

"It's a one-stop shop. It makes a huge difference in a student's life, to be able to go and find everything in one place."

— Rachel Ruiz, vice president of student affairs at Clark College



Photos by JANET L. MATHEWS/The Columbian

Visitors are reflected in an interior glass wall inside the newly opened main Gaiser Hall concourse at Clark College. The \$10 million remodeling project brings most student service offices under one roof again in the longtime campus hub.

Clark College reopens its heart

By **HOWARD BUCK**
Columbian staff writer

So long, plywood walls, plastic sheeting and awkward detours.

Clark College celebrated the return of its campus hub on Friday, formally reopening the east half of Gaiser Hall following a \$10 million makeover.

Student eligibility, registration, advising and financial aid, cashier, counseling and career services are back together again, conveniently housed in a two-story concourse.

"I like it. It's real nice, compared to the building that was here before," said Maria Kornchuk, 19, of Ridgefield, turning in financial aid forms for fall term, when she enters Clark's nursing program.

That would be the dark and cramped original Gaiser Hall, opened in 1958. Now comes an airy, 21st century wing that contains passive and active heating and cooling elements, including beams chilled with cool water and radiant concrete slabs.

LSW Architects hopes to earn the silver level of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, certification for the green features, Clark officials said.

\$10 million

renovation

of Gaiser Hall

is complete



Running Start program students Kevin Reddington, 16, left, and Gleb Sukhovolskiy, 17, both of Vancouver, compete in the Battle Arena during Clark College's year-end "Spring Thing" celebration on Friday, staged near Gaiser Hall.

Gaiser:

From Page C1

Ongoing Clark students, including those in Running Start, will more likely be grateful they no longer must wander through parts of the Penguin Union Building (Gaiser's western half) or trek across Fort Vancouver Way to the "T" Building for vital services.

Room with a view

"It's a one-stop shop," said Rachel Ruiz, vice president of student affairs. "It makes a huge difference in a student's life, to be able to go and find everything in one place."

Clark trustees will meet in a new Community Room on the second floor, also open for group use. Guests will have a gorgeous view of the leafy campus through a south-facing glass facade.

The renovation began in December 2006 and was essentially completed by March. School officials chose to wait until after spring term to move the scattered offices back from their temporary homes.

It's the latest of several Gaiser Hall projects. In April



JANET L. MATHEWS/The Columbian

An exterior view of the newly remodeled Gaiser Hall at Clark College. The new wing includes passive and active heating and cooling elements.

2005, Clark christened the Penguin Union Building, a major addition that also cost \$10 million.

More work ahead

The PUB continues to house the campus Welcome Center for visitors and new or prospective students, plus popular lounge areas and the "fireplace room" used for intimate public gatherings.

Last September, a newly expanded Clark bookstore opened at the north end of the new concourse.

This summer, workers

will make \$500,000 worth of upgrades in Gaiser Student Center, the large hall used for music, theater and speaking events. They will enlarge the stage, re-tile the floor and improve lighting and audio systems.

A rebuild of Gaiser Hall's last original portion, the culinary arts program kitchen and student cafeteria, is four to six years away, officials said.

HOWARD BUCK covers schools and education. He can be reached at 360-735-4515 or howard.buck@columbian.com.