

# Presidential Coins



Prof. Kathleen Perillo receives a Presidential Coin from President Knight at the 2016 State of the College address.

In 2007, Clark College President Bob Knight introduced a new honor at Clark College: the presidential coin.

The coin is given to faculty and staff members who provide exemplary service to Clark students, the college and the community. The honorees are decided by the president and are kept secret until the names are announced—generally on Opening Day in the fall or during the annual State of the College address.

Five Clark College employees received Presidential Coins during his 2016 State of the College address on January 21. They were:



Karen Driscoll, *left*, was congratulated by her colleagues from Economic & Community Development, Tracy Reilly Kelly and Bonnie Peterson. President Knight praised Driscoll as “a great mentor to so many people both inside and outside the Financial Aid Office.”

### **Karen Driscoll**

President Knight characterized Financial Aid Director Karen Driscoll as “the best financial aid director in the state of Washington.”

Driscoll has earned praised as a leader not only at Clark College, but in the state. She has served as the president, vice president, treasurer, and legislative representative of the Washington Financial Aid Association; represented the state of Washington as the Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators board president; served as president and treasurer of the state’s Financial Aid Council; and is an active member of the State Need Grant Legislative Group representing community colleges.

“She is an approachable and genuine leader and probably the only person I know who likes to read federal financial aid updates over her morning cup of coffee,” said Knight.

Driscoll, who has led Clark's Financial Aid Department for eight years, is retiring later this year.



Maria Masson receives a round of applause with her Presidential Coin.

## **Maria Masson**

Maria Masson joined Clark College in 2014 as Assistant Director of Human Resources and, in the words of President Knight, "hit the ground running."

Masson's role has included providing human resources services to the college community and leading the college's benefits team's efforts to comply with complex and ever-changing regulations. Recently, she was also named the college's Title IX Coordinator. She has also served the college as an adjunct instructor teaching Spanish.

"She is always willing to help where she is needed and approaches her work with a problem-solving attitude," said Knight.



Ken Pachico, *right*, has served as Director of Security & Safety for 12 years.

### **Ken Pacheco**

After a distinguished career in law enforcement in Portland, Ken Pacheco was hired in 2004 as Director of Security & Safety. Pacheco also serves on Clark's Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment Team, its Emergency Management and Planning Committee, as a Title IX investigator, and as the college's representative on the statewide Safety, Security and Emergency Management Council.

"He can always be counted on to respond quickly to any incident, day or night, and even on weekends," said Knight. "He is known for his calm, 'just the facts ma'am' approach to his job, as well as for being fair-minded in enforcing the College's policies and regulations."



Prof. Kathleen Perillo, center, with STEM Coordinator and biology professor Erin Harwood and Dean of STEM Dr. Peter Williams.

## **Kathleen Perillo**

Biology professor Kathleen Perillo began teaching at Clark in 1999 and was awarded tenure in 2002. She presented on biodiversity in 2008 as part of the college's respected Faculty Speaker Series. She has worked with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in support of western pond turtle recovery activities in the Columbia River Gorge and she is the co-founder and president of the Center for Eco-dynamic Agriculture, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting biodiversity in agriculture.

More recently, Perillo has been leading efforts on native-plant restoration on the main campus, as well as the development of a new environmental science degree.

"Most importantly, with members of the college and Ridgefield communities, she is leading the visioning for sustainability efforts at the North County site," said Knight.

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# Fall 2015 Classified Staff Award: Vanessa Meyer



Vanessa Meyer

Congratulations to **Vanessa Meyer**, recipient of the 2015 Fall Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award.

Meyer is the Secretary Senior in the Behavioral and Social Sciences unit, and is the sole support for both divisions, which encompasses 10 departments, 21 full-time faculty, and 35 adjunct faculty. Vanessa was nominated with input from 23 Clark employees.

Meyer is described by her nominators as “friendly, helpful, efficient, knowledgeable, innovative and committed.” She is known to be a natural collaborator who lends her talents and skill sets to develop strategies that can replace outdated modalities and allow departments to function smoothly.

Nominators commend Meyer for treating everyone with the utmost respect and taking on challenges with humor and grace. As one colleague describes it, “I’ve worked with Vanessa Meyer for over 10 years and her exemplary work ethic has always



impressed me. She's organized, knowledgeable, and very efficient. She effectively meets the goals that are set for her, and completes all tasks in a timely manner. It appears that nothing is beyond her ability to accomplish."

Congratulations as well to this quarter's other nominees:

**Linda Healy** works as Program Support Supervisor for Advising Services and is called the "glue that keeps the office together." Linda is a caring and compassionate leader who leads by example and is the first to support new projects and initiatives. She engages colleagues and staff in sometimes difficult but important conversations; addresses challenges instead of ignoring them, and is a firm believer in continuous improvement. Healy acts as liaison between departments because she is highly respected and well-liked by her fellow colleagues. As one nominator explains it, "She has a way of bringing people together to get a job done. Linda isn't just a cooperative spirit, she is the spirit of compassion and good will and she is a pleasure to work with."

**Dan Simonson** works for Facilities Services as a Maintenance Mechanic, and is described as an "outstanding team leader for Facilities." He has a strong work ethic; is committed to whatever job he is assigned to; is never without his tools, and is always willing to help when he can. His nominators admire the quality of his work; his calm, steady demeanor, and find his cost-saving suggestions helpful. Simonson is considered to be efficient, knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. One nominator wrote, "He has a kind heart and it shows in his everyday interactions with everyone."

As Maintenance Mechanic in Manufacturing Technology, **Mitch Sott** is termed "Resident Mr. Fix It" in the bakery. He is accessible and responsive to their needs, and deemed "indispensable" to the department. Sott is known for quality work and a consistently quick turnaround time for projects. He has saved the department money by being creative and willing

to tackle anything asked of him. The tag line in the bakery is “Don’t throw it out, call Mitch. If he can’t fix it, he’ll make a new one.” Sott’s work is not only functional, but also artistic. He is always pleasant and friendly, and he makes his customers feel valued.

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## A part of the family



Professor Veronica Brock

“This is where I grew up,” says Professor Veronica Brock from her office in O’Connell Sports Complex on Clark’s main campus. “My dad was a professor here, teaching physics and astronomy. I was a student here. I grew up with ‘Penguin blood,’ as we



like to say.”

Brock, who recently marked 20 years of teaching at Clark, didn't intend to follow in her father's footsteps. After graduating from East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania with a Master of Science degree in cardiac rehabilitation and primary prevention, she remained on the East Coast working in cardiac rehabilitation. But gradually she began to realize that she didn't love the clinical aspects of her work as much as she did teaching patients about their health.

“I've always just followed my heart when it came to career and jobs,” Brock says. “Every job I got, I'd say, ‘Oh, I like this aspect of the job—let's do more of that.’ When I worked in cardiac rehab, I realized my favorite part of my job was the educational element.”

Brock began teaching health and physical education, and when she decided to move back to the Pacific Northwest, taking a position at Clark seemed like a natural fit. “It was a good match for my heart, with this job's teaching and learning focus,” she says. “And I love the idea that, as an open enrollment institution, we provide an opportunity to everybody. That's such a cool idea: If you want an education, you can get an education.”

Brock—who teaches health, physical education, fitness trainer, and health and physical education classes—says she loves seeing the changes her students make as they learn to develop new approaches toward their own health.

“In our curriculum, we don't just want students to change their behavior during the class,” she says. “We want to teach lasting change, and that requires motivation. Motivation is two things: importance and confidence. You have to be able to define why it's important for you to be doing this, and you have to be able to believe you can do it. If you don't have motivation, you're probably not going to stick with any

exercise or health practice long-term.”

Brock’s certainly shown long-term motivation to make Clark a stronger institution. She has invested much of herself into Clark—professionally, personally, and financially. She has served on numerous committees, including the Healthy Penguin Nation Committee to promote employee health, and is a regular donor to the Clark College Foundation.

Brock says she began donating to the Foundation when her two children, now teenagers, were enrolled in the college’s Child & Family Studies program as preschoolers, making her family third-generation Penguins.

“My kids are the amazing people they are today because of that program,” she says. “So that really prompted me to give—I could see the program needed support.”

Since then, Brock has donated regularly to the Foundation, which supports capital improvements to the college as well as scholarships and programs to promote academic excellence.

“I like putting my money toward solving problems,” Brock says. “Education is a solution; if you educate the world, the world can change. It’s a very direct way to say, ‘I believe in what I’m doing and I believe in our students.’”

*Read Veronica Brock’s Top 10 Tips for a Healthy Lifestyle.*

*Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

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# Open Enrollment has begun for employee benefits



## **PEBB Medical Flexible Spending Arrangement (FSA) and Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP)**

If you wish to enroll in or continue your Medical FSA and/or DCAP, open enrollment is the time to do it. You must enroll or reenroll no later than November 30 for the January 1, 2016 coverage year.

The Medical FSA allows you to:

- Set aside part of your paycheck, before taxes, to cover qualified medical expenses for you and your family members.
- You may set aside as little as \$240 or as much as \$2,500 during 2016, which will be deducted from each paycheck

in equal installments.

The DCAP allows you to:

- Set aside part of your paycheck, before taxes, for child or elder care expenses.
- You may set aside up to \$5,000 per household (\$2,500 each if married and filing separate tax returns) which will be deducted in equal amounts from each paycheck.

**Want to learn more about the FSA and DCAP? Live presentations on November 9, 2015, from 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm in PUB 161**

Navia Benefit Solutions (formerly Flex-Plan Services) is offering webinars throughout the month of November. To see the webinar schedule, visit the Navia Benefit Solutions website.

In addition, Navia Benefit Solutions will have representatives available at the benefits fairs.

### **Shine a light on your medical plan options in 2016**

Choose the best plan for you and your family – Choosing a medical plan is important. Many people think first about cost and which doctors and hospitals are in the network. There are other things to consider when choosing the plan that is right for you and your family.

Think about these questions as you review the 2016 plan options:

Providers:

- Are the providers I want to see in the plan's network?

Coordinated Care:

- Will my provider share information that helps the providers work in partnership to make decisions about my health care?
- Will I receive care by providers who are supported by a

system with the goal of keeping me healthy and getting me the care I need?

Nurse line, online resources:

- Does the plan have access to a 24/7 nurse line or medical help line for after-hours support or to help me decide whether I need to see a provider?

All medical and dental plans that are currently available in 2015 remain available in 2016.

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## So long, Skip: saying goodbye to “Clark’s Lorax”



Skip and Lori Jimerson at Skip’s retirement party

On September 24, Clark College bid a fond farewell to retiring



Grounds Manager Skip Jimerson. The Penguin Student Lounge was filled with colleagues who'd worked with Jimerson over his quarter-century at the college.

Jimerson began his career at Clark as a custodian in 1990 and shortly thereafter moved to the grounds division. Once there, his strong work ethic and dedication helped him advance until, in 2008, he was named grounds manager.

Many people stood to share memories of Jimerson, often referring to his famously laconic demeanor. (Indeed, true to character, Jimerson declined to make any public remarks at the party.) "Skip is a quiet leader," said Clark College President Bob Knight in his remarks. "He doesn't talk much—he talks with his actions. He cares about this institution."

Director of Facilities Services Tim Petta said, "In my mind, I'm going to think about you as the college's Lorax—you speak for the trees."



Grounds Manager Skip Jimerson and CADD Professor Keith Stansbury share a laugh at Jimerson's retirement party after 25 years of service. At the party, Director of Facilities Services Tim Petta, *not pictured*, referenced the quotation on

this plaque that reads, "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."

Jimerson was instrumental in making Clark College officially recognized as a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for the past five years, as well as in an ongoing effort to plant state trees from all 50 states on the college's main campus. Colleagues mentioned many other projects he'd helped realize, ranging from outdoor play spaces for Child & Family Studies to work on new facilities like Clark College at Columbia Tech Center and the new STEM Building being built on the main campus. Other colleagues praised him as a manager.

"What I most value is his gentle spirit," said Director of Career Services Edie Blakley. "Some of our students have less-than-stellar backgrounds. Skip, you've always given people a second chance, and that has really touched my heart."

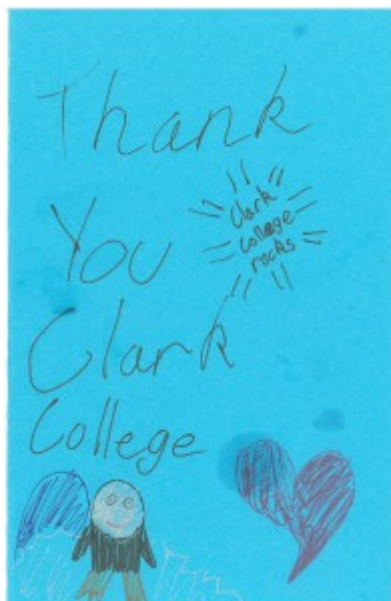
There was one more colleague who had plenty of praise for him: Lori Jimerson, Skip's wife of 26 years, who works as a fiscal specialist in Facilities Services. "I'm going to miss him as a coworker, honestly," she said in between serving slices of cake to the gathered guests. "He's an excellent colleague. ... He's really put his heart and soul into this place."

*Photos: Clark College/Hannah Erickson*

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## **Clark employees' generosity**

# is always in style



We are in the midst of change at Clark College. The STEM building is being built and people will begin moving next year. ctcLink has many of us reviewing our business processes and anticipating a modern ERP (enterprise resource planning) college-wide management software. The new Academic Plan is focusing us on developing academic pathways that will lead students to gainful employment and further education.

What hasn't changed is Clark College employees' willingness to go above and beyond to help students. This year, for the 12th annual Backpack Project, employees donated backpacks and supplies to 52 school-aged children of Clark College students. The support and generosity of employees has sustained this project through the years, and employees tell us that they always look forward to the announcement of the project.

Names of children are gathered and referred by Workforce Education Services, Financial Aid, Veterans Affairs, Child & Family Services, and the Diversity Center. Each child is asked their favorite color and characters so the donors can find a backpack that is specific to that child. The characters from the children's movie *Frozen* were the favorite this year.

This year we received some wonderful drawings and heartfelt

thank-you notes we wanted to share with you



*"Hey, thank you for the backpack, it was very helpful for me. I know you guys didn't have to do it but I'm very thankful so thank you!"*

*"Thank you so much for the backpacks, you have no idea how much this helped out our family."*

*"I ♥ my backpack!"*

No matter how things change, we know we can count on Clark employees to keep helping our students and their families, year after year. Thank you!

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## Wellness Interest Survey



Greetings from the Healthy Penguin Nation Wellness Team!

We need your input! Clark College is a member of Team WorkWell, a statewide initiative that supports healthy lifestyle behaviors for employees of state agencies and higher education institutions, and is moving forward to plan a comprehensive and sustainable wellness program for our community members. Please share your voice by completing a brief online survey, telling us about your health and wellness interests and needs.

This survey is voluntary and anonymous and should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

You can access the survey through **May 15** by following this link:

<https://webapps.clark.edu/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=142930177939>

Paper copies of the survey are available upon request:  
kferguson@clark.edu

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## **Make Your Voice Heard: Take Clark's Climate Survey**

On January 27, all Clark College employees will receive an email from Shanda Diehl requesting that they complete the Clark College Climate Survey 2015.

The information collected from this survey will allow the College to identify the positive and negative aspects of our climate. The executive leadership is committed to make improvements to climate based on the results of this survey. We cannot do this without your feedback!

The college has a proven track record to make improvements to



the climate based on past climate survey results. Based on the 2011 and 2013 climate survey results, administration has made strides to improve in the following areas:

- Shared governance,
- Diversity,
- Communication,
- Compensation, and
- Food service.

Executive leadership regularly reports the improvement activities related to the climate's strengths and weaknesses to the Board of Trustees.

The results of the survey are anonymous. No login is required. Planning and Effectiveness will not report individual responses, nor will it report aggregate responses where individuals may be identified through their responses to demographic questions. Any individual names provided in the open-ended comment section will be removed before publishing the results.

The success of the survey rests with you. Every employee here at Clark College plays a crucial role in enhancing student learning. The more satisfied employees are with the climate of their work environment and their ability to influence it, the more effective their work becomes to improve student learning.

Because each employee plays a role in student learning, each employee's perspective is equally important, including those of part-time employees, adjunct faculty members, full-time temporary and tenured/tenure-track faculty, classified staff, and administrators. We need everyone's input!

Please look for Diehl's email on January 27, 2015. The survey will be available online; a link will also be available on the ClarkNet homepage. Your time is a guaranteed investment in improving the climate of Clark College.

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# **SICK LEAVE BUYOUT – Deadline is January 31, 2015**

Under the provisions of Administrative Procedure 635.025, the AHE CBA, and the WPEA CBA, eligible employees who have balances of more than 480 hours of compensable sick leave as of December 31, 2014, may choose to convert unused sick leave hours accrued in 2014 to monetary compensation. Any sick leave hours used during 2014 are deducted from the hours that are available to convert.

Compensation is calculated at the rate of 25 percent of the employee's current hourly rate. Employees who choose to participate in the buyout must be compensated for *all* eligible sick leave hours earned in 2014, not just a portion of them.

Employees considering buyout should be aware that the College offers a VEBA program to retirees which allows sick leave buyout dollars to be transferred to a VEBA account, tax free, to be used to pay for medical expenses during retirement. To be eligible for VEBA an employee must retire from state service and meet other requirements. For more details and eligibility requirements for VEBA contact a benefits representative in Human Resources.

Sick leave buyout application forms are available in Human Resources. The deadline for submitting completed forms is January 31, 2015. Payment will be received on February 25, 2015. Please call **Thao Schmidt, x2628**, or **Guisela Eberle, x2119**, for additional information.

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# The Race is On!



Members of Team Penguin 2013 show off their tees. (Organizer Joe Jenkins is standing in the center of the front row.) *Photo: Clark College/Alison Pezanoski-Browne*

Once again, academic advisor Joe Jenkins is organizing a Clark College team to run in the next Shamrock Run, held March 15 in Portland. Last year, 96 members of Team Penguin completed one of the courses—which range from a 3.1-mile walk to a 13.1-mile half-marathon run—raising \$480 for the Alex Montoya Scholarship Fund at Clark College Foundation. Interested in learning more? Jenkins has created a Facebook page for team members to share information, schedule training runs, and cheer each other on.