

# HISTORY

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In the midst of the Great Depression, a group of educators boldly embraced a dream of higher education for Southwest Washington. That dream became reality when Clark College was founded as a private junior college in 1933.

The college was originally located in Vancouver's historic Hidden House, where it remained through 1937. During the next two decades, the college was housed at four different locations. In 1951, the college launched an evening program in the Applied Arts Center, the first building on the current 101-acre campus in Vancouver's Central Park.

Initial accreditation was granted during the 1936-37 academic year following a visit by professors from the University of Washington. In 1948, the college first received accreditation from the organization known as the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools. Today, that organization is known as the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Since its first accreditation in 1937, through periodic reviews, Clark College has remained accredited throughout its history.

Clark College first received state financial support in 1941. Five years later, the college was placed under the general supervision of the State Board of Education, with the Vancouver School Board serving as its policy-making body.

In 1967, the Washington State Legislature created a state system of community college districts. Clark College, in District No. 14, is one of 34 Washington community and technical colleges, and serves residents of Clark, Skamania and west Klickitat counties. The college is governed by a five-member board of trustees appointed by the Governor.

The campus was designated a Bee Campus, USA (<https://www.clark.edu/about/visitors-guide/bee-campus/>) in 2023. The college also offers classes on the campus of Washington State University Vancouver and at a satellite location in east Vancouver at the Columbia Tech Center. The college's non-credit Community and Continuing Education (<https://www.clark.edu/cce/>) program, offers corporate and continuing-education classes. Clark College has collaborated on partnerships with many regional colleges, universities, and technical institutions, allowing students to apply credits earned at Clark toward their bachelor's degrees.

Many of its annual events, like its Jazz Fest and Sakura Festival, are traditions that go back years or even decades.