

# Oswald gets a new look



President Bob Knight welcomes Oswald back to campus after a summer makeover. The new Oswald was revealed at Opening Day on September 17.

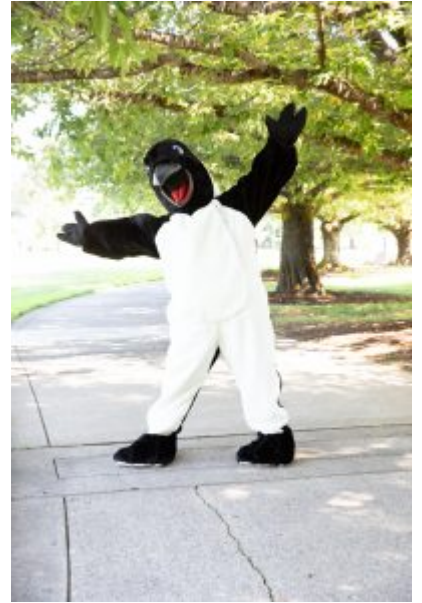
Oswald the Penguin has been Clark College's mascot since the college was first founded—in fact, he was donated by the college's very first student. But that doesn't mean he hasn't changed his feathers from time to time. This fall, Oswald will be receiving his first makeover in 17 years.

"We love Oswald—everybody does," said Athletics Director Chris Jacob. "But the current costume is hard to move in. We needed to help him get into a form that allowed him to cheer at games, to run out onto the court or field, and to be able to interact with people a little more.

"Basically," Jacob added, "we sent Oswald to the gym over the

summer, and he's come back more toned and agile."

Jokes aside, the process of redesigning the beloved mascot required input from many members of the college community, including Student Life, Admissions, Athletics, Communications and Marketing, and the Associated Students of Clark College. Starting in March, the work group discussed how to make Oswald better able to perform his duties as an ambassador of the college at games, special events, and in the community. A key issue was making the costume less burdensome for the students who wear it, while ensuring he remained the fun and approachable penguin that makes him a family favorite at community events.



"With the old costume, the feet were these giant things that made it hard to move without falling over," said Student Life Program Support Supervisor Sami Lelo. "We would always need to have two students available if we wanted Oswald at an event—one to wear the costume, and the other to lead Oswald around by the hand so he didn't bump into things or trip."



Oswald's new

costume can be put  
on without help.

The new costume's feet slip over the tops of the performer's own shoes, allowing them to wear athletic shoes for easier movement. Its arms and legs are also easier to move, allowing for better mobility—no need for a guide anymore. Also, the new costume can be donned without assistance, making it easier for Oswald to appear at events all over campus and the community.

The new Oswald will get his official reveal at the college's annual Opening Day employee event that kicks off the new academic year, on September 17. At that point, the old costume will be officially retired and put into storage.

Cartoon images of the old Oswald, complete with tie and running shoes, will still appear in print and online media ... for now.

"It's inevitable that, once people get used to Oswald's new look, they're going to want to have images of him available to put on invitations, flyers, etc.," said Clark College Senior Graphic Designer Jenny Shadley. "We'll be ready for those requests when they start to come in."

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

---

## **Clark's Pharmacy Tech ranked No. 1**





Pharmacy Technician students in the Columbia Credit Union Simulation Pharmacy

Clark College's Pharmacy Technician program has been ranked No. 1 in the nation by *Washington Monthly* in its annual "College Rankings" issue.

The issue, which is published in September, traditionally ranks four-year colleges and universities based on a range of criteria. However, this year marks the first time the Washington, D.C.-based magazine ranked vocational certificate programs, using data from the U.S. Department of Education's "gainful employment" database.

Clark College's Pharmacy Technician program is based in the college's location at Washington State University Vancouver. Students learn in the program's state-of-the-art Columbia Credit Union Simulation Pharmacy, as well as in



externship placements with local employers. Local employers were also consulted in building the program's curriculum, so that graduates learn the skills needed in today's health care marketplace.

"We were already confident of our Pharmacy Technician program's reputation in this region, but are tremendously proud to see its excellence recognized on a national level," said Brenda Walstead, dean of business and health sciences. "Our faculty work hard to create a program that produces the kind of skilled technicians that modern pharmacies need."

The full *Washington Monthly* article may be viewed at <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2018college-guide>.

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

---

# Many Clark College offices closed to the public Aug. 21-22



Many offices and student services at Clark College will be largely closed to the public for a collegewide staff training on Tuesday, August 21 and Wednesday, August 22. Classes will continue as normally scheduled. Additionally, Child & Family Studies (child care), the Clark College Bookstore, all libraries (including Cannell and the iCommons at CTC), and Tutoring Services will remain open. However, most other business offices (including Cashier's Office, Human Resources, Facilities Services, etc.) and student services (including Advising, Financial Aid, Student Life, etc.) will be closed all day for both days.

---



# Teaching accessibility



Bruce Elgort

Clark College computer technology instructor Bruce Elgort recently received grants from the national organizations Teach Access and the Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT), as well as the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), to incorporate accessibility principles into computer science curriculum.

Elgort was just one of 13 faculty members across the nation to receive this grant and the only instructor from a community college to do so. He plans to use the funds to enhance his current curriculum so that it expands its teaching of Universal Design principles.

“We teach accessibility in our HTML classes—you know, ‘add a description to all your images so people using screen-reader technology know what they are,’” Elgort said. “It’s time to start taking accessibility further. It’s time to create forms for people with cognitive disabilities, or physical disabilities that go beyond visual impairment.”

The topic is deeply personal for Elgort, who is visually impaired himself. “I am a user of accessibility,” he said. “I am someone who is challenged as a user of technology.”

Funded by Teach Access and PEAT, the Teach Access Curriculum

Development Award totals \$5,000. The SBCTC is matching that grant with an additional \$5,000. Elgort plans to use the funds to develop curriculum enhancements over the summer, and have them ready to share with other faculty in the fall.

“We’re extremely fortunate to have a faculty member like Bruce working at Clark College. His strong commitment to ensuring everyone can use technology is commendable. With the Teach Access and PEAT grant, which SBCTC is matching, Bruce can impact an entire industry by making sure future web developers are equipped to develop accessible technology as soon as they enter the field,” said Jess Thompson, program administrator for accessible technology initiatives at SBCTC.

## **About Bruce Elgort**

Bruce Elgort began his career as an electrical engineer and then moved into the world of enterprise information technology. He was responsible for designing and developing collaborative computing solutions to serve global businesses. Elgort also started one of the largest open-source communities for IBM’s Collaboration Software division. He is a popular speaker at conferences and industry events. As an entrepreneur, he created the award-winning IdeaJam idea-management software. Elgort began teaching at Clark College in 2013 and has earned the college’s prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award in 2014 and 2018.

## **About Clark College**

Located in Vancouver’s Central Park and serving more than 12,000 students per quarter, Clark College is Southwest Washington’s oldest public institution of higher education. The college currently offers classes at two satellite locations: one on the Washington State University Vancouver campus and one in the Columbia Tech Center in East Vancouver. Additionally, its Economic & Community Development program is housed in the Columbia Bank building in downtown Vancouver.



## **About Teach Access**

Teach Access is a unique collaboration among members of higher education, the technology industry and advocates for accessibility, with a shared goal of making technology broadly accessible by infusing accessibility into higher education, with enhanced training and collaborations with people with disabilities. Teach Access includes members from leading tech companies, academic institutions and disability advocacy organizations and other non-profit institutions. Teach Access operates as a fiscal sponsorship fund at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF). To learn more visit [teachaccess.org](http://teachaccess.org) or email [info@teachaccess.org](mailto:info@teachaccess.org).

## **About the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges**

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is led by a governor-appointed board and provides leadership, advocacy, and coordination for Washington's system of 34 public community and technical colleges. Each year, about 374,000 students train for the workforce, prepare to transfer to a university, gain basic math and English skills, or pursue continuing education.

---

## **Penguins shine**



The skies above Sleep Country Amphitheater filled with heavy gray clouds on June 21, but nothing could dampen the bright spirits of the more than 700 students participating in Clark College's 2018 Commencement ceremony.

Members of the college's 82nd graduating class encompassed every imaginable background, age bracket, and life goal. Approximately 75 of them wore the light blue robes that indicated they were celebrating their high school diploma or GED completion; another two dozen or so wore the white robes reserved for those receiving their Bachelor of Applied Science degree. The class included a record 476 Running Start graduates who were graduating from high school and college simultaneously; meanwhile, other graduates were old enough to have children of their own—and, in at least a couple cases, dressed them in matching royal-blue robes so that they could cross the stage as a family.

All told, more than 2,300 degrees and certificates were

conferred upon the Class of 2018.

As the ceremony began, however, it became clear that certain themes held these graduates together. When President Bob Knight asked all graduates who had worked while attending Clark to stand, almost the entire class rose to their feet. When he next asked the first-generation college graduates to rise, the result was only slightly less unanimous.



Valeria Flores

Student speaker Valeria Flores spoke about her experiences as the first in her family to attend college. "Being a first-generation student in college is like learning a foreign language," she said. "You don't become fluent overnight. I had no idea where to begin. I did not know that I could apply for FAFSA. I didn't know how to register for classes, or even how to *find* my classes."

Flores went on to say that she did eventually find her path through college, and that working at the college's child care facility had led her to decide on a career as a speech pathologist, a path that would require her to continue her education to a master's degree.

The ceremony's keynote speaker, retired Evergreen Public Schools superintendent John D. Deeder, spoke of his own experiences as a first-generation college student. "I recall that 51 years ago tonight, I finished my junior college career in Couer d'Alene, Idaho," he said. "It was a big deal, because

I was the first in my family to ever graduate beyond high school. It opened so many doors—I can't tell you how important this night is for you."



John Deeder

Deeder also spoke about the importance of education in broadening people's perspectives. "I really believe we need to be more tolerant, we need to be more inclusive, we need to be better listeners, we need to be accepting of differences in every way—cultural, religious, political, social, etcetera," he said. "If we do that, this society and the world that you're going to lead in the next few years will be a better place, and that is critical."

As is traditional, the ceremony was occasion to announce two major awards. Early in ceremony, President Knight announced the names of the recipients of the 2018 Exceptional Faculty Awards: computer technology instructor Bruce Elgort; English as a Second Language professor Sara Gallow; music professor Richard Inouye; mathematics professor Dr. Kanchan Mathur; and addiction counselor education instructor Don Wissusik. Later during the ceremony, he announced that graduate Grace Moe was the recipient of the 2018-2019 Community College Presidents' Award in Honor of Val Ogden. This annual scholarship is given to a Clark College graduate who demonstrates leadership potential, a commitment to community service, and academic achievement. The scholarship award provides full-time tuition at WSUV and is renewable for one additional year, essentially



providing full tuition to complete a bachelor's degree.



Grace Moe

Thanks to the Clark College Foundation, scholarship finalists Chad Lipka and Mckenna Pozsgai also received \$1,000 each to attend WSUV.

The ceremony ended with the traditional sounding of bagpipes. And as for those looming storm clouds? By the time the last graduate had crossed the stage, they'd broken up to reveal patches of golden sunshine. And when the graduates left the amphitheater and headed toward what their new futures held, they walked into the last golden rays of a gentle sunset, with the cheers of family and faculty greeting them on every side.

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. To see more photos, visit our Flickr album.*

---

# **‘I did it!’**



Alina Gonzalez, *left*, and Madison Moore, *center*, stand with a classmate as they wait to receive their high school diplomas at Clark College’s 2018 Commencement.

At 22 years old, Madison Moore was ready to receive her high school diploma at Clark College’s 82nd Commencement ceremony—beyond ready, really. She knew that not having graduated from high school had held her back in job searches and other opportunities.

Now she was just moments away from entering the Sunlight Supply Amphitheater so she could walk across the stage and be recognized for her achievement. There was only one thing to fear: “As long as I don’t fall, I’m good,” she said, laughing.

“If you do, it’s OK,” said her friend Alina Gonzalez. “You just get up and keep going.”

It was apt advice for this graduating class. Each robed figure waiting to enter the amphitheater—more than 700 in all—contained their own story of resilience and endurance, whether they were earning a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree.

Gonzalez had needed both qualities herself to earn her second high school diploma, this time in a second language (her first had been earned in her native Mexico). “The English was hard for me,” she said. “I can tell you, there were times when I cried, it was so hard. But you know, I think I’m going to be graduating with a 4.0 [GPA].”

Not only that, both of her daughters would also be graduating that night with associate degrees that they had earned through Running Start. More than 470 members of the Class of 2018 were graduating through that program, which allows high school students to earn college credit and, in some cases, enter four-year universities as rising juniors.



Emily Hain, who began taking classes at Clark while still in high school, and Elizbeth Browne, who simply said it had “been a while” since she was last in school, take a moment to rest before graduating at Clark’s 2018 Commencement.

Not everyone took the fast lane through college, however. For Maegen Davidson, whose graduation cap was adorned with the message “It always seems impossible until it’s done,” the journey had taken four years. Because she’d had to work while attending Clark, she’d needed extra time to earn her associate degree in Medical Office Technician and certificates in Medical Reception and in Medical Billing and Coding—and, technically, she still had a couple more classes to take over the summer, though she was being allowed to walk with her classmates.

“It feels so good to know I’m *right* there,” she said, pinching her fingers together to show how close she was to earning her degree.

“Yeah, she’s only been posting about it on Facebook like 20 times a day,” cracked a friend standing beside her.

“Well, hey!” laughed Davidson. “Some things are worth making a big deal about!”

For others, simply *getting* to college had taken a while. Originally, Elizbeth Browne had come to Clark just to learn some American Sign Language to help her in her work with toddler-age foster children. But once at the college, she decided instead to pursue an associate degree in Early Childhood Education. Now she was wrestling with how to get her honors and Clark tassels to both hang from her mortarboard cap. After graduation, she said, she planned to become a “traveling granny nanny.”

Browne was not the only graduate who was older than what’s frequently considered “college age.” Wayne Schmasow was a Vietnam veteran earning his fourth college degree, this one in network technology. “I think I might come back to earn a certificate in Network Plus,” he added.





Daughter-and-father team Edna Stultz and Wayne Schmasow get ready to graduate at Clark's 2018 Commencement.

Beside him stood his daughter, Edna Stultz, who was earning her associate degree in pharmacy technician leadership. Both had woven feathers into their regalia to honor their Native American heritage. As she stood waiting to graduate, Stultz was approached by her daughter, who took a string of beads from her to give to a friend who was also graduating.

For Stultz and Schmasow, Clark truly was a family affair: Schmasow's wife (and Stultz's mother) Anna Schmasow works at the college and earned her degree there as well. Stultz said that along with her family support, she appreciated the support provided by her program's cohort model.

"Having the same classmates for three quarters was amazing and helpful," she said. "Everybody wanted you to make it."

Stultz also appreciated the opportunities to put what she was learning into practice, both through Clark's simulated pharmacy and through externships. "The hands-on experience, that was a fantastic opportunity," she said.



Raymond Gutierrez, *far left* poses with some Diesel Technology classmates at Clark College's 2018 Commencement.

Raymond Gutierrez also enjoyed getting to learn on-the-job skills and work with cutting-edge equipment in his Diesel Technology program. He fondly recalled the wireless helmets he and his classmates had worn that allowed them to communicate while working on heavy equipment.

Gutierrez came to Clark after the birth of his child. "I had a baby, so I had to start thinking about a career," said the former auto-body and -paint worker. "I went to diesel because so many things are diesel these days, there are lots of jobs."

Gutierrez said he appreciated how much his family supported him while he pursued his degree. "I'm going to be the first in my family to graduate from college, so they were really behind me," he said. "It became a priority for me."

Now that he was almost about to walk across the stage as a Clark graduate, Gutierrez said, "I feel good. I feel happy. You know, people say, 'Oh, if I can do it, you can do it,' and you think 'whatever,' right? But you know what? I did it!"

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. For more photos from the 2018 Commencement, see our Flickr album.*

---

# A student leader with community roots



Grace Moe is congratulated by President Bob Knight at the 2018 Commencement ceremony.

This year's recipient of the Community College Presidents' Award in Honor of Val Ogden was Grace Moe, who graduated with an Associate of Arts transfer degree. "She has shown an exemplary work ethic, participating in student government and volunteering with community organizations while maintaining a high GPA," said Clark College President Robert K. Knight in announcing the scholarship during the college's 2018 Commencement ceremony.

Moe came to Clark College through the Running Start program, which allows high school students to earn college credit. A first-generation college student, Moe has excelled at Clark, serving as the president of the Associated Students of Clark College (student government) and earning a cumulative GPA of 3.82. In addition, she has volunteered with Friends of Trees, the Clark County Food Bank, and New Heights Church.

Moe, 17, says that this scholarship will allow her to complete her bachelor's degree in finance and marketing in two years, when she will be 19 years old; because her parents are unable to financially contribute to her college tuition, without the scholarship she would have had to attend WSUV part-time in order to earn enough to cover the costs. After earning her bachelor's degree, she intends to spend a year volunteering with her church before beginning a career at a local business.



"My roots are definitely ingrained in this area," said Moe, who has lived in Vancouver her whole life. "I plan to give back to the community that raised me, by working in the area so that I can continue to volunteer and serve for Vancouver."

Because Moe was already sitting on stage during the Commencement ceremony in her capacity as ASCC president, Knight invited her to the podium as he announced the scholarship. "You've been a wonderful leader and I know we're going to hear a lot more about you," he said.

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley.*

---



# Exceptional faculty



The 2018 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients are: computer technology instructor Bruce Elgort; English as a Second Language professor Sara Gallow; music professor Richard Inouye; mathematics professor Dr. Kanchan Mathur; and addiction counselor education instructor Don Wissusik.

During the 2018 Commencement ceremony, President Robert K. Knight announced the names of the recipients of the 2018 Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards. The awards are presented annually to full-time and part-time faculty members. Nominations can be submitted by Clark College students, faculty, classified employees, administrators, alumni, Board members, and Foundation directors.

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

This year's Exceptional Faculty members are:

- Bruce Elgort, computer technology instructor
- Sara Gallow, English as a Second Language professor
- Richard Inouye, music professor
- Dr. Kanchan Mathur, mathematics professor
- Don Wissusik, addiction counselor education instructor

## Bruce Elgort



If there is one word to describe computer technology instructor Bruce Elgort, it is probably “connected.” He stays connected to his students through email, social media, and online tools. “Never in the history of teaching has a professor been more available to his students,” raved one student in their nomination.

Elgort is also connected to local industry through his long career in tech, which includes high-level positions at major companies like Sharp and Underwriters Laboratories, as well as launching his own successful software company. And he creates connections in his community, regularly attending (and sometimes speaking at) conferences and inviting others to come with him. “I can’t count the number of events I’ve attended because Bruce posted something on Slack or Facebook—or gave me a digital nudge saying, ‘You should go to this!’” wrote another student.

Small wonder, then, that Elgort has gathered a significant fan base at Clark since beginning to teach here in 2012. Indeed,

this is his second time winning an Exceptional Faculty Award at the college; the first time was in 2013. Elgort says that, since then, he's become involved in numerous Clark committees and initiatives. In other words, he's become more, well, *connected* to Clark—and clearly Clark is all the stronger for it.

## Sara Gallow



When Sara Gallow began her teaching career, she imagined it would be a way to travel the globe. But one day, while teaching English in Japan, she read a newspaper article about a program in the U.S. teaching English to immigrants and refugees; instantly, she realized that was what she wanted to do. Within a year, she was living in Portland and teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) at area colleges, including Clark.

Clearly, it was the right fit: Gallow was hired full-time in 1999 and has been here ever since. Currently, she serves as chair of the Transitional Studies division and has been described as the division's "consistency, vision, driving force, and backbone." Under her leadership, Transitional Studies has redesigned all of its ESL and basic education courses, as well as developed a new program serving inmates in the Clark County Jail.

Throughout her career, however, Gallow's first love remains teaching. "My students teach me strength, persistence, and humility," she says. "I've had doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, and musicians in my classes. I've had students who weren't able to finish elementary school and others who have escaped war. All of them came to this country for a better life, and for one quarter they trusted me to teach them English and help them reach their goals—it's truly an honor to be their teacher."

## Richard Inouye



It's hard to imagine Clark College's exemplary concert band and jazz ensemble without their fearless band leader, music professor Richard Inouye. Since 2007, Inouye, who is retiring this June, has not only led the band but also raised its musical reputation in order to recruit top notch student musicians to attend Clark. Additionally, he has directed Clark's annual Jazz Festival, which has grown to attract more than 50 middle and high school bands from around the region.

Inouye has a long professional career in music, beginning with teaching band in Colorado public schools and followed by a 20-year career in the United States Air Force Academy Band as a saxophonist, music director, and band leader. He also served on the music performance faculty at The Colorado College for eight years before moving to Vancouver to begin teaching at Clark.

"Although Rich can come across as stern and direct, he's also got a soft heart, often coaching and mentoring students on his own time and with his own resources," wrote one nominator. "He believes in giving students second chances, within parameters designed to help them become successful."

"He wants us all to be responsible, of course, but he will lend a hand whenever needed," wrote one student. "He continues to push us to be the best we can be—in band and outside of band."

## Dr. Kanchan Mathur





“I enjoy everything about math,” says mathematics professor Dr. Kanchan Mathur. “The clarity of thought it brings, the seemingly unrelated quantities that come together in a beautiful formula, the numerous applications of it, the elegant proofs of theorems, the history behind some of the most important developments—and, well, numbers in general.”

Dr. Mathur is all too aware, however, that not all her students feel the same way. “Math should not be intimidating, but it is, sadly,” she says. A tenured professor at Clark since 2008, she helps students overcome their math hurdles by making herself available outside of the classroom for one-on-one help with tricky concepts—and with other challenges they face.

“In addition to her dedication to our students’ academic success, she also genuinely care about their well-being,” wrote one nominator, point out that Dr. Mathur stocks a variety of snacks in the Mathematics Department office for hungry students.

In addition to her teaching duties, Dr. Mathur has served as the Mathematics Department’s scheduler. She also works with local schools to hold several math competitions and to get young students excited about mathematics and higher education. And she’s teamed up with other math faculty on many of the department’s math-themed events, like its annual Pi Day celebration and its “Read a Math Book to your Child” campaign on Bring Your Child to Work Day.

**Donald Wissusik**



For almost two decades, Donald Wissusik has made the long commute to Vancouver from Newberg, Oregon, to teach evening classes to students in Clark's Addiction Counselor Education (ACED) program. That he has done so on top of his full-time job as a clinical services manager in addiction medicine for Kaiser Permanente speaks to his dedication to teaching.

"The wisdom from his many years of experience, along with his gentle and kind demeanor, makes him very approachable and makes us students feel valued," wrote one nominator. "Don has made a huge impact on me, and I will carry his words of wisdom with me into my professional career."

Wissusik's own career is coming to a close, as he is retiring from Clark this year. (He retired from Kaiser in 2016.) But his legacy will continue at Clark through his many years as a volunteer on the ACED's advisory committee, which helps ensure the program's outcomes match employers' needs.

"I am very honored and amazed to receive this award," Wissusik says. "I have tried to be guided by being mindful of how I wanted to be mentored when I started this career over 40 years ago."

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

---

# New bachelor's degree announced



On Wednesday, May 23, Clark College received approval from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the college's regional accrediting body, to begin offering its third baccalaureate program: the Bachelor of Applied Science in Human Services (BASHS).

The BASHS degree program is designed for students who already hold an associate degree in Addiction Counselor Education or a related field, allowing them to advance their careers in the

behavioral health professions. Sample courses include Multicultural Counseling in Human Services; Trauma, Grief, and Loss; Practical Family Therapy; and Systems and Social Justice.

Full-time students can complete this 90-credit program in two years. Designed with working professionals in mind, classes are taught in-person two evenings a week, with electives being offered online. The program also provides all the educational requirements necessary to sit for the Washington Department of Health Chemical Dependency Professional (CDP) exam.

“This degree program answers a need we’ve heard from local employers, who want professionals who are cross-trained in mental health and addiction,” said Dr. Marcia Roi, BASHS Program Director and head of the Addiction Counselor Education department at Clark College. “It also serves the needs of our students, who historically have not had a straightforward pathway to a bachelor’s degree that also meets the educational requirements of the CDP exam.”

The college is currently taking applications for fall 2018, the first term the new degree will be offered. For more information or to apply, contact Marcia Roi at [mroi@clark.edu](mailto:mroi@clark.edu). Information is also available online at [www.clark.edu/cc/bashs](http://www.clark.edu/cc/bashs).

---

## **Penguins hiring Penguins**





It's become an annual tradition: hundreds of Clark College students showing up to meet potential employers as graduation looms near. But while Clark's Career Fair has become a familiar part of the academic cycle, not everyone realizes how many of those employer booths are staffed by former Clark students—some of whom attended the fair themselves, once upon a time.

Leslie Matheney, an HR generalist for Burgerville, remembered attending the fair before graduating from Clark in 2008 with her associate degree. "At the time, I wasn't really ready for it," she said, noting that she had just been looking for part-time work as she geared up to transfer to WSU Vancouver, where she earned a bachelor's degree in human resources and personal psychology.

Matheney, who was at the May 3 fair to recruit seasonal crew members and managers, said she felt being a Clark graduate helped her when she did start looking for full-time, permanent

employment. "I think, especially because I was looking for a position at a local company, it was good," she said. "I think that Clark is really well respected in this area."



Sgt. Fred Nieman stands with a colleague at the Clark County Sheriff's Office table.

Sergeant Fred Neiman, who was recruiting for the Clark County Sheriff's Office, said that his workplace also values the diversity of Clark's student body. "What we look for is folks who have a variety of education and background," he said. "You deal with all kinds of people in public safety. So to have a background of diverse education and experiences, and knowing how to interact with lots of different kinds of people—that's valuable."

Neiman has a long personal connection with Clark College. Not only did he attend classes here in the late 1970s, but he came back to work as its Director of Security for eight years. Clark is also where he met his wife, and their three children all earned associate degrees from the college.

"It's a wonderful institution," he said. "I enjoyed attending here when I was a student, and I enjoyed working here when I was an employee."

Vicky Barnes also has a child who graduated from Clark. She

earned her own associate degree here—with highest honors, no less—while he was still a teen.



Vicki Barnes

“I often got mistaken for a professor on campus,” laughed Barnes, who was at the fair to recruit for Woodland Public School, where she is the HR coordinator and district office manager. Barnes said she enjoyed her time as a Penguin, even though it meant long days—she attended Clark while working at WPS. “This is something I wanted to show my kids—that you can be a life-long learner.”

“It definitely benefited me in HR,” she said. “You learn how to engage with people, how to get out of your comfort zone.”

As if to prove this, she quickly turned to a woman eyeing her display of job descriptions to answer questions about open positions in the district.

According to Clark College Employer Relations Specialist Scott Clemans, 15 of the 110 employers who registered for this year’s fair indicated that they would have Clark College alumni present.

“Smart companies send alumni to events like these because they’re great role models and mentors for current Clark students,” Clemans said. “The alumni show current students what’s possible after college, and give great advice on how to

achieve it. And of course, they relate to Clark students on a level that other recruiters simply can't."

Clemans added that the fair was an impressive success. "Not only did we have 110 employers registered to attend—the maximum the O'Connell gym would hold—but we had to create a wait list for interested employers and probably had about 20 more who were interested but contacted us too late to register," he said.

This year's job fair included not only employer booths but also a photo booth where visitors could get a professional portrait taken for their LinkedIn accounts. Leading up to the fair, Clark College Career Services also hosted numerous workshops and events, as well as the annual Career Clothing Closet, to prepare students and guests for the day. The fair, which is open not just to Clark students but to all job-seekers in the community, saw 923 visitors this year—up 15 percent from last year's attendance.

*Top photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. Photos of Nieman and Barnes: Clark College/Hannah Erickson.*