

Clark College inks Knight for three more years

New contract adds three vacation days, no pay raise

By **HOWARD BUCK**
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Clark College President Bob Knight, former commander of the U.S. Army's Vancouver Barracks, has earned another three years at his current post.

Last week, Clark's board of trustees voted to extend Knight's original three-year contract through August 2013.

The move follows an annual evaluation and comprehensive job review begun last year. Trustees also conduct quarterly performance reviews.

"We were pleased with the direction he's taken Clark College," said Jack Burkman, the board chairman. "He's managing the college in very tough economic times and during a dramatic growth in enrollment. And we're still meeting students' needs."

Enrollment has soared to record levels, topping 14,000 individual students in the spring quarter.

Meanwhile, Washington state budget woes have triggered ongoing budget tightening, with a new round of 4 to 7 percent cutbacks expected soon.

Through it all, Knight has kept Clark on an even keel, while the college opened a new classroom building at the Columbia Tech Center and prepares to



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construct a new science, technology, engineering and mathematics (or STEM) building on its main campus. It also continues to scout for a north Clark County satellite campus site.

"It is a very stressful time for the col-

lege," Burkman said. "We want to continue his great work."

Knight's contract extension lies in stark contrast to past turmoil under Clark's previous two leaders.

President Wayne Branch's contract was not renewed in summer 2006 following his third year. A buyout cost the college more than \$195,000 for 15 months' salary. He had succeeded Tana Hasart, who was terminated in April 2002 at a cost of \$184,000, just shy of four years at the helm.

Hasart previously served one year as interim president, just as Knight did following Branch's departure. Knight won

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the permanent job in August 2007.

"I'm enjoying being president of the college," Knight said after the trustees' 5-0 vote. "The board's been pretty happy with me, and they're happy with the way the college is moving forward."

Knight's base salary remains at \$166,260 per year.

He also gets an annual \$7,000 tax-deferred annuity payment.

He received a 2 percent cost-of-living adjustment his first

year, from his initial \$163,000 salary. But there have since been no COLA increases for Clark faculty or staff members coming from Olympia, and so, none for Knight.

"I'm fine. I will not accept a pay raise, if my employees can't get a COLA increase," Knight said. He doesn't expect any short-term change on the fiscal front, either. "It's just going to be a tough three, four years. It's not anything we're going to be coming out of anytime soon," he said.

Trustees did agree to give Knight three more vacation days, raising his annual leave allotment to 25 days.

"We want him to take time

off. He's working really hard and needs to take breathers, here and there," Burkman said.

Under state law, Knight may accrue no more than 30 vacation days total (to cash out later), unless trustees agree.

If one were counting, three paid vacations days at Knight's salary are worth nearly \$1,900, equal to a 1.1 percent pay hike.

Worth noting: Terms of Knight's contract call for a six-month salary buyout should he be terminated without cause — intended to avoid a repeat of past oversized payouts.

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