

PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
COMMUNITIES

GOING FAR TOGETHER
Introducing PCC President Mark Mitsui
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“An educated workforce ensures the prosperity of our communities. U.S. Bank proudly supports PCC programs that help individuals succeed in the workforce and provide pathways to higher education.”

Karen Kervin
U.S. Bank
Community Relations Manager,
Northwest Region



Back to Class

◆ Winter term begins January 9

Register now! There are thousands of credit and non-credit classes available at hundreds of sites across the Portland metro area. For information about registration, visit pcc.edu.

Upcoming Events

◆ 18th Annual Pow Wow January 21

Join PCC for Wacipi, a celebration of Native American culture and tradition, featuring drumming, dancing, food and craft vendors, and family fun! Visit pcc.edu/powwow for details.

◆ Cascade Festival of African Films February 3 – March 4

Save the date for the west coast's largest African film fest, hosted at PCC Cascade Thursdays through Saturdays, Feb. 3 through March 4. Visit africanfilmfestival.org for complete schedule and list of films.

Shared on Social Media



@triciabrand

- ◆ Really exciting to see all these racks taken this afternoon. It was a perfect day to #gobybike and rental bikes are now available at PCC!



@pccclearningarden

- ◆ Happy Fall from the PCC Rock Creek Learning Garden! These are some of the garden beauties that we roasted up in the Earthen oven yesterday!



@prezmitsui

- ◆ It's a beautiful evening at PCC Sylvania.



@pccascademc



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GOING FAR TOGETHER

For the seventh president of Portland Community College, a commitment to educational equity is rooted in personal experience—and inspired by students and colleagues.

by James Hill & Cate Soulages

There's a sign in Mark Mitsui's office that reads: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." PCC's new president has been going far with others his entire career.

Along the way he has been a teacher, a senior administrator at Northwest community colleges, and a national leader in higher education, serving three years as deputy assistant secretary for community colleges in the Obama administration's Department of Education.

And though Mitsui accomplished much in this national role, his objective was always to return to a community college and apply everything he learned where it matters most.

While president of North Seattle College, he was lauded for many notable achievements, such as creating a strategic plan, navigating tough budget cuts and building successful student programs. But he may be best known for his sincere appreciation for students and colleagues alike, and for the culture of inclusion he helped nourish.

"Over the years, I've learned that a college's culture plays a vital role in students' experiences and ultimate success," Mitsui said. "When we acknowledge a broad range of perspectives, we do better work, and we move forward our mission."



Mark Mitsui began his tenure at Portland Community College with listening sessions on all PCC campuses and centers.

A Commitment Rooted in Personal History

Mark Mitsui's outlook is deeply rooted in his family's history. In the early part of the 20th century, his grandparents—both second sons unlikely to inherit family property—immigrated from Japan to Seattle seeking new opportunities.

"In the Japanese language, the kanji character for America is phonetically similar to 'rice,'" said Mitsui. "In other words, America was the land of plenty, the land of opportunity, as it has been for countless generations of immigrants from all over the world."

In America, his mother's father became a farmer, and his father's a railroad worker. But laws of the era made it illegal for these hard-working immigrants to become naturalized U.S. citizens. At a time when Irish immigrants could become Irish-Americans and vote for politicians to represent them, Asian-American immigrants on the West Coast were left out of the political process.

"Asian American immigrants lost out on generations of political representation," said Mitsui.

When the Washington state legislature made it illegal for residents ineligible for citizenship to own land, his grandparents' landholdings were wiped out. His mother's family moved east and became sharecroppers in the Yakima Valley, living in sheds behind other people's farmhouses. The family eventually bought land again, but experienced harassment from some in the community intent on driving out Japanese and Filipino farmers.

"My grandparents and parents were viewed as the enemy—especially when World War II broke out," Mitsui remembered.

Alongside 120,000 others of Japanese ancestry, his relatives were forcibly removed to internment camps during wartime by the U.S. government—his mother's family to Heart Mountain, Wyo., and his father's to Tule Lake, Calif. Astonishingly, Mitsui's own father volunteered for the U.S. Army during this period, serving in counterintelligence. After the war, he was able to attend college on

the G.I. Bill, where he met Mitsui's mother, an aspiring kindergarten teacher. Their experiences at college changed the trajectories of their lives and, ultimately, those of their children:

"My family's remarkable journey from Heart Mountain and Tule Lake to the University of Washington forever underscored for me the transformative power of both education and perseverance," he said.

Beyond Beacon Hill

Mark Mitsui was born on Beacon Hill in Seattle, Wash., in a mixed neighborhood with Chinese, Japanese, African-American, Native-American and Italian families. At the time, he did not realize that the ethnic diversity of his neighborhood was the result of racial intolerance.

When his parents sought a larger home beyond Beacon Hill, realtors refused to show them property north of the Montlake Bridge. Years later, he would understand that many banks at the time did not make loans to people of color who wanted to buy in white neighborhoods, and that some home owners would only sell to white families.

Undeterred, the family purchased a parcel of wooded land in unincorporated King County, where his father designed and built a house. The Mitsuis were the only family of color in the neighborhood.

"My mother would introduce herself by saying, 'Hello, my name is Tammie, and I am here to integrate the neighborhood,'" he remembered. Her charm offensive worked, and most neighbors welcomed the family.

Mitsui played in the woods for hours with his new buddies, exploring streams, hiking and building forts. But while most were friendly, some classmates felt strongly he did not belong, and they bullied and harassed him. As a schoolboy, he was forced to stand up for himself many times—and such experiences became formative.

"My parents' cultural pride sustained me during that time," said Mitsui. "It taught me that my multicultural heritage was a strength, and that awareness has shaped my lifelong commitment to promote



educational equity. Every student should have the opportunity to thrive in the classroom—and to achieve in the world beyond.”

The fact that students bring cultural assets and strengths with them to the classroom became an important theme for him during his career as a teacher, student services professional and administrator.

The Importance of Push and Pull

Growing up, Mark Mitsui loved sports. They were a great social equalizer that also helped instill in him the values of teamwork, self discipline and accountability. In college he pursued kinesiology, the study of human movement, and began to appreciate at a deeper level the role of positive tension in the body and in life.

“When you flex your elbow, your bicep is the prime mover and your tricep is the antagonist,” he said. “When muscles don’t have that push and pull, joint damage can occur, and the body’s motions can become uncoordinated and uncontrolled.”

For Mitsui, such insights apply equally to the body and to organizations. “In great organizational cultures, there is a profound sense of shared purpose, but there is also an appreciation for the vigorous engagement that drives innovation and ultimately moves forward a mission. We should embrace that learning and growth mindset.”

Towards Equitable Student Success

Since joining PCC in September, Mitsui has launched a listening tour, connecting with students, colleagues, partners and community members to gain a deep understanding of PCC’s strengths and

culture. In the year ahead, he will focus on collaborating with these partners to see the college’s strategic plan come to life—with a special emphasis on equitable student success.

For Mitsui, PCC’s special responsibility to serve students of color and the underserved is derived from Oregon’s demographic and economic realities and opportunities.

“EVERY STUDENT SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE IN THE CLASSROOM — AND TO ACHIEVE IN THE WORLD BEYOND.”

From 2000 to 2010, the region’s Latino population grew regionally by 97 percent, Asian population by 50 percent, and African American population by 34 percent. Meanwhile, since the end of the recession, there has been little to no income growth for households in the middle of the economic spectrum. The strongest growth has been at the very top and very bottom.

Put another way, at a time when Portland remains the second-fastest growing regional economy in the nation—having created more jobs in the past 12 months than Houston, Milwaukee,

Omaha and Albuquerque combined—income growth for the middle classes has stagnated. What will happen by 2020 when two thirds of all American jobs are projected to require some level of postsecondary education or training? Enter the community college.

“Community colleges are *the* pathway to the middle class,” said Mitsui. “That is where opportunity lies. PCC is about fostering equitable success for students and colleagues, and a sustainable prosperity for the region. With that kind of shared goal to build upon, we will definitely go far, together.” ♦



Follow Mark Mitsui on Twitter @PrezMitsui

DIY Tiny Homes

Photo credit: Guillaume Dutilleul



Lina Menard in front of her tiny home, *The Lucky Penny*.

If you're thinking about going small this year, PCC has big ideas for you.

A new tiny homes design course offered this winter will give students a chance to explore all of the aspects of tiny home living and design—from big picture design considerations like layout and circulation flow, to the nitty gritty of windows and doors.

"We're going to help people think through everything they need to know about going small," said instructor Lina Menard.

Menard, an experienced tiny homes designer, will lead the two-day intensive design class. She designed and built her own tiny home—called "The Lucky Penny"—and now helps others navigate the process through her tiny homes consulting business, Niche Consulting.

"This is a really great time of year to be dreaming and scheming," says Menard. "An intensive design class like this can give you ideas and inspiration to mull over before it's time to start ordering your materials in the spring."

After you come up with the floorplans for your tiny dream home, it's time to get building.

PCC's tiny house construction course, led by general contractor Jeff Kolwitz, offers students an affordable way to get professional building advice. This 10-week course, offered every term through PCC Community Education, walks students through the major steps of building a standard eight by 12-foot tiny house.

Menard says that if you're interested in living in a tiny home, give it a try and don't be afraid of changing your mind later down the road.

"For some people their home is a forever home, but for so many of us it's a stop along the way on our journey," she said.

Menard's personal story illustrates this fluidity: after living for several years in the tiny home she had built for herself, Menard fell in love and decided it was time to move in with her boyfriend. They dreamt up a plan together and are now finishing construction on a new tiny home—with room for two. ♦

To learn more about tiny house design and construction, turn to page 31 or visit pcc.edu/communityed.



Guiding Others Through Conflict

PCC is offering a continuing education course giving students a chance to put conflict resolution techniques into practice. This 40-hour training offered by professional mediators will lead students through various role playing scenarios, allowing students to practice conflict resolution and mediation from all angles.

The instructors, Mary Forst and Molly Keating, are leading mediation professionals in the Portland metro area. Forst, the owner and principal trainer of Portland's Confluence Center, specializes in helping people and organizations through times of upheaval by offering a combination of team building, skills training and dialogue-building. Forst is a seasoned facilitator with a career spanning five decades.

Co-instructor Keating has been practicing mediation since 1984. She specializes in addressing issues of respect, communication, assumptions and stress to help her clients find a path through conflict.

To learn more about conflict mediation training, turn to page 67 or visit pcc.edu/communityed.

OREGON'S PROMISE

PCC welcomes almost 1,700 Oregon Promise students to its campuses



Chase Isaacson is thrilled Portland Community College is keeping the Oregon Promise.

The Westview High School graduate is eager to get started on his college career at PCC through the state's new initiative, Oregon Promise. The program encourages qualified recent high school and GED graduates to continue their education by providing grants to help cover the cost of tuition at an Oregon community college of their choice.

Isaacson is one of the 6,000 students statewide who was awarded an Oregon Promise grant for the 2016-17 academic year. He chose to use his grant to enroll at PCC. Without this support, he would have been forced to take out student loans to pay for his education which he said would have jeopardized his dreams of becoming a filmmaker.

"This is a great opportunity for me and everyone here," Isaacson said at one of the college's Oregon Promise Welcome Days. "Without this it would have been so much harder for me to go to school."

Oregon Promise grants are for students who have earned a 2.5 grade-point average at their high school (or GED score of at least 145) and have filled out the FAFSA or ORSA. PCC has almost 1,700 first-year students who are taking advantage of the grants, which cover most of their tuition costs.

Nick Morae-Alvarado is one of them. The 18-year-old graduated in 2016 from Faith Bible High School in Hillsboro and said signing up for

the Oregon Promise has made his goal of transferring to Oregon State University easier than he thought possible.

"It was important for me and my family to go to school locally," Morae-Alvarado said, speaking to his choice to attend PCC.

Since before the beginning of the academic year, PCC has been helping Oregon Promise students acclimate to college. PCC's outreach coordinators organized 16 orientations in the summer that attracted almost 900 students across the college's district to learn about college resources and services.

Aloha High School graduate Brianna Zacarias is aiming to transfer to Portland State after finishing her pre-requisites at PCC. She said a counselor at her high school steered her toward the Oregon Promise as a cost-effective way of earning college credits.

Funding for Oregon Promise for the 2017-18 academic year is subject to Oregon Legislative approval. More information will be available in spring 2017.

—James Hill

For more information about Oregon Promise, visit pcc.edu/oregonpromise.



SECRETS OF THE DEEP

PCC geology student Iris Romo studies climate change by examining the ocean floor

by James Hill

Iris Romo was so happy to analyze a 30-year-old sample soil core from the Florida coast seafloor that she didn't notice her seasickness.

Romo took smears of the sediment to learn how to document the micro fossils and forams she was finding in the rock.

"You could see from the top of the core to the bottom there was an actual change in climate from 1986 to now," Romo said. "I really couldn't believe we found that."

"I did get seasickness after hours of looking into the microscope," she continued. "But you just have to make it work."

The 21-year-old's activity was part of a National Science Foundation undergraduate research experience called Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Student Experiences Aboard Ships (STEMSEAS). She and 10 other college students from around the nation explored the world of oceanography on a five-day adventure aboard the Endeavor—a research vessel belonging to the University of Rhode Island and Columbia University. They sailed with experienced faculty mentors and analyzed climatology data, explored water columns, measured oil seepage—and even dabbled in knot-tying.

"I really liked the mix of things we got to do," recalled Romo. "The crew was super helpful and very patient. I learned so much."

Romo, who once backpacked through Southeast Asia through Carpe Mundi on a Gilman scholarship, was particularly blown away by the Endeavor's work in netting and analyzing plankton.

"The crew had the ship go slow as we towed a giant net behind it to collect the plankton,"

she said. "I was super excited to view them under a microscope—especially when I saw how similar they were to the micro fossils."

Romo's all-expense paid learning experience is a great example of the STEM research opportunities available to PCC students. She is a member of The Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) at Portland State University and PCC, which is dedicated to enhancing the undergraduate experience for underrepresented students in STEM.

"Her high level of interest in science was apparent from the first day of class," said Eriks Puris, Romo's geology instructor at the Southeast Campus. "Undergraduate research experiences are a great way for students to see if they are really interested in making a career out of science."

Romo was always determined to make her college experience an incredible one. After graduating from David Douglas High School four years ago, she started college in Future Connect, the PCC Foundation's support program that serves first-generation or low-income students. A Pell Grant recipient as well, Romo was lured by PCC's dual enrollment agreement with Oregon Institute of Technology. At first she wanted to earn a radiology degree, but after a few terms, fell in love with geology.

She hopes to transfer to a university like Oregon State to continue her geology education, but for now—she's happy to be at PCC.

"At community colleges there are people of all age groups, from high school graduates to older returning students," Romo said. "That diversity builds community and makes learning the best." ♦

Breath and



A small cluster of people line up and begin to stretch. They've come on a rainy night to a small gymnasium in Southwest Portland to take self-defense from David Bersaas, one of the best fitness trainers in the city and a veteran PCC Community Education instructor.

The students begin blocking and kicking in graceful dance-like steps across the gymnasium floor. They've done this before, and know exactly how to begin.

Bersaas arrives—a man smaller than most of his students, with a calm presence and gentle air to him. He quietly integrates himself into the class, showing a student how to block herself from an imaginary blow. The 68-year-old has been practicing martial arts, yoga and meditation for nearly his entire adult life—and has dedicated his life to helping others find balance in theirs.

Bersaas has taught at the college for nearly 43 years and was once a PCC

student himself. His course offerings have run the gamut over the decades—he's taught everything from strength training for firefighters and defense tactics in the police officer training program, to body awareness and tantric yoga for human sexuality.

Now semi-retired, he still teaches self-defense classes at PCC Sylvania. This course is one of his favorites. He's proud to train students in his own system of martial arts which he has developed over his lifetime—an eclectic mix of kung fu, tai chi and ju jitsu.

When teaching martial arts, Bersaas says, size isn't the best indicator of strength.

"I had a friend who was a world-class body builder—he could lift 525 pounds. I'm a very lean person who couldn't do half of that, but when it came to doing things in the real world—helping someone move furniture, for instance—he would always ask me for help," he says.

Bersaas is a living example of his inclusive philosophy of strength training. Although he was small as a boy, he frequently came to the defense of schoolmates who were picked on by bullies. He bore the brunt of their aggression until he started studying martial arts at age 13. The next time a bully came at him, he didn't take the punch—he blocked it.

"It's important to work our bodies, our minds - and our hearts"

- David Bersaas

David Balance

by Becky Olson

For self-defense instructor David Bersaas, a balanced life is a satisfying one.

"I've always been a naturally sensitive and gentle person who wants to be able to help others in an emergency, but before I started studying martial arts, I didn't have anything to back it up," he says. "It's very empowering to be able to defend yourself and others."

Bersaas has focused his attention as a teacher on helping students develop functional strength—strength in the body within normal ranges of motion. Functional strength is one example, Bersaas said, of a shift in the focus of physical education over the years. Early in his career, weightlifting students were more interested in bulking up; today many are looking for overall strength and increased flexibility through courses such as pilates and yoga.

This is exactly why self-defense student Mei-mei Wang signed up for the class.

"This course really appealed to me because it's a great workout and it's also very empowering," she said. "David is an inspiring teacher. He has made this class feel like a community."

As a longtime physical fitness expert, Bersaas is acutely aware of the role that the mind and spirit play to one's overall wellness. This is one of the reasons he was initially attracted to yoga—a practice which sees the body and spirit as inseparable.

Bersaas began practicing yoga more than 45 years ago when Portland's yoga scene was in its infancy. He was in the navy at the time, living on a naval air base just outside of San Jose, Calif. On a weekend off from his clerical job preparing charts and reports for the base commander, he wandered into a metaphysical bookstore and picked up a book on yoga.

"I started practicing the breathing exercises described in the book and within a week had noticed such a profound difference that I was hooked," he says. "It became a very important part of my life."

In addition to yoga, Bersaas also practices meditation, appreciates art, and enjoys taking advantage of the great outdoors of the state that he's always called home. He values balance in his life and encourages people to seek out different activities to help them nourish all parts of the self.

"It's like if you have a garden and you only water one half of it. One half is going to thrive, and the other will die," he says. "It's important to be well-rounded and to work our bodies, our minds—and our hearts." ♦

For more information about Community Education's health and wellness classes, visit page 43 or visit pcc.edu/communityed.



SPOTLIGHT

WHAT'S NEW AT PCC

New grant expands advanced manufacturing training program

The Oregon Talent Council has awarded PCC a \$577,500, one-year grant to lead a new advanced manufacturing training program. The goal of the project—called RAMP PDX (Realizing Advanced Manufacturing Potential in Portland)—is to recruit, place and retain workers in a variety of advanced manufacturing jobs.

“This project aims to draw participants who may have never considered advanced manufacturing as a career option, or are looking for advancement opportunities within the industry,” said Marc Goldberg, the

college’s associate vice president of Workforce Development and Community Education.

RAMP PDX aims to serve about 300 participants through outreach events at the college’s MakerSpace Lab and through special career education sessions.

PCC will partner with four companies—Festo Didactic Inc., Leupold + Stevens, Inc., RapidMade and Rose Technical Graphics—to get the project rolling.



■ Four thousand pounds of free pumpkins were given away to community members at this year’s **PCC Harvest Festival**. To encourage folks to put their Jack-O-Lantern carving remains to good use, the festival also held a special session on reusing pumpkin pulp in delicious autumnal recipes.



■ The third annual **Jade International Night Market** took place on PCC’s Southeast Campus on two warm weekends in August. An estimated 20,000 people visited PCC’s newest campus for the event, sharing in the sights, sounds and tastes of the vibrant neighborhood festival.

HITS



■ The **newly remodeled library** on the PCC Cascade Cascade is now open. A new computer classroom, group study areas, additional restrooms and reference desks were all added to the space, as well as a new computer bar. The library is open for public use. Visit pcc.edu/library for hours.

■ PCC's **Career Pathways Program** received a \$100,000 grant from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation to expand training and career opportunities for low-income students and youth of color. Career Pathways is a unique program which offers short-term stackable certificates that help people advance in their careers or earn credits toward a college degree.



PCC mails this schedule of classes to households four times each year to let you know about upcoming Community Ed classes and share what's happening at PCC. It is printed and mailed for about 21¢ per copy and can be recycled. Because it is addressed "Residential Customer" we are not able to remove individuals from our distribution route. We hope you find it informative and enjoy the stories inside.



My Project:
Make art this winter!

— Marcia Bianchi,
*retired librarian, weaving
and ceramics student*

project:
YOU

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 winter.



PCC Community Ed