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A WAY TO GIVE BACK
Health care student finds his path
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Training for a career in automotive service tech
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“We must have an educated and healthy workforce for our communities and economies to thrive. It is institutions like PCC that provide a more equitable and effective gateway to higher education and career success.”

Rep. Joe Gallegos
Back to Class

Spring 2016 term begins March 28
Register now! There are thousands of credit and non-credit classes available at hundreds of sites across the Portland metro area. For information about registration, visit pcc.edu.

Upcoming Events

5th Annual “An Evening for Opportunity,” April 16, Hilton Portland
Join the PCC Foundation for its annual gala for scholarships and student success programs. This year’s theme—Think Panther—is inspired by the classic film “Pink Panther” and a play on PCC’s spirit icons, the diamond and the panther. Join us as we help students shine. Visit pcc.edu/gala for tickets.

Semana de la Raza, April 18–22
This week-long celebration honors Latino culture and community at PCC’s Rock Creek Campus, 17705 N.W. Springville Road. Semana de la Raza features free public events such as lectures, music and films. Visit pcc.edu/semana for details.

2016 Commencement, 7 p.m., June 10
Celebrate PCC’s graduates as they receive degrees and certificates in front of thousands of friends, family and community members. Memorial Coliseum, 300 N. Winning Way.

Get social with PCC

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Contributors: James Hill, Rebecca Olson, Celene Carillo
Photographers: Vern Uyetake, James Hill, Erin Berzel

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Big thanks to Poppie for supporting feminist leadership development and gender equity at the SE WRC!
@Women’s Resource Center - PCC SE Campus

Celebrating diversity, culture and tradition @Portland CC Powwow #PCCProud @AveryPCCSyl

@BankofAmerica, WWC and #PortoofPortland supporting workforce development @PortlandCC Swan Island Trades Center @PortofPortland

Did you get to meet Rojo the Llama in the Lower CC today? Thanks to our awesome Student Organizers for this fantastic Beat the Stress week event! @ ASPCC Sylvania

Share your thoughts and photos with us on Twitter @PortlandCC.

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Ellie Steele doesn’t let obstacles slow him down.

The Automotive Service Technology Program student is a self-admitted gear head who can talk shop about engine performance, types of cars or how to troubleshoot modifications. With assistance of his wheelchair, Steele easily navigates the Sylvania Campus auto shop to fix cars as part of his training. The rigorous physical experience of learning in an active shop doesn’t phase him.

“Ellie works like any other technician—on the ground, crawling under the dash, removing gas tanks,” said Scott Morgan, auto service instructor. “His creative thinking, positive attitude and great teamwork allow him to tackle any project with success.”

In 2004 at age 19, Steele crashed his restored four-cylinder Toyota Tercel, breaking his neck and back. The accident left him a paraplegic with minimal leg ability.

“It was a tuna can,” Steele said of the Toyota. “It blew up and I flew out of it.”

Steele, 30, spent nearly a decade recovering through physical therapy with the full support of his family. As his mobility improved, he sought out organizations that treat spinal cord injuries by helping patients get back as much physical ability as possible. He worked with Project Walk in Carlsbad, Calif., and is enrolled at OHSU’s Rewalk Program, which pairs the injured with exoskeleton braces that are powered by batteries.

“It’s futuristic stuff,” Steele smiled.

After talking to a friend at a parts store in 2013, Steele felt he should capitalize on his automotive know-how and enrolled in PCC’s Auto Service Program. There, he’s getting the high-tech, fundamental skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing auto service industry that includes advanced work on computers and maintaining alternative fuel vehicles. In total, almost 150 students a year get trained at PCC’s auto service shop, part of the more than 21,000 students training annually in career-technical education programs collegewide.

The program’s intensive auto repair training is perfect for Steele, who wants to work as a service writer or technician at a local dealership. He plans to graduate from the program by next June and earn his associate degree next winter or spring from PCC. A pretty good evolution for a student who admits that school in general has never been his thing.

“I’ve always wanted to learn, though, and since coming to PCC I’m really liking what it has to offer,” he said.

Instructor Paul Sackman said Steele was often honored with the famous “Sackman Certified” stamp, which is given to an automotive student who earns a perfect score on his tests.

“The logistics of how he adapts from the chair to do the work is where Ellie really thinks outside the box,” Sackman said. “He comes up with ways that work for him. He does whatever it takes and always does it with a smile.”

You have the feeling that the smiling Steele will conquer any obstacle. Even when people questioned his odds of his recovery, or whether he can accomplish a task due to his injury, it just motivates him more.

“When somebody is questioning what you are doing, you have to keep pressing and working toward your goals,” Steele said. “What they say isn’t the bottom line. You can make your own destiny.”
The Automotive Service Technology Program, which is a leader in alternative fuel vehicle repair and accredited by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation, trains students to be skilled service technicians. Based at the Sylvania Campus in Southwest Portland, the program provides the high-tech and fundamental skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing industry.

To learn more, visit pcc.edu/programs/auto-service/
FEEDING MINDS

New campus Foods and Nutrition Lab nourishes students with multidisciplinary learning

by Rebecca Olson

Add state-of-the-art culinary prep equipment to a traditional science lab classroom, and you’ve got a recipe for success. That’s the thinking behind a new collaborative, multidisciplinary learning space newly opened on PCC’s Rock Creek Campus.

The Foods and Nutrition Lab features six spacious learning stations where students have room to learn about, prepare and enjoy food—a fitting addition to a campus known for its “farm to table” culture and award-winning Learning Garden.

Fully equipped with ovens, refrigerators, sinks, pots, pans, knives and other cookware, the second-floor kitchen looks out at the Rock Creek Campus through large windows that fill the space with natural light.

An instructor’s station at the front of the classroom is nestled between large television screens projecting a live camera feed, allowing students to easily observe their teacher’s technique—even from the back of the lab.

The first group of students to use the new space was a PCC Community Education Program artisanal baking course, which met in the lab in late January. Students in the non-credit class tackled the art of French bread baking under the guidance of instructor Larry Eisenbach.

Over the course of four hours, students learned how to make French baguettes from scratch by observing Eisenbach’s master technique.

“The students were very excited when their loaves came out of the oven,” Eisenbach said. “Bread is part of human life, and there’s something powerful about learning to bake it yourself.”

Eisenbach will teach “Artisanal French Bread Baking” again in spring term. Other upcoming Community Ed classes include “Introduction to Sourdough” as well as a new style and beauty class that teaches students how to make their own natural spa products from scratch using espresso beans, aptly titled “Espresso Yourself.”

PCC’s Foods and Nutrition Program also offers academic coursework out of the food lab. In spring term, a new class called “Everyday Cooking” will give students the chance to apply foundational knowledge of food composition and nutritional values to food preparation, meal planning, recipe modification and basic cooking techniques.

A multidisciplinary work group established by the Foods and Nutrition Program is currently developing additional academic programming for the space.

“We want our course offerings to reflect the needs of the community we serve,” explained Dana Fuller, division dean of Social Science and Health. “Our goal is to give students what they need to find jobs or move into bachelor’s degrees.”

While there’s a lot cooking for the Food and Nutrition Program, the lab serves other classes and departments as well.

“We’re encouraging faculty from all disciplines to augment their teaching with a demonstration in the Foods and Nutrition Lab—whether it’s a language class or sociology,” Fuller said. “This is a kitchen for students from all areas of study.”
The classes offered in the Foods and Nutrition Lab are the first of their kind for this area, expanding opportunities for residents of Hillsboro, Beaverton and Southwest Portland.
THE BIG ONE
Earthquake preparedness classes train residents for a natural disaster

Chances are you’ve heard friends, neighbors and coworkers talking about what they’ll do when “the big one” hits—the mega-earthquake scientists predict will shake the Cascadia Subduction Zone sometime in the future.

A new PCC Community Education course aims to help residents prepare for a natural disaster of this magnitude by offering practical advice and hands-on training.

“There’s no way to know how you’ll react in an emergency, but more often than not, people fall back on their training,” said Rachael Pecore-Valdez, Community Education earthquake preparedness instructor. “Practice, practice, practice—that’s what will help keep your head level.”

Pecore-Valdez, an experienced outdoor survival instructor, co-teaches the class with Laura Hall, a leader for the City of Portland’s Neighborhood Emergency Team Program.

Students learn how to keep calm during an earthquake by managing the physiological responses our bodies go through when experiencing a natural disaster. They also receive practical advice for how to stay safe in an unstable building, pack an emergency kit for your car and home, and purify water.

“Many people have questions about what the government is going to do for them in case of disaster,” Hall added. “In addition to teaching survival skills, we’ll address the services and plans currently in place for the city of Portland so people have realistic expectations.”

Earthquake readiness training will help you and your family feel prepared, and helping more people know what to do in case of an emergency benefits us all.

“It’s been shown that community resilience after a disaster is closely linked to a community’s sense of closeness,” said Pecore-Valdez. “The more we can come together, get to know and support each other, the stronger we’ll be in the event of an emergency.”

—Rebecca Olson

Apps as Art
You may be walking around with one of the world’s most engaging artistic mediums in your pocket—your smartphone.

A new Community Education class seeks to explore the mobile app as art. The class is part art history and part coding. Students reflect on artistic expression through technology in class discussions, and while learning to code their own art apps.

“One of the advantages of the mobile app as an artistic medium is that it’s so interactive,” said instructor Sean Miller. “You can take its function, and twist it to invite the user to have an artistic experience.”

Students in Miller’s class are creating their own “calculators as artworks.” First they write the basic code to make a functional calculator app. Then students adapt the code to make the calculator function in surprising or suggestive ways.

“With help from the students, I make an app called the ‘emo calculator’—a machine with human characteristics. It makes errors, it complains,” Miller said. “As an art piece, the project explores how the boundary between human and machine is blurred in our hi-tech culture.”

Miller has a doctorate in Science and Cultural Studies. He left academia a few years ago to become an entrepreneur. He’ll be teaching this course in the spring term as well as a five-week course on coding interactive e-books.

To learn more about creating your art apps, turn to page 64 or visit pcc.edu/communityed.
After serving 35 years with the Oregon Army National Guard, Bob Frasco had lots of experience repairing and crewing U.S. Army helicopters before landing at PCC. Despite his extensive knowledge, he didn’t have the certification required to work on commercial aircraft outside of the military. Using G.I. Bill funding, Frasco went back to school to get the degree he needed to advance his career. Frasco enrolled in PCC’s Aviation Maintenance Technology (AMT) Program, an industry-respected name which offered the certification he needed.

“In two years, graduates can earn a living wage as a certified aircraft mechanic. PCC really does change lives.”

Frasco currently supports and teaches in PCC’s AMT Program as an instructional support technician. He helps students with everything from interfacing with an aircraft turbine simulator to repairing sheet metal structures. Like Frasco, many students in the program have prior experience working on aircraft because of past military service. “We have a varied mix of students,” Frasco said. “Some have experience repairing aircraft for the military or grew up cleaning spark plugs in their grandpa’s garage. Others are learning their way around mechanical things for the first time. It’s especially rewarding to work with these students.”

“I’ve seen students come here not knowing the difference between a wheel bearing and a spark plug,” He added. “Two years later they’re ready to earn a living wage as a certified aircraft mechanic. I don’t know where else you can find that kind of transformation. PCC really does change lives.”

—Rebecca Olson

The course of Frasco’s life was changed by his experiences at PCC and he’s amazed by the transformations he’s witnessed in the lives of students.

Aviation Maintenance Tech Program helps students land living-wage jobs

DID YOU KNOW?
The average annual salary for aviation maintenance technicians is $56,980 per year. Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.
For Nick Minch, an accident-prone childhood and a passion for helping others sparked an interest in health care that led him to PCC. As kids growing up in Portland, Minch and his brother (both athletes) were in and out of the emergency room. In addition to more minor injuries, Minch suffered a broken leg and collarbone during his childhood—and his brother a broken neck. These experiences cemented Minch’s respect for the medical profession.

“Seeing the level of care my brother received was incredible,” said Minch, who is now director of the memory care unit at Regency Park. “I also grew up in a family of nurses, so part of me always knew I would want to make a career out of caring for others.”

Minch earned his bachelor’s degree in Community Health Education at Western Oregon University in 2011, but needed additional training before he could find full-time work in his field. He chose the Nursing Assistant Training Program through PCC’s Institute for Health Care Professionals to help him take the next step.

“I knew PCC’s program would put me on the job market with the skills I needed to get hired quickly,” Minch said.

One of the distinct advantages of getting trained as a nursing assistant through PCC is the pace of the program. After completing only 155.5 hours of training, students graduate with a certificate of completion and are ready to take the Oregon State Board of Nursing’s competency exam.

“Most students complete this training in two to three months,” said Linda Schneider, the director of PCC’s CNA program and a longtime RN. “Students graduate with the knowledge to not only pass the state exam, but to get hired and begin caring for patients immediately.”

Student split their time between the classroom and skills lab, and clinical practice. At the Glisan Care Center, the nursing and rehabilitation facility where Minch did his clinical practice, the knowledge he had learned in the classroom and in labs came together. Minch got to know his patients and heard their stories, and it affirmed his reasons for wanting a career in healthcare.

“In two to three months, students have the knowledge needed not only to pass the state exam, but to get hired and begin caring for patients immediately.”

“Being a nursing assistant is more than just taking care of people,” Minch said. “It’s really about making someone’s day a little brighter. As you start to get to know people you learn their preferences, you learn how to make them happy. Even things as small as having coffee ready for people when they wake up goes a long way.”

After completing the training program and earning his CNA certification in 2013, Minch was hired at a memory care facility to work as a CNA on the night shift. While he enjoyed working directly with residents, he became interested in caring for residents and their families from a different side: administration.
I found that I love being in a position where I can not only provide care, but oversee care others provide," he said.

Minch recently took a new job as director of the memory care unit at Regency Park, an assisted living facility in Southwest Portland. There, he’s in charge of everything from staffing to service planning, to nurse supervision and meeting with families to make sure everyone is comfortable with how their loved one’s care is going. And since Regency Park is a long-term care facility, Minch and his staff can build strong relationships with the residents.

“I work with people right now who have dementia. I love hearing stories from them and their families, and learning who they were at different points in their lives,” he said. “Forming a bond with residents and their loved ones makes it feel like a family.”

TRAINING FOR A CAREER IN HEALTH CARE

PCC offers many options to students seeking high-demand careers in healthcare.

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Visit pcc.edu/programs/health-care-programs for program details and admission requirements.
SPOTLIGHT
WHAT’S NEW AT PCC?

PCC Sylvania Hosts 17th Annual Traditional Winter Powwow

More than 1,000 community members attended PCC’s 17th annual traditional winter powwow. The “Wacipi” (“they dance”) powwow featured drum groups and dancers from across the region, Native crafts and food, activities for children, and raffle prizes.

“The annual Sylvania Powwow is a stellar example of the college’s long-standing commitment to diversity, both at PCC as well as in the community at large,” said Sylvania Campus President Lisa Avery. “Wacipi is an event that brings together the Native community—and the many communities PCC serves—to celebrate beauty and tradition.”

Master of Ceremonies Bob Tom (Confederated Tribes of Siletz and Grand Ronde) and Whip Man Ed Goodell (Confederated Tribes of Siletz) ran the proceedings, with Jason Stacona (Warm Springs) and Gina Stacona (Oglala Lakota) as head dancers.

Proceeds from the powwow support the Native American Student Scholarship, which aims to increase access and retention of Native American students at PCC.

- PCC honored one of its longtime champions with the official naming of the Harold S. Williams Sr Court in the Cascade Campus gymnasium in early December. Williams, who passed away in 2012, was a former board member and community activist with a long history of advocacy on behalf of students from traditionally underrepresented communities.

- A new suspended glass sculpture comprised of 140 small glass birds titled “Sweep of Swifts” has been installed on PCC’s Southeast Campus. The composition is meant to reflect the flight patterns of Vaux’ Swifts at Chapman School in Northwest Portland. This art is one of many installations around the college as part of the one percent for art promised by the 2008 voter-approved bond measure.
Fifty students received free passports to study anywhere they want in the world at PCC’s International Education Week MiniFair. The cost of the passports was donated by the Council on International Education Exchange which partners with PCC to remove barriers and encourage community college students to travel abroad.

PCC has won the nation’s top award for sustainability in higher education for its Rock Creek Learning Garden. The Learning Garden increases access to fresh, healthy food for students struggling with food insecurity by offering hands-on learning opportunities in sustainable farming techniques and incentive-based programs. For this program, PCC was awarded the 2015 AASHE Sustainability Award from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.
When the big solar eclipse happens next year, Toby Dittrich is going to there to make history.

The long-time physics instructor and spaceship power plant inventor is heavily involved in the national planning for the solar eclipse that will hit the continental U.S. in August of 2017. During the eclipse, he plans to pull off a large-scale experiment, repeating British astronomer Arthur Eddington’s 1919 solar eclipse observations on the deflections of starlight.

“I have put together a team of astronomers across the country and around the world to this experiment,” said Dittrich, who is working with NASA. “Eddington was the first to verify Einstein’s Theory of Relativity (predicting that the sun deflects starlight that passes near it) proving that stars warp space.”

PCC is on NASA’s radar thanks primarily to Dittrich’s outreach and collaboration. As associate director of the Oregon NASA Space Grant Consortium, Dittrich has advocated for and encouraged students to apply for scholarships from NASA. Since 2009, PCC students have earned 56 state scholarships and 10 national NASA internships and scholarships.

“We have been steadily growing year by year,” Dittrich said. “These programs from the Oregon NASA Space Grant make our magnet for students interested in STEM even stronger.”

Through these opportunities, students have worked beside famous scientists on important projects, like analyzing space probe data and mapping asteroids and the surfaces of planets.

“This networking springboards them into a lifelong journeys of scientific and engineering exploration,” said the active 69-year-old, who occasionally meets up with astronauts or NASA leaders for coffee. “These honors are a very effective tool to facilitate their future.”

Dittrich has helped PCC become a destination for those interested in pursuing science. Many of the college’s science students transfer to engineering programs and related classes at Portland State, Oregon State and the University of Portland. Nearly half of the students at PSU take their science, particularly physics and math classes, at PCC.

Dittrich’s always got something going. In his spare time, the Fulbright scholar is an inventor, writes for “The Physics Teacher,” and works on a climate change study on an Alaskan glacier.

—James Hill

STAR MATERIAL

Physics faculty and NASA partner Toby Dittrich helps students reach for the stars

For more information about PCC’s STEM programs, visit pcc.edu/stem.
Join us at the PCC Foundation's fifth annual "An Evening for Opportunity," a benefit for student scholarships and success programs. We'll travel to 1960s Paris to solve the case of the missing diamond—and create sparkling opportunities for students!

April 16, 2016
5:30 p.m.
Portland Hilton & Executive Tower

Featuring
Live performance by Thomas Lauderdale and members of Pink Martini!
Remarks from Oregon Governor Kate Brown
Student speakers
NW cuisine & signature cocktails

Tickets available online at pcc.edu/gala.
Make YOU the project!

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

PCC CommunityEd