

Climbing Higher

Chris Marsaglia guides students through climbing basics, techniques, and safety in his popular “Bouldering and Climbing Strength” course.

see inside cover



Being ‘Boulder’

A PCC instructor shows how bouldering and climbing can benefit the entire body

Chris Marsaglia is the head coach at Circuit Bouldering Gym and partners with Portland Community College to host the class “Bouldering and Climbing Strength.” He has taught for PCC’s Community Ed Program since spring 2018. He began climbing in 2001 while attending Oregon State University where he joined the mountain climbing club. That experience grew his love of the sport as he learned the basics of traditional climbing and bouldering.

Marsaglia uses this expertise to teach students the history, techniques, gear, safety practices, and ethics of the sport. He says climbing is a great way to build core strength, and have fun meeting new people.

See pages 39 – 46 for details on this and other courses in the Recreation & Wellness section of the non-credit schedule.

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A MESSAGE from the President

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the winter issue of Portland Community College’s “Communities” Magazine!

At PCC, we continue the tradition of providing greater opportunity for students through education. At the same time, we know our world is changing at an ever-increasing pace. While remaining focused on our core mission, we are moving forward with innovations focused on equitable student success and opportunity. These include a redesign of advising services, a new enrollment system, and better online course scheduling – all tied to our Guided Pathways effort where students have the support they need as they work toward their completion goals.

In the winter issue, you’ll read about specific examples connected to these initiatives. Like the math instructors who have improved success rates by developing a new formula for how their students learn, or how we’re recruiting and retaining under-represented geomatics students using a \$560,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant.

These examples complement the nearly \$1 million in NSF funding that is allowing us to create additional pathways for low-income, under-represented students to in-demand STEM careers. We are also proud of the \$500,000 award from The Renaissance Foundation to the PCC Foundation that will grow workforce opportunities for SNAP recipients. And because many of our students struggle with food and housing insecurity, PCC is leading a statewide effort called “Pathways to Opportunity.” This important initiative will increase student access to support services that allow them to focus on school instead of the basics of survival.

These are just a few examples of how we are working to support our community. So, please, enjoy this issue of “Communities” and have a happy 2020!

Sincerely,

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Table of Contents

- 2 Home Improvements
- 4 Out of Kosovo
- 6 Chief Alum
- 79 Going High Tech
- 80 Common Denominators
- 82 History Corner & Spotlights
- 84 Soaring to New Heights

Schedule (pages 7 – 77)

- 8 Register and Pay

Arts

- 11 Dance
- 12 Music and Theater
- 14 Photography
- 15 Visual Arts
- 19 Writing

Home and Garden

- 23 Emergency Preparedness
- 23 Home Improvement
- 24 Do It Yourself (DIY)
- 24 Style and Beauty
- 24 Food and Drink
- 27 Garden, Nature, and Yards
- 28 Hobbies and Crafts
- 29 Woodworking and Metalworking

Language and Culture

- 31 Cultural Exploration
- 32 Languages

Recreation and Wellness

- 39 Adult 55+ Fitness
- 40 Health
- 40 Mind-Body Wellness
- 41 Sports
- 42 Work Out

Swim (page 47)

Traffic Safety (page 48)

Travel (page 50)

Work and Life Balance

- 53 Careers
- 54 Career Skills
- 56 Computer Skills and Technology
- 60 Continuing Education and License Renewal
- 61 Professional Development
- 62 Personal Development
- 63 Personal Finance
- 64 Test Preparation

Student Information (page 66)

Home Improvements

PCC students are solving costly city permit issues for low-income residents

“Especially in Portland, with the tiny-home movement and homelessness, there’s a need for people to do what we’re doing. It’s great to do pro bono work.”

— Toby Hatcher

Portland Community College’s Architectural Design and Drafting Program students are meeting a crucial need for disadvantaged homeowners in the City of Portland.

These residents are typically low income and many are non-native English speakers or are disabled. All of them need help meeting the city’s building codes and obtaining permits for remodeling projects on their properties.

Last spring, with assistance from the City of Portland, a dozen students from instructor Denise Roy’s class, “Intro to Residential Building Codes,” participated in the Portland Permit Solutions Program. The city’s Ami Fitzgerald reached out to Roy to propose the idea. PCC piqued Fitzgerald’s interest because, “The city is full of planners, architects, and inspectors who all came from PCC programs,” she explained.

The problem for Fitzgerald was clear. The city had a number of cases where homeowners had modified their homes or properties, unaware that a building permit was required. The homeowners were

unable to obtain the required drawings due to financial, language, or disability barriers. Enter the Portland Permit Solutions Program, which is an equity program designed to serve clients of color and those with disabilities. Homeowners who have limited or low incomes were matched to PCC students to assist them in the permit process.

As part of the project, Roy’s students would visit a homeowner’s property with a permit inspector. They would measure the spaces and create architectural drawings. They eventually met with the homeowner at the Permit Center downtown to walk them through the plan review process and obtain the proper permit.

Students Kyra Littlefield and Corina Giamakidis worked with a homeowner who was 89 years old, blind, and spoke only Croatian.

“On our first visit, it didn’t really seem like anybody understood what was going on because the whole family was there and there was a bit of hesitancy having us

Architectural Design and Drafting

Students are not only taught drafting and design fundamentals, but also how to apply problem-solving skills to residential and commercial buildings using architectural history as a guide. The program provides the fundamental building blocks necessary to begin a career as a residential designer and architectural drafter.

[Learn more at pcc.edu/programs/architectural-design.](https://pcc.edu/programs/architectural-design)



(Left to right) Toby Hatcher, Kyra Littlefield, and Corina Giamakidis.

come in and look at their stuff,” said Littlefield of the site visits. “By the third visit, the homeowners were super happy we were there and really appreciative of all the work that we had done.”

Littlefield has a background in the art industry and graduated with a degree in textiles 10 years ago. Her interest in interior design stemmed from her attempts to save a neighborhood building that had been targeted for demolition a year ago.

“I learned a whole lot about city codes and historical buildings,” Littlefield continued. “We also remodeled our home, which was an original schoolhouse built in 1892. Those two experiences made me realize how much I love the building environment and interior design with my textile background. It really felt like the right direction.”

Giamakidis moved from Alaska to Portland to enroll in the Architectural Design and Drafting Program, located at PCC’s Sylvania Campus in Southwest Portland.

“Up until a year ago, I knew nothing about architecture,” Giamakidis said. “I dove into it. I always had a thing for design and sketching things out, and I thought, ‘Let’s put it to use to help people and make buildings.’”

Meanwhile student Toby Hatcher had to start from scratch. He hadn’t inherited architecture blueprints from his homeowner’s property, so it was up to him to get creative. This is his second career after retiring in 2017 from the military. In his retirement, Hatcher plans to pursue small home remodels and architecture designs.

“Especially in Portland, with the tiny-home movement and homelessness, there’s a need for people to do what we’re doing,” Hatcher said. “It’s great to do pro bono work.”

Roy and Fitzgerald hope to continue to grow the Portland Permit Solutions Program, to give more students the opportunity to apply their skills and help Portland’s underserved homeowners.

“When Ami first approached me with the project, I was hesitant, because I knew that it would be a stretch for our students,” Roy recalled. “But the real life, hands-on experience proved to really engage the students, and they did a fabulous job with the projects.” ♦

Out of Kosovo

Flamur Vehapi endured the chaos of war and now flourishes as a resource for students



On the first day of school, a young Flamur Vehapi, a Muslim Albanian, arrived to his second grade classroom to find soldiers.

“We were told, ‘Get lost, this is not your school anymore,’” remembered Vehapi of his Kosovo school. “That message was being repeated all over the country. From that point on, only Serbian children were allowed to go to school.”

For the next seven and a half years, Vehapi, his family, and other ethnic Muslim Albanian students had to find places to secretly learn as the country’s leadership preferred the Eastern Orthodox Serbs. It was that experience that instilled a love of education in him.

“I almost got killed trying to go to school,” he said. “I would be stopped on the road and humiliated, beaten, and have things thrown at me, but I wasn’t going to give up. I knew I was going to get an education to help myself and my family someday.”

The conflict intensified and reached a crisis point for all Albanian families like the Vehapis in 1999. Soldiers came to their village, demanding cash and valuables, and threatening to return in two hours for their remaining possessions.

“They told us they would shoot anyone who refused them,” Vehapi said. “As soon as they left, we jumped in the car. We didn’t know where we were going, but still, we just went.”

Only Serbians were allowed to pass through checkpoints, and anyone who didn’t stop could be shot, he said.

“We were careening toward the checkpoint, my dad insisting he wouldn’t stop, and the soldiers were waiting for us,” Vehapi recalled. “One had his gun poised, drawn, and ready for the moment we came into range.”

Thankfully, another soldier recognized his father from the restaurant he owned and let them pass. They stayed with family in a nearby village for two weeks, but being surrounded by burning houses and daily bombings, as well as looting and limited food, they knew they had to leave.

Eventually, the Vehapis were escorted across the Macedonian border in the middle of the night. On the other side, they could still hear the bombings, but they were safe.

Over the next five months, they were shifted from one European refugee camp to another. When the war ended, they returned home to find their house had been burned to the ground.

“War is always chaos,” warned Vehapi, who lived in a vacated apartment building while his family rebuilt their house.

As the country recovered, he met some aid workers from the United States. One of the families was from Jacksonville, Oregon, and they invited him to come and study there, which he did in 2005.

“I work with students to help them understand how people from different cultures interact with each other, and, in some ways, to approach people of different backgrounds. We forget that we all have different contexts.”

— Flamur Vehapi

Thanks to that opportunity, Vehapi now lives in Portland as a researcher, poet, literary translator, academic success coach, and instructor. He is in the second year of his Education and Leadership doctorate program at Pacific University. In 2013, he received his master’s degree from Portland State in Conflict Resolution.

Vehapi works as a student resource specialist at PCC’s Southeast Campus, teaching a myriad of college survival and success courses, as well as a non-credit class called, “How Islam Shaped World History.” He loves being able to share how Islam has impacted both the East and West, and the role it played in the translation and transmission of knowledge.

“My favorite part of teaching is when students have that, ‘Wow’ moment,” Vehapi said.

He feels that living in America has helped him become more spiritual, because he’s spent so much time explaining his faith and battling misinformation about Islam.

“I work with students to help them understand how people from different cultures interact with each other, and, in some ways, to approach people of different backgrounds,” Vehapi said. “We forget that we all have different contexts.

“And PCC is a place where students and staff can connect and heal,” he added. ♦

Explore & Learn

PCC’s Community Ed Program offers hundreds of non-credit and Continuing Education classes each term like Flamur Vehapi’s “How Islam Shaped World History” course (page 31). The program enrolls more than 25,000 non-credit students each year. [Visit pcc.edu/community](https://pcc.edu/community) to sign up for a class today.

“... Community health is a critical component of our bureau’s overall mission.”

— Chief Sara Boone



Chief Alum

Portland’s groundbreaking fire chief is a PCC grad

When she was a young student at Portland Community College, Sara Boone had an important revelation. She was studying to be a youth sports coach at the time, hoping to make a difference in her community.

However, Boone realized that she could make a bigger impact elsewhere. Today, as Portland’s first African-American fire chief, she is positioned to do just that.

Last summer, she was officially sworn in to her new role as Portland’s Fire Chief during a ceremony in the Moriarty Auditorium at PCC’s Cascade Campus. The North Portland campus is home to the college’s Fire Protection Technology Program, where the firefighters of tomorrow learn their craft. PCC student firefighters joined their professional counterparts and a host of well-wishers to celebrate Boone’s promotion.

“My position is not a position of power, but a platform of support,” Chief Boone said at the ceremony. “It is imperative that Portland Fire & Rescue evolve from a place of reactionary emergency response alone, to one where preventative community health is a critical component of our bureau’s overall mission.”

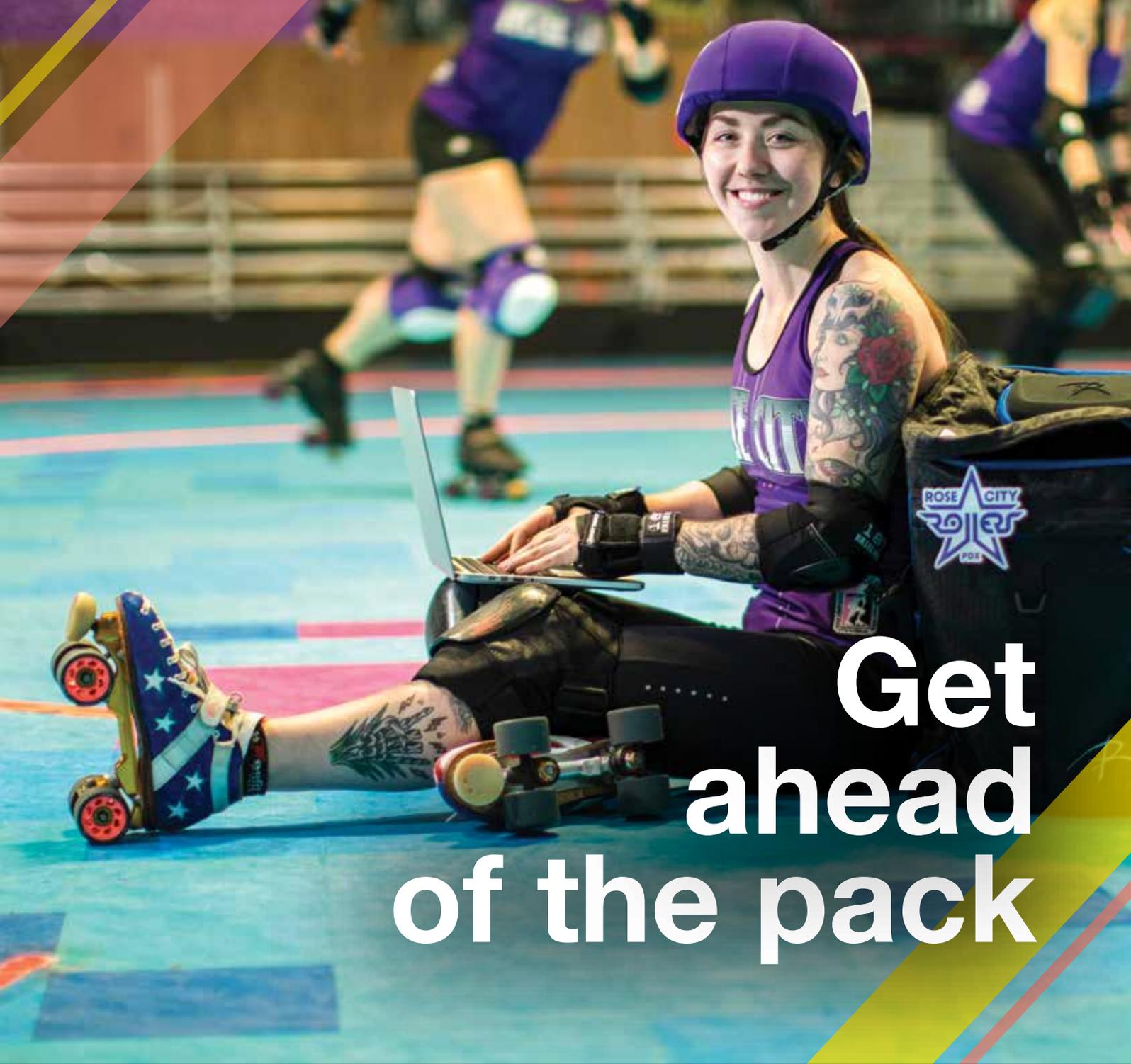
Boone’s elevation to the top position in the Portland Fire Bureau caps off a distinguished 24-year career in which she registered a series of “firsts” for the city. She became Portland’s first African-American woman firefighter in 1995, and the city’s first African-American battalion chief in 2014. She has also served as the bureau’s safety chief, deputy chief of logistics, and division chief of medical services and training.

With her promotion, Portland now has a woman of color at the head of its two principal emergency response agencies: Boone at the Fire Bureau and Chief Danielle Outlaw at the Police Bureau.

Boone’s appointment was the doing of City Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty, who oversees the Fire Bureau. It helped to fulfill two of Hardesty’s long-standing priorities: promoting from within and delivering on the city’s commitment to uplift members of traditionally underrepresented communities.

“When I was tasked with hiring the new fire chief, I was absolutely convinced that they already worked for the City of Portland, that they were already part of the Fire Bureau,” Hardesty said. “Sara Boone and I are going to work together to make sure we have the best men and women serving this community.”

After attending PCC, Boone went on to earn a degree in Education from Boise State University. She returned to Portland to pursue a career in education, but a chance encounter with a firefighter from the Portland Fire Bureau changed her career trajectory, leading to the role she has today. ♦



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Going High Tech

After serving in the Army, PCC grad Sarah Teters has made microelectronics her career

Right out of high school, 19-year-old Sarah Teters enlisted in the Army and served from 2008 to 2014. After her service, she found work as a security guard, but it offered few career advancement opportunities.

“I didn’t make very much money,” Teters recalled. “The job wasn’t cutting it, and I didn’t know what else to do. I knew I needed an education, though. I decided to go back to school in 2016 because I needed a real career.”

Enrolling in college was an important first step for Teters, to reinvent herself. The divorced mother of three had just moved in with her mother enabling her to enroll in general education classes at PCC.

“It was on me to supply the money,” she cautioned. “It was essentially ‘go time.’”



A self-professed problem solver, Teters discovered math classes that challenged her. These classes became the basis for her to transition into the Microelectronics Technology Program at the Rock Creek Campus.

“It was all fresh and new,” Teters said. “There was a learning curve, but the instructors were really good and super supportive.”

The Microelectronics Technology Program teaches students how to maintain and repair the highly complex manufacturing equipment used to make integrated circuits and solar cells. They also work on vacuum and plasma systems, as well as process tools used by the industry.

Teters earned a National Science Foundation scholarship for women and underserved students that helped her focus on her training, which included the program’s job interview class.

The class features professionals and volunteers from the semiconductor industry who work with second-year students to develop their resumes and perfect their interviewing skills.

Armed with skills learned from the program, Teters met with Intel and was offered a job shortly thereafter. About 85 percent of microelectronics graduates are hired before or shortly after graduation.



“I am very proud of Sarah,” said Dorina Cornea-Hasegan, microelectronics instructor. “Her success story is truly the theme for our program.”

Teters’ security job is now a distant memory. She earned her associate degree and secured work at one of the world’s leading tech companies.

“I went from living in a bedroom at my parents’ house to having my own place,” Teters said. “I developed a career, and it’s great. The opportunity is there because you have this amazing support at PCC, especially in this program. As long as you don’t give up on yourself, you can make it.” ♦

Learn more about
microelectronics at
pcc.edu/mt

Common Denominators

Jessica Bernards and Wendy Fresh employ new, supportive way to teach math



Two Portland Community College math instructors have developed a new formula for how their students learn.

Jessica Bernards and Wendy Fresh have taken a national learning model called the “Flipped Classroom” to a whole new level. Students go online outside of class at the MyMathLab website to watch short videos of lectures created by the instructors that contain embedded introductory questions. Working at their own pace, students can pause and rewind the lectures, filling in corresponding video notes as they go.

The Rock Creek Campus instructors said this helps students stay organized, remain engaged, and develop a valuable resource for studying. Having identified the prerequisite skills needed for each section, the instructors provide links to outside resources within the video notes for students to use as needed.



Then, students attend class, not to listen to the instructor lecture for hours and hours, but to tackle harder problems with guidance from their teachers. For the first hour of class the instructors organize engaging activities designed to accelerate learning and provide opportunities for students to work out common misconceptions of the topics (think puzzles, math Jeopardy, station mazes, and Kahoot!). In the second hour, they take on higher-level problem solving, or the “homework,” individually. This way, as they’re working independently, they have immediate support from their instructor and classmates.



environment where everyone feels part of the team, and they all can learn something from each other.”

Fresh added, “It makes it so math isn’t this scary thing anymore.”

For the past six years both instructors have been attending national conferences, learning about the flipped classroom model at other colleges and universities. They hope to advise more and more

PCC instructors on possibly adapting the model to their classrooms.

But does it work?

“We took this model and put it on steroids,” said Bernards, who teaches a hybrid model where students meet once a week. “We are seeing more students coming from a variety of different backgrounds and with varying responsibilities outside of school. I think this model levels the playing field.”

In the end, students have the ability to ask for help without having to schedule office hours with their instructor or wait for pauses in long lectures.

“Everyone brings value to the class, and just because you’re struggling doesn’t mean you are the only one,” said Bernards, who travels the country with Fresh to talk about their approach. “It’s amazing how close the class gets. It creates an inclusive

“Everyone brings value to the class, and just because you’re struggling doesn’t mean you are the only one.”

— Jessica Bernards

Since 2017 when the flipped classroom idea was integrated at Rock Creek, the number of Math 111 students who earned an A grew by 27 percent and pass rates improved by 10 percent. In Fresh’s course, the number students who earned an A increased by 47 percent, while those passing the material grew by 24 percent.

“It was really hard to go back to school with a baby at home,” said Braa Aldebi, a Math 111 graduate who took the course after returning to college after an extended break. “But it was amazing to have the videos available to watch. They helped me get through the course, which refreshed what I had forgotten since high school.”

The success of the completion rates isn’t hard to figure, Fresh said. With more engagement in class, the students are able to learn efficiently and effectively.

“In the past it would just be instructors up front with a monitor and we talk, talk, and talk,” Fresh said. “We would try to answer questions, but it was hard when you had so much material to get through. This model allows us to walk around, answer questions, and provide support when they need it.

“We know the classes’ success wasn’t a fluke,” she added. ♦

What is a Flipped Classroom?

At home, students watch lectures from short online videos, take quizzes, and make notes at their leisure. In the classroom, the instructor conducts activities and group breakouts that tackle the material so students can receive help and ask questions. [Learn more about math flipping at anyonecanbeamathperson.com.](http://anyonecanbeamathperson.com)

Powwow Focuses on Scholarships

Once again, PCC is celebrating Native American culture and traditions with its 21st annual “Wacipi” (They Dance) Traditional Powwow at the Sylvania Campus (12000 SW 49th Ave.).

The powwow is from noon to 9 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 18, in the gymnasium in the Health Technology Building. Money raised from the event benefits PCC’s Native American Scholarship Fund, and vendor space provided by the college helps local native businesses.

For more information, visit pcc.edu/powwow or call 971-722-4116. ♦

JOIN US

Jan. 18 | Sylvania Campus

LEARN MORE:

pcc.edu/powwow



History Corner: A Really Big, and Green, Deal

Back in the rollicking 1960s, everyone used a car to get to the brand new Sylvania Campus overlooking the metro region. Today, due to climate change, Portland Community College is making sure students, staff, and faculty have greener options. And it has paid off. As a result of the college’s sustainability efforts centered on bike riding, alternative fuel shuttles, ride and car sharing, and public transit partnerships, PCC was named the top U.S. community college in the Chronicle of Higher Education’s 2019 Sustainability Index. ♦

Holding Court at PCC

Last fall, PCC and the Multnomah County Library welcomed U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor to its Sylvania Campus to celebrate the release of her new children's book, "Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You."

PCC's legal assistant program helped welcome her to the college. Sotomayor's assistant, Anh Le, is a graduate of the program and was named a 2012 Diamond Alumni, which recognizes PCC's most outstanding graduates. ♦



Cascade Festival of African Films Turns 30

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Jan. 31 – Feb. 29
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africanfilmfestival.org

It's the 30th anniversary for PCC's most beloved community festival. A free popular Portland event, the film festival features a month of more than 30 feature, documentary, and short films by established and emerging African directors from 18 countries. The Cascade Festival of African Films shows Africa through the eyes of Africans, rather than a vision of Africa packaged for Western viewers.

Come celebrate three decades of the festival in 2020, which runs from Jan. 31 to Feb. 29. The films are shown at the Moriarty Auditorium, Cascade Campus (705 N. Killingsworth St.). Details on this year's film festival can be found at africanfilmfestival.org. ♦

Soaring to New Heights

Geographic Information Systems is training the next generation of technicians

It might look like a concrete bunker without light, gray in color from floor to ceiling, buried deep in the Sylvania Social Science Building, but there is more that meets the eye. It's the center of a burgeoning technology field called geographic information systems.

Rows of powerful Dell computers line the desktops where students use the latest software for cartography, modeling, and stat analysis. Next to a colorful wall mural, geography instructor Christina Friedle opens a black cabinet filled with the next generation of GIS toys – drones. Standing with her are interested students, past and present, who have been impacted by her program.

Their eyes widen when they spot what are technically called Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS).

The shelves are stocked with propeller and fixed-wing drones. These tools symbolize the new age of geospatial technologies where they're used to survey land for development, environmental preservation, or national security. The drones Friedle shows off to the students are part of a re-imagining of her certificate within PCC's Geographic Information Systems Program.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently awarded Portland Community College a \$563,123 grant to establish the Enhancing Geographic Information Science Technology Education Project (eGIST). It will provide up-to-date equipment for the GIS labs, examine curricula for inclusionary approaches for under-represented students, and recruit and retain those students in STEM fields. Another focus of the grant will be creating stackable credentials in geomatics, GIS, and UAS through partnerships with the NW Geotech Center.

"This project is needed to train the next generation of geomaticians in Oregon," comments Friedle, who leads the project.

"Many of the trained surveyors today are not familiar with geospatial technologies that have become more relevant in the field of land surveying."

She pulls out both types of drones and starts assembling parts. Assisting her is student Mike Holscher who can't stop smiling.

"I'm a GIS fanatic," exclaims the Forest Grove resident.

Holscher completed his certificate from PCC in 2016 but returns regularly to keep current on new equipment. He's a biologist by trade but after completing the program, he now works for an environmental consulting firm as a GIS technician and is a drone pilot.

"I use drones to remotely collect images for the wetlands we map," Holscher says. "We try to do a forensics kind of investigation. We go back and see where the wetland boundaries used to be and then try to calculate an impact area. I couldn't have picked a better job."



Meet a GIS Student

A native of Austin, Texas, Krishna Sunglieng has a bachelor's degree but wants to add an associate degree to his completion toolbox. In his first term at PCC, he's using his training to transition into the field of urban planning to build green spaces.

"Electrical engineers have spoken very highly of this program (GIS)," he says. "Both teachers I've had so far have worked in the industry, professionally, and know what they're talking about." [Check out PCC's GIS program at pcc.edu/gis.](https://pcc.edu/gis)



“PCC is in a key position to fill this gap in Oregon because we already have established programs and have the expertise, skills, and technology to train the future geomaticians.” — Christina Friedle

Devin Shiang helps snap the propellers into place on one UAS. He discovered GIS while taking a human geography course as part of his associate degree. Human geography is the study of people and how they interact with their lived spaces.

“I like studying how cultures have interacted with their environments and moved through the world over time,” he asserts. “Every teacher here is very passionate about what they do and all work in the industry.”

Now outside on the campus quad, the drones are ready for flight and Friedle is pleased. Some students have the typical multi-rotor drone that can hover at precise

locations and positions, while others hold the fixed-wing UAS, which can map larger areas and stay in the air much longer.

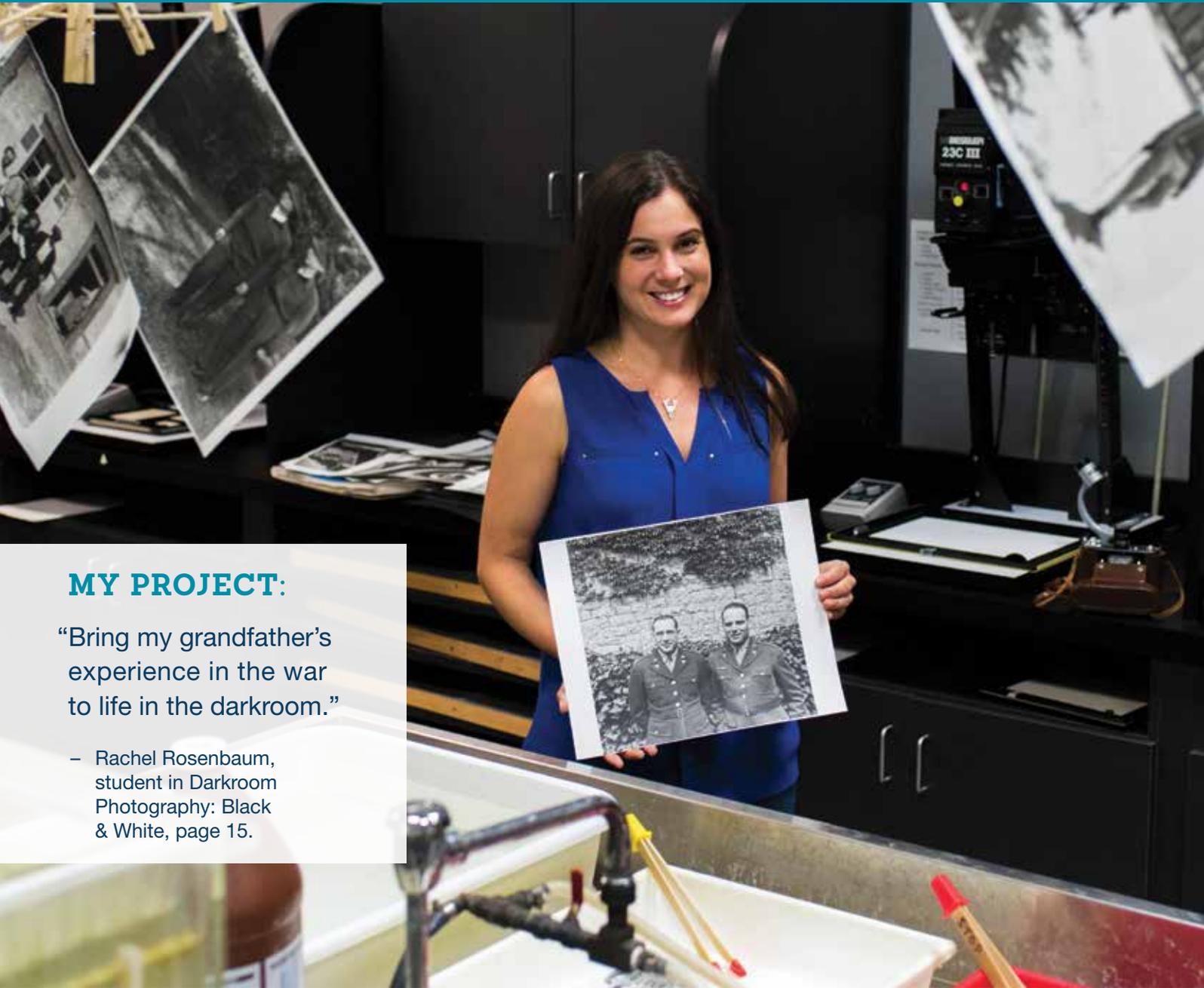
Friedle is training the next generation of GIS technicians to fill a need for qualified workers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, jobs like cartographers and photogrammetrists are projected to grow 19 percent and geoscientists by 14 percent through 2026. This is creating a skills gap as there are more jobs than workers.

“PCC is in a key position to fill this gap in Oregon because we already have established programs and have the expertise, skills, and technology to train the future geomaticians,” Friedle says.

Many of her students are either using the skills in their jobs, are entering the workforce, or will enter it once they graduate. Their journeys all began in that lab in the basement of Sylvania’s Social Science Building, launching them into a field desperately in need of trained GIS technicians.

“I’m planning to earn my bachelor’s in geography or something in data science,” Shiang adds as he watches the drones finish their flights. “In the meantime, I’m looking for work and applying for internships. PCC is very much oriented toward people like me who are going back to school to find work.” ♦

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 30¢ 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:

“Bring my grandfather’s experience in the war to life in the darkroom.”

- Rachel Rosenbaum, student in Darkroom Photography: Black & White, page 15.

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.