

Molded at Clark



The Next Step: An exhibition of work created by alumni from the Ceramics Area at Clark College.

On February 22, several Clark College alumni gathered in the Frost Art Center's lobby gallery during the reception for their collective show, "The Next Step." The brainchild of art professor Lisa Conway, the show highlights the achievements of former students in the college's ceramics.

"I feel really kind of flabbergasted to be doing this," said Trish Bottemiller '15, gazing at a fellow alumna's delicately painted bowl. "It's so nice to be back to see what everybody else from Clark is doing."

Bottemiller said that her time at Clark was "a huge influence" on her artistic path. "I had never touched clay before I came to Clark," she said. "Clark definitely prepared me to continue my education at [the Oregon College of Art and Craft]. My

portfolio was approved before I even applied, because I was so thoroughly prepared for what I was up against.”

The show runs through March 25 and is part of Clark’s programming during the upcoming National Council for Education in the Ceramic Arts conference in Portland in March. According to the show’s opening statement, “Collectively, these 10 artists have all found employment in their field, built their own studios, completed residences, internships, mentorships, or transferred on to other undergraduate and graduate programs in ceramic arts. Most importantly, they have all created their own communities for sharing resources, advice and inspiration along the way.”

Read more about the artists, in their own words:

Elizabeth Alexander

Trisha Bottemiller

Jordan Jones

KeigKenzie Studios

Hector Macias

Yelena Roslaya

Lauren Ruhe

Aleka Tomlinson

Alyssa Willard



LIZ ALEXANDER

I applied to Clark College exclusively to take ceramics

classes, and eight short months after enrolling I finally got the chance to sign up for Ceramics I and rapidly became obsessed with clay. Ceramics II and III quickly followed, as well as a Special Projects class so I could continue working with clay beyond the typical class projects. When the time came to graduate from Clark, the thought of losing access to the equipment and supplies (that were now essential to my practice and I couldn't afford on my own) was worrying to say the least. Fortunately, one of my ceramics teachers strongly suggested that I apply to Oregon College of Art and Craft and to my astonishment I was accepted.

I am now in my thesis year at OCAC and my studio practice has changed a lot from what I thought it would be. When I started making work I didn't understand the environmental effect that just creating a piece of art can have. I thought nothing of buying supplies for a new project or what my pieces were made of. With each year that I have been in school, however, I've gained more knowledge about the responsibilities of being an artist. For me, being a responsible artist means having an awareness of the materials that I use in my work and using as much recycled and eco-friendly supplies as possible, including found objects. I still have a lot to learn to reach the type of working practice that I want to achieve, but this is my way of continuing to create without feeling like I am just producing objects to clutter up the world we live in.



TRISH BOTTEMILLER

When I first came to Clark, I was determined to be a drawing/painting major. That was what I had done, and been good at, my entire life. One fateful semester, though, I found myself in a ceramics class as an elective. It changed my life, and eventually became my major. I transferred from Clark to the Oregon College of Art and Craft, where I currently study for my Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics. The transition from the familiar, community space of Clark's ceramics department was a bit scary and it took some time to really feel at home in my new school. I'm learning so much, and I've had the most amazing exposure to an entirely art-based community thanks to OCAC. It has forever changed who I am as a person and as an artist. I never imagined I would be making the things that I am. Currently, I'm very invested in both figurative sculpture, and mold-made slip-cast objects using a marbling technique that I have become rather obsessed with. I have the amazing opportunity to create not only my own glazes, but my own clay bodies. Lately, much of my mold-made objects are cast using a cone 10 translucent porcelain that has been a learning experience to work with. I look forward to learning even more. It is never enough.



JORDAN JONES

I left Clark College to pursue a three-year apprenticeship with Robbie Lobell and Cook on Clay on Whidbey Island. I was thoroughly excited, completely nervous, and definitely overwhelmed as I left Clark in a whirlwind heading for my new adventure in clay. This opportunity allowed me to continue to work in ceramics after Clark, and also gave me the tools to continue working in clay after the apprenticeship was over. I was immersed in the day-to-day aspects of the life of a studio potter, along with learning how a small business in artisan manufacturing runs and grows. I had a studio space and Robbie's mentorship, which greatly helped me develop my voice and style. After completing my apprenticeship, I worked at Cook on Clay as an employee before taking the plunge and committing to working for myself full-time as a studio potter. I currently continue to live on Whidbey, sharing a house and home studio with my studio mate from my apprenticeship. I create functional pottery with playful and lively animals carved onto my pots. Like many other potters, I believe that using handmade objects brings joy to people in their daily lives. I want my pots to delight the people that use them. I use a stoneware clay that I decorate with sgraffito and slip inlay, soda-fired to cone 10. I am interested in exploring cone 6 electric firing again and plan to start experimenting with that soon.

I think one of the biggest resources for continuing to work in ceramics has been getting involved in my clay community. There are so many wonderful and knowledgeable people out there. Also, the *"Field Guide for Ceramic Artisans"* compiled by Julia Galloway, is a fabulous resource chock-full of valuable, helpful information. My advice for students at Clark who want to continue their pursuits would be to put yourself out there as much as you can. Become involved in your clay community, and get to know the people around you. Apply to shows, call for entries, and galleries. Research and pursue different ways to continue your education, whether it be undergrad, grad school, residencies, workshops, assistantships, or

apprenticeships. There are so many different ways to continue on your path, find out what works for you.



KEIGKENZIE STUDIO: SAM MACKENZIE & KELLY KEIGWIN

We both began our journey with ceramics at Clark College, Sam in 2003 and Kelly in 2010. Upon exiting we knew we wanted to continue to create pottery, but didn't know it would become our primary form of expression. We had the common questions of how and where to keep working, since we couldn't immediately build a ceramics studio of our own. Sam continued her education at Oregon College of Art and Craft, which lead to teaching art classes for children. After we met, Sam recommended Kelly join her working at OCAC which brought Kelly back into a ceramics studio.

Sam was able to seek out and purchase used items to start a home studio, including an ancient Skutt kiln and a Pacifica wheel. We've had to learn along the way about repairing and keeping used studio equipment running. We recently upgraded to a larger, newer used Skutt kiln, but it's taken a while. We learned many things by working with other potters at OCAC and by visiting Georgie's in Portland. For those who can't buy their own equipment, it is possible to work and have your pieces fired at Georgie's, at community centers, and even at other artists' studios for a fee.

We're fortunate to have a home studio. It is nothing fancy, but it gets the job done. Our advice to students who want to continue pursuing art after graduation is to make sure you know your resources. Don't be afraid to be scrappy. There are many paths to take with art, particularly ceramics and pottery. Do you want to be in gallery shows? Do you want to be a studio potter? Do you want to be an educator? OCAC is a good option for continued learning and access to equipment – either by seeking a degree or simply signing up for an evening class.

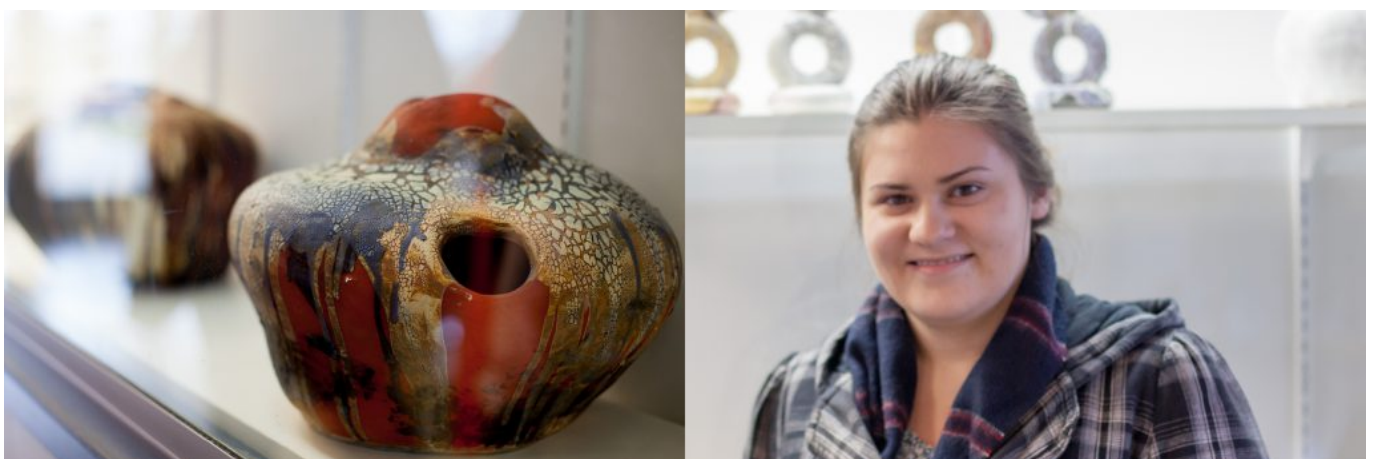
We have both taken meandering paths in life, in general and artistically. We both have many years of experience working in various media, but pottery has become a natural way for us to work collaboratively and sell work to support ourselves. Generally speaking, Sam throws on the wheel, while Kelly throws, does some slab work and hand building. Kelly carves imagery on the pieces and we both work on glazing. Our work is mostly cone 6 porcelain and features colorful characters that reflect both the lighter side of human experiences and connect with personal emotions. We often feature hearts and themes of companionship – a reflection of the happiness and love we all long for. We find that people connect with these images personally, in a way that evokes positive feelings and simple joy.



HECTOR MACIAS

It started with a pottery class in high school. The art credit I desired went on to fulfill its purpose and more. With an interest in ceramics, I found myself in the pottery studio at Clark College. During this time, I had the opportunity to learn and explore more about ceramics than I could ever imagine. After leaving Clark, I ran into one of the problems every ceramic student would face, studio space. Luckily, Oregon and Washington both have great ceramic communities with great opportunities. I became involved with the Oregon Potter's Association and found studios to temporarily work in. It wasn't until a few months later that I bought my first potter's wheel and now I happily work in my studio at home.

My style of ceramic work is largely influenced by Japanese pottery. The wares that I create are wheel thrown from porcelain or on occasion from red clay bodies. I'm a big fan of using celadon glazes and glazes with a lot of flux. My work is almost always made to be functional. There's nothing like eating and drinking from handmade wares. If you have never used a pottery wheel I encourage you to try it sometime. You might find the experience to be very therapeutic.



YELENA ROSLAYA

My immediate feelings after leaving Clark College were nervous and excited at the same time. I was nervous not knowing what

was ahead of me or what was going to unfold in terms of my artistic career. I was also excited because it was like an adventure where I couldn't predict what was going to happen. After leaving Clark College, I transferred immediately to Oregon College of Art and Craft, where I focused on Ceramics. Four years later, I graduated with a BFA from OCAC and am now assisting ceramic artist Careen Stoll in Battle Ground. At OCAC, I pushed myself and worked beyond academia. I tried to take every job opportunity or call to artist that came up that pertained to me. This led me to be a step ahead above my peers as well as access some great collaborations I didn't expect.

My ceramic work is evolved around sound, musical instruments, and my personal experience with hearing-motion synesthesia. My style tends to be formed intuitively and I love to use colorful underglazes and crawling glazes that contrast each other. It gives the work energy and motion as if it's alive. I currently share a studio space with Careen Stoll, where we share ideas, advice, and helpful information. It's a two-way mentoring atmosphere. My personal advice for ceramic or art students who want to continue their pursuit after graduation is to keep going, to continue looking and applying and never give up.



LAUREN RUHE

After completion of my AFA at Clark College, I continued my education at The Oregon College of Art and Craft (OCAC). While attending OCAC, I focused on improving my techniques, as well as on finding my own voice and style for my work. I also developed new and useful skills, such as how to make my own glazes, different methods of firing clay, and digging up local clay in order to process it into a usable material.

A frequent theme that I use in my work is the memory of the place where I grew up. I spent my childhood in a thickly-wooded area located outside of Vancouver, Washington, where I encountered wildlife daily. The forest was a mysterious and magical place that was full of life, and also seemed much bigger than anything I could have ever imagined. I encountered forest animals daily, and my family even named some of the frequent visitors to our yard. These forest friends have been the main focus of my current work.



ALEKA TOMLINSON

After taking ceramics courses at Clark College as part of the Running Start Program in 2006, I transferred into a BFA program at the Oregon College of Art and Craft. After that I took a hiatus from clay and made work privately in book format through drawing and painting. A job opportunity as studio technician at Pigeon Toe Ceramics in Portland brought me back

to clay. I quickly grew from my position as a studio tech to a full time production potter and operations manager. During this time, I was able to make connections with local artists in Portland and began working as an assistant to artists Lilith Rockett in ceramics and Andy Paiko in glass.

In 2015 I was accepted by the Ash Street Project in Portland, a ceramics mentorship program run by Thomas Orr and Joanna Bloom. I was fortunate to spend 11 months sharing a studio with Thomas and Joanna, three other mentees, and a number of visiting artists including Jean Nicolas Gerard, Eva Kwong, Jessica Jackson-Hutchins, Dirk Staschke, Jennifer Kenworth, Michelle Liccardo, and my teacher from Clark, Lisa Conway. During my time at Ash Street I took advantage of the dedicated studio space and found my voice as a ceramic artist. Upon leaving in the summer of 2016, I moved into a private home studio and worked part time as assistant to ceramic artist Brian Jones. That fall I assisted artists Birdie Boone and Matt Repsher during an 8-week concentration at Penland School of Craft in North Carolina, after which I returned home to Portland to continue work in my own studio, while assisting artists Brian Jones and Victoria Christen.



ALYSSA WILLARD

After leaving Clark I was excited to continue my education in

the arts. I went on to complete my BFA at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, and am currently working towards my MFA at Montana State University in Bozeman, with a focus on both ceramics and painting. Montana State University has great studio spaces and equipment. There are wood-fired kilns, electric kilns, gas-fired, and soda/salt kilns all available for me to use. It is also great because I am surrounded by so many talented artists who work in a variety of mediums; their work inspires me and I can get quality feedback on my work from both the faculty and other graduate students. My advice for other art students that want to continue their pursuits is to continue to network, and actively participate in the art scene in some way, whether it's through school, residencies, commissions, or call-for-entries.

Currently my work explores the interactions between technology and the natural environment. I am interested in the combination of plant forms with electronic or mechanical components. My work can be interpreted in different ways, and I am starting to be more interested in the viewer's interpretation, rather than describing how I view the work. I use a combination of techniques depending on the form I am looking to create. I have also been experimenting with firing techniques. I mostly electric fire, but I also do wood and salt firings. So far the wood and salt firings have only been used exclusively for functional pieces. I have also been experimenting with room-temperature finishes, such as using spray paint and resin.

Building a Better Future



Keeley
McConnell '16

You want to know Keeley McConnell's strategy for success, the thing that's helped her go from remedial math to high-level medical research? It's this: Stay focused on the path in front of you. One foot in front of the other. If you can make that next step, you can keep going.

Four years ago, the next step was: Get the kids in the car. Pack everything else in around them. Get the heck out of Dodge before your ex comes back.

Eighty miles later, McConnell and her three children arrived at a shelter for victims of domestic violence. She'd left her job, her home. She had no idea how she would support her family on the money she earned as a medical assistant. But one thing at a time. Find a place to live, get some stability.

It was only three months later, when McConnell had moved her family into an apartment, that she considered college. "When I was in high school, I never thought about college as an option," she says. "I'd taken one class when I was pregnant with my son, but I tested into the lowest level of math they had and I thought, 'Oh my goodness, this is going to take forever!'"

However, a friend encouraged McConnell to come with her to apply to Clark College. Just as she'd feared, McConnell tested into DVED 21, the lowest-level math course offered at the

time. But one thing at a time. Keep your eyes on the path.

McConnell's other strategy has been listening to advice from friends, family, and mentors. When an instructor suggested she enroll in Clark's Math Academy program, McConnell signed up. This yearlong program pairs standard classroom time with dedicated math labs, where students get extra help understanding difficult concepts. McConnell describes it as "the key to my success in math."



Keeley McConnell helping a student in Clark College's STEM Tutoring Center.

By the time McConnell finished her last Math Academy class, not only was she prepared to enter college-level math courses—she'd been recommended to become a math tutor herself. The experience helped boost her confidence and gave her the tools she needed to continue pursuing her dream of becoming a physician's assistant.

That goal would require her to spend two more years at Clark to earn an associate degree, plus another two at a four-year institution to complete a bachelor's, followed by at least two years of medical school. *But*. One foot in front of the other. Stay focused on the path in front of you.

McConnell continued to thrive at Clark, finding she enjoyed the intellectual challenge of biology coursework. And once again, a mentor stepped in to change the course of her life.

When biology chair Dr. Travis Kibota first approached her about applying to the BUILD EXIT0 Scholar Program, she was skeptical. Run by Portland State University in partnership with Oregon Health Sciences University, and with funding provided by the National Institutes of Health, the program helps undergraduates from diverse backgrounds become successful in health research careers.

“I was hesitant at first, because I wasn’t originally interested in going into research,” McConnell says. “But it’s been the most amazing opportunity.”

Through her participation in BUILD EXIT0, McConnell joined a cohort of students from community colleges in the region who formed a Research Learning Community. Within that RLC, she could learn about careers in research, develop skills, and connect with mentors. She also had a built-in social network to help her make the adjustment to a four-year institution after she graduated from Clark in spring 2016.

“If I had had to do all this without EXIT0, I would have been really overwhelmed,” she says. “I knew everyone at Clark—staff, faculty, students. PSU was huge. But the EXIT0 staff have been there for me—you can go in and ask them anything.”

Now a junior in her second semester at PSU, McConnell is deeply immersed in research in her chosen field of trauma medicine; she’ll even see her name on some upcoming research papers, a big boost to career advancement in the research world. “I work with the Chief of Trauma at OHSU,” she says proudly. “I wear a pager; when a call comes in, I’m there, collecting data and samples.”

McConnell says it was overwhelming when she first walked into OHSU. “I looked up and thought, ‘I’m so close. I’m literally standing in the building I want to have my future in. It’s what I’ve been waiting for my whole life.’”



Keeley McConnell, left, celebrates graduation from Clark College in 2016 with a friend.

She still faces challenges. While BUILD EXIT0 students receive a stipend that significantly eases the financial burden of being a college student, McConnell still works 30 hours a week outside of school to support herself and her three children, now ages 8, 9 and 18. And she struggles to find time to be present for her children as a mom.

“It’s probably my biggest challenge right now,” she says. “But they’re great, they’re my little drivers. I want them to have something better. They need to see that, when you want something and you work really hard at for it, you can get it.”

McConnell brought her son with her earlier this year when she was invited to the Washington State Association of College Trustees’ Transforming Lives Awards banquet, where they sat between Clark College President Bob Knight and two state senators. “I wanted him to experience that,” she says. “But once we were there, I realized how big a deal this was for me, too. With me, I get so focused on the road ahead, I don’t spend much time thinking about the big picture. It made me realize, ‘Oh, gosh, I guess I have come a long way.’ And, you know, my kids and I—we’re still moving forward.”

Are you a student interested in participating in BUILD EXIT0? The application deadline for the 2017-2018 year is February 28, and there is a free application help session on Friday, February 24, 10 a.m. – 11:50 a.m., in SHL 124.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Get a Running Start at Clark College



High school sophomores and juniors can learn how to take the next step in their education by attending one of two optional Running Start Information Night sessions at Clark College.

The identical sessions will be held 7:00-8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 1 and Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2017, in the Clark College gymnasium in the O'Connell Sports Center, located on the southwest corner of Clark College's main campus.

Running Start allows eligible juniors and seniors to earn college credit while they fulfill their high school graduation requirements. Running Start students attend Clark classes along with "regular" college students. They can choose from a full range of academic and professional/technical courses as long as the students meet the criteria and the classes are college-level.

The program, which can significantly reduce the cost of a four-year college degree, has proven popular in Southwest Washington. Some Running Start students are so motivated that

they earn their associate degree from Clark at the same time that they earn their high school diploma. According to Associate Director of Running Start Linda Calvert, these annual information nights frequently attract hundreds of interested students and parents to the college, which is why the college hosts two sessions. Fall Quarter 2016 Clark College welcomed 2432 Running Start students, which was up by 163 from the previous year.

These information sessions are for students and parents who want to know more about beginning the program in fall 2017. Calvert explained, "These optional sessions provide a great chance to hear current Running Start students candidly describe their experiences in the program. You'll also hear about the eligibility criteria, deadlines, and more."

Running Start students pay for books, transportation, and some fees, but do not pay full Clark College tuition. Students can be part-time or full-time in Running Start. Fees are subject to change by the Washington State Legislature. A fee waiver is available for those demonstrating financial need.

Calvert noted, "Running Start is not for everyone. It requires not only college-level skills, but also college-level maturity. Successful program participants who flourish under the academic rigor of Running Start are generally self-motivated and looking for additional academic challenges. Students frequently tell us that they like the learning environment at the college and the ability to gradually sample the college environment."

Clark College is located at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way in Vancouver, Wash. Parking will be available in the college's Red lots on the east side of Fort Vancouver Way and in the Purple Lot on the west side of Fort Vancouver Way. Driving directions and parking maps are available at www.clark.edu/maps.

Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP), or visit Penguin Union Building (PUB) room 013, as soon as possible.

For more information on Running Start, visit the Clark College website at www.clark.edu/runningstart. For information about Running Start Information Nights, call 360-992-2366.

Financial Aid Info Night



On Wednesday, December 7, specialists from Clark College's

Financial Aid Office will be on hand to answer questions from prospective students and parents about navigating the world of financial aid.

Clark's annual Financial Aid Information Night provides information about Clark's admission process, scholarship opportunities, financial aid grants and loans, how to apply, and much more.

The event will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Clark College's main campus in Gaiser Student Center. Clark College is located at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver, WA 98663. Driving directions and parking maps are available at www.clark.edu/maps.

This event is free and open to the public; it requires **no** advance registration or reservation. Information is available at the Clark website at <http://www.clark.edu/cc/fan>. If you have any additional questions, please direct them to Clark College's Financial Aid Office in Gaiser Hall at 360-992-2153 or finaid@clark.edu.

Event Schedule:

- 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.: Open House
- 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.: Financial Aid Presentation by Chippi Bello, Clark College Associate Dean of Financial Aid
- 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.: Question-and-Answer Session

If you need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event, you should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP), or visit Penguin Union Building room 013 as soon as possible.

Clark kicks off a new year



Monday, September 19 marked the start of the 2016 fall quarter at Clark College. A highlight of opening day was seeing progress on the college's initiative to encourage more students to attend full-time (12 credits or more). Forty-eight percent of non-Running Start, and 74% of Running Start students, attended Clark full-time. These statistics are important because studies show that students who are enrolled full-time are more likely to graduate and to do so in a shorter amount of time.

While official numbers are not available until after the 10th day of class, the day began with 12,099 students enrolled, statistically even with last year's enrollment numbers.

While enrollment was flat overall, some specific segments saw increases. Running Start, which allows high school students to earn college credits tuition-free, saw its enrollment rise by

11 percent from its fall 2015 numbers to 2,445 students. Clark College's Office of Planning & Effectiveness estimates that families of Clark Running Start students saved a combined \$7.1 million in college tuition during the previous academic year. Elearning (or online) courses grew this year by 15 percent, with more than 4,400 students taking advantage of those courses.

Other highlights for the quarter:

- This is the first quarter that classes are offered in Clark's new, state-of-the-art STEM Building, which will have its ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 3.
- This quarter sees a 67% increase from fall 2015 in students enrolled in apprentice programs. Additionally, Clark's Transitional Studies is offering a new pre-apprenticeship program designed to help adults enter the trades. The one-quarter class costs just \$25, making it an accessible entry point for people seeking a new career.
- Students have begun enrolling for prerequisites to prepare for entry into Clark's new Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management This will be the second bachelor's degree offered by Clark.

About Clark College

Located in Vancouver's Central Park and serving up to 12,500 students per quarter, Clark College is Washington State's second-largest single-campus, for-credit community college. The college currently offers classes at two satellite locations: one on the Washington State University Vancouver campus and one in the Columbia Tech Center in East Vancouver. Additionally, its Economic & Community Development program is housed in the Columbia Bank building in downtown Vancouver.

An investment in students' financial futures



Judy Starr, director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at Clark College Foundation, center, receives a check from David Reiter, senior vice president and private client manager for Bank of America, and Jessica Hewitt, vice president of Enterprise Business & Community Engagement for Bank of America.

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation recently awarded Clark College a \$20,000 grant to support a full-time financial literacy coach at Clark College. The coach works directly with students to help them stabilize their finances and increase the likelihood of students meeting their economic, educational, and career goals.

The grant, delivered to Clark College Foundation, provides ongoing support within Clark College's Career Services department for students. Assuring that a full-time financial coach remains on staff allows the college to continue providing workshops, classroom presentations, and individual sessions focusing on how to budget, balance a checkbook, set long-term financial goals, and understand credit cards, credit scores and loan repayments.

"The full-time coach has been highly valuable for our students," said Lisa Gibert, president and CEO of Clark College Foundation. "The coach assisted 64 students in one-on-one sessions over a seven-month period, held 27 different budgeting workshops for scores of other students and conducted specialty workshops for the Veterans Resource Center and the Pathways Center."

Jamie Madison was one of those students. She was ready to graduate from Clark's nursing program in 2015 when unforeseen circumstances led her to withdraw. When she was contemplating a return, she was unsure if she had the resources to do so. She met with Clark's financial literacy coach, Craig Ebersole, who helped her outline her personal finances and discover ways to limit her spending and create a budget.

"I am now confident with my finances and proactively use the resources I have learned about," said Madison, who returned to Clark to finish her degree. "These resources help me through college and prepare me for my career after graduation."

Approximately 54 percent of Clark students come from families

living below the poverty level, and 60 percent are unemployed or receive public assistance. Moreover, nearly three-quarters of Clark students are the first generation in their families to attend college.

“Bank of America understands that financial fluency and empowerment are key drivers for future financial mobility and success,” said David K. Reiter, senior vice president at U.S. Trust Bank of America Private Wealth Management in Vancouver. “That is why we are proud to support Clark College Foundation on this important decision to retain a financial coach. When individuals feel financially secure and are able to achieve their financial goals, communities are made stronger and we all benefit.”

A budgeting course delivered by the financial literacy coach was added to the College 101: College Essentials course last year. All students working toward an Associate of Arts degree are required to complete the course, which introduces students to campus resources, such as campus navigation, technology, tutoring support, and financial aid.

Text and photo provided by the Clark College Foundation.

**Penguin flies high among
Cougars**



Clark alumnus and employee Narek Daniyelyan was named to the WSU Board of Regents. *Photo courtesy of WSU.*

Clark College alumnus and employee Narek Daniyelyan has been appointed by Governor Jay Inslee as the student member of the Washington State University Board of Regents for the 2016-2017 academic year.

"I am excited to have Daniyelyan as our student representative on the regents," said WSU President Kirk Schulz. "He has an impressive background and will bring a strong student voice to board deliberations. I look forward to working closely with Daniyelyan during my first year as WSU President"

Daniyelyan has a long history of service to institutions of higher learning. During his time at Clark, he was a Student Ambassador, helping to guide new students around the college and supporting Clark events. He graduated from Clark with his Associate of Arts transfer degree from Clark in 2009, but soon returned to the college to work as a recruitment specialist. He currently works in the college's Office of Instruction as

its Education Partnership Manager, engaging with local schools, businesses and other higher education institutions to create and maintain mutually beneficial student partnership agreements. His other past work includes serving as a recreation leader for the City of Vancouver and as an intern with the Clark County Juvenile Court system.

Daniyelyan continued his education after Clark, graduating from WSU Vancouver in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in Human Development. In 2013 he began his master's degree studies in public affairs at WSUV.

"Upon graduation, I plan to continue working in higher education and serving students in our community," said Daniyelyan. "Education has given me an opportunity for social mobility, so I want to help others see their potential and become the best versions of themselves."

"I am ecstatic to be serving as the Student Regent and am looking forward to representing all WSU students," Daniyelyan said of his appointment. "During my time as student regent I hope to learn about some of the amazing things that past Student Regents have accomplished, work with current board members on some of the pressing initiatives for the year, and serve as a liaison between students and the board."

Daniyelyan was elected vice president of the Associated Students of WSU Vancouver and has held a variety of other student leadership positions, including serving as a student ambassador and as director of Leadership Development for ASWSU-Vancouver.

Effective July 1, Daniyelyan's appointment will run through June 30, 2017. He succeeds current Student Regent Jansen VanderMeulen, of Burlington, Wash.

This article adapted from the Washington State University news site.

Penguins Fly



Graduates from Clark College's welding program wait to enter the Sunlight Supply Amphitheater before the college's 2016 commencement ceremony.

"Mommy did it!" read the message on Ashley Ellis's mortarboard cap, the glittery writing sparkling in the sun as she waited outside the Sunlight Supply Amphitheater before Clark College's 80th Commencement ceremony on June 16.



Ashley Ellis

Ellis wrote the message for her 2-year-old son, Paul, who would be in the stands watching his mother receive her Associate in Applied Technology degree in pharmacy technician—making her the first generation of her family to earn a college degree.

“I just wanted to show my family that I could do more,” Ellis explained. “I dropped out of high school at 16, and now here I am graduating with honors.”

As was the case for many of the approximately 720 Clark graduates waiting to process, Ellis’s achievement did not come without sacrifice. “I didn’t sleep a lot,” she said with a laugh. “I got up at 3:30 a.m. to study sometimes.”

While many graduates, like Ellis, came to Clark after time away from school, others had attended Clark before they’d even graduated from high school. This year’s graduating class included 346 members of Running Start, the Washington State program that allows high school students to attend college tuition-free. This was a record number of Running Start graduates for the college; 170 of them graduated with honors.

“I really felt like the experience I had at Clark prepared me so much—not just for college, but for life,” said Running

Start graduate Anita Bejan; the three fellow Running Start graduates standing with her nodded in agreement.



Bachelor of Applied Science
in Dental Hygiene graduates

Another large group of graduates stood together, chatting and playing with the oversized paper teeth necklaces hung around their necks. These women were some of the 23 graduates from the college's new Bachelor of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene program. This is the first cohort of students to earn their BAS since the program launched in fall 2014, making it the college's first baccalaureate degree. The college is in the process of getting a second BAS program, in Applied Management, accredited and able to enroll students in the 2017 winter quarter.



Bruce Becker

Graduate Bruce Becker, who was waiting to receive his Associate of Arts in Business Administration, said he hoped to enroll in the new BAS. Becker came to Clark after a traffic accident left him unable to do his old job. "It had been 47 years for me since I'd last been in school, so it was a little challenging at first," Becker said. "But it's been really fun. I've had a blast."

Jessica Sanchez was also ready for more school. Sanchez was one of about 20 Transitional Studies graduates waiting to receive their High School Diploma or GED recognition. This is the second year that Transitional Studies graduates have been recognized at Commencement.

For Sanchez, this moment had been four years in the making—two spent learning English through Clark's English as a Second Language program, followed by two of basic education. "I already had a high school diploma," said the 26-year-old native of Mexico, who plans to continue in Clark's for-credit classes. "And then I had to do it all over again, but in another language. I really liked doing it at Clark College, because you can get one-on-one tutoring and there's great support."



Jessica Sanchez, *third from left*, stands with some of her fellow 2016 Transitional

Studies graduates.

Another high school diploma recipient, Esmeralda “Vita” Blanco, addressed the audience inside the amphitheater as one of two student speakers included in the ceremony. Blanco, a single mother of two who dropped out of high school after becoming pregnant, spoke movingly about the ways pursuing her education has changed her and her family’s life. “I strongly believe I’m taking away more than a diploma,” she said. “What I’m really getting is a world of new opportunities, one I can share with the two most important people in my life: my daughters.”

Associate of Arts degree recipient Megan Cook, who attended Clark through Running Start, spoke about the wide range of students she’s encountered at the college. “There are graduates here who are the first in their family to go to college, and those who are learning right alongside their parents,” she said. “I’ve met people of all ethnicities, ages, and genders, and that isn’t necessarily something you find at every college or university.”



Left to right: Washington All-Academic Team member Tammy Senior, ASCC president Sarah Swift, student speaker Megan Cook, Washington All-Academic Team member Qi Wu, Clark College President Bob

Knight, keynote speaker Jessica Lynch, and student speaker Vita Blanco smile with Oswald before going onstage for the 2016 Commencement ceremony.

This year's keynote speaker was former prisoner of war Jessica Lynch. "Each one of us has some type of obstacle, some type of struggle that wants to hold us down," she said. "Do not let it."

The ceremony was occasion for Clark College President Robert K. Knight to announce the names of the recipients of the 2016 Exceptional Faculty Awards. The 2016 awardees are history instructor Joseph Cavalli; business technology instructor Dr. Kathleen Chatfield; geography professor Heather McAfee; and French professor Doug Mrazek, who is retiring after 38 years at the college.

President Knight also announced the recipient of the 2016-2017 Community College Presidents' Scholarship in Honor of Val Ogden, which 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 Washington State University Vancouver (WSUV) and is renewable for one additional year, essentially providing full tuition to complete a bachelor's degree. This year's recipient was Holly Varner. Two other nominees, Abigail Bambilla and Adeena Rose Wade, received \$1,000 each.

President Knight concluded the evening by saying, "We are excited to think of the ways in which you will change the world. And we are glad to know that Clark College will always hold a special place in your hearts. Remember: Once a member of the Penguin Nation, always a member of the Penguin Nation!"

Approximately 2,000 degrees and certificates were conferred in total on the Class of 2016.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

See more photos from Commencement in our Flickr album.

See full video coverage of the ceremony online from CVTV.

After 20 years, a dream realized



2016-2017 Community College Presidents' Scholarship in Honor of Val Ogden recipient Holly Varner

Holly Varner had always meant to go to college. She tried taking classes a couple times, but life as a Navy wife made it difficult—she was constantly having to move to follow her husband's 21-year-long career, not to mention taking care of three boys, now ages 8, 13, and 18. It was only when her husband retired and the family settled in Washougal that Varner could pursue her dream. She enrolled in Clark with just a GED and a handful of community-college classes on her transcript, determined to succeed academically.

During the 2016 Clark College Commencement ceremony, that determination paid off when Varner heard Clark College President Robert K. Knight announce that she was the recipient of the 2016-2017 Community College Presidents' Award in Honor of Val Ogden. The scholarship award provides full-time tuition at Washington State University Vancouver (WSUV) and is renewable for one additional year, essentially providing full tuition to complete a bachelor's degree.



Holly Varner hugs her son after hearing that she has received two years of tuition to Washington State University Vancouver.

As soon as President Knight made the announcement, Varner stood and hugged her son, Jonathan, who had attended Clark alongside his mother through Washington State's Running Start program, which allows high school students to attend college

tuition-free. The two had taken three classes together and even quizzed each other before exams.

“It was great to see him progress, to see him grow,” said Varner.

Varner’s own growth at Clark has been exceptional. She graduated with a 3.98 Grade Point Average (“I was so upset about that A-minus!”) while managing multiple volunteer and extracurricular activities. Varner served as Vice President of Service for Alpha Sigma Phi, Clark College’s chapter of the international honor society Phi Theta Kappa. In that role, Varner helped organize a Thanksgiving basket drive that provided holiday dinner supplies to more than 100 Clark College students and their families—negotiating an agreement with a new vendor that brought down the price of each basket that in turn allowed Alpha Sigma Phi to serve more students. She also coordinated drives to provide books and art supplies to families in local homeless shelters. She interviewed more than 60 homeless individuals to learn what they needed most; based on those interviews, she developed a shoe and sock drive to help them.

“She is the go-to person if advisors, other officers, or administration have questions,” wrote Professor Ruth Trejo, who serves as Alpha Sigma Phi’s advisor. “We joke about her three-inch binder, where her sticky tabs have sticky tabs.”

Varner will begin studying at WSUV this fall. She intends to major social work and/or public health. Varner said that, while her family had educational funding available to them through the GI Bill, she needed to save that funding to help put her children through school. Receiving the Community College Presidents’ Scholarship will allow her to pursue her own education, hopefully to a master’s degree.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Clark Jazz never skips a beat



Clark College's Jazz Ensemble performing at the 2016 University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival.

For the third time, the Clark College Jazz Ensemble distinguished themselves among the other colleges and universities representing seven states at the 2016 University of Northern Colorado/Greeley Jazz Festival, held April 21 through 23. This year, eight Clark College Jazz Ensemble students received Special Citation for Outstanding Musicianship awards, recognized from the 8,000 festival participants. The Clark students who received awards were:

- Mattias Tyni – trumpet
- Keith Cheek – tenor saxophone
- Anna James – tenor saxophone
- James Powers – trombone
- Jenny Baird – trombone

- Hayden Lilak – bass
- Josh Gonzales – drums
- Sam Niborg – drums



Clark students James Powers and Keith Cheek with John Clayton, bassist and leader of the Clayton-Hamilton Orchestra.

In addition to performing for adjudication and clinic from internationally recognized jazz educators, Clark students also had the opportunity to listen to performances, workshops, and panel discussions presented by luminaries in the field of jazz including the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, Houston Person, Joey DeFrancesco, and Ellis Marsalis.

“The experience of visiting the Greeley Jazz Festival this year was exhilarating,” said Clark student James Powers. “It has been said that it can be disappointing to meet one’s heroes, but I can say that that is not always the case. When speaking with some of the learned men of music, I was greeted with humility and kindness. Just as important as the uplifting musical performances, was the realization that these performers were all just regular people who have just

practiced more than I have. Overall I would say that as a result of attending the festivities, I have come to several inspiring and informative conclusions about the nature of my craft, and I believe the same can said for my fellow band members."



Members of the Clark Jazz Ensemble saxophone pose with iconic saxophonist Houston Person.

Jazz Ensemble Director and music professor Rich Inouye said he could not have been more proud of the band's performance at the festival. "Many times you work so hard for something like this and when you perform, little mistakes pop up here and there, but this year's performance at the festival was pure perfection," he said. "I hope the Clark College community recognizes the work our band students put in to help Clark achieve this distinction. People in the audience shared with me how surprised they were when they found out we were a two-year college! It's good that the Music Department can represent Clark's academic distinction at the national level along with programs such as STEM, Speech and Debate, and Journalism."

UPDATE: Recently, Powers has learned that he has even more reason to be exhilarated: He has been awarded the Festival's highest award, a tuition scholarship to attend the world-famous Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop at the University

of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky. Powers was recognized as one out of only four recipients to receive this prestigious award from the 8,000 participants who performed at the national jazz festival. Powers is currently a resident of Gresham, Oregon and he graduated from Heritage High in Vancouver; he plans to complete a transfer degree with a major in music this spring. This award is a first for the Clark Music Department.

The Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshop is recognized as being one of the best intensive programs for mastering jazz improvisation. The festival features the nation's leading jazz educators and performers and is dedicated to providing an intensive learning experience for musicians of all ages and levels. Theory Classes, Ear Training, Combo Performance, and Master Class Sessions allow the opportunity for attendees to grow and develop to their fullest potential, and each evening attendees get to listen to faculty jazz recitals presented by some of the leading jazz musicians from around the world.

Photos: Richard Inouye

This story was contributed by the Music Department.