

# Overcoming obstacles, pursuing their dreams



Marcell Richard has had to miss out on time with his daughter while his family is separated during COVID-19. *Photo courtesy of Marcell Richard.*

Clark College students shared the obstacles they have overcome during the pandemic during “Student Voices: The Realities of Being a College Student during COVID.” The April 15 Zoom panel was presented by Clark’s Teaching and Learning Center and moderated by Director of MESA Dalila Paredes.

The panel grew from Paredes’ work with MESA, a program that supports underrepresented student populations pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. When she meets one-on-one with a student for the first time, she starts the Zoom session by asking the student how they are doing and what challenges they have faced during the pandemic. Their common struggle is

figuring out how to pay their tuition. But their challenges go far beyond money.

Paredes said, “So many of their stories are incredible. Many students have been furloughed from their jobs not just once, but twice. Many are parents. They are in multiple-generation households and are taking care of their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncle and their children—with very little resources. We have students from war-torn countries, intergenerational households, poverty. Students who have lost their housing. Family members who are ill.”

She added, “I wanted faculty to hear these stories—to hear students say, ‘These are my hurdles. This is how I overcame them.’ For underrepresented students, COVID is just one more hurdle. It’s just one more thing for them to navigate.”

Two of these Student Voices stories are featured below.

## **Pearl Muodzi**



**Pearl Muodzi**, 20, is majoring in biology at Clark with an eventual goal to become a doctor. She had a comfortable life in her native Zimbabwe where she lived with her parents and three brothers. She had a private school education.

But her life changed drastically beginning with her father being diagnosed with a rare type of inoperable cancer. She became his caregiver. Her father died in 2017. A few months later she was walking with her brother when men driving fire trucks and army trucks pulled up and began shooting people.

Muodzi recalled, "I found myself sprinting for my life with my little brother."

Things in Zimbabwe grew increasingly unstable. The president was ousted, inflation was rampant, and life became more difficult. Muodzi, her mother, and younger brother took a two-week vacation to visit family in Vancouver and to get a break from the challenges back home. But the week they arrived in Vancouver, civil war broke out in Zimbabwe. Friends and family in Zimbabwe sent videos showing soldiers killing people just outside the gate of their family home.

Muodzi said, "I cannot begin to explain how shocked I was. We could not go home. Our two-week vacation turned into an immigration situation. When you're going on vacation, you carry a small suitcase and just a few things from home. We left everything behind."

Muodzi's two aunts welcomed her family into their home and helped them. Eventually, her mother found work and they moved out into their own place.

Muodzi said, "There we were, trying to start a new life."

In fall 2020, Muodzi enrolled at Clark College as a full-time

student. To help pay for her education, she works 25 to 30 hours a week at a mail-shipping business.

In Zimbabwe she had just completed her Cambridge exams and already had studied college-level biology, chemistry and math, but those classes were not accepted. She had to start over. Despite the challenges of a new country, new education system, online classes and working, she earned a 3.9 GPA at Clark.

Navigating college in America during a global pandemic has been just one more challenge for Muodzi.

She said, "I'm proud of my growth. I've learned how to tackle challenges differently. To endure challenges. I'm proud of myself for stepping up in my academic life."

Money and time are her biggest barriers.

"Balancing working and going to school is challenging. Most of the time I am tired. I'm not doing as well as I could."

Muodzi said, "A big motivator for me is my parents. I want to be a doctor because I want to find a way to cure the disease my dad had. I also am inspired by my mother who works day and night to provide for us. I see my mother work so hard. I can't take school lightly."

Muodzi's pathway to become a surgeon includes completing two years at Clark, then transferring to WSU Vancouver to earn a bachelor's degree in biology. Next she plans to attend University of Washington Medical School. It's a long road ahead of Muodzi, but she already has come so far.

## **Marcell Richard**



Marcell Richard

**Marcell Richard**, 31, is a full-time Clark College student who is pursuing a biology degree. His eventual goal: to earn a degree in forensic toxicology. Richard is experienced at climbing over obstacles to reach his goals.

He's a first-generation college student raised by his single mother. His father is black; his mother is white. When his mother was diagnosed with cancer last summer and became very ill, Richard stepped up to be his mother's caregiver.

Due to COVID, last year Richard was laid off from his job waiting tables and bar tending. He exhausted his unemployment benefits. He and his partner, also a Clark College student, have a two-year-old daughter. When their lease expired in January, they could not afford their apartment. Richard moved in with his mother, in Gresham, Oregon, to be her caregiver. His partner moved in with her own mother in Vancouver with their daughter. Richard spends the night with his partner and daughter two to three times a week to maintain some continuity in their young daughter's life—and to be a couple with his partner. They are saving their money in the hope of eventually being able to rent their own place and be together again.

Richard diligently is overcoming challenges. He recently

started a work-study job with Clark's Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion as a student consultant. He's a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the honor society for community and technical colleges. Richard is a BUILD Exito student, a MESA student, and is a student advocate for MESA.

He explained, "I'm trying to uplift students and form a community, especially during these times when we're isolated and apart. I've been given an opportunity to go to school and have received scholarships and help. It's time to give back."

Richard listed his biggest barriers: "Trying to take care of my mom and watching her health deteriorate. Also, I'm away from my daughter half of the time. It puts a strain on my relationship with my daughter and my partner. I bury myself in my studies. That's how I cope."

Through all the loss and challenges, Richard said, "Many times, I've tried and failed due to pitfalls, but I've never given up on my education. Despite the difficulties, I've stayed in school. I have a lot more schooling to go. This is the path I chose."

Richard plans to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology, a Master of Science degree in Biology with a minor in chemistry, and eventually apply to medical school to study forensic pathology.

He added, "Everyone has a different narrative. We don't know what other people are going through. Kindness goes a long way."

His advice to fellow students navigating through the pandemic: "If you're like me, you have this sense of imposter syndrome. That you can't do it. But you can do it. Take one leap of faith. Reach out to resources and groups. Make connections. It's all about breaking out of your shell and creating a support system. Get as much tutoring help as possible if you have problems with math like I do. Clark has so many programs

and resources to help students. Use them.”

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## Senator Albert “Al” Bauer 1928-2021



Retired State Senator Albert “Al” Bauer ’55 in a photo taken on Clark College’s campus in 2008. *Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

Longtime State Legislator and Clark College alumnus Albert “Al” Bauer, whose work made a major impact on not just Clark College but on all of Washington State’s educational system, died today at the age of 92.

“Clark College has a heavy but grateful heart today as we mourn the passing of retired State Senator Al Bauer,” said Clark College President Karin Edwards. “We extend our deepest

sympathies to his family. Penguin Nation has lost a great man who dedicated his life to supporting students and our community.”

During his time as a legislator, Bauer championed the cause of public education in Washington State. He conceived of the Running Start program, which allows eligible high school students to attend community college tuition-free. He is also largely credited with making possible the Vancouver location of Washington State University. Indeed, the building at Clark College where the first WSUV classes were taught—before the university’s permanent campus was built—now bears his name. Bauer Hall now houses many of Clark College’s math classrooms, as well as faculty and staff offices.

Yet the man who once was declared the “education senator” by Washington Gov. Gary Locke was himself a high school dropout. The son of a local dairy farmer, he planned to go into farming as well and thought he wouldn’t need an education.

But in 1948, after being laid off from his 80-cents-an-hour cannery job and earning the equivalent of a GED through a correspondence course, Bauer went to Clark College requesting admission as a freshman. He suspected he might be rejected. Instead, the office congratulated him on his effort, allowed him to enroll, and urged him to keep his grades up.

“That was the turning point in my whole life,” he said on the occasion of Clark College’s 75th anniversary. “I attribute whatever I’ve done to my family and to Clark College for encouraging me to keep going.”

Bauer attended Clark for two quarters before leaving to enlist in the U.S. Navy, where he served for six years. While in the Navy, he trained new recruits in navigation. This gave him his first experience with teaching, and when he left the Navy in 1954, he re-enrolled at Clark with the idea of becoming a teacher.



Bauer always praised the education he received at Clark College. During the college's 75th anniversary, he spoke about Herman Foster, who taught German, among other subjects. "He would say, 'Albert, you probably ought to get a little tutoring,'" said Bauer. "Come in at 4 o'clock three nights a week and let's see if we can keep you on track.' He was just a dedicated academic."

After earning a bachelor's degree from Portland State University and a Master of Education from Oregon State University, Bauer took that example to heart during his own 20-year career teaching in area schools.

It was Bauer's teaching career that eventually led to his next career in politics. He became active in the teacher's union and was elected president of the Vancouver Education Association. In 1970, he was elected to the Washington State House of Representatives, where he served for nine years. By his second term, he chaired the Education Committee and began earning a reputation as a creative and committed champion of public education. In 1980, he left the House to run for State Senator, a position that he went on to hold for 20 years.

Bauer brought his experiences as both a student and a teacher to his legislative work around education. It was thinking about how to lower the state's high school drop-out rate, as well as the boredom he felt during his own high school years, that inspired him to propose the Running Start program.

Bauer never forgot his experiences at Clark College and was a staunch supporter of the college that gave him his educational start. He was a longtime donor to scholarships funded through Clark College Foundation. But he never meant or expected to have his name on a building. Bauer's late wife, Pat, and fellow state Sen. Joe Tanner, sought—without Bauer's knowledge—to have a Clark building named for him. He later said he was shocked when he learned his name was emblazoned on Bauer Hall.

This article will be updated with details of his memorial service when they are available.

To read more about Sen. Al Bauer, read this article from Clark College Foundation's *Partners Magazine*.

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## Two Clark students join All-Washington Academic Team



On April 15, two outstanding students represented Clark College at the 25th annual All-Washington Academic Team ceremony, honoring students from Washington State for their academic excellence and community service. Bios for students Erin Lysne and Natalie Worthy appear below.

Top students from 33 of Washington state's community and

technical colleges were honored at the annual ceremony, which was held virtually due to COVID-19; each received a medal and a \$250 scholarship from KeyBank and became eligible for additional scholarships from private sponsors as well as transfer scholarships from four-year colleges and universities. Natalie Worthy was also awarded a \$750 scholarship from Washington State Employees Credit Union (WSECU). Gov. Jay Inslee served as keynote speaker at the event.

The All-Washington Academic Team is a program of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges. It is co-sponsored by the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges, Washington State Association of College Trustees, and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Besides KeyBank and WSECU, scholarships are funded by the Washington State Association of College Trustees.



Erin Lysne. *Photo courtesy of Erin Lysne.*

### **About Erin Lysne**

Erin Lysne, 29, has always loved the outdoors. That passion led her to pursue a career in geology. Despite encountering attitudes from some people that geology is a “man’s field,” Lysne has excelled in her studies, becoming a geology tutor and starting Clark College’s first Geosciences Club. She volunteers with environmental organizations including Friends of Trees, the Vancouver Water Education Resource Center, and

the Cascade Volcano Observatory. She plans to continue her education to earn a doctorate in volcanology.

### **About Natalie Worthy**



Natalie Worthy. *Photo courtesy of Natalie Worthy.*

Natalie Worthy began volunteering at age 8 and hasn't stopped since. She recently earned a silver Congressional Award for her community service and was also named Miss Battle Ground's Outstanding Teen in 2020. She balances her many volunteer activities with being a Running Start student, working part-time, and performing in musical theater. She plans to continue her studies at a university and achieve her lifelong dream of being a professional performer.

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## **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](http://vigor.net).

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## More aid for students in crisis



The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn have caused many financial challenges for Clark College students. Some have lost jobs, while others have found themselves facing steep medical bills. With schools closed for months, many students with dependent children were scrambling to pay

for child care.

That's where Clark College's emergency grants program comes in—and, starting in spring term, it's about to start helping even more students than before.

Soon after the college moved to remote operations in spring 2020, it set up a one-stop clearinghouse to manage all the different sources of emergency funding available to students experiencing a financial crisis. These sources include community organizations, Clark College Foundation, state funding—and the largest source of all, federal funding distributed through the 2020 CARES Act.

By December, however, that CARES funding—about \$2.6 million dollars—was almost exhausted.

“We averaged awarding around \$96,000 a week over the last three terms,” said Sheri Terjeson, who manages the Emergency Grants program. “Our students have faced incredible challenges paying for basic needs like rent and food, not to mention school supplies and health care.”

By December, Terjeson and the rest of the Emergency Grants Committee were desperately trying to figure out how to stretch out the few remaining grant funds to help students in the coming winter term. Fortunately, just before the new year began, Congress passed the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), providing additional funding for students.

“That funding really came just in the nick of time,” said Terjeson. “We all breathed a sigh of relief when we heard the news—and then started running full-speed to get that funding ready for our students as quickly as possible.”

In winter term alone, the college disbursed more than \$635,000 in emergency grants to 668 students. Now, however, with the CRRSAA and the funds in President Biden's COVID relief package



that was signed into law in March, the college expects to award approximately \$1.1 million to students in need during spring term 2021.

Unfortunately, that federal funding excluded certain kinds of students from eligibility, including Dreamer (DACA and/or undocumented) students. But the Washington State Legislature also recently approved new funding for emergency grants to students, including Dreamers. The grants can be applied for through the same Emergency Grant Application as is used for all other emergency funds.

“Really, our message to students is that, if they are worried that financial hardship is going to derail their educations, they should fill out the Emergency Grant Application, and let us see if there’s a funding source that matches up with them,” said Terjeson. “There are a lot of different sources of funding—from the government, from generous donors through the Clark College Foundation, from funding sources dedicated to supporting a particular subset of students like veterans or students of color—and we will do our best to find a source that can be used for that particular student’s case.”

“What we don’t want is for students to stop their educational journeys because of a financial crisis,” added Dr. Michele Cruse, Interim Vice President of Student Affairs. “Once students drop out of college, it can be very difficult for them to come back. We know that a college education can have life-changing benefits for students, their families, and their communities. That is why we are working so hard to keep our students supported during these challenging times.”

And now, thanks to this increased funding from multiple sources, the college will be able to help more students than ever.

If you are a student experiencing financial hardship, please visit our Emergency Grants page to learn how to apply for

emergency assistance.

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# Welcome, Professors!



In 2021, the college welcomed 12 newly tenured faculty member, *clockwise from top left*, Joseph Cavalli (history), Mark Eddinger (mathematics), Amy Ewing Johnson (dental hygiene), Melissa J. Favara (English), Tyler H.J. Frank (career and academic preparation), Doug Harris (music), Christina Howard (biology), Dr. Sarah Kuzera (medical assisting), Dr. Michelle Mayer (mathematics), Kristin Sherwood (College 101), Beth Slovic (journalism), and Christina Smith (English).

Twelve outstanding educators are the newest members of the tenured faculty at Clark College. Joseph Cavalli (history), Mark Eddinger (mathematics), Amy Ewing Johnson (dental hygiene), Melissa J. Favara (English), Tyler H.J. Frank (career and academic preparation), Doug Harris (music), Christina Howard (biology), Dr. Sarah Kuzera (medical assisting), Dr. Michelle Mayer (mathematics), Kristin Sherwood (College 101), Beth Slovic (journalism), and Christina Smith (English) were all granted tenure during the Clark College Board of Trustees meeting on March 10. They will be honored at a college reception later in the spring.

Tenure is awarded by the college's Board of Trustees based on

professional excellence and outstanding abilities in their disciplines. The granting of tenure is based on the recommendations of tenure review committees to the vice president of instruction, which are then forwarded to the president, who presents a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Recommendations are based on self-evaluations, tenure review committee evaluations, student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, and peer evaluations. The final decision to award or withhold tenure rests with the Board of Trustees.

## About the faculty members

### Joseph Cavalli, history



Joseph Cavalli holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Portland State University and a Master of Arts in history degree from University of Portland. He has experience teaching in private high schools in Croatia, Italy, the Kingdom of Bahrain, and Portland, Oregon. He has also taught history at University of Maryland College Park and Mt. Hood Community College, in addition to his experience teaching history at Clark College since 2006.

At Clark College, he has served as program director for the college's Model United Nations team since 2011. He is also a popular instructor in Clark's non-credit Mature Learning program and in 2016 received the college's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award.

"My approach to history is best summed up by the American

historian John Tracy Ellis: 'History is the rediscovery of the past in an enlightened manner,'" said Cavalli. "I am always striving to make history applicable to my students' everyday lives in a way that piques their interest and curiosity."

## **Mark Eddinger, mathematics**



Mark Eddinger earned his Bachelor of Science degree in electronics engineering technology from DeVry Institute of Technology and his Master of Science in mathematics from Western Washington University. He began his career as a quality engineer at a manufacturer of lighting control systems before spending a decade teaching English as a foreign language in Japan. In addition to this work experience, he has taught math at the college level for 11 years.

At Clark College, Eddinger serves on the Math Events Committee, as well as on the team that has developed, improved, and supported a new math pathway for non-STEM majors. He has also designed Canvas courses that promote inclusion and shares them with his colleagues.

"I am committed to being a fellow journeyer with my students as we nurture our growth mindsets, as we learn how to make a more effective effort, and as we develop a passion for more thorough understanding of both math and the many academic disciplines that connect to math," he said, adding, "They all connect."

## **Amy Ewing Johnson, dental hygiene**



Amy Ewing Johnson attended Indiana University's School of Dentistry, where she earned three degrees: an Associate in Science in dental hygiene, a Bachelor of Science in public health dental hygiene, and a Master of Science in education. She has more than 30 years of work experience in dental settings.

At Clark College, Ewing Johnson serves as lead instructor and coordinator for all clinical and lab operations related to junior-year students. She is involved in dental hygiene study clubs, and continues to improve her own learning by attending state and national conferences.

"My teaching philosophy is all about making students feel safe to learn through experimentation, question/answer, as well as confident enough to learn via discussions and active learning opportunities," said Ewing Johnson. "I believe in creating a warm and relaxed classroom community and work to communicate an enthusiasm of support for every student, as they strive to complete their academic goals."

## **Melissa Favara, English**



Melissa Favara earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a creative writing emphasis from Western Michigan University and her Master of Arts degree in English from The Pennsylvania State University.

Favara joined the faculty at Clark College in 2007, first as an adjunct and then as a full-time temporary instructor. She served as the college's Academic Early Warning liaison from 2009 to 2020. She currently assists in training fellow English faculty members on the college's new co-requisite teaching model to serve its most at-risk students; she has previously taught in the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training program and has presented at national conferences on Clark's work in both practices.

Favara described her teaching philosophy as follows: "I meet students where they are and engage them in learning opportunities that honor their experience while offering chances to gain and apply knowledge in ways that they can transfer to new school, work, and life challenges."

## **Tyler Frank, career and academic preparation**



Tyler Frank earned his Associate in Arts transfer degree from Grand Rapids Community College; his Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of Michigan; and his Master of Arts degree in reading and culture from the University of Arizona. He served as a youth development facilitator for the U.S. Peace Corps in Huallanca, Peru, and has previous teaching experience at Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona.

Since joining the faculty at Clark College in 2018, Frank has involved himself deeply in the college's work. He has developed a fully online version of the CAP 42 (Integrated Math and Science) course, developed Open Educational Resources (OER), and led the outcomes assessment for CAP mathematics

faculty. He also leads the “Anti-Racists Curriculum and Instruction” subgroup of the college’s White Anti-Racism Education Employee Resource Group.

“As a teacher, I prioritize creating a safe and welcoming environment for my students, where we all feel comfortable enough to explore new ideas, make mistakes, and share our discoveries and confusions with one another,” said Frank in describing his teaching philosophy.

## **Doug Harris, music**



Doug Harris earned his Bachelor of Music in music education degree from the University of Florida, after which he continued his education at the University of Northern Colorado, earning both his master’s and doctoral degrees in music there. He has directed bands at multiple middle and high schools, as well as at Santa Clara University and Western Kentucky University.

Since joining the faculty at Clark College in 2018, he has led the college’s concert band, jazz band, and pep band, as well as directing its annual Jazz Festival.

“I strive to help each student achieve their potential through positive reinforcement within a rigorous curriculum,” Harris said in describing his teaching philosophy.

## **Christina Howard, biology**



Christina Howard attended Portland State University, where she earned both her Bachelor of Science degree in biology and her Master of Science degree in behavioral neuroendocrinology. She has teaching experience at Portland State University and Portland Community College, and served as Lead Instructor of Human Anatomy and Physiology at the National College of Technical Instruction's College of Emergency Services. She joined the faculty at Clark College in 2018.

At Clark, Howard serves as an event runner for the annual Science Olympiad, as well as co-lead advisor for cadaver dissection.

“My teaching philosophy is to help students find wonder in the biological sciences, specifically the study of the human body,” she said. “I employ an evidence-based and applied-learning approach to engender deep learning and curiosity for the subject matter, so that students can show mastery and better understand how biology applies to them.”

## **Dr. Sarah Kuzera, medical assisting**



Dr. Sarah Kuzera earned her Associate in Applied Science in medical assisting from Springfield College; her bachelor's degree in management from Everest College; her Master of Business Administration degree from Bryan University; and her



Doctor of Education degree from Capella University. She holds certifications through the American Association of Medical Assistants and the American Medical Technologists. She has six years of work experience as a certified medical assistant in a variety of practices and clinics. She has nine years of experience teaching in post-secondary environments.

Since joining the faculty at Clark College in 2017, Dr. Kuzera has served the college in many roles. She developed a Medical Assisting Club at the college and served on a Guided Pathways Pillar One work group. She has served on the Evergreen School District's Medical Science Advisory Board and participated in Clark College's Instructional Planning Team and Curriculum committees.

"I believe that teaching should always be student-centered and I should facilitate the teaching environment," Dr. Kuzera said. "My role as an instructor is to provide students, through my experiences and expertise, the necessary resources for them to produce learning and foster critical thinking. I have always been flexible in my teaching strategies to adapt to the needs of the adult learner."

## **Dr. Michelle Mayer, mathematics**



Michelle Mayer earned her Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. She continued her education at Texas Tech University, where she earned both a master's and a doctorate degree in mathematics. She has previous teaching experience at Texas Tech University and Pacific University.

Since joining the Clark College faculty in 2018, Dr. Mayer has become the course co-coordinator for the applied algebra courses MATH 092 and MATH 096.

“My approach to teaching is to present the material with clarity and accessibility; create an open environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and interacting with me; and to challenge my students to think critically while giving them the support they need to succeed,” said Dr. Mayer.

## **Kristin Sherwood, College 101**



Kristin Sherwood earned her bachelor's degree from Lewis & Clark College and her master's degree in public administration from Portland State University. She has previous work experience as the Community Service Coordinator at Lewis & Clark College and as the Outreach Coordinator for the City of Vancouver's Community Services Department. In 2003, she began teaching in the human development department of Clark College; ten years later, she began serving as the coordinator of the College 101 course, which provides guidance to incoming college students.

At Clark College, Sherwood serves on the Foundation Scholarship Selection Committee, the MyPlan Work Group, and the Guided Pathways Advisory Committee. She also regularly presents in the Student Success Workshops presented through Career Services.

“I aspire to empower, engage, and encourage my students with knowledge and resources to support their academic success,”

said Sherwood in describing her teaching philosophy. “I do this by developing rapport, making sincere connections, providing timely and thoughtful feedback, and maintaining a genuine commitment to my classes.”

## **Beth Slovic, journalism**



Beth Slovic earned her bachelor’s degree from Amherst College and her master’s degree from Columbia University. She has work experience as an editorial assistant at a nonprofit book publisher and as a print journalist at the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, *Willamette Week*, the *Oregonian*, and the *Portland Tribune*. For the past 13 years, she has worked as an occasional stringer for the *New York Times*, and she freelances regularly for *Portland Monthly* and *PDX Parent* magazines. She has previous teaching experience at Clackamas Community College, Portland State University, and the University of Portland.

Since joining the Clark College faculty in 2018, she has become the journalism advisor to the Clark College *Independent*. She also serves as president of the Pacific Northwest Association of Journalism Educators.

“I believe journalism is a framework for talking about skills and concepts that serve students in wider pursuits,” Slovic said of her teaching philosophy. “My students seek answers to questions and communicate across multiple platforms, making them the ‘communicorns’ of the future.”

## Christina Smith, English



Christina Smith earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from McDaniel College and her Master of Arts degree in rhetoric and writing studies from the University of Utah. She has previous teaching experience at the University of Utah.

Since joining the faculty of Clark College in 2015, Smith has served on several committees and work groups, including the Vice President of Instruction Hiring Committee, the Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Hiring Committee, the Tenure Review Equity Committee, the Women's Studies Scholarship Review Committee, the Clark College Forms Committee, and the Student Code of Conduct Policy and Training Work Group. Additionally, she has presented at both the Queer Student Luncheon and the "Discovering College Confidence" workshop.

"My approach to teaching is what I would call adaptive, holistic, and rhetorical," said Smith. "Adaptive teaching means discovering how each student learns and processes information, as this will let me find the appropriate teaching methods and tools to successfully communicate course content. This adaptability also speaks to my holistic approach to instruction. I believe it is important to engage the whole person, not just the student-mind that is present in my course; this means providing supports that address their personal needs while simultaneously challenging them as learners."

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# State of the College



Dr. Karin Edwards

Dr. Karin Edwards, Clark College President, will deliver the 2021 State of the College Address to share the college's vision, challenges, and accomplishments with the larger community. Due to COVID-19 it will be presented online via pre-recorded video.

The video will premiere on YouTube at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 4. The link for the video will be available on the college's State of the College web page, which is posted at [www.clark.edu/campus-life/arts-events/stateofthecollege/index.php](http://www.clark.edu/campus-life/arts-events/stateofthecollege/index.php). During the 2:00 p.m. premiere, viewers will be able to comment and participate in a livestream discussion on YouTube.

Dr. Edwards will speak on how the college has responded to COVID-19, continuing budget challenges, and advancing racial equity in higher education. Two students will also share their own experiences at Clark College: Associated Students of Clark College President Josiah Joner and 2021 Transforming Lives Award nominee Tosha Big Eagle.

The video will run approximately 35 minutes in length.

This event was originally scheduled to take place on January 20 but was rescheduled due to technical difficulties. It is free and open to the public. The video will be captioned and has picture-in-picture American Sign Language interpretation. If you need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event, you should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-992-0901 VP as soon as possible.

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## **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.”

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## Unlocking education for the incarcerated



A Clark College faculty member brings backpacks full of class supplies to students at Larch Corrections Center. Photo courtesy of Hanan Al-Zubaidy

A surge in COVID-19 cases paused Clark College’s programs at Larch Corrections Center in early January. The minimum-security prison had its first positive COVID-19 test in late December. Only a week later, 218 of those incarcerated –about 70 percent of the prison’s residency–had tested positive for COVID.

An immediate shutdown meant Clark College programs came to a



halt. The classroom building was closed. All face-to-face classes were canceled.

“With COVID restrictions, everybody in the education field propelled forward into new methods with online learning, but corrections education took a few steps backward,” said Hanan Al-Zubaidy, Clark’s Director of Education at Larch Corrections.

For security reasons, Larch residents do not have access to the internet, so online education is not an option.

Al-Zubaidy said, “With our classroom closed, we had to figure out a new way.”

As it turned out, the new way was an old way.

## **Making a game plan**

“We came up with a game plan for getting coursework materials to students until they can return to the classroom,” Al-Zubaidy said.

She and Clark instructors –Justin Allen, Lauren Zavrel, Steven Smith and Ron Powers–stepped up to provide educational care packages to those who are enrolled in Clark programs at Larch. They filled backpacks with textbooks, packets of assignments and reading materials, paper, pens and pencils–everything students need to do their work.

They distributed the backpacks with books at the beginning of the quarter. Students work on their Clark projects in their living units and return their completed work in a collection box. Assignments are collected weekly. The assignments are critical to keeping students engaged so they can get back on track once classrooms are open again.

# Adapting during COVID



Hanan Al-Zubaidy helps prepare backpacks for students at Larch Corrections Center. *Photo courtesy of Hanan Al-Zubaidy*

Clark College offers business, GED, and High School Plus (a high school credit-recovery program) courses at Larch Corrections Center. While the classroom facility is closed, students cannot take the GED test, but they can work on recovering high school credits.

Typically, 175 Larch students are enrolled at Clark per quarter, but with COVID social distancing restrictions and rapid releases shortly after the pandemic began, only 68 students are enrolled winter quarter.

Al-Zubaidy, the instructors and staff are working remotely from their homes, but they drive to Larch twice a week to drop off packets of course assignments for students. Located in the remote Cascade foothills in the far east of Clark County, Larch Corrections center is 22 miles—about a 40-minute drive—from Clark College’s main campus.

Sometimes instructors and staff go into the living units to drop off the material. If there are many COVID cases, they dress in PPE or the corrections staff distributes the educational material to students. Due to the number of

active COVID cases, when students' completed papers are picked up, Al-Zubaidy sprays papers with a cleaning solution and leaves them in the classroom for two days before instructors can handle them.

During the COVID lockdown, students who have questions about a particular assignment can message their instructors via an offline messaging system called a kiosk, which Al-Zubaidy described as like a computer, but without internet access. Students also can request tutoring help from a trained tutor if one is living on their floor. (The residents are confined to their own floor.) These paid tutors are also residents at Larch. Some tutors also are Clark students.

Al-Zubaidy said, "We wish we could have a tutor on every single floor, because they are in the units with our students when we can't be there during COVID."

She spoke about the Larch students having to adapt to frequent changes in their housing units during the pandemic and dealing with additional stress from not knowing what is expected of them.

"Our students have been very patient. To help reduce their stress, we've been flexible with assignment due dates. It's important we do what we can do to ease some of that frustration."

## **Looking toward the future**

Al-Zubaidy was the re-entry navigator at Larch before becoming the program director in September. The Clark team at Larch does significant reentry work to prepare students for continuing their education after they are released. They set students up with meetings with colleges across the state. During the lockdown, Al-Zubaidy has been dropping off FAFSA forms and college applications for students.

Because there is no guidebook for running educational programs in a prison during a global pandemic, Al-Zubaidy, the Clark faculty and staff have had to problem-solve each time a new roadblock arises. The deans and directors of all corrections facilities across the state meet weekly via Zoom to share ideas and best practices in corrections education during the pandemic.

Al-Zubaidy said, "It's helpful to be able to bounce ideas off other directors and ask: 'What did you do in this situation? What worked for you?' This group makes me feel supported for all that's going on."



Clark College staff and faculty deliver backpacks full of school supplies to students at Larch Corrections Center, where online learning is not an option. *Photo courtesy of Hanan Al-Zubaidy*

This was the first backpack drop for Clark students at Larch Corrections Center, but it won't be the last. Al-Zubaidy said although it was a lot of work for her team to put together backpacks and folders with student materials and to distribute packets throughout the quarter, it was important to do.

She said, "Students were yelling through their

windows asking us if we were finally bringing their assignments. One student saw our basic skills instructor through the window and began asking how he could turn in his homework and if he could get more assignments to work on while in lockdown. Providing our students with material keeps them on track in their programs, gives them something to do to fill their time, and provides a sense of normalcy during these challenging times.”

Al-Zubaidy’s team isn’t done innovating: Clark College is expanding its educational offerings at Larch to include a degree program in Supervisory Management.

Armetta Burney, Interim Dean of WPTE & STEM, said, “I appreciate our faculty and staff’s leadership and the extraordinary commitment they have demonstrated to support our students at Larch. They have come up with creative solutions. They are deeply invested in our students at Larch.”

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**Clark College removes  
application fee**



Clark College has taken an exciting new step to expand access to higher education. Beginning with registration for the 2021 spring term, the college is removing its admission application fee, making it free for almost all prospective students to apply. (The one exception is International Students, who use a separate admissions process to apply to the college that requires special handling of their F-1 visa status.)

Previously the college charged a \$25 application fee to most prospective students. While this is significantly less than the application fees for most universities and private colleges, it still could prove to be a barrier for some of the college's students. Approximately 40 percent of Clark College students qualify as low-income.

"This has been a complex project that was months in the making, especially given the college's current budget challenges, but I am so proud of our staff for staying focused on serving our students by removing barriers that discourage students from taking the next step," said Dr. Michele Cruse, Interim Vice President of Student Affairs. "Clark College is

committed to being an open-enrollment institution, and this one more big step toward being truly open to everyone in our community.”

“We don’t want students to have to choose between gas money and the admissions fee,” said Josiah Joner, Associated Students of Clark College President. “Money’s tight. We need to make it easier for students to get started.”

The change goes into effect for students applying for spring term, registration for which began on February 9 for most students.