

Clark College strides into future

By **HOWARD BUCK**
Columbian staff writer

Clark College celebrates its 75th year in 2008 by reaching out more than ever.

By expanding, teaming with local high schools and universities and embracing "eLearning," Clark will serve nearly 13,000 full- and part-time students in exciting ways.

Physical

The two-year community college has close ties with Washington State University Vancouver.

The Clark Center at the WSUV campus in Salmon Creek serves hundreds of Clark students, and houses the popular Clark nursing program. With WSUV's upper-division courses, the two schools have partnered to make an in-county, four-year

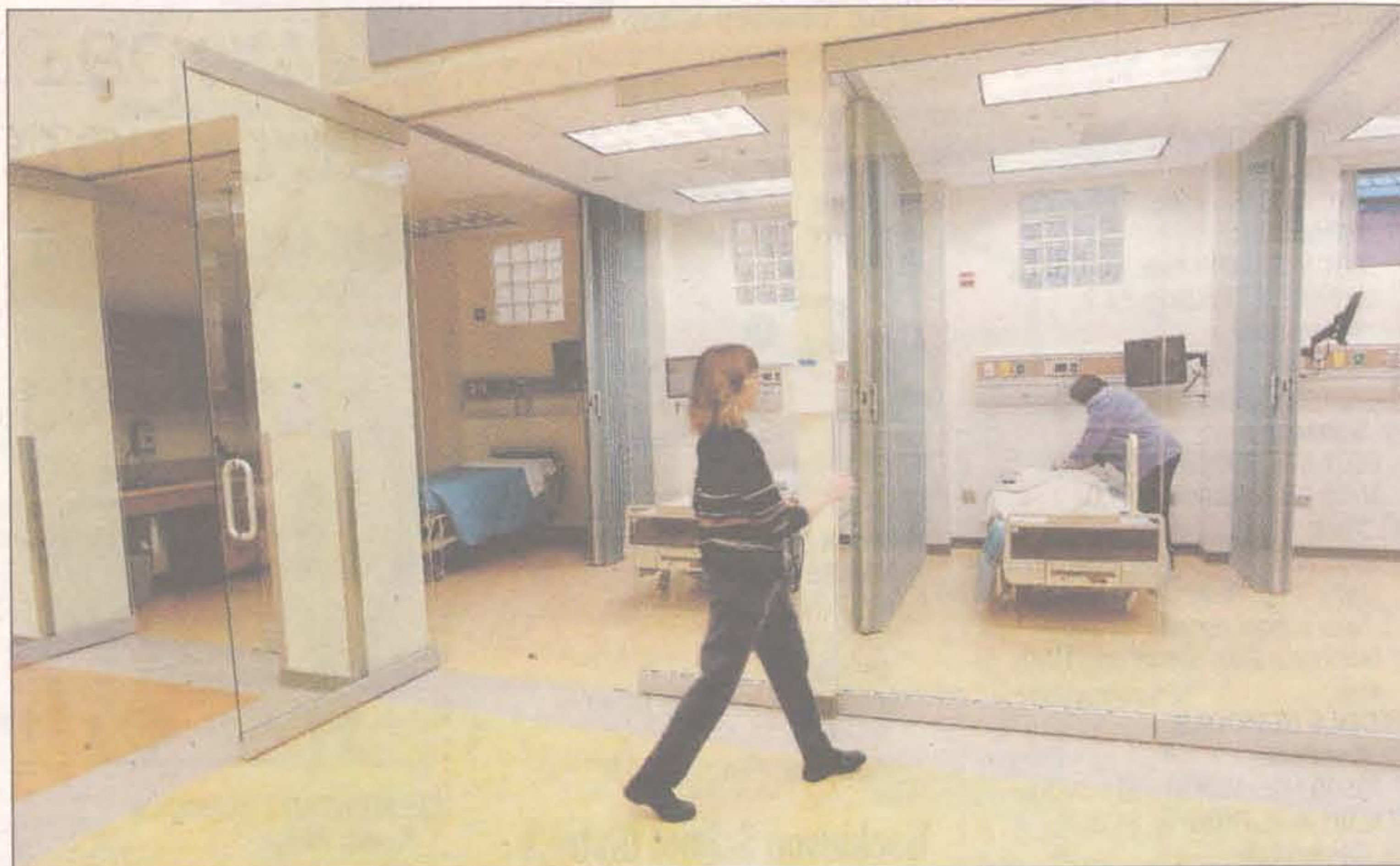
college track a viable option.

Construction has begun on a satellite campus in east Vancouver, due to open in fall 2009. The Clark Center at Columbia Tech Center will serve 1,000 students near the 192nd Avenue corridor and foster more job training partnerships with nearby high-tech firms.

The building will host general education courses, professional and technical training, and basic and adult classes. It will have science and computer labs and a large conference room for community use.

Clark already serves hundreds of students in its Town Plaza center in the McLoughlin Heights neighborhood. Town Plaza is geared for specialized job training, adult basic education and English as a second language courses.

Basic skills classes also are taught off-campus, including



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Instructors set up a nursing lab at Clark College's building on the WSU Vancouver campus.

local high schools, the Columbia Gorge Academy in White Salmon, Vancouver's Open House Ministries and the Job Service Center in Stevenson.

Programs

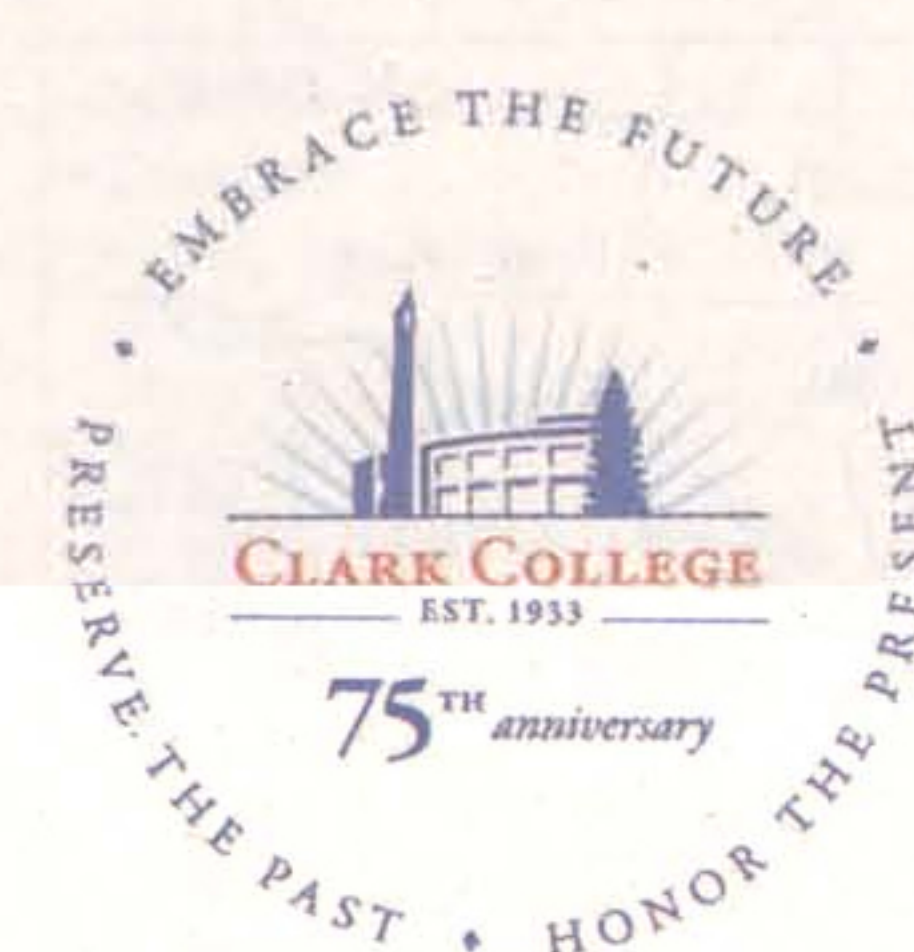
Each quarter, about 1,000 high school students who meet academic standards earn college credit by attending regular Clark courses, in the school's Running Start program.

Clark has a highly regarded nursing program. Each quarter, 40 nursing students begin a two-year degree track.

A diagnostic imaging program launched in 2007 drew a stampede of applicants. Clark will add eight new student slots each quarter of 2008, to meet growing job demand.

On the drawing board is a \$30 million health sciences classroom building on the western edge of the main Clark campus. Expected to open within four years, it would host several more medical programs.

Clark added 16 new slots to its welding program this year. A new grant for integrated ba-



sic education and skills training should support additional early childhood education and office assistant courses.

A \$188,000 state Opportunity Grant will help cover costs of tuition, books and supplies for low-income students who enter high-demand career pathways. Clark plans to add a career pathways coordinator to help basic skills and nontraditional students choose and complete training in promising fields.

Progress

Reacting to evolving needs, Clark has signed co-admis-

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PENGUIN TRACKS

■ Clark offers online registration. For a catalog of courses, to check on class openings and to enroll electronically, use: www.at-campus.net/clark.

■ Hundreds of adults enroll at Clark each quarter for popular Continuing Education, Mature Learning and Travel Studies courses. Options range from senior fitness to guided overseas tours to learning Mandarin Chinese. Mature Learning students get a 70 percent discount on tuition.

■ Clark began operating as a small, private two-year school in 1933, first received state funding support in 1941 and became a full-fledged community college in 1967. The campus will mark its 75th anniversary with several October events this year.

■ Clark has heavily recruited international students in recent years, especially in Asia. By autumn 2007, 72 international students were registered, a jump of 40 percent from 2006.

sions 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 further ties with Eastern Washington University. Without leaving town, students can earn EWU bachelor's and master's degrees in social work and technology, and a dental hygiene bachelor's degree, with instruction from EWU faculty here.

What's more, Clark has

dived into Web-based "eLearning." By late 2007, about 1,250, nearly one in 10 Clark students, was taking at least one eLearning class. The number of class sections offered was 287, up from just 15 sections in 2003.

Online tutorials, telecourses, discussion board messages and hybrid use of classroom and alternative instruction helps students fit courses around work or family responsibilities.

Clark's eLearning enrollment

has grown 40 percent since fall 2006. Women made up nearly 70 percent of users.

Not everyone has the level of self-discipline, motivation or access to technology required for eLearning, but it's destined to keep growing in popularity.

CLARK COLLEGE

■ The community college at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way serves students taking academic, vocational or adult-education courses. Annual tuition, for a student taking a 12-credit load over three quarters, is \$2,601.30.

Call 360-992-2000.

On the Web: www.clark.edu.