



Blake Bowers

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Staff reporter

Blake Bowers was not going to work in education. Both of his parents had worked as educators, and he was not interested in following in their footsteps.

But after walking down a different career path, the new Battle Ground resident journeyed back to the family business and was appointed dean of Health Sciences at Clark College Jan. 8.

A sports enthusiast, Bowers chose to follow his first passion outside of college as an athletic trainer. During the near-decade long career, he worked minor and major baseball leagues including the Oakland Athletics.

Yet education called him back to university life after his first child was born. Long seasons of games away from home looked far less appealing with a new baby, he said. His young family had settled in Coos Bay, OR, and he applied for a job in education after earning his masters degree that would allow him to stay near home.

"Actually, it was a smooth transition," he said. "I found that my experience made me well versed for the work. Educators have to be adept at multi-tasking and show accountability."

Bowers moved into an administrative role as an instructional director for health and human development at Southwestern Oregon Community College soon after taking an adjunct teaching position there. The position taught him a lot about forming policies and procedures as well as the impact of high stakes decision making, he said.

"I did not have the kind of vision and perspective as an instructor that I now possess as an administrator," he said.

Although he holds both a bachelor and master of science degrees from Southern Oregon University, Bowers decided to take his work further. He began crafting a dissertation on how community colleges can enhance learning partnerships with the workforce for his doctorate degree at Oregon State University.

In his new role at Clark College, he will provide oversight and leadership

for a number of dynamic programs, including early childhood education, family education resources, human services, health and physical education as well as allied health, pharmacy technician medical imaging and nursing.

"These fields are far from boring," he said with a laugh. "Things change every day. When I get into the office, I never know what is going to happen."

He will coordinate with stakeholders and leverage resources to provide opportunities to students. To do so he must stay aware of emerging trends in health and education fields as well as seek new areas for students success.

Bowers said he jumped at the opportunity to head up the division for Clark College that simultaneously matched his skill set and provided opportunities for professional development.

"There are tremendous opportunities and a tremendous amount of potential here at Clark," he said. "In my leadership position, I will utilize and really see the College through the next phase of growth and development. There are new opportunities and areas every day in these fields."

Bowers chose to settle in Battle Ground with his wife, Angela and their children, Haley, 5, Sierra, 4, and Ehlan, 3. Years of living in rural Oregon prepared them to find a community that could offer the best of all worlds, he said. North Clark County was able to give his family both the access and exposure to metropolitan life and services as well as safe, family-friendly community.

Even though his career and academic work takes most of his free time, Bowers said he is a strong believer in balancing work and life. His search to find quality time with his family in the community has led them to new welcoming neighbors, churches and fun.

"It's been a delight for our family," he said. "We have great opportunities and enjoy our new surroundings. Every weekend finds us exploring and experiencing something new. We can take the family on an adventure in a park or museum."