Golden!
PCC gets ready to celebrate its 50th anniversary
Page 6

Rock Creek
The college’s Washington County campus is poised for renovation
Page 66

Enroll now!
Classes starting March – June
Inspiration
We’re all about that.

I’m 35 and thought I was quite old to be at PCC. But every day I see students who are older than me, and it inspires me to succeed in my goals.

Chandra
Future Social Worker
PCC Communities Spring 2011

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Welcome to the spring issue of PCC Communities.

The Oregon Legislature is meeting right now, and at the top of its to-do list is addressing the multi-billion-dollar shortfall for the 2011–13 biennium.

A quick background for those of you new to Oregon governance: the state sets its budget in two-year periods, starting with odd-numbered years. We are still in the 2009–11 biennium and will be until June 30. The next day, the 2011–13 biennium begins.

The state helps support all 17 of Oregon’s independent community colleges. However, the amount of that support has been shrinking since the long recession and slow recovery of the past few years. Funding for the community colleges came to a total of $500 million at the end of the 2007 legislative session. That shrank to $450 million in 2009. The governor ordered a 10 percent cut to all state budgets — including community colleges — in spring 2010, then another 9 percent cut that summer. That whittled funding for the community colleges down to an estimated $417 million.

And all of that was just to adjust for the shrinking revenue in the 2009–11 biennium, which was “merely” millions of dollars short. The funding for 2011–13 is short by billions.

What will this mean for Portland Community College? Nobody knows for sure. One thing we do know: From now until the end of the legislative session, easy answers will be few and far between.

Enrollment at PCC has climbed by more than 30 percent in two years, at the same time that state funding has plummeted. That gives us our own distinctive set of challenges.

Frankly, we would be in much worse shape if voters in 2008 hadn’t helped us pass a bond measure. But they did, believing that PCC would be a good investment heading into tough economic times. Thanks to the voters, we have opened new facilities in downtown Portland, downtown Hillsboro and on Northwest 185th Avenue in Washington County. We have broken ground for a new site in Newberg and we have construction and renovation projects planned for every campus and the Southeast Center.

These projects will help us meet increased student demand for job training and education. That, in turn, will help us continue to serve our students.

One final note: The college has until March 31 to meet a match from the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, in order to net an additional $320,000 for student scholarships. This would be our third consecutive year of meeting this terrific goal. You can learn more at pcc.edu/foundation.

Sincerely,

Preston Pulliams
District President
Heidi Durrow’s childhood dream to pen a novel came by way of a meandering—although quite successful—path that saw her work as a journalist, attorney and life skills trainer for professional athletes.

It all started with what she calls a “glow.”

“I couldn’t have articulated it then, but I was probably about seven when I made the connection to absolute joy and being a published writer,” she recalls. “My mom received a check for her first published essay. I remember my dad taking a photo of her, and I swear I could see rays of light emanating out of her. She looked like the sun. I think I just kind of tucked that moment away deep inside me and thought I want to feel that way one day.”

Durrow’s family moved to Portland when she was 11. While attending Jefferson High School in 1983, she started taking classes at PCC.

“I would take three to six units each term and by the time I finished my sophomore year I had enough credits to graduate,” she said. “I decided not to graduate early so I would have more time to research and apply for college scholarships.”

Durrow went on to Stanford University where she studied English. From there it was a stop at Columbia University for a graduate degree in journalism. She attended Yale Law School, passed the bar and worked for a prestigious New York City firm.

Durrow began writing “The Girl Who Fell from the Sky” in 1998 and finished in 2004. After dozens of rejections from publishers, she finally submitted her story for the Bellwether Prize for Fiction, the only major North American prize that specifically advocates literary fiction addressing social justice issues. The prize is awarded to a previously unpublished novel.

She won the award in 2008; the book was published in early 2010.

The story is about the daughter of a black G.I. and Danish mother who moves into her grandmother’s mostly black community in Portland in the 1980s. She must swallow her grief following a family tragedy and confront her identity as a biracial woman in a world that sees her as either black or white.

The book has been widely received by literary critics and she’s developed a fan base across the country. Closer to home, the book was chosen for the 2010 PCC Reads program, an initiative to encourage faculty, staff and students to read books that address diversity.

Now comes news that Durrow has been nominated for an NAACP Image Award in the category of Outstanding Literary Work — Debut Author. The awards ceremony was held after press time and the results were unavailable for this issue of Communities.

Still smiling with that “I’ve been published” glow, Durrow looks for more inspiration from her mom, Birgit Wedel, a longtime librarian at the Cascade Campus.

“My mom has always been super supportive of what I was doing, even when I wasn’t sure what I was doing,” she said.

Q. What’s the premise of your next book?
A. This book is about race — it’s about many other things too, but I don’t think I will ever get away from writing about this subject. The book is about the life of a mulatta strongwoman and trapeze artist who was very famous in her time but now is just a footnote in history. I want to rescue her from obscurity.

Q. Any advice to college students in general?
A. All of the work you do matters — even if it’s not in the area you’re interested in or studying long-term. Every class is an opportunity to connect with a new mentor or friend and a chance to test out new ideas. College is essential in this day and age. Make the most of it by taking advantage of any mentoring programs or grants for special projects.

Q. Any advice to writers-in-waiting who want to get published?
A. Be patient with yourself but also be sure to put yourself on deadlines. The sad truth is that the world is not waiting for you to write the great American novel. You have to have your own internal drive to get it done. And be sure to take control over what you can.
This fall, Portland Community College will begin celebrating 50 years of being part of the community. Hundreds of students, staff and faculty have taken the opportunity to reflect on how PCC changed their lives. You can read more stories — and add your own — at www.pcc.edu/50th.

PCC saves my life. I was headed back to homelessness and the streets when I got myself enrolled, and now I never have to live that way again. I didn’t think I could do it, but I am, and I’m the first in my family to go to college. Thank you.

Adam
current student
Southeast Portland

I always say that all roads lead to PCC. After life took an unexpected turn, PCC was the first place I looked for computer skills to help me get back into the workforce. Three years later, I was working at PCC. My oldest began her college experience at PCC (and still cites her favorite instructor as teaching at PCC, not the universities she later attended). My youngest finished high school at PCC through the high school completion program, earning college credit at the same time. PCC has been a hugely positive force in our lives, and in those of many we know.

Dawn
staff member
Lake Oswego

PCC changed my life in so many ways. I returned to school in 2006 at the age of 36 as a high school dropout, desperately wanting to work my way towards a better future for myself and my then 1½-year-old daughter. My three-year journey at PCC taught me more about myself than I ever expected and I gained confidence and strength I didn’t know I had. Through hard work and unyielding support and encouragement, I received several scholarships, finally took my GED, graduated with an Associate of Science Degree, and was accepted to several nursing programs. I am now finishing my last year of nursing school at Linfield College and I know I would not be at this point if it weren’t for my time at PCC.

Erica
alumna
Southwest Portland

I never felt like I was in the right place when I previously attended college. I decided to move here and try again (eight years later) and I love it. The teachers are incredible and the students are great. Going to PCC has been one of the best decisions of my life!

Samantha
current student
Aloha
My PCC story took 24 years to start. After graduating from high school, college was not an option. No one in my family had gone to college so why me? Getting laid off two years ago released me from the last excuse I had for not getting my degree. I just completed my third term and my only regret is not signing up sooner. Since becoming a full-time student, I have been expertly guided every step of the way by skilled and caring individuals. I am so happy to have the opportunity to experience what this college has to offer. PCC has given me wings…watch me fly!

Tammi
current student
Beaverton

Planning for PCC’s 50th anniversary has kicked into high gear, but you haven’t missed your chance to be a part of the action. From now until the kickoff in fall 2011, there are many ways that you can get involved. Start by visiting www.pcc.edu/50th to share your PCC story. While you’re there, check out the 50th planning blog to read about and comment on the latest planning activities. If you are a PCC alum or retiree looking for a higher level of involvement, consider volunteering for a planning subcommittee. To find out more about this commitment, contact 50th Anniversary Coordinator Katherine McDonald at kmcdonal@pcc.edu.

Finally, stay tuned for the 50th anniversary events that will take place throughout the 2011-12 academic year!

More to Come in 2011

I became a classified staff person at PCC in 1998, but my PCC story begins in 1968 when my mom took evening classes at the Sylvania Campus. At that time, I was a very busy and curious 9-year-old. Mom would bring me with her to class each week, and I would hang out in the library (the Computer Resource Center is there now), where I’m sure I questioned the librarians until they wanted to scream. They were always patient, kind and helpful. They treated me like I saw them treating all of the other students and patrons, with respect and dignity. This made a huge impression on a little 9-year-old African-American girl. 1968 and 1969 were not the most pleasant or positive years in African-American history in our country, but once a week, I could forget all about the negative images, all the bad stuff. PCC was an exciting place for me then and it still is today.

Deborah
staff member
Northwest Portland

When I began working at PCC as a secretary in 1978, I was encouraged to take classes which would benefit my position. I took a class or two each term and eventually earned an associate’s degree. I was very proud when, as an adult, wife and mother, I walked across the stage at graduation to collect my degree. As a PCC retiree, I am very happy to share my good fortune with future generations of students by contributing annually to the PCC Foundation.

Glenda
alumna and former staff member
Gresham

Glenda
alumna and former staff member
Gresham
Longtime PCC math instructor George Choban likes old-style cars and old-style mathematics. He likes students to know the equation.

At age 82, he believes simple living is a key factor to living well.

For Choban, the equation for life includes living on a North Bethany farm that feels like stepping into a century past, complete with an antique car collection. Most notable among his collection are the 1911 Hupmobile, a roofed carriage with wooden wheels and acetylene lanterns, and a Ford Model-T of the same vintage. But the others also are impressive, not only in their sleek lines and meticulous care, but also for their personal histories. Choban’s wife, Anastasia “Susie” Choban recalled, pointing to a 1931 Pierce Arrow, “We used that car at our wedding in 1960.” Showing off a 1939 Packard, she remembered, “We brought our babies home from the hospital in this one.”

As PCC nears its 50th anniversary, Choban has pondered the changes he has seen in the past 26 years. The campus then was small, there were no cubicles and parking was easier. But, he says some things haven’t changed. Specifically, “the colleagues and administrators I associate with now are as friendly as the ones I associated with then.”

Choban’s take on math is similar to his take on cars: He likes an old-fashioned approach. “The math we taught 20 years ago was more concerned with the whys, not just the hows,” he said, adding, “It’s important for students at whatever level of math to know why — the basis for solving a problem.”

Though Choban does not own a computer or cell phone, his students find him accessible.

Student Donyale Campbell said the instructor often can be found in his classroom an hour before class starts, and he is always willing to stay late and grade papers or give explanations. Campbell said he appreciates Choban’s approach to problem solving. “He introduces new ways to solve equations; he makes things easier to understand.”

Born in 1929 to a Greek immigrant family, Choban’s is a classic American story. He grew up in a Cedar Mill shack with no running water and a wood stove for heat and admits that his boyhood “was primitive.” Despite the Depression, his family never went hungry. They survived by growing and selling vegetables throughout the 1930s and ‘40s.

Choban found his vocation in the Korean War. Shipped by the Army to Germany instead of Southeast Asia, he took an assignment teaching American soldiers, some barely literate. His charges seemed to pick up the math and, “The Army thought I had a lot of patience, which was probably true.”

When his service ended, Choban earned his teaching certificate. After working for Hillsboro High School for a year, Choban became an instructor at Portland State University and Clark College before landing at PCC in 1984.

In spite of curricular changes, Choban said he has no plans to retire, and he sees great merit in PCC’s educational model. “Here students are not thrown into classes of 300,” he said.

Choban said he hopes to facilitate more than math in his students; he strives to instill critical thinking skills as well. “In a class of 30, an instructor will find students who are sharper than he is.” Then, he says, the instructor has an obligation to “check (his) ego at the door.”

For more information about offerings at the Rock Creek Campus, visit pcc.edu/rockcreek
PCC Programs
Degree programs and credit classes

PCC is also your one-stop resource for the following credit programs. Go to www.pcc.edu to learn more.

Transfer Degrees
Associate of Arts, Oregon Transfer
Associate of Science
Associate of Science, Oregon Transfer, Business

Other Degrees and Areas of Study
Oregon Transfer Module
General Studies
High School Completion
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Adult Education (ABE and GED classes) (Non-credit)

Career and Technical Education Degrees and Certificates
Alcohol and Drug Counselor*
Apprenticeship
Architectural Design and Drafting
Auto Collision Repair Technology
Automotive Service Technology
Aviation Maintenance Technology
Aviation Science Technology
Bioscience Technology*
Building Construction Technology
Business Administration
  Accounting
  Management
  Marketing
Civil Engineering Technology*
Computer Applications and Office Systems
Computer Information Systems
Criminal Justice
Dealer Service Technology*
Dental Assisting*
Dental Hygiene*
Dental Laboratory Technology*
Diesel Service Technology
Early Education and Family Studies
Electronic Engineering Technology*
Emergency Management
Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic*
Emergency Telecommunicator/911 Dispatcher*
Facilities Maintenance Technology
Fire Protection Technology*
Fitness Technology*
Geographic Information Systems
Gerontology
Graphic Design
Health Information Management*
Interior Design
Landscape Technology
Machine Manufacturing Technology
Management and Supervisory Development
Mechanical Engineering Technology*
Medical Assisting*
Medical Imaging*
Medical Laboratory Technology*
Microelectronic Technology*
Multimedia
Nursing*
Occupational Skills Training
Ophthalmic Medical Technology*
Paraeducator
Paralegal*
Professional Music
Radiography*
Sign Language Interpretation*
Veterinary Technology*
Welding Technology

*Program has special enrollment requirements.

Phone numbers to switch for all of PCC

All telephone numbers for Portland Community College's campuses and centers will change, as of this summer. For now, both the old numbers and new numbers are operational.

PCC’s area code will switch from 503 to 971 and the prefix for all campuses and centers will change to 722. The last four digits will remain the same. So, if an employee had (503) 977-5555, the new number will be (971) 722-5555.

On an alphanumeric keypad, 722 can be spelled out as “PCC.”

The old phone numbers will be forwarded to the new numbers until October 1, 2011.
Deborah Evind has been the driving force behind a Women’s Resource Center at PCC

By Kate Chester

A Woman Who Works Wonders

Deborah Evind has been the driving force behind a Women’s Resource Center at PCC

The Women’s Resource Center at PCC’s Sylvania Campus has a mission statement with powerful goals: Support the academic achievement of women. Increase access to education for women. Encourage women’s leadership.

The mission also reflects on the center’s founder, Deborah Evind, who retired this past fall due to health reasons.

Since its 1995 launch, the center has been pivotal in advancing women’s educational equity and social justice at the college and in the community. Under Evind’s guidance, the center’s services have expanded to include resource and referral, counseling, advising, mentoring, advocacy and personalized assistance with entering college. The center sponsors lectures, exhibits and special events. Its annual production of “The Vagina Monologues” has raised more than $100,000 for local nonprofits addressing domestic and sexual violence and for WRC programs.

“Many of the students we serve are among the college’s most vulnerable,” Evind said. “They often arrive...when they still have one foot somewhere else — divorce, job loss, escaping domestic violence — and may need extra support. This is a part of what we provide at the WRC.”

The WRC also offers students a framework to analyze and process what they’re learning in the classroom.

“Courses exploring history, literature and psychology from a multicultural women’s perspective became institutionalized in the early 1990s,” Evind said. “The WRC offers an opportunity...for students to reflect on what they’re learning in class and put it into action.”

Gina Watkins is one of several WRC success stories. A student advocate for the center when she was at PCC in 1998 – 99, Watkins transferred to Portland State University where she received a bachelor’s degree in community development, followed by a master’s degree in social work. She now lives in Denver and runs a private practice as a licensed clinical social worker.

“What I witnessed was Deborah’s amazing ability to just ‘be’ with people, to make them feel important,” Watkins said. “There was so much going on at the WRC — people coming in and out, confused and lost, buried in their own ‘stuff.’ Yet Deborah had this calmness and sense of humor as she managed it all, and people could connect with her. It made a huge impression on me.”

Portland Community College has a tradition of hosting retirement parties for long-time faculty and staff. When complications from stage 4 breast cancer forced Evind to retire, she opted to forgo a party and instead create an endowed student scholarship — The Deborah Evind Women’s Leadership Award. An inaugural gala lunch was held March 5 at the Tiffany Center to raise funds for the scholarship.

“For the last 16 years my work has been deeply connected to my personal values,” Evind said. “It’s allowed me to focus on the well-being of others, build community and fulfilling relationships, and work to create long-term, positive social change.”

“My hope for this scholarship is that it will encourage women at Sylvania to continue the work they started at the WRC as they move out into the world, with a strong commitment to service, social justice and ethical behavior,” she said.

“I can’t think of a better candidate to receive this national honor,” said Sylvania Campus President Linda Gerber. “Deborah has been, and continues to be, a force of energy, enthusiasm and ‘can do’ spirit for the college.”

Portland Community College has a tradition of hosting retirement parties for long-time faculty and staff. When complications from stage 4 breast cancer forced Evind to retire, she opted to forgo a party and instead create an endowed student scholarship — The Deborah Evind Women’s Leadership Award. An inaugural gala lunch was held March 5 at the Tiffany Center to raise funds for the scholarship.

“My hope for this scholarship is that it will encourage women at Sylvania to continue the work they started at the WRC as they move out into the world, with a strong commitment to service, social justice and ethical behavior,” she said.
Rock Creek Creek Rocks Forward

A consensus is reached on the re-design of the Washington County campus

By James G. Hill

Portland Community College’s Rock Creek Campus in Washington County has decided on a general layout for its first phase of bond construction.

A steering committee of students, staff and faculty unanimously chose an option that will add approximately 109,000 square feet to two campus buildings. The option attaches a two-story addition to the east side of Building 7 and builds a two-story structure onto Building 5. The option was one of the least expensive of the plans considered because it efficiently taps into the surplus capacity and current infrastructure of the buildings.

Rock Creek Campus President David Rule said the campus community and the Rock Creek architect – Opsis Architecture – have started thinking about the design of the new buildings. The first task for construction will be to work on the addition to Building 7, bordering the quad, he said.

“We have completed several rounds of faculty, staff and student discussions to rough out where the programs will go and then we can move forward,” Rule said. “The goal is to get some consideration of what the construction will be and start it during the summer when it’s least disruptive.”

In addition, plans include completing a second access road to Rock Creek on 185th Avenue. The new road would be used for emergency vehicle access as well as for campus evacuations in school emergencies.

A year’s worth of campus and community engagement activities followed the passage of PCC’s bond measure in 2008.

Opsis, PCC bond staff and college leadership hosted an array of public events to hear from the community on everything from campus designs to proposed hybrids or alternate options, and to discuss critical issues such as building placement, parking and a second exit.

The decision came as a result of the formation of five campus committees, in which groups focused on specific areas that the bond would impact. In addition to the plethora of meetings and surveys involving the community, staff hosted interactive displays where people passing by could rearrange miniature buildings on a campus map.

SEATTLE CENTER UPDATE

At PCC’s Southeast Center, master-planning activity has focused on program development to eventually convert the center into a comprehensive campus.

After a year of workshops and open houses with the campus and neighboring community, the master plan includes renovation for the college’s two existing buildings, two new campus buildings and adding new land with two existing structures, to be renovated.

Plans for expanding the Southeast Center include a child development center, conference rooms, a community multipurpose room and more classrooms.

The grounds of what had been the German American Society on Division Street will be made into green space for both the campus and the community.

The center’s two new buildings will house a much-needed library, science labs, career technical education facilities, classrooms, student services and the bookstore.

Visit pcc.edu/bond to see the PCC Bond Program’s 2010 annual report.
For the 14th straight term, PCC’s student population has grown despite a tighter budget future

By James G. Hill

During winter term, PCC grew by 5 percent in total headcount to 43,019 students (a gain of 2,030 people) and by 5.2 percent in full-time equivalent students (FTE) — a surge of approximately 449 FTE to a total of 9,031 for the term. The enrollment figures reflect the number of students taking classes for that specific term. These numbers cannot be added to other terms’ totals to get an overall enrollment number, as many students who are enrolled throughout the year would be counted more than once. FTE is the total number of full- and part-time students added up to calculate one full-time student.

“During the last two years our enrollment has grown by more than 30 percent, which represents more than 7,000 additional full-time equivalent students who are coming to us for education, training and lifelong learning,” said District President Preston Pulliams. “I am so appreciative of the amazing work our staff and faculty are doing to support the students.”

The official enrollment statistics released during the fourth week of the term came as the budgeting process in Salem officially began. This is important to PCC because 42 percent of its general fund budget comes from the state.

Every other year, the governor of Oregon proposes a budget for the coming two years, or biennium. This year, with John Kitzhaber taking over the governorship, and facing a $3.5 billion shortfall for 2011–13, his proposed budget included a total of $410 million for Oregon’s 17 community colleges. To put that in perspective, the budget for the community colleges was $500 million just a few years ago. That dropped to $450 million in the middle of the recession, then down to about $417 million currently, which means that all community colleges are serving a lot more students with less state funding.

“Even as state funding has declined, we continue to look for new ways to improve our student services and instruction,” added Pulliams, who toured the PCC district to host budget forums with staff, faculty and students during winter term. “The recently launched GRAD Plan, which will enable students and advisors to track movement toward degree completion, and the progress we are making on assessment of student learning, are just two examples of the innovation and continuous improvement that are integral to PCC’s culture of service to students.”

In the next step, the Legislature’s budget-writing Ways and Means Committee, and its various sub-committees, debates the proposed budgets for each state agency. That process takes many months. It also usually hinges on the quarterly revenue forecast, which will be presented by the state economists in May. The final decision generally is reached around June.

While enrollment is up at the major campuses, they do not represent PCC in its entirety.

Other centers are thriving, including the brand new Willow Creek Center and the Hillsboro Education Center, both in Washington County. Meanwhile, the PCC Community Education program offers classes throughout the metropolitan area in more than 200 locations.

### Campuses by the Numbers

By campus, here is how winter term enrollment unfolded across the district:

- **Rock Creek Campus**: 5.8 percent increase in credit students and 8.3 percent in total headcount.
- **Cascade Campus**: 2.4 percent growth in FTE and 7.2 percent growth in overall headcount.
- **Southeast Center**: 4.5 percent increase in the center’s core enrollment.
- **Sylvania Campus**: 3.3 percent increase in total student enrollment and 2.9 percent growth in FTE.
For Julie Dery it came down to her portfolio. Over the course of several months the PCC graphic design student created then revised then revised again about 10 pieces of her best work.

By last June, after the portfolio class at PCC ended and her layouts were showcased exactly to her liking, she embarked on the job search circuit. One of the first potential employers to see her portfolio was a designer at Wieden + Kennedy, Portland’s own advertising giant that handles accounts for some of the nation’s biggest businesses.

“One of the main reasons I went to PCC was to come out with a great portfolio,” said Dery, who believes her portfolio played a part in getting her hired by W + K last August.

Despite a downturn economy continuing to put a stranglehold on well-paid professional jobs, some PCC graduates are finding work with advertising agencies, media publications, marketing companies and in-house design departments with sports companies Nike, Adidas, Columbia and Nautilus.

“By the time they graduate, our students love and have a passion for graphic design,” said CeCe Cutsforth, a full-time faculty member and program chair. “And once the passion is there, the learning is amazing.”

The Sylvania-based Graphic Design Program runs its students through a rigorous set of classes, fashioning introductory
courses into a boot camp as a way to weed out the less-than-serious students. Consider the numbers: Typically, of the 100 new students who enroll for the fall term, only about 60 return.

With at-home design programs so easy to master that even a “dummy” can use them and photo editing no longer an art but a necessity, students in these beginning graphic design classes go back to the basics. During the first term of classes they never touch a keyboard or mouse and never look at a computer screen. They focus on freehand drawing. And they must earn a grade of a B or higher for each class, or their place in the program is in jeopardy.

“Just because you know how to use a computer, doesn’t mean you know how to design,” said recent design graduate Windie Chao, who recalls those first classes centered on the history of graphic design as well as typography.

By the start of the second year the number of students has trickled down to 35. Students treat the program as a job, not just a class. They call in sick to the instructor when they’re absent from class. Missed deadlines are not accepted and there is no extra credit.

“We train you the way we want you on the job,” said Cutsforth. “It’s a waste of time to go through the classes and get Cs because those students are not doing work that is marketable and they won’t get hired.”

While there is competition from other private and public four-year universities, PCC’s solid program has received praise from employers looking for well-trained new hires. Taught mostly by part-time instructors who work in the field and stay current with the trends, PCC students master their skills in state-of-the-art facilities.

“You get a great education for a quarter of the price of a four-year university,” said Dery, 29, the W + K designer now working on Target ads.

Many students in the program have returned to school for a second career. They left jobs as business owners, accountants, pharmacists and lawyers, among others, to learn graphic design. After graduation, most will find work with their associate’s degrees and some will transfer to the university level — PCC has an articulation agreement with Portland State University.

Lee Benson moved to Portland several years after graduating with a film degree from a University of California campus but soon found that graphic design was a better career fit for him.

After checking out other universities and institutes, he came to PCC in 2008. “I was surprised how in-depth the program is for a community college. I never felt like I was getting a second-rate education and I was so excited about my classes.”

Benson, 28, finished the program last spring and now works as a freelancer designing book covers, business cards and letterhead for local businesses as well as posters promoting clubs and other nightlife events.

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By the start of the second year the number of students has trickled down to 35. Students treat the program as a job, not just a class. They call in sick to the instructor when they’re absent from class. Missed deadlines are not accepted and there is no extra credit.

“We train you the way we want you on the job,” said Cutsforth. “It’s a waste of time to go through the classes and get Cs because those students are not doing work that is marketable and they won’t get hired.”

While there is competition from other private and public four-year universities, PCC’s solid program has received praise from employers looking for well-trained new hires. Taught mostly by part-time instructors who work in the field and stay current with the trends, PCC students master their skills in state-of-the-art facilities.

“You get a great education for a quarter of the price of a four-year university,” said Dery, 29, the W + K designer now working on Target ads.

Many students in the program have returned to school for a second career. They left jobs as business owners, accountants, pharmacists and lawyers, among others, to learn graphic design. After graduation, most will find work with their associate’s degrees and some will transfer to the university level — PCC has an articulation agreement with Portland State University.

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As students and later as professors, John Crabbe and Jeri Janowsky have studied and taught at some of the nation’s most prestigious universities and colleges: Stanford, Cornell, Reed, University of California San Diego, Oregon Health & Science University, University of Oregon and University of Colorado.

While their parents focused on their educational pathways early on in their lives, the Portland couple is acutely aware that not all families are able to encourage their children to attend college. Some parents don’t know what it takes for their children to get into college and how to mentor them in completing their studies.

“We know there are a lot of kids who struggle and they don’t have support and that’s why we wanted to help,” Janowsky said. “We also believe that education is critical to changing the world.”

So about six years ago they came up with a plan. They pledged to make an annual donation to PCC which would allow at least two students to enroll in classes without having to worry about how to pay tuition. One main requirement is that students intend to transfer to a four-year university.

Crabbe holds a doctorate degree in biopsychology and has conducted research at OHSU for decades. A professor in the Department of Behavioral Neuroscience and a scientist with the VA Medical Center, Crabbe is also director of the Portland Alcohol Research Center.

Janowsky, who also holds a doctorate degree, was a professor for 19 years at OHSU where she studied brain changes in aging adults. She hopes to work with either an organization that helps students stay in college or a business or nonprofit that focuses on quality of life in older adults.

They chose PCC because of its strong academic programs that offer something for everyone. Now they hope to inspire other couples who may be looking to give to a good cause.

For years Crabbe was reluctant to talk about his personal philanthropy for fear he sounded boastful. But now he realizes the only way his friends will learn about what he supports financially is by sharing information.

“There may be people who don’t have children and are able to donate and it doesn’t occur to them to think about donating to PCC,” Crabbe said.

Janowsky chimes in: “I know it would make someone feel really good to put a kid through college.”

Both say PCC has been a solid investment for their dollars because they know the college is training and educating the local workforce.

Donors such as Crabbe and Janowsky make PCC a community-supported institution because it shows that Portlanders with no direct connection to the college are so moved by students and the desire to create opportunities that they want to give, said Kim Kono, the PCC Foundation development director.

For the third and final year, the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation has issued a challenge to the PCC Foundation and its supporters: raise $320,000 in new and increased scholarship gifts by March 31 to receive a matching gift of the same amount.

Generous contributions from donors like John Crabbe and Jeri Janowsky have allowed the PCC Foundation to successfully meet the Miller Challenge for the past two years, providing hundreds of additional scholarships for deserving PCC students. To take advantage of the final year of this matching challenge, donate online at pcc.edu/foundation or call (971) 722-4382.
When PCC Community Education welding instructor Shona Yardley talks about the classes she teaches, she keeps things simple.

“We jump in, get to know the basics, and then we start to play,” she said. For Yardley and her students, “play” can mean basic fabrication, grinding, cleaning and whatever skills her students need to finish their unique projects. Students work on everything from large-scale art sculptures to more functional pieces, such as basket hangers, candleholders, trailer hitches and kayak racks.

Yardley, who graduated from PCC with her associate of applied science in welding, explains that if she were to teach a complete overview of welding, she would have to spend an entire semester just on tools. “If everybody had to go through college again to figure out one little thing, nobody would come back to school,” she said. “I try to focus on getting people into their art and feeling really successful about their project.”

Every term, Community Education offers a selection of non-credit welding classes in the Home and Garden section, such as Beginning Welding, Metal Working, Art Welding Sculpture and Introduction to Art Wire Welding.

Portland’s do-it-yourself culture contributes to the widespread popularity of the program, which draws students of all ages and backgrounds who have no reservations about picking up a torch and trying a new skill. “Welding classes often reach enrollment maximums and when possible we add classes to meet the demand,” said Community Education Director Tonya Booker.

Dlynn Souba is a glass artist and teacher who first took Community Education welding classes to learn to use metalwork with her fused glass art. “I love the fact that you can take some scraps of metal and make a great piece of art. You’re limited only by your imagination,” said Souba.

She adds that Yardley has been a great teacher. “She gives a lot of really good one-on-one instruction,” Souba said. “It can be so overwhelming when you’re getting into a new medium.”

PCC instructor Scott Judy, who’s taught for 18 years in the credit welding program, says that’s exactly why non-credit welding is important. “A Community Education class gives the public the chance to experiment with entry-level welding classes without committing to the welding program.”

Judy has been working with Newberg High School to improve its welding program, including the installation of new ventilation, wiring upgrades, new welding booths—built by the PCC welding shop—and new cutting tables and vent hoods. As a result, plans are being made for the shop to host Community Education welding classes and eventually PCC credit welding classes.

For those who want to dip their toes into the world of welding, this means even more opportunities for PCC to offer fun, accessible non-credit welding classes.

“My whole goal is to see people happy, whatever they do,” Yardley said. “I just like to watch people create and be happy.”
My Project:

Name: Deena Szlovak
Occupation: Marketing and Communications Analyst
My Project: Make a space for creativity in my daily life.
Class I Took: Mosaic Art Workshop
And Now: The mosaic class was just the first step. Now, I’m taking a painting class, a voice-over class and yoga! Plus, I’m creating a full-size mosaic for the mirror in my children’s recently remodeled bathroom.

Make YOU the project!

If you can dream it, Community Education’s hundreds of classes can help you achieve it. Go online to pcc.edu/community and get started on your own Project:YOU this spring.