

# Gold card gives seniors access to credit classes

**Alice Perry Linker**  
*staff reporter*

People age 60 and older can take credit classes on the cheap at Clark College.

With a proof-of-age card, such as a driver's license, anyone age 60 and older can register for a gold card and take classes for \$5.75 per credit hour. There are a couple of caveats, however: the class must not be full and seniors using the gold card may not earn credits toward graduation.

"They must take classes for personal enrichment only," said Barbara Kerr, executive director of communications and marketing at the college.

Prospective students must have lived in the state for one year. Students may take up to two classes each term, she

said. Although they do not earn credits, the senior citizens are expected to do homework assignments and take exams.

Thirty-six senior citizens have signed up for classes with gold cards for the fall term, said Kimberly Marshel of the registrar's office. The most popular classes are physical education—yoga, aerobics and other low-impact classes, she said.

"Music classes are a close second," Marshel said. "We offer a variety of dance—ballet, ballroom, swing."

Other popular classes are art, computer technology and Spanish.

"Compared to the total number of students, 36 is not a very big number," Marshel said. "There's probably not as much advertising as we'd like to see;

not many know about it."

The gold card is applicable only to credit classes. Community education and mature learning classes are not covered under the card, she said.

According to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, a state rule allows every community college to offer lower fees—or no fees—to people older than 60 if it chooses. The rule was established in 1992 by the Leg-

islature.

Mature learning classes, open to people age 55 and older, provide different programs than credit classes, said Tracy Reilly Kelly, a program coordinator. The mature learn program receives a subsidy from the state and college that helps to keep the class cost low.

"Seniors pay 30 percent of the overall tuition," she said.

For example a five-week class, Religions of the World,

costs \$30, typical for most mature learning classes.

The mature learning program offers between 28 and 32 classes each quarter.

"They fill up," Kelly said. "We have a low cancellation rate, about 8 percent."

The most popular mature

learning classes are art, yoga and thai chi, she said.

Information about classes for senior citizens is available on the Web site [www.clark.edu](http://www.clark.edu) and by calling the college at 699-6398.