

The Clackamas Print

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Obama's era begins



Contributed by Obama Campaign

President Barack Obama was inaugurated into his role as the 44th President, in front of a purportedly record making crowd on Tuesday, Jan. 20 in Washington DC. In his speech Obama expressed the need for Americans to come together to fix the problems that have been created by everyone in the nation.

Economic hardships freeze new hirings

John Hurlburt
News Editor

After surviving the media dubbed "Artic Blast" students are coming back to college and facing a new cold front - a faculty freeze.

A message sent out to staff and faculty campus wide on Jan. 20, 2008, College President Truesdell announced that cuts in the college's funding will stop processing new applications to fill open positions and the applications that are currently being processed will be processed at under a more careful

While some positions will likely be filled, it is my hope that the majority will stay open for the future," Truesdell stated.

The budget shortfall of \$450,000 was due to statewide cuts by the governor as a result of the economic recession that the nation is facing.

"This is money that we relied on to balance the current year's budget," Truesdell added in her letter.

The timing of the cessation of hiring couldn't be at a more unfortunate time for Clackamas as enrollment numbers that are increasing, going from a total enrollment headcount of 25,209 in the 2005-2006 school year to 28,008 in the course of 2007-2008. As a result more students will be attending fewer classes.

According to Truesdell, because this is just a freeze in taking on new employees and not a layoff, the majority of instructors at Clackamas will not suffer as a result. "Our goal will be to review the positions in light of quality," Truesdell adding that this is a time to, "Re-evaluate the positions for those currently hired."

Bill Briare, dean of arts, humanities and social sciences, felt the impact of the recent cuts as his department has to cut some of the courses it previously offered, as well as leaving some of the positions open after faculty members are retired.



Photo illustration by Kayla Berge and Lisa Sellars Clackamas Print

"All of those positions are needed ... but you can't hire back every position you want in this budget climate," Briare said.

Briare agrees with Truesdell that the silver lining to this dark storm cloud is that this is a time to take into inventory what is needed and how staff and faculty can be best utilized. The wish is still that the cloud will soon pass

"Every position there has a history. They're all important in different ways," Briare commented, "They represent courses being taught ... It's tough because the full time faculty contribute much more than just teaching classes."

It is without a doubt that students will be affected by the freeze as well as the departments. One of the disadvantages Briare confirmed is going to be class sizes.

"Some of the class sizes have increased," he affirmed, also saying, "(but) one of the advantages of community colleges is smaller class sizes."

Even though the current budget situation may look bleak, Briare believes that there is hope to be had.

"Clackamas has a history of facing budget difficulties kind of square," he said, "We have a history of pulling together in this."

The emergency freeze in hiring teachers is just one way in which the school will be trying to account for gaps in the budget created by the recent economic climate.

Among other options that are being pursued are an increase in tuition and using fees built up among the school's departments to cover the gaps.

Truesdell openly welcomes students to voice their opinions on how the school should cope with the budget shortfall. To be heard you

can leave her a voicemail at 503-657-6958 ext. 2405 or e-mail budgetideas@clackamas.edu.

If you would like to pose questions or share ideas with Truesdell she would be willing to discuss them at the next fire side chat on Feb. 13 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the Fireside Lounge located in the Community Center.

The Clackamas Print will be accepting letters to the editor as to what you think the school should do as well. Letters can be e-mailed to chiefed@clackamas.edu.

Grant cut leaves students staggering

Lydia Emily Bashaw

Editor-In-Chief

Student Nate Cornell has taken classes at Clackamas five times in the last four years, and was enrolled for a sixth term at the end of December, but when the Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) suspended its Oregon Opportunity Grant program on Nov. 30, Nate was left unable to pay his tuition bill.

"I was all ready for the term," said Cornell. "But then the state told me that they didn't have any funds to help me out. Now I'm just not sure how to afford my classes and living."

The Clackamas Financial Aid Department sent letters out to students on Dec. 8, with the news that OSAC had suspended any awards for the remainder of the current school year.

At press time, OSAC had not returned calls on the number of students who were affected by the program's suspension. Clackamas' Financial Aid Department also said that they didn't know how many students lost out on the grant for winter and spring terms. Yet, according to the OSAC Web site, 16 percent of the grant's funds went to Clackamas, with over 60 percent going to Oregon community colleges in 2006-2007.

For those who had their financial aid files completed before Nov. 26, they will still receive the grant. However, as of Nov. 23, no new Opportunity grants would be handed out by OSAC.

"Every student had their disbursement," said Fayne Griffiths of Student Financial Services, "if they had their completed files."

Community college students that are eligible would have received up to \$1,470 from the Opportunity Grant program.

The big question amongst students is what to do without the money. The commission announced that it will be minimizing award amounts for the next two terms, with a \$40 decrease in winter and an \$80 decrease in the spring. OSAC hopes the extra money will be able to support some of the students who missed out.

"I'm hoping that something good happens before spring term," said Cornell. "I really need to be at school, and I won't be able to afford things if this is the way it plays out."

Volleyball player Liz Johnson also lost out on her grant for this term. Liz Johnson travels more than an hour to campus. Without the grant she is feeling the pressure of the money she has not going far enough. Any leftover school funds were going to help her with medical bills and the cost of gas.

"The only money I had left from last term was about \$100," said Liz Johnson. "I guess I'm trying to scrape by."

According to Executive Director of OSAC, Dennis Johnson, when the state's revenue started to go down, so did the amount of money available for students.

"All things are down right now," said Dennis Johnson. "When the economy tanked a whole lot of money went away and we had to stop all awards after the 30 (of November). Of course this happens when we most need education."

For now all that can be done is wait, with the Oregon Legislature just starting its budget discussion. Students with questions should speak to the Financial Aid Department in Roger Rook.

"I kinda feel hung out to dry," said Liz Johnson. "But then I realize there are sorer people out there."