February AWEstar Courtney Castle

I feel truly fortunate to be a part of this amazing and AWESome team! I believe that AWE has a significant impact on student success. I am the product of a Columbia Community College education. My father, Mike Fabry, has been an Adjunct HHP Instructor for almost 30 years at Columbia so this campus has been a second home to me since childhood.

After attending Columbia College and Modesto Junior College I graduated with an AA in General Education. I then transferred to Stanislaus State where I earned a BA in Liberal Studies with and emphasis in Psychology. Then on to earn a Master’s Degree in Counseling with a PPS credential from Chapman University.

I was hired here at Columbia College in the Fall of 2008 as an Adjunct Counselor and Guidance Instructor. I have now moved into a new role as the TRiO Counselor. My involvement in AWE began when I was given the opportunity to become the FIG Coordinator for On-Ramp in the summer of 2010. This program is such an amazing opportunity for students to increase their knowledge of campus resources and basic skills before undertaking the Fall semester. It has been so exciting to watch these students enter the program feeling very uneasy and unsure of themselves, then blossom into confident and capable academic achievers.

AWE is a place where I feel inspired and supported to make amazing things happen for our students!

AWEstar Tutor’s Corner with Gabriel Vistica

My name is Gabriel Vistica. I have been a tutor in the Academic Achievement Center since Spring 2011. I currently tutor a significant portion of the computer science courses offered here, as well as most of the math courses. My first semester as a student here at Columbia College was in Fall 2007, during my senior year of high school. I don't currently have a declared major, though I know I want to go into the field of computers.

I also am not sure where I am transferring to, or even if I am going to transfer. Due to a class cancellation here at Columbia, I am also enrolled in classes at Cabrillo College in Aptos, CA. Every one of my classes at Cabrillo is online, and despite having completed nearly 30 units...
there, I have only been to the campus once, which was during finals week for the Fall 2011 semester.

One tip I have for the instructors at Columbia is to explain key concepts in more than one way during class. As a tutor, I have seen numerous students who make appointments because they “just don’t get it.” I explain the concept in a different way than the teacher did, and sometimes the half-hour-long appointment is over in less than ten minutes.

On February 17 & 18 a small group made up of students, staff and faculty attended the Learning and the Brain Conference in San Francisco. The group attended a variety of key notes and break out sessions and came away energized about teaching and learning. The conference offered both specific ideas about improving teaching and learning as well as an understanding of how the United States compares to the world and other countries in our approach. Many in the group were reminded about the value of incorporating physical activity into our teaching and learning practices and gained new ideas about how to do it. We were also inspired by information on how to structure our classes to best promote learning. A theme within the conference presentations was the importance of social and emotional contexts for learning, speakers explored why learning is so closely tied to emotion, ways to increase happiness and therefore success and our motivations to connect and make meaning with those we care about. Everyone in the group enjoyed getting to know each other better and discussing new ideas to apply to our teaching and learning.

If you’d like to be part of the continued conversations about teaching and learning join us every other Tuesday, from 1:00-2:00 in the AAC. Contact Twyla Olsen at olsent@yosemite.edu for more details.

Chalk Talk & Results of GPS Winners

On 2/21 the GPS crew interacted with students on the Manzanita patio. As part of the February tool on Time Management we asked students to write or draw their ideas about time management with sidewalk chalk. This event was a great way to talk with students, encourage them to share ideas and let students know about the GPS project. Many students really embraced the opportunity to be creative. Thanks to those who sent your students over as part of an assignment or stopped to share ideas yourself.

For our March tool on Balancing Stress GPS will be hosting tea time at the Wellness Fair 3/20 & 3/21 from 10:00-2:00 in the Manzanita rotunda. Keep an eye out for print materials coming your way soon!

Announcing the winners of the January GPS Health and Nutrition Richard Simmons work out event and recipe/health tip contest:

- Monica Hay
- Ryan Hodge
- Elissa Creighton

Recipe and Health Tip winners:
- Tori Palmberg
- Shannon Lovgren
- Kaylynn Crawford

All the entries will be available on the GPS website soon!

Learning & the Brain Conference

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