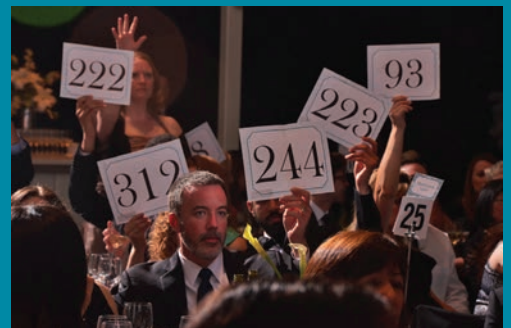




Portland Community College 50th Anniversary Celebration

September 2011 – June 2012



PCC's 50th Anniversary

A Year-Long Campaign for "Opportunity—Then. Now. Always."

This fall, PCC was honored with 15 awards from District 7 of the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations, an AACC affiliate council. Every one of these awards was for an activity or product related to our recent 50th Anniversary campaign. Such awards are a nice way to judge the effect of our efforts, but the real ROI is based on more practical results. While the Anniversary is still in our rear-view mirror, we'd like to take this opportunity to summarize our objectives and results.

THE PCC 50TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2011-12, we celebrated more than 1.3 million people who have received an education at PCC in the past 50 years. It was a moment for our region to celebrate the significance of this accomplishment as a key part of Oregon's history, and a moment to communicate the value and importance of PCC's mission — so that PCC can obtain the resources it needs to help more people succeed. In a massive, year-long campaign, encompassing more than a dozen events, extensive communication through advertising and earned media, widespread grassroots engagement, connecting with community and political leaders, storytelling, original artwork, and even a museum exhibit, the Anniversary put spotlight on PCC as the place that provides OPPORTUNITY to Oregonians — "Then. Now. And Always." It represents the largest single community relations campaign we have ever undertaken.

OBJECTIVES:

While PCC has had great success in reaching students — and community-wide surveys have shown that the public appreciates PCC as a great place to take classes — PCC's place as THE critical resource for opportunity through education in Oregon was much less understood. We saw our 50th Anniversary as a potentially powerful vehicle to address this, and approached it from the start as much more than an institutional birthday party.

Our objectives for the Anniversary were:

1. Raise awareness of PCC — both in the positive difference it makes in the life of individuals, and in the integral role it plays in strengthening our community.
2. Celebrate PCC's history by honoring the accomplishments of our founders, students, and staff.
3. Make contact with our alumni base, increasing involvement and affinity.
4. Strengthen relationships with community supporters, business partners, donors and friends.
5. Share PCC's vision for the future and where we can be as a community through the transformational power of education.

KEY MESSAGES:

1. *"PCC is a vital leader in our community's success."*
2. *"PCC stands up for people, working to provide access to education and the opportunity for everyone to be successful."*
3. *"PCC plays a role in the community – and the community plays a role in PCC. Together, we are partners."*

ENGAGEMENT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

Even in the formative stages, we wanted our Anniversary to be a community-wide collaboration. More than a year before the Anniversary began, we assembled a planning committee comprised of key stakeholders. Forty people, representing faculty, students, administration, retirees, alums and community members began to meet to imagine how to celebrate this historic milestone – hundreds of people participated in generating ideas at special events or the website.

We asked people for ideas on how to celebrate...but we also asked them to articulate what PCC meant to them. One theme continued to resound: PCC is where anyone can find opportunity. Our subsequent slogan – "Opportunity – Then. Now. Always." – became the banner that was woven into all of our events and activities.

RESULTS

Never before have we been able to make such a far-reaching and sustained case for PCC's overall importance to the community. The 50th Anniversary allowed PCC to shine as an integral part of the community – a critical resource for opportunity that must be protected and supported. At a time when state funding for community colleges has reached new lows, this communication opportunity was invaluable. As we look to the possibility of a future bond measure, a major gifts fundraising campaign, and the certainty of the next legislative session, we are better positioned to raise up advocates for PCC because of this Anniversary. We have truly reached a new level of pride in the institution, and awareness about our important mission.

Here are some highlights:

1. Media Coverage

While we regularly receive media coverage for individual programs, we have rarely earned stories that highlight PCC's overall contribution to the region. By using the historical significance of our anniversary, we were able to make compelling pitches that achieved some of the best coverage we've ever had:

- TWO multi-page special sections, one at the beginning of the year, and one at the end, in *Community Newspapers*.
- A front-page article in the *Portland Tribune*.
- Feature highlighting the history and accomplishments of the college in the state's daily paper *The Oregonian*, as well as a feature on the renaming of our skills center after Oregon Senator Margaret Carter in honor of the anniversary.
- Feature highlighting PCC's contribution to the economic vitality of Oregon in the *Portland Business Journal*.

- Television feature on *AM Northwest* covering our history exhibit, the Governor's "PCC Day" proclamation, and the winners of our Diamond Alum Awards.
- *Oregon Public Broadcasting* program dedicated to our visiting author and PCC alum Rebecca Skloot, as well as a story on the Anniversary.
- *Portland Society Page's* coverage of the 50th Anniversary Gala.
- Front-page feature in *Community Newspapers* on our "50th Anniversary Partnership Breakfast" held as part of Rock Creek Campus' anniversary event.
- Numerous other radio and newspaper stories.

2. Endorsements by Key Public Figures

We were honored to have the participation of some of Oregon's top political figures. This included:

- Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber, who attended and made remarks at our anniversary event at Cascade Campus.
- U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley, who attended and made remarks at our public kick-off event in downtown Portland.
- Portland Mayor Sam Adams, who attended and made remarks at our "Evening for Opportunity" fundraising gala.
- Beaverton Mayor Denny Doyle; Hillsboro Mayor Jerry Willey; and Forest Grove Mayor Pete Truax, who all attended and made remarks at our "Partners' Breakfast" as well as attended our various other anniversary events throughout the year.
- Oregon Representative Michael Dembrow who sponsored the PCC Day proclamation with the Governor's Office and spoke to the media on our behalf.
- Oregon Representative Julie Parrish who was honored as one of our Diamond Alums and spoke on our behalf to the media.
- City Commissioner Randy Leonard who was honored as one of our Diamond Alums and was featured in our advertising.
- Key executives from many of Oregon's industries, including Intel, SolarWorld, and Hillsboro Aviation, who attended and spoke at our events.

3. Scholarship Funds Raised at Our First Formal Fundraising Dinner

The 50th Anniversary was the perfect opportunity to hold the college's first formal fundraising gala, "An Evening for Opportunity." To help celebrate the historic milestone, nearly 500 guests joined us for a stylish event, in the theme of 1961 (the year of the college's birth). Guests came in 1960's evening attire and enjoyed "Opportunitini" cocktails and heard powerful original poetry composed by students. The event featured remarks from Portland Mayor Sam Adams, major donors, and scholarship students, and honored Intel and Oregon Community Foundation for its years of support to PCC. Grammy-nominated singer Juliette Johnson entertained the crowd with her heartfelt rendition of "I Know Where I've Been" and guests saw a video highlighting the many faces of success in PCC's history. Through the paddle raise, auction, and sponsorship donations, the PCC Foundation raised nearly \$300,000 for student success initiatives.

4. 50,000 Hour Community Service Challenge

To honor 50 years of community support, we pledged as a college to give back 50,000 hours of volunteerism in the communities we serve. Community Service Days were organized many times throughout the year and a website invited people to post their name as someone who has “taken the 50-hour pledge,” agreeing to log at least 50 hours of personal volunteer service in one year. Giving back 50,000 hours in volunteer service to the community was an unprecedented challenge, particularly for a highly transient environment such as ours, where the majority of our students have jobs and none live on campus. Not only did we meet the challenge, we exceed it by nearly 25,000 hours **for a total of almost 75,000 hours of community service.**

5. Launchpad for New Communication Efforts

One of the things the Anniversary allowed us to do was launch some important communication activities that will serve us well in the future. For example, the anniversary microsite will morph into an overall advocacy site for PCC, in which community members can participate in projects to help elevate the college, such as lobbying or volunteering. The fundraising Gala is also an event we are now poised to continue, having established a successful base of awareness with high-profile corporate sponsors. Other continuing projects include tracking community service hours, the Diamond Pride e-newsletter, annual Diamond Alum Awards and publicity about the winners, graduation as a higher-profile event, all-college picnic held once a year, and PCC Day / Founders’ Week celebrated each year.

6. Attendance at Events and Overall Impressions Made

Finally, the sheer number of impressions we were able to make through the 50th Anniversary was great evidence of the power of PCC’s cause. Hundreds and hundreds of people attended these events, whether it was to volunteer in a service project, to hear a famous alum speak, or to dance together in the town square in honor of PCC’s birthday. Thousands and thousands of impressions were made through advertising and media relations. Now, more people know what the “PCC Diamond” is (we see it on their cars!) and associate PCC with one of the most important causes in our community: Giving people the **opportunity** to succeed.

OTHER KEY STRATEGIES

1. **50 Diamond Alums - Awards Campaign** — This campaign was created to showcase the range of lives that have been positively affected in our 50 years. Through a community nominating process, 50 alums were chosen to receive our first Diamond Alum Awards. The subsequent media coverage, advertising, and PCC magazine stories all worked together to honor and raise awareness of how important PCC alums are to the community.
2. **Diamond Pride Campaign** — PCC has never really had a unified pride symbol. This year, we focused our attention on the “Diamond” symbol from our logo, and engaged a team of PCC graphic design students to create different versions of Diamonds for each subject offered at PCC. The Diamonds were used at Anniversary events and are now available to departments as promotional tools. We also widely distributed unique Diamond pins and car decals – associating wearing the Diamond with advocating for opportunity in our community.

3. [**Public Kick-Off in Pioneer Courthouse Square, the Heart of Portland**](#) — We officially kicked off the 50th Anniversary with a huge public event in “Portland’s Living Room” – Pioneer Courthouse Square. This event featured a dozen program booths who were matched with corresponding community partners (for example, our veterinary-technician program matched with The Banfield Pet Hospital) to show the link to community vitality. A giant wooden cake built by the PCC Theater department was the event centerpiece, holding hundreds of “Diamond” cookies that we gave away to hundreds of guests as they danced to the sounds of a local reggae band. U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley made remarks, calling PCC “an absolute gem in our community.”
4. [**Series of Campus Celebration Events**](#) — Each of our four campuses staged a celebration event, so that surrounding neighbors, as well as community leaders engaged in that particular campus, could have a chance to come together. From hayrides at our rural campus, to renaming a building in honor of Oregon Senator Margaret Carter at our urban campus, each event reflected the unique character and personality of its surrounding community. Hundreds of people attended each of the events.
5. [**Special Faculty & Staff In-Service**](#) — Our yearly convocation event, In-Service, featured national best-selling author Wes Moore, who talked to the crowd about how community opportunity, like the kind presented and upheld at PCC, made the difference for his life path. The program was followed by a barbecue lunch and band, as a special “thank you” to honor the people of PCC who make education happen every day. We had record attendance of 1200 people at the event.
6. [**“Project 50”, an original play produced by PCC Theater**](#) — Using the college’s historic archives as a base, plus interviews with retired faculty and alumni, the PCC Theater worked with Jonathan Walters, of Hand2Mouth Theatre, to stage a creative interpretation of how the college began, effectively showcasing how college students have changed, and stayed the same, over 50 years.
7. [**Oregon History Museum Exhibit**](#) — To help meet our objective of positioning PCC as integral to Oregon’s history, we approached the Oregon Historical Society about supporting an exhibit at the Museum. The subsequent exhibit, “Portland Community College: 50 years of Education Revolution,” was an excellent opportunity to show how PCC’s beginning was truly a new way of approaching education for Oregon, and to tell the story of PCC’s growth to become the largest college in the state. We held a reception at the exhibit, where we honored our 50 Diamond Alums as part of PCC’s historic legacy in Oregon.
8. [**PCC Day**](#) — For PCC’s official birthday, we earned a Governor’s proclamation declaring May 15 as “PCC Day” in our community. Our student government leaders handed out free ice cream on each campus, as well as small copies of the original charter and proclamation.

9. [**"Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" author and alum Rebecca Skloot**](#) — Rebecca Skloot's international best-selling book raised important ethical questions of race, class, medical research, and opportunity. But before Skloot became an author, she was a high-school student who nearly dropped out before enrolling in a program at PCC. At PCC, she first learned about the subject of her book – so this year, her book was chosen as the "PCC Reads" book, the book that our college community reads together and discusses in various classes. As part of the Anniversary, Rebecca Skloot came back to PCC for a series of events in which she made remarks and was honored for her accomplishments.
10. [**"Unity Art Project" Commemorative Sculptures**](#) — Artist Nicky Falkenhayn learned her trade as a former industrial welding student at PCC. Today she creates large, public works of art, and for the 50th Anniversary was commissioned to produce a commemorative piece. The result was four metal-and-glass sculptures, which will each be placed at one of PCC's campuses. The glass plates used in the piece contain the etched notes of PCC students and faculty as a sort of time capsule.
11. [**Past Presidents Picnic**](#) — To honor our history, PCC invited back to campus all of our living past presidents. All five of them, along with the family of our founding president Dr. Amo DeBernardis, who passed away last year, attended to host a college-wide picnic celebrating our history. Each past president made remarks telling the story of PCC's evolution from their point of view. It was the perfect event to announce that the college's 50,000-Hour Service Challenge had officially been met – and exceeded to nearly 75,000 hours. The past presidents also cut the ribbon on the new Unity Art Project, symbolizing unity around our mission through the years and across our campuses.
12. [**Commemorative Beer: "Dr. De's Special Bitter Ale"**](#) — Legendary local micro-brew company "McMennamin's" produced a commemorative beer for PCC's anniversary. The beer, a seasonal bitter ale, was named after PCC's founding president Dr. Amo DeBernardis, who was known for being extremely visionary, but also stubborn in his pursuit of the PCC dream. It was a featured item in several McMennamin's pubs across the college district.
13. [**Commemorative Coffee: "Opportunity Blend"**](#) — We partnered with local coffee roasting company "Portland Roasters" to create a special coffee for us for the anniversary. The "Opportunity Blend" coffee was sold for the entire year at all of our cafeterias and coffee shops by the cup, and included a special branded label.
14. [**Starlight Parade**](#) — In honor of the 50th, Portland's Rose Festival Association invited PCC to participate with a float and parade walkers in this year's Starlight Parade (an evening parade characterized by illuminated floats). We turned the giant wooden cake built by the PCC Theater Department for the 50th Anniversary into a float festooned with twinkling lights and invited 50 students and alums to walk the parade route.
15. [**Original Rap Song & Music Video**](#) — To officially close PCC's year-long 50th Anniversary, we wanted to do something creative that could reach many people at once. Our answer was an original rap song and music video featuring three PCC alums from the professional all-female rap group "Rose Bent." The rap used the anniversary's theme: "Opportunity: Then. Now. Always." to recount the activities and photos of the year. The video, produced by PCC's Video Production Unit has earned nearly 9,000 views on YouTube!

16. **Special Graduation** — This year's graduation honored the 50th Anniversary graduating class. We produced a commemorative golden zipper pull for each graduate and provided each person with a Diamond design, corresponding to their chosen major, to decorate the top of their mortarboards. The event was decorated with 50th Anniversary banners and material and even featured surprise air cannons that burst "anniversary blue and yellow" streamers in the air as the graduates were conferred.
17. **Microsite: "opportunity.pcc.edu"** — We created this microsite to support PCC's 50th Anniversary and provide a portal to news and events of all the celebration activities. In addition to photos and coverage though, the site was an engagement tool, featuring a "story wall" for its homepage that allowed users to write in and share their experiences with PCC, as well as a place to "take the 50-hour challenge," contribute to our 50,000-hour community service project, and track progress toward that goal.
18. **Advertising Campaign, "Because of PCC"** — PCC's 50th Anniversary was an opportunity for us to creatively communicate the extraordinary breadth of people the college has touched during its history, and the strengthening of our whole community as a direct result. These ads, featured real alums who have gone on to make significant contributions to our community because of the education they received. Variations on these ads were featured on:
 - Television
 - Radio
 - Newspapers
 - City bus sides
 - City bus shelters
 - MAX transit trains
 - PCC shuttle busses
 - YouTube videos
19. **Feature Article Series** — We dedicated part of each issue of PCC's community magazine to the 50th Anniversary. Mailed to 300,000 homes, the articles told the story of PCC's history and achievements, as well as showcasing the 50th events. These feature articles were also regularly displayed on the PCC homepage and emailed through our new "Diamond Pride E-Newsletter," created for this year.
20. **Brand Experience Promotion** — To create and sustain the Anniversary throughout the year, we created a wide range of branded items to decorate our campuses and touch people in their daily lives. From a commemorative "Opportunity Blend" coffee produced by Portland Roasters, to bright "anniversary blue" t-shirts for every member of PCC's staff, our promotional materials worked to keep awareness going all year. Additional items included:
 - A giant (10 feet tall!) cake constructed by our theatre department and painted to match our colors and logo. The cake travelled to our major events and served as holder for birthday cupcakes, and centerpiece for photos.
 - Bright "anniversary blue" t-shirts given to all 2,000+ staff members to wear at 50th special events throughout the year (especially service projects!)
 - Banners for our light poles at all 4 campuses and 3 centers (nearly 150 colorful banners)

- Banners for the buildings at each of our campuses
- New college letterhead and stationary with the 50th Anniversary logo.
- Branding of our website, shuttle busses, folders, etc.
- Thousands of coffee sleeves containing PCC trivia – used in association with our commemorative “Opportunity Blend” coffee, created for us by Portland Roasters.
- Lance-Armstrong-like rubber bracelets with “Opportunity—Then. Now. Always.” printed on them.
- Diamond pins and decals produced and given away by the thousands.
- Messenger bags, pens, water bottles and more designed in 50th Anniversary colors and graphics.
- Cookies and cupcakes with the 50th Anniversary imprinted in frosting – given to hundreds of people throughout the year.

CONCLUSION:

By raising the college up, we have positioned the college to gain more resources – which will ultimately help more students succeed, and bring more strength and vitality to our entire community.

The success of the 50th Anniversary provides far-reaching benefits to our students and community in several ways: First, by increasing public awareness about PCC, we laid the groundwork for legislative support, as well as future alumni engagement, fundraising campaigns and bond measures. Second, by communicating the stories of our students and alumni, and encouraging hundreds of people to personally participate in some aspect of the anniversary, we created new relationships and built pride in the institution. Finally, by investing in a year of activities that focused on the overall mission of the college, we made inroads in positioning the college as a key player in the conversation about Oregon’s future vitality.

The 50th Anniversary Planning Committee

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