

# Clark College receives \$1.68 million grant to support student success

A \$1.68 million grant will allow Clark College to take the next step to support student success and completion in Southwest Washington.

The Title III grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education under its "Strengthening Institutions" initiative.

The grant will be administered over five years. In the first year, Clark will receive \$371,687, then \$374,095 in the second year, \$380,581 the third year, \$305,322 the fourth year and \$250,126 for the final year.

Shanda Diehl, associate vice president of Planning and Effectiveness, said the money will allow Clark College to support their long-term advising plan.

"Clark College is committed to student success," she said. "Coming against the backdrop of sharp state budget cuts, this grant will allow us to move up the timelines for our efforts in program assessment and advising. It will allow us to start taking some important steps this year to support our long-term advising plan and develop new and innovative programs to increase our student completion rates."

Diehl also said the grants are highly competitive and that it's exciting news because it will have a real impact on the college, students and the region.



**CLARK COLLEGE recently received a \$1.68 million grant that will allow the college to take the next step to support student success and completion in Southwest Washington. Pictured here is Clark College's east Vancouver facility.**

The funding will be used to support three distinct areas. First, it will fund improvements in program assessment, which is the process colleges and uni-

versities use to make sure that students have truly learned what they were supposed to learn to earn their degree or certificate. Second, it will fund

improvements in advising, a service offered to students to help them reach their goals. Finally, it will allow the college to explore new and innovative teaching strategies with a learning focus.

All of these efforts will be centered around increasing the completion rate from 20 percent to 30 percent among the degree-seeking Clark students who use the services funded by this grant. The national completion rate for public, two-year colleges is 22 percent.

"Our mission is to provide opportunities for every student to succeed," said Robert Knight, Clark College president. "By continuously reviewing and assessing our academic programs, we can ensure that our students are getting the best possible education and that we are truly meeting the needs of our region. At the same time, we know that advising is critically important in the long-term success of new and returning students. Through advising, they learn about programs, choose courses, and find the resources and tools they need to be successful."

Knight added that with the state providing about 40 percent of Clark's funding and with more state budget cuts pending, dollars from grants and donors are critically important.