

Grant aimed at students over 50

\$70,000 will fund
pilot program at
Clark College

By **HOWARD BUCK**
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Retirement these days: It's not what it used to be.

More adults on the far side of age 50 now expect to keep working for years to come. Others, content to quit their jobs, will want to stay active.

At the crossroads lie community colleges, in prime position to help millions of baby boomers in major transition.

That's the crux of a new three-year, \$70,000 grant awarded to Clark College, a "Plus 50 Initiative" pilot project designed to develop and assess programs that reach out to older students.

The pilot grants went to 15 U.S. colleges. Clark is one of five "mentor" schools designated, thanks largely to the success of its existing Mature Learning and Continuing Education programs that have served thousands.

With the new money, Clark plans to expand its nursing assistant certification and fundamentals of caregiving programs, said Tracy Reilly Kelly, continuing education project manager. Older trained and licensed workers will be needed to stem Pacific Northwest work force shortages, she said.

Clark also would beef up some conventional corporate and continuing education classes, such as a succession planning course that helps businesses try to retain older workers.

New courses could be of-

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ferred online, or in traditional formats.

Kitchen facilities inside the Clark Center at Columbia Tech Center, due to open in September 2009, could host new wine hobbyist business classes. Other wine and food courses might focus on nutrition, ethnic cooking and local agriculture.

Clark also plans to expand its online enrollment system for all corporate and continu-

ing education classes.

The \$3.2 million national pilot project is funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and led by the American Association of Community Colleges.

Other Washington schools will share in the grants. The Community Colleges of Spokane system was designated as a mentor school. Lakewood's Clover Park Technical College was named one of 10 "demonstration" colleges.

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