

# Sharing their stories



*Clockwise from top left, Nathan Webster, Rashida Willard, Tyler Monk, and Erykah Weems spoke during an online public forum called "Listen to Learn & Lead: Stories from our Black Community." Photo courtesy of VanTalks.*

Two members of the Clark College community shared their experiences of being Black in Vancouver during a public online event held on July 30. Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion **Rashida Willard** and marketing professor **Nathan Webster** were among four speakers who told their stories during "Listen to Learn & Lead: Stories from our Black Community."

The event was co-presented by VanTalks, Vancouver's version of TED Talks that inspire change, ideas and innovation, and by Ready to Rise, which supports students of color and first-generation college students.

The other two featured speakers were Tyler Monk, Clark County director of Ready to Rise, and Erykah Weems, who grew up in Vancouver and recently graduated from Central Washington University. She is passionate about supporting and elevating the voices of girls and young women of color who have been impacted by adverse childhood experiences.

At the start of the forum, emcee Monk reminded the audience: "We have four Black folks sharing our experience. We do not speak for all Black folks."

## Nathan Webster

Webster, who grew up in Vancouver and graduated from Mountain View High School, talked about how it felt growing up in a sea of white people. During his presentation, he shared class photos in which he is the only Black person.

"I've always been that ink spot in that bottle of milk," he said. "I don't see enough Black males in leadership roles in Vancouver. Can we show some love to our Black males? So many of my students at Clark have never had a Black male teacher until they took my class."

Webster also addressed how he feels being a Black male during an era when police brutality toward Black males is rampant. Too often, white people encounter a law-abiding Black male who is doing nothing illegal and minding his own business, but the white person calls the police.

He said, "White folks, please don't be scared of Black men. I don't want to be an endangered species."

## **Rashida Willard**

Willard says she grew up in pre-gentrified Northeast Portland in a close-knit Black community that included "cookouts, church ladies and aunties sitting on the porch watching out." Later, she and her husband and their growing family were priced out of their Portland community. After moving to Vancouver, where housing prices were more affordable, she started looking around for other Blacks and asked herself: "Where are they?"

Willard spoke about the need to pay attention to her actions and words in Vancouver's stores, medical offices, restaurants and her workplace. She talked out her internal monologue when she's in a store: Keep your hands out of your pockets or people will think you're stealing. Her list of "don'ts" was long and included paying attention to her clothing and hair.

She told a story about a time she was grocery shopping when a white stranger asked her to control her child. The woman was pointing to someone else's Black child.

She told the audience, "I don't own all the Black kids in

Vancouver!”

On another trip to the grocery store, the cashier asked Willard whether she was going to use her EBT card to pay for her groceries. Willard told the audience that she doubted the cashier asked white shoppers that same question.

After many negative encounters in Vancouver, she said, “I started to wonder where I belong.”

She spoke about the need for more local leaders who are not white: “In Vancouver students need to see people of color in leadership positions.”

During the Q&A after the presentations, an audience member asked: What’s the biggest mistake white allies make?

Willard answered: “Be an ally when the cameras aren’t rolling. True allyship is what you are doing when nobody is watching.”

She added, “If you’re a white person called out by a person of color, listen to them. Believe Black folks.”

The event is viewable on the VanTalks YouTube channel.

---

## Automotive Technology steers through challenges



Clark College Automotive Technology students maintain their distance while learning about air conditioning systems.

When Clark College made the switch to online instruction during COVID-19, students showed their tenacity by adapting to new ways of learning. But some

challenges take more than determination to overcome. For instance, what if your “homework” is an automobile you need to repair—what then?

Well, that’s when your professors’ creativity and flexibility come in. When Clark’s Dealer Ready Automotive Technology programs faced COVID-19 restrictions, the college found a way to help students complete their hands-on labs in the shop.

The college set up a system for daily health screening checks. It has required face coverings for both students and employees. To comply with social distancing, the professors re-organized the garage with fewer students. The programs integrated online learning with in-person labs to keep students on the path while minimizing in-person class time. The program’s creative solutions for keeping its students learning were featured in the July edition of Northwest Automotive Trades Association (NATA) Industry Review.

Similar models will be used throughout summer and fall terms for all students taking Career Technical Education classes that require hands-on labs.

President Dr. Karin Edwards recently had the opportunity to visit Clark’s Toyota T-TEN program to talk with instructors **Tonia Haney** and **Mike Godson** and observe students working in the reconfigured, socially distanced lab environment. She learned how the automotive instructors adjusted the program to COVID-19 restrictions, helping students complete their programs while putting safety first.



Dr. Karin Edwards, *left*, meets with Automotive Technology professors Tonia Haney and Mike Godson.

## **Smaller classes, safer classes**

Two new cohorts of students start in the Automotive Technology

program each fall: T-TEN (Toyota/Lexus) and HiTECC (Honda PACT, Audi AEP and Dick Hannah dealers). Normally, each program starts with 20 students per cohort, for a total of 40.

But to maintain social distancing requirements, fewer students will be admitted in each cohort this fall.

Haney says that to begin an automotive program, a student must be hireable, have a good driving record, and be at college-level math and English.

“To diagnose with computers, you must have a good understanding of electronics,” Haney added. “But you have to be able to turn a wrench.”

## **Making apprenticeships work**

Clark College provides hands-on instruction so graduates are equipped to step into good jobs. Clark’s automotive programs are apprenticeships that require students to concurrently be working at a dealership garage or independent repair facility so that they can put into practice what they learn in the automotive lab. Students have three days of instruction in Clark’s automotive labs weekly, followed by three days of in-dealer apprenticeship experience.

Most students work in shops in the Vancouver-Portland metro area, but students have worked at dealerships as far north as Centralia (83 miles from campus) and as far east as The Dalles (90 miles).

Although auto repair and maintenance facilities are deemed “essential services” during the coronavirus outbreak, Haney says there may be fewer apprenticeship slots available because dealers may not be hiring as many people.

Haney adds, “We may make exceptions to the

apprenticeships, due to COVID.”



Nick Ferguson entered Clark College’s Automotive Technology program to move up in his career.

## From a hobby to a career

**Nick Ferguson**, 33, lives in Tigard and has been working at Lexus of Portland for 10 years as a lube technician doing oil changes, minor maintenance and repairs. He realized that in order to advance in his career and be considered for promotions, he needed more training.

He enrolled in Clark’s Toyota T-TEN program because “I wanted to move up in the shop. It was the only way to move up.”

Ferguson earned his GED in 2005. He hadn’t attended any college classes. When he started Clark’s program two years ago, in the Lexus shop he could do work that was supervised by a team lead, but as he neared graduation from Clark’s Toyota T-TEN program, he says, “Now I’m doing anything and everything they’ll let me do.”

For the past two years, **Aaron Quick**, 19, has driven 140 miles round-trip between Winlock and Vancouver to participate in Clark’s Toyota T-TEN program.

“I’ve always enjoyed working on cars,” says Quick, who graduated from the program this spring. “I work on my own cars, and I work on my parents’ and friends’ cars too.”



Student Aaron Quick commuted to and from his home in Winlock for two years to complete his Automotive Technology degree at Clark College.

During his senior year at Centralia High School, he started looking for a robust, hands-on automotive technology program close to home, but he couldn’t find one, so

he applied to Clark and started the program immediately after high school graduation. Clark has turned Quick's hobby into a vocation.

Haney says, "Most students starting in the fall already have been hired by a sponsoring dealer and are working throughout the summer in a variety of different positions—from lot porter to lube technicians or even line tech, depending on their skills coming in. When classes start in the fall, most students will have three months or more of experience in the dealer to relate to instruction. Even if that experience is parking cars, it still helps to relate to daily instructional topics."

Learn more about Clark's Automotive Technology programs at [www.clark.edu/cc/auto](http://www.clark.edu/cc/auto).

---

## Getting to know Dr. Karin Edwards



Clark College President, Dr. Karin Edwards.

*As she begins her Clark College presidency on June 22, Clark 24/7 sat down with Dr. Karin Edwards to learn a little bit more about her life, her outlook on higher education, and her experience guiding a college—in her former capacity as president of the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College—through a global pandemic.*

*Read a full biography of Dr. Edwards at the bottom of this Q&A.*

# Starting out

***Q: Tell us about your family.***

**A:** I'm the youngest of eight children. I have four sisters and three brothers. We were a tight family who ate dinner and watched TV together, did chores, stuck up for one another, and played games. We grew up in a housing project in the Bronx, New York. My parents finished high school in Atlanta, but they did not attend college. My siblings and I all attended college or some other post-secondary training.

I met my husband, Raymond Edwards, during my freshman year at SUNY Albany. We've been married going on 35 years. He is a major accounts manager with Northwest Natural. We moved to Portland in the summer of 2014 when I was hired at as Campus President at PCC Cascade. We have two children—an adult daughter and son. We have two granddaughters and a third on the way.

***Q: Did you have a Plan A and/or a Plan B for your career? Are you doing what you set out to do 25 years ago? Was there a moment or experience that changed your direction?***

**A:** I learned the power of education early on, so I knew I wanted a career in education. It would provide me an opportunity to impact lives. I remember wanting to be a teacher and/or a guidance counselor. I wanted to help students. I knew that was my purpose. Some of that was based on my wonderful second-grade teacher, Miss Saxton, who demonstrated so much care and consideration toward her students.

I first set my sights on the K-12 sector, but while I was a college student, I got a job helping students in my college's Financial Aid office. I enjoyed being able to help students make the financial aid process easier. That job



experience changed my path. That is when I decided to stay in higher ed. Since then, all my professional experience has been in higher ed. I worked in financial aid, admissions and advising.

***Q: Are you an introvert or extrovert? Does it affect how you work?***

***A:*** I'm more of an introvert, though not shy and quiet. Instead of sharing about me, I'm more interested in learning about others. I find ways to build relationships with people based on what I learn about them. I also do quite a bit of reflection.

***Q: What are the milestone moments in your life that have shaped you today?***

***A:*** Here is my first milestone moment: When I was in seventh grade at Clark Junior High School in the Bronx, my homeroom teacher, Mark Cooper, who also taught science, noticed that I wasn't being challenged academically. He suggested I apply for a private school, Columbia Preparatory–Columbia Prep—an affluent school in Manhattan.

At Columbia Prep, I was exposed to so many things I'd never seen before. I was in the same city I'd lived in my whole life, but I was having all-new experiences. I went to the ballet and Broadway shows. I visited my classmates in their Central Park West apartments. Growing up in the Bronx, I never knew or experienced such affluence.

Here's my second milestone moment: Six years ago, I moved across the country from Connecticut to Portland to take my job at PCC. I'm not afraid to try something new.

***Q: How did your parents influence your educational decisions?***

***A:*** My mother was a homemaker with eight kids. I'm the youngest. My dad was injured while in the Army.

He later worked with the railroad.

Both of my parents were very supportive of me attending Columbia Prep, the private school. They both finished high school in the South. My mother recognized that, if you're going to get a quality education, there's a cost associated with it. I received significant scholarship support through A Better Chance.

My graduating class at Columbia Prep had only 64 students, and I was one of only four students of color; a very different experience. I would go to school in Manhattan where I had to live by one set of rules, but then I'd come home to the Bronx, which had another set of rules. I was living in two different worlds. At Columbia Prep, it was very competitive. Students ranked themselves on practically everything, including wealth, grades, personal attributes, you name it. In the Bronx, we were family; we helped each other and didn't try to outdo one another.

Straddling those two worlds taught me to ask myself: How do you live in both worlds? It's a survival skill I developed. Long story short, I got an excellent education at Columbia Prep, but it was annoying to me that I couldn't get the same education in the public schools in the Bronx.

That's been part of the basis for my fight for equity. If I hadn't had that foundation of the private school opportunity, I wouldn't be in the position that I am. I saw the power of education, the disparities that exist between the haves and have-nots. This has led me on the quest for equitable success for students.

Going away to college was that first step of independence. For me, as the youngest of eight children, it was a very big step. It helped me build my confidence and independence.

***Q: What's a significant achievement in your life?***

**A:** Earning my doctorate was significant. I had the pleasure of working with exceptional college leaders and presidents in Connecticut and New York. My mentors told me if I wanted to pursue a college president position, I had to get my doctorate.

When I was pursuing my doctorate, my entire immediate family was in college: my husband, our two children, and me. My husband was getting his MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. My daughter got her BA in English from Columbia University. My son was studying at Morehouse College. Three of us—all but my son—graduated all in same year. Now my son is enrolled in a doctoral program at Vanderbilt University.

***Q: What do you see as a teacher's role in a student's life?***

**A:** I have so much respect for teachers. They can change the trajectory of a student's life. I know the power of quality instruction in education. I've witnessed it. In our work, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to help encourage, inspire and challenge students to reach their full potential. That's the power and the value of education.

***Q: Who are your role models or heroes?***

**A:** My mother, Roberta Slaughter, who is 97. She raised eight children and demonstrated that kind of unfailing love for us. Each of us were different. Some did sports, some were homebodies. She tried to find something that fit each of our tastes. When I think about equity work, I think about my mother, meeting the needs of the individual. My mother is still with us today. My father, Purchase Slaughter, also believed in me. He's now deceased.

I have worked with outstanding college presidents, both in New York and Connecticut, who demonstrated that kind of concern for me as an individual and continued to push me and encourage me for opportunities to learn and grow. I've tried to model

that same leadership style in my work to recognize an individual's capacity and help them develop their talents.

I worked with two excellent presidents at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, Connecticut: Dr. Booker T. DeVaughn and Dr. Grace Jones. Both took stock in me and showed me how to be professional—how to be prepared. They remain in my life now, even though we haven't worked together for many, many years.

I also think of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a hero and role model. His ideals and his ability to communicate powerfully inspires me.

## **Career and technical education**

***Q: You've had a lot of experience with career and technical education at PCC Cascade.***

**A:** Of all the PCC campuses, Cascade has the highest percentage of CTE students and programs. About a third of Cascade students are enrolled in CTE programs.

Some of PCC's programs that lead directly to a career instead of going to a four-year college include Emergency Medical Services, Fire Protection Technology, Paramedic, Criminal Justice, Medical Laboratory Technology, Ophthalmic Medical Technology, and Addiction Counseling.

***Q: Why are you an advocate of Career Technical Education?***

**A:** For so many students who may feel college is not for them, career technical education provides opportunities to train and prepare for meaningful careers and living-wage jobs. As educators, we must ask ourselves: How are we preparing the next generation of workers?

The applied baccalaureate programs at Clark are designed to

meet specific workforce needs. It's important to ensure the cybersecurity, dental hygiene, applied management and human services programs are meeting the workforce needs.

Clark's Career Technical programs are successful because they provide relevant training and education that prepare students for high demand jobs in our community. They play to a students' best strengths allowing opportunities for growth, challenge and creativity.

It's important there's a close tie between workforce needs and what the college is offering. Workforce changes can be quick and expensive. It means a college must be strategic. A college must be nimble to keep up with industry.

## **Working during a pandemic**

***Q: What have you learned during the COVID-19 crisis?***

**A:** Traditionally, colleges are not well known for being agile and nimble, but most schools were able to very quickly shift from face-to-face operations and instruction to remote and online. It was quite remarkable. So, I learned we could move and respond quickly when needed. I learned different technological platforms to communicate and create virtual groups.

I was further made aware of the disparities that exist for people of color and other marginalized populations as it relates to health, healthcare, access to equipment and internet service. Also, it became clear that the risk of exposure to COVID-19 is so much greater for people of color and other marginalized populations because of the jobs they hold. The service industries do not provide flexibility for employees to work from home.

I also saw the increased risk of physical and emotional abuse that occurs when staying home is not always a safe people for

people who are living in very difficult circumstance.

We see stress and strain throughout the community. It's a poignant reminder, that while we are all in this together, we are not in the same boat.

***Q: How have you navigated working remotely at PCC?***

***A:*** Initially, it was very exhausting. I experienced Zoom fatigue; my eyes and body were so tense from the back-to-back meetings. I felt like I was engaged every minute of the day. Eventually, I've become so much better at scheduling meetings and making sure I give myself screen time breaks.

***Q: What has been your most humbling tech moment during COVID-19?***

***A:*** I've had a few humbling moments with technology. My granddaughter had to help show me how to retrieve notes in the chatbox.

I also couldn't figure out how to un-mute myself on a few occasions and there have been times, I've had to walk around my house to find sufficient bandwidth. But I take comfort in that, we're all learning as we go.

***Q: What routines have you built into your workday while working remotely?***

***A:*** Both my husband and I are working from home—in separate rooms. We've designated the kitchen as our cafeteria. During our workday, we meet in our “cafeteria” for breakfast and lunch. I wear my FitBit and march in place to get some steps in.

***Q: What are the lessons learned from this experience?***

***A:*** College faculty, staff and students are resilient. They are creative and they are motivated to be successful regardless of what challenges they face. I am impressed by their ingenuity

and their commitment to this work.

There are opportunities for creativity as we adapt our traditional model of education. We want to engage our students, inspire them and support them. This can be challenging when working on line.

But I have seen examples of creative innovation this year that encourages me. Our students have learned to paint and draw online this year. They are treating patients using digital simulation models. They are becoming confident online learners.

For all the challenges, there are tremendous opportunities to rethink and explore new ways that as faculty and staff we can support our students whether online or face-to-face.

Colleges have learned they can and must adapt.

***Q: You began your new job as President of Clark College on June 22 at a time when the college remains in remote operations. How do you connect?***

***A:*** I'm giving so much thought to that! I am a relational person. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, it will be months before we're all on campus together. I want to maximize technological resources to make it more personal—more real—so that by the time we're able to meet face-to-face on campus, people will know something about who I am and that I know about somethings about them.

I think the key to connection is a willingness and a desire to be authentic and at times vulnerable with people. I am not afraid to show people who I am and I am honored when they feel comfortable to reciprocate.

I met several Clark career technical education instructors during my first week at Clark College. We were all wearing our face coverings. We're learning how to use our eyes and

gestures to smile and to listen a little more closely to hear the words in order to get to know each other.

I've received such warmth in every greeting during my first days at Clark. I am excited to be here at this time to lead this talented group of instructors, staff, and students. I'm honored to be the newest member of Penguin Nation.

## About Dr. Karin Edwards

Dr. Karin Edwards' 36-year-career at community colleges spans roles from Admissions Counselor to Campus President. Since July 2014, she has served as president of Portland Community College's Cascade Campus. For the previous 14 years, she was Dean of Student Development and Services at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, Connecticut. Before that, she served for eight years in leadership positions—from Student Development Counselor to Director of College Extension Centers—at Orange County Community College in Middletown, New York. Earlier in her career, she was Higher Education Opportunity Program Counselor at Skidmore College, in Saratoga Springs, New York and Admissions Counselor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York.

Dr. Edwards has been actively engaged with the American Association of Community Colleges, attending its Presidents Academy Summer Institute and serving on its Commission on College Readiness and Marketing/Public Relations. Additionally, she has been an active participant in the American Association of Community College Trustees Governance Conference; National Council on Black American Affairs, Western Region Conference; and Creating Inclusive, Socially Just Campus Environments.

Her community service includes serving on the board of directors of Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives and on the advisory board of the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, as well as being an active member of the



Partners in Diversity Leadership Council and the Oregon President's Council of the Oregon Community College Association.

Dr. Edwards earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology and her master's degree in Higher Education Administration at State University of New York at Albany, and her doctorate degree in Educational Leadership at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island.

---

## Clark's All-Washington Academic Team



Julisse Hopmann and Kellie Langston  
Congratulations to Clark College students **Julisse Hopmann** and **Kellie Langston**, who were named to the 2020 All-Washington Academic Team. The students were recognized for their achievement during the June 10 Board of Trustees meeting.

Julisse Hopmann is earning her Associate of Applied Science degree in Business Administration with a Certificate of Proficiency in business management. She expects to graduate Winter 2021. Running Start student Kellie Langston graduated from Clark College in June with her high school diploma and her Associate of Arts degree. *Read more about Julisse and Kellie below.*

### Julisse Hopmann

Sometimes we find ourselves in over our heads—treading water

and about to go under. But then a stranger comes along at just the right moment and pulls us to safety. Four years ago, when Julisse Hopmann was a 25-year-old diner waitress, a customer pulled her from the brink and changed her life.

Julisse explains, "During that period of my life, I was drinking heavily. I wanted help, but I didn't feel I could get the help I needed."

An astute customer approached Julisse, pressed a card into her hand, and told her she had turned her own life around through a 12-step program.

"She probably could smell the liquor coming from my pores," Julisse recalls. "She gave me her card and said she could help me. Sometime later, [I had] one really bad night when I was drinking so much that I didn't think I was going to wake up, and I didn't want to wake up. But I did wake up—so I called her that morning and asked her to help me."

Julisse says, "My life was one big struggle, but at age 25, I turned my life around. That was my second chance. My redemption. Now I ask myself how I can be a beacon of hope."

Today she juggles her classes at Clark, cares for her 3-year-old son, and helps others through her involvement with a 12-step recovery program.

"I try to help others the way I was helped," she says. "Some people just need to get to 12-step meetings. Some people need resources. Alcohol and addiction come with other issues, including mental health issues."

Before her alcohol addiction and recovery, she ran away from home and joined the carnival when she was 18. She had always wanted to travel. Shortly after earning her high school diploma via Clark's Running Start program, she told her parents she was joining a friend and going on the road to work at a carnival, Funtastic Traveling Shows.

"My parents told me they'd do anything they could to stop me," Julisse recalls. "So, I left a note on the kitchen counter and left in the middle of the night. I caught up with the carnival at the rest stop near Battle Ground. I left everything behind."

For six seasons she traveled with the carnival to state and county fairs throughout Washington and Oregon. She discovered she enjoyed the work and was good with people and at business management. The carnival owner, Ron Burback, who had earned a business degree at Portland State University, saw something in Julisse and gave her increasing responsibilities. She started out making cotton candy, but by the time she left, she was managing a burger stand and two cotton candy stands.

She recalls the 80-year-old carnival owner telling her, "This carnival is my dream. You need to go back to school and find your own dream."

She doesn't have any regrets about joining the carnival. "I picked up a lot of useful skills: leadership, communication, working with people, learning how to handle stress, working long hours," she says. "When people tell me starting your own company is hard work, I know I can do it."

Five years after leaving the carnival, she's following Burback's advice. She's back at Clark College and pulling straight A's. She's been a Clark student before. She completed her high school diploma as a Running Start student in 2009. After she left the carnival, she enrolled at Clark but didn't stay. "I wasn't in the right mental space to take care of myself," she says. "My drinking picked up. I got depressed. I couldn't do it."

Julisse grew up on Larch Mountain near Hockinson, "way out in the sticks," she says. "I was always in the woods. Nature is healing for me."

After she graduates from Clark, her career goal is to combine

her love of nature with her desire to help people struggling with addiction to find connection.

“I get a lot of personal connection from a 12-step program. Everybody needs connection,” she says. “My goal is to start a nonprofit naturopathic clinic to help people with addictions to connect with each other and with nature.”

## **Kellie Langston**

If there's a volunteer project to be done, Kellie Langston is likely rolling up her sleeves. During COVID-19 quarantine, the 17-year-old volunteer helped distribute meals to the students at Hearthwood Elementary, where her mother is a teacher.

Kellie has faced multiple challenges: coping with her parents' divorce, abuse, toxic households, and going back and forth between two families. As a result, she struggled with mental health issues. She chose to use that struggle to guide her volunteerism. During her first two years at Mountain View High School, she volunteered with her school's chapter of Youth Suicide Prevention Program, which trains youth to recognize the signs, risks, and triggers of suicide and how to get help.

“I wanted to use my story to help other students realize that they aren't alone,” she says. “I know how someone with suicidal thoughts feels. Students pay more attention when it's a peer speaking rather than an adult.”

Kellie served as the club's co-president her freshman and sophomore years. She and fellow club members wrote inspirational chalk messages on the school's walkways and opened doors for and greeted students when they arrived at school to help them feel welcome and connected.

But what Kellie enjoyed most about being involved in the club

was speaking to more than 50 classes and leading discussions about youth suicide, mental illness, stressors, helpful hotlines and how students could find extra support when they needed it. "Presenting helped me deal with my own mental health problems and my trials and tribulations," she says. "It was powerful and rewarding."

Kellie was invited to participate in a KATU News town hall on youth mental health along with other teen volunteers with youth mental health programs. She had her turn on the air answering students' questions.

During her junior year, Kellie became a full-time Running Start student. She joined Phi Theta Kappa and volunteered for service projects including distributing Thanksgiving meals to more than 100 Clark students in need.

In the fall Langston plans to continue her studies at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. If the campus isn't open for face-to-face instruction due to COVID-19 restrictions, she says she likely will stay home in Washougal and take her courses online. She plans to pursue a degree in education or perhaps business entrepreneurship.

"My dream job is to be a writer and a public speaker," Kellie says. "I hope to inspire youth to overcome their own obstacles."

## **About the All-Washington Academic Team**

In all, 65 students from Washington's community and technical colleges were named to this year's All-Washington Academic Team. Traditionally, students are honored at a reception at South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia in late March, but this year, the COVID-19 outbreak canceled the event.

The All-Washington Academic Team is a program of Phi Theta

Kappa, the international honor society for two-year college. It recognizes academic achievers in the state's community and technical colleges who have demonstrated a commitment to scholastic achievement and service to their college and community. To qualify for the team, students must participate in PTK and fulfill other competitive criteria.

Each All-Washington Academic member receives a Phi Theta Kappa medallion and a \$250 scholarship from KeyBank. The top-qualifying students also will receive scholarships from Washington State Employees Credit Union and the Washington State Association of College Trustees. Additionally, students who choose to attend Washington State four-year colleges and universities are eligible to receive additional scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$12,000.

*Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*

---

## When your internship is in the middle of a pandemic



Sofiya Saakyan wears safety gear during her internship at Eurobake. *Photo courtesy of Sofiya Saakyan.*

When Sofiya Saakyan, a student in Clark College's Professional Baking and Pastry Arts program, called Baron Patisserie in early April to check on her planned spring quarter internship there, the bakery was closed indefinitely due to COVID-19. The owner told her he wasn't sure when the bakery could open again—or when Saakyan could fulfill her internship.

Saakyan is one of nine students graduating in June with an

Associate in Applied Technology degree in Clark's Professional Baking and Pastry Arts program. The program's final requirement is to complete a five-week industry internship during spring term. Students work 24 hours a week gaining real-world experience before they graduate. Students cannot graduate without completing an internship.

Department Head Alison Dolder had arranged student internships in bakeries, patisseries, and chocolatiers in Vancouver and Portland. When COVID-19 restrictions shut down most food operations, Dolder had to act quickly to secure new internships for Saakyan and the other students. Because of the COVID-19 shutdown, all internships were pushed to the second half of the quarter while the department figured things out.

That's when Dolder called Josh Svenhard, co-owner and Vice President Operations at Eurobake.

## **Coming up with a Plan B, in a hurry**

Eurobake, a Portland wholesale baker, remained operating as an essential business during the COVID-19 shutdown. Svenhard is a member of Clark's Professional Baking & Pastry Arts Advisory Committee. This is the first quarter Eurobake has provided internship opportunities for Clark students.

"I think we're a perfect fit," Svenhard said. "We can bring in students during COVID-19 because we're not a retail bakery with customers, so students aren't being exposed to the public. It's important for a business to give back to its own industry, as well as the community."

Dolder offered all nine of the students the option of an internship at Eurobake, which is near Portland International Airport.

"We left it up to the students to do what's best for their

families,” Dolder said.

Six of the nine Clark students chose to complete an internship at Eurobake spring quarter. One student chose not to do the internship at this time due to family reasons. Two other students had been laid off from their jobs and couldn’t afford to travel to Portland for the internship. Those three students are waiting for an opportunity to do an internship in Vancouver during summer term, when COVID-19 rules allow more bakeries to open.

Two students per week are scheduled to work at Eurobake. The bakery operates from 3:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., providing ample opportunity to work around the students’ schedules. It allows students to maintain their other jobs.

Dolder said, “Eurobake is rotating our students through their bakery for their internship and is providing hands-on learning following proper social-distancing protocol. It’s a great opportunity for our students. Some want to finish the program and be available to be hired when everything opens up.”

To accommodate students, Dolder said the baking program is not taking its standard break between spring and summer term to allow students to finish their internships, even if they started later in the quarter.

## **Safety first**

Working in a wholesale bakery during a global pandemic is no different from working in a bakery pre-COVID-19, Svenhard said. Eurobake’s follows strict safety protocol. “The baking industry has become one of the most careful,” he said. “Food safety starts with washing your hands and ends when the product gets into the packing in an unadulterated form. The industry has evolved to require handwashing, not touching your face, wearing hairnets and gloves. These things are common practice every day in a



bakery. We can show student interns how these safety measures can be used to safely operate a business.”

Svenhard said, “We want to ensure the Clark students aren’t just working at Eurobake, but also learning. We’re working with only two Clark students at a time so we can give them individual attention.”

Dolder said, “It takes time to train students. Bakeries that accept students for internships are training students for the way their business operates, their product line.”

Svenhard explained the importance of students getting hands-on experience: “They’re learning to use their skills. Learning the repetition and how to become efficient with your movement is a key part in baking, or any manufacturing business. To make hundreds of uniform products. To develop a rhythm.”

He added, “The real-world bakery experience is production at speed, keeping up with line and the crew. Teaching students about food safety, R & D [research & development] projects we’re working on. We have a cake department, a bread department, and a pastry line. Students are operating different kinds of machinery in each department.”

Eurobake staff also talks with interns about the business side of operating a bakery. They work with their interns to do a cost analysis on what to charge for each product in order to make a profit.

## **There’s always summer**

Dolder told her students who chose to intern at Eurobake that she would contact the other shops where they had planned internships before COVID-19 shut everything down, to see if they will allow Clark students to

do internships in the summer after more businesses can open.

Dolder and the program's other instructors have worked to build relationships with local bakeries. In previous years, Clark baking students have completed internships at highly respected Portland restaurants and retail bakeries including Papa Haydn, St. Honore Patisserie, and Fleur de Lis Bakery and Cafe.

Dolder said, "The best outcome is if we get a student interning at a bakery or shop where they want to be, and then they get hired. It happens quite a bit."

## **Sofiya's Story**

During a class Zoom meeting after COVID-19 pushed the pause button on baking internships, Dolder told students about the new internship opportunities at Eurobake. Sofiya Saakyan chose to start the internship as soon as possible so she could graduate from Clark and start working in her chosen field. She works three eight-hour days at Eurobake. One of her favorite tasks is at Eurobake is braiding sweet raisin bread.

"You get to practice it a lot," Saakyan said. "We make hundreds of loaves. There are multiple people making it on the same bench."

She said her classes at Clark prepared her for her internship.

"I built confidence in my classes at Clark," Saakyan said. "You learn good skills and get to practice so you can be confident that you know how to do certain things and not be afraid of many challenges."

Saakyan grew up in Ukraine, where she learned home baking from her mother. Her family immigrated to Vancouver five years ago when she was 15. She graduated from Fort Vancouver High

School, where she spent three years in that school's baking program.

Saakyan said she hopes to land a baking job that allows her to stay in Vancouver.

"I'm very thankful for the internship," she said. "I thank my advisor and Eurobake, who took me in. The opportunities—and the internship opportunities—at Clark College are awesome."

Those opportunities haven't ended: With Dolder's help, Saakyan has landed a summer internship at the Vancouver-based Baron Patisserie, where she had originally planned to intern during spring term.

Saakyan offered advice to future baking students: "Make sure you love what you do. When you're a baker and you love baking, I think people can taste that."

---

## A Quick Study



Supplies for students taking a ceramics class are bagged up in Frost Arts Center, ready for contactless pickup. *Photo: Lucy Winslow*

When Gov. Jay Inslee announced his Stay Home, Stay Healthy order in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Clark College professors had less than a month to adapt about 2,000 classes' curriculum to be taught online. Now, as spring term is more than halfway over—and the ongoing pandemic has led to most summer and fall classes being offered remotely as well—it's clear that they were more than up for the challenge.

"Our faculty are resilient and dedicated to student success,"

said Vice President of Instruction Sachi Horback. “Though there were many reasons to settle for being ‘good enough,’ amidst this pandemic, our faculty pushed ahead, ensuring that our students had equitable opportunities for student learning. As educators, we were made for this, readily adaptable and willing to do whatever is needed in service to our community.”



Professional baking professor Melanie Hendry gets ready for a “Pop and Drop,” where students pop the backs of their cars for her to load lab supplies in. *Photo: Alison Dolder*

“Our motto is ‘we make it work,’” said Baking Professor Alison Dolder of her department’s faculty. “All of us jumped right in to record baking videos, to learn Zoom and Canvas. We are not technology-savvy people. But we are dedicated.”

Faculty and staff worked to create take-home boxes of baking supplies for each student to use, filled with the ingredients and tools of their trade—rolling pins, measuring spoons, etc. They also worked to learn how to produce useful instructional videos, no small feat: It requires a certain amount of choreography to capture the best camera angle for a stand mixer.

## “Hands-on,” but online

Indeed, it was a challenge experienced across the college: How does an institution that prides itself on its “hands-on learning” adapt to a virtual educational experience? But over and over, faculty stepped up.

In professional technical and allied health fields, faculty quickly re-organized curriculum so that students’ lecture classes took place during spring term and lab classes could be delayed until summer, providing additional time to set up safe social-distancing protocols for in-person lab work.

Mathematics professors collaborated with the college’s

Tutoring Services to place tutors right in Zoom classrooms so that students got the one-on-one help they needed to understand material. Tutors also worked to create a Zoom version of their regular English practice chats held for English as a Second Language students. Art professors arranged virtual tours of galleries and museums for their students.

Ceramics professor Lisa Conway drafted her husband, a professional video editor, into helping her create a series of instructional videos for her students. As with baking students, Conway's classes received boxes of supplies and equipment to complete class projects at home.

"For the month before spring classes started, I was working hard and was busier than I've ever been in my 30 years of teaching college," Conway said. "We're all making videos. We're all dealing with how students get their supplies and materials. We're all completely changing how we function in this universe. We're all reinventing our classes from scratch."

## Learning from each other



Bruce Elgort

Professors have been sharing best practices and tips with one another as they develop their skills to deliver education online.

Computer Technology Professor Bruce Elgort has become something of a go-to source for many of his colleagues during this shift. Elgort, a two-time Exceptional Faculty Award winner, has a long professional history in the tech field and already used many online tools, including Slack and videos, in his teaching.

This spring, Elgort taught his classes using

the synchronous modality, which means the classes meet the same time online as they would in the classroom. (“Asynchronous” refers to online classes that have no set time.)

“The most difficult part of going online is learning new software and learning to shoot video,” said Elgort, who has provided tips and tricks to faculty on this subject and others.

Faculty also have had a great resource in the college’s eLearning department, which oversees the college’s many online learning offerings. Even before COVID-19, more than a third of Clark College students were taking at least one class with online components.

In fact, several programs are taught entirely online in Business Administration, Network Technology, and Psychology. They provide students the flexibility they need in balancing college, work and family. More eLearning programs come online each year.

“Offering our business programs entirely online will allow our students to successfully complete their desired degrees regardless where they live,” says **Business Administration Professor Adnan Hamideh**. “It will also attract working people who did not think about going to school because their work hours conflict with a school schedule.”

## A More Flexible Future

Clark College has already announced that summer and fall classes will be offered primarily online, with some in-person labs conducted in career technical classes that require hands-on learning, using social distancing and safety precautions. But even when it becomes safe to congregate in large groups again, the current move to remote education may leave lasting changes on higher education.

“Moving past COVID-19, I think more programs will go online as professors and students gain confidence,” said Bruce Elgort. “Professors and students enjoy personal interactions with one another. Most would not have chosen this sudden shift to remote learning. But through the process, many have acquired a taste for eLearning. It is a powerful tool. In the future, professors will have opportunities to blend different teaching modalities to include face-to-face and online instruction.”

“No one really know what will happen in this next six months and how it impacts what we do at Clark College,” said Alison Dolder. “This experience has taught us that we are highly adaptable and that we can learn new technology. With each adjustment, we decide how to move forward—with our students’ success in mind.”

*Learn more: Watch this YouTube video for more stories about Clark College art faculty adapting to remote teaching.*

---

## A Little Penguin’s view of quarantine



*Clark 24/7 has been reaching out to members of the college community to learn how they’re coping with, and adapting to, life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, we share an interview conducted by Dean of Student Affairs Cath Busha and Counseling and Health Center Professor Dr. Bevyn Rowland with Busha’s 7-year-old son, Oliver. Busha and Rowland are both still working remotely from home, while Oliver is now completing second grade online.*

*“We appreciated this chance to talk with him about these*

*issues as a check-in," Busha said. Their conversation reflects many of the emotions and logistics being experienced by members of the Clark College family—not just staff and faculty, but also the 25 percent of Clark students who have dependent children.*

**Busha & Rowland:** Why have we been working from home and why have you been learning from home?

**Oliver:** Because of the COVID-19 going on. If we went to work and school, we could get sick and get other people sick, especially older people. and they could die.

**B&R:** How do you feel about COVID-19?

**O:** I feel 'hassed'—like happy and sad together. I'm happy because I get to have more time with my parents, and I'm sad because I don't get time with my friends. I only get time with my friends on Google Hangouts.

**B&R:** How has it been to be home with us?

**O:** Great! Because I get more time with my parents, which is great because my parents are some of the best parents you could ask for, and I get to watch *Star Wars* movies.

**B&R:** What are some things you've done since we've all been working and learning from home together?

**O:** I've put on magic shows, I created an alarm system with a safe that I've turned into a time capsule and buried; I will open it in one month. I also camped on the trampoline and read *Mr. Wolf's Class* and *New Kid*. I've made apple hand pies, caramel corn, and soft pretzels. Also, some nights at 8 p.m. we howl to show support for first responders.

**B&R:** What are some frustrating things about being home?

**O:** That I don't get to see my friends. I also miss Pizza Day at school. Seesaw [an online learning tool used by elementary schools] can be hard. My teacher posts a bunch of things. I



finish one, and then I have like six more to do. It can be tiring.

**B&R:** What advice do you have for other kids who are at home?

**O:** Stay home, stay safe, have fun.

**B&R:** What advice do you have for parents?

**O:** Stay home, stay safe, and spend as much time with your kids as you can.

---

# Making business ideas a reality



Alison Warlitner works to create a custom order for the business she and her husband created with support from Clark Entrepreneurs' Pitch Fest contest.

As the entry deadline approaches for Pitch Fest 2020 at Clark College, last year's winners say participating in the *Shark Tank*-like competition sponsored by Clark Entrepreneurs made an enormous difference in moving their business to the next level.

Teams of Clark College students are invited to apply for an opportunity to pitch their entrepreneurial business ideas at Pitch Fest 2020. The competition is open to any Clark College students enrolled full time from fall 2019 through spring 2020 and who maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA. The deadline to apply is 8:00 p.m. on Friday, January 31. See details and apply online at [clarkpitchfest.com/](http://clarkpitchfest.com/).

Last year, when Clark College students Alison Warlitner and her husband, Scott Warlitner, entered the 2019 Pitch Fest

competition, they hoped to glean expert advice from the business-owner judges. The couple recently had begun making CBD-infused bath bombs in their home, marketing them under the business name Cherry River CBD. Ali and Scott advanced to the competition's final round of top three student businesses—and they won.



Scott and Alison Warlitner met actor Jim Belushi when they were a sponsor at the 2019 Portland Waterfront Blues Festival.

Fast-forward one year after its Pitch Fest success. Cherry River CBD has tripled its gross sales, connected with capital investors, and hired their first employee, who markets their products at vendor trade shows. Emboldened by their Pitch Fest success, Ali pitched their business to a *Shark Tank* producer hearing pitches in Portland. Although they weren't invited to pitch on camera on the TV show, the experience pushed the Warlitners to keep going. Last summer they were invited to be a sponsor of Portland's Waterfront Blues Festival. Actor Jim Belushi, who owns a cannabis farm in southern Oregon's Rogue Valley, hung out in their booth.

Scott, a fine arts student at Clark, will graduate at the end of winter quarter. Ali, a Clark graduate, is pursuing an accounting degree at Washington State University Vancouver and plans to graduate in spring 2021. They live in The Dalles, Oregon, 90 miles from Vancouver. Four days a week, they drive to their classes—90 minutes, each way. Their sons, ages 3 and 5, attend the college's Child and Family Studies program.

The couple met when both were enlisted in the U.S. Navy in Virginia. After completing active-duty service, they moved to the Pacific Northwest, where Ali grew up. But one thing hampered their new life: Scott suffered from chronic pain due to injuries he sustained while in the military. Originally a nonbeliever in CBD, he was treating it with

narcotics prescribed by the VA. But after Scott began taking CBD daily to relieve his pain, he realized the cannabinoids worked, and he stopped taking the narcotics.

This experience led the couple to begin thinking about creating their own CBD business. And, as luck would have it, this is when Ali walked by a poster advertising Pitch Fest outside her math class at Clark College. Enrolling in the contest forced the Warlitners to clearly articulate their business plan, refine their marketing materials, and answer tough questions posed by judges. It also provided them with mentorship from successful entrepreneurs that helped them take the next steps in their business.

“We’re absolutely a success story,” says Ali. “While we would have made those steps eventually, Pitch Fest is the reason we were able to move so quickly in establishing ourselves as a viable business. We wouldn’t be where we were today if not for the help we received from Pitch Fest, Clark College and the Clark Entrepreneurs.”

The Warlitners produce their CBD-infused bath, beauty and wellness products in their home. The hemp oil is grown on Ali’s cousin’s farm in Woodburn, Oregon.

Cherry River has been featured twice in *Broccoli*, a Portland-based magazine created by and for women who use cannabis. Ali has spoken on a couple of podcasts about being a veteran, a business owner, a full-time college student and a mother of young children.

“I’ve become a sought-after formulator in the cannabis world,” Ali says. “I like to bake. It’s just with different ingredients.”

So far, Ali and Scott have invested all profits back into their company. In 2020, they hope to start paying themselves a salary. They also are considering opening a production facility in Hawaii. [Learn more](#)

at <https://www.cherryriver.net/>

## About Pitch Fest

*January 31 at 8 p.m.:* Deadline for Clark College student teams to apply

*February 21 from 9 a.m. to noon:* Top 24 teams participate in Clark Entrepreneurs trade show at Gaiser Hall Student Center. The free event is open to the public. In the afternoon, the top 12 teams pitch their business ideas to the judges in a format similar to the TV show "Shark Tank."

*March 6 final round:* Top 3 teams polish their pitches and present to judges; closed to the public.

## About Clark Entrepreneurs

Founded in 2016, Clark Entrepreneurs is a student program under the Associated Students of Clark College. The club welcomes any student interested in starting a business. Its purpose is to encourage and support students with their entrepreneurial ideas and expose them to the resources to help grow ideas, support real student business ventures, and scale businesses. Program Director is Nathan Webster. Student Rebekah Sharp-Regnier recently became marketing event director. Learn more at <https://clarkpitchfest.com/about-us/>

*Read more about the Warlitners and other student veterans in Clark College Foundation's Partners magazine article.*