

Battling stereotypes, they found success



Qi Wu and Tammy Senior are Clark College's representatives to the 2016 All-Washington Academic Team.

Two outstanding Clark College students were selected to attend the 2016 All-Washington Academic Team Recognition Ceremony, held on March 24 at South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia, Washington. Tammy Senior and Qi Wu are two of just 66 students from community and technical colleges across the state to receive this honor, which recognizes students for their academic excellence and service to the community.

At first glance, Senior and Wu don't seem terribly similar. One is young even by the standards of Running Start, a program that allows high schoolers to take college courses; the other is coming back to college after serving four years in the

military. One has spent her whole life in Vancouver; the other has lived in more countries than she can count on one hand.

But on closer inspection, certain parallels become clear between the two young women: They're both fascinated by science and technology. They both are driven students who make time in their busy schedules to serve their communities. Both have had to challenge others' assumptions and figuring out creative ways to get around obstacles in their educational journeys. And so far, both are succeeding impressively.



Clark student Qi Wu stands before the college's new STEM Building, slated to open in fall 2016.

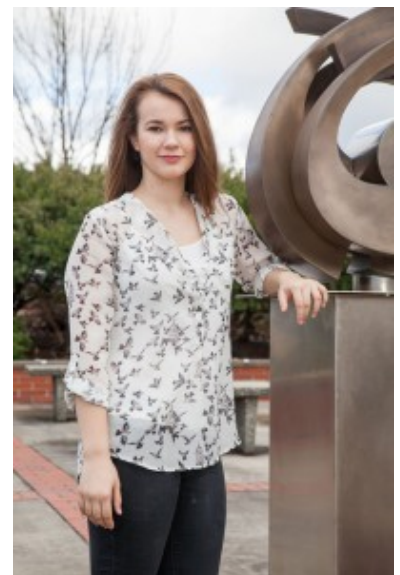
Wu's obstacles began surfacing when she and her mother emigrated from China to the United States. Wu, then a sophomore in high school, struggled to maintain her grades while learning a new language in a new culture. She also found herself confronting gender stereotypes, as classmates and teachers assumed she would be more interested in subjects like art and the humanities instead of math and science.

"When I was growing up, I was always better in physics and chemistry," she said. "I like numbers, I like logic. When I came to Clark and took my first engineering course, it was like, 'Wow, this is where I belong!'"

However, soon a new hurdle appeared. Wu, whose mother had remarried and had another child, realized her family could not afford to pay for her college education. Hoping to support herself, she enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 2010 as an aviation mechanic, and took every opportunity to earn educational credits and develop new skills—despite the doubts some had of the petite young woman’s abilities.

“When I got transferred to Japan, my supervisor told me, ‘Well, you can do the desk job here, because you’re a girl,’” Wu recalled. “And I said, ‘No. I want to do the job I trained for.’”

Wu said that overall, she’s grateful for the opportunities the military provided her to travel and learn skills that will help in her electrical engineering career. She’s currently receiving scholarships from Clark, which allows her to save her military education benefits for the more-expensive, four-year institutions she hopes to attend one day to earn her master’s degree. She also works in Clark’s scholarship office herself, and spends weekends training as a Naval Reservist.



Clark student Tammy Senior says she’s been impressed by how welcoming the

college was to her, even when she took her first class at age 14.

Like Wu, Senior's challenges also began in high school, but they were of a different nature: She felt stifled. "I wasn't being challenged enough," she recalls. "I took a class at Clark and found it so much better."

Senior's family couldn't afford to pay for a full load of college classes out of pocket, and when the 14-year-old visited Clark's scholarship office, she discovered she was too young to qualify for financial aid or scholarship opportunities. Then, the scholarship staff offered a new possibility: Perhaps Senior could enroll in Running Start, the Washington State program that allows eligible high school juniors and seniors to take college classes tuition-free. The only problem was that Senior was still a freshman. She wound up skipping the 10th grade in order to qualify, enrolling at Clark as a full-time student at age 15.

"It was definitely interesting," Senior, now 16 and set to graduate in the spring, said with a grin. "But Clark's pretty welcoming, and I really thrived in the community here."

Senior has maintained a 4.0 GPA while taking classes in Clark's challenging Honors Program, volunteering with her church, teaching private music lessons, and serving as the vice president of leadership for Clark's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges. She'll be 17 when she enters a university—potentially with junior standing, depending on where she attends.

"People ask me, 'Why don't you enjoy your high school years?'" Senior said. "But I'm a planner. I think ahead. My mother wasn't able to finish school because she started a family. I know I have a lot of school ahead of me, and this is a way to

speed things up.”

Senior hopes to become a neurologist, a goal developed when her beloved grandmother suffered a series of debilitating strokes in 2014. Like Wu, Senior faced some skepticism about her ambitions.

“When I tell people I want to pursue a career in neurology, sometimes they look at me strangely and say, ‘Oh, why don’t you go into nursing, so you have time for a family?’” she said. “But I know I can do it. I can have a family. I can have the career of my choice. I just have to work hard. And you know, they would never tell a male student that.”

Both students say they appreciate the support they’ve found at Clark. “I like the diversity here,” says Wu, a first-generation college student. “Engineering professor Izad [Khormae] is from Iran. My physics teacher is from Russia. I think half the STEM faculty are women. And then in my classes I’ve met a few other veterans. You get so many different experiences here, different cultures.”

Wu and Senior were honored for their achievements at the All-Washington Academic Team induction ceremony on March 24, 2016, in Olympia, where Gov. Jay Inslee was the keynote speaker. The All-Washington Academic Team is a program of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society of two-year colleges. Team members are eligible for numerous scholarships, including transfer scholarships at most four-year universities in the state.

“It is such an honor,” said Senior, sitting with Wu during a break between classes.

“It’s nice for your hard work to be recognized,” adds Wu.

“Yes, you feel like your hard work is finally paying off,” said Senior.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Welcome, Penguins!



Students were greeted with sunshine as they started a new academic year on September 21, 2015.

The parking lots were filled. The Bookstore was bustling. And the sunshine poured down as if to comfort those who were still mourning the end of their summers as they started the 2015 fall quarter at Clark College on Monday, September 21.



View of Gaiser Hall from the new STEM Building, currently slated to open in fall 2016.

Returning students got to see how much progress had been made on the college's new Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Building, which broke ground last fall and is slated to open in fall 2016. What had been mostly a collection of girders when students left in June has now grown into an imposing presence on Ft. Vancouver Way with walls and roof.

This will not be the only construction students will see on the main campus this year: Gaiser will undergo a remodel in preparation for a significantly restructured and modernized Culinary Arts program, and C-TRAN's Bus Rapid Transit Project is likely to also bring some minor construction along Ft. Vancouver Way.

While official numbers are not available until after the 10th day of class, the quarter began with 11,187 students enrolled, or 4 percent fewer students than the first day of the 2014 fall quarter. This decrease in enrollment is consistent with numbers throughout the state, as a strengthening economy has softened the enrollment spike seen during the recent recession. Oregon two-year colleges are also experiencing significant decreases in enrollment.

While enrollment declined overall, some specific segments saw increases. Running Start, which allows high school students to earn college credits while still in high school, saw its

enrollment rise by 14 percent from its fall 2014 numbers to more than 2,200 students. Elearning (or online) courses grew this year by 5 percent, with more than 3,700 students taking advantage of the flexibility to take online classes at times and places that work for them. The college continued to see slow but steady growth in students of color, up 1 percent compared with fall 2014. Students of color now make up 31 percent of Clark's student body.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Get a Running Start at College



Associate Director of Running Start Linda Calvert, *far left*, helps students at an open house held by the Bookstore in 2012.

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, Jan. 14 and Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2015, 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. In fall 2014, Clark College welcomed 2,044 Running Start students, 140 more students than the previous academic year.

These information sessions are for students and parents who want to know more about beginning the program in fall 2015. Calvert explains, "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, testing procedures, 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. Fee waivers and limited textbook assistance are available for those demonstrating financial need.

“Running Start is not for everyone,” notes Calvert. “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, Washington. 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.

Making the Most of her

Opportunity



2014-2015 Presidential Scholarship recipient Natasha Hambrook

Early in Natasha Hambrook's high school career, things weren't looking so great. She felt frustrated by the lack of academic challenge in her classes; at the same time, she was having trouble accessing help in subjects where she was having difficulty, like math. She could have become discouraged. She could have checked out, or gotten into trouble, the way some bright but bored young students do.

Instead, she came to Clark.

Hambrook enrolled in Washington State's Running Start program, which allows students to take college classes while still enrolled in high school. That decision paid off on June 19, when Hambrook not only earned her associate degree at age 17, but was also named recipient of the 2014-2015 Community

College President's Award. The annual scholarship is given to a Clark College graduate who is transferring to a WSU Vancouver degree program and who has demonstrated leadership potential, a commitment to community service, and academic achievement. The scholarship award provides full-time tuition and is renewable for one additional year, essentially providing full tuition to complete a bachelor's degree.

Hambrook, who lives in Vancouver with her family and will turn 18 in July, has thrived at Clark, earning a 3.98 grade point average—yes, even in math, a subject she came to love. “Coming to Clark College has been the best experience,” she says. “I’ve met so many amazing instructors and classmates who really believed in me.”

Hambrook took classes in Clark's challenging biology and chemistry sequences as preparation for her chosen career path of becoming a pediatric surgeon. She says one highlight of her time at Clark was getting to visit the college's cadaver lab during a biology class.

“We got to reach inside the body,” recalls Hambrook. “I think a lot of people were surprised by how I reacted, because I’m kind of a ‘girly girl,’ and I think they thought I’d be turned off by that. But I loved it.”

Hambrook was able to get a different kind of hands-on experience at Clark with another one of her interests: volunteerism. In winter quarter 2014, she became the Student Volunteer Coordinator for Clark's Service and Leadership in the Community (SLIC) program. In that role, she organized groups of students on volunteer trips to organizations like Habitat for Humanity and Clark County Food Bank, as well as a beach-cleaning trip to Cape Disappointment State Park.

On top of the 10 hours per week spent working for SLIC, Hambrook spent another six or more hours volunteering at the Southwest Washington Humane Society, where she helps care for

cats and trains other teen volunteers.

Hambrook says her commitment to community service comes both from a love of helping others and from her own family's experiences. "My family has received help from the food bank in the past, so I know there's a need for community service," she says.



Natasha Hambrook receives her degree from President Knight at Clark's 2014 commencement ceremony.

Like 73 percent of Clark's student body, Natasha Hambrook is a first-generation college graduate. Her parents describe her as a very driven, self-motivated young woman. "She did it all on her own," says her father, Matt Hambrook, of Natasha's decision to enter Running Start and pursue a degree at Clark. "We just ferried her around."

"I am so proud of her accomplishments," added Natasha's mother, Denise Hollar-Hambrook, who has been working two jobs to help support the family, which also includes Natasha's younger brother, Matthew. "She will be a compassionate doctor—she will make a difference."

Clark College President Robert K. Knight announced Hambrook's scholarship during the college's 2014 commencement ceremony at

Sleep Country Amphitheater. During the announcement, he said that a nominator had described Hambrook as “a rare type of goal-oriented student who combines exceptional natural ability with a willingness and eagerness to learn.”

Hambrook plans to spend the summer continuing her volunteer work at the Humane Society, and possibly at the Free Clinic of Southwest Washington as well. She’s already investigating on-campus volunteer opportunities at WSU Vancouver, where she will begin taking classes in the fall of 2014.

“It feels so amazing to have won this scholarship,” Hambrook says. “I am so grateful I had the opportunity to participate in Running Start, because Clark helped shape me into the woman I am today.”

Under the Caps



Jaime Taylor and Susan Baker

Susan Baker and Jaime Taylor had to arrive at the Sleep Country Amphitheater before 6 p.m. to get their spots near the head of the line of graduates waiting for the Clark College commencement ceremony's 7 p.m. start. But for both women, the wait for this moment was much longer than an hour.

"I started this journey in 1995," said Baker, who works as a teacher in the college's Child & Family Studies department. "And then I had children, and I had to put things on hold for a while, but now here I am!"

Taylor—who, like Baker, was graduating with honors with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE)—told a similar story. "It was kind of my time," she explained about her choice to enroll at Clark, where she worked in Baker's classroom as part of her studies. "My kids had gone to school and it was time for me to do something for myself."



Judith Gomez

All along the line, there were tales of dreams deferred. Judith Gomez—also among the ECE contingent at the head of the line—first began taking classes in Clark’s non-credit English as a Second Language program 16 years ago, soon after she moved to Vancouver from her native Mexico. At the time, she spoke no English, but she was determined to go to college. She had to drop out twice when she had children, but eventually she was able to improve her English skills to the point that she could take for-credit classes.

“English isn’t my first language, so for me, doing papers was double the work,” she said, beaming under her blue mortarboard cap, from which dangled the golden tassel and insignia of Phi Theta Kappa, the honor society for two-year colleges. “But I was determined, and my teachers were amazing, so supportive.”

Gomez, who also works in Child & Family Studies as an early-intervention specialist, said she hoped her children—ages 19, 14, and 10—would follow in her footsteps to pursue college educations. “In ECE, we call it ‘modeling,’” she said. “You

model the right behavior, and the children see it and learn. My children are so excited already. They're all talking about going to college."

Kevin Ross was also hoping to being role model. "I am the first one from my whole family to graduate from college," he said as he waited to receive his Associate in Applied Technology in degree in Supervisory Management. "We're talking parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins. It feels good—it feels *great*. It gives my family members something to see. ... I have a little brother. I want to set an example for him, to show him that you can succeed, no matter where you come from or what's happened in your life."



Juliab Dutkel, Carlos Cervantes, Gregory Michael, and Kevin Ross

For Ross, life has not always been peaceful. He first started thinking about attending Clark when he was incarcerated at Larch Corrections Center. He got to know Clark College President Bob Knight, who regularly visits the center to play basketball with inmates. "As I approached my time to come out [of Larch], Bob started asking me, 'What are you going to do next? You should come to Clark,'" Ross recalled. "So I went to Clark. It's offered me an alternate route toward success."

Ross said he plans to transfer to WSU Vancouver to pursue a bachelor's degree in business. He will not be the first former inmate to do so—in fact, Clark College has long run an educational program within Larch, and on the Friday following commencement, a ceremony within the correctional facility's walls would celebrate the 34 inmates who earned their High School Equivalencies during this academic year.

Standing next to Kevin Ross was Carlos Cervantes, whose cap sat atop a long mane of curly gray hair. Cervantes came to Clark when the housing-market crash put an end to his career as a Realtor. He was graduating with a degree in Paralegal, despite having suffered financial hardships after losing his job.

“I was really struggling, but I got scholarships,” Cervantes said. “The Clark College Foundation made my education possible.”



Katie Brilz and Lacey Mac-Rhyann

For other graduates, this commencement wasn't a dream deferred—rather, it was a dream accelerated. Lacey Mac-Rhyann had decorated her cap with the slogan “17 with my AST.” Mac-Rhyann was one of the 235 graduates who participated in Running Start, a Washington State program that allows students

to take college classes while still enrolled in high school. "It was the most phenomenal thing," she said of the program. "It didn't just give me college credit—it gave me college experience."

Ana Lai, who had decorated her cap with pictures of scientific equipment and the logo of University of Washington, also appreciated being part of Running Start. "It gave me a head start," said the Ft. Vancouver High student, who plans to become a mechanical engineer. "I did the calculus and physics sequences, and I loved it."



Ana Lai

Aleksander Thompson, who attended Evergreen High School, said he appreciated the serious atmosphere he experienced at Clark through Running Start. "In high school, you don't pay to get an education," he said. "In college, people are there because they want to learn."

Thompson was standing next to his friend Mark Hamilton, also a Running Start student from Evergreen, and who like Thompson plans on transferring to Portland State University's criminal justice program. Another thing the two young men had in common was that they originally chose Running Start in part because Clark's schedule offered them the flexibility to work full-

time while attending school.

“You kind of cut out sleeping after a while,” laughed Hamilton.



Timothy Witcher, Alecsander Thompson, Mark Hamilton, and English instructor Kate Scrivener.

As the bagpipes began to sound, the graduates quickly adjusted caps and gowns in preparation for their procession. This was the moment that would make all of it—the sleeplessness, the studying, the doubts and fears—worthwhile. Near the front of the line, Susan Baker got ready to complete the journey she’d begun almost 20 years earlier.

“You know, when you’re a mom, you spend so much time telling your kids that you’re proud of them,” she said. “It’s pretty cool to be hearing my kids tell me they’re proud of me.”

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. More photos of graduates are available in the college’s Flickr album.

Get a Running Start at Clark



A student gets assistance during an annual open house event for Running Start students that's held at the Clark College Bookstore during the start of each fall quarter.

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, Jan. 22, and Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2014, 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. In fall 2013, Clark College welcomed 1,904 Running Start students, surpassing all other Running Start enrollments in the state community college system.



Associate Director of Running Start Linda Calvert, *far left*, supplying information to students at the Bookstore’s Running Start Open House in 2012.

These information sessions are for students and parents who want to know more about beginning the program in fall 2014. 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, testing procedures, deadlines, and more."

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Linda Calvert noted, "Running Start is not for everyone. It requires not only college-level skills, but also college-level maturity. Successful program participants 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 Gaiser Hall Room 137 two weeks in advance of the events.

For information about Running Start Information Nights, call 360-992-2366.

New for Fall



International students make new friends in the International Student Lounge on the first day of fall quarter. Fall 2013 marks record enrollment for International Programs.

On Monday, September 23, Clark College opened the doors for its 2013-2014 academic year. The college welcomed 13,373 students on opening day, down slightly from fall 2012, when the college welcomed 13,927 students.

The start of fall quarter is always a time of new beginnings at the college, but this year is seeing a number of changes to the way the college enhances student learning. Some highlights:

- **Expanded hours at CTC:** For the first time, Clark College

at Columbia Tech Center will be open for credit classes on Fridays. The expanded schedule will make it easier for residents of East Vancouver to complete their degrees entirely at CTC, without traveling to take classes on Clark's main campus.

- **Expansion into the Gorge:** In response to demand from local businesses and residents, Clark College is offering college-level classes to the communities of the Columbia River Gorge through its new satellite location in the Wind River Education Center in Carson. Until now, residents had to travel 20 miles or more to attend the nearest community college—and that college is located out of state, in Oregon.
- **New Phlebotomy program:** Clark College has redesigned its Phlebotomy certification program and relocated it to specially configured classrooms and labs on the campus of Washington State University Vancouver in the college's health care instruction building, which also houses the college's Nursing and Pharmacy Technician programs.
- **Bachelor's degrees in Health Informatics :** Clark College and Bellevue College have signed an articulation agreement that allows students at Clark to earn a bachelor's degree in Health Informatics Information Technology (HIIT) from Bellevue through online and remote classes—without leaving the Clark College campus. “In our ongoing conversations with regional employers, we realized there was a need for Health Informatics Information Technology professionals and responded quickly to that need, but we also realized that there would be a need for students to take their education to the next level,” said Debra Ortiz, director of allied health programs at Clark College.
- **Record number of Running Start and international students:** Clark expects to see more than 1,770 students enrolled in Washington state's popular Running Start program, which allows high school students to earn

college credit for little or no cost. This number is a 5-percent increase over last year's Running Start enrollment. Meanwhile, Clark is also seeing a record number of international students at the college this year. A total of 103 students from 31 different countries are attending the college this quarter.

- **Mechatronics offers evening classes:** Clark College's state-of-the-art Mechatronics program will begin offering evening course, allowing workers to retrain for modern industrial jobs without leaving their current positions. This expansion is designed to boost the region's economy; it was prompted by local businesses who wanted more opportunities to retrain their employees.



Food carts make their debut on campus.

- **New food carts serve campus while Culinary Arts program is on hiatus:** Clark is discontinuing its Culinary Arts – Food program while it launches an ambitious new redesign of the program that will make it more responsive to modern culinary trends. Three privately owned food carts are supplying food service to the college while the program is overhauled. The college's widely respected Culinary Arts – Bakery program will continue operating during this time.
- **Water-bottle filling stations:** Students and college administration have worked together to help preserve the

environment by setting up water-bottle filling stations around the main campus, thereby reducing the number of disposable plastic water bottles bought and discarded at the college.

Book ‘Em!



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

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

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

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



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

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

Some 1,771 Running Start students are expected to attend Clark during the 2013-2014 academic year—a record number. Each year, the Bookstore hosts an open house before fall quarter begins so that students and their parents can become familiar with

college systems, including Tutoring Services, Clark College Libraries, and ASCC (student government). Additionally, Bookstore staff set up informational stations where visitors could learn about how to best use the Bookstore's services.

"This is a three-quarter textbook," Bookstore employee Ali Hallenbeck told a small crowd gathered at the "Affordable Textbook Options" station as she held up a massive, hardback tome with Japanese writing on it. "If you're only taking one quarter of the language, it's probably cheaper to buy this," she added, holding up a thinner, soft-cover workbook.

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



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

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

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

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

A Regional Resource



Left to right, Associate Vice President of Corporate & Continuing Education Kevin Kussman, Vice President of Student Affairs Bill Belden and Vice President of Instruction Dr. Tim Cook meet with the residents of White Salmon to discuss potential course offerings in a satellite location.

As the economy of the Columbia River Gorge has developed, so have its needs for a more highly trained workforce. Recently members of two Gorge school districts reached out to Clark College to help meet those needs.

Representatives from Clark College recently attended two public meetings in the Columbia River Gorge to hear public input and gauge interest in offering college-level classes to the communities of Klickitat and Skamania counties. The public meetings were hosted by the Stevenson-Carson School District and the White Salmon Valley School District. Held at the Wind River Education Center in Carson and at the Columbia High School Library in White Salmon during February and March, the meetings were well attended by a cross-section of prospective

students, business leaders, educators and economic development advocates.

More than 200 people attended the meeting in Carson, indicating the interest was there for college-level classes. Although there was a smaller number in attendance in White Salmon, the participants there clearly stated the need for educational programming to train for workforce needs, particularly for the growing high-tech sector in the Gorge. What Clark College officials still need to determine is how many and what types of classes to offer.

“Clark has explored the option of offering for-credit classes in the Gorge before, but we know that demands change with changing economic times,” said Clark College President Bob Knight. “We really needed to hear that the interest was there for a model that we could fiscally maintain and one that would be sustainable for the workforce needs of these communities.”



Columbia High School principal Troy Whittle gives Clark College insight into the high school population in White Salmon.

Clark College is already offering adult basic education and ESL classes through the WorkSource offices in Stevenson and White Salmon and will continue those classes. The proposed expansion would bring general education offerings to the

region—classes that would have broad appeal and that also could be taken by Running Start students.

“White Salmon Valley School District is excited about developing partnerships with Clark College and Stevenson-Carson School District for expanding college-level course opportunities that will better meet the growing needs of our students, adult learners, and communities,” said Dr. Jerry A. Lewis, Superintendent of White Salmon Valley School District.

Clark College may begin offering a limited number of classes this summer; the formal kickoff is scheduled for fall quarter in September. Classes in Skamania County will be offered at the Wind River Education Center, formerly the middle school for the Stevenson-Carson school district. A location for White Salmon classes is being discussed.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley