



The Clark Journal

FEBRUARY 2007



CONTENTS

PAGE 1

The President's Perspective

PAGE 2

From the Board of Trustees

PAGE 3

State of the College

PAGE 6

Getting to Know:
Shih-Han Lu



EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor/Contributor
Erica Schwenneker

Contributor
Barbara Kerr

Graphic Design
Pat McDonald

Photography
Ian Beckett

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

The 2007 State of the College celebration was designed to be just that – a celebration of the people, programs and events that make our college such a special place. I was very gratified by the number of people – from the college and the community at large – who joined us that day. For me, one of the highlights was being able to enjoy the celebration across the entire college – at our main campus, at Clark College at Town Plaza and at Clark College at WSU Vancouver.

During the State of the College address, I talked about the current session of the Washington State Legislature. This is an important session for Clark College. The State Board's proposed budget includes hundreds of additional FTEs for the college over the next biennium (more than any other community college in the state). It also includes funding for the construction of Clark College at Columbia Tech Center and pre-design work on our proposed health and advanced technologies building, planned for the corner of Fort Vancouver Way and Fourth Plain Boulevard. We feel very good about the progress of those proposals so far and are continuing to follow the session in Olympia.

This month, I had the privilege of representing the college in Washington, D.C., for the National Legislative Summit of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). Presidents and trustees from colleges all over the country came together to discuss common issues and concerns and to meet with their congressional delegations. With so many demands for dollars on the federal level, it's important for every college to be an advocate for higher education. Under the overall theme, "Advancing America's Community Colleges," the agenda included support for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, support of the Hope Scholarship and other tax credits as well as Perkins funds, and support for increased funding for the Community-Based Job Training Grants to enhance community colleges' capacity to train workers in high-demand, high-growth industries. The Clark College delegation met one-on-one with Congressman Brian Baird's staff, Senator Patty Murray's staff, and Senator Maria Cantwell's staff, and in a larger session with Senator Cantwell, to discuss those issues and issues facing our college.

(continued on page 2)

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE *(continued)*

This issue of *The Clark Journal* provides highlights from the State of the College celebration and our legislative efforts and agenda. We also introduce a new feature. "Getting to Know" is a chance to learn about important jobs at the college that may not be widely understood. Shih-Han Lu is our new internal auditor at Clark College. What does she do and why is it important to us all? Find out in this issue.

Since the State of the College event, a number of people have talked to me, called or written to tell me that celebrating the accomplishments that occurred across the college during the past year made them feel proud. It made me proud too. Keep up the good work you are doing. 🌿

Robert K. Knight, Interim President



FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AS A STATE
HIGHER
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION,
Clark College
depends almost
totally on the
operating budget

and the capital (construction) budget passed by the legislature. Because biennial budgets are passed in odd-numbered years and updated by the legislature in the even-numbered years (known as the supplemental budget), the focus for securing construction funding from the state is in the odd-numbered years. Since the 2007 state legislative session is now underway, our time is now.

For many years, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) carried the load of working with the legislature on behalf of the colleges throughout the state. Over time, the budget needs of the state have grown more competitive and the art of organizing grassroots lobbying efforts by groups with a stake in state spending has grown more sophisticated. Today, in order to stay in the running, every college needs to get involved in the legislative process, ensure that its state representatives and senators understand their needs, and solicit support for their requests.

The Governor, by law, is required to deliver her budget to the Legislature prior to the opening of the legislative session. The good news for us is that the Governor is asking for enough

capital dollars for basic community college construction to begin construction of Clark College at Columbia Tech Center and the predesign of our primary construction request (the proposed health and advanced technologies center to be located at the corner of Fourth Plain Blvd. and Fort Vancouver Way).

The Governor has presented a budget that is good for higher education. But she has requested fewer enrollment growth dollars and less special category funding (some additional items that affect Clark) than the State Board requested. This has been the norm in budget requests from governors over the past two to three decades. However, budget requests from the governor are usually larger than the budgets actually adopted by the House and Senate.

We know from recent history that nothing is set until the Legislature actually adopts its final budget. And adopting of the final state budgets is usually one of the last acts of the legislative session. With this in mind, we will keep a close eye on the activities in Olympia and keep open channels of communication with our legislative delegation in support of our legislative agenda, our college and our students. 🌿

Kim Peery joined the Clark College Board of Trustees in 1998. He served as a member of the Washington House of Representatives for 10 years and previously owned a consulting firm specializing in public affairs and governmental lobbying with local governments and the Washington Legislature.



A YEAR OF CONNECTIONS FOR CLARK COLLEGE: THE 2007 STATE OF THE COLLEGE ADDRESS



In his role as interim president, Robert Knight delivered the 2007 State of the College address to a full house in the Gaiser Student Center on January 31.

CLARK COLLEGE INTERIM PRESIDENT ROBERT K. KNIGHT delivered the 2007 State of the College address on Wednesday, January 31. Knight's theme of "connecting" was evident throughout the speech, which highlighted the many activities and accomplishments of the past year. Members of the Clark College Board of Trustees, community members, faculty, staff and administrators gathered in Gaiser Student Center to hear the address, which was recorded and broadcast on Clark-Vancouver Television (CVTV).

Not lost on Knight was the fact that 2006 was a year of change at the college. He addressed that issue head-on in the opening minutes of his speech when he said, "At times, it may have seemed like one

event – the change in presidential leadership – dominated last year. But a strong organization is more than any one individual. A strong institution succeeds – and Clark College is a strong institution – because of the commitment, hard work and accomplishments of every individual." Knight added, "So – to our students, faculty, staff and administrators – to each of you – I want to say thank you for everything you contributed to our college and our community during 2006."

Knight opened his address with an overview of many of the accomplishments and notable happenings that occurred at Clark College in 2006, including the opening of Clark College at WSU Vancouver; the opening of the college's new Welcome Center; the renovation of Joan Stout Hall; the growth of Clark's Running Start and e-Learning programs, both of which are among the largest in the state of their kind; the highest enrollment of international students in five years; and the historic day when Clark College became the first tobacco-free college in the state of Washington. Clark College student achievements were

(continued on page 4)



Familiar faces at Clark College are also familiar faces in the community. (From left) Trustee John White, vice president of BERGER/ABAM Engineers, Inc.; Clark College Foundation board member Bruce Paris, executive vice president of Bank of Clark County; Trustee Sherry Parker, Clark County Clerk, and her husband, Phil Parker, were all on hand to celebrate the achievements of 2006 and look ahead to 2007.



A YEAR OF CONNECTIONS FOR CLARK COLLEGE: THE 2007 STATE OF THE COLLEGE ADDRESS *(continued)*

also recognized, including the Associated Students of Clark College's leadership in hosting a regional Model United Nations Conference in Portland; the selection of students Sarah Craciun and Mariah Acton as members of the 2006 All-Washington Academic Team and Sue Corey and Max Holloway as members of the 2007 team; and two national awards received by the staff of *Phoenix*, the student art and literary magazine.

Apart from the recurring theme of "connecting," Knight's secondary theme was that of growth. For the 2007 legislative session (currently underway), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has requested 442 growth FTEs during the next biennium – the most new FTEs and the largest growth for any community and technical college in the state. That request would translate to more than \$1.6 million in new state funding for Clark College. The nursing program is expected to grow by 40 FTEs beginning in the fall quarter of 2007, helping to meet the need for trained health professionals and expanding the capacity of Clark's respected program.

The anticipated physical growth of Clark College was also part of the message during the State of the College address. A request for funding to design a new health and advanced technologies building at the corner of Fort Vancouver Way and Fourth Plain Boulevard will go before the state legislature this session, as will funding for construction of Clark College at Columbia Tech Center – a building that will house 18 classrooms, eight science and computer labs, a 3,500-square-foot multipurpose area and faculty and staff offices. In announcing these projects, Knight also addressed the impact these projects will have on the community. "[The health and advanced technologies center] would serve as an important part of the city of Vancouver's plans to energize the Fourth Plain corridor," he said. "With these two projects and others already scheduled we will be bringing nearly \$100 million in construction dollars to the community over the next several years."

Knight's speech went beyond the issues of new programs, new buildings, and new plans for the future. As he said in his

(continued on page 5)



PENGUIN NATION IS ALIVE AND WELL

Not one to miss out on a college event, resident leader of the Penguin Nation, Oswald, made an appearance during the 2007 State of the College address. Interim President Robert Knight welcomed Oswald on stage during the speech, shaking hands with his colleague in celebration of the many accomplishments and achievements of Clark College during 2006. As Knight noted in his address, "Here at Clark College, we believe that it is *always* the year of the Penguin."



A YEAR OF CONNECTIONS FOR CLARK COLLEGE: THE 2007 STATE OF THE COLLEGE ADDRESS *(continued)*

opening, it is the work of every individual that makes Clark College successful. As he closed the 2007 State of the College address, Knight shared several examples of what makes a difference at Clark – the people:

- ❖ “On January 16, after classes were canceled due to severe weather, our math division chair Paul Casillas pulled up a chair and sat in a lounge to help a student who had made his way to the college despite the cold and snow. Paul didn’t tell anyone, but another colleague spotted his act of kindness. That’s connecting.”
- ❖ “One of our star soccer players had his kick blocked during sudden-death penalty kicks during a playoff game against Bellevue. We lost the game and the opposing goalie tried to ridicule our player. But our Penguin athlete handled it well, looking at it as a life lesson. [And] it was – not just for him but for his teammates as well. That’s connecting.”
- ❖ “Not long ago, a student was checking out in the bookstore but didn’t have quite enough money to cover her books. She was trying to figure out which book she could get away with not buying until later in the quarter. Another woman who was standing in line – at a different register – overheard the conversation. She quietly asked her cashier to find out how much money the woman needed. Just as quietly, she then bought the book for the other woman and left the

bookstore. The student was so happy and grateful that she started crying. That’s connecting.”

- ❖ “Our college recently lost our Director of Auxiliary Services Director, Carl Flipper, who died unexpectedly. While visiting him in Legacy hospital during his last few days, I asked the ICU nurse where she had received her training. She immediately began to talk about her education and training at Clark College. She bragged about her instructors. She was a recent graduate of Clark and was immediately placed in the ICU because of the reputation of our nursing program. She did not know that Carl and I were associated with Clark until after she told the story. It was heart-warming to know that one of Clark College’s own was taking care of one of Clark’s own during his last few days. That’s connecting.”

For those who attended the 2007 State of the College address and celebration events held at Clark College at Town Plaza and Clark College at WSU Vancouver, the message was clear – 2006 was a strong, successful year for Clark College and just one of many to build on as the college moves toward its 75th anniversary in 2008.

(To read the full-text version of Knight’s speech, click on the “2007 State of the College Address” link on the Clark College Intranet home page.) 🌿



GETTING TO KNOW: SHIH-HAN LU, CLARK COLLEGE INTERNAL AUDITOR



“I’m here to help, not find out what kind of mistakes people have made.” So began Shih-Han Lu during a recent conversation in which she was asked to explain her role and work as internal auditor at Clark College.

“COME TALK TO ME”

When asked what it is about being the internal auditor at Clark College she would want the college community to know, Lu’s reply had nothing to do with policies and procedures. Rather, it is her outgoing personality that is speaking when she replied, “I want people to come talk to me – not just because they have a question, but to get to know me, and for me to get to know them. It helps me understand how things work at Clark College.”

Lu’s personality and excitement is evident in her work, too. “I’m outgoing and I like talking to people,” she said. “My personality is very different than most auditors – and the image most people have of auditors. Someone described me as being very ‘disarming’ and that that is my secret weapon.”

Lu joined the Clark community on November 1, 2006. She holds an accounting degree from the University of Kentucky; she was

hired by the Kentucky State Auditor’s Office before she had even graduated. “I worked with other auditors – wonderful people who taught me so much. Theory is theory, but experience is different,” she said of that first position. When she and her husband decided to relocate to the West Coast, she began looking for a position in the Portland area – and thought she’d end up in Salem. She was thrilled to find out about the opening at Clark, and even more excited to have been offered the position after a rigorous three-interview selection process. “When Sue [Williams] called to say I had been offered the position, I was so excited I was jumping up and down.”

Clark College’s internal auditor position is a full-time position that reports directly to the president. According to the posting for this position, the internal auditor is “responsible for performing the internal professional auditing of the college’s financial records and conducting investigations related to the use of college resources.” Many of the duties and responsibilities for the position involve review, analysis, research and monitoring of various policies, procedures and internal controls. Some examples include:

- ✦ Review and analyze institution procedures for compliance with various internal and external regulations and policies.
- ✦ Review and appraise procedural controls over revenues, expenditures, assets/liabilities and business principles.
- ✦ Conduct and assist in conducting investigations related to use of college resources.

The role of internal auditor, according to Lu, consists of three major areas of responsibility: efficiency and effectiveness, reliability of reporting, and policies and regulations.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Clark College operates under several different sets of policies and procedures – everything from federal and state policies, to those of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), to Clark College policies. These policies outline the methods and procedures for handling everything from cash flow to goods and services to student and employee personal information. The overriding policy is that of the highest authority.

(continued on page 7)



For example, if federal law establishes the policy of how student information is protected (as it does through FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), then Clark College policies and practices must adhere to that policy as well.

As an internal auditor, Lu's responsibilities go beyond making sure the policies are known and followed; they also include making Clark College operations efficient by eliminating redundant procedures. "We have controls set up," she explained, "but we must also be updating policies to make sure they meet our current needs and changes in technology."

RELIABILITY OF REPORTING

Most people understand the work of auditors as reviewing financial documents for both accuracies and inconsistencies – and that is also part of Lu's work at the college. "The reliability of the financial reporting that takes place at Clark College is also part of what I do here," she said, "to make sure that what is being reported is accurate." While Lu reviews financial documentation for accuracy, she does not make any final decisions as to how inconsistencies may be addressed: "After conducting my research, I present my findings to the President, who reviews the report and makes decisions on how to handle it." Lu has both a schedule of departmental audits that she conducts as well as those that are assigned as projects or questions arise.

The work of an internal auditor is also proactive. "On some level I am also doing risk assessment," said Lu. "If, during an audit or review, I see an area that is problematic I can identify that as higher risk – to pay closer attention to it, create systems for evidence and documentation – and try to help fix it." It is Lu's hope that members of the college community understand that she is here to partner with them to make sure the systems and policies work – an approach that is very different from her previous experience as an external auditor with the Kentucky State Auditor's Office. "Being an internal auditor is very different," she explained. "When you're an external auditor, you can ask for any information. If they don't have it, it goes in the report and I come back next year. Now I am working internally to help departments create systems to provide that documentation."

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

In addition to the question of whether Clark College is following the applicable federal, state, or college policies and regulations, there is also the question of whether the college is following the generally accepted accounting procedures (or GAAP) – a set of commonly accepted ways of recording and reporting information that is used in the United States to ensure the consistency of data reported across businesses and institutions. There are instances, however, when the college will depart from GAAP; knowing, understanding and documenting these departures is also part of Lu's work as internal auditor. "Clark College's regulations will follow GAAP," said Lu, "and if not, we must document why we depart from GAAP. If we do, it is because our policies and regulations more accurately reflect what happens here at Clark College – and are ultimately more accurate for our circumstances – than the GAAP regulations."

Lu also sees her role as one of helping individuals who may find themselves in potential "whistleblower" scenarios where a policy or regulation may not be being followed: "If people have questions about whether someone is doing something that may not be appropriate, they can come and ask me. I can investigate and look into things that perhaps they cannot without raising concerns from those involved."

Like so many at Clark College, when asked how she feels about her work, Lu replied "I love this job." It is this energy that makes Shih-Han Lu, internal auditor for Clark College, someone we should all know. 🌿

Editor's note: After introducing herself to a roomful of people at a recent meeting, I commented to those in my proximity that I needed to introduce myself to Shih-Han Lu, Clark College's internal auditor, and ask her exactly what she does – because I myself didn't know. Any trepidation I may have had about such a revelation was quickly dismissed when those around me replied that they, too, were unsure of what an internal auditor does on a day-to-day basis. This was the inspiration for this article and more to follow – to help everyone at Clark College understand some of the unique positions within the college and the amazing people who fill them. If you have any ideas or suggestions for future positions that could be featured for the benefit of the college community, please share them with me.

-ES

