

Honoring Excellence



On Opening Day 2013, Exceptional Faculty Award plaques were presented to, *left to right*, Darcie Thompson (accepting the award for her mother-in-law, Mickey Thompson), Patti Serrano, Bruce Elgort, Tony Chennault, and Mike Arnold.

Clark College President Bob Knight announced the recipients of the 2013 Exceptional Faculty Awards during the 2013 Commencement ceremony on June 20; they were presented with engraved plaques during Opening Day on September 11. This year, five faculty members—two part-time instructors and three full-time professors—received the award, which honors excellence in teaching.

The Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards are presented annually to full-time and part-time faculty members in recognition of exemplary work performance, positive impact on students, professional commitment, and other contributions to

the college. Nominations are 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.

This year's Exceptional Faculty Award recipients are:



Mike Arnold

Mike Arnold, Health and Physical Education

Mike Arnold began teaching at Clark College in 1989 and over that time has taught everything from archery to weight lifting, as well as coaching athletic teams. His students praise him for helping them improve not only their bodies, but their minds and characters as well. "Not only does he want you to do well in his class, he wants you to do well in life," wrote one student in his nomination.

Another student wrote, "Mike Arnold is one of the most caring, respectable, honest and genuine people I have ever met. He is willing to help any student that is in need. ... He is more than a teacher; he is a friend and a mentor."

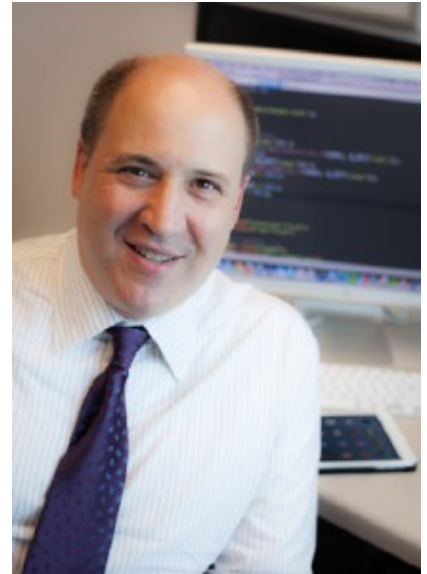


Tony Chennault

Tony Chennault, Biology

"Simply put, Tony Chennault is the best professor I have ever had," wrote one student in nominating Chennault for the Exceptional Faculty Award. Many students praise Chennault for making a notoriously difficult series of classes—namely, Human Anatomy and Physiology—fun and understandable.

Chennault, who also teaches Human Biology, began teaching at Clark in 2008 and received tenure in 2011. He strives to make his students feel comfortable as they tackle challenging material, providing them with helpful study tips and mnemonic tricks for learning anatomical terms. "I believe this award is a reflection of having a job that I truly love and am passionate about, and I take pride in bringing that passion and energy to class every day, trying my best to make learning the science of the human body fun for the students as I have fun, too," he said.



Bruce Elgort

Bruce Elgort, Computer Technology

Bruce Elgort has only been teaching at Clark since winter quarter 2013, but already he has made a huge impression on his students. “I was worried when I started his class that I wouldn’t be able to learn the material or properly grasp the concepts, but after I was in Bruce’s class for an hour, I felt confident and comfortable and able to learn anything,” wrote one nominator.

While Elgort is relatively new to teaching in a college setting, he has a long career in computer technology. He has worked for major technology companies, including Sharp and Underwriters Laboratories, and launched his own successful software company. When he teaches courses about programming, HTML, and PHP coding, he brings real-life experience from the work world into his classroom—a classroom that extends into the virtual realm through help sessions conducted via social media. “In today’s hyper-connected, ‘always-on’ world, the ability to extend the physical classroom is something that has become an integral part of all my work at Clark,” Elgort says.



Patti Serrano

Patti Serrano, Business Administration

Patti Serrano has had plenty of time to develop fans at Clark College—she began teaching here in 1981, beginning by teaching Fashion Merchandising before transitioning to Business Management and Marketing courses. During that time, Serrano has demonstrated leadership at the college time and again. She helped draft the college's Strategic Plan and participated in the college's last three accreditation efforts, as well as serving on countless committees to improve college functions; she has also served as head of the college's Business Department and chair of the Business Division. Additionally, she is a committed educator.

"Having known Patti Serrano for over thirty years, I have personally seen the many, many hours she has devoted to helping her students with guidance in professional and personal advice," said one coworker. "She has been a positive force for hundreds of students."



Mickey Thompson

Mickey Thompson, Paralegal

Mickey Thompson entered the legal profession in 1977, and she brings both a depth of knowledge and a great enthusiasm about paralegal work to her teaching. Students point to the countless hours she has spent serving as the advisor to the Clark College Law Club and to her patience when guiding them through the thicket of legal terminology.

“She’s compassionate, organized, strict, and funny all at the same time,” wrote one student in her nomination. “Legal procedure is tough and complicated, and Mickey makes sure that all of her students understand the course material and have a good grasp on the concepts.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

All “Fore” the Students



Student-athlete volunteers at the 2013 Penguin Nation Charity Golf Tournament with Athletics Secretary Senior Marla Derrick, *second from left*.

More than 120 golfers converged on Royal Oaks Country Club for an afternoon of fun on the links in support of Clark athletics in late August during the Penguin Nation Charity Golf Tournament. The winning team—finishing 12 under par with a score of 60—was led by Quail Construction owner Jon Girod and his son, Jai, who plays for Clark’s baseball team.



More than 120 golfers participated in the 2013 Penguin Nation Charity Golf Tournament.

There were a variety of contests during the game to keep it fun and competitive. The men's longest-drive winner was Mick Hoffman; women's longest-drive went to Jeanne Caswell. Scott Munn won the closest-to-the-pin contest by coming within 13 inches of the cup.

From the moment the golfers were greeted at their vehicles by Clark's soccer teams, to dinner with volleyball and baseball players and track-and-field athletes, the participants learned how much Clark's student athletes and coaches appreciated their support.

Royal Oaks and its membership graciously welcomed the players to its beautiful, tree-lined course for the annual Penguin Charity Golf event. Premier sponsors included Wacom, US Bank, Homewood Suites, Sterling Bank, Adidas and Columbia Credit Union.



Vice President of Administrative Services Bob Williamson, left, and Vice President of Student Affairs Bill Belden get ready to hit the links.

Additionally, tee sponsors included Clark College Bookstore, Biggs Insurance, The Blind Onion Pizza, NY Life, Keil Enterprises, First Pacific Associates, Exercise Equipment NW, Residence Inn, and Moss Adams. The hole-in-one car sponsor, Dick Hannah Kia, provided a silver Optima on the course.

No holes-in-one were made, but funds were raised in support of Clark's student athletes to ensure their bright futures through scholarships, high-quality education and facilities.

*Story submitted by Rhonda Morin and Vivian Cheadle-Manning
Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

Book 'Em!



Faculty volunteer Carole Makewich helps student Tamika Taylor shop for textbooks.

For Alex Adrian, the thing he's looking forward to most about taking classes at Clark College is something he *won't* be doing—namely, rote vocabulary quizzes.

“I would finish them in, like, half the time provided,” said the Hudson's Bay High School student. “It was really boring.”

Alex was one of 214 Running Start students to attend the Clark College Bookstore's Running Start Open House on August 27. Running Start is a Washington state program that allows qualified high school students to take community college classes for credit during their junior and senior years, potentially earning an associate degree while still in high school.



Father-and-son duo Peter and Alex Adrian were getting ready for Alex's first year at Clark by attending the Running Start Open House.

"It's such a great opportunity, especially for bright kids like Alex," said Alex's father, Peter Adrian, who had brought his son to the open house to shop for textbooks. Peter added that, with two younger children at home, the opportunity to save on college tuition for Alex was also appealing. Running Start tuition is significantly lower than standard college tuition.

Some 1,771 Running Start students are expected to attend Clark during the 2013-2014 academic year—a record number. Each year, the Bookstore hosts an open house before fall quarter begins so that students and their parents can become familiar with college systems, including Tutoring Services, Clark College Libraries, and ASCC (student government). Additionally, Bookstore staff set up informational stations where visitors could learn about how to best use the Bookstore's services.

"This is a three-quarter textbook," Bookstore employee Ali Hallenbeck told a small crowd gathered at the "Affordable Textbook Options" station as she held up a massive, hardback tome with Japanese writing on it. "If you're only taking one

quarter of the language, it's probably cheaper to buy this," she added, holding up a thinner, soft-cover workbook.

"The main reason for the open house is to give students a chance to visit the bookstore and learn about how to find out what books and supplies will be needed for their classes," said Bookstore Secretary Senior Leah Skeen, who organizes the event every year. "Students are taught how to use the book list and supply list. The secondary purpose for the event is to provide a fun, inviting atmosphere to welcome the students to Clark, help them feel comfortable starting a new school, and let them know the resources available to them. The open house is a time to build relationships and let students know we're here for them. Hopefully, after attending the event, they feel more confident and prepared for their first day of class at Clark."



Bookstore buyer Kaina Barba helps students out at the technology desk.

It seemed to be working for Fort Vancouver High School student Tamika Taylor. She decided to enroll in Running Start to accelerate her ability to join the U.S. Navy, where she hopes to become a cryptology technician, a field that appeals to both her love of math and her sense of tradition; both her grandfather and father served in the military. When asked what she was looking forward to most about her time at Clark, she unhesitatingly answered, "Math class."

And did she feel at all nervous about taking on the challenge of college while still in high school? Taylor looked around the Bookstore for a second, then smiled and said, “Not really, no.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Welcome, Student Athletes!



Fall quarter starts for most students on September 23, but Clark's student athletes began their year on Saturday, August 10. That's when the Athletic Department hosted an orientation session for 70 first-year student athletes.

The student athletes met with advisors and registration staff, but also learned about being a Penguin—and specifically, an athletic Penguin—by hearing the history of the athletics program as well as getting information about study resources, social media, and NWAACC.

“Our Student-Athlete Orientation introduces our freshmen and transfers to key people across campus and gives them the tools to begin successful careers at Clark,” said Charles Guthrie, Director of Athletics. “Of the 70 students who attended, we had an estimated 20 student athletes who are first-generation, and these types of events are vital to seeing them succeed.”

Clark’s fall sports include men’s and women’s soccer, cross country, and volleyball. Visit clarkpenguins.com to see an updated schedule of athletic events.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Notes from California



Concert Choir performing at Union Square, directed by Pavel Kovalenko, student director.

Eighty-eight members of the Clark College Concert Band and Concert Choir represented Clark College by performing in San Francisco, California, the week after spring quarter ended. The tour and performances culminated a year of concerts presented by these two Clark College music groups.

During the trip, which occurred June 23-26, the groups performed two concerts together, followed by individual choral and band workshops taught by nationally recognized conductors. One performance was service-related: The groups gave a free concert at the San Francisco Veterans Administration Community Living Center. It was a moving experience for the students. Following the performance, student Jessica Banks called it "amazing" and "a beautiful experience."

The second performance served a public-relations function:

This free concert at Union Square promoted Clark College's excellence and drew a large crowd that responded with enthusiasm to the students' skill and talent.

The Band and Choir each had opportunities to be rehearsed by notable music educator/conductors. The Concert Choir worked with world-renowned conductor Elena Sharkova of the Symphony Silicon Valley; students came away from the experience edified and validated for their work and passion for singing. Choir member Isabelle Wilson said afterward, "I am leaving San Francisco amazed and coming home so inspired. Not only by our performances this week, but the heart and talent and laughter that went along with it. This was a weekend I won't forget because of my Concert Choir family. I was inspired after working with Elena Sharkova, and I am inspired by all of you. Thank you for making my year."

The Concert Band worked with Charles R. Barrett at San Francisco State University, taking away new skills and insights to performing that will benefit them technically and musically.

Both groups attended a professional chamber music concert at the Davies Symphony Hall, which for many of the students was a new experience. Band director Rich Inouye commented, "This tour really represents the comprehensive education we try to provide at Clark. It was the perfect balance of culture, education, and performance, and the students really had a great experience."

Photo: courtesy of April Duvic

The End of an Ara



Ara Serjoie bids a heartfelt farewell to the Penguin Nation.

More than 100 guests gathered to say goodbye to Clark College Foundation's Ara Serjoie, who has accepted a position in California, and to share funny and touching memories of their relationships with him during an August reception at Gaiser Student Center.

Jan Oliva, a philanthropic partner of Clark College and community leader, called Serjoie a visionary who excels at inspiring others to give of their time and treasure. "You cannot say no to Ara," she said. "He has a vision and shares it with everyone."

Oliva also expressed what many in the room had experienced: Serjoie's genuine compassion for others and deep belief in the mission of Clark College has left a legacy at the college.

Jeanne Firstenburg, also a major donor to Clark College, said Serjoie has become a personal friend whom she will greatly miss.

Serjoie, senior vice president at the foundation, announced his departure to California State University, East Bay, in

Hayward, Calif., in June. He will serve as the vice president for university advancement and president of the foundation.

Bob Williamson, vice president of administrative services at Clark College, said, "The era of Ara is over, but he will be more than remembered: He's a legacy. We are a better place for Ara being here."

Williamson referred to several facilities and programs on campus that have been created or enhanced due to Serjoie's fundraising adeptness and strong community relationships: the Oliva Family Early Learning Center, Little Penguins' Gardens, Firstenburg Family Dental Hygiene Education and Care Center, and Columbia Credit Union Simulation Pharmacy, as well as many student scholarships.

Greg Wallace, Clark College Foundation Board of Directors chair, called Serjoie a "remarkable talent," adding, "Ara has a quick wit, he's engaging, very bright and he knows everyone from the region and remembers each of them."

Lisa Gibert, president and CEO of Clark College Foundation, said that when she was searching for a vice president of development seven years ago, she was looking for a partner who would work side-by-side with her. "I needed someone who could bring the foundation to a new level and could teach me about the amazing world of development," she said.

She said she found that and more in Serjoie: "He has my deepest respect and admiration. The community holds the college in high regard because of his professional ethics, responsibility to philanthropy and his unwavering belief in the mission of Clark College."

When Serjoie rose to speak, he said, "This evening is not about me; it's about you. It's about the students and the wonderful work faculty members and staff do every day in service to our students."

Then, with tears in his eyes, he said, "All of you have been kind to me over these past seven years, and for that and more you are forever in my heart."

Photo: Clark College Foundation/Rhonda Morin

Banking on Student Success



Roger Hinshaw, Bank of America's president in Oregon and Southwest Washington, and Monique Barton, senior VP of corporate social responsibility, at the bank's offices in Portland. In July, they presented a \$15,000

gift for Clark College's Volunteer & Service-Learning program.

Bank of America has donated \$15,000 to Clark College's Volunteer & Service-Learning program to prepare more than 1,000 students with valuable on-the-job training. The funding will assist with community partnerships and program expenses.

The Volunteer & Service-Learning program places students in more than 100 community nonprofits and governmental organizations, including American Red Cross, Boys and Girls Clubs, Columbia Springs, Habitat Store, and Hazel Dell Community Garden. Students receive experience that promotes their personal growth and contributes to their understanding of course material.

For example, Clark students have volunteered to build homes with Evergreen Habitat for Humanity; students taking Spanish have read bilingual versions of children's books at local elementary schools as a service-learning component of their classes. These experiences not only enrich the students' education, they can give students the real-world work experience that can lead to paying jobs.

The Bank of America grant will boost the resources for such major events as Career Days, which needs more than 100 volunteers to operate successfully. It will also allow the program to offer more service-learning opportunities; elevate awareness of career- and service-learning; and finalize new relationships with local businesses. Additionally, Bank of America employees will volunteer their own time to participate in Career Days and to educate students about personal finance.

Clark College President Robert K. Knight said the college's primary goal is to improve the rate of post-secondary completion. "As a result of the alignment with Bank of America, Clark anticipates students will receive high-quality work history experiences—particularly for students with little

or no previous work experience—through service learning and community engagement experiences, and opportunities for civic and community engagement, career exploration, life and soft-skill development,” he said.

“Providing grants to local nonprofit organizations that support career readiness is part of Bank of America’s broader effort to help create economically vibrant communities,” said Roger Hinshaw, Bank of America’s president in Oregon and Southwest Washington. “As part of that, we’re proud to support Clark College’s Career Service-Learning Program, which helps prepare college students to enter the workforce and, in turn, support our local economy.”

Clark’s Career Services department, which oversees the Volunteer & Service-Learning program, has a history of aligning college classroom learning with current community needs; promoting personal growth of college students through reflection about self, society and the future; combining experiential with academic instruction to focus on critical thinking and civic responsibility; and organizing on- and off-campus events that provide quality service opportunities for Clark College students, faculty and staff.

What a Weekend!

Clark College is hosting two major community events this coming weekend that may affect access to the main campus. Read below for information about how to plan around the events if you were expecting to be on campus this weekend—or why you might want to come, even if you weren’t.



**COUVAPALOOZA – SATURDAY,
AUGUST 17**

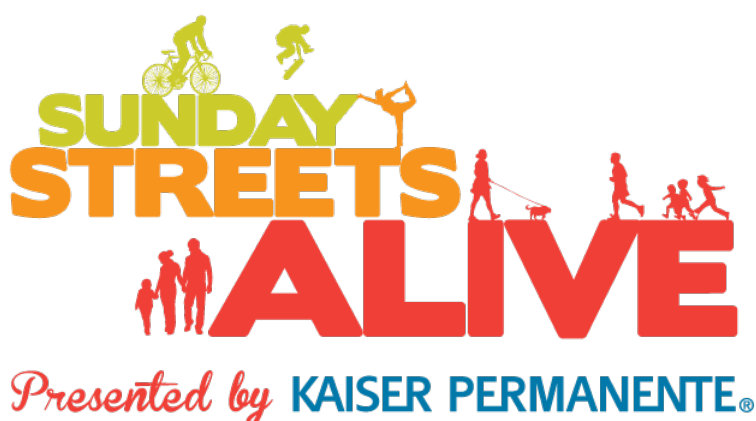
What it is: Now in its second year, Couvapalooza is a daylong, all-ages music festival benefiting local music-education programs, including Clark's.

How it affects Penguins: The event takes place 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the South Lawn in front of McLoughlin Blvd. Setup will begin on Friday, August 16. Classes will continue as scheduled. However, the event has rented all the Red lots and Blue Lot 1, so they will be unavailable to the college community. Also, expect some noise—these are rock bands, after all.

Why you might want to go: Besides the fact that some of the proceeds will go toward Clark's own music program, the event is boasting a well-known band as its headliner: Everclear, performers of modern-rock radio staples like "Santa Monica," "I Will Buy You a New Life," and "Everything to Everyone." Other acts include Santa Barbara rock band Winchester Rebels, Seattle-based alternative country singer Dylan Jakobsen, and Dallas artist Remington. A total of 16 bands are scheduled to perform including local favorites Smoochknob, One From Many, Foreign Talks, Seth Myzel and the Battle Ground High School Advanced Jazz Band. A beer and wine garden managed by

Northwest Battle Buddies will be available for attendees 21 and up. Activities for children will be available from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., including a music wall, balloon animals and face painting. The festival will also feature local art, craft and food vendors.

SUNDAY STREETS ALIVE – SUNDAY, AUGUST 18



What it is: Sunday Streets Alive is Clark County's first open street event, in which several streets in Vancouver will be closed to traffic so that

pedestrians, bicyclists, and others can travel between six activity areas, one of which is located on the southwest side of the main campus.

How it affects Penguins: McLoughlin is one of the roads closed to traffic (visit the official event website for a complete map of the route). Parking in the Red lots, as well as the restrooms in O'Connell Sports Center, will be open to participants, so expect more activity than normal in those areas. The event lasts 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Other college events will continue as scheduled.

Why you might want to go: The 4.2-mile route winds through downtown, Fort Vancouver, and up past Clark College and Uptown Village. Each of the six activity areas boasts food, vendors, entertainment, and fun activities. Clark is actively participating in this event—in fact, the college is still looking for volunteers, so contact Michelle Golder at mgolder@clark.edu as soon as possible if you'd like to help

out—with information tables for Admissions, Financial Aid, Veterans Programs, Career Services, and N.E.R.D. Girls. College personnel are also leading activities and demonstrations that include hiking, zumba, line dancing, t'ai chi, cooking, and a basketball competition.

All in the Family



Presidential Scholarship recipient Ramona Vercher at Clark College's 2013 Commencement.

Every last Sunday of the month, the Vercher family holds a big dinner for all its many members: Donnie and Louise Vercher, their nine children, 14 grandchildren, and assorted in-laws, relatives, and friends. The family would have plenty to

celebrate at their June dinner: Ramona Vercher, the second-youngest of the Vercher children, was named the recipient of the 2013-14 Community College President's Award. The annual scholarship is given to a Clark College graduate who is transferring to a Washington State University Vancouver degree program; it provides full-time tuition for one year, renewable for one additional year, for a total of four semesters.

The whole Vercher family was in attendance at commencement, when the award is announced. As Clark College President Bob Knight described Vercher's achievements, a massive cheer filled the amphitheater when the family realized she had won.

Vercher, who is a resident of Vancouver, graduated with honors, earning an associate degree in business administration. A first-generation college graduate, she plans to major in business administration with a specialization in finance while attending WSU Vancouver.

While at Clark, Vercher served in a number of volunteer roles both on and off campus. She was a work-study tutor at the Student Learning Center helping Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL) students in all subjects. She was also a Classroom Tutor, assisting professors in the classroom, and part of Clark's Homework Help program, where she assisted individual students. Within the greater community, her volunteer service has included work with the City of Vancouver's Urban Youth and Urban Forestry programs. Additionally, she helps run the charity begun by her family's small business, Daddy D's BBQ, providing Christmas presents to families in need, and works there as a cashier.

"Receiving this scholarship means everything in the world to me," said Ramona Vercher after the ceremony. "I am a first-generation college student, so to have this opportunity to continue my education is the biggest thing that has ever happened to me in my life."

Knight said that people who know Vercher praised her for her strong work ethic. Indeed, Vercher has often begun study sessions at 5 a.m. to fit them around her work and other activities. She and her longtime boyfriend, Dwan James (also a Clark student), have regularly eschewed fun weekend outings for “date nights” of studying.

Vercher attributes her work ethic to the example set by her parents; Donnie regularly works 13 hours a day at his barbecue restaurant, a business he began after breaking his back doing construction work on bridges. “I never graduated high school,” said Donnie. “I think [Ramona] sees what her parents went through and wants better.”

Indeed, many of the Vercher children are pursuing education. Ramona’s brother Sherman recently graduated from Western Oregon University, and two of her sisters received their GED diplomas at Clark’s GED and high school completion ceremony on June 22.

Vercher was one of three finalists selected for the award. President Knight announced that the other two finalists, Jennifer Campbell and David Taub, would receive \$1,000 scholarships from the Clark College Foundation to continue their education. Knight said of the three finalists, “They are all sterling examples of what Clark College is about.”

Vercher plans to continue being an example of both Clark College and her family. “I am going to do big things through this scholarship,” she said. “This definitely won’t be the last you see of me.”

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Now and Then



Left to right, George Welsh and President Bob Knight congratulate Outstanding Alumni Award recipient Professor Michael Greenwood.

Clark College's alumni association celebrated connections and camaraderie at the annual Alumni Student Dinner on June 4.

Students and alumni gathered to honor Outstanding Alumni Award recipient Professor Michael Greenwood '61, who taught mathematics at Clark for more than 30 years. He played a role in taking Clark and Washington State University Vancouver global when he taught at Krasnoyarsk State University in Russia on a Fulbright Award.

More than 120 students and alumni exchanged business cards and laughs over dinner, which was partially underwritten by community partner Riverview Community Bank.

The alumni association also gave two, \$2,000 scholarships to Clark students Ashton Kylo and Natalie Hendren. The awards were given to the students by a previous recipient, Rebecca Zeff, who is finishing her degree at WSUV and plans to attend medical school following graduation.

George Welsh '67, alumni association president, said that bringing together alumni and students is a great opportunity to support each other.

"The students hear what is happening in our community from alumni, and the alumni are reminded of their own days at Clark, which helped begin many career paths," Welsh said. "Clark is a special place and this event helps all of us stay connected."

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley