

# Fall begins at Clark



Students find their way on the first day of the 2017 fall term.

Monday, September 25 marked the start of the 2017 fall term at Clark College.

While official numbers are not available until after the 10th day of class, the day began with 12,055 students enrolled, slightly down from last year's Day One enrollment of 12,099. This reflects trends seen throughout the statewide system and through much of the country as well.

Some specific segments saw increases. Enrollment in eLearning (or online) courses grew this year by 18 percent, with more than 4,700 students taking advantage of those courses. Clark College's Running Start Program also grew again this year by 2 percent to just over 2,100 students, making it the largest

Running Start program in the state.

Other highlights for the quarter:



■ Cuisine instructor Aaron Guerra looks ready to start fall term.

This quarter sees the relaunch of the college's culinary programs, including Cuisine Management and Professional Baking and Pastry Arts. Students entering the program this quarter will be the first to study in the college's McClaskey Culinary Institute, which is still in the final stages of construction and is expected to open to the public by the end of 2017. When it opens, it will be the only nonprofit culinary institute within 120 miles. Clark's Culinary Arts – Cooking/Restaurant Management program was put on hiatus in 2013 in order to modernize the curriculum and facilities. The Culinary Arts – Baking/Bakery Management program was put on hiatus in 2015, when it was determined that the program could not continue running while the culinary facilities were being remodeled.

- The Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management program, which launched January 2017, begins its first full academic year at capacity with 35 students. This is the second bachelor's degree offered by Clark, and more

are expected to be announced by the end of this academic year. In response to strong demand, a second cohort of the BASAM program will launch in January.



The BAS in Applied Management program's newest cohort poses with administrators, faculty, and campus resource specialists during their orientation session.

The college's new Rural Access Mechatronics Program (RAMP) launches this quarter, providing opportunities for students in underserved parts of the college's service district to gain in-demand skills without relocating to urban areas. Made possible by a grant from the National Science Foundation, this two-quarter program allows students to earn a certificate in mechatronics through primarily online classes that require them to come to Clark's Columbia Tech Center location in East Vancouver on Saturdays only. As with the BAS in Applied Management, this program is at capacity, and faculty are considering adding an additional cohort in winter term.

- The college's new Penguin Pantry has opened on the

college's main campus, providing students with free food and hygiene supplies, as well as some clothing and school supplies. Almost half of Clark's student body is classified as lower-income, according to data from the college's Office of Planning & Effectiveness.

*Photos: Campus photos by Clark College/Jennifer Shadley, BAS in Applied Management photo by Clark College/Jennifer Lea.*

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## **Marking the path for a new year**





Clark employees enter O'Connell Sports Complex to attend Opening Day.

Fall was in the air on Monday, September 18. Not only did the day see the first substantial rainfall in months—a change welcomed by many, with their thoughts on this summer's devastating wildfire season—but it was also the occasion for Clark College faculty and staff to gather once again and greet a new academic year at the college's annual Opening Day celebration.

The event highlighted a year in which the college will be, in many ways, re-envisioning itself. President Bob Knight opened his remarks with lessons that he and other college leadership had gained Dr. Margaret Wheatley's book, *Who Do We Choose to Be?: Facing Reality, Claiming Leadership, Restoring Sanity*. "In a world that is sometimes chaotic at best, every day, faculty and staff have the opportunity to do extraordinary things that change the lives of students, improve the community, and ultimately impact our world," he said, adding

that the college is adapting to expand those opportunities.

Board of Trustees Chair Jada Rupley echoed that theme, discussing the board's role in approving the college's Strategic and Academic plans that are designed, in large part, to help boost student retention and completion rates.



"Now the hard work is what needs to be done—and that's your work," she said.

Knight went on to enumerate some of aspects of that work, including the college's progress toward the Guided Pathways model of higher education, which has led to the creation of a new "Areas of Study" map that changes the way current programs are organized. He also talked about new systems put in place to provide shared governance at the college, as well as continued work toward realizing the college's Social Equity Plan.

In speaking about social equity, Knight addressed the plight of Clark students covered by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a currently threatened program that provides limited protection to undocumented immigrants who grew up in the United States. "Our DACA students are welcome here at Clark College," said Knight. He continued over the noise of a standing ovation, "We're an open-access college and we're here for everyone!"

Knight received another standing ovation shortly afterward when he announced the opening of the college's new Penguin Pantry, an on-campus food bank that began serving students this summer. "This new service recognizes that our students make difficult choices with their money every day, and we don't want hunger to limit a student's ability to learn," he said.

Knight also looked forward to the McClaskey Culinary Institute opening later in the year—"We'll be eating there very soon, so hang on"—and thanked the Clark College Foundation for its support in funding the new facility.



President Bob Knight congratulates Clark alumna Dr. Inva Begolli during the college's 2017 Opening Day.

Then, in a reminder of what the college has already accomplished, he invited Dr. Inva Begolli to join him at the podium. Begolli, who graduated from Clark in 2011 after fleeing her native Albania, earned a full scholarship to continue her education at Washington State University. Earlier this year, she earned her doctorate in Pharmacy from Pacific University. "This lady is an example of what we do here at Clark College," said Knight. "She wants to be the Health Minister of Albania one day, and I believe she will be."

Knight said that another way the college is adapting to meet its students is through a months-long rebranding effort. "As we continue to struggle through an enrollment crisis, it is important to take a step back and evaluate who we are, if others know who we are, and most importantly, if who we are matches who or what people think we are," he said.

Employees received weekly planners with key brand messages inside them and viewed a video covering key elements of the



brand. As is Opening Day tradition, a music video featuring employees was unveiled, and employees were honored with awards, Presidential Coins, and service-anniversary recognitions. The event ended with lunch in Gaiser Student Center.

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

## Clark rocks out



Ever since the popular art movement Vancouver Rocks! began motivating residents to paint and hide rocks all around their community, Clark College's main campus has been a popular spot for stashing the hand-painted treasures. Now the college is becoming an active participant by hiding about 100 Clark



## College rocks in Southwest Washington.

Started about a year ago, Vancouver Rocks! is based on a simple idea: People paint rocks and then hide them in public spaces; other people find the rocks, and then re-hide them for others to find. Often, people post their finds, as well as hints on where to find rocks, on a public Facebook group with more than 35,000 followers. The goal is to build community, encourage creativity, and provide individuals and families with a fun, free activity—all ideas that made it a natural fit for Clark College.

Faculty, staff, students, and alumni were invited to paint a collection of rocks that will be hidden around downtown businesses and local parks. To inspire their rock designs, participants were asked, “What comes to mind when you think of Clark College?”

Beginning on August 4, Vancouver area residents will have the chance to find Clark-themed rocks hidden in parks and other public spaces. In addition to adding a rock to their collection, each community member who finds a Clark rock can redeem it at the Welcome Center for a free cookie from the McClaskey Culinary Institute. One special rock, painted by Clark’s culinary faculty, will earn its finder lunch for two at the institute.

The rocks are hidden throughout the college’s service district—meaning not just Vancouver, but also all of Clark and Skamania counties as well as part of Klickitat County. Each rock has a label on the back that explains how the rocks can be redeemed. Rocks may be redeemed between September 25 and December 31, 2017.

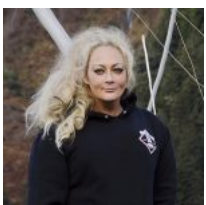
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# Outstanding Alumni announced



Six notable Clark College individuals have been selected for top Clark College alumni awards.

The 2017 Outstanding Alumni awardees are Nancy Boyce '08, Mitchell Jackson '93, Debi Jenkins '93, Rujean "Jeanne" Mack '67, and Steve Morasch '87. The Rising Star awardee is Cody Messick '10.

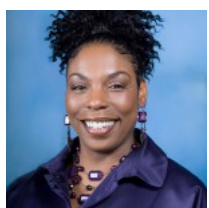


**Nancy Boyce** is a diesel mechanic and owner of the heavy-machine repair business PowerTech Generation, based in Juneau, Alaska. In 2008, she became the first female Caterpillar field mechanic to work in Alaska. She has also taught diesel technology at the University of Alaska Southeast. The *Alaska Journal of Commerce* nominated her as its Top Forty Under 40 Award winner in 2017, and she was one of three finalists for the Association of Equipment Management Professionals Foundation's

Technician of the Year Award in 2017.



**Mitchell S. Jackson** is the author of the award-winning novel *The Residue Years*, a creative nonfiction writing professor at New York University, and an adjunct instructor at Columbia University. His second novel, *Survival Math*, will be published in 2018. Jackson's honors include fellowships from TED, the Lannan Foundation, the BreadLoaf Conference, and the Center for Fiction. He's also a popular national speaker for youth and an advocate for criminal justice reform. Jackson, who grew up in Northeast Portland, presented at Clark's Columbia Writers Series earlier this year.



**Debi Jenkins** has more than 20 years of experience as a developmental life coach, teacher and presenter. Her expertise is in the areas of lifespan development, diversity, equity, inclusion and institutional climate/organizational change. Her business, Share the Flame Consulting LLC, provides a wide range of personal life- and career-coaching strategies. She is a national speaker and author on equity practices, 2016 Oxford Round Table honoree, and 2009 YWCA Women of Achievement recipient. Jenkins is the division chair of Clark College's Behavioral Sciences department and has worked at the college for 25 years.



**Rujean "Jeanne" Mack** is a retired principal and executive

director of Vancouver Schools. She is one of the creators of the innovative Help One Student to Succeed (HOSTS) Math Program, which was adopted by educational systems around the country. Mack is also the first executive director of the Vancouver Schools Foundation, where she grew the endowment to \$1 million; the former director of Children's Therapy at the nonprofit Innovative Services NW; and the former director of Youth House, a youth empowerment center developed by the Clark County Department of Community Services.



**Steve Morasch** is a land-use, real estate, and litigation attorney at Landerholm. He has received awards from the *Wall Street Journal*, *American Jurisprudence*, and *Vancouver Business Journal*. He's the chair of Clark County Planning Commission and has the highest peer-reviewed attorney rating—AV Preeminent. Morasch was part of the Clark Alumni Association Board from 2004 to 2007, and the Alumni Scholarship Endowment Committee from 2005 to 2006.



**Cody Messick** is a doctoral student in physics at Pennsylvania State University and was part of the team that detected the presence of gravitational waves at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) in Washington state and Louisiana in 2015. He is a current executive committee student



member of the American Physical Society's Division of Gravitational Physics. He was a math tutor at Clark, a Physics Days host at University of Washington, and a gravitational wave summer camp organizer at Pennsylvania State University.

Outstanding Alumni Award recipients are chosen for their exemplary service to the community and Clark College, and for personal and professional achievements. The Rising Star Award recognizes alumni who are aged 35 or younger; who deliver exemplary service to the community and to Clark College; and exhibit personal and professional achievements.

The group will be recognized during a luncheon reception on November 1 and at Clark College Foundation's annual donor gala, Savoring Excellence, on November 2. The reception is a collaboration with the alumni association, Clark College, and Clark College Foundation.

*Mitchell Jackson photo by Cole Bennetts; Nancy Boyce photo by Heidi Lynn.*

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## The play's the thing



Oswald greets visitors to the 2016 Clark County Fair.

Clark College will again be participating in the Clark County Fair, which runs August 4-13.

Faculty, staff, and students from across the college will lead family-friendly activities and competitions that highlight Clark's educational and extracurricular offerings as a part of this year's fair theme of "Game On!" Each day of the fair will feature a different department, ranging from Alumni Relations to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

Clark's activity schedule for the fair is as follows:

- **Friday, August 4:** Faculty and staff from across Clark College will lead games of Penguin Toss & Trivia with the chance to win prizes.
- **Saturday, August 5:** Alumni Relations will be offering a range of giveaways with their Prize Wheel, as well as information about upcoming alumni events.
- **Sunday, August 6:** STEM faculty and the student club

N.E.R.D. (Not Even Remotely Dorky) Girls will be helping fairgoers build kinetic butterflies and paper LED circuits and leading a Fruit & Vegetable card game.

- **Monday, August 7:** The Automotive Technology department is challenging people's fine motor skills with their Dexterity Boxes.
- **Tuesday, August 8:** Poetry faculty from the English department will be creating "Poetry on Demand" using unique prompt words provided by fairgoers.
- **Wednesday, August 9:** Staff from Human Resources and the Office of Diversity and Equity are getting to know fair attendees with a question-and-answer game called "Keep It Real."
- **Thursday, August 10:** The Athletics department will be running games of mini-basketball, with prizes available.
- **Friday, August 11:** Representatives from the Health Occupations programs will be on hand to offer health assessment games and tests.
- **Saturday, August 12:** Faculty and staff from across Clark College will lead games of Penguin Toss & Trivia.
- **Sunday, August 13:** Faculty from the new Tod and Maxine McClaskey Culinary Institute are hosting games of Cuisine and Professional Baking Jeopardy to test visitors' food knowledge. Their edible prizes include mini cupcakes and savory brittle.

The college also will have staff available during the fair to answer questions about available programs, financial aid, Running Start, and to help students with applying to Clark and registering for classes. Current students, prospective students, and alumni can stop by the booth for special giveaways and prizes—and Oswald the Penguin, Clark's loveable mascot, will be on hand for photos throughout the fair. Additionally, Human Resources will be present on Wednesday, August 9, with information about job openings and working at Clark.

All activities will take place in the Clark booth on the midway at the fairgrounds. For more information about Clark at the fair, visit [www.clark.edu/cc/fair](http://www.clark.edu/cc/fair), and follow Clark College on social media. For additional information about the fair including ticketing, maps, and directions, visit [www.clarkcofair.com](http://www.clarkcofair.com).

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## Clark College summer hours



Beginning July 10, the College will be closed to the public at noon on Fridays through September 1. Below please find information about the availability of College services available during this closure period.



Please note that even when services are available during normal operating hours, staff do take vacation during the summer and not all departments may be at full strength all the time. However, the college will ensure adequate staff coverage in critical areas.

*All hours listed below are effective July 10 – September 1 unless otherwise noted.*

## **Athletics Office**

- Closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Bookstore**

- Closed July 17 and 18 for annual inventory
- Open Friday, July 21, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Closed Fridays July 28 – August 25
- Open Friday, September 1, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

## **Business Services**

- Closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Cashiering**

- Closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Central Services**

- Outgoing mail will be delivered to the Post Office prior to noon on Fridays. There will be no campus mail delivery after noon on those Fridays. Campus mail will be delivered on the following Monday.

## **Child & Family Studies**

- Closed September 4 – 8.

## **Counseling and Health Center**

- CHC Front Desk (scheduling, chill room, resources, and over-the-counter medications): Monday 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Friday closed.
- Student personal counseling appointments: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Physical health/medical(ARNP) appointments: Tuesday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and Wednesday-Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

## **Emergency Management**

- Will maintain normal operating hours during the summer and will not be closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Environmental Health and Safety**

- Will maintain normal operating hours during the summer and will not be closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Events Services**

- Will be closed at noon on Fridays from July 14 – September 1, unless there is an event scheduled that requires staff to be on site.

## **Facility Services**

- Will maintain normal operating hours during the summer and will not be closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Food Service**

- Bauer Coffee Lounge – open Monday – Thursday, 7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Closed Fridays.
- Hanna Coffee Lounge – open Monday – Thursday, 7:30 a.m.

- 2:30 p.m. Closed Fridays.
- Chewy's Really Big Burritos – open Monday – Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Closed Fridays.
- Mighty Bowl – open Monday – Thursday, 9:50 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Closed Fridays.
- Clark Café (in Joan Stout Hall) – open Monday – Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Closed Fridays.

## **Gaiser/PUB student services**

- Open Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Advising, Assessment, Career Services, Enrollment, and Financial Aid are open until 6:00 p.m. on Mondays and Tuesdays.

## **Human Resources**

- Closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Information Technology Services**

- Will maintain normal operating hours during the summer and will not be closed at noon on Fridays.

## **The iQ Credit Union branch on the main campus**

- Open Monday – Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., July 3 – August 25.
- Open 9:00 a.m. – noon on Fridays from July 14 – August 25.
- Clark College branch closed August 28 – September 22.
- Resumes regular operating hours the week of September 25.

## **Libraries**

- Cannell Library and CTC Information Commons: Open Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Closed Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- eLearning front office (LIB 124): Open Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- TechHub (Cannell Library): Open Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## **Office of the Vice President of Administrative Services**

- Closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Office of the Vice President of Instruction**

- Closed at noon on Fridays.

## **President's Office**

- Closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Production Printing**

- Closed at noon on Fridays.

## **Security**

- Lost and Found will be open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Fridays.
- Security officers will be available 24/7 for all security related issues.

## **Tutoring**

- Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math Center: Monday



- Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Language & Writing Center: Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Transitional Studies Tutoring Center: Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Accounting & Business Center: Closed during summer

### **Other Clark College locations**

- The Clark Center at WSU Vancouver, the Columbia Tech Center, and the Continuing Education Center in downtown Vancouver will also be closed to the public at noon on Fridays, although instructional classes—as well as programs offered by Corporate & Continuing Education—will be provided as already scheduled.

*Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# **Congratulations, Class of 2017!**



Happy graduates prepare to walk in the 2017 Clark College Commencement ceremony.

On June 22, approximately 800 graduates gathered at Sunlight Supply Amphitheater to participate in the 2017 Clark College Commencement ceremony. A strong breeze tried to whip their carefully decorated mortarboard caps off their heads, and the summery sunshine forced many to unzip their gowns to avoid overheating, but nothing could stop them from celebrating their achievements.



Amanda Owens with her daughter, Naya, at Clark's 2017 Commencement.

This year marked the first time that graduates wore differently colored robes based on the degree/certificate they earned. Bachelor of Applied Science recipients wore white robes; associate degrees and certificates, royal blue; and GED completion and high school diploma, light blue. This is the second year that the college graduated baccalaureate degree-holders, and the third year that GED/High School Diploma graduates from Transitional Studies students participated in the ceremony.

Graduates hugged each other to celebrate the momentous day. Some held their children in their arms. Associate degree recipient Amanda Owens watched her 5-year-old daughter, Naya, play with bubbles as she waited to enter the amphitheater. The two had lots to celebrate: Not only was Owens graduating, but the single mother had recently found out she would have stable housing for the first time years, thanks, in part, to her part-time job as a program coordinator in Clark's Workforce Education department.

In line with Owens was her friend, Amanda Williams, who was also graduating with an associate transfer degree. Like Owens, Williams had enrolled at Clark straight out of high school but then dropped out—in Williams's case, because of a family crisis. By the time she returned to school, she had a family of her own to care for. "Juggling being a mom with schoolwork was the hardest thing," said the mother of two. "There were some late nights doing homework after the kids went to bed."



Amy and Tom Merfeld get ready to graduate together.

Williams, who plans to continue her education at Washington State University Vancouver to become a social worker, did not have her children with her in line—they were being watched by her husband, which only seemed fair since she had watched them during last year's Commencement ceremony, when he graduated with a welding degree. A few yards down the line, Amy and Tom Merfeld were doing the Williamses one better: The couple, who have been married for 10 years, were graduating together.

The Merfelds pursued different educational paths at Clark—Amy earning her degree in Addiction Counselor Education and Tom, one in merchandising management. As such, they were never “study buddies,” but they did support each other's educations with some creative scheduling. “When she was at school, I was at work,” said Tom, who installs windows and runs his own entertainment company. “A lot of classes I was able to do online, which helped.”

Clearly, many graduates struggled with competing time commitments while pursuing their educations. When, during the ceremony, President Bob Knight asked all graduates who had worked while attending Clark to rise to be recognized, the vast majority of graduates stood up.



"Remember the feeling of what it's like to complete something you set out to complete," said actor Ernie Hudson during his 2017 Commencement keynote address.

This year's keynote speaker, actor Ernie Hudson, could empathize with those students. As he described during his keynote address, Hudson had grown up poor, and by the time he tried to enter college, he was working as a janitor in order to support his wife and young son. "I was at my wit's end," he recalled. "It was a rough time."

Hudson went on to recount how he enrolled at Wayne State University and fell in love with acting—how he helped found what is now the oldest African-American theater company in the United States, and then drove with his wife and two sons from Michigan to Connecticut in order to personally convince the admissions staff at Yale University to allow him into its celebrated Master of Fine Arts program in drama. He also spoke about the difficulties of trying to launch his acting career while simultaneously adjusting to being a single father, balancing the duties of work and family—and the work ethic that helped him eventually find success in films like *Ghostbusters*, *The Crow*, and *Miss Congeniality*.

"I'm not that brilliant," he said. "I know how to work hard."



But Hudson added that, along with his work ethic, he credits trusting his “spirit” to get him where he is today. “There’s a part of you, and it speaks to you in the strangest ways, in the middle of the night,” he said. “You have to listen to it.”



Student Ambassador  
Abigail Volk was  
the 2017  
Commencement  
student speaker.

The ceremony was also occasion to announce two major awards. Early in ceremony, President Knight announced the names of the recipients of the 2017 Exceptional Faculty Awards: economics instructor Patricia Atkinson; English instructor Dr. John Caruso; American Sign Language instructor Becky Engel; computer science and engineering instructor Dr. Nicholas Macias; and welding professor Brian McVay. Later during the ceremony, he announced that graduate Nicholas Freese was the recipient of the 2017-2018 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.

Thanks to the Clark College Foundation, scholarship finalists Sarah Moe and José Augusto Barcelos Espindola Neto also received \$1,000 each to attend WSUV.

In all, more than 2,100 degrees and certificates were conferred upon the Class of 2017, Clark's 81st graduating class. Of those graduates, 413 were Running Start students—a record number for the college, which has the largest Running Start program in the state.

At the end of the ceremony, President Knight said, "Your time at Clark has provided you with new skills, new perspectives, and new confidence. These are powerful tools. As you take your next step, use those tools to build a bright future for yourselves and for our community."

*See a video of memories from the Class of 2017:*

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

*Video: Nick Bremer/Clark College*

*To watch the Commencement ceremony in its entirety, visit CVTV's website.*

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## Exceptional faculty



During the 2017 Commencement ceremony, President Robert K. Knight announced the names of the recipients of the 2017 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:

- Patricia A. Atkinson, instructor of economics
- Dr. John Caruso, instructor of English
- Becky Engel, instructor of American Sign Language
- Dr. Nicholas Macias, instructor of computer science and engineering
- Brian McVay, professor of welding

## **Patricia A. Atkinson, Economics**



When Patricia Atkinson was an undergraduate, she was an enthusiastic student—but not a focused one. “I loved all my studies, from history and geography to math and science,” she said.

It was only in her junior year of college, when she took her first economics course—a field that combined aspects of all those disciplines—that Atkinson found her true academic passion.

Today, Atkinson passes that passion on to her students. “She made me enjoy and understand a subject that I disliked and struggled with in the past,” wrote one nominator. “She always would go out of her way to make sure we understood the material by relating it to real-life experiences.”

Another student wrote, “She allowed me to understand and appreciate what college can be. ... Professor Atkinson showed me that college is about learning, engaging, participating, and enhancing your personal capital.”

Atkinson, who has taught at Clark since 2009, is currently a tenure-track instructor at the college. She has also taught at Portland Community College, University of Phoenix, and Portland State University, where she earned her master’s degree in economics. She is currently completing her doctorate degree in education leadership at Washington State University Vancouver.

## **Dr. John Caruso, English**

Most kids' first jobs are something along the lines of babysitting or mowing lawns—John Caruso's, which he began at age 13, was writing book reviews for the local newspaper. So it's not all that surprising that he grew up to be an English professor.



"I love learning, and I love helping my students learn," Caruso said. "When you have an active, alert mind, talking about ideas and language is like playing your favorite sport. I feel blessed to spend my days doing something that I enjoy, and doubly blessed that what I enjoy also improves the lives of my students."

Students clearly count Caruso as a blessing, too. "John makes everyone want to engage in class activities and discussions," wrote one nominator. "Even the more shy kids are raising their hands. We all felt safe and valued in his class."

Caruso said that his own experience as a first-generation college student helps him create a welcoming environment for the diverse student body he teaches at Clark. (He also teaches at Marylhurst University.) He earned his bachelor's degree at UCLA; his master's, at California State University Chico; and his doctorate in English at the University of Washington. He has taught English for two decades, and at Clark for the past six years. A frequently published writer of short fiction, Caruso is expecting his first full-length novel, *The Lawn Job*, to be published by Cloud Lodge Books later this year.

## **Becky Engel, American Sign Language**





When students describe Rebecca Engel, they mention her supportiveness, her individual attention, and her flexibility in presenting material in a range of teaching styles.

“I see myself as a chameleon of sorts, always adapting to the different needs and learning styles the students present,” Engel said. “I picked up this skill in my first teaching job in the K-12 system. I had deaf students of all levels, so I was constantly adapting to meet their needs and learning styles.”

Students say they appreciate Engel’s adaptability, as well as the unique perspective she is able to provide as a Deaf person herself. “Becky strives to teach her classes about Deaf culture and how to interact within the Deaf community,” wrote one nominator. “Not only does she teach ASL, but she also teaches us proper etiquette, what to expect when in a Deaf community event, and other important things that help us learn how to interact with the Deaf community.”

Engel earned her bachelor’s degree from Oregon State University and her Master of Deaf Education from Western Oregon University. She taught at the Washington School for the Deaf before becoming an instructor at Clark College. Currently she is a tenure-track instructor at the college, teaching not only standard language classes but also a course in American Deaf Culture and a special Honors Program language class. She serves on the ASL advisory boards for the Vancouver, Battle Ground, Evergreen, and Camas school districts, as well as on Clark College’s Social Equity Task Force and Emergency Building Coordinator Committee.

# Dr. Nicholas Macias, Computer Science and Engineering

Dr. Nicholas Macias has had an almost life-long fascination with computers. He began playing around with programming on the computers at his high school, even though he wasn't yet old enough to take the school's computer science classes. "I'd pull people's code out of the garbage, uncrumple it, type it in, and try to figure out what it did," he recalls.



That boundless curiosity and enthusiasm is still on display now that he teaches computer science himself. "He's intensely passionate not just about teaching, but also about learning," wrote a student in nominating him. "He's dedicated so much of his life to the work that he loves, and it always shines through."

Dr. Macias earned his master's degree in computer science from George Washington University and another in mathematics from Duke University. He earned his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Virginia Polytechnic University. He spent many years as a computer scientist in both government and private enterprise before deciding to focus full-time on teaching. He has taught at Clark since 2011 and has served as a faculty advisor for both the Computer Science and Engineering and the MARS Robotics student clubs.

"Knowing that this award is based in part on student input means so much to me," said Dr. Macias. "I like to believe that I'm helping students, even when I know I'm making them work hard and they'd rather have the weekend free! This award feels like a very big 'Thank You,' and gives me hope that what I'm doing really is making a difference."

# Brian McVay, Welding



You could say welding runs in Brian McVay's blood—both his father and stepfather were welders, and his mother worked as a machinist on nuclear submarines. "In the eighth grade, I knew what I wanted to do," he said.

McVay studied welding at Clark College before being accepted into a boilermaker apprenticeship. Later, he returned to Clark for further studies to prepare for an apprenticeship as an ironworker, a job he held for 17 years. "I always came back to Clark," he said, noting that he returned to the college again for management classes later in his career. "Education has been something that I really value. I wake up in the morning looking forward to learning something new that day."

In 2014, he found himself returning to Clark again—this time, to teach. He said he enjoys being able to give back to a place that taught him so much, preparing students for today's industrial jobs.

"I tell my students on the first day of class, 'I don't *give* you a grade. You *earn* your grade,'" he said. "I run my shop like it would be run in the industry."

Students appreciate his "tough love" approach. "Mr. McVay has a very 'let's get it done now' attitude," wrote a nominator. "However, he never teaches us to prioritize the work over safety. ... He pushes us ahead in order to help us achieve more."

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# **“I want to be a role model”**



Nicholas Freese '17 waits in line to participate in commencement.

When Nicholas Freese heard his name announced as the recipient of the Community College Presidents' Scholarship in Honor of Val Ogden, there was one person he wanted to discuss it with, above all others: his 4-year-old daughter, Sadie.

“I really want to know what my daughter thinks about this,” he said as he stood in line to receive his degree, clearly still stunned by the news that he would be able to attend Washington State University Vancouver for two years, tuition-free, in order to complete his bachelor's degree. Clark College President Bob Knight made the announcement during the 2017



## Clark College Commencement ceremony.



Nicholas Freese stands, stunned, as he learns that he has received the 2017-2018 Community College Presidents' Scholarship.

It might seem strange to want to know a toddler's opinion on your academic achievements, but for Freese, Sadie has been at the heart of his pursuit of higher education. "With her, I have the opportunity to be awesome, just from the get-go," he said during an interview prior to Commencement. "She can just think of Daddy as this great guy who's worked hard and pursued his goals."

Freese is painfully aware that many people who have known him since his own childhood might not see him in such an unambiguously positive light. Growing up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Freese began getting into trouble around the time he entered high school. Trying to escape a violent home life with an alcoholic father, Freese began staying with friends—including "some people I probably shouldn't have been hanging out with," he said.

By his junior year, Freese was struggling with his own addiction issues. He bounced between alternative schools, but didn't graduate from any; he tried rehab, but it didn't stick.



For the next few years, he wandered from city to city: Denver, Seattle, Honolulu, Saipan. By the time he landed in Vancouver, he had made the commitment to get sober, but hadn't found much direction past that.

All that changed after Sadie was born. "At first, it was like, 'Daddy's being clean,' but after a while I felt like, 'That's great, but what's Daddy going to *do*?' " Freese recalled. "I don't want to be borderline poverty, like I grew up. I want to be a role model."

Freese enrolled at Clark College. At first, he found college daunting—less academically than logistically. "I didn't understand how registration worked," he said. "I had to use my resources. I had to ask for advice, and I'm not used to asking for advice. I'd be in the Financial Aid Office every day for a week, trying to figure things out."

But as Freese continued at Clark, he learned how to navigate its support systems. Advisors showed him how to plan his degree; he met friends while working out in the Fitness Center; he took advantage of other free and subsidized services like the Counseling and Health Center and the college's dental clinic. In the end, Freese graduated with honors, earning a cumulative GPA of 3.77.



Clark College President Bob Knight congratulates scholarship recipient Nicholas

Freese.

It hasn't always been easy. Freese had to balance his studies with caring for Sadie and volunteering in his community. He serves as a mentor to other recovering addicts, works on clean-up parties in his neighborhood, and participates in activities aimed at improving police-community relations. Additionally, he has worked during much of his time at Clark, though he credits his wife, Ashley, with keeping the family financially afloat while he pursues his education.

"She's paying the bills," he said. "She's working toward this just as much as I am."

Freese, now 28, plans to major in public affairs at WSUV, with the long-term goal of becoming a lawyer. "I want to be a voice for those who don't have a voice," he said. "I want to help people."

A first-generation college graduate, Freese said he hopes that sharing the story of his struggles and success will help to inspire others who might be facing their own challenges. "I want to show people in a similar case that this is possible," he said.

For Freese, earning this scholarship means that he will be able to concentrate on his studies at WSUV instead of on how to pay for them. But it also carries deeper meaning than the easing of financial burdens.

"What it means to me is that I'm there, I've reached that level," he said, raising his hand to about chest-height. "I'm not just getting an associate degree—I'm *doing well*."

And he knows just the little girl to celebrate that with.

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# Clark College adds to its leadership team

Clark College has recently welcomed several exceptional educational professionals to its leadership team.

New hires and appointments include Dr. Loretta Capeheart as Associate Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Judith Hernandez Chapar as the Director of the Teaching & Learning Center; Brenda Walstead as Dean of Business and Health Sciences; and Jim Wilkins-Luton as Dean of Transitional Studies, English, Communications and Humanities (BEECH).

## Dr. Loretta Capeheart



Dr. Capeheart has a B.A. in psychology from the University of Texas, an M.A. in Sociology from Texas State University, and a Ph.D. in Sociology for Texas Woman's University. She has previous work experience as a faculty member at the University of Idaho and at Northeastern Illinois University, among other institutions. Most recently, she was at the Portland Police Bureau, where she served as an analyst and as Acting Equity and Diversity Manager. Dr. Capeheart has written about and taught extensively on the subjects of diversity, inclusion, and social justice. She is the author of a book called *Social Justice: Theories, Issues and Movements*.

Clark College President Bob Knight stated: "This position is important to our Strategic Plan and social equity work. As I read the feedback from across the college, it was clear that Dr. Capeheart has the necessary skills and experience to

continue the good work that has been started on the college's Social Equity Plan and lead us forward."

## **Dr. Judith Hernández Chapar**



Dr. Hernández Chapar earned a Doctorate of Philosophy in Education from Oregon State University with a focus on Community College Leadership. She also holds degrees in Social Work, Psychology, and Women's Studies. She is currently working on a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at San Diego State University, where she is researching the student engagement patterns of underserved community college students with faculty, as well as community college pathways for underrepresented students in STEM.

Dr. Hernández Chapar is familiar with the Washington state community and technical college system, having worked at both South Puget Sound Community College and at Lower Columbia College. Her work experience includes leading, designing, delivering, and assessing First Year Experience and TRiO programs and curriculum to promote student experiences focused on retention, persistence, and degree completion.

## **Jim Wilkins-Luton**



Jim Wilkins-Luton holds a Master of Arts degree in Literature and Composition from Gonzaga University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in British and American Literature from Whitworth University. He taught English and lived in Japan for eight years prior to settling in Clark County. Wilkins-Luton has worked for Clark College since 2000, beginning as an adjunct faculty member and earning tenure in 2006.

During his time at Clark, Wilkins-Luton has taught English as

a Second Language, pre-college English, and college-level composition and literature classes. He earned Clark's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award for the 2013-2014 academic year; one student who nominated him for the award wrote, "[He] makes all students completely comfortable in the classroom." Wilkins-Luton has been the interim Dean of BEECH since 2015.

## **Dr. Brenda Walstead**



Dr. Brenda Walstead has worked for Clark College for 21 years, starting as an adjunct instructor in Dental Hygiene. But her history at Clark goes beyond that: She earned her associate degree from Clark before going on to earn a B.S. from Concordia University, an M.S. at Portland State University, and an Ed.D. from Walden University.

During her tenure at Clark, Dr. Walstead has served as the Director of the Dental Hygiene program and led the creation of Clark's two bachelor's degree programs. She served as an Outcomes Assessment Liaison and on numerous collegewide committees. Most recently, she served as Interim Dean of the Business and Health Sciences, and was named to the non-interim position after a nationwide search. Feedback from the college during that hiring process consistently noted her ability to work collaboratively with faculty, staff and administration as well as her knowledge of the Business and Health Science Unit.