also read the book aloud to classrooms as part of Read Across America Day.

"The best part of the event is always seeing the look on the children's faces when you hand them a book and tell them that it is their very own to keep and take home to share with their family and friends," said Bookstore buyer Kaina Barba, who visited Crestline with his colleagues Michael Owenby, Ashley Anderson, and Michal Neubauer. Indeed, many children gasped when they received their books, peppering the Bookstore staff with questions like "how did you get all these books here?" and "I really get to take this book home?"

"The children were absolutely thrilled to receive books of their own," said Crestline Budget Secretary Lori Boyd. "Many of our students come from homes where there is not extra money to purchase books, and having their very own, brand-new book to keep is a special treat."

In addition to the Bookstore's Crestline visit, 56 Clark students participated in Read Across America Day by reading to children at Harney and Fruit Valley elementary schools through Clark's Volunteer & Service Learning program.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Goal Met



WSUV's Butch T. Cougar and Clark's own Oswald the Penguin, as well as volunteers and Student Ambassadors from Clark College, were on hand to greet guests at College Goal Washington. *Photo: Matthew Hunt/Doghouse Graphics.*

On January 26, Clark College hosted a College Goal Washington event in Gaiser Student Center, attracting approximately 250 guests—more than any other such event in Southwest Washington.

College Goal Washington (also called "College Goal Sunday") is a state-based volunteer program that provides free information and assistance to students and families who are applying for financial aid for post-secondary education. Financial aid specialists from both Clark College and Washington State

University Vancouver were on hand to help families fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Volunteers were able to provide assistance in both Spanish and Russian, as well as in English.

The afternoon-long event included three break-out sessions: "Getting to College & Succeeding," "Financial Aid 101," and "Scholarships." Translation into Spanish and Russian was also provided for these sessions.

Financial Aid Program Coordinator Kendra Graham contributed this article.

Why Mentors Matter



Clark paralegal student Letisia Ford, left, introduced

Professor Debi Jenkins at the 2014 winter quarter Faculty Speaker Series presentation.

Most large workplaces today have made some efforts toward encouraging diversity: a training session here, an “awareness day” there. But, as Early Childhood Education and Psychology professor Debi Jenkins argued passionately in her winter quarter Faculty Speaker Series presentation, truly fostering diversity requires a daily commitment by all members of the workforce, not just a once-a-year activity attended by a few.

“The question to ask is: How does the workplace nurture the souls of its diverse employees?” Jenkins said during her lecture, which was held February 13 in the Ellis Dunn Community Room on Clark College’s main campus. More than 40 people were in attendance, including college administration, faculty, staff, and students, as well as members of the larger community.

Appropriately enough, given Jenkins’s topic, she was introduced by a student who came to Jenkins for mentorship at a moment of crisis. Clark College paralegal student Letisia Ford said she first met Jenkins when Ford was referred to her by another professor after experiencing prejudice from her classmates. “I was called certain names, I’ve been singled out and called ‘ghetto,’ and I’ve been told I need to learn how to ‘speak like an American,’” said Ford, who is fluent in both English and Spanish.

Ford said Jenkins was able to offer her empathy, advice—and courage. “She challenged me to not give up,” said Ford. “She gave me the tools to be able to be positive.”



Prof. Jenkins brought in items from her own family's Kwanzaa altar to help illustrate her presentation.

It was a fit introduction for Jenkins's own presentation. Titled "*Habari gani?: Support for a diverse workforce through communities of practice,*" it synthesized research Jenkins is conducting on diverse employees' experiences in the workplace. *Habari gani* is Swahili for 'What's happening?,' a question posed by village elders to younger community members as a way to gauge how they were feeling. "They had the responsibility for the soul of the community," Jenkins said of these elders, who were called the *habari gani menta* ("people who ask what's happening") but today would probably be called mentors.

Habari gani is also the call that begins each day of the African-American holiday Kwanzaa, and Jenkins used the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa to organize her findings and recommendations. She presented both research on academic literature about challenges experienced by diverse employees as well as direct quotes from anonymous employees of diverse population groups whom she'd interviewed. The results were sobering: employees who felt their employers were constantly watching them, waiting for them to fail—or, as one interviewee put it, to "steal staples." Others complained of feeling like

their abilities and contributions were minimized by their supervisors, or of feeling completely isolated at their workplace.

The remedy, Jenkins said, was to use the *habari gani menta* mindset at work, reaching out to diverse employees to ensure they felt both understood and valued. As Jenkins explained, this approach makes everyone responsible for creating a workplace that welcomes diversity—but also lets those diverse employees have an active role in how that happens.

Jenkins cautioned members of dominant groups against the urge to try to position themselves as the “expert” when talking with diverse employees. “‘Oh, my cousin dates a black person,’” she said by way of example. “‘Oh, my cousin dates a lesbian.’ That’s great. [But] we members of diverse groups don’t know what our response is supposed to be to that.”

Better to accept the position of listener, Jenkins counseled, and to ask questions about those diverse employees’ own experiences and viewpoints—and really listen to the answers provided.

Jenkins also urged her listeners to ask themselves questions about what their own individual role was in fostering diversity in their workplace, and what they were doing currently to help foster diversity. “If you have to think about, ‘Hmm, what do I do?’ then you’re probably not doing enough,” she said.

Jenkins, who serves as division chair of Behavioral Sciences and head of the Early Childhood Education Department at Clark College, was presenting research that was part of her doctoral thesis in Higher Education Administration, which she plans to complete next year at Phoenix University in Arizona. Jenkins already holds a Master of Science degree in Psychology from that institution, as well as an Associate in Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education from Clark College and

both bachelor's and master's degrees in Human Development from Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, California. In addition, she is founder of Share the Flame, an organization that offers strategies for personal growth and change through one-on-one coaching, workshops and presentations. In 2009, she received the YWCA Woman of Achievement Award for Clark County.

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Photos: Clark College/Hannah Erickson