

# Columbia County Listening Tour

Board of Directors  
Portland Community College  
June 19, 2014

Four outreach efforts were organized to gather input from various Columbia County stakeholders on the educational programming that could best serve Columbia County.

- Web survey sent to all instructors and staff at St. Helens and Scappoose High Schools
- Employer's breakfast forum
- Community forums in Scappoose and St. Helens.

**Overview**

Wide spectrum of courses, programs, services, and needs were discussed, the following themes emerged:

- A physical presence in Columbia County is long overdue.
- Columbia County has unique needs and the new center must be tailored to these in order to succeed.
- Weekday evening classes are preferred.

**Outcome summary**

- The highest programming need is for career and technical programs/courses followed by GED and college transfer classes. A need for pre-employment skills training (resume writing and interviewing, computer skills, professional etiquette) also surfaced.

## Outcome Summary

- Career counseling services are the most needed student service at the new center followed by academic advising. Financial aid counseling was also frequently mentioned.
- There is a significant opportunity for partnerships between the new center and Columbia County businesses, schools, and government agencies (e.g. pre-employment classes, manufacturing skills training, dual-credit programs, and DHS training).

## Outcome Summary

- Ten question web survey was distributed via email to all teachers and staff at Scappoose and St. Helens High Schools. The response rate was approximately 30%.
- Course timing and programming preferences mimicked the general trends outlined above, though the need for GED classes was expressed most strongly by this audience.
- Student service needs followed the general trends listed above although a need for admissions assistance and orientation was also strongly expressed by this group.

## High School Educator's Survey

52 employer and interested parties participated in this moderated session which focused on:

- current and future training needs
- how programming at the new center could best meet these needs.

PCC representatives located at each table documented attendees' responses.

**Employers' Breakfast**

- Basic computer (e.g., MS Office, basic website updating)
- Pre-employment (professional etiquette, interview and resume writing, customer service basics)
- Professional skills (e.g., project management, business ethics)
- Technical training (e.g., welding, electrical, and construction skills).

**Themes for Current Training Needs**



- Advanced computer (e.g., database and computer programming)
- Manufacturing (e.g., automation and industrial sewing)
- Hospitality/tourism skills
- Healthcare and safety training.

**Themes for Future Training Needs**

- 60 community members attended the two forums (20 in Scappoose and 40 in St. Helens) including State Senator Betsy Johnson and Representative Brad Witt.
- Five questions emphasizing programming needs for the new center were presented to attendees and their responses were documented by PCC representatives manning flip charts.
- The need for a physical presence by PCC in Columbia County was strongly expressed.

## Scappoose and St. Helens Forums

- A commitment to continued communication and relationship building with area schools, groups, and businesses is needed.
- These forums were a positive start but it must be maintained.
- Programming preferences mimicked the general trends outlined above with an emphasis on pre-employment and career/tech skills. Lower division transfer classes were also frequently mentioned.
- A strong need for career counseling and financial aid assistance emerged.
- A desire for community education courses was more strongly expressed in these forums than in previous outreach efforts.

## Community Forum Feedback

- A survey designed to get the perspectives of 9th-12th graders will be administered in the St. Helens, Scappoose, and Vernonia High Schools in late September.
- A breakfast for St. Helens, Scappoose, and Vernonia High School counselors will occur in late September/early October.
- A community follow-up forum is scheduled for October 21 to share the results of all the outreach efforts.

## Next Steps

- Dr. Sandra Fowler-Hill
- Dr. Cheryl Scott
- Dr. Karen Sanders
- Jason Johnson
- Kelly Marks
- Janice Nichols

**Columbia County Team**