PCC Cascade Campus’ Paralegal Department held a reception November 2 to celebrate the opening of its new law library. Julie Tordanor, president-elect of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a branch of the American Library Association, was on hand for the occasion, as was Jacqueline Jurkins, director of the Multnomah County Law Library. Representatives from several of the law firms that donated books to the library were also in attendance, along with paralegal students and Cascade Campus faculty and staff.

The addition of the 6,000-volume library makes Cascade Campus the first community college campus in the state to have a law library, and only one of a handful in the nation. As a result, paralegal students will no longer have to leave campus to study at the county law library in downtown Portland. Cascade Campus now joins Lewis and Clark College as the only college campuses in the Portland area with their own law libraries.

Cascade Campus Paralegal Department Chair Jerry Brask credits Jurkins, herself a former paralegal instructor at Cascade Campus for nearly 30 years, for helping to get the Law Library project off the ground. Brask also said that the members of the Cascade Campus Paralegal Club – particularly Amber Stoecklin, Jill Wiseman, Debbie Johnson, Anh Lee, Diana Gabaldon, Liana Harden, Nancy Riningar and Angee Antoine – were instrumental in bringing the library to fruition.

A broad range of law firms, attorneys and existing law libraries joined forces to donate books to the Cascade Campus Law Library, including:

- Peter Baer, Attorney at Law
- Buono Block PC
- Davis Rothwell Earle & Xochihua PC
- Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe
- Kilmer Voorhees Laurick
- Los Angeles County Law Library
- Martin Bischoff Templeton Langslet & Hoffman LLP
- Douglas Minson, Attorney at Law
- Multnomah County Sheriff’s Department
- Schwabe Williamson & Wyatt

A plaque honoring the book donors is on display in Terrell Hall 107, the library’s home. The library will support the paralegal and related educational programs and will be open to use by the general public. An article about the law library was featured in the November 3 edition of The Oregonian on the front page of the Metro section.
**Lost Boys of Sudan**

A capacity crowd turned out at the Moriarty Arts and Humanities Building on November 8, 2006, for a screening of the critically acclaimed *Lost Boys of Sudan*, a documentary about the grim legacy of the civil war and genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. The film follows two Sudanese refugees on an extraordinary journey from Africa to America.

The Multnomah County Library and the World Affairs Council of Oregon, in partnership with the Cascade Festival of African Films, hosted the free event. Filmmaker Megan Mylan and local “Lost Boy” Isaac Chol led a discussion and answered questions from the audience following the film. *Lost Boys of Sudan* tells the story of Santino Chuor and Peter Dut, who were orphaned in the longest-running civil war in Africa. Along with thousands of other children, they walked hundreds of miles, surviving lion attacks and militia gunfire, to reach the Kakama refugee camp in Kenya. There they were chosen to come to America, where they found themselves confronted with the abundance and alienation of contemporary American suburbia. The film has received a number of awards, including an Emmy nomination. English instructor Michael Dembrow provided the leadership for this event.

For more information on *Lost Boys of Sudan*, visit www.lostboysfilm.com.

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**Portland Teachers Program**

The Portland Teachers Program (PTP) – a Cascade Campus-based public school/community college/university partnership that recruits and supports minority teaching candidates – held an orientation for 17 new students on September 15. The program is the single most successful resource in the greater Portland area for developing teachers of color.

The orientation provided students with a detailed review of the program’s vision, mission and goals and a handbook outlining program expectations and responsibilities. Students learned about the core values of the program and heard from veteran PTP students about time and stress management, financial aid and the resources available to them at PCC campuses. PTP students transferring to Portland State University during the coming academic year completed a transfer orientation on September 14.

Also during September, PTP Director Deborah Cochrane attended the Oregon State University NASA Space Grant meeting in Ashland, Ore., and began collaborating with OSU science faculty on a National Science Foundation grant that would provide opportunities for students of color to learn how to use geospatial tools.

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**Black Colleges Conference**

On October 28, over 150 people attended the 27th annual Black Colleges Conference at Cascade Campus. The conference is organized each year by the Black Colleges Committee, an association of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), as a means to reach out to prospective students.

In the Pacific Northwest – far from the mostly Southern and Eastern concentration of HBCUs – the committee relies on local alumni to fill the shoes of recruiters who often can’t make the journey. Local graduates of HBCUs shared their personal stories and hosted workshops on the benefits of attending historically black institutions and on how to navigate the college application process. Information on 36 United Negro College Fund Schools was available, along with advice on how going to community college can be a pathway to attending an HBCU. The conference was co-sponsored by the Black Colleges Committee Inc. and PCC Cascade Campus.
Art Gallery Opening

The Cascade Campus Art Gallery in Terrell Hall was abuzz with students and faculty November 13 for the opening of “Artistic Process,” an installment of recent works by professional Pacific Northwest artists. The exhibit features the work of Kirk Botero (painting), Anne Greenwood (embroidery), Yuji Hiratsuka (etching), Christina McNearney (digital, drawing), Rebecca Poulson (print, watercolor), Rick True (sculpture) and Anthony Waters (digital, painting).

The gallery is a regular stop on the Campus’ self-guided art tour, “The Hidden Treasures of Cascade Campus.” Along with the changing installations in the gallery, the tour offers a look at the many permanent pieces on display around the campus. Starting outside the Student Services Building with Linda Ethier’s evocative “Circle of Life,” a circular arrangement of blocks of granite and glass, the tour continues through each of Cascade Campus’ major buildings.

Both the gallery and the campus’ permanent exhibits are a point of pride for Cascade Campus students, faculty and staff. They help to bring a level of culture to the surrounding community that is simply unavailable by any other means.

Campus Ambassadors Launched

Cascade Campus’ new Student Ambassador program was launched in September 2006. The Ambassadors are greeting students, giving campus tours and providing information and referral, as well as helping newcomers to use the student section of the PCC Web site and assisting them with the transition to college-level academics and campus life.

This program is an outgrowth of past Peer Advising efforts, and follows a program modeled at Linn-Benton Community College. Existing funds and Work-Study dollars were reallocated to hire and train a corps of outstanding students.

During the second and third week of

THE AMBASSADORS HAVE BEEN VERY WELL RECEIVED ON CAMPUS, AND ARE PART OF AN ONGOING SET OF INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE STUDENT RETENTION

the term, Student Ambassadors phoned 1200 new students to check in with them, remind them of the drop deadline, and encourage them to meet with an Academic Advisor. They are now engaged in a phone campaign to encourage new students to pre-register for the winter term – which should help with retention efforts – take advantage of tutoring opportunities and complete an educational plan.

The Ambassadors have been very well received on campus, and are part of an ongoing set of initiatives to enhance student retention. Roberto Suarez, Admissions and Assessment Coordinator, and Kendi Esary, Student Leadership Coordinator, are overseeing the program.
PCC Blue Ribbon Panel on Intercollegiate Athletics

The Panel assembled to investigate the question of maintaining and/or expanding intercollegiate athletics at PCC conducted its most recent brainstorming session on Oct. 27, 2006.

The Panel is in agreement that an expansion of the intercollegiate athletics program is in the college’s best interests both in the near term and in the future. Toward this end, the Panel has developed a set of wide-ranging recommendations.

In the short term, the Panel recommends that the college should maintain men’s and women’s basketball at the Cascade Campus and add women’s volleyball (Sylvania) and men’s and women’s soccer (Rock Creek) within the next two years.

In terms of promoting a well-rounded student body and college community, the Panel agrees that athletics can be a key part of this effort. Athletics help to build leadership and team-building skills, and contribute to a more comprehensive social atmosphere.

Funding remains a major question for the Panel, beginning with the need for a top-down commitment from district administration. As the state’s largest two-year institution, the Panel believes that the college should maintain and/or expand its athletics program to increase corporate and community partnerships, as well as a means to cultivate personal support from business leaders in the community.

Finally, an expanded athletic program would be a valuable tool for recruiting, retaining students and undergirding their future success. It would offer the community the opportunity to support the PCC Foundation and an expanded athletic scholarship program, and would provide a seamless bridge between the K-12 educational system, PCC and four-year institutions. Most high school students who attend a two-year institution, the Panel believes, desire a solid athletic program in addition to a good academic program.

The panel – co-chaired by Ms. Gale Castillo, Executive Director of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, and Dr. Algie Gatewood, Cascade Campus president – is comprised of a number of community leaders, including former City Commissioner Charles Jordan, Jefferson High School Athletic Director Marshall Haskins and former Portland Trailblazer Michael Holton, among others. Despite their busy schedules and many responsibilities, the Panel showed a high level of commitment to and engagement on the question of intercollegiate sports at PCC. Attendance remained high throughout the Panel’s series of meetings. Its final report should be presented to Dr. Pulliams before the end of the calendar year.

The panel’s full membership includes:

- Dan Birkey, Men’s Head Soccer Coach, Concordia University
- Ally Britton, PCC Instructor
- Gale Castillo, Executive Director, Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber
- Ken Carr, Owner, Carr Construction, and former Portland TrailBlazer
- Jimmy Conway, Coach, Oregon Youth Soccer Association
- Wing-Kit Chung, PCC Associate Vice President of Finance
- Lois Davis, Vice President of Public Affairs and Marketing, OHSU
- Mandy Ellertson, PCC Rock Creek Student Leadership Coordinator
- Algie Gatewood, Ed.D., PCC Cascade Campus President
- Marshall Haskins, Athletic Director, Jefferson High School
- Eli Herr, PCC Cascade Campus Student President
- Michael Holton, former Portland TrailBlazer and owner of MH Inc.
- Jim Jackson, Director of Health and Physical Education, Clackamas Community College
- Charles Jordan, former Portland City Commissioner
- Teri Karen-Keith, Albina Community Bank
- John Lee, retired PCC Instructor
- Dick Magruder, PCC Athletic Director
- Dick McClain, Executive Director, Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges
- Keith McMurry, PCC Student Athlete
- Wayne Mendezona, PCC Men’s Head Basketball Coach
- Moe O’Connor, PCC Sylvania Physical Education Chair
- Eric Owens, Supervisor, Tualatin Valley Parks and Recreation
- Neil Naigus, PCC Community Relations Manager
- Vicki Nakashima, Executive Director, Partners in Diversity
- Korvel Pyfrom, PCC Student
- Levi Query, PCC Instructor
- Linda Reisser, PCC Cascade Dean of Student Services
- Leslie Reister, PCC Associate Vice President of Technology
- Marina Santos, Facilitator, Pyramid Training and Consultants
- Fred Schnell, Coach, Mt. Hood Community College
- Candy Solojvos, PCC Grant Writer
- Dave Traweek, PCC Instructor
- Carolyn Wilson, Executive Assistant, PCC Cascade Campus
- Amy Winterowd, Marketing Coordinator, Yost Grube Hall

If the Panel’s recommendations are accepted by Dr. Pulliams, the creation of an Athletic Advisory Board – comprised of Panel members, students and other interested community members – would be of great assistance in organizing and facilitating the expansion of intercollegiate athletics at PCC.
Danes Visit Cascade Campus

Cascade Campus reached out and forged ties over the Atlantic during October and November when two Danish professors paid a visit. Ole Højgaard Pedersen and Bent Henning Hørkjær Pedersen, representing the computer science and multimedia programs at Denmark’s Business Academy West, visited Portland and worked with students and faculty at both the Sylvania and Cascade Campuses. During their stay, they also spent time with local media production houses Second Story Interactive and Laika Entertainment, attended a 3-D seminar at the Oregon Forestry Center and visited Oregon State University in Corvallis for a demonstration of the new Apple operating system.

The visit grew out of PCC’s participation in Community Colleges for International Development, a cooperative organization of community colleges from around the globe. Business Academy West found out about PCC through the organization, and sent two representatives on an initial visit to Portland in February, when they met with Cascade Campus’ multimedia instructor Beth Fitzgerald. From this visit a partner college relationship was established between the two institutions.

Fitzgerald traveled to Denmark in late September to lecture on what PCC multimedia students are doing to prepare for careers in the creative industry, and met with faculty and students to discuss the education and training challenges faced by students in Denmark. The Danish professors’ visit to Portland was the second leg of this international exchange.

Fitzgerald said that the exchange helped her to frame the multimedia curricula and techniques against those from another culture, giving her a broader perspective on what works and what doesn’t in terms of students’ academic success.

Medical Laboratory Technology Program

Cascade Campus’ Medical Laboratory Technology Program is now in its second year of delivering its curriculum across the state via distance learning.

The program has expanded its reach this year by way of collaborative relationships with Lane Community College and Rogue Community College, and through agreements with medical laboratories in Eugene, Grants Pass and Medford. These institutions join a statewide network of hospitals, laboratories and community colleges to provide clinical training to students in their home regions.

The program’s capacity was expanded on the basis of an Oregon Bureau of Labor Statistics estimate of 67 statewide job openings for medical lab technicians per year over the next decade.

Program administrators hope to add an additional 20 students per year on an ongoing basis, with a goal of eventually doubling the capacity of the existing program, improving career access to medical laboratory technology, especially in rural areas, and creating a measurable response to Oregon workforce needs.

A total of 19 students are currently enrolled in the online program, from communities as geographically dispersed as Burns and Coos Bay.
Cascade Campus Green Team

The Cascade Campus “Green Team,” led by Spanish instructor Jan Underwood, is implementing a campus-wide set of procedures and practices aimed at making Cascade a more sustainable entity. This step involves turning a critical eye to all that we do – reducing our waste, increasing our use of renewable resources, preserving the integrity of the campus ecosystem and, in general, reducing our collective environmental “footprint.”

Moving toward a sustainable economy is a crucial step in preserving the ecosystem for future generations. As one of the larger facilities in our part of town, Cascade Campus intends to set the standard in terms of sustainable practices.

Urban League of Portland Equal Opportunity Dinner

Cascade Campus President Algie Gatewood, chair of the board of the Urban League of Portland, presided as co-emcee with local TV news anchor Ken Boddie at the annual Urban League Equal Opportunity Day Dinner.

A crowd in excess of 1,000 filled the Portland Hilton for the October 3 event, the largest fundraiser of the year for the Urban League.

Two local standouts were honored for their service to the community: the Rev. Mary Overstreet-Smith, pastor of Powerhouse Temple Church of God in Christ, who sold her home to help the survivors of Hurricane Katrina; and Peter Kohler, M.D., the retiring president of Oregon Health Sciences University, who has worked tirelessly during his tenure to advance the health and well-being of all Portlanders.

The evening’s featured speaker, Janice Bryant Howroyd, related the story of how she started a temporary employment service with only $1,500 borrowed from her sister. She is now the CEO of Act*1, the largest woman-owned temp agency in the country which had revenues in excess of $600 million in 2005.

Multimedia Hosts Electronic Theater

In September, the Cascade Campus Multimedia Department hosted the Electronic Theater, a film and video extravaganza featuring sophisticated technical imagery. The event was sponsored by Cascade Campus ACM SIGGRAPH, a professional computer graphics association.

Electronic Theater is a showcase of computer graphics and special effects shorts from around the world that offer insight on the future of films, commercials and scientific visualization. The show combines trends in art and science with cutting-edge computer graphics to depict scenes of comedy, drama, romance, action, adventure, fantasy, science fiction and science fact.

Many current and former Cascade Campus Multimedia students were in attendance, along with representatives from the multimedia industry. More information on SIGGRAPH is available online at www.cascadesiggraph.org.
Cascade Campus ASPCC Events

- Club Fair, an event to charter clubs on campus, was held during the second week of term. Cascade Campus has 25 student clubs.
- Blood Drive – 30 pints of blood were collected by the American Red Cross on October 10.
- The Welcome Back to school $1 BBQ fed 500 students and staff on October 4.
- The ASPCC provided 20 subsidized tickets for students to attend the Al Gore event on October 24.
- The ASPCC Multicultural Awareness Council began its Survivor Series – a series of addresses and workshops about overcoming adversity – by sponsoring Victor Rivers, child abuse survivor, who spoke to a crowded auditorium on October 9 about preventing violence against women and children. The council is a group of students dedicated to addressing issues of cultural diversity, identity and expression.
- The second installment in the Survivor Series featured Linda Hummer, breast cancer survivor, who spoke to 75 attendees on “Defying Cancer” on October 23.
- The Clothesline Project, a national movement that addresses the issue of violence against women, was on campus the week of October 9. The project confronts the issue in a provocative, poignant and distinctive way – by displaying on a clothesline a collection of shirts, each decorated by a woman who has been the victim of violence.
- The Silent Witness Exhibit, representing women in Oregon who have been killed as a result of domestic violence, showed from October 9 through 13.
- Five community “Speak Outs” were held in the cafeteria at noon during October. Speakers who came to talk about the issues of the day included Lew Frederick and Jeff Cogen, candidates for Multnomah County Commissioner; Tina Kotek and Jay Kushner, candidates for the Oregon House of Representatives; Ulanda Watkins, candidate for Multnomah County Circuit Court judge; and Sharon Little, representing the League of Women Voters and the National Abortion Rights Action League.
- The ASPCC Club sand the Native American Youth Association sponsored “Pow Wow” on October 28. More than 150 attendees enjoyed the presentation on native culture and issues.
- The “Festival of Fright” event on October 25 had 200 children in attendance.
- On November 2, the Cascade Campus ASPCC hosted a Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) display in the Student Center Street, in part to pro-

Susan B. Komen Learning Trailer

On October 31, the Cascade Campus Women’s Resource Center co-sponsored the Susan B. Komen Foundation Interactive Learning Trailer on Breast Cancer Awareness, a traveling educational exhibit on breast cancer research, treatment and prevention. The Pink Trailer, as it is known, parked on the NorthPark Mall and educated students and the community about breast cancer and how to help with the fundraising aspect of cancer research. State Rep. Chip Shields made a brief address, and several cancer survivors shared their stories. The event was facilitated by the Rev. Renée Ward, pastor of Chrysalis Ministries and chief of staff to Rep. Shields.

Jefferson High Students Visit Cascade Campus

On October 18, more than 180 Jefferson High School freshmen and sophomores spent the morning at Cascade Campus. They were given tours of the campus by student leaders and ambassadors. They also visited classrooms and departments for program demonstrations, and met in the Moriarty Arts and Humanities Auditorium to learn about educational opportunities at
Former Cascade Campus Photographer Hits the Big Time

A former Cascade Campus student has been named the winner of a nationwide photography contest hosted by National Geographic magazine. Anna Mair came to Cascade Campus at the age of 17 from a home-school background.

Her time at Cascade Campus – and an abiding friendship with English instructor Rachel Stevens – began the broadening of her horizons and led to a life outside of the United States.

Now a resident of the Middle Eastern nation of Oman and the mother of a young daughter, Anna has continued to pursue her twin passions of photography and poetry, and has maintained her connection with Stevens, her former instructor. The shot that won her the National Geographic prize, “Embracing Tradition,” depicts a young Omani bride-to-be, her face concealed in brightly-patterned silk and her hands and wrists covered in intricate henna wedding tattoos.

To view Anna’s photos and read her poetry, visit www.herschelmair.com/annakmair.

Middle College Program Now in its Second Year

The Middle College Program, a successful collaboration between Cascade Campus and Jefferson High School, is now in its second year. The program allows Jefferson students to enroll in college-level courses while still in high school.

Of the 179 participants in the program’s first year, 84 took full credit college courses at Cascade. Of those, 80 percent succeeded in their coursework.

Students enrolled in courses ranging from Fire Science and Business to Multimedia, Criminal Justice and a host of mathematics and humanities classes. They were aided in their studies by an academic coach, who helped them confront the rigors of college-level academics through daily contact and advice.

Jefferson High School’s students often face economic challenges, and the majority of them are students of color. Given the hurdles that minority students face on the path to success, resources like the Middle College Program can literally make the difference between long-term prosperity and poverty, between achievement and obscurity.

Research demonstrates that high school students who participate in a positive academic experience on a college campus are more likely to enroll and succeed in college after high school. Students in the Middle College program have already dispelled one of the myths about students from inner city high schools: they are, in fact, enrolled in college. It’s no longer a question of whether they will be able to go to college, it’s about how they are going to continue.

A priority for Cascade Campus over the next three years is to increase the number of students of color enrolling and succeeding in college. By providing motivated students with limited means the basic financial resources they need to enroll in their first year of college, more students of color will thrive and be successful.
Cascade Campus Hosts Prescription Drug Kickoff Event

Cascade Campus helped usher in a new era in Oregon health care on December 7 as host of the official launch of the expanded Oregon Prescription Drug Program. Representatives from AARP, the Urban League of Portland and the PCC student body association, among others, were on hand to celebrate the occasion.

Attendees were invited to sign up for the program, which helps Oregonians without health insurance receive up to a 60 percent discount on prescription drugs. The program, which had previously been restricted to seniors with limited incomes, was expanded to include all uninsured Oregonians with the overwhelming passage of Ballot Measure 44 in the November general election.

“Cascade Campus is the perfect setting for today’s events because, like many of the people who will benefit from the expansion of the Oregon Prescription Drug Program, many in our community have been underserved and under-represented for too long,” Dr. Algie Gatewood, Cascade Campus president, said at the ceremony.

The program is able to reduce the cost it pays for prescription drugs by negotiating a bulk rate on behalf of its participants, a group that has increased by more than 1 million members since the passage of Measure 44.

This is in contrast to the federal Medicare Part D prescription drug program, which specifically forbids Medicare from negotiating for a bulk rate. And since the program doesn’t provide insurance, no additional taxpayer dollars were required to implement it.

In 2007, the program is set to join forces with a similar initiative in Washington state. The resulting pool of participants in both states will be able to negotiate an even greater discount on prescription drugs.
Students Named to National Honor Society Scholar Team

Once in awhile, when you’ve gone the extra mile for your school, your neighborhood, good things come back to you. That’s the case for two Portland Community College Cascade Campus students who were recently honored for their achievements in the classroom and their leadership on campus and in the community.

Lisa Hummel and Debra Lynn Porta, both seniors at the North Portland-based Cascade Campus, were named to the All-USA Academic Team by Phi Theta Kappa, a nationwide community college honor society. Both women will receive a $1,000 scholarship and will travel to Nashville, Tenn., in April 2007 for Phi Theta Kappa’s national conference.

Porta and Hummel both said that their experience at Cascade Campus has made them aware of an inner potential for achievement that they didn’t know existed before they began their studies.

“Being in student leadership has made all the difference,” said Hummel. “I never thought of myself as a leader; I was always more of a follower. The opportunities I’ve found here have given me the courage to strike out on my own.”

Porta described a similar sense of self-discovery when she recalled her activities as Cascade Campus. She has been active in student government, helping to organize a voter registration drive and a voter education program, something that led eventually to a position on the campus: director of legislative affairs for ASPCC, the college’s student body association. On the horizon before graduation are a series of student forums aimed at raising awareness of current events, as is a plan to develop a support structure for veterans returning from the war in Iraq.

“I’m looking forward to seeing these programs come to fruition,” said Porta, who plans to transfer to Portland State University to pursue a degree in sociology. “Especially helping the returning soldiers.”

Hummel has used her area of study – gerontology – to develop a focus for her community service, developing a number of service programs for seniors in area retirement communities. She’s also been an Americorps volunteer, and volunteers her time with the Cascade Campus ASPCC. And if she weren’t busy enough, she also serves as president of the Cascade Campus chapter of Phi Theta Kappa.

Both women have been strongly influenced by their respective instructors at Cascade Campus, especially by one they have in common – English and writing instructor Porter Raper.

“He’s the first teacher that really inspired me,” Hummel said. “He made me realize I had a voice. Taking his class changed my perspective on how far I could go.”

CUNY Professor to Address Cascade Campus Faculty

The keynote speaker at this year’s Dean Shirley Anderson Winter Conference – scheduled for February 8 and 9, 2007 – will be City University of New York Professor Aaron Barlow, who will speak on the subjects of academic freedom and civic discourse in the public sphere.

Barlow’s Cascade Campus appearance – he will speak at the Cascade, Rock Creek and Sylvania campuses during the conference – will consist of an address to faculty on February 8. The conference is an annual PCC event focusing on topics of relevance to contemporary education.

Barlow teaches English at CUNY’s New York City College of Technology, and has written widely on such topics as intellectual freedom, the “citizen journalism” movement that has grown out of the Internet and the liberating effect of technology on academic discourse.

His most recent book, The DVD Revolution: Movies, Culture, and Technology, was published in 2005.
For Jesse Lambert, going back to college has been a long time coming. The 55-year-old metal worker has survived one plant layoff, raised two children and endured a lifetime of changing technology in the metal casting business.

Nearing retirement age, Lambert decided to return to school, learn some new skills and prepare for small-business ownership. Then he hit a road bump.

Like many other returning students, Lambert lacked some of the basic skills necessary to succeed in college. Over the last quarter, Lambert said he has made “tremendous” strides in the Adult Basic Education class at Portland Community College’s Cascade Campus. Where he used to stumble at reading, he now succeeds and is on his way to attaining his goals.

Along with Lambert, a small class of 10 students gathered for their last day of class on Nov. 30 to evaluate their progress. The students are a mix of old and young; black, brown and white; men and women. Some students are attending the class in order to go on to GED or continuing education classes, others are taking the class to gain minimum reading proficiency so they can better understand the newspaper, voting pamphlets or even the state driver’s license test.

The class also offers beginning education in geography, simple math, life skills (understanding a lease, tax completion, etc.) and computer skills.

Class instructor Lisa Rosenthal, began teaching the course two years ago — a switch from her years teaching high school and developmental education courses at the college.

The Adult Education Course is available at a minimal cost ($45 for 10 weeks) and is free for those who qualify (those on food stamps, disabled worker, YES program or Oregon Health Plan).

Rosenthal, who is upbeat and jovial with the students, administers an oral spelling test to her class. After the test, she grades the papers; some in the class have scored As and while others have scored Ds. Tackling adult illiteracy is often a difficult and complicated problem to solve, she said.

Judy Voth, department chair for Adult Basic Education, said PCC Cascade is one of the only places in the area where adults can receive instruction in beginning reading and other basics.

Lambert said he is shooting for computer training, Spanish language classes and business classes. He plans to make learning a habit for the rest of his life while balancing a career as a robot operator at Precision Castparts.

“At one point I was thinking I was too old,” he said. But after seeing a television special about a disabled man succeeding, he said he gained enough inspiration to return to school.

Living with a supportive wife and with two grown children out of the house, Lambert said returning to school was still difficult, although he finds time to study in every open minute — during his lunch breaks, or when traffic on the freeway grinds to a halt.

“I keep pushing to do it,” he said.

Not concealing the difficulty in her job, Rosenthal said teaching the class — with student skill levels that range from first to fifth grade — can be much more difficult than teaching high school. But what keeps Rosenthal coming back are the success stories.

“I learned how to read better and spell words,” said one student.

“They’re reading things I couldn’t read. It’s easier to read words I couldn’t understand,” said another.

Measuring success can be difficult, but the students do take standardized tests. Voth said that students in the upper class (grade levels six to college

See ‘Literacy’ on Page 12
Literacy

(50 hours of ABE work and GED requirements. Last term, Voth said about five out of 12 took advantage of the fee waiver. Many times, outside influences, including family and career situations, can affect when and if students return to campus.

Many times, these factors — ranging from child care, transportation, employment, even homelessness — can determine the time it takes for some of these students to complete their goals. Rosenthal said the small class size, as well as the volunteer tutoring programs, help provide specialized help. Dividing the class into groups also helps her focus different curriculums on different skill levels.

“I feel limited in what I can do. I can only address literacy,” she said.

Bessie Chandler, an older woman in the beginner program, said she didn’t know if she would return next quarter, but added that the class helped her better understand passages in the Bible and had to pay her own bills.

Voth said many illiterate adults may fear facing their problems, be overwhelmed by the college campus and atmosphere or may simply lack the resources or knowledge to sign up/attend the program. While a standardized test is required before attending classes, those who cannot read can quietly let the test supervisor know.

“These people are marginalized,” Voth said. “The whole idea of coming here is overwhelming.”

To help overcome some of those fears, volunteer literacy tutors are available for both students and nonstudents. Sherri Prodani, tutor coordinator, said many people benefit from tutors when they don’t succeed in class. To become a tutor or find a tutor, call 503-978-5373.

The college offers both day and night Adult Basic Education courses, as well as GED preparation courses.