

Teaching Students to Fish



Members of Clark's Phi Theta Kappa chapter, Alpha Sigma Phi, hand out CollegeFish goodies at the Involvement Fair to increase awareness in the program.

As tuition at many four-year institutions continues to soar, many students have realized the value of spending their first two years of college at a community college. New studies show that the majority of community college graduates who go on to four-year colleges do so successfully, and the economic advantages of the "2+2" plan have been publicized in the media for years.

But while many students enter Clark confident in their transfer plans, they sometimes begin to feel lost or overwhelmed at some point in the process. After all, aren't they supposed to be focusing on their time at Clark, taking in all the school has to offer? Well, yes—but early planning is

critical to transferring successfully.

So where does a student even start? There are a number of resources available to students: Advising Services, the Career Center, our WSU Vancouver Transfer Coordinator, and so on. And this fall quarter, a brand-new tool will be available for Clark students who have indicated they intend to eventually transfer.

CollegeFish.org is a free database and transfer-planning tool for community college students that's been developed and maintained by Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the honor society for two-year colleges. CollegeFish was originally developed for members of PTK to use in their planning; however, through a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant, PTK was given the opportunity to refine the tool and open access to all students in specific pilot states.

Clark College is one of several colleges in Washington that are partnering with PTK to roll out CollegeFish access. CollegeFish allows students to create a personalized profile of their transfer institution preferences—size, location, major, and cost—and provides recommended transfer matches based on those preferences. CollegeFish also creates a Transfer Success Plan for students, so they can customize their higher education journey and manage it to stay on track. Lastly, when students access CollegeFish.org, they have the opportunity to search for more than \$37 million in transfer scholarships.

Clark PTK advisor Melissa Sinclair says that staff and faculty will soon receive an email with some basic information about CollegeFish.org, as well as an invitation to a training session to learn more about the website's functionality. Eligible students will receive an email in October alerting them to the resource.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley