

Background: As part of a budget cutting process, Clark College Student Affairs has proposed to cut Valentina, one of our only three full-time Counselors at Clark. Valentina is also a Ukrainian refugee. This cut also violates the faculty contract. **Why is it so important to cut a Counselor?**

Talking Points:

- More than 600 Ukrainian refugees have enrolled at Clark College in the last year. Refugees are perfect candidates for community colleges because the logical next step after taking ESL is taking classes in Clark's tech and transfer programs. Clark should be doing everything we can to attract more refugees, and Valentina is a perfect person to help with that.
- This is a golden opportunity to increase our enrollment *and* meet a serious need in our community. Valentina can empathize with these students AND she's a mental health professional. Ukrainian refugees will keep immigrating to Vancouver for years, not just months. It's our responsibility to educate and serve this vulnerable population. Let's do our job!
- **Why are we planning to cut services to the fastest growing group at Clark College today, especially considering their vulnerable status?**
- Furthermore, our nation is in the midst of a mental health crisis. College students are suffering too. While many colleges, Spokane Falls, Lower Columbia and Olympic are adding counselors, why is Clark determined to cut a counselor?
- The Clark College student government (ASCC) voted to allocate \$162,000 to Counseling for next year. In fact, year after year for **decades** the ASCC has approved similar amounts to the Counseling Center. Our students understand the need for mental health support, **why doesn't Clark College see this intense need in our community?**

Here are a few other very disappointing pieces to this story:

- Cutting Valentina would be a contract violation. Per the contract, Clark would have to actually cut two counselors in order to eliminate Valentina's position.
- College officials now know this. However, they just can't accept it. They have such a strong desire to exert power over faculty.
- In reality, faculty has already suffered cuts by several dozen. At least 60 adjuncts who were here in 2020 are now no longer at Clark College. Those were our friends, our colleagues, our work family, and outstanding teachers. Yet the loss of these faculty has never been acknowledged by College leadership.
- **If you want to know the purpose of a thing, look at the results it produces.** Cutting Valentina means fewer counselors for our students, and less services to our vulnerable refugee students. What is Clark going for here? How can we be doing this so badly?