

PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COMMUNITIES

FALL 2023

Back to Center Stage

After four years of virtual or campus-only events, graduates once again donned caps and gowns for the 2023 commencement at Memorial Coliseum.

See page 2



**Portland
Community
College®**

BLACK

PCC Community Ed

**Classes held remotely
and in-person**

Sept. – Dec. (see pages 3 – 60)

Registration opens

Aug. 16 at 7 am



Someday Starts Today, Your Way

Find yourself
and your future with a
state-of-the-art education
from Portland Community College.
Our vibrant campuses, flexible schedules,
and welcoming community are here to help.

Take the first step – or the next – in your journey, today.



DON'T MISS THE SEPT. 7
FALL APPLICATION DEADLINE –
APPLY FOR FREE

pcc.edu/go



**Portland
Community
College**

Managing Editor
James Hill

Contributors
Misty Bouse, Alaina Buller, Matt DiBattista

Senior Designer
Justin Eslinger

Design & Photography Contributors
Katrina Harsha, Tom Cook

PCC Communities (USPS 001-624) is published quarterly by: Portland Community College, 12000 SW 49th Ave, Portland, OR 97219. Periodicals postage paid in Portland, Oregon. Send address changes to: *PCC Communities*, P.O. Box 19000, Portland, OR 97280-0990.

Spotlights

Foundation Creating Dreams

The Portland Community College Foundation’s “Festival of Dreams” annual gala, presented by Comcast, was a resounding success, raising more than \$318,000. This event brought together 350 guests to celebrate and honor the significant contributions made by PCC alumni, students and programs in the Portland-metro community.

The funds generated from the event will be directed towards the Foundation's scholarship program, which plays a crucial role in granting access to a PCC education for learners from diverse backgrounds. By supporting this fund, the Foundation aims to ensure that individuals in our community have the opportunity to pursue their educational goals at PCC. ♦ [Learn more: pcc.edu/foundation](https://pcc.edu/foundation)



Academic Team Announced

Oregon Community College Association selected nine PCC students to the 2023 All-Oregon Academic Team. These outstanding student scholars are selected for their academic excellence, leadership and community service, and many are members of Phi Theta Kappa, the nation’s community college honor society. Scholars include: Kahneeta Atkin (Hillsboro), Ajainicole Duncan (San Francisco), Tammy Hendon (Gresham), Beatrice Borkor (Woodside, California), Kathy Tran (Aloha), Emily Swenson (Portland), Joshua Webb (Portland), Michelle Effle (Whitethorn, California), and Oscar Larson Phillips (Boulder, Colorado). ♦

New Executives Join PCC

Over the summer, the college welcomed new leadership to its ranks. Dr. José Dela Cruz is PCC’s new vice president of Student Affairs; Dr. Steven Nakana is the vice president of People Strategy, Equity and Culture (PSEC); Kurt Simonds is the vice president for Strategy, Policy, & Integrated Planning; and Dr. Howard Croom III is the first associate vice president of PSEC. Welcome to PCC! ♦



Left to right: Dr. José Dela Cruz, Dr. Steven Nakana, Kurt Simonds and Dr. Howard Croom III



In-Person Commencement Returns

PCC's signature event celebrated student success back at Veterans Memorial Coliseum for the first time in four years

After a four-year hiatus due to the pandemic, Portland Community College's signature event has made a triumphant return to an in-person format.

The 61st commencement ceremony returned last June to Veterans Memorial Coliseum with 5,000 family and friends in attendance and nearly 900 freshly minted graduates earning their degrees or certificates.

The festive event featured President Adrien Bennings' first opportunity to address graduates and confer diplomas and certificates. Dr. Bennings is PCC's eighth president and first permanent female president of color to serve in this role. She said it is an honor to serve as a champion and advocate for student success.

"Today, as we stand on the precipice of accomplishment, I am reminded of a powerful quote, 'The race is not given to the swift, but to those who endure,'" she said to the graduates. "These

words encapsulate the essence of our journey through education and life. It is a reminder that success is not solely dependent on speed but on the strength of our endurance."

Dr. Bennings, who was part of the 2022-23 class of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship, has been a driving force since joining PCC. She serves on crucial boards, councils and task forces, including the Portland Business Alliance board, the state's Semiconductor Task Force, and is chair of the Future Ready Oregon Healthcare Industry Consortia, shaping the economics of the city, region and state.

Suzan Nuri, a political science major graduating with an Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer degree and a the student board representative, spoke on behalf of the students. The Beaverton resident is an Ethiopian immigrant from Saudi Arabia who was accepted into the Early College High School Program. Nuri was able to blend high

school and college in a personalized and rigorous education program.

"Over the past few years, graduates, we have endured so much to get to this day," Nuri said. "A loss and grief, a global pandemic ... inflation. You have made significant sacrifices. But, they have paid off because we are here today.

"For the immigrants, parents, students of color, nontraditional students, and all others that are graduating today, you have faced additional challenges that many of your peers did not, but you are here today. If you and I had listened to our 'odds' and didn't dare to dream, didn't dare to desire more, and didn't take risks, we wouldn't be here today celebrating our hard work and dedication." ♦

Apply to PCC!

PCC has 96 academic programs and offers 235 degrees and certificates.

Interested in applying to PCC?

Visit pcc.edu/enroll

Constructing Opportunity

The college's respected construction program offers students a pathway to build skills and discover a great career

Great construction jobs at excellent companies are there for the taking. Well-paying careers, such as carpenters, kitchen and bath remodelers, or construction project managers, abound for graduates. With the special training available through Portland Community College's Building Construction Technology (BCT) Program, construction professionals can compete for positions immediately.

PCC has the only program of its kind in the Portland area that offers these three options – building construction, design/build remodeling and construction management. Students can earn an associate degree or a one-year certificate, which focuses on teaching students the foundations of carpentry.

“Most of our hands-on students are new to construction, but some participated in local high school construction programs,” said faculty chair Shannon Baird, who previously worked in architecture and construction management. “Some students start with a single class to increase their skill set, but most want to earn a degree. A few earn all three.”

Baird said the program is a great fit for degree and non-degree seeking students. Students can attend full- or part-time and often fill identified industry knowledge and skill gaps. It also can accommodate students who work or may have families. In addition, students can start any term, after attending an info session.

Based at PCC's Rock Creek Campus, BCT faculty teaches students everything they need to know to build a house. The Design/Build Remodeling Program is great for those who want to renovate or flip, learn basic repairs, and those who want a Construction Contractors Board license. The construction management degree is offered in the evenings to further students' careers in project management, on both commercial and residential projects.

Current BCT student, Dionne Kelly (below), is interested in improving communities through the remodeling of homes and believes her greatest strength is creativity – and being able to make her ideas come to life. She just was approved as a volunteer

with nonprofit Catalyst Partnerships Northwest to provide home repairs and remodeling services for elderly, disabled and under-resourced home owners.

“After more than 20 years in the corporate world, my main career goal is to have a successful design and remodel company,” said Kelly, who recently became a licensed residential contractor and is completing a design/build remodeling degree. “Producing excellent, high-quality work is what I want to be known for. I believe these two-and-a-half years in PCC's BCT program have really helped me on this journey.” ♦



of homes and believes her greatest strength is creativity – and being able to make her ideas come to life. She just was approved as a volunteer

Interested in a construction career?

For more information, visit pcc.edu/programs/bldg-construction



Finding Security

PCC and partners offer stable, affordable housing options for students near Southeast Campus

As a youth, Javier Gomez immigrated to Portland with his family from El Salvador for a better life and a shot at college.

With finances tight, he needed an alternative to a four-year university. Gomez discovered Portland Community College's Future Connect Scholarship

between PCC, Portland State University, Mt. Hood Community College and the nonprofits College Housing Northwest (CHNW), NAYA Family Center and New Avenues for Youth.

ARCS provides subsidized housing for students at several apartment complexes in the Portland area and helps relieve

together and tackles these problems in the wider society."

According to a survey by the Hope Center for College, Community and Justice, 64% of Portland Community College students say they experience some sort of basic needs insecurity. And, overall, more than 52% of students at Oregon's community colleges reported being housing insecure during the pandemic.

PCC and ARCS continue to address the issue. The first property the non-profit organization developed is the 72-unit Connery Place building for \$11.5 million, which is located a few blocks from the Southeast Campus. In addition to Connery Place, PCC's Portland Metropolitan Workforce Training Center redevelopment will be introducing affordable housing on the property in partnership with Home Forward in the near future.



From left, PCC President, Dr. Bennings, David Garnand (former College Housing Northwest Director) and Matthew Rasmussen (Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program coordinator for DHS) open Connery Place.

Program, a scholarship and support resource for students who identify as first-generation or low-income. Through scholarship money, career guidance and personalized advising, Future Connect is helping Gomez build his future.

But it didn't address his number one problem – housing insecurity. That's where he went back to PCC and found a solution. Gomez is taking advantage of the low-cost housing via the Affordable Rents for College Students (ARCS program) – a partnership

student homelessness and housing insecurity. Full-time or part-time students can apply for apartments through the organization's website. Gomez said the stability the housing has provided has been key to his education.

"I was able to continue my college education," Gomez said. "It's wonderful when the community comes

"This will go a long way to not only be a legacy for communities to follow but also be a model for other community colleges across the state and the nation," said Dr. Adrienne Bennings, PCC president. "This partnership has created an opportunity for our students to have access to affordable housing. When you see the situation across our state, this is going to go a long way in creating some resolution so that basic needs can be met." ♦

Are you a college student?

For more details on applying for low-cost housing through ARCS visit chnw.org



Banner Reuse Project

Thanks to a student-funded Eco Social Justice Grant, retired vinyl banners across all campuses have been repurposed into an assortment of 150 upcycled cooler, tote and bike bags. The collaboration between PCC's Sustainability, Student Life & Leadership and Marketing departments salvaged nearly 900 square feet of material for reuse. ♦



Youth Conference Connects Students to Social Causes



Last May, PCC's Rock Creek Campus hosted the fourth Ethnic Studies Youth Conference in partnership with Pacific University College of Education. The event featured the attendance of 300 middle and high school students from throughout Oregon who shared research and participated in workshops. The biannual conference is

designed as a platform for youth voices in a supportive environment and is supported by a grant from the Oregon Community Foundation. ♦

Alum Designs Career Path

Dreams do come true! PCC's Graphic Design Program provides successful graduates to a variety of industries. And one of those graduates is Seunghoi Seunghoi An, a Portland-based designer. While in the program, she excelled at the software and design-focused courses taught by professionals with experience developing work for clients in both print and web applications. This approach results in students creating presentation-quality portfolios.

After graduating in 2018 with an associate degree, An is a full-time design employee with Nike, which is her dream company to work for. ♦

Learn more: pcc.edu/programs/graphic-design



History Corner:

Recalling 2019's Commencement

This year, PCC returned to celebrating student success in-person for its commencement ceremony – the first time in four years. Back in 2019, before the pandemic hit and moved graduation to the virtual world, the 57th commencement ceremony was about more than simply earning a degree. It was about a symbolic celebration of how PCC graduates are building the workforce with more than 1,000 graduates walking across the Memorial Coliseum stage to receive their associate degree or certificate.



The theme of the event was how community colleges like PCC are the economic engine for the region. Community colleges provide not only educated residents but a trained workforce to fill the skills gap. In Oregon, 50% of all jobs are considered “middle skill jobs,” which means they require education beyond high school but not necessarily a four-year degree.

Out of the roughly 4,800 total degrees and certificates awarded in 2019, more than 1,200 were short-term career technical education certificates. It's the kind of impact that affects not only the students but the community, which benefits from the newly trained and degree-holding graduates. This makes PCC's graduation even more special. ♦



Portland Community College mails *Communities* to most district residents to let them know about upcoming Community Ed classes and share what's happening at the college. The magazine is printed and mailed four times a year for about 32¢ per copy. It can be recycled. **Because the magazine is addressed to "Residential Customer," PCC cannot remove individuals from the mailing list.**

 **PCC Community Ed**

f @ @PCCcommunityed

pcc.edu/communityed

Want to pull out your binoculars and hit the trails, or learn about local birds from home?

Nine different classes this fall will get you in the birding mindset before you know it.

Get started on pages 28-31.