

September 24, 2015

Hello Friends of Clark College World Languages,

In the Columbian article below, you will note the dilemma we face at Clark College- the intent to eliminate the French & German Departments. Although I am close to retirement, the issue is broader. Any community support expressed to the administrators at Clark will be appreciated- in the long term. Even if we save partial departments, there is hope we can build again.

Clark College eyes up to \$2.6 million in cuts

Declining enrollment means less state funding; nursing may be trimmed

By [Tom Vogt](#), Columbian Science, Military & History Reporter

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Clark College is looking at cutting up to \$2.6 million as it finds ways to address declining state funding.

As declining enrollment erodes state funding, Clark College officials are proposing cuts in academic programs of up to \$2.6 million.

The proposed cuts would eliminate several departments, including German and French; humanities; reading; addiction counselor education; paralegal training; medical radiology; and meteorology.

Other proposals would reduce sections in several subjects that aren't required for getting a degree.

The biggest proposed cut — \$400,000 — would trim enrollment by a third in the high-profile field of nursing to match projected job openings over the next five years.

The budget-cutting exercise reflects Clark College's teeter-totter relationship with the economy, said Tim Cook, vice president of instruction.

The state supported the equivalent of 10,988 full-time students in the 2010-2011 academic year, when many people who'd been shut out of the job market focused on their education.

In 2014-15, Clark College had 8,887 of those state-supported students: a 19 percent reduction. As state support has sagged, Clark College has relied more and more on tuition.

Cook unveiled the proposals to members of the Clark College faculty and staff Thursday afternoon at a forum in the Foster Hall Auditorium. He emphasized that the session marked the start of a conversation. Cook called it an opportunity for him to roll the proposal out "and have you guys cut holes in it."

Cook went through the 28 proposals in order of projected savings, starting with a \$1,735 cut to drama.

During a question-and-answer period following the announcement, theater instructor Gene Biby — "First on the list," he said later — wondered what this all says about the future of the college.

"We've lost a lot of sleep," Biby said. In his time at Clark, "It's been four years of cuts and (more) cuts and justifying programs," Biby said.

"It's demoralizing for us too," Cook said. He did offer one observation about struggling through a comprehensive — if dramatic — exercise in program cuts: "We can't continue to whittle away."

The \$2.6 million in proposed cuts actually overshot the target, Cook said. The goal was to cut \$2 million in academic programs. With \$600,000 worth of cushion, "We have quite a bit of room to put programs back."

Another forum will take place from noon to 1 p.m. today in the Foster Hall Auditorium.

Earlier this week, Cook explained the rationale behind some of the proposals. None of the cuts will prevent a student from earning a degree. But in some areas, "We have too many choices. Part of this is narrowing to 'guided pathways,'" Cook said.

The job market is a big factor, including the proposal to reduce the number of Clark's nursing graduates to about 96, from the current class of about 148.

"People are really surprised, but the area turns out more nurses than it needs," he said. Four colleges in the Portland area, plus Washington State University Vancouver and Clark, graduate 150 or so more nurses each year than the area needs.

Feedback from the forums and an online survey will be collected until Oct. 9. It will be considered when the final budget proposal is completed by Oct. 30.

The article doesn't mention the further intent to eliminate second year classes for the remaining departments- (ASL/ Japanese/Spanish). Second year classes (and beyond) are vital for acquiring the prerequisite skills for many professions.

Dr. Cook states that students need fewer choices- this is most incredible when at the same time Clark College is putting greater emphasis on diversity, multi-cultural acknowledgement and growing the presence of international students on our campus.

Please write a note of support for retaining all languages (French, German, Spanish, Japanese and ASL) currently offered at Clark College, including your special insights of how we support each other in Southwest Washington by all that we offer in terms of World Languages.

Please note the deadline of October 9!

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Also, cc me so I can request your note be included in the official report.

Thank you sincerely for your support,

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