

## Job seekers flock to Clark College for free guidance in crafting a career



Photos by TROY WAYRYNEN/The Columbian

Tim Cook, chairman of Clark College's Counseling Department, leads the "Choosing a Career" workshop with a standing-room-only crowd at Gaiser Hall. Workshops for job seekers continue today and Wednesday.

# Hunting for a goal

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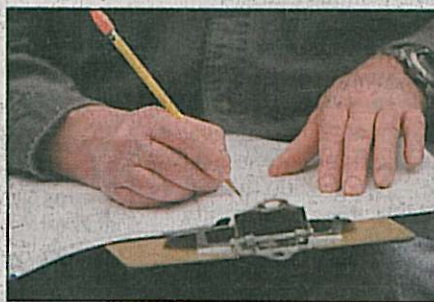
Seated inside the Career Center at Clark College on Monday, Crystal Place, 28, was busy learning who she is.

She pored over a workbook, head down, pencil in hand. Packed with an overflow crowd of 93 people, some of whom had stationed themselves in the lobby, the Career Center was nonetheless quiet.

At one point, Place gave the workbook's list of occupations an incredulous frown. "What's a master of ceremonies?" she asked. "Sounds cultist."



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Neil Machajewski, a part-time student at Clark College who is finishing his GED, answers questions on a career-interest assessment booklet.

After a while, she was ready to total up her score.

The assessment she took told her that she'd be a good fit for jobs that are,

by their nature, investigative, conventional, artistic, or realistic — or some combination of those qualities. "It's just informational," she said, "something to chew over."

Indeed, there was plenty of information to be collected and analyzed at Monday's workshop, "Choosing a Career," held as part of Clark College's three-day "Career Days" event at the main campus in Vancouver. Aimed at helping job seekers build effective career plans and successfully market themselves to prospective employers, the event continues today and Wednesday.

It's free to students and residents. No registration is required.

It also comes at a nerve-jangling time



# Career:

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for job seekers. Although the U.S. is officially no longer in a recession, many people are still out of work and finding it a tough haul to break back in. In Clark County, the jobless rate in February was 10.2 percent, and that number is expected to be revised significantly upward after the jobless claims of county residents who previously worked in Oregon are added in.

As Scott Bailey, regional labor economist for the state Employment Security Department, put it: "The bleeding has stopped but the healing has not taken hold yet."

That's why it's so important for job seekers to know who they are and, if they get that coveted call for an interview, how to impress a potential employer. Quickly. Catharine Keane, program manager for Clark College Career Services, recalled that a recruiter from Boeing once said that the decision whether to hire a person is made in the first 90 seconds of a job interview.

Keane urged attendees of Monday's workshop to also go to Wednesday's event, where people will have the opportunity to meet local employers. It's a good place to get career advice, network with companies and polish your interview skills, she said. "It's a pretty safe environment."

Monday's workshop centered on the self-directed search



TROY WAYRYNEN/The Columbian

Tim Cook, chairman of Clark College's Counseling Department, presents the "Choosing a Career" workshop to an overflow crowd at Gaiser Hall.

program developed by psychologist John Holland. The program breaks work into six basic categories, including realistic occupations such as skilled trades; investigative occupations, such as scientific or technical work; and artistic occupations, such as musical or literary work.

The program also matches people to jobs by asking them what kind of work they'd enjoy and whether they think they're capable of doing a particular job.

Tim Cook, chairman of the Counseling Department at Clark College, who led the workshop, said the results you get from Holland's program are "one piece of the puzzle."

It's possible to receive a score that recommends a job you've already done, he said, when what you want is to move onto something else. Or maybe you just need to think about it some more. "We can help you out," he said, noting that people are welcome to visit the Career Center for more career assessment and advice.

Hazel Dell resident Karen Raetz, 56, who attended Monday's workshop, said she hopes to soak up more advice from the "Career Days" event. She gets seasonal work now, she said, but she'd like to be employed full-time. It would help her family's finances.

She's done a lot of different jobs over the years, including homemaker: She has five grown children and three grandchildren. Her list of new jobs that might suit her includes teacher's aide and assistant librarian. "I'm trying to look for any opportunities I see," Raetz said.

Place, meanwhile, has her sights set on a degree in engineering technology. She's in

her first year at Clark College, and lives just a walk away from campus. Her work experience includes teaching English as a second language in Rome. She admires Europe's public transportation. She sees herself winning a career in transportation planning.

After scribbling in her workbook Monday, she was pleased to learn that her personality gravitates toward investigative occupations, work that involves conducting research and figuring things out. It rang a bell with her. "I know that I'm definitely investigative," she said.

## CAREER DAYS SCHEDULE

"Career Days" at Clark College continues through Wednesday. All events are free to students and residents. No registration is required.

The location of the events is Gaiser Hall on the main college campus, 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver.

For more information, call Career Services, 360-992-2902 or visit <http://www.clark.edu/cc/careerdays>.

Here is a list of upcoming events:

### TODAY, MORNING SESSION

#### Marketing Yourself on Paper (Writing a Winning Résumé)

■ **Résumé Building**, 9 to 9:50 a.m., Gaiser Hall 213. Learn how to market your education, skills and experiences effectively.

■ **Résumés from a Recruiter's Perspective**, 10 to 10:50 a.m., Gaiser Hall 213. Learn what employers are looking for in a résumé. Hear from a recruiter what makes a résumé effective and helps it stand out in a stack hundreds deep.

■ **Résumé Critiques and Assistance**, 9 a.m. to noon, Career Center/Gaiser Hall 108. Bring your résumé and receive a one-on-one, personalized critique from a professional. Also bring an electronic copy and update your résumé on the spot.

### TODAY, AFTERNOON SESSION

#### Marketing Yourself in Person (Developing Your Networking Skills)

■ **Conversational Skills for Networking**, 1 to 1:50 p.m., Gaiser Hall 213. Information to help you build alliances and develop relationships; it's quality versus quantity. Learn conversation starters, tips for staying connected and ways to be a great contact for others.

■ **The 60-Second Commercial**, 2 to 2:50 p.m., Gaiser Hall 213. Write your 60-second commercial, also known as your "Elevator Speech," and practice with the professionals.

■ **Informational Interviewing**, 3 to 3:50 p.m., Gaiser Hall 213. Gain confidence and expand your network; learn to get firsthand knowledge with informational interviews.

### WEDNESDAY

#### Marketing Yourself to Employers (Career Fair)

■ 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Gaiser Student Center. Connect personally with local employers to obtain career advice and use your networking skills to seek employment opportunities.