



ZACHARY KAUFMAN/The Columbian
Hudson's Bay High School student Jesus Cortes, 16, takes notes at a seminar Monday at Clark College's annual Career Days.

Career Days kicks off at Clark

Four-day event offers advice on finding a job

By ERIC FLORIP
Columbian staff writer

Lori Judkins didn't waste any time jumping into the job market after losing her own job last month. Sitting idle wasn't an option.

The Vancouver resident hasn't found employment yet. Instead, she's found an entirely new landscape — Judkins held a steady job, after all, and hadn't looked for work since the late 1990s.

"It's a lot different than 13½ years ago," said Judkins, 54.

Judkins spent Monday afternoon catching up, attending a job search workshop on the first day of Clark College's annual Career Days event. The four-day program aims to help local job seekers land on their feet, covering everything from picking a career to honing cover letters and résumés. Anchoring the event is a job fair the college will host Wednesday.

Judkins, a former secretary with Springleaf Financial Services in Vancouver, said she was let go in March as the company downsized. She quickly waded into a much more Web-focused job search than a decade ago — a process that can feel much less personal than it used to. One employer asked Judkins to create a video of herself answering a set of questions, then post it online.

"You just send off all this information, and you don't hear a thing," Judkins said.

Monday's job search session drew a wide range of ages — student and nonstudent — all looking for ways to improve their own career prospects. The workshop,

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Event has tips for workforce newbies, veterans

By AARON CORVIN
Columbian staff writer

Even if you have a solid education or proper training, the job market these days is a rough place to navigate with little room for failure — whether it's forgetting to dot an "i" on your résumé or freezing up in an interview.

That's why Clark College wants to help.

As legions of job seekers hunt for work, Clark rolls out Career Days, a four-day event aimed at helping them sharpen everything from their interview skills to their résumé-building abilities.

Launched Monday, the annual event continues today through Thursday at the college's main

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Career Days

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led by Clark College Career Services program supervisor Barbara Jo Ivey, touched on many of the basics: the purpose of a cover letter, what to include (and not include) on a résumé, how to avoid downfalls during an interview.

"All of these little things, you're making a presentation," Ivey said. "Every little detail makes an impression."

Jesus Cortes and Alisha Dechand aren't seasoned members of the workforce just yet. The two Hudson's Bay High School students, both 16, came to an earlier "Choosing a Career" seminar Monday hoping to gain some insight on their own evolving paths.

Both are looking to Clark College for early college credit before they finish high school. And both appeared to feel at least some pressure from a still-sluggish economy

and a tough job market. Dechand said her mother is among Clark County's recently unemployed.

"It's intimidating sometimes," said Cortes, who may pursue an engineering career. "But as I grow up, I just want to make sure I have many doors open."

Career Days continues with a busy slate today. A full day of workshops will include résumé building, a panel of job recruiters, networking and ways to advertise yourself. Wednesday's career fair will bring together close to 40 employers, and likely hundreds of job seekers.

Portland resident Eric McNeil welcomes the help offered by Clark College and other local resources. McNeil sold building materials — "That still hasn't hit bottom," he said — before being laid off in 2010. He's been looking for work since. And he's learned that the process can be overwhelming at times.

"There's so much information," McNeil said, "you don't know where to go."

CAREER DAYS EVENTS

TODAY

Write a Winning Résumé

9 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.:

Résumé Building.

10 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.:

A Recruiter's Perspective:

Applying for Jobs.

9 a.m. to noon: Résumé Clinic:

Critiques and Assistance.

In Your Words

1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.:

Conversational Skills

for Networking.

2:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.:

The 60-Second Commercial.

4 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.:

How to Work a Job Fair.

WEDNESDAY

Career Job Fair: An

opportunity to obtain career advice, network with employers and seek employment opportunities.

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.,

Gaiser Student Center.

THURSDAY

Transfer Fair: A chance to get answers about admissions, financial aid and academic programs.

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.,

Gaiser Student Center.

Event

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campus in Vancouver, offering workshops designed to help students and job seekers alike. Some 40 companies will participate in a job fair Wednesday. All workshops are free to students and the public. No registration is required.

Driving directions to

Clark College, 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, and parking maps are available at <http://www.clark.edu/maps/index.php>. More information about Career Days, including times and locations of the various workshops, is available at <http://www.clark.edu/cc/careerdays>.

Information about the college's career services is available at <http://www.clark.edu/cc/careerservices>.