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#ThinkPCCFirst
A MESSAGE from the President

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the spring edition of PCC’s “Communities” magazine! Its theme is “Student Success,” and in it you’ll read about the talented and inspiring students who call Portland Community College home.

At PCC, we’re about ensuring that students earn the degrees or certificates they need while providing a qualified workforce for our industry partners. A huge part of this process is building a support structure that enables everyone we serve to reach their goals. Innovative programs like Career Pathways and Future Connect give under-represented students financial, academic and career coaching assistance, with proven success. And our advising and mentoring services not only get students into the classes they want, but make sure they succeed.

It is a pivotal time for PCC and the state’s community colleges. Oregon’s Legislature has been focused on determining policy and state agency funding for the 2019-21 biennium budget. This includes the Community College Support Fund, which provides a large share of support to the budgets of Oregon’s 17 community colleges. Our collective of community colleges across the state is asking for $787 million to add capacity in career-technical education and double the number of graduates, and to expand student success efforts leading to increased completion rates. Together, these efforts meet employer needs and close the achievement gap.

PCC also serves as a rich resource for lifelong learning through its robust, non-credit catalogue (page 8). Community colleges are a fundamental part of our educational pipeline, and this issue of “Communities” exemplifies PCC’s comprehensive offerings. Please enjoy!

Sincerely,
Mark Mitsui
Portland Community College is cultivating future leaders right here in its own backyard.

Only in its second year, the Presidential Executive Internship Program is an opportunity for students to work with PCC President Mark Mitsui and his leadership team. The program is individually tailored to the students and their academic and professional interests, and develops projects they want to lead.

This year’s interns are Elsa Van Ornum and Anthony Schaw.

Seattle native Van Ornum is currently enrolled in her first year at PCC. With the ultimate goal of becoming a project manager, she is working toward her associate Business degree.

Her experience includes volunteering with the Seattle Rotary Club to bring shelter boxes to families in the Philippines in the aftermath of a natural disaster. And at her high school, she and other student leaders worked tirelessly on equity and inclusion projects, like creating gender-neutral restrooms.

At PCC, Van Ornum is enjoying the internship and the opportunities she’s had to work closely with college leadership. For her internship project, she is spreading the word about PCC Foundation scholarships.

Van Ornum said, “This internship has given me the chance to become more involved with my college, to help PCC deliver on its mission of creating a successful path for students like myself and others.”

Schaw is in his final year at PCC, taking a range of courses that includes Oceanography and Accounting as he works to complete his transfer degree. He plans on graduating this spring or summer, after which he intends to transfer to a four-year university to complete his bachelor’s degree in Business.

His ultimate goal is to work in a human resources department to help develop an inclusionary and accepting workforce. He’s working with the college’s Human Resources to learn more about how PCC builds diverse teams.

“Respecting others is clearly an important value here at PCC,” Schaw said.

In 2017, Schaw interned with the City of Hillsboro and helped to organize the Hillsboro Tuesday Market, which promotes healthy eating for children. At the Rock Creek Campus, he mentors high school students of color to demystify the college process and guide them to resources.

“This internship has given me the chance...to help PCC deliver on its mission of creating a successful path for students like myself and others.” — Elsa Van Ornum
A Place of Opportunity

A snapshot of how PCC provides a place for students to build a better future for themselves and their families

Who is PCC?

- 58% of students are part-time
- 42% of students are full-time
- 36% of students receive Pell Grants
- 45% are first in their family to go to college
- 30% have children

Biggest Challenges?

- 13% of students experience homelessness
- 66% of students experience food insecurity
- 1 hour is the average commute for a typical student

With a Degree, Opportunity Abounds

- 50% of jobs are middle skills (requiring 2-year degree), but there are only 45% of middle skills workers available to fill them
- 45% of students at PCC are in Career Technical Education programs and nearly all get jobs when they graduate
- 46% of job openings require at least a 2-year degree

What Full Funding Would Mean

Community colleges are asking the legislature for a $787 million biennium budget

7,900 Double the number of CTE graduates by 7,900 annually

17,900 Expand student support programs to serve an additional 17,900 students statewide annually
Civil Engineering student America Rodriguez is inspiring students like her to succeed at college

America Rodriguez is not good at college. She’s great. The native of Mexico is working on her associate degree in PCC’s Civil Engineering Program. Her classes are pretty cool, and challenging. One of them involves an introduction to “Plane Surveying” where she uses state-of-the-art equipment to learn subjects like “Topography of Land,” “Strength of Materials” and “Geographic Information Systems (GIS).”

With a thirst for learning, the 20-year-old feels right at home with science and engineering. But she needed a bit of encouragement to feel as though she could succeed in fields usually populated by white males.

In 2016, she was a senior at Westview High School and excelling in all of the high school’s engineering classes, so it was natural for her to attend the Hermanas Conference at PCC’s Rock Creek Campus in Washington County.

The conference, co-sponsored by PCC and Intel Corp., attracts more than 200 Latina high schoolers annually from throughout the metro area. It immerses the students in STEM-related education and opens their eyes to career opportunities in the field, to demonstrate that science and math can be a great fit for them.

“The conference motivated me to say, ‘Yes I want to go into the engineering program,’” Rodriguez recalled. “They had three female electrical engineers from Mexico, and they told us that regardless of your background, successful companies will hire people with different perspectives and experiences, especially people with ambition and passion for their work. The conference makes girls feel safe, comfortable, and encouraged by role models to dive into STEM.”
Hermanas is one of PCC’s cornerstone events to recruit underrepresented high school students.

“It is exciting to be able to give so many young Latinas the opportunity to experience something that may transform their lives,” said Rock Creek Campus President Chris Villa.

The conference proved to Rodriguez that PCC was the place to start her college education, but it hasn’t been easy. As a foreign student, she faces an uphill battle to simply pay for her studies because, without a social security number, she can’t apply for federal financial aid, most scholarships and loans, or even take paid internships.

Thanks to support for first-generational, underrepresented students like herself, she was able to earn Oregon Promise and DREAMers scholarships, and was accepted into PCC’s Future Connect Scholarship Program, which provides financial assistance and academic coaching.

“Because my parents didn’t go to college, they didn’t know how college worked,” she said. “But Future Connect coaches helped me to find the right resources, and taught me how to get involved and enroll in college classes.”

Rodriguez credits PCC’s DREAM Center, the first of its kind at an Oregon community college, for helping her and other DACA students find resources and assistance.

“I can talk to students with the same backgrounds, the same struggles, and use them as a support group,” Rodriguez said.

Because of her academic success, Rodriguez was chosen to participate in the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Program – a collaboration between PCC, the National Science Foundation and Portland State University, assisting students interested in STEM degrees and careers.

As much as she has received, Rodriguez gives back. In addition to being an inspirational panelist at this year’s Hermanas Conference, she is a mentor and tutor for a variety of college support programs. She also visits local high schools to inspire students like her to consider college.

“I tell these students not to be afraid because there’s no obstacle that we can’t overcome in our lives,” she said. “Just keep moving forward, with a smile along the way.”

**Did You Know?**

PCC is asking the state legislature to fully fund the state community college 2019-21 budget at $787 million. If given that funding, community colleges will expand student support programs to help more students in need like America.
This spring, Community Ed offers 16 language classes

At Portland Community College, students have the option of learning widely spoken languages and those that are hardly spoken.

The college’s Community Education Program offers a global array of language courses each term. Classes can range from English language pronunciation and American Sign Language, to Mandarin, Spanish and Arabic.

Offered at convenient times and locations, these non-credit courses empower people to practice language skills, explore world cultures thanks to passionate instructors, and learn languages that reflect communities residing right here in Portland – like Russian, Polish, and even Irish Gaelic.

Irish Gaelic is one of 16 languages taught by Community Ed this spring. Despite being an official language of Ireland, Irish Gaelic is a minority language on the island – with approximately 75,000 native speakers. Instructor Brian Hart said support for Irish language reflects PCC’s values.

“PCC creates a much-needed community space for the discussion and dissemination of this language,” Hart said.

“Its facilities, technology and networks help boost the reach of Irish Gaelic for a community that would not have access otherwise.”

Many Irish arrived in the Northwest via the Oregon Trail in the mid-to-late 1800s. At one point before 1880, Irish comprised as much as 30 percent of the foreign-born community in Portland. Since then, a robust community has endured and developed as a result of its dedication to preserving Irish culture. Hart said Irish Gaelic is a crucial component of that preservation.

“Learning the Irish language is a way to better access indigenous Irish heritage. It’s also a bridge that enables students to relate to the challenges indigenous people around the world face as they attempt to maintain or reclaim their own language and cultural practices.”

Find languages starting on page 37 or visit pcc.edu/communityed.
Tanner Scott knew at an early age (10-years-old, to be exact) that he wanted to be a welder.

In 2004, Portland Community College hosted a “Bring Your Kid To Work” day. His dad, welding instructor Matt Scott, brought Tanner in and introduced him to the wonderful world of torches, sparks and metal within the Rock Creek Campus shop.

“The experience ‘sparked’ my interest, for sure,” laughed Tanner.

Today, that spark has turned into a career. Tanner is the welding supervisor for Vigor Fab on Swan Island in Northeast Portland.

“I oversee all of the projects we have down here as far welding goes,” he said. “It’s a lot of hours, but it’s also a lot of fun.”

It’s been a rewarding journey for Tanner at Vigor. A few years ago, he was hired at Vigor Fab as a welder fabricator and has worked his way up to supervisor.

A graduate of Westview High School, he headed to Kentucky for college where he majored in math and secondary education. As a junior, however, he realized that completing his bachelor’s degree in education would take three more years – so he decided to give welding a serious try.

The PCC Welding Program was a perfect fit for Tanner – not only because his dad taught there, but that it was open-entry, open-exit system.

“I loved welding so it came pretty easy to me,” said Tanner, who earned his welding associate degree in 2015. “It was the obvious choice, and it definitely got me the experience I needed to get that first welding job.”

His dad always believed that this program was where his son could build a fulfilling, rewarding career.

“We give students a solid understanding to get started on a career and be productive in a short amount of time,” Matt said.

Tanner is now instructing welding at PCC as part of his supervisory work with Vigor and its maritime welding technology courses at the Swan Island Welding Lab.

“It’s very rewarding to teach,” Tanner said. “I’ve been teaching part-time for a year and a half now. I love working with entry-level welders because it’s a lot of fun.”

Swan Island Maritime Welding Lab

The lab is a partnership between PCC and Vigor Industrial, which is the leading provider of shipbuilding and repair in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. The facility provides welding training opportunities for the local manufacturing industry.
Lilly Boone’s dream is simple. Well, at least to her it is. When she earns her associate degree from Portland Community College’s Automotive Service Technology Program, the first-year college student wants to convert a school bus into a mobile auto shop and home for herself (a trend known as “skoolies”). Her aim is to repair vehicles for families who choose to live as nomads (think tiny home dwellers, RV enthusiasts…etc), but who can’t make it to a traditional repair shop when their home, or vehicle, needs fixing.

“By watching YouTube I’ve learned that many ‘nomads’ have been stranded, in the middle of nowhere, because they don’t have the knowledge to fix their vehicles,” Boone said. “My interest in helping these people is what sparked my idea. I’ll be able to travel anywhere.”

As she works through her required classes, Boone continues to shape her future plans. For example, on YouTube Boone wants to provide lessons where she’ll cover the basics of auto repair, all the way to engine fixes and rebuilds, as well as market her services worldwide.

The Nomadic Mechanic

Lilly Boone wants to provide auto repair services while on the go

The 20-something with lofty dreams traversed a rough road to get to PCC. The Wyoming native had moved to Denver for a relationship. It ended after a few months, but the experience inspired Boone to take control of her future. She called her aunt, Dee Wilson (PCC’s longtime bursar), for advice. Wilson persuaded Boone to pack her Toyota Rav4 and head to the Pacific Northwest. So, with $200 in her pocket, her cat and her dog, Boone moved to Portland in fall 2016 to restart her life.

The following year, Boone found work with the college’s Facilities Management Services as a custodian. Her route included servicing the automotive shop at the Sylvania Campus in Southwest Portland where automotive classes are held. She eventually enrolled and began classes in fall 2018.

“It gave me an advantage, as I got to know all of the instructors and see a little bit behind the scenes of what they are doing for students,” she said.
PCC’s wrap-around student support services really made a difference for Boone. She accessed the Panther Pantry, which is the college’s free food resource for low-income or hungry students and staff, and utilized counseling services. Classes and tools were paid for by a generous career-technical scholarship from the PCC Foundation.

“People shouldn’t feel bad about taking advantage of the resources at hand,” Boone said. “Having a counselor available to talk to, and get the proper advice about what is happening in their lives, helps students focus on their classes.”

Boone works hard in her self-paced lab modules deep inside the automotive shop. All around her are shelves of parts, high-tech circuitry and tools, as well as more than 40 stand-alone engines and donated vehicles to test her skills on.

The program plays a critical role in providing qualified workers for the industry in Oregon.

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Money for CTE

PCC is asking the state legislature for $70 million for career-technical training as part of the state community college budget of $787 million. Community colleges will double the amount of CTE graduates in the state.

“It has been a dream come true for me,” Boone said of PCC. “The teachers here show endless support and true drive to help students reach their life goals.”

— Lilly Boone
Rebuild with a Smile

The Pre-Apprenticeship Program had a project that left everyone smiling

Last winter, almost two dozen pre-apprentice students went on a field trip to Beaverton from their base at the Swan Island Trades Center, using their skills to repair an elderly woman’s mobile home. Through a partnership with Rebuilding Together Washington County, instructor Enrique Maldonado and trades coordinator Sal Castañeda Jr. led the class in fixing mold issues, flooring, plumbing and HVAC. The experience enabled students to hone their skills so they meet minimum entry qualifications to enter a trade or apprenticeship program.

A Healthcare Collaboration

PCC and its partners broke ground on a new venture that will bring the college’s key healthcare programs to downtown Portland. The Fourth and Montgomery Building is a collaboration between PCC, Portland State University, Oregon Health & Science University and the City of Portland. It will put health-oriented services and community organizations together in one building in the central metro area.

PCC’s Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene programs and its clinic will move from the Sylvania Campus to the third floor of the building, slated to be completed in 2020. Both are high-demand career-technical training programs, which are capable of educating more than 100 students annually.

Pictured are, from right to left, PCC President Mark Mitsui, PSU President Rahmat Shoureshi, OHSU President Danny Jacobs and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler.
History Corner

A student from the early 1970s uses a Dietzgen Uni Site Level surveying scope at the old Cascade Center, which is now PCC's Cascade Campus in North Portland. Since the college began in 1961, career technical education, also known as CTE, has been key in PCC's development. Founding PCC President Amo De Bernardis wanted his community college to foster strong relationships with business and industry by educating the region's workforce. It's a philosophy that still holds true today.

Semana de la Raza

It features free events that are open to the public, including lectures, music, awards and films during April. The event is a week-long celebration honoring and advocating for the experiences of Latinx communities.

When & Where: April 22 – 26, Rock Creek Campus (17705 NW Springville Road).

Jesus Christ Superstar

This spring the Theatre Arts Program is putting on the 1970s rock opera, which has earned worldwide acclaim. This timeless musical is set during an extraordinary series of events but seen, unusually, through the eyes of Judas Iscariot. Public is invited. Visit: pcc.edu/theatre

When & Where: 7 p.m., May 10-11 & 15, and 17-18, Performing Arts Center, Sylvania Campus (12000 SW 49th Ave.). Special matinees at 11 a.m., May 16 and 2 p.m., Sunday, May 19.

Commencement

PCC's academic season comes to a glorious end with its 57th commencement ceremony. Hundreds of graduates will earn certificates and degrees while being cheered on by thousands of family and friends.

When & Where: 7 p.m., Friday, June 14, Memorial Coliseum (300 N. Winning Way).

PCC Spring Job Fair

Job-seekers and employers from around Portland and the region will converge on the Cascade Campus for the annual job fair. It’s an opportunity for nearly 1,000 job-hunters to connect and network with companies and organizations. The event draws a diverse pool of applicants and a broad range of employers from many industries. Public is welcome.

When & Where: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Tuesday, April 30, Gymnasium, Cascade Campus (705 N. Killingsworth St.).
Four Portland Community College alumni are the latest to receive the college’s most prestigious honor. Its Diamond Alumni Awards for 2019 are Candyce Scott, Jon Hay, Wendy Palmer and Abdi Mohamed. The awards celebrate outstanding PCC alumni for their community leadership and achievement in the face of adversity. They serve as examples of the good that results when a door to opportunity is opened. This year’s shining diamonds are:

**Candyce Scott**

If you walk into the Artists Repertory Theater in downtown Portland and look up, you’ll see a brilliant kinetic sculpture with colorful strands dangling from the ceiling.

Scott, 68, is the artist. She’s a professional artist and Art Program Director at The Geezer Gallery, a nonprofit that celebrates masterful senior artists and delivers art therapy workshops.

It was in rehab that Scott decided to return to college. With the help of PCC’s Project Independence Program, she signed up for art classes, which her counselor encouraged her to continue. In gratitude for her accomplishments and the support she received at the college, Scott returns to PCC every Friday to lead an addiction recovery group.

“Look what I did,” she said as she reflected on her journey. “Think about what you can do.”

**Jon Hay**

Hay is president and CEO of Hillsboro Aero Academy, and he encourages his students to “live the dream.”

It’s a slogan Hay knows intimately. He can’t remember a day when he didn’t want to be around airplanes or helicopters, or when aviation wasn’t part of his life. Growing up, Hay’s love of aviation stemmed from his stepdad’s work as an aircraft mechanic.

He followed his dreams and eventually landed an internship at the academy, while enrolled in PCC’s Aviation Science Program. There, he learned the nitty gritty of aircraft mechanics, which gave him a leg up in his career.

“It was really key for me to have an understanding of the aviation industry that I’m a part of managing now,” he said.

Hay continues to work with PCC students through a partnership with the college’s aviation program.
Call for Nominations

Do you know a PCC alum who’s a diamond in the rough? Nominate them by March 8. Visit: pcc.edu/diamond

Wendy Palmer

Palmer tells her co-workers that, “I bleed blue and gold.”

For the past 40 years, Palmer has been helping PCC students with disabilities find education, employment and self-confidence. She started as a student in 1978 (her dad Bob Palmer helped create the then-named Special Education Department) and was one of the first access aides to help disabled students in their classes.

Palmer has had many roles; from testing center clerk to currently serving as access resources coordinator for Disability Access Services.

Palmer has many memories of student successes, but one stands out. In the early 1990s, a student came to PCC with advanced AIDS and was determined to have his obituary read that he’d received a GED. But the state administrator denied his request for test accommodations.

Palmer advocated on his behalf, and the student was a GED graduate prior to his death.

Abdi Mohamed

Mohamed believes the most powerful tool for disabled refugees and immigrants is knowledge of resources and opportunities.

After fleeing Somalia’s civil war and surviving a gunshot wound that left him in a wheelchair, Mohamed resettled in Oregon. That first year, he spent most of his time isolated, at home. At PCC, he took English classes, frequented the Disability Resource Center, and found his community.

Mohamed is now a Community Engagement Coordinator and ESL teacher at African Youth Community Organization. He’s also the co-founder of the Disabled Refugee Alliance, and is on the board of Disability Rights Oregon.

“I’m changing someone’s life every day,” said Mohamed, who studied business at Portland State University. “It’s the most important work I can be doing.”

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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.

MY PROJECT:

“I want to be proactive and improve my health. All women over 50 should take this class. It’s the one thing they should do to better their health.”

– Donella Russell, student in Better Bones and Balance, page 50