

# Cougar creates campus craze

By John Howard  
The Clackamas Print

For a school with a mascot that's a cougar, we don't see the big cat all that often. According to the Associated Student Government, that is about to change. "We're starting to bring the cougar back," said Trevor Hoffmann of ASG public affairs. Along with a logo and chosen colors, a

school's mascot is often the most recognizable thing about the institution. Whether it is because of Clackamas Community College's commuter nature or whether it can be attributed to poor publicity of athletics and student activities, there is an astonishing number of students that have never seen "Cougie," as the school's mascot is named. Even fewer students seem able to name the school colors of navy and scarlet.

"I just see people going to class and going home," said Hoffmann. That lack of awareness shows in the attendance for many school sponsored events, including sporting events and ASG functions. Men's basketball, for example, cannot even fill up the stands, despite back-to-back NWAACC championships and a 5-2 division record. "We're trying our best to raise interest," said Sean Briare, ASG vice president. "Really

the only place you can go to see what school colors are is over in (Randall Hall) because that's where the athletics are. Even then, there's one thing that says 'Cougie Country' and the court has (the CCC logo) but that's not enough. It's definitely a difficult situation."

Several new ideas have sprung out of a tight spot that Cougie and his colors have been put into. The first was to spruce up the mascot's outfit by adding a jersey that has the school colors making this the first year Cougie has sported such attire. The second was the implementation of a new campus event, Cougar Days.

Cougie Days are the days on which the ASG newsletter is distributed throughout campus. On those days, Cougie the Cougar will be walking among us in broad daylight. The experience is one that our cougar is very fond of. He enjoys being out among students and loves to see people express school spirit.

"Cougie really makes it feel like a school," said student Ceili Smythe. "He's a real mascot. Whatever the school does, Cougie is there to help create that atmosphere."

While Cougie's identity is kept fairly simple and wraps, the qualifications for the position are fairly simple and up front.

"If you have the courage to get up in front of your peers and make a fool of yourself, you're ahead," said Cougie. "At the 'Make-A-Wish' event, I remember the DJs were playing music and somebody said, 'Hey, can we get Cougie?' and I showed up and just started dancing. We wouldn't want to see the cougar do the morning man?"

It seems that, while there is still a long ways to go, there is progress being made. Posters advertising school spirit events are all around campus and plenty of information can always be found inside ASG's office. A social networking attempt has taken off in recent months, with 'likes' on the Facebook page nearly tripling since September. However, the most recent push for spirit is the most promising, and by far the cuddliest. Who knows, Cougie might even pose for a picture or two.



Brad Heineke Clackamas Print

Fans find the cougar warm and cuddly at the men's basketball game on Feb. 5. Cougie has been making many more appearances here on campus and will be hand-delivering the ASG newsletter on campus.

## DEFICIT: College seeking ways to lower spending, fill gaps

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Although these cuts are being looked at in all divisions, they won't be made across the board. Wilton said the preliminary decisions on what will be affected will be completed by the end of this term.

"We're going to look at spending as well. Our general fund's budget is around \$40-44 million and a one percent reduction equates to about \$450,000," said Wilton.

The second option is to increase the college's revenue and because of the drop in state support, tuition and fees have become one of the college's biggest sources of income. Wilton noted during the College Council meeting on Feb. 4 that increasing tuition, while it helps fund programs on campus, has a "tight rope" effect.

"A \$1 tuition increase generates roughly \$180,000; that assumes the same enrollment (of students). It's always challenging to estimate tuition revenue, because if you raise it too much there's a danger of losing enrollment," said Wilton.

Wilton did not specify how much of a raise in tuition the college would be looking at proposing.

The third option would be to pull money from

the school's monetary reserves. If accessed, the college would have around \$6 million to help cushion the loss.

"But understand that those need to last a multi-year period. We wouldn't want to take all those in one fell swoop," said Wilton.

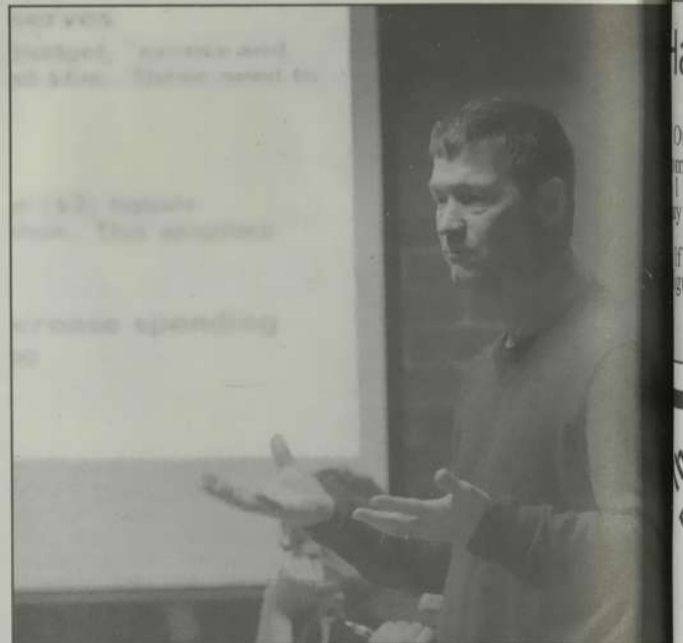
But while the school does have this cushion, some instructors, such as math instructor Adam Hall, wonder how much of it is going to be spent.

"In your estimation, is this college committed to spending all \$6 million of that to get us through this recession?" asked Hall.

"We need to look at how long this problem is going to last and if it truly is a six-year problem, which is what we're looking at right now," said Wilton. "I think we can program it out. If we do, we're down to a very low reserve level and if we end up having problems on top of that, we're going to have a problem. We're not going to have the insulation we have now."

Clackamas is still in discussion on how to deal with this deficit. Whether the board chooses to go with option one, two, three or a combination of those choices, it shows that CCC is quickly running out of options as state support continues to decline.

"The deeper you get into this, the harder it gets," said Wilton.



Nathan Sturgess Clackamas Print

Courtney Wilton presents the growing budget deficit to the College Council on Feb. 4 that Clackamas faces as state support dwindles.

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