

# Freshmen learn ropes at Clark orientation

## WHAT'S NEW AT CLARK COLLEGE THIS AUTUMN:

■ The school's admissions and registrar's offices have been moved to make way for continuing Gaiser Hall renovation. They are now on the ground floor of the recently built Penguin Student Union on Gaiser's west side, part of a new student welcome center closer to Fort Vancouver Way.

■ More than 929 local high school-age students have enrolled in Running Start programs to earn early college credit. That ranks Clark among the state's top five Running Start programs.

■ More than 1,300 students have registered for online courses this autumn, a 250 percent increase from a year ago.

■ This autumn, students will be accepted for a new bachelor of arts degree program for social work starting in January, offered by Eastern Washington University and taught by Clark instructors. This adds to EWU bachelor's degrees in technology and dental hygiene already offered in Vancouver.

■ Among fall-term courses reported at full enrollment or near capacity, as of Friday: baking, welding, nutrition, geology, meteorology, chemical dependency, and piano and guitar studies.



### ON THE WEB

Clark College  
Web site:  
[www.clark.edu](http://www.clark.edu)

## Day of bonding, seminars gives 300 students, parents overview of college life

By **HOWARD BUCK**  
*Columbian staff writer*

The newest students at Clark College looked around during a Friday orientation and saw others just like them.

Or maybe, not so much.

Sixteen-year-old Melissa Meline will take 15 credit hours this autumn through Clark's Running Start program, focusing on Japanese language and software engineering. She's leaving behind Camas High School, where she finds the boys, and even the girls, somewhat annoying.

"I'm trying to be over-achieving," Meline said, off to a good start after notching her first morning freeway commute.

Angel Dieu-Hanh Huynh, 30, will study business, with a goal of launching an import-export firm.

"I'm doing this for my son," said Huynh, mother of a 1-year-old.

Cristal Cabrera, fresh out of Mountain View High School, will pursue business management. She could see herself working at her father's auto dealership, she said — in the Dominican Republic.

Jonathan Heberling, 20, has already logged time in the U.S. Air Force. Now he's teaching chess to home-schoolers while working at an investment firm. He wants to build his business skills, start a new chess club and invigorate a veterans group at Clark, he said.

## Day of bonding and discovery

Harboring an infinite amount of dreams, about 300 incoming freshmen students and their parents came to Clark's first-ever Student Welcome Day on Friday.

The orientation marked the vanguard of a 2006-07 student wave due to crest Monday at the central Vancouver Clark campus as the fall quarter begins. Enrollment totals are close to those of last year, when 11,463

students registered by opening day, a total that swelled to 12,860 by late autumn.

To help freshmen learn about the campus and coursework and bond with each other and a few faculty members before Monday's dizzying crush, Clark set up the welcome session.

In Gaiser Hall, parents were briefed on financial aid and how best to support their children's work. The students attended break-out sessions to learn the ropes and and scoop up study tips. Some delved into study success in math or reading, while others learned about time management, career and degree choices, or joining organized campus groups.

In Foster Hall, professor Erin Davis dished out forgettable trivia: The number of graduates in Clark's first class? Five. The official moniker of Clark's penguin mascot? Oswald.

"Just call him 'Mr. Penguin,'" Davis suggested.

She then quickly cut to the important

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stuff. Unlike in high school, no one's poised to hound students over late work or skipping class or falling behind on term projects. Instead, tuition-paying students must shoulder responsibility for their effort, she said.

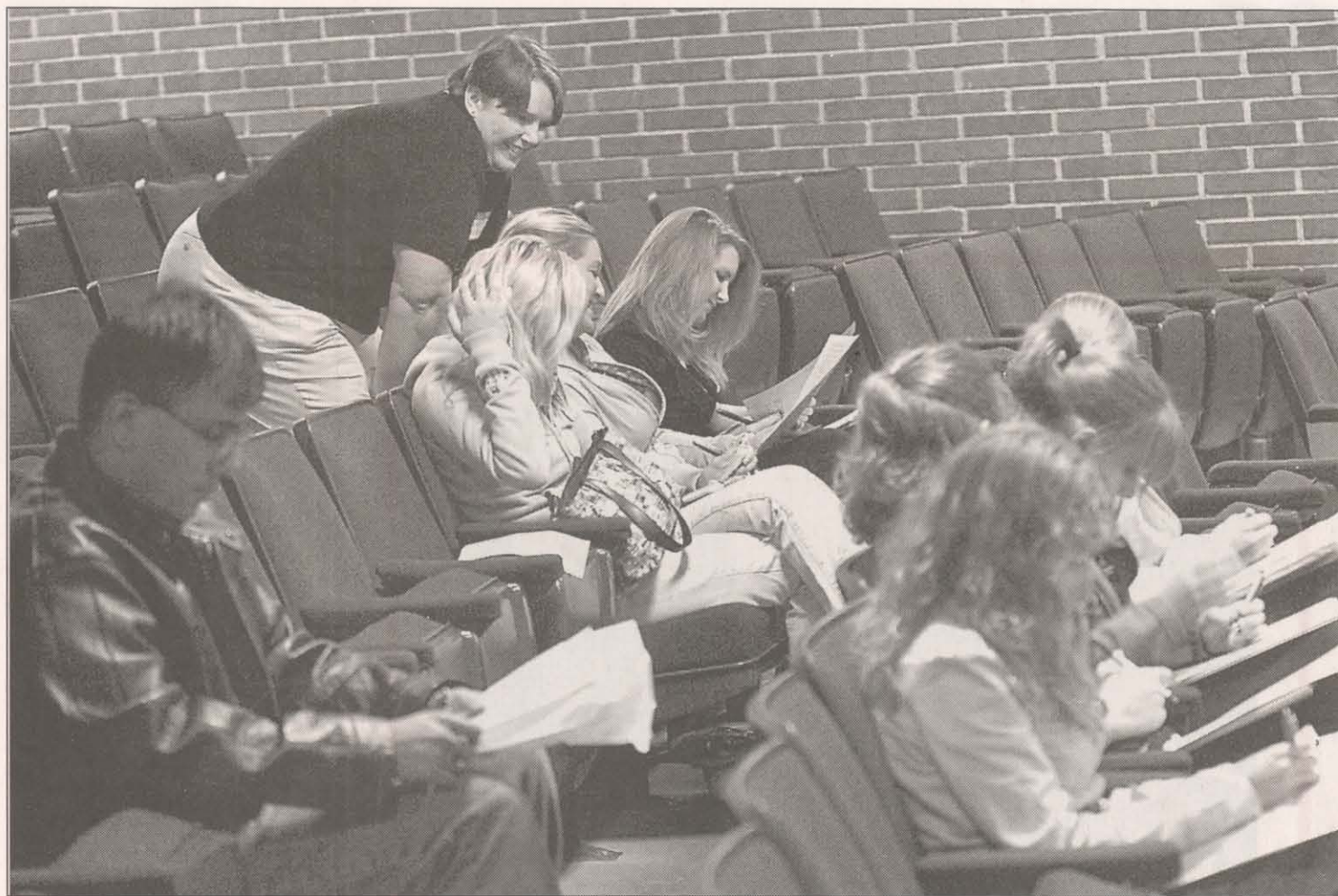
Sit near the front of class, Davis advised. Join student study groups. Take advantage of campus counseling and student tutors and career guidance services, and don't tarry late into the term.

Davis led students through an exercise to indicate whether their learning style is primarily visual, auditory or hands-on. Visual learners must work to improve listening skills, she said. Auditory learners can tape classroom lectures for repeat listening, read aloud while studying and try to cut down distractions when alone.

"You need to find ways in which you can adapt the course and the learning to your needs," Davis said. By the time students graduate, their skills will be much more in balance, helping to carry them through work and life, she added.

Afterward, Kris Mackey was excited. Venturing back to school at age 39, she was unsure about recording lectures on her cell phone, plus a slew of other issues, she said.

"That's a great tip. I was hoping it wasn't illegal," said Mackey, adding that monologues put



JANET L. MATHEWS/The Columbian:

**Erin Davis, a Clark College professor leading a new-student seminar this autumn, helps freshmen students self-test their learning styles during a recent campus orientation. She told them their visual, auditory and hands-on learning styles should even out by graduation time. Student enrollment is expected to top 11,400 when Clark's fall term begins Monday.**

her to sleep. She found Friday's event inspiring, she said. "It's great. There are a lot of questions that were on my mind."

Rachel Ruiz, vice president of student affairs, said the welcome session was modeled on

a popular program at her last stop, San Diego Mesa College.

"It's to make them comfortable with the campus ... and not so off-balance on the first day," said Ruiz, enjoying the free barbecue lunch while a

band played up-tempo Latin tunes.

Already, the young Camas Running Start student felt more confident about her college baptism.

"I thought it was going to be

real scary, real uptight," Meline said. "No — it's awesome."

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