

The Weekly News: Week 30



This week

Kudos to the Facilities Services staff and Safety and Security officers at Columbia Tech Center for responding so quickly to the water damage due to flooding from a broken water pipe over the weekend. We recovered quickly thanks to the Facilities team and the Office of Instruction's Joanne Savage, who figured out room moves for the remainder of the week and made the changes in 25Live. The restoration phase will be rebuilding the damaged systems and bringing the building back to completed form. This might take a month or two, depending on class schedules, contractor/staff availability, and the extent of the repairs needed after the recovery phase. Thanks to all for the quick response in getting classes back up and running.

I enjoyed a delicious, four-course Mardi Gras lunch in the McClaskey Culinary Institute this past week and also stopped in to see beautiful Japanese calligraphy created by students. As an ex officio member of the Foundation Board, I shared an update on the progress of the 10 board priorities for this year. At the Board of Trustees

work session, it was inspiring to listen to the 11 tenure-track candidates share their passion for teaching. Kudos to the Tenure Office and all of the support Danielle Plessner and Quincy Berkompas have provided to the candidates and the tenure committees to make this a well-organized and supportive process.

At the Board of Trustees meeting we heard heartfelt student testimonials on the impact that the college navigators and the MESA program have had on students' lives. In describing his experience at Clark College, student Jovan Merceron shared, *"I feel like a person, and the faculty always care. Clark is a place where you can become somebody and become the best version of yourself."*

It was my honor to welcome the statewide Council for Unions and Student Programs to Clark College for their Winter Quarter meeting, which was hosted by Sarah Gruhler, Director of Student Life. It was made even more special to reconnect with a former student life director I had previously worked with at Everett Community College. I also enjoyed celebrating birthdays and getting to know some of our amazing faculty and staff.

Budget

In my earlier budget message sent today I let the college know the Budget Committee has recommended going with a conservative

option in projecting 2020-21 enrollment. This option anticipates fewer state-support, Running Start, and International students than we built into the current year's budget.

Given our recent enrollment history, I accepted the committee's recommendation to plan very conservatively for next year's budget. But the net result of serving fewer students, coupled with increases in must-fund items such as wages and benefits increases for all faculty and staff, leaves us with a \$5.4 million deficit to close in 2020-21.

To put this deficit in perspective, last year's 5% budget cut saved \$3 million. To close next year's projected shortfall we will have to find cuts of 7 to 8%.

We are faced with a significant budget challenge, and solving it will require everyone's participation. The Budget Committee will soon be announcing the process for engaging the entire college community in developing next year's budget. In the meantime, please feel free to share your thoughts with your Budget Committee representatives. A current committee roster is attached to the earlier budget message.

President Search

Thank you everyone who took time to provide feedback on the finalists for the position of Clark College President. All

feedback provided
online is confidential and anonymous. The Board of Trustees
extends their
appreciation to you for the thought and time you have put into
helping them
select the next leader of the college. You can remind yourself
of the three
candidates by going to the Presidential
Search Finalists web page.

The Board of Trustees is on schedule to make a hiring decision
as early as Friday, February 14. The decision would be made
during the open
session of the Board of Trustees meeting. We'll be quick to
update you by email
and with news alerts as soon as we hear the news. All three of
our candidates
are excited at the prospect of leading Clark College and
working with all of
you.

New MESA Director

Please join me in welcoming Dalila Paredes to her new role at
Clark College as MESA Program Director! Dalila highlighted two
of her students
and presented at Wednesday's Board of Trustees meeting. It is
so encouraging to
hear from students who are thriving at Clark College.

Margaret Tolmacheva is studying to be a mechanical engineer,
and
she's currently President of the NERD Girls Club. Derek
Ferguson is studying to
be a nurse practitioner. They both say MESA's tutoring,
textbook supports, and
personalized attention are all important resources helping

them succeed. Dalila has taught college STEM classes for a decade. She previously opened a STEM tutoring center at Amarillo College in Texas.

The Clark College MESA program currently has 95 students enrolled who are pursuing degrees in science, technology, mathematics and engineering.

It provides added supports for low-income students of color who are

underrepresented in STEM-related careers. The current group of students has an

average 3.08 GPA and a 79% retention rate. Dalila says she hopes to create more

internship opportunities for MESA students. If you have ideas or want more

information, she can be reached at dparedes@clark.edu.

Clark/Vigor agreement signed

This is exciting! Clark College has signed an MOU with Vigor for what will be a very positive

partnership benefiting our students. I mentioned this a few weeks ago. Vigor has

a new \$1 billion contract to build next-generation landing craft for the U.S.

military and needs skilled welders.

Caleb White and his team are creating curriculum that will ensure students have the skills that Vigor needs.

Vigor will offer interviews to our students that will potentially lead to

employment opportunities. In addition, Vigor will send their current employees

to Clark for training. This is exactly the kind of partnership we want for our students and our employers.

So many people to thank, let's start with Caleb White, Welding Department Head and his team of expert welding faculty. Also Vice President of Instruction Sachi Horback and Interim Dean of WPTE Armetta Burney for making this a high priority and negotiating the newly signed MOU. This is a big win for our students, our college and our employers. Congratulations to our Welding Program and Office of Instruction!

Faculty Kudos

Congratulations to Bruce Elgort, Computer Technology Instructor. He has been recognized by IBM as an IBM 2020 Champion. The international program recognizes innovative thought leaders in the technical community. It provides training opportunities to its recognized champions. 1,400 individuals were nominated from 44 countries. IBM announced its 600 champions this week. Bruce is one of approximately 250 recipients from the United States. Bruce is a great example of an innovator bringing the very latest in a rapidly changing world to our students.

Clark College Grants

Clark College has been awarded more than \$2 million in grants this past year. I want to thank everyone, especially Julie Robertson, Director of Planning & Grant Development, who have obtained these additional resources that benefit our students in direct and meaningful ways. Over the next several weeks, I'll be highlighting some of the grants and how they're being used.

On the foundation side, Clark College's Veterans Resource Center was recently named the recipient of a \$245,700 grant thanks to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. This is a tremendous investment in our veterans and we are grateful for the support.

On the college side, you may remember the Career Connects grants awarded in September. This comes from a dedicated fund identified in the Governor's budget; one-time money to help bolster and expand college programs in high-demand industry. Clark College received \$1.3 million earmarked for the Mechatronics program. It provides capital equipment funding and instruction funding to support more FTE's.

SBCTC provided Clark with \$100,000 for Guided Pathways – specifically for the student emergency assistance grant.

I like to highlight these grants because it requires substantial

work to apply for, and then manage, the grant. These are valuable additional resources to the college that help us fund high-demand services and programs.

Alpha Sigma Phi Honors

The Alpha Sigma Phi Chapter at Clark College has been recognized nationally as a 2020 REACH Chapter. REACH stands for *Recognizing Excellence in Acceptance and Completion with Honors*. PTK members will receive special graduation stoles to wear in honor of their achievement. Clark College is grateful for their many contributions to our community.

Honoring our students

Because we place so much emphasis on supporting our students I wanted help spread the word.

Each year, the ASCC Officers host the **OSWALD Awards** (Outstanding Students With Academic Leadership and Development skills) to recognize Clark College students for their outstanding achievements. You can submit the names of current students you would like to be recognized at the **2020 OSWALD Awards**.

Award categories and submission forms can be found by visiting the OSWALD website. The deadline is Friday, March 20.

Next week

I am looking forward to attending the women's and men's basketball games this weekend and honoring former athletes and

teams who are
being inducted at the ninth annual Clark College Athletics
Hall of Fame. Next
week I'm hosting the Clark Equity Advisory Committee, an event
I look forward
to each month. This group of dedicated community leaders have
provided great
insight and feedback on improving college culture for
systemically non-dominant
students.

I also look forward to attending WSUV's 30-year celebration of
research and community partnerships and representing Clark
College on the WSUV
Advisory Council. And finally, as we all excitedly anticipate
the announcement
of the next president, I have convened an onboarding committee
to support their
success.

Great things continue to happen every day here at Clark
College.

Thank you for all you do.