

First Generation Student Day



First-generation student mentor Tamam Waritu, *left*, with two Clark students and event organizers Heather Leasure and Darci Feider.

Clark College celebrated National First Generation Student Day by offering student success mentorships with renown mentor and trainer, Tamam Waritu. He tours around the nation talking to students about being of first generation and discussing student success.

U.S. Bank provided funding to bring the nationally acclaimed mentor to Clark's campus.

The event was organized by Heather Leasure and Darci Feider, who are co-advisors of Clark's Phi Theta Kappa chapter.

Feider said, "The small group one-on-one interaction with Tamam is invaluable. You can tell he is really connected and engaged with the students."

Leasure explained thanks to funding from U.S. Bank, the students who participated in the day-long mentoring with Waritu will continue being mentored by him for throughout their academic career at no cost to the students.

“Because the students are engaged, I think this will be a pivotal moment they will look back on throughout their lives,” said Leasure.

Tamam Waritu said, “I am a first-generation student and trainer. The goal is to make that paradigm shift in the mind of these students. To transcend obstacles. To not only survive college, but to thrive.” Here’s a video of Waritu talk about being first-gen.

Transfer Fair offers resumé help, crafts



Clark students Dajay Vasquez Aracely Cuanasa and Ximena Gonzalez put together jigsaw puzzles.

Another part of the event was a student transfer fair with representatives from Washington State University, Central Washington University, Warner Pacific University, Western Governors University and Columbia Southern University who are there to answer students’ questions.

Students were encouraged to go to the Career Center to get assistance in strengthening their resumé.

Students also had the opportunity to unwind by doing crafts, games, and puzzles. Janice Currie made a bookmark she embellished with burnished leaves, mosses, and tree bark collected by fellow student and PTK officer Natalie Perdun. Next, Currie was heading to the Career Center with her resume.

About Tamam Waritu



Tamam Waritu, *third from the left*, with students at First Generation Student Day.

Tamam Waritu, you can call him T, is a former first-gen low-income student turned Student Trainer. Waritu is a national student speaker and a leadership development trainer who has worked with thousands of first-generation college students and staff in over 500 college and university campuses. He holds an Ed.M. from Harvard University and a bachelor's degree from

Portland State University.

The training the Clark students received encompasses:

- A full-day comprehensive, hands-on training with Waritu on Clark's campus
- An ongoing post-training mentorship with Waritu throughout their academic journey. Students will have the opportunity to schedule virtual group mentoring sessions with him so he can provide ongoing support and guidance.

The program is tailored to meet the needs of first-gen low-income students. He addresses some pervasive issues first-gen students face: impostor syndrome, low self-efficacy, family issues and sense of belonging.

Students have the opportunity to gain these takeaways:

- The ability to see themselves as an asset, not a deficit—a complete paradigm shift
- Heightened personal awareness and clearer vision regarding academic and career goals
- The ability to sustain motivation throughout college
- Increased self-confidence and adopting an attitude of “I belong” and “I have what it takes”
- A greater understanding of the science behind habit formation

From food stamps to Harvard...

Taman Waritu comes from a family with no educational background. He grew up in a low-income government housing with food stamps as one of their main sources of income. He graduated from one of the lowest performing inner-city high school, considered an “at-risk” student. Since he was the

first person in his family to go to college, his first day of college experience felt like he was in a different world..

Read more about Tamam Waritu [here](#).







Photos: Clark College/Susan Parrish