

**IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STUDENT:  
2008 STATE OF THE COLLEGE ADDRESS  
Robert K. Knight, President, Clark College  
January 17, 2008**

At last year's State of the College address, we celebrated the power of our Penguin Nation. Those words – that concept -- have captured people's imaginations in ways we couldn't have imagined even a year ago.

I think people respond to the Penguin Nation because it's joyful and fun. It demonstrates a vibrant spirit that makes us all proud.

And our penguin nation has grown. It's now expanded into our State Capitol. Governor Chris Gregoire got happy feet and wore a proud penguin costume last Halloween.

Congressman Brian Baird is such a supporter of the Penguin Nation that he recently travelled to Antarctica. The congressman was kind enough to send us this photo – and a few others – proving that the Penguin Nation now truly extends to the ends of the earth.

What makes us most proud, though, is student success -- and that's what I want to focus on today. At Clark College, it's all about the student.

So I think it's important that, as we celebrate the State of the College, we hear from some of our students.

What makes Clark College a special place? Cozette Tyler and Jennifer Patterson each have great answers.

**VIDEO CLIP #1 - Cozette Tyler:** "Clark College amplifies the idea of diversity but, I think it goes a little more than that. I come from a background of a low income person. And, when you have that kind of background higher learning seems to be something that you often think is out of your reach. The wonderful thing about Clark College, and its faculty and staff is <sup>that</sup> they bring that to your reach with a sense of commitment to the student. That is a welcoming open door. That has allowed me to feel as if not only do I belong but that I am a part of something that belongs in our community." **Jennifer Patterson:** "For me it'd be the people, not only the faculty, the students, there's tons of organizations and clubs here that pretty much fit the personalities of almost anybody that could come to campus. And, it's like a big family."

Jennifer Patterson is a member of the 2007 All-Washington Academic team. Congratulations, Jennifer!

### It's all about the student: Clark College programs

We are always searching for new opportunities to expand and enhance the programs we offer to our students.

- In 2007, we launched a new Field Survey Technician program, the only one of its kind in the metropolitan area. These are high-demand jobs, and those classes have been filled since day one.
- For the first time in several years, Clark College offered credit courses in American Sign Language (ASL). Those classes were so popular that a second-level class has now been added.
- 2007 was year of impressive growth for our Teaching and Learning Center. Under the leadership of Gail Liberman, the center hosted a series of Conversation Cafés – and welcomed guest speakers – all focusing on what it means to be a learning-centered college. In the years to come, I know that the Teaching and Learning Center will expand its role in fostering lifelong learning and development for our faculty and staff.
- In 2007, Clark College Corporate and Continuing Education launched Campus CE -- a new system allowing business, professional and individual students to search class schedules -- and register and pay for classes -- online. And SCORE Vancouver, America's counselor for small businesses, has just located their offices next to our Corporate Education offices in our "T" Building. This will allow a great alignment of SCORE's counseling and mentoring services with Corporate Education's small business classes and training.
- In addition to offering classes at our main campus, Clark College at Town Plaza and Clark College at WSU Vancouver, we offered basic skills classes at 14 satellite facilities throughout our service district.
- With a grant from the Department of Early Learning, and in partnership with ESD 112, our Early Childhood Education Department is taking "higher education on the road" by teaching classes in two local neighborhoods to family child care cohorts.
- Our Board of Trustees has been meeting with the boards of our K-12 partners from throughout our service district, focusing on new ways to help our students move smoothly from kindergarten through grade school, high school and on to higher education.

In 2007, our Service-Learning Program developed partnerships with over 75 organizations that welcome Clark students and offer challenging and creative service-learning opportunities.

- As part of that effort, enrollment in the Students in Service AmeriCorps program has increased. Over the next two years, 25 students will complete 13,650 hours of community service and earn \$38,146 in AmeriCorps educational scholarships.
- Our eLearning growth has exploded. Among Washington's community colleges, we now have the second largest eLearning program in the state -- and our program has experienced the highest growth of any community college in the state.
- We've also reached a new milestone in our Running Start program. For winter quarter, we are welcoming 1,067 Running Start students – that's 800 FTEs. Both are new records for us.
- Not only that – Washington CEO Magazine just listed Clark as one of the top community colleges in the state based on our fall 2007 enrollment. And we're continuing to grow because, at Clark College, it's all about the student. For Janet Ellis, it's all about lifelong learning.

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**VIDEO CLIP #2 -- Janet Ellis:** “I’ve been to school in three different locations through the years. I have a master’s degree from a California school. And, when I first started here, I was very timid because I was returning to art which had been my love since grade school but, I’ve had a 40-year career in business. So, when you go back to school in your 50’s or 60’s its a little intimidating. I was feeling very unable to do the work and so really the instructors being so incredibly supportive as well as being talented was really a wonderful gift to me.”

- During the 2006-2007 academic year, 1,126 men and women earned degrees and certificates from Clark College. They included 59 students from our Running Start program.
- Those of you who joined us during commencement know that it was a particularly joyous event. Our keynote speaker – businessman and literacy advocate Wally “Famous Amos” Amos – read stories, played a kazoo, and greeted every single graduate – bringing smiles to everyone.
- Two days later, several hundred men and women earned their GED certificates and high school diplomas through Clark College. Students like Michael Logan, a native of Liberia, who earned his GED last June and is now continuing his studies at Clark.
- Clark College also provides English as a Second Language classes to people who have come to our region from throughout the world – students like Irina Ziyu. Irina came to the United States from Russia in 2004, leaving behind family and friends, her education at a medical university and her job. She’s now studying nursing at Clark College.
- Like all of our students, Michael and Irina each have their own definition of student success.

**VIDEO CLIP #3 – Michael Logan :** “Student success for me, being here I have always hoped to be a college student. Number one, I got my GED and I am here. And, am hoping to be a business administrator and one day own my own business.”

**Men-OK (Irina) Ziyu :** “As a former ESL student in Clark College I would like to say that Clark College gives wonderful opportunities for immigrant and international students.”

Irina Ziyu is also a member of the 2007 All-Washington Academic team. Congratulations, Irina!

Some of you may know that we received funding from the state to do pre-design work on a new growth project. It will be located on the southwest corner of Fort Vancouver Way and Fourth Plain Boulevard.

The Fourth Plain corridor between Fort Vancouver Way and Andresen is a multicultural center and perhaps the most ethnically diverse part of Vancouver. One of our visions for that building is a display of flags representing the homelands of our international students.

In 2007, Clark College welcomed 54 international students, the highest enrollment in more than five years. This great program connects our students to cultures from all over the world. This quarter, we are welcoming 75 students from 26 different countries.

### Clark College in 2008: a year to remember

So now it's time to ask the question: What will 2008 be like for Clark College and our students?

This year, we will:

- offer new and expanded programs,
- build and open beautiful new facilities,
- mark our ten-year accreditation,
- and celebrate our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary -- our diamond jubilee.

In March, Clark College will graduate its first class of medical radiography students. Kathleen Murphy, who now serves as Interim Associate Dean of Allied Health, spearheaded the creation of that program and did an outstanding job.

Starting with this quarter, our nationally-recognized nursing program is expanding their admissions by 20% (that's eight additional students) during each quarter of 2008. Also this quarter, the college has added 16 new welding slots to meet the demand for those jobs in our region. We also received additional state funding for slots in science, technology, engineering and math.

The college has received an Opportunity Grant that will provide 188-thousand dollars for tuition, books and supplies for low-income students who are pursuing high-demand career pathways. A new Career Pathways Coordinator will help basic skills and non-traditional students select and complete training that leads them to promising careers.

And we're looking at other new ways to support student success:

- We're exploring the creation of an honors program. This program would motivate academically talented students. It would enhance their critical thinking skills and help them develop their fullest potential.
- We believe that 2008 will be the year when our chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges, earns five-star honors. That honor reflects national recognition of the excellence of local chapters. Ours is led with great passion by Communications Studies instructor Deena Bisig. (Deena made news herself this year when she was named the recipient of the 2007 George C. Marshall Leadership Award.)
- In addition, the college is looking at the creation of Weekend College. Weekend College would enable people who are busy during the week to continue their education by taking credit classes online and, on weekends, in a classroom. These classes would apply toward a transfer degree.

We also know that challenges lie ahead in 2008. Like most colleges and universities, we took a fresh look at our security procedures following the tragedy at Virginia Tech. We have taken new steps – and others are planned. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our students.

We are also committed to fostering a positive college climate because that's important – not just to our faculty and staff – but to our students and our community – students like Estancia Cota, president of Multicultural Students United.

**[VIDEO CLIP #4 – Estancia Cota:** “What I love most about Clark College would have to be the students, the people that I interact with. There’s such a diverse group of people at Clark College, you get a sense of almost a global perspective here at Clark College.”

We also to continue to highlight the role of Clark College Foundation and the work they do on our behalf. Their support – and generous support from our donors – makes so many things possible at Clark College from scholarships to program support. I look forward to working with the Foundation to continue to foster a culture of philanthropy at the college – investing in ourselves as we ask others to invest in us.

### **It’s all about the student: Clark College facilities**

During the past year, we’ve continued to turn our classrooms into “smart classrooms” – providing technology to truly become a learning-centered institution. But we also know that the overall student experience doesn’t just take place in the classroom.

Last year, we added bright, easy-to-spot parking signs across the main campus. It was the first phase of our college way finding initiative, designed to help our student and visitors. Over the holidays, we freshened the lettering of the names on our building and added the building acronyms that we use on our maps. In the next few weeks, you’ll see campus maps on our new “where you are” location finders. It’s all to make it as easy as possible for our students – and our visitors.

In 2008, we’ll continue this project by replacing the signs welcoming visitors at the major entrances to our main campus with big, beautiful new signs that compliment the new signs already in place.

We are nearing the completion of much-needed renovations at the O’Connell Sports Center. That facility is scheduled to open later this quarter with a great new look and feel.

We’re also excited about the progress of the construction of central Gaiser Hall. Work is on track and the newly-remodeled area is scheduled to be ready for students when spring quarter begins. We will be holding a celebration to mark the grand opening of that building. We hope to announce that date very soon.

Last November, we broke ground for Clark College at Columbia Tech Center, the next step in higher education in Southwest Washington. Construction of that beautiful, 27-million-dollar facility will continue throughout 2008.

Located at 18700 SE Mill Plain Boulevard, Clark College at Columbia Tech Center will house 18 classrooms, eight science and computer labs, a 3500-square-foot multipurpose area for conferences, offices for faculty and support staff, and parking for 393 vehicles.

LSW Architects plans to exceed Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design. LEED is the national benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance, energy-efficient green buildings. Clark College at Columbia Tech Center is scheduled to open in fall 2009.

As we look to the future, the presidents of Washington’s community colleges, through their Capital Budget Committee, have given the college high marks for an additional growth project to meet the demand for higher education in Southwest Washington.

That’s a compliment to our college. If we’re successful, we’ll be the only college in the state to receive growth projects during the past three legislative sessions. Our legislative delegation has been extremely supportive of Clark College and we owe them a debt of thanks. We hope to get positive news about another new satellite facility during the upcoming legislative session.

### **It's all about the student: Clark College events**

Clark College is a leader in hosting events that benefit our students and bring our community together. I hope you were able to join us during 2007 – whether you came for an art exhibit, music or theatre performance, multicultural event, or our Distinguished Lecture Series.

In 2007, two national figures came to Clark College to talk about key topics of our times. Former counterterrorism czar Richard Clarke spoke about the war in Iraq. Former presidential advisor David Gergen spoke on leadership and the upcoming presidential election. Both men held student forums in addition to presenting their keynote addresses for the greater community. We appreciate the support of the Clark College Foundation, the Associated Students of Clark College and the Bank of Clark County for our Distinguished Lecture Series last year. And we plan to bring in another nationally-respected speaker during our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

This quarter, we will launch a Faculty Speaker Series. We're very excited about having the opportunity to showcase, each quarter, the work and expertise of Clark's faculty.

On March 13, Clark College will partner with YWCA Clark County in hosting the 2008 Women of Achievement celebration. This marks the 24<sup>th</sup> year of this illustrious event, which began at Clark College under the leadership of former Director of Women's Programs Pat Watne.

October 2008 will bring two of the most important events in recent/college history.

The college's ten-year accreditation visit by representatives of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges will take place from October 8<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>. Accreditation tells your students – and the world – that you meet the highest professional standards. Clark College was founded as a private, two-year junior college in 1933. Just three years later, we received our first accreditation, based on a visit by five professors from the University of Washington. In 1948, the college received accreditation from the Northwest Association of Colleges and Universities. We have maintained that professional standing ever since.

We have been working toward this accreditation visit for nearly two years. Under the leadership of Dr. Tim Cook and Dr. Charlene Montierth – and with support from Executive Dean of Planning and Advancement Candy Bennett -- teams of faculty and staff members from across the college have coordinated a self-study and even held a college-wide accreditation fair to bring this event to life.

We're celebrating our accomplishments and acknowledging our challenges in addressing the needs of our community for the future.

### **Celebrating a diamond jubilee: Clark College's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

Last year, we celebrated a new street address: 1933 Fort Vancouver Way. That number – 1933 – pays tribute to the year that we were founded.

On October 1, 2008, the college will mark its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary – the start of a year of special events to mark our diamond jubilee. Leaders from throughout our region are serving on our honorary steering committee. An outstanding planning committee – representing our entire college community – is hard at work planning a yearlong celebration.

Today, on their behalf, I'm proud to unveil the symbol and slogan for our diamond jubilee. For our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Clark College will: preserve the past, honor the present and embrace the future.

### **It's all about the student: Healthy Penguin Nation:**

In 2006, Clark became first community college in Washington State to become tobacco-free on our main campus.

In 2007, we expanded our wellness efforts. Under the leadership of Professor Judy Van Patten, the college launched a “Mental Health Mondays” series, offering information and assistance resources to students – and the general community – on subjects as diverse as dealing with the aftershocks of war, depression, overcoming anxiety, eating disorders and substance abuse. The programs are held on Mondays from noon to 1 p.m. in the Penguin Student Lounge. You can find the dates and topics for winter quarter on the activities calendar on our Web site.

Today, I am proud to announce the next step in our health and wellness efforts: our Healthy Penguin Nation initiative. In fact, today, we are launching our kickoff program -- Penguin Points.

- Penguin Points is Clark College’s incentive-based program to live well. All employees and students are invited to earn Penguin Points that they may exchange for a chance to win prizes (including a \$100 gift card for the Clark College Bookstore). And there’s an even bigger prize. Living a health life: priceless.
- To earn one Penguin Point, you must do something healthy. You can earn a maximum of one point per day, but every point must symbolize a different healthy action. You can earn points in six dimensions: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual and environmental. You can find more information about this on our Web site and you’ll be hearing more about this in the weeks to come.
- To help people stay physically fit, we have created Penguin paths throughout our main campus. Kudos to students Holly Hobson, Cyndi Hughes, Erik McIntyre, and Ryan Gallagher for helping to create our Penguin paths.
- I hope you’ll join me at noon today as we talk our first walk on those paths. We’ll leave from the bottom of the steps to the Penguin Union Building. It will be your first chance to earn Penguin Points and you’ll receive a special prize for being the first to take part.
- You may have noticed that we have healthy treats on our tables this morning – and we’re providing trans-fat free cakes for our students and staff throughout the college as part of our State of the College celebration. Our Culinary Arts Department is stepping up and embracing this initiative – working to provide trans-fat free and healthy products in our bakery, cafeteria and dining room -- while still ensuring great taste for our students, faculty, staff and guests.
- I am really excited about the Healthy Penguin Nation program and I want to thank Health Services Officer Mary Deal and Health & Physical Education Professor Veronica Brock for their tireless work in bringing it to life.
- On May 14, our Service-Learning Program will host a Community Health Fair, bringing the college community together to coordinate the fair while emphasizing wellness. I hope our faculty members will encourage their students to participate in this event.

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Our student athletes demonstrate health and wellness while representing our Penguin Nation. Our men's basketball team earned a berth in the state playoffs last spring and is having a strong season again this year.

Last fall, our women's soccer team earned a playoff berth. And, under the leadership of new head coach Biniam Afenigus, our men's soccer won the regional NWAACC championship, bringing honor to themselves, our college and our community.

Shawn McCready scored the winning goal. Some of you may have read an article about Shawn in *The Columbian*. Shawn had to battle to be on this year's team. He broke his wrist during the first game of the season – but went on to play in a cast. On the field and in life, Shawn understands the importance of goals in fostering student success.

**VIDEO CLIP #6 – Shawn McCready:** “It’s an individual goal to further educate yourself, to set-up yourself up for a career in the future.”

**[President invites the men's soccer team onto the stage, unveiling the design for their championship rings]**

### **It's all about the student: yesterday, today and tomorrow**

Since 1933, Clark College has truly been “The Next Step” for thousands of residents of Southwest Washington. We have succeeded because our students have succeeded.

As we enter into this very special year in our history, I know that we will continue to be successful because of:

- the talent and dedication of our faculty and staff,
- the commitment of our Board of Trustees and our Foundation, and
- because of you, the people who support us...the people that we serve.

Most of all, I know that we will be successful because, at Clark College, as it has been for nearly 75 years, it's all about the student.