

SUMMER 2024

Watercolor Wonders

Instructor Leslie Barnum takes her painting classes to new and fun levels for beginners and seasoned watercolorists

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Spotlights



Lifeline to Great Careers

Nursing students flocked to the Sylvania Campus to attend PCC's Registered Nurse Job Fair, hosted by the college's Career Services, with more than a dozen employers exhibiting career opportunities. The fair helped students compare not only starting wages, but also seek a nurturing employment environment with generous time off, tuition reimbursement, and ample retirement compensation. Entering an in-demand career like nursing that offers a secure financial future is key for these students, but having a job that is also personally rewarding and sustainable is crucial. ♦

Focus on Semiconductors

For the fourth time in two years, PCC has welcomed a member of U.S. President Joe Biden's Cabinet to its campuses to learn more about the college's training programs and initiatives.

Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su joined Oregon Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici and local leaders for a semiconductor tour and roundtable at the Mechatronics Lab within the Willow Creek Opportunity Center in Washington County – the heart of the Silicon Forest.

PCC is the epicenter for semiconductor training in the region via a full menu of on-ramp and training programs that provide people the advanced manufacturing skills needed to find living-wage jobs. One of the key areas of focus for the college is mechatronics, a rapidly evolving interdisciplinary field that encompasses some of the fastest-growing careers globally.

"What you are doing with young people here is needed," said Secretary Su. ♦

Learn more: pcc.edu/semiconductor



Manufacturing Curiosity

Youth Manufacturing Day showcased high-tech career opportunities for Hillsboro students

Portland Community College's Willow Creek Opportunity Center ignited the spark of curiosity and ambition in about 60 high school students from Washington County. In collaboration with the Hillsboro School District and the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, the center recently hosted an immersive Youth Manufacturing Day aimed at shedding light on the diverse pathways within the manufacturing industry.

Attendees embarked on a whirlwind tour through six interactive stations, each offering a glimpse into the exciting world of manufacturing. From donning bunny suits at the gowning station to delving into the cutting-edge realm of virtual reality, students had the opportunity to engage firsthand with various aspects of manufacturing technology. In addition, representatives were available to discuss job and employment opportunities at their companies.

"PCC and local industry partners have a shared goal to raise awareness of manufacturing and semiconductor jobs with career growth potential," said DaNene Dwyer, program manager with the Willow Creek Opportunity Center.

In its second year, the event aims to not only showcase PCC's array of manufacturing-related programs, but also to inspire the next generation of industry leaders. By offering a hands-on experience, organizers hope to spark enthusiasm and encourage students to pursue educational pathways that align with their interests and aspirations.



Microelectronics instructor Dorina Cornea-Hasegan shows students the wonder of a mini hover drone.

"It was a great opportunity to share information about PCC's manufacturing-related programs that get students workforce ready in three months to two years," said Ariel Ladum, PCC trainer and education specialist. "The students were highly engaged." Programs highlighted for the students include:

Semiconductor Essentials Training – This class is free to young adults ages 17 to 24 years old who are interested in the semiconductor industry. They can plan next steps to start in PCC's manufacturing programs, learn technical skills through hands-on training, and develop in-demand, essential skills for success. Interested students can call 971-722-2623, or visit pcc.edu/set.

NextGen Youth Services – The NextGen Youth Services Program provides a welcoming and supportive space for young adults ages 16 to 24 years old who are encountering barriers while trying to enter the workforce. Staff provide support for work tools, books, fees, TriMet passes, and career exploration activities to help participants develop skills and gain work experience. To learn more, call 971-722-2541 in Washington County or 971-722-2178 in Multnomah County, or visit pcc.edu/nextgen.

College & Career Prep at PCC's Opportunity Centers – PCC's two Opportunity Centers (in Northeast Portland and Hillsboro) connect people to college and community resources. The Opportunity Centers support students who are working toward earning a family-wage job. For details, call 971-722-2688 or visit pcc.edu/opportunity-center. ♦



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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: Enrollment Boom

Between 1966 and 1968, Portland Community College’s growth was dramatic. In fact, it was described as “a cattle stampede on the Kansas plains” in a book written about PCC’s history called “They Just Did It.”

As enrollment reached 9,710 students in the fall of 1966 and space became limited, students, faculty and administrators were advocating for more breathing room. Failing and Shattuck Halls (now part of National University of Natural Medicine and Portland State University, respectively) were jammed to the breaking point, and a wide assortment of temporary buildings were used to accommodate the student overflow. Enter the Sylvania Campus. The college broke ground on the first phase of the “Mt. Sylvania Campus” on July 6, 1966, with the first three buildings ready for occupancy in 1968. Today, Sylvania alone houses more than 23,000 students, and PCC as a whole attracts 50,000 every academic year. ♦

Founding PCC President Amo DeBernardis provided staggering college enrollment figures to his Cabinet in the late 1960s.



Budget Friendly

PCC has earned its 31st consecutive recognition by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA), receiving the prestigious Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The GFOA award highlighted the college’s comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. Out of approximately 90,000 state and local governments mandated to produce financial reports annually, a mere 4,300 have earned this esteemed award. ♦

Receptive Crowd

The college’s Sylvania Campus was abuzz with political energy earlier this year as it played host to an annual Legislative Reception. Earning its reputation as a must-attend event, the soirée drew over a dozen influential elected officials, notably featuring State Senate President Rob Wagner and State Senator Michael Dembrow. College leaders, led by PCC President Dr. Adrien Bennings, engaged in discussions about pivotal initiatives and programs. ♦



\$250K for Student Success

PCC’s student success programs Future Connect and PDX Bridge received The Johnson Charitable Trust Award for Excellence in Service and Leadership from JCT Board President Ashley Campion. The award includes a \$250,000 grant that can be used over a three-year period. The funding will allow the college to expand support services and coaching to low-income, first generation students who face barriers accessing and navigating educational resources. ♦

Learn more: pcc.edu/foundation

Seizing the Opportunity

Neamhain Virtue capitalizes on PCC's support system to earn Johns Hopkins research program honor



At Portland Community College, Neamhain Virtue (they/them/their) is a testament to the institution's transformative prowess and proof that anything is possible at PCC.

The Gresham resident spent two impactful years at PCC, earning an Oregon Transfer associate degree with a focus on science. Their journey continues at Portland State University, where they are currently pursuing a bachelor's degree and holding a pristine 3.95 grade point average.

Virtue's aspirations extend beyond academics, delving into the realms of academic research and writing, fueled by a passion for Irish culture and history. Described by instructors as affable, pleasant, and dedicated to their craft, Virtue's commitment reached new heights last year.

Johns Hopkins University had just unveiled a competitive undergraduate summer research program. Part of the program was geared toward community college students, and Virtue knew it was right up their alley. Kerry Pataki, an anthropology instructor at PCC, connected Virtue and their classmates to the new program.

“There was a lot of compassion at PCC that made me feel like I mattered and helping me succeed mattered.”

— Neamhain Virtue

“It seemed a little too good to be true – an opportunity to study a topic of my choosing, with expenses paid and a stipend?” Virtue said. “I almost didn’t apply, but I did.”

Virtue seized the opportunity, securing a spot among the 14 national finalists. The university’s new program consisted of eight full weeks, travel, room and board on the John Hopkins campus, plus a \$6,000 stipend.

“The summer program was an incredible experience,” Virtue said. “Together with a small cohort of peers from across the country, we spent 10 weeks learning more about the research process, including publication and academic journals. They also provided so much support for those of us wanting to transfer to four-year universities or graduate schools.”

At Johns Hopkins, Virtue presented themes of displacement and mental illness in the old Irish tale of “King Sweeney.” It was a perfect opportunity to blend their passion for Irish history and culture,

especially legends and folklore with community and disability activism, and how to build a society that incorporates everyone into the community.

“In the first few weeks at Johns Hopkins, we did lots of brainstorming and general research to choose topics, and it was really amazing to see how no one starts a project with all the answers. Figuring out a question is the first part of the research,” Virtue said.

It was quite the exclamation point for Virtue’s academic journey. When Virtue enrolled at PCC, they were returning to college in their 30s as a parent, and money was really tight. They first left school at age 20, convinced they would never be able to make it through two years of college, let alone four.

“My career options were incredibly limited through my 20s, and I was basically bouncing from entry-level job to entry-level job,” Virtue said. “Now, of course, I’ve got a family and a kid, which is its own challenge. But it also motivates me.

For my kid, I want to set an example of working toward things that matter and improve my life.”

Virtue, who would love to work in academic research and writing, chose PCC for its affordability and accessibility. They started at the college during the pandemic, and loved the school’s flexibility in online and in-person courses that fit into their hectic schedule.

“I’ve talked to people with masters and doctorates who told me their best academic years were at PCC, where they had some of the best classroom experiences, and that really influenced my community,” Virtue said. “There was a lot of compassion at PCC that made me feel like I mattered and helping me succeed mattered.”

Virtue stood tall to challenge stereotypes and prove that PCC is indeed a launchpad to opportunity. As they said about the Johns Hopkins experience, “I entered that program believing I wasn’t a real academic, just some community college student. I left genuinely believing that I could be an academic. Grad school might even be in my future after PCC.” ♦



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.**

Get Grillin' this summer

Explore the flavors of outdoor grilling with Chef Steven Havens in two new grilling classes this summer.

Fire it up on page 20.

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