

# A welcome sign for Dreamers



Design by Mia Linnik

Digital Media Arts student Mia Linnik's winning design for a Dreamer-friendly logo

Being a college student can be stressful for anyone, but it carries an extra layer of anxiety for the undocumented. Will they be able to access financial aid? Will they be asked for a Social Security Number? Above all, will talking with a professor or staff member compromise their safety and lead to deportation?

Clark College is taking a new step to reassure these students: It is creating a new logo that faculty and staff can display to show that they are a “safe space” for undocumented students, commonly known as Dreamers.

The concept is much like the “Penguin Pride” sticker unrolled several years ago to indicate safe spaces for Clark's LGBTQIA+ students. As with that sticker, faculty and staff must undergo specific training before receiving the sticker—in this case, “Best Practices to Support Dreamers,” offered by the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

The project is the result of a collaboration between Digital Media Arts students and BUILD (Broadening Understanding, Intercultural Leadership and Development), a yearlong employee training program that focuses on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

After completing the inaugural BUILD cohort together, **Deena Godwin**, **Marilyn Hale** and **Yusufu Kamara** proposed creating a Dreamers logo for faculty and staff to display on windows, workspaces, or online to indicate safe spaces and community support for Clark College Dreamers. And who better to design such a thing than Clark College Digital Media Arts students?

Collaborating with Digital Media Arts department head **Kristl Plinz** and students enrolled in a beginning Digital Media Arts course fall term, the three BUILD members along with Diversity Outreach Manager **Rosalba Pitkin** helped define the client needs assessment, then participated in a student-led design pitch session via Zoom. After weeks of creative development, 24 student designs were submitted for consideration. A committee of 18 faculty, staff, and students—including Dreamers—voted on the designs.



Runner-up design by Jessica Peters

The winner, student **Mia Linnik**, was awarded a \$500 tuition scholarship provided by Clark College Foundation. Her design features monarch butterflies, which have become a symbol for Dreamers because of their long migration patterns.

Here is Linnik's description of her winning design: "This

design incorporates the ideas of community, support and migration. The concept was to create a warm and uplifting feeling with supportive hands and a group of flying monarchs. The Earth communicates the idea that Dreamers are from all over the world, and that we are still a community no matter where someone was born. The hands wrapped underneath the Earth conveys a message of support and care. The monarch butterflies are a symbol for migration. The group of butterflies shows community and togetherness.”

One Dreamer commented on the winning design: “It shows me again that Dreamers come from all different backgrounds and we don’t have a limit or where our dreams/goals can take us. We are resilient and determined to go anywhere our education goals take us.”

BUILD teammate and Economics professor **Yusufu Kumara** said of the winning design: “It takes me back to the first time I came to this country as a Fulbright Scholar in 2006. I met many others like me who came here from all over the world, and we were welcomed and embraced and made to feel like we belonged here by people who barely knew us. Looking at the winning design, I cannot hold back tears thinking back to those days, which considering what is going on now, seems like 100 years ago. I am filled with joy and very proud to have been a part of something bigger than myself. My wish is that this can carry over to other colleges and universities around the country. Let’s make this a national thing.”



Design by Sarah Bounds

Designs by students **Sarah Bounds** and **Jessica Peters** tied for second place. Both students were awarded a \$75 credit to the Clark College Bookstore, also compliments of the Foundation.

It's hard to know how many Dreamer students attend Clark College; by necessity, they often keep their status hidden. This has been especially true in 2020, when the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative has been uncertain. However, the college has made a public commitment to not base admission decisions on immigration status and to not share students' immigration status with others unless required to do so by a subpoena or court order. Furthermore, Dreamers who live in Washington state have an added source of hope: While they are usually ineligible for federal financial aid, they may be eligible for state aid through the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA).

## Learn More

- View the Zoom recording announcing the winning designs.
  - View all 24 student design submissions.
  - Learn more about how Clark College supports Dreamers at [www.clark.edu/cc/dreamers](http://www.clark.edu/cc/dreamers).
  - *"Best Practices to Support DREAMers"* will be offered February 8, 2021 from 4 to 6 p.m. via Zoom. Click to register here (must be a Clark College employee to attend).
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# Free Financial Aid Advice



WSUV's Butch the Cougar and Clark's Oswald the Penguin help Student Ambassadors greet guests at the 2013 College Goal Washington event.

Clark College and Washington State University Vancouver will again team up to host College Goal Washington, a free annual event that helps students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the form required to apply for federal financial assistance for higher education. The event will be held in Scarpelli Hall on Clark College's main campus at 11:00 a.m. on Jan. 24.

Clark College and Washington State University Vancouver's College Goal Washington is the largest of its kind in the state.

New this year, the event will also cover the Washington



Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA), the new form created through Washington's Real HOPE Act that allows certain low-income, non-citizen students to apply for state financial aid. Spanish and Russian interpreters will be available. "Because the law was passed recently, there is confusion and uncertainty about how it works and who is eligible to apply," explained Karen Driscoll, director of financial aid at Clark College. "We are committed to helping our community's students and their families understand their financial aid options."

The event is open to all students and families, no matter where a student plans to go to school. Whether a student chooses a four-year college, community college, vocational or technical school, College Goal Washington can help make education more affordable. The FAFSA is considered the gateway to accessing financial aid resources such as federal and state grants, school loans, and scholarships.

Family financial information is a key part of completing the form, so students and parents are encouraged to attend together. Typically the FAFSA form takes about 45 minutes to complete.

In addition to computer labs for completing the FAFSA, College Goal Washington will offer a brief welcome presentation and helpful workshops: "Getting to College & Succeeding," "Financial Aid 101" and "Scholarships."

Clark College is located at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, close to downtown Vancouver. Parking is free and widely available in the Orange Lot next to Scarpelli Hall. Maps and directions are available online.

Individuals who need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event should contact Clark College's Disability Support Services Office at 360-992-2314 or 360-991-0901 (VP), or visit Penguin Union Building room 013 as soon as possible.

For more information about College Goal Washington, visit <http://www.clark.edu/enroll/paying-for-college/events.php> or call 360-992-2153.