

PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMUNITIES

SPRING 2024

Eyeing Better Futures

Ophthalmic Medical Technology
Program helps students shape
their future careers

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April – June (pages 3 – 60)

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**Portland
Community
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Annual Gala April 27

Join the PCC Foundation for an evening of opportunity as it raises critical funds to support Portland Community College students. The foundation is hosting its annual gala, with the theme “Road to Success: That’s Where You’ll Find Me,” on Saturday, April 27, at the Hyatt Regency Portland at the Oregon Convention Center. The deadline to buy tickets or sponsor a table is April 15. ♦

[Learn more at pcc.edu/gala](https://pcc.edu/gala).

Spotlights



Athletic Endeavors

PCC's longtime men's basketball coach and Portland icon Tony Broadous was named athletic director. Broadous has a strong background in athletics and an impressive track record, including coach of the year awards, conference and league championships, and induction into two Hall of Fames (Grant High School and Portland Interscholastic League).

One of his key staff, women's soccer coach Shawn Bundy, earned the Northwest Athletic Conference Southern Region Coach of the Year award last fall. ♦

[Learn more at panthers.pcc.edu](https://panthers.pcc.edu).

Navigating the Digital World

Recently, PCC welcomed 14 digital navigators to facilitate greater technological accessibility for its students. These navigators serve as a specialized guide focused on helping individuals bridge their digital skills gaps and achieve greater confidence in the use of technology (i.e. home internet connectivity, finding affordable computing devices, and enhancing digital literacy). Digital navigators are stationed at all PCC libraries and tutoring centers, and they represent the college's commitment toward equitable access to technology. ♦

[Learn more at pcc.edu/digital-literacy-support](https://pcc.edu/digital-literacy-support).



Grand Openings

PCC introduces two key workforce development facilities in 2023



Local leaders, including PCC President Adrien Bennings (with scissors), officially open the Opportunity Center at 42nd Avenue.

Welding graduate Keyonna Williams cuts the ceremonial chain to mark the grand opening of the Mobile Welding Outreach & Skills Training Center.

Portland Community College opened two new facilities that symbolize its commitment to career development, economic mobility and strategic partnerships. PCC cut the ribbon and the steel chain on the grand openings of the Opportunity Center at 42nd Avenue in Northeast Portland and the Mobile Welding Outreach & Skills Training Center, respectively.

Funded by the 2017 PCC bond, the Opportunity Center at 42nd Avenue is a collaborative endeavor supported by the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Native American Youth and Family Center. It offers a comprehensive array of services, educational resources and workforce development initiatives. In the coming year, the center will soon welcome Multnomah County’s 10,000-square-foot health clinic, and Home Forward (Housing Authority of Portland) will begin construction on an 84-unit affordable housing complex.

PCC staff, who provide services and resources to the community, played a big role in shaping the new building.

“It is spectacular,” said Rebecca Ocken, PCC’s Planning & Capital Construction director. “I want to acknowledge the contributions that the center’s staff made to the design of this building. The dedication and commitment that they gave to the process is transformative.”

The Mobile Welding Outreach & Skills Training Center will travel to a variety of communities across the district. This allows PCC faculty to provide training on-site at community-based organizations, schools, tribal lands and correctional facilities. With six welding booths, the trailer can serve up to 20 students at a time and provide a pathway to a certification, an associate degree or a new career.

Like the Opportunity Center, this was a partner-driven endeavor. The college teamed up with the PCC Foundation,

and Union Pacific provided an initial investment of \$375,000 to outfit the trailer and launch the program. Funding and support also came from the state’s Future Ready Oregon initiative and Vigor Industrial.

“It’s these partnerships that are critical to ensure everyone in the community has the access and the support to pursue their educational and professional dreams,” said Jans Dykhouse, assistant vice president of Sales Operations & Dental at The Standard and board vice president of the PCC Foundation.

Union Pacific Senior Director of Public Affairs Aaron Hunt added, “The only way we can do what we need to do as Union Pacific Railroad is to have a highly trained workforce. And, that’s where this partnership really makes sense, because PCC can give us the highly trained trades workforce that we need to move our business into the future.” ♦

Learn More:

For more information on the Opportunity Center at 42nd Avenue, visit pcc.edu/opportunity-center/42nd-ave.

Details about PCC welding classes can be found at pcc.edu/welding.



Meet your future your own way



No two paths are the same, but all paths lead you forward at Portland Community College. No matter who you are, who you want to be, or where you want to go, all of your possibilities begin at PCC.

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*Estimated 2023-24 cost for a full-time, resident student (12 credit hours per term). Calculation based on public university recruitment materials. For university-specific costs, visit pcc.edu/tuition.



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History Corner: Welding Moves Eastside

In 2023, Portland Community College launched its new Mobile Welding Outreach & Skills Training Center to travel to rural communities across the district and provide students access to on-site training. This effort is the continuation of PCC's dedication to developing trades, especially welding.

Back in 2008, Vigor Industrial and PCC joined forces to open the Swan Island Training Center in North Portland to provide welding training opportunities that support the local manufacturing industry. Then and now, skilled welders were a key labor component for manufacturing companies. Since then, the college has also redeveloped its core welding shop at the Rock Creek Campus and added a new training lab at its new Columbia County Center in Scappoose. There remains a shortage of well-trained workers in this vital trade, and the Swan Island Training Center, along with PCC's other welding locations, are a valuable resource for companies to find and hire skilled graduates. ♦



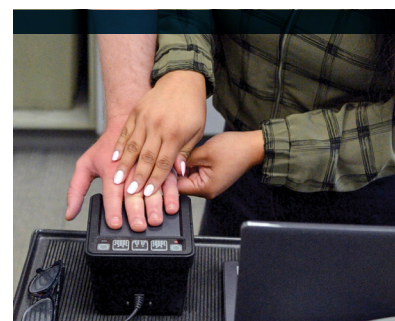
Preview Days

Every year, PCC's Admissions Office hosts hundreds of prospective students at scheduled Preview Days – an informative series of outreach events for high school students thinking about attending PCC. They learn about academic programs and how to fulfill their college goals, spend time interacting with PCC faculty and staff, and better understand the financial aid and scholarship processes. The next Preview Day is April 19 at the Cascade Campus! ♦ [Get more info at pcc.edu/preview.](https://pcc.edu/preview)

Legal Assistance

The college has partnered with WorkSource Portland Metro to offer free legal services once a month at the PCC Willow Creek Opportunity Center. The PCC Legal Resource Center provides limited-scope legal services for various issues, including DACA support, criminal record expungements, eviction assistance, and more. The clinic operates on the second Monday of each month from 2 to 6 p.m. ♦

For more information, visit pcc.edu/clear-clinic.



Blazing a Trail

National Hot Rod Association drag racing champion Antron Brown, the first Black champion in drag racing history, made an exciting pit stop at the college's OMIC Training Center in Columbia County. Brown took a different kind of ride as he toured the state-of-the-art facility, which offers a variety of manufacturing-related training programs. The drag race champion engaged with PCC students as well as local community and industrial leaders who are focused on the future of manufacturing in the region. ♦ **For more on the OMIC Training Center, visit pcc.edu/omic.**



Vladislav Kirilov knew Ophthalmic Medical Technology was for him after recovering from vision issues as a child.

Visionary Careers

Students use personal inspiration to work toward goals in eye care

Like many of his classmates, Vladislav Kirilov has embarked on an inspiring educational journey that is deeply rooted in personal experience and a passion to make a difference in the world of ophthalmology.

About five years ago, Kirilov immigrated from Ust, Kazakhstan, to play collegiate basketball, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced him to rethink his studies. He moved to Southeast Portland and discovered Portland Community College, where he attended online classes at the beginning of his academic career.

Soon, as the college transitioned back to in-person operations, Kirilov earned his lifeguard and first aid certificates, com-

pleted his English for Speakers of Other Languages requirements, and began working on prerequisites to join the Ophthalmic Medical Technology (OMT) Program.

Kirilov's decision to pursue the OMT Program at PCC stems from his background. As a child, he navigated the world with impaired vision. His early exposure to compassionate ophthalmologists and ophthalmic technicians inspired him to become a beacon of support for others facing vision impairment.

"These individuals were my heroes, guiding me toward a clearer future," he said. "Now, I am inspired to follow in their footsteps, aspiring to become a hero for others facing the same challenges."

Kirilov is grateful for the basic needs support he received from PCC during the pandemic, particularly through emergency grants and food pantries. These resources helped him navigate school while the college was operating remotely, reminding him of the importance of community and support in times of need.

"The support I received truly touched my heart," Kirilov said. "As a student, navigating through the uncertainties posed by the pandemic was overwhelming, and these grants were a lifeline that helped me stay afloat."

His classmate, Vivian Cao, also enrolled in the OMT Program due to the impact of personal experience. Cao started at PCC



Ophthalmic student Vivian Cao wanted a rewarding career in health care after working at a senior living facility.

in 2021, during a time when the loss of human life from the effects of the coronavirus had a profound impact on her.

“I became a caregiver at a senior living facility to explore nursing to see if it’s the right path for me,” Cao said. “During that time, one of my patients had cataracts, which caused him to lose more than 50% of his vision. The more difficult his life became, the more I wanted to be an ophthalmic technician to understand why this was happening. This led to wanting to know about all eye diseases.”

Cao left her job to shift her focus to eye care and the goal of getting an associate degree in Ophthalmic Medical Technology at PCC. She was awarded a PCC Foundation scholarship to reduce the financial

pressure as she enters her final year in the program, which consists largely of clinicals.

“I know that many people, especially the elderly, struggle with their vision on a daily basis,” she said. “It is a pleasure for me to work with patients and assist physicians as well.”

The college’s network of resources and support services are key in keeping students engaged and on the path to graduation as they find a great career. PCC’s OMT Program offers a small cohort of 24 to 28 students. Each cohort is guided by faculty through hands-on training in a specialized lab and by licensed physicians in clinical practicums at more than 40 community partners.

Thanks to that support, Kirilov and Cao see themselves as contributing to and enhancing patient experiences.

“I’m eager to be part of a team that changes lives through vision care,” he said. “The thought of being that guiding light for someone else, just as those professionals were for me, fuels my passion for pursuing this path.” ♦

Ophthalmic Medical Technology

Are you considering a career change or looking for a rewarding path in health care? Ophthalmic medical technician jobs are expected to grow by 20% in the Portland area through 2027.

Learn more: pcc.edu/omt



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.**



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Hit the range or find equine serenity.

Choose from horseback riding (at two locations this term!) or equine meditation this spring.

Saddle up on pages 47 and 50.