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## CWI president reflects on new college

*Bert Glandon says enrollment surge proves need for school*

NAMPA — Bert Glandon has 30 years experience with community colleges. But nothing he has seen has come close to his first five months as president of the new College of Western Idaho, based in Nampa.

CWI has seen phenomenal growth since opening in January. Its enrollment tripled from an opening 1,200 to more than 3,600 this fall. “I’ve never seen or heard of any community college grow this fast,” said



Glandon, 62, who became president in July. “Growth has got to be the biggest surprise (of my first months).”

*College of Western Idaho President Bert Glandon has seen enrollment surge at the Nampa campus since its opening in January.*

Glandon said anyone who questioned the need for a new community college for Canyon and Ada counties before the college taxing district election “missed the boat.

There was a huge pent-up need here,” Glandon said. “The economy has fed into this as well.”

CWI could easily hit 5,000 college credit students for the spring semester. But the college also serves 17,000 more in workforce development and adult basic education programs.

The growth has brought challenges for the new college. But helping start a new school also provides Glandon a unique opportunity.

“It’s exhilarating,” Glandon said. “I know there’s some people that (this) would probably paralyze them, but actually it’s exhilarating for me. Every day is a new day. And every day it’s like we’re going to break a new record.” Glandon has plenty of other ideas about CWI and community colleges.

- Many new community colleges take three to five years to build up to 1,500 students, Glandon said. CWI passed that number in its first eight months.
- Finding qualified faculty has been one of the challenges of CWI’s skyrocketing enrollment. So far that has not been a real problem though, Glandon said. At a career fair for prospective CWI instructors this week, 250 people showed up. “What you don’t want to have is growth diminish your quality of programs,” he said. He’s confident that has not happened at CWI. Some students experienced delays getting financial aid payments this fall. But officials said those problems are in the past.
- A community college can become an economic engine for a community, Glandon said, by graduating skilled workers. CWI works with local officials to bring businesses to the Treasure Valley and keep track of workforce needs of established businesses.

- Glandon called community colleges “the people’s college.” He said CWI and other community colleges take people as they are and improve them. That may be giving someone a high school equivalency education, even teaching an adult to read or teaching new skills to adults who already have four-year college degrees. Glandon said at his last college president job in the Denver area at Arapaho Community College, 17 percent of the students already had college degrees.
- Two-thirds of CWI instructors are adjunct, or part time. Glandon said that can be a benefit because many adjunct instructors have full-time jobs in their field of instruction, so they have upto-the-minute knowledge of their industries.
- “They’re doing their jobs and then sharing it with the next generation,” he said.
- CWI’s goal is to have dual credit classes in every high school in Canyon and Ada counties next fall. These classes allow high school students to earn both high school and college credit in the same class. So far the college has dual credit classes in two high schools.
- Glandon said community colleges change people’s lives regardless of where they are when they enroll. “I want students to walk away (from CWI) feeling like they really got what they wanted,” Glandon said.