Running Start gathers steam

More high-schoolers are earning free Clark College credits

By HOWARD BUCK
Columbian staff writer

Jena Bodell prefers her drama on the stage, not in the classroom.

Midway through her second year at Clark College, the Skyview High School senior will earn her Associate of Arts degree without spending a day at high school the past two years.

STEVEN LANE/The Columbian
Running Start student Jena Bodell rehearses with the Clark College cast of the musical “Jesus Christ Superstar.”

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Did you know?

“...aren't there,” Bodell, 17, said of Clark. “There are no social cliques, really. You can concentrate on your schoolwork and not worry about what people think of you,” she said.

Bodell, a Running Start student, earning college credits at no cost that will hasten her pursuit of a bachelor’s degree in theater direction.

Turns out she has plenty of company at Clark. More than 1,000 high school students have registered for Running Start courses in the winter term that starts today.

If you go

What: Running Start orientation for students who are currently high school sophomores or juniors and their parents.

When: 7 to 8 p.m. Jan. 15 and Jan. 24.
Where: Clark College’s Gaiser Hall student center, 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver.

Total credit hours reflect 800 full-time-equivalent students, a new high at Clark. The school has gladly added class sections to keep up with demand.

Running Start continues to lure crowds, enough so for Clark to schedule double orientation sessions this month for prospective entrants in the fall.

The identical orientation meetings run 7 to 8 p.m. Jan. 15 and Jan. 24, in the O’Connell Sports Center gym. Parents or students need attend only one.

“The word is out. People are pretty familiar with Running Start,” said Linda Calvert, program manager. “They appreciate what the value of the program is.”

Enrollment has steadily grown since Calvert helped

RUNNING START, Page C5
Slow start dooms Clark in NWAACC loss to Pierce

Raiders capitalize to stay unbeaten in conference games

The Columbian

The Clark College men's basketball team could not bounce back enough from a slow start half Saturday at the O'Connell Center, falling 69-63 to visiting Pierce College.

The Raiders caught their host on an off shooting afternoon and established a 31-25 lead at the half after leading by as many as 10 points.

Clark mustered a 36.7 shooting percentage from the field, and only hit five 3-pointers on 21 attempts. The Penguins fared little better at the free-throw line, where they only converted 14 of 25 attempts.

"Their defense had a lot to do with" the Penguins' shooting, Clark coach Mike Arnold said. "Give their defense credit, but on the flip side, we weren't ready to execute our offense."

JC Alexander and Bryan Martin both scored 17 points for Clark while Keith Jordan Moilanen chipped in 10, but Pierce answered by scoring 20 points off 23 Penguin turnovers.

"You can't win a basketball game with that many turnovers," Arnold said.

Clark College

Pierce also outrebounded Clark 44-41 with Demetrick White pulling down 10 boards in the Penguins' effort.

The Raiders sit atop the NWAACC standings at 2-0, while the Penguins fell to 1-1. Clark resumes play Wednesday at Grays Harbor.

Women's basketball

At Clark 80, Pierce 56 — Five players scored in double figures to propel the Penguins over winless Pierce.

Ashley Kitzman led the Penguins (2-0 NWAACC) with 12 points, while Mandie Wall and Kristina Wilson both scored 11. Kippy Powers and Anna Kitzman each added 10 points and Linh Nguyen had six of the team's 18 assists.

The Penguins shot 51.8 percent from the floor compared to their visitors' 35 percent performance. Clark also picked up 17 points from the free-throw line, missing only one freebie out of 18 tries. Clark outscored the Raiders 43-30 in the first half and led by as much as 31 points after the half.

Pierce is 0-2 in NWAACC play. The Penguins travel to Grays Harbor on Wednesday.

Running Start:

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start Clark's program in 1992. Today, nearly one of every 12 Clark students is a participant. Clark trails only Green River and Bellevue community colleges in Running Start numbers across Washington.

Early on, Clark leaders worried that precocious students might struggle. That hasn't happened, as Running Start students earn better grades, on average, than their Clark classmates. It makes sense, because high school applicants must first demonstrate college-level reading and writing skills on a COMPASS placement test all incoming Clark students take.

Running Start students also are grabbing more credits than ever: An average 11 credits per term, just shy of a full-time load of 12 credits.

Bodell, who has earned As and Bs, will earn an impressive 18 credits this term, two by performing in the play "Jesus Christ Superstar" next month.

Her Clark transfer credits will let her start as a junior at Central Washington University, her current top pick for bachelor's studies.

"I can just take all my classes on my major and not have to worry about all the little things," such as prerequisite English and math courses," Bodell said.

She'll seek the theater degree, plus a teaching certificate. Her goal is to teach high school drama and operate a children's theater school in Vancouver.

Bodell is no trendsetter at her Salmon Creek home. Three older siblings have used Running Start rather than finish up at Skyview. The former Utah residents were home-schooled and were confident in their skills, she noted. And her parents readily embraced the means of shaving college costs.

"It's free tuition; why wouldn't you do it?" Bodell said.

She praised Clark instructors for "real experience in the field," compared with most high school teachers. "They can really relate and tell you what it's like," she said.

Bodell has improved her own real-world mettle. Theater has boosted social skills that really blossomed while in Running Start, she said.

"Now that I'm at Clark, it's a lot easier to be doing a project with a 30-year-old," she said.

Did you know?

- Running Start allows students to earn early college credits at Clark College while completing high school. State K-12 school funding pays student tuition, while the school district keeps a small portion.

ROUNO START AT CLARK COLLEGE FALL HEAD COUNT

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Source: Clark College

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- Winter term