

President commits to college's challenges

By **BILL STEWART**
THE OREGONIAN

VANCOUVER — Clark College will continue to expand its partnerships and courses needed to survive in today's world, President R. Wayne Branch promised Thursday in his annual State of the College address.

"This is not an institution that is people's second choice," Branch told an audience of about 160 faculty members and community leaders. "Let us not shackle Clark College by the traditional view that two-year institutions are the place for people who can not go elsewhere. That is not reality nor the vision we have for Clark College."

He spoke of co-admissions partnerships with Marylhurst University and Portland State University, and said Clark has invited Eastern Washington University to use the

Clark campus to offer its bachelor's degree in social work with minors in alcohol/drug studies and aging studies, as well as its bachelor's degree in technology.

Branch also said the shift to make Washington State University Vancouver a four-year school is an acknowledgment of the area's growth. But that growth also means new challenges for Clark College, which has a new building on the WSUV campus.

And with growth and new challenges comes the need for new funding sources, which private partnerships could provide, Branch said. He said the college will have renovated or built about 400,000 square feet of "learning space" by 2009.

The speech drew support from Bart Phillips, executive director of the Columbia River Economic De-

velopment Council, who praised Branch's work to prepare students for work.

"We already see shortages in skilled labor," Phillips said. "Manufacturing industry especially has special needs, and Dr. Branch has worked hard to address those needs."

Branch said the college's challenge today is teaching students how to learn and how to find information. The average person now changes jobs five times in his lifetime, often in new fields and new environments. It may mean learning how to live in a new city or country.

"The question is, are you prepared to learn more stuff?" Branch asked.

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