

# Clark College celebrates ten years at Columbia Tech

Business and community leaders joined Clark College on Monday, October 14 for a Vancouver Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting to celebrate a milestone. Clark College first opened Columbia Tech Center in east Clark County in fall 2009.

Responding to feedback from employers and residents in East Vancouver, the college refreshed its offerings at Columbia Tech Center to be a hub for business and technical education.

*“Columbia Tech Center is today a bustling campus on the east side with a wide range of programs available to our students. We are grateful for the community’s support over the years and renew our commitment to serving the community in a way that best meets their needs.”*

*Clark College Interim President Sandra Fowler-Hill*



ASCC President Evans Kaame and Clark College Interim President Sandra Fowler-Hill

The college has worked to create a series of course offerings this fall that will allow students to pursue career-oriented higher education in subjects that include business, information technology, computer support, and project management—all without having to travel to the college's main campus near downtown Vancouver. Most classes are scheduled to run just two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday), allowing students to plan their studies around work and/or life obligations.

*We are committed to offering business classes at Columbia Tech to provide our students viable pathways forward to earning the new skills that they need to be successful—whether that be a single course, a certificate or a degree.”*

*Professor Adnan Hamideh, Division Chair, Clark College Business Administration Department*

Hamideh is also preparing to create a business degree path for office administration, he said. The school already offers accounting, marketing, management and business administration. About 7,000 full-time students take business classes at Clark College he said.

Additionally, Clark College Economic and Community Development, which provides non-credit continuing education and customized training, has relocated to the Columbia Tech Center location.

Last month, ECD moved its business classes from a leased space in downtown Vancouver to the Columbia Tech Center, said Kevin Witte, vice president of the program. The move was in part a way to help the college save money, but it also moved students



closer to some of the city's larger employers, including WaferTech.

Witte said participating employers include Boeing Co, and they request specific skills for students to learn, which the college incorporates into its training.



Business leaders take a tour of Clark College's Mechatronics program at  
Clark College Columbia Tech Center

Business and community leaders toured the college's nationally recognized Mechatronics lab. The engineering program focuses on both electrical and mechanical systems. It is a foundational training program for advanced manufacturing.

Graduates earn an average of \$88,000 as mechatronics engineers and 100 percent of Clark's graduates are finding jobs in their chosen field.

The college has also expanded the range of class offerings serving Running Start students, a popular state program that allows high school students to earn college credit, tuition-free, while still in high school. The expanded offerings provide more opportunities for families with children attending high schools in the eastern portion of the college's service district, which covers Camas, Washougal, and parts of the Columbia Gorge.

ASCC President Evans Kaame spoke to the business leaders and elected officials thanking them for their support of Clark College students over the years.

*"Because you care, students at Clark have opportunities to succeed. Our students are better prepared to go out and do great things."*

*ASCC President Evans Kaame*



ASCC President Evans Kaame and Vancouver Chamber of Commerce staff

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**CTC location is “open for business” this fall**





Business students at Clark College have opportunities to participate in career-oriented activities like the college's Entrepreneur Club.

As Clark County's demographics and economics change, Clark College is ready to adapt to serve its community's needs. Responding to feedback from employers and residents in East Vancouver, the college is transforming its facility at Columbia Tech Center into a hub for business and technical education.



The college has worked to create a series of course offerings

this fall that will allow students to pursue career-oriented higher education in subjects that include business, information technology, computer support, and supervisory management—all without having to travel to the college's main campus near downtown Vancouver. Most classes are scheduled to run just two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday), allowing students to plan their studies around work and/or life obligations.

Additionally, Clark College Economic and Community Development, which provides non-credit continuing education and customized training, is relocating to the CTC location. CTC is already the home of the college's popular mechatronics program, which teaches students the skills they need to work in automated manufacturing.

"As more and more employers establish facilities in East Vancouver, they've expressed a need for additional training for their employees," said Associate Vice President of Instruction Genevieve Howard. "We want Clark College at Columbia Tech Center to be the hub for career-oriented education in East Vancouver, while also opening opportunities for students on the eastern side of Clark County to take advantage of the state's Running Start program."

Clark College at CTC is located at 18700 SE Mill Plain Blvd. in Vancouver. Opened in 2009, the location will be celebrating its 10th anniversary on October 14 with an official ribbon-cutting.





*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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## **ECD welcomes new employees**

Clark College's Economic and Community Development program recently welcomed two talented leaders to its team. Francois Wevers joined ECD as the Director of Economic & Community Partnerships and Kelli Gizzi is the incoming Director of Professional and Personal Development.

### **About Francois Wevers**



Francois  
Wevers

Francois Wevers has a long, rich and successful track record in sales and business management. He has most recently been the National Sales Manager for Lightspeed Aviation in Lake Oswego. Prior to Lightspeed, Wevers held a number of key sales management positions with Hewlett-Packard, based out of the United States, France and Germany. He has helped to build large new businesses, created new retail and commercial sales channels, and managed sales organizations in both Europe and the U.S.

Wevers has a Bachelor in Business Administration from Pacific Lutheran University, in Tacoma, and a DSCAF in Business Administration from Ecole Supérieure de Commerce, Le Havre, France. Wevers was born and raised in the Normandy Region of France and relocated to the Pacific Northwest in 1996. He and his wife, Bracy, have three daughters; they all live in the area.

### **About Kelli Gizzi**



Kelli Gizzi

Kelli Gizzi is a veteran of both Intel Corporation and

Motorola, Inc., where she held a number of key roles including marketing in emerging markets, online learning, enterprise channels, enterprise software, information technology, mobile apps, and social media.

Gizzi lives in Battle Ground with her husband, Jim, and daughter, Jenna—all avid soccer fans. Gizzi has a strong community focus and has served on the board of directors of the Women's Center for Leadership, a greater Portland nonprofit, for four years—the past two years as the board president. Gizzi is also a parent volunteer for Battle Ground Citizens for Better Schools.

Gizzi has a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Missouri – Columbia. While Gizzi is a longtime resident of the area, she has also lived and worked in other countries, including Indonesia, Singapore, and Japan.

### **About Clark College Economic and Community Development**

Clark College Economic & Community Development (ECD) is Southwest Washington's premier provider of workforce training and non-credit learning, serving more than 10,000 people annually. These elements are part of ECD's vision to maintain and continually develop its status as the region's premier provider of classes, seminars, certificate programs and training opportunities that serve the residents and businesses of the Southwest Washington region.