

# Clark College among nation's best



Highlighting the critical importance of improving student success in America's community colleges, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program today named Clark College as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the 2017 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence and \$1 million dollars in prize funds, as well as Siemens Technical Scholars Program student scholarships.

The Prize, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges and recognizes institutions for exceptional student outcomes in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and access and success for minority and low-income students.

“We are excited and honored to be selected as one of the top 150 community colleges in the country,” said Robert K. Knight, president of Clark College. “Students and student success is at the heart of everything we do, and it is wonderful to have the hard work of our exceptional faculty and staff recognized in this way. Our new strategic plan and program initiatives are all aimed at increasing student success, and being selected as one of top community colleges is proof we are moving towards this goal.”

Nearly half of America’s college students attend community college, with more than 7 million students – youth and adult learners – working towards certificates and degrees in these institutions across the country.

“Community colleges have tremendous power to change lives, and their success will increasingly define our nation’s economic strength and the potential for social mobility in our country,” said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. “This competition is designed to spotlight the excellent work being done in the most effective community colleges, those that best help students obtain meaningful, high-quality education and training for competitive-wage jobs after college. We hope it will raise the bar and provide a roadmap to better student outcomes for community colleges nationwide.”

A full list of the selected colleges and details on the selection process are available at [www.aspenprize.org](http://www.aspenprize.org).

Clark College and 149 other community colleges were selected from a national pool of over 1,000 public two-year colleges using publicly available data on student outcomes in three areas:

- **Performance** (retention, graduation rates including transfers, and degrees and certificates per 100 full-time equivalent students)

- **Improvement** (awarded for steady improvement in each performance metric over time)
- **Equity** (evidence of strong completion outcomes for minority and low-income students)

Clark College has been invited to submit an application to the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence containing detailed data on degree and certificate completion (including progress and transfer rates), labor market outcomes (employment and earnings), and student learning outcomes.

Ten finalists will be named in fall 2016. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data. A distinguished Prize Jury will select a grand prize winner and a few finalists with distinction in early 2017.

The Aspen Prize is funded by the Joyce Foundation, the Siemens Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation.

### **Scholarship Opportunities**

For the first time, the 150 Prize-eligible institutions are also invited to nominate exceptional students enrolled in their best middle-skill STEM programs for scholarships. Up to 50 Siemens Technical Scholars will be selected from programs that provide outstanding preparation for high-demand jobs in manufacturing, energy, health care, and information technology. A partnership between the Siemens Foundation and the Aspen Institute, the Siemens Technical Scholars Program intends to help our nation's community colleges and their business partners bridge the gap between projected shortages of skilled workers and the millions of high-demand jobs in these STEM industries. Scholarship winners and the programs that deliver rigorous training enabling their success will be announced in fall 2016. For more information and to view video profiles of 2015 Siemens Technical Scholars, go to: <http://as.pn/stscholars>.

## **About the Aspen College Excellence Program**

The Aspen College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes. Through the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the New College Leadership Project, and other initiatives, the College Excellence Program works to improve colleges' understanding and capacity to teach and graduate students, especially the growing population of low-income and minority students on American campuses. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org/college-excellence](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/college-excellence).

## **About the Aspen Institute**

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, Colorado; and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also has offices in New York City and an international network of partners. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).

## **About Clark College**

Located in Vancouver's Central Park and serving up to 14,000 students per quarter, Clark College is Washington State's largest single-campus, for-credit community college. The college currently offers classes at three satellite locations: one on the Washington State University Vancouver campus; one in the Columbia Tech Center in East Vancouver; and one in the Columbia River Gorge in Bingen, Washington. Additionally, its Economic & Community Development program is housed in the Columbia Bank Building in downtown Vancouver.

*Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# Mothers, daughters, writers



Lydia Yuknavich and Debra Gwartney, *inset*, are both reading at Clark College as part of the Columbia Writers Series.

Clark College's Columbia Writers Series will host two outstanding writers during winter quarter, both of whom are known for their beautifully written but brutal memoirs—one a recollection of an adolescence wracked with alienation and abuse, the other a wrenching account of a mother losing her own daughters to drugs and the streets.

Lidia Yuknavitch and Debra Gwartney will be reading from and discussing their work at two separate events in February. These events, which are free and open to the public, will be held on Clark's main campus.

Read more about these two authors and their appearances at Clark:

**Debra Gwartney**

**February 17, 12:30-1:30 p.m.**

**Penguin Union Building, Room 258C**

Debra Gwartney is the author of *Live Through This: A Mother's Memoir of Runaway Daughters and Reclaimed Love*, a memoir published in 2009 and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. The book was also a finalist in 2009 for the National Books for a Better Life Award and the Oregon Book Award, and was shortlisted for the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award. *Kirkus Reviews* described it as “[a]n achingly beautiful chronicle of unfathomable sorrow, flickering hope and quiet redemption.”

Gwartney is also co-editor, along with her husband Barry Lopez, of *Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape*. She has published essays in many magazines, newspapers, and literary journals, including *American Scholar*, *TriQuarterly*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Salon*, *Tampa Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *The New York Times* (“Modern Love” column), and others.

Gwartney is a recipient of fellowships from The Writer's Center, located in Bethesda, Maryland, the American Antiquarian Society, Portland's Literary Arts, The Oregon Arts Commission, The Wurlitzer Foundation of Taos, New Mexico, and Hedgebrook Writers Colony. In 2000, she was a scholarship winner for the Breadloaf Writers Conference. She is currently a member of the nonfiction faculty for Pacific University's MFA in Writing program.

**Lidia Yuknavitch**

**February 23, 11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.**

**Penguin Union Building, Room 258A&B**

Lidia Yuknavitch is the National Bestselling author of the

novels *The Small Backs of Children* and *Dora: A Headcase*; the memoir *The Chronology of Water*; as well as three books of short fictions – *Her Other Mouths*, *Liberty's Excess*, and *Real to Reel*; and a critical book on war and narrative, *Allegories of Violence*.

The *Los Angeles Review of Books* wrote of *The Chronology of Water*, "Yuknavitch's fragmentary 'anti-memoir' relates a history filled in equal parts with violence and aesthetic discovery, sexual exploration and personal chaos. *The Chronology of Water* is striking for its emotional bareness, but also for its lapidary prose; each sentence is a beautiful gem, diamond-hard and precise."

Yuknavitch's writing has appeared in publications including *Guernica Magazine*, *Ms.*, *The Iowa Review*, *Zyzzyyva*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *The Sun*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *TANK*, and in the anthologies *Life As We Show It (City Lights)*, *Wreckage of Reason (Spuytin Duyvil)*, *Forms at War (FC2)*, *Feminaissance (Les Fignes Press)*, and *Representing Bisexualities (SUNY)*, as well as online at *The Rumpus*.

She is the recipient of the Oregon Book Award – Reader's Choice, a PNBA award, and was a finalist for the 2012 Pen Center creative nonfiction award. She writes, teaches and lives in Portland, Oregon.

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## Magdalena heads baseball



Mark Magdaleno was named Interim Baseball Coach in January 2016.

Clark College has named Mark Magdaleno as its Interim Head Baseball Coach. Magdaleno takes over as the Penguins are preparing to begin practice for the upcoming season.

“Mags” takes the helm after serving as the associate head baseball coach since he was hired in August. He has spent 32 years coaching baseball at the high school and college level. Most recently he was on staff at Ventura College in California, where he also began his career in 1983. Magdaleno has extensive coaching experience in California and throughout the West. Andy Moore, Mick Ellett, and Jesse Villanueva continue to serve as assistant coaches for the team.

Director of Athletics Ann Walker says she feels fortunate to have Magdaleno and his staff leading the baseball team. “There is great energy in our baseball program right now and that is a tribute to Mags and his assistant coaches,” she says. “I am confident, through his leadership, our young men will achieve great successes, enjoy a sport they love playing, and will represent the program and athletic department in a manner we can all be proud of. I look forward to working with him and his staff and watching the team compete this spring.”

Clark College opens its 2016 season on Tuesday, March 1, against Linfield College at home.



*Photo: Clark College/Nick Bremer-Korb*

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## Archer @ Archer



As retired Clark College art professor James Archer stood in the gallery named after him and gazed at the works hanging on the walls, his expression was slightly wistful. Archer was attending the reception for “Archer @ Archer,” an exhibit of selections from Archer’s private art collection, which he is donating to the college where he taught for 23 years.

“It’s pretty overwhelming,” he said, standing between two colorful abstract prints of his own and a row of prints made by a former student who is now an art professor himself. “Many of these works were done by young people whom I mentored over

the years. Most of them, I never was able to frame, so this is my first time seeing them framed and hung as a collection. It's a very emotional experience for me."



Carson Legree, left, with Jim Archer at the opening on January 12.

The college has received many donations of art through the Clark College Foundation over the years, but this donation is unusual both because of its size and its historical significance. Archer is donating 129 works total, about 40 of which are on display at the gallery. These works include drawings, paintings, prints, and collage, many of them by Clark instructors or students. Not only do they form an impressive collection of regional art, but they also represent the artistic vision of Archer Gallery's founding director.

Archer originally became curator of the gallery in 1982, when it was still located within the Clark College Bookstore and was called the Index Gallery. Successful in attracting well-known Northwest artists, the Index Gallery became known as one of the region's top alternative venues for contemporary artists. In 1995, the gallery—which by then had been relocated to a larger space within Gaiser—was renamed in Archer's honor. It moved to its current location in the lower level of the Penguin Union Building in 2005.

"This donation is significant because it has a lot of regional

pieces, many with a strong Clark connection,” said Clark art professor and current Archery Gallery curator Senseney Stokes. “There are works here from [retired art professor and former Archer Galley curator] Carson Legree, from Jim himself, from [retired art professor] Jim Baker. But even beyond these connections, some of the work here is so strong, so beautiful. Jim collected some really great stuff, and we’re lucky to have it in our campus collection.”



Professors bring art students to the Archer Gallery regularly as part of their instruction.

Clark’s Art Committee will be deciding where to place pieces from the collection after the show ends February 20. Members of the college community are invited to provide the committee with feedback on placement of particular objects.

Asked why he chose to donate his collection to Clark, Archer explained that he was downsizing to a smaller home and that Clark seemed the natural place to donate these works. “I’m an alumnus of this college, I worked here,” he said. “I’m happy that they won’t just be put in a closet here. People will see them, and react to them, for a long time to come.”

Photos of the exhibit can be viewed on our Flickr site.

*Photos Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# A smart investment



Clark College student Cindy Nguyen hopes to become an ultrasound technician.

“I’ve always wanted to go to college,” says Clark student Cindy Nguyen. Even so—and despite her excellent grades—Nguyen acknowledges that college has its challenges.

“When you come to college, you need to learn to study more efficiently than you did in high school,” says the 19-year-old. “And there’s the money thing: tuition, and then textbooks are really expensive, like \$200 a quarter.”

Like almost three-quarters of Clark’s student body, Nguyen is a first-generation college student. Her mother, a nail technician, and her father, who installs hardwood flooring,

never had the chance to attend college in their native Vietnam. Paying for college for their children (Nguyen's older sister, who also attended Clark, is now a social worker, and her younger sister is still in middle school) is a financial challenge for them—but one they have decided is worth the sacrifice.

“They're really supportive,” says Nguyen. “They're willing to do anything for me to pursue my education, because they never had that opportunity.”

Being able to attend Clark has helped significantly in reducing the cost of college for the Nguyen family, who have lived in Vancouver since the 1990s. Nguyen is able to save on housing by staying with her parents while completing her prerequisites at Clark before transferring to a farther-away institution to complete her degree in ultrasound technology. Furthermore, she has received support from scholarships made possible by generous donors to the Clark College Foundation.

“That's been really helpful,” she says. “It's relieved the financial burden. Without the scholarships, I would have to get a job to support myself in college. This way, I can just concentrate on my studies. I'm so focused on what I'm doing.”

Every year, Clark College Foundation supports the college's students with tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships, many of which are funded by Clark alumni who remember being struggling students themselves.

Nguyen says having total strangers investing in her education gives her a sense of responsibility to make that investment worthwhile. “It's really motivating,” she says. “Their way of helping me has allowed me to enable myself, achieve an education, and hopefully support other people one day. I see myself working at a hospital and helping people as an ultrasound technician. That's my dream. So what I'm learning right now, I'm going to give back to them—and I'm going to

help support my parents, too.”

*Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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## Student stories: Flying with a Phoenix



My name is Lily Hart, and I am a student at Clark College. I’m also the Managing Editor of *Phoenix* and was Assistant Literary Editor last year. *Phoenix* is Clark College’s award-winning literary and art journal. Run by student editors and faculty advisers, it publishes work from Clark College students, faculty and alumni—mostly students. We publish in print and

online, and accept a wide array of work including fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, ceramics, design work, music, and dramatic recitals. You can go online at [clarkphoenix.com](http://clarkphoenix.com) to get a full list. This year, *Phoenix* is proud to introduce a new category: graphic novels.



I am hoping that this post will give you insight into the behind-the-scenes process of *Phoenix*—and will maybe prompt you to submit something to the journal yourself!

Right now, the 2016 *Phoenix* is just finishing up its pre-production phase. Here are a couple little tidbits about the early stages that many people aren't aware of. Clark offers a three-credit class in the fall – Intro to Literary Publication. In this class, students work on marketing and promotions; interview plans and strategies; and editing 101. If you are curious about some of the work done in the class, take a look at the promotional posters going up around campus, as well as a slide in the Gaiser Student Center: We created all of those in our class, and it's fun to be able to see our "homework" on display all over campus. We have a class of 16 students, and everyone is enthusiastic about the work we've started.

One of my classmates in Intro to Literary Publication, Rowan Walters, is *Phoenix's* Poetry Editor. "Starting in the class and progressing to the staff has made me feel valuable, both to the campus of a school I love as well as to society in general," she says.

I would definitely agree with this. For me, one of the other highlights of being involved is getting to know a lot of amazing people with similar interests. It's a nice community

feel.

You also get real-world experience in being an editor, gaining organization skills and managing projects, which are all perfect skills for today's job market. As Jennie Avens, our Fine Arts editor from 2015 and again staff for 2016, says,



“Working with this team was a great practical experience that gave me a sneak peek of what to expect if I get into publishing after graduation.” Whether a student's career goals lie in editing and the arts, or in something completely different, the skills gained from being on *Phoenix* gives are always applicable.

Another thing which I'm really excited about is the awards *Phoenix* has won. In 2014, the journal won first place in the American Scholastic Press literary and art journal competition, and individual student work won as well. Last year, (when I was involved, so this is super exciting!) it won the 2015 Washington Community College Humanities Association's Large Budget Literary/Arts Magazine of the Year, and the Community College Humanities Association award for first place Literary Journal. This is a huge deal for us because we have never won that award before.

Remember, submissions are open to the entire college community—students, faculty, staff and alumni—and the submission deadlines are January 9 for literature, January 19 for art, and February 29 for video. Visit [clarkphoenix.com](http://clarkphoenix.com) to find out more about how to submit your work. We hope to see your submissions!

*This article was contributed by Clark student Lily Hart.*

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*



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## **2015: The year in review**

The announcement of a new campus, the girder-by-girder growth of a new building, and our first men's basketball championship in 20 years—no doubt about it, 2015 was a banner year in many ways. Take a stroll through the year that was as we wish you and yours a wonderful New Year!

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## **Leaving a legacy: a farewell chat with Laurie Cornelius**

*To say that Laurie Cornelius has had an impact on Clark College's Child and Family Studies program is a bit like saying that Dr. Seuss may have influenced children's literature—you've definitely indulged in understatement. Cornelius, who retired fall quarter after 35 years at Clark, has served in just about every position the program has: first as a teacher of toddlers and preschoolers, then moving on to serve as parent education faculty, early childhood education faculty, lab coordinator, and, for the past 16 years, as director of the program. And while Cornelius is quick to point out that she never considered CFS "her" program, the fact remains that she was instrumental in making it the statewide model that it is today. The program currently serves three main functions: providing affordable, high-quality child care for Clark students and staff, as well as for the larger community; operating as a lab school for students in the college's early childhood education program; and educating*

*parents. (All parents are automatically enrolled in a one-credit elective each quarter, which they pass by completing homework that covers everything from handling tantrums to encouraging scientific inquiry in toddlers.) Clark 24/7 sat down with Cornelius before she left to talk about how the program developed into its current form, including its nationally recognized outdoor play area, the 2011 opening of its beautiful Oliva Family Early Learning Center, and why it's important for kids to get really, really muddy.*



Laurie Cornelius speaks at the 2010 groundbreaking of the Oliva Family Early Learning Center.

**Tell me about how you first came to this program.**

I walked in as a parent, pregnant, 40 years ago. I was a visitor to see what an infant-parent class looked like. Later on down the road, I had my twins, and some of the lactating

moms here donated breast milk. I started working here as a teacher in 1980.

When I became director in 1999, I knew it wasn't "my" program. I inherited this program on the foundational efforts of so many outstanding people who preceded me. I tell the staff all the time that we don't own the program, that we're temporary keepers of the program, and how we are with each other in the course of every day, be it with children or with each other, will be the culture of the program that we hand off to others in the future. And that's the heart and soul of a program.

I think it's a myth to think that one person is responsible for innovative and creative work, because if you are going to build vision for a program, it has to be shared with others and others have to own it. It can't be just one person. I believe firmly in that. A lot of my work and some of the success and achievement that I can feel good about, that I would say are my legacy work here, it couldn't have existed without a whole community of people embracing the idea and contributing to it. Whenever you have people contributing to something, it always becomes much richer and thoughtful than it could have been in the beginning with just one person thinking about it.

**Keeping that in mind, though, what are the innovations at CFS that you feel most personally attached to, that you would consider your "legacy" work?**



Not putting them in order, but ... the first is, when I was teaching, I realized that people thought of childcare as separate from education. In our world, it becomes preschool or childcare. Preschool is valued. We would have students say, "I want to be a preschool *teacher*, not a childcare *worker*." That's the value judgment being placed. When with all of the brain research showing what children need, with 90 percent of their brain development in the first five years, it's

really clear that children need programs and environments that are nurturing and investigative at the same time. That means you combine it—in our field, we often call it "educare"—so their needs are being met and attended to.

So we had three separate programs at the time. We had our PRIDE [early intervention] program, we had our Parent Education Department, and we had Childcare Services. They were all separate. Most of the families in Parent Ed, the bulk of them were stay-at-home moms, and they were mostly highly educated, not very diverse, and seeking out a quality preschool program. It was a parent co-op founded post-World War II and had a high parent involvement and sense of community.

The Childcare side of the house was also the ECE [Early Childhood Education] lab school, and that was for student childcare services and training for students getting their degree in ECE. It had no family involvement, no connection with the family. The parents basically just arrived and dropped off, there were no programs, no gatherings, nothing.

In the Early Intervention program, they had a separate classroom for children with identified delays or disabilities, with individual therapy appointment that weren't in natural environments.

So they were all different. And so at that time, I was frustrated with this separation of childcare and preschool, and started thinking about what it would look like if we integrated all of these programs. So in the year 2000, we started to do the work to integrate. And I used to have lunch meetings—I used to call them my Hot Tomato Meetings, because I wasn't sure if I was going to survive them! [Laughs.] People were angry with the concept of integration. We had parents from Parent Ed who said, "We're not going to watch Childcare children. We're going to get head lice from them." There were biases. It was the tension between at-home and working families—somehow one's better than the other—it was that kind of tension. The reality was that, with us doing lots of talking and sorting it out—and some parents left, but most stayed—we came up with a model that was integrated.

And given the trends and research that has happened since that time, we realize that we were spot-on. You know, that we were really leading and advancing the work forward. The state board did a report recommending that the Parent Ed model in the state broaden to more diverse populations. That's exactly what we did. So I take pride in that we created a program that put this model forward. In the old model, if a parent in the Parent Ed program got divorced and had to go to work, they had to move their child. So now that doesn't happen. A family's circumstances can change, and the child doesn't have to leave. Our model allows for flexibility and options for families. I think that has been invaluable.

The concept, or the value, was universal access. I used a phrase—in fact, we put it up in the Haag Lounge when we were working on it—"Is everybody safe and warm inside?" My goal was to make sure that was happening. [Planning and Effectiveness Research, Reporting, and Data Professional] Susan Maxwell helped us do an anonymous survey a few years ago, and we were looking demographics like single parent, first generation in college. We looked at race, culture, ethnicity, all of that,

with these basic questions about feeling welcome, and there was no distinction in the answers between groups. We were doing real well. The relationships were being made.

I'm not saying we have a perfect world. We're certainly working on it. But I do take pride in the fact that we do see children and families as being special, and recognize the beauty of who they are when they come through our doors.

Whether you're a student parent, a faculty/staff parent, or a community parent—if you've been a parent—you know we have the most important treasure of each and every family up here. And if we are going to have them housed here within the confines of a fence, then we have to make sure that the environment is investigative and nurturing so those kiddos can thrive.

People often will enter the program and be here a little bit, and they're trying to figure it out. They're saying, "This place is different." And they don't know why. They can't quite put their finger on it. We speak of the environment as being a third teacher. And when we speak to that, it is both the emotional environment and the physical environment. We work really hard at being thoughtful about how we set up our environments.

Another legacy is definitely the outdoors. And that's a passion I have. That's the personal piece of me that was really, really important to me. It wasn't a conscious starting down that road. We had built this building over here and there was no money for a playground. And so we started researching. And the place we started is where everybody starts: toy equipment catalogs. You ask, "How many kids can get on this? What kinds of things can they do?"



Laurie Cornelius at an Arbor Day tree planting at Child & Family Studies.

I grew up in Seattle but I grew up with a really rich outdoor experience with my parents. All seasons, we were out camping. And then in college I had the wonderful opportunity to work up at Mt. Rainier with Ranger naturalists and do campfire programs with families.

So I realized that if children are going to be in childcare for long hours, they needed more than a playground. They needed more than recess. They needed a *rich environment*. So we dumped the playground idea. We kept elements of it, and we said, "Well, what did we like to do? What are our play memories?" They were all outdoors. They were all playing hide-and-peek—if you play hide-and-peek, are there bushes and places to hide? If you played in barns, are there straw bales? If you played at the beach, where's the water? If you camped, where are the woods, where are the rocks, where is the driftwood?

And so that birthed a whole new concept of how we designed outdoor play spaces. This was the early to mid-90s. So that brought on challenges, because we were licensed, and licensors did not want rocks, logs—didn't see that as being a safe environment. The world is very litigious. In fact, I think Head Start had sent out an article on safety saying to saw the branches off of trees so children couldn't climb them.

So I ended up, through my advocacy work and the development of this space, speaking to the State Convention of Licensors on the importance of risk in outdoor play and the need to change the WACs [Washington Administrative Codes]. It was really risky for me, because I was putting up slides of things from our program that kids weren't allowed to do, and saying they needed to do it. So it really was pretty scary for me to do. But I did it, and lo and behold, things started changing. And now you can find rocks and driftwood and trees in many play areas around the state. That's one of the legacies that I feel has been invaluable.

I really hammered on it. I was in City Council, school districts, all over the place, because I believe we need to change how we view our outdoor environments for kids. Right now they're postage-stamp grass lots. And we need the woods. Kids need green spaces, they need flatlands.

**It's interesting because there's a whole movement now toward "adventure playgrounds" that favor natural play features instead of the old swing sets and slides.**

Right. There is a huge movement to start doing that kind of work. At the time, I think we were doing some very cutting-edge work with our play space, because not very many had done it. The University of Quebec published an article right around the same time we were opening on three play spaces in the United States that should be used as models for designing school spaces for Canada. We were one of them. I was very proud of that as well. Since that time, we've done tours, fly-ins. We've had national conferences in Portland, and one international conference, and our site has always been chosen to be one of three sites in the Portland-Vancouver area for touring. So we take a lot of pride in the environments and the work that we prepare.

So changing the WACs and creating the play space were huge. What we did was we used plants in the design of the outdoor



space to have different focuses of play, so that when kids go outside—if they're going to be in a huge group of kids and do everything in a room, we've got to get them out of that environment where they can be with one or two kids and have places to hide, we've got places to crawl into, we've got places of discovery.

[Recently retired Grounds Manager] Skip Jimerson has been such a partner in crime with me, oh my gosh. Because he loves it; he gets childhood. I'll never forget when I told him, "We want a mud kitchen." He said, "You want a *what?*" And I said, "We want logs and we want dirt, and we want kids to be able to play in the mud, make mud pies, drive trucks through the mud. We'll clean 'em up afterward. We want our kids to get muddy here." And he was totally into it, he just laughed.



Laurie Cornelius, *center*, with Clark College Foundation President/CEO Lisa Gibert and former CFS parent Jan Oliva at the opening of the Oliva Family Early Learning Center.

And the Oliva Family Early Learning Center—I also see that as a legacy. Because in early learning, getting that type of building just is almost impossible, because there's no money. Our field is devalued because of the image of babysitting and childcare. Often you'll hear—and this is a huge

challenge—people say, “Don’t advise people to go into childcare, because it’s low wages.” And yet it’s the most important job on earth, given the scope of a developing child. It is just critical because children can’t catch up if they’re not having opportunity while their brains are developing. And it’s been proven. By third grade, we’ve got kids going in with as much as a 2,000-word discrepancy in vocabulary. You’ve got children who have been read to and traveled and been to OMSI—and children who have never held a book. It’s just horrible.

So I would say those are the areas I’m most proud of. Those, and always—and this is probably the most important one—the attention to relationships within the program. That’s that culture of caring. And it’s a balance, because we’re in a bureaucracy, so we have all the rules and WACs and codes we have to follow. I always try to make sure that there is some caring to go along with that, so I try to think aloud. I try to explain my thoughts, and if I’m not sure of the answer I’ll just say, “Well, I’ve got to think it through. I’m gonna need a little more time.”

**You’ve talked a bit about how CFS has changed over the years. How have you seen Clark as a whole change?**

Oh, goodness. It’s a huge change, huge. When I started, before Gaiser got remodeled, there was a room maybe a third of the size of what Gaiser Student Center is now, and a small stage, and every single employee could fit on a folding chair in there on Opening Day, and you knew everybody. And maybe there would be three or four new hires, no more than that. Then, as the college grew, they started having to open a sliding wall that opened up into where Student Services offices were. And then pretty soon it got too big for *that*. There were employee directories with photos, so you could always see what a person looked like. Now there are so many employees that you just don’t know them. It’s just gotten so big. So that’s one big change.

I remember when email came in. And the campus was all set up for email except for us. The VP of Administrative Services at the time said, "Well, they're up there with the children; they don't need email." And I complained. And his response to me was, "You can walk down to Foster every day and pick up your email."

Children, young kids in our society—they're pushed to the edges. They're not embraced. On every campus, the childcare program is always on the edge. If we really were elevating and seeing the importance of how we as a community are raising kids, the childcare program should be in the middle of a circle instead of on the edge. Though now that the STEM Building is being built, we won't be as much on the edge here.

**I know my son's loved watching the building go up—the Oliva Center's windows look straight out onto it.**



Child & Family Studies children perform and display artwork during Clark College's annual Sakura Festival.

Oh yeah, it's been great curriculum. But to go back to what I was saying about how we view kids—I mean, I'm speaking broadly of our society. You can't be loud in a restaurant. You can't cry on planes, evidently, given the news of late. There's just a lot of intolerance of children. And I used to be of the

opinion that that was how Clark viewed our children. Not anymore. I think that Clark has clearly demonstrated an exception to the rule. The reason I say that is that we now have so many areas of the campus that think of us and call us and connect with us. It's amazing, the collaborations and richness of what some of the different departments are bringing to this program. We get our clay from the art department. The kids play down in the fountain. They're part of the Sakura Festival every year. We're part of the Seventh Generation powwow every year. Student Services always invites the children to attend different performances. We partner with the Japanese department and they have exchange students who spend time with us. We have collaborated in the past with the library; the kids have had story times down there. One year in the summer, there was a collaboration with PE fitness classes. They found that when they brought the kids down to play games with the adults, there was more laughter and movement in their class than just simply exercising—it was playful.

So I appreciate that. Fundraisers like our car wash and art show—we get great support from the campus, wonderful feedback. We want to do more of those collaborations and partnerships, both on and off campus.

**More than a quarter of our student body at this point has dependent children. In a way, Clark's commitment to this program is part of our commitment to them, and part of our commitment to social equity.**

We try to keep a balance—I'd say 70 percent student parents. It fluctuates a bit. In that student population, we see high numbers of what have been identified as risk populations for retention. So one of the things, just before leaving, was Susan Maxwell was instrumental in helping us to create a way to track our student parents' success rates. We're doing that across the state with all childcare programs. We are going to be looking at retention and strategies with these populations. We also believe—and we don't know this yet, it will have to be

a research question—but we really want to know what our retention rate is. Because we're so close to the families and we work with retention in supporting their children, and I want to see what the retention rate comparison is.

We have large numbers of students here who are first-generation in college. Our Family Life faculty do an amazing job of supporting student parents in school. And student families have stress. They have life happen to them. And by us having that option to have parent involvement, we can design specific involvement that will support them in whatever stress they are facing.

It happens here all the time. The support that this program can provide students is just amazing. They come in to withdraw their kids because they're dropping out, and they'll be sobbing. Maybe it's something at home, maybe it's the workload, maybe it's trauma from their past that's creating stress. And we bring them in and sit them down and connect them to resources—and they stay in school. Nobody dropping off or picking up their kid is going to see those stories. But they are here, lots and lots and lots of them.

It's about supporting families—supporting them to be successful in a career path, but you're also supporting them to start a journey of parenting and preparation for the K-12 system. And if we're sending children who are healthy and excited about learning and ready to learn—who are open to inquiry, open to investigation—then we're breaking cycles. We're gaining an opportunity for a future Clarker to be successful here at the college.

We have third-generation families here in the program. We have students who work for us who were children here. We have grandchildren here of people who went to Clark. There's a rich history, and lots of new families who are entering through our door all the time.

**What advice do you have for whoever comes in to your position? [Ed note: At the time of this interview, Cornelius's successor had not yet been named. Michele Volk is now the Director of Child & Family Studies.]**



Oh, I've got pages and pages and pages of single-spaced writing already! [Laughs.] About the history, about the values. You know, it isn't about staying the same. That goes back to the very beginning comments about how we are with each other. Every person who comes in the door here, even if they're here for just a short period of time, they're bringing something into the space and into our world, and we want to value that, we want to value their voice. So when a new person comes in and joins our staff, they're bringing a beautiful dimension of who they are and what they can bring to our community. And we really believe in sharing the strengths and talents and joys between each other and with our children and families. Different teachers bring different passions and interests to the program. We all do that. The outdoors was definitely mine. We have a beautiful performance that we do every year, and that was Sarah Theberge's gift. And Michelle Mallory's bringing in the development of the art studio, the development of the library. You see the passion, you see the gifts, and they bring that into the program and it gets expressed. So the new director will come in and will have interests and passions and things that she or he will bring to the program, and it will thrive, and it will be wonderful.

That's another reason why it's always good to have some change. Also, you don't pay attention to things you don't like to do. That can create gaps. I'm not savvy with technology—I get by, but I don't Facebook. We need somebody who can bring people up to speed. I bought iPad Air2's for every classroom.

They're for electronic assessment—that's the future, we need to be looking at the way we do our assessment of children and screening, we absolutely have to do it—and I don't want to have anything to do with it! [Laughs.] That's for the next generation.

**So what comes next for you?**

I've told everybody I'm taking one year off. I've had many approaches about consulting work, but I need a break from the early learning community for a year to reassess and then I'll decide what I can and can't do.

My oldest grandkid is in kindergarten, and the two youngest are both one—they're four months apart. So I will definitely be spending time with them, and I'll be traveling and gardening and working out and probably doing a fair amount of cleaning and tossing things out. I'll be—oh! The kitchen! You were asking about legacy earlier. I'm really proud of getting our food program running, so our children can have hot, nutritious lunches made with healthy ingredients. Gosh, how did I forget that?

**Well, 35 years—you can do an awful lot in that time, it seems like.**

Yeah. [Laughs.] Yeah, I guess so.

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# Clark men's basketball rolls

# in home opener



Clark College Penguin Miles Martin dunks during a Dec. 4 game against Wenatchee Community College. *Photo: Bruce Berg*

The Clark College men's basketball team opened its home season with a wire-to-wire, 84-64 victory over the visiting Wenatchee Valley Knights on December 4.

The Penguins, who had previously relied on their hot shooting to create early leads, just couldn't find the range from the field and only shot 33 percent from the floor and 32 percent from 3. The shooting woes frustrated the Penguins, which led to some uncharacteristic fouls and turnovers as the team pressed early in the game. The Penguins committed 27 fouls, which led to 34 free-throw attempts for Wenatchee.



“Games like that are good to go through,” Head Coach Alex Kirk said following the win. “No one in that locker room feels good about our performance, but we found a way win despite not being at our best. There’s a lot to learn from this type of performance.”

It certainly wasn’t all bad for Clark College, as the Penguins had four players in double figures, led by Micah Paulson’s 19 points on 6-10 shooting. Bryan Berg added 13, Eris Winder Jr. added 11, and Aubrey Stephens added 10. Additionally, Glenn Baral had another great overall performance: 6 points, 10 rebounds, 2 blocks, 3 assists, 0 turnovers and only 1 foul.

Led by Baral’s 10 rebounds, the Penguins out-rebounded the Knights from Wenatchee Valley 52-43, en route to a 17-5 advantage in second chance points. During the evening, the Penguins had 17 offensive rebounds, their highest number to date. “The guys really crashed the offensive glass hard tonight,” a pleased Coach Kirk said, looking at the stat sheet. “In that area, this was definitely our best effort thus far this season.”

Additionally, the Penguins had 14 steals and forced 21 overall turnovers on the evening, which led to a 16-8 advantage in points off of turnovers. While Clark’s outside shooting touch wasn’t as efficient as had been previously, the Penguins still outscored the Knights 30-9 in points off of threes.

Perhaps the greatest strength thus far for the Penguins has been their depth, and once again the Clark bench proved to be a huge weapon. Clark’s bench dominated the Knights 38-22 in bench scoring. Aubrey Stephens, Devon Hawkins and David Baze all provided huge contributions throughout the game, especially on the defensive end, where they frustrated Wenatchee all night long.

Next up for the Penguins will be Concordia JV on Thursday, December 10. Tip is at 7 p.m. at the O’Connell Sports Complex.

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# Clark Makes Run at Title



The Clark College volleyball team celebrates its second place finish in the 2015 season.

The Clark Volleyball team started the NWAC Championship tournament with a No. 3 South Region seed and an opening match loss on Thursday to Walla Walla in five sets. After that, the Penguins went on a roll and won their next six matches on Friday and Saturday to make it to the Championship game on Sunday.

Head coach Mark Dunn said he kept telling the team to take things one match at a time. And after a big win over South Region rival Chemeketa, it was about authenticating that win. "After we defeated Chemeketa on Friday, we felt like we had to validate that on Saturday," Dunn said. "And the ladies came through with four in a row."

Their run at the NWAC Championship came to a halt Sunday afternoon at the Tacoma Convention Center. Three-time defending champ Blue Mountain (42-9) of Pendleton, Oregon, added a fourth straight title with a 3-1 win over the Penguins. The Penguins opened the match with a back-and-forth battle and won 25-23. The next three sets and the title went to the Timberwolves. Scores for the match were 23-25, 25-17, 25-22, and 25-20.

Clark's Janessa Mast had 14 kills and 16 digs, Livia Strandberg had 12 kills and 10 digs, Meghan Turner had 26 digs, Gauleighyan Eastman had 22 assists and 10 digs, and Kinsey Pease had 22 assists. For a complete box score of the championship:

<http://www.nwacsports.org/volleyball/gameinfo.php?id=5620>

It was the first time since 1979 that a Clark team had played for an NWAC Volleyball title. Clark finished the year with a 26-16 record and as runners-up in the Championship. In addition to taking the second-place trophy, Clark had three players named to the All-Tournament team. Those three were sophomores Meghan Turner and Janessa Mast, and freshman Melisa Ljuca. The all-star libero, Meghan Turner, was also named "Most Inspirational Player" of the tournament.

## **2015 Clark Volleyball (26-15)**

### **26 NWAC Tournament Appearances**

#### **2 top 4 finishes**

#### **Road to the Championship**

#3 Seed out of the South, 7-5 Region Record

Saturday – Clark def Linn-Benton (14-25,25-20,15-13)

Saturday – Clark def Tacoma (25-21,16-25,15-13)

Saturday – Clark def Walla Walla (25-13,25-17)

Saturday – Clark def Bellevue (22-25,25-22,15-6)

Friday – Clark def Chemeketa (21-25,25-23,17-15)

Thursday – Clark def Pierce (25-17,25-13)

Thursday – Walla Walla def Clark  
(22-25,12-25,25-19,25-20,20-18)

## **Team Tournament Stats**

### **Hitting Percentage**

Clark – .195, 4th ranked in the tournament

Blue Mountain – .194, 5th ranked in the tournament

### **Opponent Hitting Percentage**

Clark – .109, 1st ranked in the tournament

Blue Mountain – .144, 3rd ranked in the tournament

### **Assists**

Blue Mountain -11.33/set, 3rd ranked in the tournament

Clark – 11.10, 6th ranked in the tournament

### **Kills**

Blue Mountain – 12.39/set, 3rd ranked in the tournament

Clark – 11.71, 7th ranked in the tournament

### **Blocks**

Clark – 2.43/set, 2nd ranked in the tournament

Blue Mountain – 1.78/set, 6th ranked in the tournament

### **Service Aces**

Blue Mountain – 1.78/set, 3rd ranked in the tournament

Clark – 1.14/set, 13th ranked in the tournament

*Photo by Tracy Swisher, NWAC Sports Information Director*