

Clark College

CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

School
faces the
challenges
of record
enrollment

By HOWARD BUCK
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Demand for college credits and career training that Clark College offers just won't let up.

By autumn 2010, high unemployment rates pushed part- or full-time enrollment to a record-high 16,500 students.

Among them were almost 1,700 area high school students who earned tuition-free Running Start college credits.

Should the economy rebound, population and business growth in Clark County will continue to steer local students and career-minded adults to Vancouver's public community college, founded in 1933.

And so, the institution keeps evolving.

Clark plans to expand its health and medical training. It hopes to build a \$38 million allied health classroom building by 2013, just west of its main campus on Fort Vancouver Way. Besides health training, state-of-the-art laboratories and teaching space would serve growing needs in the science, technology, engineering and math fields.

State legislators' approval of construction funds might be stalled by Washington state government's fiscal crisis, however.

Also on the drawing board: A north Clark County satellite campus to meet the county's expected growth.

That branch campus would form a nice counterpart to the Clark Center at Columbia Tech Center in east Vancouver, which opened in 2009 on East Mill Plain Boulevard near 192nd Avenue. The attractive classroom building fast attracted more than 1,400 students taking courses of all types, equivalent to about 500 full-time students.

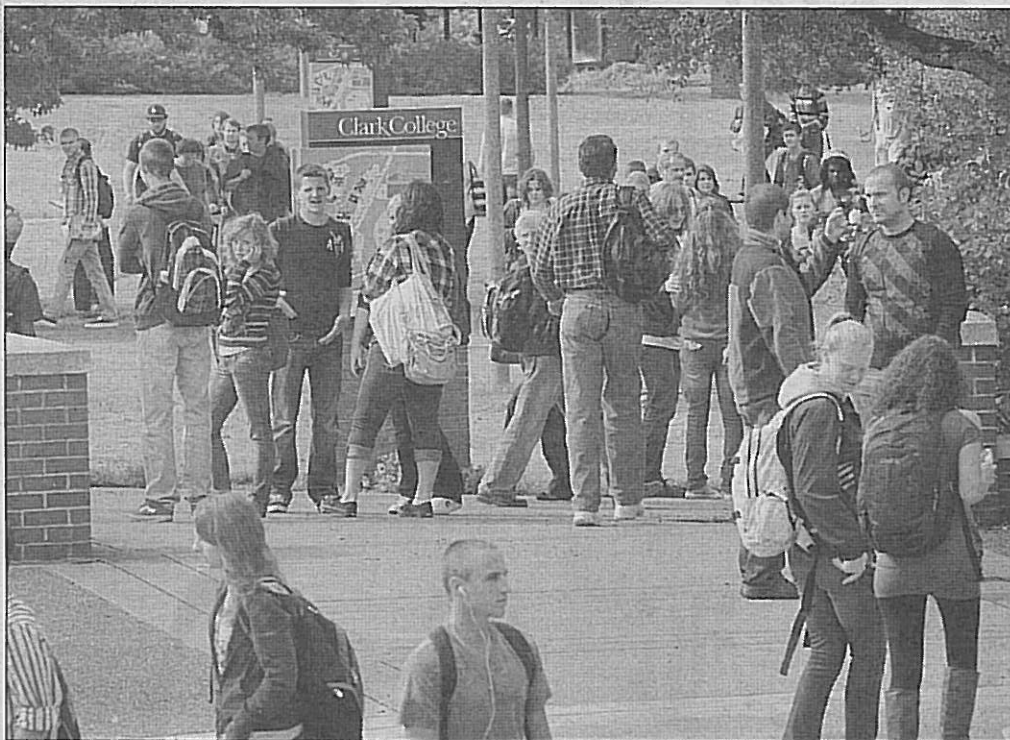
Due for completion in 2011: Clark's new Early Learning Center for childhood development classes and child care, and a new Japanese Garden, both located on the main campus.

Clark's first satellite campus continues a positive partnership with Washington State University Vancouver. The Clark Center at WSUV's hilltop Salmon Creek campus serves hundreds of Clark students and houses its popular nursing program. With WSUV's upper-division courses, the two schools have teamed to make a stay-at-home, four-year college track possible.

Clark has formal co-admissions agreements with WSUV, Portland State University, Marylhurst University and Concordia University.

The teamwork means hassle-free registration and service for transfer students. Some can reserve upper-division slots while they use advising, library and other resources of either school.

Clark has close ties with Eastern Washington University. Students here can earn EWU bachelor's and master's degrees in social work and technology, and a dental hygiene



TROY WAYRYNEN/Columbian files

Clark College has seen record enrollment the past two years fill its main Vancouver campus and branch campuses in east Vancouver and Salmon Creek.

bachelor's degree, with instruction from visiting EWU faculty.

Clark's well-regarded health care programs include nursing, medical radiography and dental hygiene. There are 144 slots each year for students to begin a two-year nursing degree track and 20 slots open every other year for medical radiography. Since 1970, each dental hygiene graduate has passed the national board exam on the first try.

In 2010, Clark launched mechatronics courses at the Columbia Tech Center building. Students learn to service modern mechanical equipment controlled by electronic and computer systems. This year, Clark will add a new two-year degree in Pharmacy Tech leadership, which can lead to a bachelor's degree through Central Washington University.

An Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training program assists GED or ESL students who get specialized job training for welding and early childhood education professions. I-BEST classes offer extra academic support in high-demand job training. I-BEST also helps students earning certification as nursing or office assistants.

Popular options

Clark has added online tutorials, telecourses, discussion board messages and a hybrid blend of classroom and alternative instruc-

tion to better meet students' work and family responsibilities.

Clark has fully embraced Internet-based "e-Learning." By autumn 2010, more than 2,000 students were enrolled in online-only courses, besides other hybrid classes taught mostly online with limited face-to-face or, "FTF" instruction, as it's now labeled. Those online and e-Learning classes served the equivalent of 1,640 full-time students, more than 15 percent of Clark's full-time population.

Clark also serves hundreds of students in its Town Plaza center, in Vancouver's McLoughlin Heights neighborhood. Town Plaza is geared for specialized job training, Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language.

Town Plaza is home to a Pathways Learning Center that extends resources to students and customers of other work force agencies there. Aid comes from a \$308,138 state Opportunity Grant designed to help cover costs of tuition, books and supplies for low-income students who enter high-demand careers. The grant has served hundreds of Clark students in recent years. More information is available on the college website: http://www.clark.edu/admissions_fin_aid/fin_aid/opp_grant.php.

Basic skills classes also are taught off-campus, at Battle Ground, Evergreen and Vancouver district public schools and at WorkSource in Stevenson and WorkSource Columbia Gorge in White Salmon.

On the Web:
Clark College:
<http://www.clark.edu>