

# Clark College announces new president



Dr. Karin Edwards

Today Clark College marked a major milestone when its Board of Trustees announced its selection of Dr. Karin Edwards to be the college's next president.

Dr. Edwards comes to Clark College with an impressive history of leadership, including her current position as Campus President of Portland Community College Cascade. (Full bio listed below.)

"Dr. Edwards is an incredible leader," said Trustee Paul Speer. "Her ability to help close achievement gaps between student populations, her work in equity, her work in partnerships in workforce development, and her previous experience in a presidential role were certainly very influential in the board's decision. When you look at her track record and at the information we gained during the

course of this process, what you'll find is an individual who is incredibly aligned with our stated values and the needs of our college over the coming decade."

Today's announcement is the culmination of a rigorous search process that began last summer following the retirement of President Bob Knight. Working with a national search firm, the Board of Trustees was able to attract 65 applicants from across the country who were reviewed by a Search Advisory Committee composed of college employees, community members, and other key stakeholders. The committee narrowed the field down to a limited number of finalists. Three finalists visited the college for interviews and open forums, and trustees visited their respective campuses as well.

The Board of Trustees made the final selection based on the position profile, personal interviews, and a review of the data and recommendations gathered from the committee and from student and community forums held with each candidate on the Clark College campus. More information about the search process is available on the college's Presidential Search web pages.

"Clark College Foundation has assisted Clark College with philanthropy for nearly five decades, helping the college align with the needs of Southwest Washington's businesses and organizations while making college possible for those who face barriers to higher education," said Eric Merrill, chair of Clark College Foundation's Board of Directors. "We are committed to working with the new president and introducing her to vital community partners in order to sustain Clark College's future."

Dr. Edwards will be the college's 15th leader in its 87-year history.

Dr. Edwards says she is excited to step into her new role, the exact date of which is still being determined along with other

hiring details. “I have a full heart today, she said. “I’m excited to begin a new chapter as President of Clark College and grateful to everyone at Portland Community College who has walked with me these past six years. We have a great deal to be proud of, developing programs and support services that help our students succeed.”

Dr. Sandra Fowler-Hill, who has served as Interim President during the 2019-2020 academic year as the college conducted the presidential search, said she will continue in her current role until Dr. Edwards is able to join the college in summer 2020 and will help with the onboarding process.

## **About Dr. Karin Edwards**

Dr. Karin

Edwards’ 36-year career at community colleges spans roles from Admissions

Counselor to Campus President. Since July 2014, she has served as president of

Portland Community College’s Cascade Campus. In that role, her responsibilities

at PCC Cascade include supervising the advanced manufacturing programs at PCC’s

Swan Island Trades Center, a 20,000-square-foot facility housing the college’s

Apprenticeship and Trades department, as well as PCC’s Maritime Welding

Training Center at Swan Island, which trains welding students and has MOAs with

Vigor Industrial.

Her community

service includes serving on the board of directors of Portland

Community

Reinvestment Initiatives and on the advisory board of the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, as well as being an active member of the Partners in Diversity Leadership Council and the Oregon Presidents Council of the Oregon Community College Association.

Dr. Edwards

earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology and her master's degree in Higher Education Administration at State University of New York at Albany, and her doctorate degree in Educational Leadership at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island.

## **About Clark College**

Located

in Vancouver's Central Park and serving up to 11,500 students per quarter, Clark College is Southwest Washington's oldest public institution of higher education. 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.

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# Open forums for presidential candidates announced



Dr. Karin Edwards, Dr. Lamata Mitchell, and Dr. Sara Thompson Tweedy

Dates have been set for the open forums for community members to meet the three finalists for the Clark College President position. These forums are a chance for members of the Clark College community and other stakeholders to meet the finalists and ask questions about their leadership experience and philosophy.

Each candidate will hold two open forums during their visit to the college: one that's open to the public, and one that's specifically for students. The forums will be recorded. On January 27, the videos will be available to review at [www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/finalists.php](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/finalists.php). There will be links to provide feedback available through February 4, 2020.

Biographies of all three finalists are available online at [www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/finalists.php](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/finalists.php). Full resumes are also available online at <http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/forums.php>.

A fourth finalist, Dr. Joaquín G. Martínez, has withdrawn from the hiring process.

## Open forum dates

### Public open forums

All public forums are scheduled for noon to 1:00 p.m. in Foster Auditorium on the college's main campus. Each forum will be live-cast to the college's Columbia Tech Center and Washington State University Vancouver locations—room numbers are posted at <http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/forums.php>.

- **Tuesday, January 14:** Dr. Sara Thompson Tweedy, vice president of student access, involvement, and success at SUNY Westchester Community College
- **Friday, January 17:** Dr. Karin Edwards, president of the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College
- **Wednesday, January 22:** Dr. Lamata D. Mitchell, vice president of instruction and academic operations at Pima Community College

### Student-focused forums

All student-focused forums are scheduled for 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Foster Auditorium on the college's main campus.

- **Monday, January 13:** Dr. Sara Thompson Tweedy, vice president of student access, involvement, and success at SUNY Westchester Community College
- **Thursday, January 16:** Dr. Karin Edwards, president of the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College

- **Tuesday, January 21:** Dr. Lamata D. Mitchell, vice president of instruction and academic operations at Pima Community College

Clark College is located at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver. Driving directions and parking maps are available at [www.clark.edu/maps](http://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.

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## **Four finalists named in presidential search**





Dr. Karin Edwards, Dr. Joaquin Martinez, Dr. Lamata Mitchell,  
and Dr. Sara Thompson Tweedy

The Clark College Board of Trustees has announced the completion of a major step in selecting the next Clark College President. The trustees selected four finalists Wednesday, December 18, at its monthly public meeting. The board acted on the recommendations made by the search advisory committee that conducted interviews with ten semi-finalists last week.

“It’s a milestone in our search and a moment to celebrate,” said Board Trustee Paul Speer. “The Search Advisory Committee has accomplished its task in finding Clark College four



outstanding candidates. I thank them for their excellent and collaborative work.”

The four finalists are: Dr. Karin Edwards, president of the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College; Dr. Joaquín G. Martínez, district vice provost of institutional effectiveness at Miami Dade College; Dr. Lamata D. Mitchell, vice president of instruction and academic operations at Pima Community College; and Dr. Sara Thompson Tweedy, vice president of student access, involvement, and success at SUNY Westchester Community College. Full biographies of all four finalists are available [online at www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/finalists.php](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/finalists.php).

Clark College received 65 qualified applications as it began its recruitment process in September with the assistance of a national search firm, Gold Hill Associates. The Search Advisory Committee comprised of community leaders, college employees and students then reviewed the applications and narrowed the field to ten semi-finalists. Last week, the committee interviewed all ten candidates and made their recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

“This was a great process to be part of,” said Al Schauer, a committee member and business leader. “I appreciated the robust discussions and ultimately, the strong consensus within the committee that Clark College has four outstanding candidates to choose from.”

“This has been an inclusive search with multiple perspectives represented in the process,” added Eric Merrill, Clark College Foundation Board Chair and member of the President Selection Committee. “This is a critical leadership position for the college and our community. It’s exciting to see high-caliber candidates who want to serve as our next college president.”

The finalists will be invited to the college in January for constituent panel interviews and public forums. It is expected

that the Board of Trustees will make its selection by the end of February 2020 and that the new President will begin onboarding in the summer of 2020 in preparation for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Current Interim President Dr. Sandra Fowler-Hill was hired in June 2019 to lead the college through the transition. She was not a candidate for the permanent position. Fowler-Hill stepped in when former college president Bob Knight retired last summer.

“Having an interim president has allowed the college and the community this important time to carefully consider who will lead the college into the next decade,” said Speer. “Dr. Fowler-Hill has provided key leadership at a critical time and will help the onboarding process with our next President.”

More information about the ongoing search process can be found at [www.clark.edu/presidential-search](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search).

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**Presidential search open  
houses**



Clark College reached out for community and college input on the selection of the next college President this past week. The search firm, Gold Hill Associates, held an open house as one source of input on what the job profile should include. The profile will be used as the job description during the recruitment process, which begins formally later this month.

There is no formal presentation. “We want this to be a conversation around the priorities of the community and the college,” said Clark College Trustee Paul Speer. “Specifically, we have three questions. (1) What do people see as the biggest **opportunities** for Clark College over the next decade? (2) What do people see as the biggest **challenges** for Clark over the next decade? (3) What do people think are the most **important qualifications** for our new president?”

Clark College will soon announce the formation of its Presidential Search Advisory Committee comprised of college students, staff, faculty and community leaders who, with an equity lens, will assist in the search process. They attended equity training sessions Friday, October 11th as their first

order of business. They will help formalize the job description to be released later this month.

The Board of Trustees are responsible for the hiring of the next college president. They anticipate a final decision by February 2020. For more information about the process please go to [www.clark.edu/presidential-search](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search).

All interested candidates should contact Gold Hill Associates for questions regarding the application process or inquiries.

*Preston Pulliams, President and Owner, Gold Hill Associates  
1065 Stigger Road  
Jackson, Mississippi 39209  
Email: [preston@goldhillassociates.com](mailto:preston@goldhillassociates.com)  
Web: <http://collegepresidentsearch.com>*

For questions regarding community involvement and the process itself, please email [presidentalsearch@clark.edu](mailto:presidentalsearch@clark.edu)

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**Presidential search firm  
selected**





Clark College has selected Gold Hill Associates to assist the Board of Trustees in identifying and recruiting a new president for Clark College.

Clark College President Robert K. Knight has announced he plans to retire August 31 at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year. He has served as college president for 13 years, helping Clark College expand and grow both in its programs and locations. Clark College is the largest community college in Southwest Washington and one of the largest community colleges in the state of Washington.

“For more than a decade President Knight has provided stability and vision helping the college grow, adapt and serve its community,” said Paul Speer, board trustee. Speer and board vice chair Jane Jacobson are co-leading the board’s recruitment and selection process. “This is an important moment for Clark

College. We are looking for the right person for the next chapter of the college,” said Speer.

“The board is fully committed to conducting an equitable, inclusive and transparent national search. Gold Hill Associates will be a good partner in the process.”

Gold Hill

Associates was selected following a competitive bid process. Its CEO, Dr.

Preston Pulliams, has worked in a variety of higher education leadership roles

for 25 years. From 2004-2013, he served as District President at Portland

Community College. Gold Hill has made successful placements at more than 20

colleges in the Pacific Northwest.

Gold Hill

Associates will also assist the board in identifying and recruiting an interim president for Clark College.

The interim

president is expected to serve beginning August 2019 for a one-year period

allowing sufficient time for the permanent presidential search. The interim

will not be considered as a candidate for the permanent position.

“The presidential

search will also be assisted by a Presidential Search Advisory Committee

including representatives from the college and external community,” said



Speer. “We look forward to updating and receiving feedback from the community as we move forward.”

All interested

applicants must contact Gold Hill Associates directly. To contact Gold Hill

Associates or learn more about the presidential selection process, visit Clark

College’s website: [www.clark.edu/presidential-search](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search).

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## **President Knight announces retirement**



President Robert K. Knight

President Robert K. Knight has announced that he plans to retire at the end of the 2018-2019 contract year on August 31.

“On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees, I want to thank President Knight for his exemplary service during his 13 years leading Clark College,” said Royce Pollard, chair of the Clark College Board of Trustees. “For more than a decade, he has provided stability and vision that has allowed the college to grow, adapt, and serve its community.”

Knight joined Clark in 2004 as Vice President of Administrative Services. In 2006, he was named acting president, and a year later was named president. During his tenure, he has overseen many changes at the college, including the opening of its Columbia Tech Center location in 2009, a new STEM Building in 2016, and the development of the college’s first three Bachelor of Applied Science degree programs.

Knight publicly announced his retirement on January 18, the

day after delivering his annual State of the College address, in which he shared the news of the college's recent successful accreditation process.

President Knight will continue to serve as president until his retirement date.

"While this is a decision that my wife and I have been weighing for some time, I wanted to see the college through its accreditation process before informing trustees and Executive Cabinet," Knight wrote in an email to college employees this morning. "Now that our review is complete and the college has received commendations in six areas, I feel comfortable that I am leaving this institution on firm footing."

Pollard said that the Board of Trustees will begin the work of selecting a replacement for President Knight at a special board meeting to be announced soon.

*Read the full text of President Knight's email below:*

*Dear college community,*

*As many of you know, I have spent 15 years working at Clark. It has been a privilege and an honor to lead the college for more than a decade, and I am proud of the work we have done together to serve our students and our community.*

*So it is with mixed emotions that I announce that I will be retiring at the end of my contract year on August 31.*

*While this is a decision that my wife and I have been weighing for some time, I wanted to see the college through its accreditation process before informing trustees and Executive Cabinet. Now that our review is complete and the college has received commendations in six areas, I feel comfortable that I am leaving this institution on firm footing.*

*The Board of Trustees will be holding a special meeting, to be announced soon, to begin the process of seeking new leadership for the college. I have the utmost faith in their ability to steward the college safely through this period of transition and to find the right leadership to guide Clark into the future. In the meantime, I am committed to spending the next seven months ensuring that the college continues to work toward fulfilling its mission.*

*Please know that I will continue to support Clark and be a part of its community, even after I retire. After all, once a member of the Penguin Nation, always a member of the Penguin Nation.*

*Thank you,*

*Bob Knight  
President*