

# Clark official is interim president

## Knight says he's not candidate for top job

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

Clark College trustees named Bob Knight the school's interim president Thursday, a move aimed at preserving campus continuity through the lengthy search for a permanent president that remains ahead.

A top Clark administrator since March 2004, Knight said he is not a contender for the full-time president's job.

The promotion, which comes without a pay raise, serves as strong affirmation for Knight's work since he was appointed acting chief executive officer Aug. 2. That's when trustees voted to cut loose Clark's third-year president, Wayne Branch.



**Bob Knight**  
Named Clark  
College interim  
president

Trustee Addison Jacobs said the findings of a consultant hired to measure Clark's campus climate, needs and what was desired in an interim leader meshed with Knight's proven skills.

"I think you have stepped up admirably and served us very well, and I think you have a great deal of support here," Jacobs told Knight after the trustee board approved his title change.

A clear call for "staying the course" on current program development, strong local connections and open communication emerged from several huddles consultant David Pierce held

# Clark College:

From page A1

with faculty members, administrators, other staff and some students, Jacobs said.

After reviewing Pierce's report in a closed session Monday, trustees decided their best choice was a simple one, settling on Knight.

Barely catching his breath after arriving home from Berlin, Germany, where he completed a 26-mile marathon Sunday, Knight agreed to take the temporary post. The former commander of the Vancouver Barracks and retired lieutenant colonel with 21 years of U.S. Army service will slide a few yards over to the president's office in the next few weeks, he said.

"I feel very comfortable working with Clark College, the community and our leadership team. We can work together," he said.

Knight has already identified a manager he'll ask to replace him as administrative chief until he returns to his old job sometime next year, he said.

Rhona Sen Hoss, trustee chairwoman, said the Clark board will continue on a very "deliberate" process as it now turns to finding Branch's permanent replacement.

Part of that work will be a thorough review of campus programs and objectives this autumn, in which Knight will play an important role, she said. She declined to estimate how soon a full-blown candidate search might begin.

Meanwhile, scratching an interim search saved Clark from spending at the least several thousand dollars and unknown hours. Knight can help smooth the transition period between Branch and the next president, while the school can keep moving forward, Sen Hoss noted.

"He's been doing the job (al-

ready). That's a plus," she said. "I think people are excited to be working with him."

Hired as administrative services vice president in February 2004 and currently paid a \$130,000 salary, Knight is active in Rotary Club affairs and in local American Red Cross leadership. Those ties have only strengthened his loyalty to Vancouver, he said.

"I like this community so much, that's why I decided to stay here (after leaving the Army)," Knight said. "I want to help as much as I can."

Branch, the former president, has remained on Clark's payroll as a consultant since his ouster. While his last day as an employee is Oct. 31, the school will owe him a final, \$84,000 installment in early 2007. Total cost of the contract buyout is \$198,256.

---

**HOWARD BUCK** writes about schools and education. Reach him at 360-759-8015 or e-mail [howard.buck@columbian.com](mailto:howard.buck@columbian.com).