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"PCC Communities" (USPS 001-624)
Fall 2018, Vol 34, No. 1
is published quarterly by Portland Community College,
12000 SW 49th Ave,
Portland, OR 97219

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, Oregon.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to "PCC Communities"
at P.O. Box 19000,
Portland, OR 97280-0990

Fall 2018
GETTING TO WORK

PCC’s planning and capital construction efforts gain momentum

“We’re improving the environment in which teaching and learning happens, and we’re contributing to the local economy through construction and partnerships. We’re living up to our middle name by building a better community.”

PCC President Mark Mitsui
With enrollment booming, Portland Community College put forth its first bond measure to voters in 1992, 31 years after the college first opened its doors. The $61.4 million bond was approved, earmarking critical funds for facilities expansion at all PCC campuses, and repair and upgrade of existing buildings.

Since then, PCC’s Bond Program has overseen facilities planning and construction associated with three additional voter-approved bond measures ($144 million in 2000, $374 million in 2008 — at that time, the largest bond ever in Oregon — and $185 million in 2017). Last year’s bond, passed in November, is heavily focused on workforce development, which includes expansion of PCC’s healthcare professions and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) programs, as well as meeting needs across the district for safety, security, disability access, and overall building longevity.

“We’re eagerly rolling up our sleeves and getting to work,” said Linda Degman, who directs the bond program. “We’re taking a big picture approach that weaves in pertinent data, findings and feedback so that current and future endeavors are strategic, thoughtful and aligned with the college’s needs.”

For certain, the Bond Program is an important resource for design and construction services tied to major college capital projects. Moreover, the program has evolved to become a vital resource to the college related to regional development and land use planning, real estate counsel, transactions and negotiations, and expansive district projects.

An example of regional planning partnerships includes that with the City of Portland and its comprehensive plan. It offers a long-range approach to help the city prepare for and manage expected population and employment growth, as well as plan for and coordinate major public investments between now and 2035. Another example, specific to Washington County, is the Southwest Corridor Plan. PCC has been a key partner in the project, which features a new 12-mile MAX line from downtown Portland to Tigard and Tualatin, whose impact will be felt mostly by the Sylvania Campus.

Given the breadth and depth of its purview for PCC, the Bond Program’s name was officially changed in June to the Office of Planning and Capital Construction.

“The name change was made to recognize and more accurately reflect the scope of the program’s work — work that has already been occurring for many years,” said Sylvia Kelley, PCC’s executive vice president, who has oversight of the Bond Program.

“We know that coordinated, district-wide regional land use development and planning models national best practices. Having that service line nested within the bond program makes sense,” she said. “The name change also points to the critical need to support existing relationships, and to develop new ones, with external regional entities.”

The Southwest Fourth and Montgomery project is testament to the power of external partnerships. Thanks to voters approving the 2008 bond measure, PCC is part of an exciting venture to build an education and health center in the heart of downtown Portland. The collaboration will transform a surface parking lot into the new home for PCC’s Dental Program, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland State University’s School of Public Health and Graduate School of Education, as well as City of Portland offices.

“This is a unique collaboration that takes us to a new level of community cooperation with the city,” said Rahmat Shoureshi, PSU’s president. “With PCC and OHSU as partners, we’re able to leverage our resources and train Portland’s future health and education leaders.”

Other 2008 bond projects underway are the Sylvania Campus Child Development Center (slated for completion in winter 2019) and the training facility as part of the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center, estimated to open in fall 2020 in Columbia County. Meanwhile, completed projects include the expansion and development of the Cascade, Rock Creek and Sylvania campuses; the construction and launch of the college’s fourth comprehensive campus (Southeast); and the opening of several new centers — Downtown, Newberg, Swan Island and Willow Creek.

As the 2008 bond projects wrap up, the 2017 bond projects, or the planning for them, are readying for take-off. The Child Development Center at the Rock Creek Campus broke ground this spring. A tentative construction calendar is being developed as planning continues for other projects like the Sylvania Campus Health Technology Building, the Metropolitan Workforce Training Center, and the Cascade Public Safety Building, among them.

This seamless dovetailing of project management exemplifies the college’s move toward integrated planning. Specifically, bond planning will incorporate findings from the first phase of PCC’s comprehensive facilities planning, a two-year effort to gather data related to overall college infrastructure. Results will assist with decisions regarding campus growth and future capital investment.

“Two pillars of PCC’s mission are to deliver access to quality education, and to advance economic development. Efforts surrounding planning and capital construction, and the bond, do just that,” said PCC President Mark Mitsui. “We’re improving the environment in which teaching and learning happens, and we’re contributing to the local economy through construction and partnerships. We’re living up to our middle name by building a better community.”
A student's dental hygiene training leads to critical skin cancer detection

Kayla Roxey simply remembered her training, and it saved a person’s life.

In early 2017, Roxey was finishing her studies in Portland Community College’s Dental Hygiene Program. It was during a community clinic at the Sylvania Campus lab, where dental faculty work with dental hygiene students to provide them with real-world experience, that she noticed it. Roxey spotted a skin abnormality on a patient while performing an exam.

“It looked like a clogged pore,” she said of the mark on the patient’s cheek. “It was super dark and had some shadowing around it. It looked like it went deep, but it wasn’t swollen or anything like that. We are taught to note everything on the head and the neck during these exams.”

The dental instructor, Dr. April Love, advised the patient he needed to consult a dermatologist and have the lesion checked. It’s the sort of training that all dental hygienists within the PCC program are taught—to bring any potential health concerns to the patient’s attention.

Student Catches What Others Missed

This particular patient was Shawn Montgomery. While attending Sylvania Campus in 2017, he was notified through the Sylvania Veterans Resource Center that he qualified for a free dental cleaning and check-up. The clinic would give him a service, and his visit would help his fellow students with their dental hygiene training.

“I usually go through another dentist for my dental care, but I thought the price was right and I would be helping out the school,” he said.

Laid-back and gregarious, Montgomery was back in school working on his associate degree in community development after a stint with the U.S. Marines. His dream was to work in a field where he could help people find affordable housing in a red-hot Portland real estate market.

He didn’t necessarily need to go to the PCC dental clinic, as he had visited a dentist just four months earlier and got a clean bill of health. Montgomery saddled into the dental chair, and Roxey was assigned as his student hygienist. He said she performed a scan of his head and neck and then went to work on his teeth. When she was done, Dr. Love asked Montgomery more about the lesion on his right cheek.

“I hadn’t thought twice about it before,” he admitted. “Dr. Love is a light-hearted person, but all of sudden her tone was different and I thought maybe this was serious.”

Scared but Cancer Free

Montgomery waited two more months before he got it checked out because, as he puts it, he’s “a guy,” and prone to procrastination, and “How bad could it be?” he thought. But with Dr. Love’s concerns imprinted on his mind, Montgomery eventually went to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center to see a dermatologist and have a biopsy done. The results came back positive for stage two melanoma, a common but deadly form of skin cancer.

“I should have freaked out, but I thought it would be a little snip and tuck, and I’d be on my way,” he said. “But that wasn’t the case.”

It took three surgeries at Oregon Health & Science University a year ago to remove the cancerous growth. Doctors tested the margins at each stage and determined they had to remove more and more tissue, which began to...
“I will forever be grateful to PCC,” Montgomery said. “They took the time to look at the big picture while performing their job, and potentially saving a life.”

Training Designed to Find Health Issues

Dr. Love was proud of Roxey’s attention to detail in her training. She said all of the students learn how to spot abnormalities within the mouth and on the face and neck in their academic classes. If something does not look right, they let the supervising dentist know their concerns so that the dentist can have a closer look.

“I feel really good Kayla brought it to my attention, which is why we like to have dental hygienists in our offices as we count on them to see things that we can’t,” Dr. Love said.

Montgomery, who is finishing up his degree at Portland State University, turned out to be a prime candidate to have this melanoma. He admitted he had lots of exposure to the sun without sunscreen and went to tanning beds in his youth. In the U.S., a person dies of melanoma once every hour, and 7,000 men will get melanoma in 2018, but this is preventable.

“I will forever be grateful to PCC,” Montgomery said. “They took the time to look at the big picture while performing their job, and potentially saving a life.”

worry Montgomery. The growth turned out to be the size of an egg deeply embedded in his cheek. His surgeries resulted in 44 stitches and a permanent scar, but he is cancer free.

“I don’t know what would have happened, but I’m here today thanks to PCC and its dental program,” he said. “Kudos to the school for everyone doing everything that they were supposed to. I’m so grateful to everyone who helped along the way.”

Roxey said it’s an awesome feeling to have saved Montgomery’s life.

“I was shocked it was cancer,” Roxey said of Montgomery’s lesion. “But I’m happy it was caught through early detection at our clinic.”
ON THE RIGHT PATH

THE COLLEGE’S GED PREP COURSES PROVIDE KEY AVENUE TO COMPLETION AND DREAMS

It may sound trite, but a lifeline is a good thing to have.

Portland Community College’s Adult Basic Education Program can be that for people who need to complete a degree or find employment, no matter where they got their start.

Khaleda Aqaei, 23, is proof that for those in the ABE program, earning a GED is the key to personal and professional success. Six years ago the Southeast Portland resident and her family immigrated to the United States from Afghanistan by way of Iran, where they lived as refugees. Aqaei had no formal education, as attending school in Iran was cost prohibitive—a pattern that could have continued in the U.S. upon learning she couldn’t enroll in her local high school due to her age.

Realizing she needed an alternative, Aqaei found a case worker who helped steer her toward the GED prep courses at PCC.

“It knew very little English, but I just signed up,” she added. “Through those classes, I improved my English, and when I was ready for college courses, I was able to place at college-level English.”

The GED prep classes are for individuals who have not completed high school and are crucial because the GED diploma is accepted as a substitute by many employers, apprenticeship programs, community colleges and universities. If students in the ABE program complete 50 hours of classes and obtain their GED, they are eligible for an $800 scholarship to continue their education at PCC.

Like Aqaei, many of the students in ABE are trying to overcome challenges. They’re hoping to change their life’s trajectory and someday earn a degree; to become part of the community in a way that is meaningful on a personal level.

“It is never easy to adapt to a new environment, especially when you don’t know anyone who can help you,” Aqaei said. “But I got help from the community and the college, and that’s how I adapted.”

Aqaei is definitely thinking beyond her GED, too. As the eldest child, she has shouldered the duties of interpreting for family members, communicating with others on behalf of her family, and assisting them in finding services and resources. In spite of these responsibilities, Aqaei has prioritized her education: She is finishing up her associate of science degree and plans to transfer into the Biochemistry Program at Portland State University this fall.

“ ‘It was my dream to earn my GED,” Aqaei said. “Now, I want to be a doctor because I want to help not only my people, but others.”

Want to know more about PCC’s GED prep classes? Call (971) 722-6255.
Immerse yourself in Creativity

A creative release can offer a therapeutic route to greater personal fulfillment, and new artistic pathways can reignite the creativity of established artists, as well. Whether you’re a beginner or established in your medium, PCC offers plenty of great arts courses this fall to help you shake up your routine or explore something new.

Dance Like No One’s Watching.

Cold winds, bare trees and endless precipitation in the Pacific Northwest can wreak havoc for those who’d rather be outside. We’ve got you covered. Get your body moving with a number of (indoor) dance classes offered by PCC, including Belly Dance 1 and Swing (pages 13-14).

For a true beginner – hey, we’ve all gotta start somewhere – PCC offers intro courses to photography, sculpture, ceramics, drawing, acrylics and more.

When the days get shorter and the nights get colder it’s a perfect time of year to recommit to personal enrichment through the arts. Check out the full list of offerings on pages (pages 13-22).

After you’ve completed your creation, give us a look-see by tagging us on Instagram: @PCCcommunityed

Tarot.

Claire Burgess is new to Portland—but this fall she brings an ancient storytelling art form to PCC.

Originally appearing in Italy in the 1400’s as a simple card game, Tarot has evolved over the centuries into a system of divination veiled in mystery and misunderstanding. Explore the myths and the facts behind Europe’s most mystical deck of cards, and learn how to use this powerful intuitive tool for yourself, found on page (pages 32 and 68).
Nick Carmack has an appreciation of the benefits of an education.

Carmack was named Oregon’s 2018 New Century Scholar by the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society this past spring and graduated from PCC in June. The affable student leader (he was the student government president at the Cascade Campus for 2017–18) maintained a robust 3.95 grade-point average and is transferring to Temple University this fall.

HE’S WELL ON HIS WAY TO SOMETHING GREAT.

“I want to change the world, but I don’t know exactly how to do that yet,” he laughed.

You wouldn’t know it, but Carmack has taken a longer route to academic success than many of his peers. A native of Utah, education was not a priority in his home as a child. He didn’t graduate from high school nor did most of his family.

“I ditched school,” he said. “I didn’t care enough to try.”

Carmack transferred to an alternative high school and eventually dropped out with a vague plan to one day earn his GED. He worked a string of jobs that paid him little and even less in terms of satisfaction and purpose. He was adrift.

The turning point came when his only brother who finished high school asked him to come live with him.

As it turned out, this brother of Nick Carmack’s lived only a few blocks from PCC’s Cascade Campus in North Portland. Once there, he took and passed the GED exam and then took to college like a fish to water. He applied for financial aid, enrolled in classes in the fall of 2015, and found his way into student leadership at Cascade.

“Student leadership changed my life for sure,” he said. “I’ve been told my whole life that I’m a natural leader, but never had the opportunity to use and grow those skills. It’s given me the freedom to do so many different things.”

Carmack accomplished a lot—he helped establish a learning garden and an all-user restroom in the Cascade Student Union, as well as expanded the Cascade Clothing Closet, which provides clothing items to needy students. He plans to study human development at Temple.

For this success, he credits his brother, not only for giving him a place to live but for helping him to see that college was within his reach.

“He helped me to believe it was possible,” Carmack remembered. “When you’re getting bad grades, consistently failing classes, it’s hard to believe in yourself. When I decided to go to PCC, it was full steam ahead.”
Last summer, Portland Community College President Mark Mitsui became a DC insider. Mitsui spoke on a panel called “Advancing Quality Work-based Learning” before the Senate Career and Technical Education Caucus in Washington, D.C. He talked about how the college is at the forefront of CTE training in Oregon and the importance of reauthorizing the budget for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Speaking to Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA), Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), Sen. Todd Young (R-IN) and Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Mitsui highlighted how the college and the state of Oregon is increasing CTE certificate completion and facilitating stronger wages locally. He told the senators that PCC has more than 1,600 employer partners that advise on curriculum, training practices and job skills to meet industry needs.

“Thanks to the partnership between PCC and employers, we offer many work-based learning opportunities like apprenticeships and internships, as well as co-operative education agreements,” Mitsui stated.

This isn’t the first time Mitsui has been in the nation’s capital advocating for community colleges. Before he became PCC’s president, he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Community Colleges for the U.S. Department of Education. In this role, he advanced President Barack Obama’s community college agenda.

During the caucus panel, he went on to highlight a successful first-of-its-kind apprenticeship partnership with Madden Industrial Craftsmen, as well as how the college is the training education lead for the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center (OMIC) consortium.

“The goal with OMIC is to close the gap between R&D and workforce training,” Mitsui added.

Mitsui touched on PCC’s Career Pathways Program, which has a completion rate of 94 percent and is closing opportunity gaps for many populations. “Fifty percent of each cohort is low-income, and half are students of color,” he added.

Mitsui continued that this work is paired with a statewide PCC grant project, which builds skills for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program recipients through GED completion, internships and coaching support. The graduates are then connected to living-wage jobs.

In addition, he told the senators that PCC has a robust K-12 pipeline for career tech and recently implemented the Workforce Connect Program. This project, funded by a $175,000 Meyer Memorial Trust grant, aims to build job readiness skills for underrepresented, first-generation and low-income high school students in Columbia, Multnomah and Washington counties.

At the end of his testimony Mitsui suggested that, in partnership with industry, there should be a “center of excellence” designation and an innovation program for Perkins to support low-income students interested in CTE, as well as higher funding levels for education.

“We want to encourage and incentivize sector partnerships across the country, and expand work-based learning models to make this happen,” Mitsui said.
PCC FOUNDATION BREAKS FUNDRAISING RECORD

The philanthropic division of the college hosted its seventh annual gala last spring, raising a record $616,000 for scholarships and success initiatives—nearly $100,000 more than last year. With the theme, “Kick Up a Storm for Student Success,” the gala helps hundreds of students, many being the first in their families to attend college, pursue their academic dreams. Special thanks to platinum sponsor Oregon State University, gold sponsor The Renaissance Foundation, and media sponsor Pamplin Media Group, as well as silver sponsors Howard S. Wright, Marion Levitan & Howard Werth, and NW Natural. Pictured: Patron Award winners Howard Butzer (left) and Bob Wimmer.
HISTORY CORNER

In 1984, the late Vera Katz conducts one of her first board meetings with the PCC Foundation. From 1982–91, Katz played an integral part in the history of Portland Community College. Oregon’s first woman speaker of the house and Portland’s longest-serving woman mayor was the first director of development and executive secretary for the newly established PCC Foundation. She later shaped PCC’s Office of Public Affairs. During her tenure, the Foundation awarded almost 750 scholarships to PCC students through private donations, corporate grants and bequest gifts.

PANTHER PARTY GETS WILD

What’s a party without friends and smiles? Not a very good one. On June 15, Portland Community College’s 56th commencement ceremony was the college’s biggest party of the year, and it sported plenty of friends and smiles. Thousands of well-wishers poured into the Memorial Coliseum to watch the students become college graduates. They also heard U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley’s galvanizing keynote and student speaker Awen Moon Gatten’s “We are all Warriors” speech. Both inspired more than 5,000 graduates and many more in the grandstands.
The Coalition of Adult Basic Education (COABE) gave Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici its highest honor and did it at Portland Community College.

This summer, local members of COABE, which includes Portland, Chemeketa, Clatsop and Mt. Hood community colleges, handed Bonamici the Champion of Adult Education Award in front of adult basic education and English for Speakers of Other Languages students at PCC’s Rock Creek Campus.

The organization honored the Congresswoman for her work on the PARTNERS Act, which promotes registered apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs for small and medium-sized businesses within in-demand industry sectors. Along with the PROSPER Act (which prepares students through expanded access for careers and degree completion), Adult Basic Education students are able to find pathways to living-wage jobs and degree completion.

In addition, the Congresswoman and U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt took the lead on a “Dear Colleague” letter to the appropriators that sought support for all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act authorized programs.

“It’s really meaningful for me to be receiving this award at a community college,” said Congresswoman Bonamici, who got her start in higher education in the Legal Assistant Program at Lane Community College. “I’m honored to work on issues that recognize that within K-12 education, not everyone is on the same path, and we need to engage all students regardless of what their passions or learning levels are. We have to make those opportunities available.”

Since 2012, Bonamici has represented the First Congressional District of Oregon, which includes Washington, Yamhill, Clatsop, and Columbia counties and part of Multnomah County. She is the Vice Ranking Member and a leader of the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce. She sets national policies that give students support and opportunities leading to their success in school and in life like with the PARTNERS and PROSPER Acts.

Plus, she is a regular at PCC. She routinely tours the college’s STEM labs, hosts roundtables to learn how to improve healthcare and careers for low-income students, and champions workforce training programs.

“She is such an advocate for our students and community colleges overall,” said PCC President Mark Mitsui. “She loves visiting students and is so inspirational. She is committed to their futures.”
the number of students receiving awards brought a smile to Usha Ramanujam’s face.

The longtime PCC business administration instructor and the lead faculty of PCC’s internationalization efforts watched as a full house in a Cascade Campus auditorium cheered 30 recipients of the Asian, China & Global Studies Focus Awards. The annual completion celebration is chance for Ramanujam and her fellow faculty to recognize students who develop a multidimensional perspective on Asia by taking at least 16 credits in courses focused on the region.

“International studies develops critical competencies in academic reading, writing, and analysis, and prepares students for success in this diverse global economy,” said Ramanujam. “The strong foundation they receive on global issues helps students who are considering transfer degrees, as well as those entering the workforce to advance their intercultural awareness.”

The growth has been a pleasant surprise for faculty associated with PCC’s internationalization push. The Internationalization Initiative began several years ago as a way to provide opportunities and services to help students and the college analyze a more complex and interconnected world. Those associated with this effort often host events, speakers, staff development and study abroad opportunities, as well as programs that support this mission.

Because of these efforts, PCC is a regional center of the East-West Center’s Asian Studies Development Program. This national program aims to enhance teaching about Asia at American two-year and four-year colleges and universities at the undergraduate level.

Students who were recognized this year were as diverse as the region they studied. Bethany DeMello said her award is a launchpad for her to create change in the world.

“I went to high school in the nineties when we were taught nothing about Asia,” she said. “I think it was ignorant, and I want to change that. This is the first step of me thinking more globally.”

For Jun Del Rio, this is a start of a professional career.

“I want to be more involved internationally and go abroad, especially to Japan,” he smiled. “This represents a big milestone for me, and I hope I can achieve more milestones on this career path.”

“Thanks to collaboration, students are recognized for their Asian-focused studies.

“Thanks to collaboration, students are recognized for their Asian-focused studies.”

Student Paula Rabourn receives a ceremonial graduation cord.

“This represents a big milestone for me, and I hope I can achieve more milestones on this career path.”
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 Fall.