

Central Oregon Community College

COCC

magazine

2019



CULTURE AT THE CORE

College Prep program promotes higher education

Education Changes Lives



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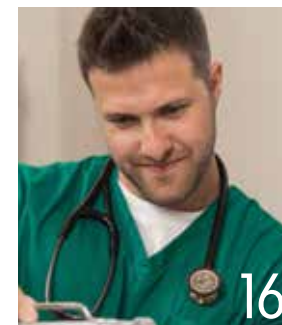
Who We Are

Established in 1955, the Central Oregon Community College Foundation scholarship program has enabled students to learn new skills, earn technical certificates, complete two-year associate degrees and be prepared to pursue the remainder of their undergraduate studies at a college or university. The COCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, separate from the College and governed by a volunteer board of trustees composed of professional, business and community leaders.

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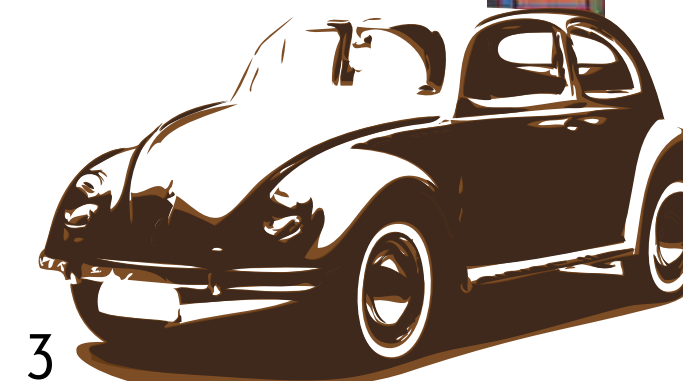
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Letter From the President

Welcome to the inaugural edition of COCC Magazine—a community publication about your College. In the following pages, we're pleased to share with you some of the diverse programs, the inspiring people and the overall academic spirit that makes Central Oregon Community College (now in its 70th year!) such an incredible place.



Spring, with all its changing ways and transitions, seems an appropriate time to share the following stories with you. Stories of new growth and new beginnings. Of lives changed. Of education in motion.

You'll read about how COCC is connecting with Native American and Latinx high school students, promoting a path of higher education. And how the College's education program at Deer Ridge Correctional Institution is making a difference. Other stories look at the vital impact of scholarships and how new technology is bridging our campuses.

This season of change also marks a personal transition in my life. With this year's commencement, I'll be culminating a career in higher education that spans 47 years, a fulfilling journey that's taken me from Hawaii to Washington to Oregon. To have my career reach its final chapter with COCC makes me happier than you'll know. The energy and commitment of this College, across our four campuses—and deep into the community—is truly unique. I'm honored to have been a part of it for these past eight years.

In the months ahead, COCC will be introducing you to our new president, Dr. Laurie Chesley, who was officially hired in March and who begins her tenure on July 1. Dr. Chesley was a first-generation college student who became an English professor before shifting into administration. With an impressive 18-year catalog of administrative experience, and as a firm believer in the power of collaboration, Dr. Chesley will be a great leader for COCC.

For now, spring does its thing. And on this day, there's a lot happening at your College. Over at the Redmond campus, for instance, automotive students are getting trained in scanners and electronic programming. In Prineville, a business class puts math basics on the board. Aspiring storytellers at the Madras campus are sure to be discussing topics of plot and structure in a creative writing class. And in Bend, among many other programs, future chefs are learning the essentials of the culinary arts.

These lessons, and many others, are improving our students' lives. And while education's greatest impact is felt by the individual, it has a profound, enduring effect on our entire community. That thought makes me smile.

With deep gratitude and aloha,

Dr. Shirley I. Metcalf
COCC President

Central Oregon Community College COCC magazine 2019 Volume 1

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A Tale of Two Stickers

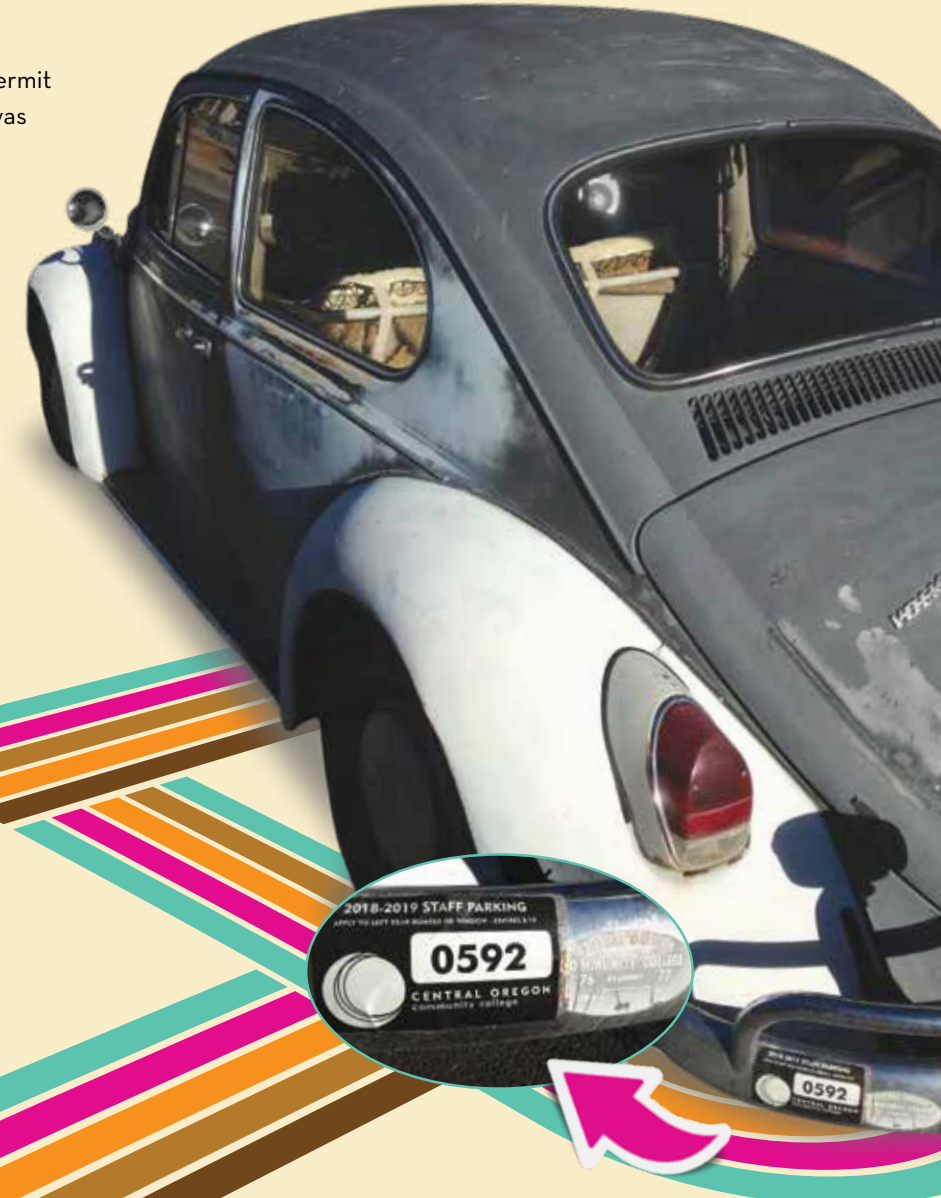


They're spotted everywhere around Central Oregon, from remote trailheads to busy intersections, those COCC student and staff parking permit bumper stickers—in a rainbow of hues—that signal a Bobcat is nearby. Most of them are current issue. Some are expired but sticking tight. And then there's the unusual duo affixed to the shiny bumper of Mark Heinlein's 1967 VW Beetle.

Paired together with the COCC math tutor's current permit is a slightly faded, but fully intact, student permit that was issued for the 1976-77 academic year. It was cruising around the roads of Bend back when the original "Star Wars" was in theaters and Jimmy Carter occupied the White House.

"I bought the Bug about 30 years ago from a friend," says Heinlein, adding that the seller was unsure of the student sticker's origin. He remembers thinking that it preceded his own time in Bend and decided to honor its legacy by leaving it. While the Beetle came with a bumper sticker, it was one engine shy of getting anywhere. So Heinlein simply swapped out his former Bug's engine—a '61—and kept on rolling.

These days, with fewer and fewer old Bugs on the road, the vehicle gets a certain degree of attention as it growls around. (Fun fact: The odometer on those vintage models rolls over after 99,999 miles, so keeping track of mileage is an iffy business.) Heinlein, who's been with the College for 35 years, hears tales aplenty. But he's never met the student. Maybe it's just a matter of time. ■



Got a sticker story of your own?
Let us know! collegelrelations@cocc.edu

Mark Russell Johnson

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Culture at the Core

With a focus on heritage, a grant-powered College Prep program promotes higher education for regional Native American and Latinx* high schoolers



A grass fire moves hungrily across the brittle landscape of northern Oregon, spreading like a spilled substance over the outskirts of Maupin and charring the basalt plateaus and open country. It's a frightfully early start to fire season—just the first week of July—and more than 300 personnel have geared up to knock down the fast-rolling Boxcar Fire.

Ninety miles south, at COCC's Bend campus, the morning dawns platinum blue, absent of a trace of smoke. Well, almost.

Inside a classroom in the Ponderosa building, a group of 15 high school students, all Native American youth, are circled around a tabletop model of a town, outfitted with streets and little buildings, where a small tuft of grayish cotton puffs like smoke from a pint-sized house. Toy fire engines have already converged on the scene.

"We run all kinds of 'sims' on that," explains Paula Simone, program director for COCC's Structural Fire Science and Wildland Fire Science departments, as the students lean in and examine the scale model. A few reach out to touch the miniature world. Firefighter students, Simone tells them, will map out response tactics and urban challenges with the model, utilizing a software interface to

run different simulations. "There are so many opportunities you can branch off into in this field," says Simone, planting inspiration as she gives an overview of the College's Fire Science programs and degrees.

It is a "cultural lens" that everything is viewed through.

Inspiration is fundamental to this gathering. The students are part of COCC's STRIVE program (Summer Training to Revive Indigenous Vision and Empowerment), a five-day symposium that gives regional Native American teenagers a snapshot of college life and opportunities, and, potentially, a better defined path beyond high school. A similar program for Latinx teens, called Ganas, took place a week earlier.

Students stay in the Wickiup Residence Hall, get acquainted with the campus. They meet faculty and hear from college-enrolled peers while learning about COCC's career-starting programs, from Fire Science and Nursing to Business and Culinary.

With an agenda that emphasizes culture, participants honor their own heritage through a series of projects and fieldtrips. Kelsey Freeman, the Native American

College Prep coordinator, calls it a "cultural lens" that everything is viewed through. STRIVE, for instance, holds discussions on language reclamation and how college can present unique challenges to Native Americans.

Chance Stwyer, a young Native student, seems primed for his next step. As some of his peers wriggle into fire gear behind him, he studies a collage of wildland fire-fighting images. "There's a lot of interesting things here," he says. "And this is one of them."

ACKNOWLEDGING HERITAGE

While the STRIVE and Ganas programs offer opportunities for college life immersion, the other half of COCC's College Prep program—also with a parallel purpose—takes place in regional high schools.

iAvanza!, for Latinx students, and The Good Road, for Native students, combine to integrate into nine regional high schools, from Culver to Prineville, with a curriculum centered on things like goal-setting, teamwork and leadership.

*"Latinx" (pronounced La-teen-ex) refers to people of Latin American origin or descent, used as a gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina.





Powering this effort is a \$175,000 grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust's Equitable Education portfolio. Monies have helped expand the reach of the program into additional schools and created a host of scholarships. Meyer's investment has also increased the iAvanza! coordinator's role and established a half-time coordinator position for the Native American program. It has strengthened the program's overall framework—and impact—directly affecting some 130 students per year while creating a ripple effect that rolls out to many future high schoolers.

"We're proud to partner with COCC to address the opportunity gap many Native American and Latinx students face," says

culture. And how a strong work ethic is key. "To be a Latino is to be hardworking," he says, referencing his own father's role-modeling, and seeming to find his stride in the exercise. There are halting moments, but the presentation is genuine. His timed four-minute talk ends with claps from his classmates.

Sitting at the back and coaxing her students on is Christine Walker, COCC's Latinx College Prep coordinator. She gives pep talks and feedback in between presentations. Behind her, an array of college and university pennants decorates the wall, all seeming to point determinedly toward some shared destination.

program is utilizing many voices and many tools to help students.

Still, there are hurdles ahead. The two traveling coordinators are spread paper-thin over a vast area. And it's an area where the Latinx population is expanding. U.S. Census Bureau figures released in 2016 indicated that Deschutes County's Latinx population, since 2010, had grown by 18 percent. Plus, some school district funds, affecting credits for younger students in the program, have recently been eliminated.

"We're hoping to grow our funding, through both internal and external sources, such as grants," says Alicia Moore, dean of Student and Enrollment Services, who's working with stakeholders to plan for the future. Part of that, she adds, is thinking in terms of a multi-generational perspective, of seeing the deeper reach. "Having Native American or Latinx teachers—growing that population of students that will then become these teachers—is an important piece." With culture at its core, the mission continues. ■

"Forty-eight out of 52 students went on to higher ed and 30 came to COCC."

Students build confidence in the once-a-week class (led by COCC coordinators) while getting a chance to peek behind the curtains of the college experience. Part of the payoff is earning a single transferrable college credit per term—up to three—to help them begin seeing their place in higher education.

COCC's College Prep program was inspired by a statewide initiative, called the Oregon Leadership Institute, and has grown since the now-retired director of Multicultural Activities, Karen Roth,

guided its liftoff nine years ago. Its goals are unchanged: promote high school graduation success and continued education for underserved students.

Oregon Department of Education data sheds light on why these populations are in need of some support. While the state's recently measured cohort high school graduation rate, for 2016-17, hit 76.7 percent, the Latinx and Native populations trailed behind: at 72.5 and 59.1, respectively. (A positive shift, however, is underway. A year earlier, the

Latinx high school graduation rate was 69.4 percent and Native Americans were at 56.4 percent.)

For cultures that put strong emphasis on the family unit above the success of the individual, diplomas are not necessarily a must-have. "It's often seen that you're leaving your culture," explains Michelle Cary, the College's Native American program coordinator. But families, she says, are noticing the program's unique approach. "They're appreciating that heritage and culture are being acknowledged."

Matt Morton, director of the Equitable Education portfolio. "These programs provide direct benefits to students, families and local communities today, and build relationships and systems needed to sustain them in the future."

FINDING A STRIDE

It's just prior to the 8 a.m. bell at Crook County High School on an ice-scraper of a December morning and students are filtering into the iAvanza! class, speaking in a mix of Spanish and English. Soon, their project for the day—a public speaking exercise meant to highlight the meaning of their culture—gets underway.

Edgar Gonzalez steps to the front of the room—and immediately looks like he'd rather be somewhere else. The tall student, a football and basketball player with Division 1 aspirations, begins to fidget slightly with the eyes of 13 classmates clapped upon him.

But then Gonzalez seems to settle in. He mentions the vital role of family in his

"Forty-eight out of 52 students went on to higher ed and 30 came to COCC," says Walker after the class, standing in the hallway and reflecting on last year's program results. "Our statistics are wonderful."

Students buzz past Walker on the way to their next class and one stops to chat. Making inroads at the schools, becoming a trusty resource and mentor, is a big part of her job. With each day, at each different campus, that role solidifies.

MANY VOICES, MANY TOOLS

When Paula Simone shared with the STRIVE students that she banked \$3,600 in two weeks of fighting wildland fire one summer, it got their attention. When Walker helped three Latinx students connect with Ford Family Foundation scholarships this past year, she opened doors.

From small business workshops that spark entrepreneurial minds to peer advice on what it's like to be a Native American working in health care, the College Prep

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Latinx Program

GANAS
Summer program at COCC



iAVANZA!
Set in regional high schools



Native American Program

STRIVE
Summer program at COCC



THE GOOD ROAD
Set in regional high schools



SOLID DATA

98%

Of the iAvanza! seniors last year, 98 percent graduated high school. For the summer symposiums, every Latinx senior in Ganas in 2018 (eight students) graduated and enrolled in higher education.

100%

Of Native American seniors in the STRIVE program (five students) graduated; sixty percent progressed into higher ed.

GET STARTED
AT COCC
TODAY!

Streaming Studies

New teaching platform is opening up options for branch campus math students

It's an afternoon algebra class and professor Doug Nelson's students are digging into exponential modeling, attempting to solve a problem based on a whodunit theme. After deciphering some data, they need to construe a model, make their calculations. A few questions start to bubble up.

"Hey Doug, on number two, you don't specify if you want us to round, or how many decimal places you want," asks a male student, turning to face his professor. "You can round to the nearest minute, that's OK," replies Nelson. The quick exchange is hardly exceptional—but for the fact that the two are located in classrooms some 46 miles apart.

The live streaming College Algebra lecture is effectively linking three separate campuses: Nelson, together with 25 students, on the Bend campus; the student posing the question at COCC's Madras campus (one of two students representing the "northern" seating

section for that class); and a pair of students located at Prineville's COCC Crook County Open Campus.

All have cameras linked up, mics catching sound. Large flat-screens enable the classrooms to view each other. The remote students could tell you, for instance, that their professor is sporting a necktie overrun with golden retrievers.

"I really believe that this works," says Nelson. As its test pilot, he helped launch the streaming platform in the fall of 2017. It has since added another math professor, along with more class options. Other

A recent survey of 80 students indicated that 78 would do it again.

subject areas, such as English, may eventually follow suit. But mathematics, less dependent on free-running discussion—and an active ingredient in most students' COCC education—seems a natural fit.

At least twice a term, the professors visit the smaller campuses to teach from those sites (each is configured to broadcast and receive), getting some valuable face time with their students. "I don't think you can beat in-class learning," says Nelson, "but we have to have other options available to students."

Robert Cole agrees. "I was able to take my math class in Madras instead of traveling to Bend just for one class," says the business student. Although he sees some

built-in challenges—quiet students might find it daunting, he reasons—he sums it up as a "huge help to those of us who do not live in Bend."

A recent survey of 80 students who had taken a streaming math class indicated that nearly all—78—would do it again. That's strong stuff to Brian Gutierrez, Ph.D., the coordinator for a \$2.25 million federal Title III grant for the College, with funds aimed squarely at boosting new student success and retention. While developmental math (pre-college level) is required of many coming into COCC, it's hard for new students to stick with studies that don't immediately give them traction. Long commutes don't help.

"This is increasing access," Gutierrez says of the fledgling program and its impact. "So we took Title III funds and reconfigured classroom space on every campus." Now, instead of technicians setting up equipment each time, there is a dedicated room at all four sites. Plus, the lectures are captured as video files for review.

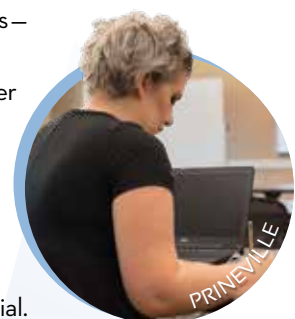
For a district that covers some 10,000 square miles—an area the size of Massachusetts—finding ways to successfully deliver curriculum without requiring students and faculty to rack up Uber driver mileage is essential. "This is way more efficient and economical, and safe—especially from the students' perspective," adds Nelson. "I like all of that."



MADRAS



REDMOND



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New Chapters

An academic partnership with Deer Ridge Correctional Institution is helping inmates envision a fresh start

Standing in a pristine cinderblock workshop, where bike tools hang neatly in a steel cabinet, Michael Cole speaks with rapid enthusiasm about gearing, brakes and all things bicycle maintenance. That's not an uncommon thing in Central Oregon—a place where cycling passes as a religion. But Cole's not a typical shop wrench: He's wearing prison blues and has the word "Outlaw" tattooed emphatically above his left eye.

One of the first to complete Deer Ridge Correctional Institution's new bicycle maintenance program,

the inmate, now a tutor in the program, props a mountain bike in front of him like a hard-won trophy. "In 10 weeks...he can teach you everything," Cole says of instructor Brian Nelson.

Deer Ridge and COCC launched the program this past year as part of its diverse educational partnership, sprung from a suggestion that Nelson had. The avid lifelong cyclist and former competitive rider, who once owned a bike shop in Seattle, is a COCC maintenance custodian. He now volunteers his time each Thursday night to work with the inmates.

"My goal is to give them some basic skills," he says. "I can provide them with transportation, to get them to employment, to get them to health care." On the outside, their new skill set will double as a way to ensure a reliable ride. Cole's life, for instance, never included a driver's license.

Open to six students at a time, the training focuses on bike anatomy and tool familiarity while serving as something of a workplace atmosphere. Ultimately, Nelson thinks the program might tune up bikes for Madras community members, maybe even salvage some discarded ones. For now, they routinely disassemble and rebuild a pair of donated bikes, headset to bottom bracket. It's an act of overhauling something to give it a fresh start.

PAST THE CHECKPOINT

"Minimum gate," says Janet Narum into her handheld radio, waiting in the bitter December air at the minimum-security perimeter. "Copy, standby," comes the reply. Juniper-studded hills surround the quiet location, engulfing the prison some five miles east of downtown Madras. A moment later, the wire-topped gate activates, rolls back, and Narum heads off.

Much of the COCC education director's day-to-day schedule involves security checkpoints. She knows the backstories

“In a 10-year span, 86 percent of everybody that’s been associated with the program is out and working and supporting themselves.”

of many inmates, their former lives and convictions. But she also believes, reflexively, in the power of education. Of writing new chapters.

Then there’s this reality: Ninety-six percent of Oregon’s inmates will eventually be released. At Deer Ridge, most prisoners—950 inmates at last count—arrive “forty-eight months to the gate.” Providing them with an invested educational program helps orient them for success in their own lives, while supporting society’s broader well-being.

“The teachers and this prison as a whole—from the superintendent on down—have worked hard to make this an academic environment,” says Narum. “Today, an officer shushed all of us in the hallway because we had somebody in there testing.”

The partnership with COCC began in 2008, the year after the minimum-security prison first opened. Through a contract with the Oregon Department of Corrections, the College provides a range of services, anchored by its state-mandated General Equivalence Diploma (GED) prep program. Educational services also include Adult Basic Skills classes, a college-credit welding program, Spanish-language instruction, and some career-aligned training, such as construction math, blueprint reading

and bicycle maintenance. For a time, there was an entrepreneurship program through the College’s Small Business Development Center.

Narum and her staff have cultivated a setting for growth that goes beyond tools and textbooks. Inmates, for instance, can join the debate club. Or practice their speaking skills in “Toastmasters.” There have been art classes. Last spring, after months of rehearsal, the curtains opened on a courtroom drama production, an homage to a 1957 film starring Henry Fonda. The inmate actors still talk about it.

And this learning culture is leading to some notable results. The GED achievement rate last year at Deer Ridge topped the state’s entire prison system, the first among 14 facilities, with 180 inmates earning their certificate—and operating with a program half the size of many. Also marking a first, a welding student from Deer Ridge (now released from the facility) earned the College’s Walter G. Coombs Distinguished Achievement Award, one of only four academic awards presented at COCC’s commencement.

Much of this success is linked to the program’s dedicated staff: teachers Anita Goodwin and Angelina Ptomey, and its welding director, Tucker Bauman. There’s also a group of education volunteers, part of a larger brigade of volunteers (more

than 100 in all), that supports the staff and helps shoulder the mission. But that’s not the whole story.

“What’s unique about our program,” explains Narum, “is that we’ve tripled the size of our one-on-one tutoring in the last few years.” Having a tutor inmate program—inmates learning from each other—is a proven system. Other prisons utilize the practice. But Deer Ridge is making it their lifeblood.

They’re putting waves of peer tutors (currently 42) on the frontlines, helping ensure that the GED prep students, up to 150 at a time, connect with someone relatable, someone who can spur their motivation and help them stay the course. Guided by instructors, the tutors—having already graduated high school or having earned their GED—are paid for their work. And they help serve as ambassadors for the program back on their cellblock. Welding and bike maintenance employs them, too.

The GED achievement rate last year at Deer Ridge topped the state’s entire prison system, the first among 14 facilities, with 180 inmates earning their certificate.

It seems to be bringing out the best in the students—and the tutors. “Bloom where you’re planted,” as Narum likes to say. “It gives them a sense of purpose,” she adds. “We’ve had quite a few go out and go into different kinds of careers in a helping profession.”

POSITIVE THREADS

Down in the “schoolhouse,” class has let out for the afternoon. Inmates and tutors are paired up, working quietly in the classrooms, speaking in low tones. Some work at desks that spill out into the hallway. For many, their GED test is looming on the near horizon.

“Confidence is growing,” says Andrew Beare, pausing briefly from his algebra studies. “It’s a goal I want to achieve to better my life.” Having arrived at the prison just nine days prior, he’s already immersed in a chunky textbook. Jason Metcalf, his tutor, has only been tutoring for a week. “He’s doing excellent,” he says. “He has a strong will.”

In the “Resource Room”—a tidy, glass-walled library packed with books—tutor Keion Harris speaks about the culture of encouragement and how he plans to work construction when he gets out. “We used to be gang members,” he says with gravity, “and they give you hope.”

Sitting nearby is instructor Ptomey. “It makes me proud,” she says, breaking into a smile. “It’s life-changing every

day—giving them hope.”

The educator, who holds a master’s degree from Capella University, is certainly up to the challenge, whether her students take months, or even years, to get over the GED finish line. But she also knows, firsthand, about deep-down potential.

Back in 2001, she was sentenced to 30 months in prison after a stack of felony convictions, resulting from a meth addiction, caught up with her. She’d been on a rather bleak path since a hardscrabble upbringing. But she found the drive to reclaim herself, deciding to be a positive thread in the lives of others. Just two weeks after her release, she was taking classes at COCC.



A CONSTANT FORCE

In Deer Ridge's welding shop, grinders and a band saw are making for a steady industrial soundtrack. Bright blue light pulses from one of the six booths and the smell of scorched metal cloaks the space. Smudged by their work, a trio of inmates is working on a freestanding fire pit: after wrapping the columnar design with deer and tree motifs, they're dulling down some burrs.

Welding director Tucker Bauman looks on approvingly. "With this skill, they're able to go out and get a job as soon as they release," he says. "In a 10-year span, 86 percent of everybody that's been associated with the program is out and working and supporting themselves." Each year, the small program draws a huge pool of applicants—they know the "felon-friendly" industry provides good wages and a solid foothold.

Other numbers are encouraging as well. A 2013 study by the RAND Corporation, sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, found that inmates who are engaged in correctional education programs were 43 percent less likely to recidivate than those who bypassed educational offerings. Certainly, reentry is

rife with challenges, homelessness being at the forefront. But education is a constant force, giving inmates self-worth and a sense of attaining something.

Graduation day this year is May 3. (Actually, it's one of two graduation days this year, as the number of grads has multiplied.) There's an inmate choir and graduates don caps and gowns on loan from COCC.

"I don't think the College even begins to realize what it means to these guys to put on a cap and gown," says Narum. "For most of them, if they've been in front of a crowd, it's been in court. When they see that they've made that success, they're more likely to continue to think that way on the outside. It means the world." ■




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 In advance of College events, persons needing accommodation or transportation because of a physical or mobility disability, contact Joe Viola at 541.383.7775. For accommodation because of other disability such as hearing impairment, contact Disability Services at 541.383.7583.



COCC EVENTS

MUSIC | BOOKS | LECTURES | SPORTS | CULTURE | FILMS | ART

MONDAY, MAY 13

Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis

Join us as Professor Robert Putnam discusses the growing opportunity gap, the multiple, unique causes that created it and the many factors that are predicting life success. Monday, May 13 at 6:30 p.m. Bend Senior High School



Professor Robert Putnam



THURSDAY, MAY 16

Judge Torres A Teatro Milagro Bilingual Play

Judge Torres is a story of triumph against the odds. Xiomara made her rise from undocumented immigrant to one of only a few Latina judges in Oregon. Thursday, May 16 at 6 p.m. COCC Pioneer Hall, Hitchcock Auditorium



Judge Torres

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MAY 17-18

Cascade Chorale Spring Concerts

Cascade Chorale goes country! Friday, May 17 at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 18 at 3 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Church

SATURDAY, MAY 18

Asian Pacific Islander Festival

Enjoy cultural performances and locally prepared ethnic cuisine. Saturday, May 18 from 1 to 4 p.m. COCC Coats Campus Center

SATURDAY, SUNDAY & MONDAY, MAY 18-20

Central Oregon Symphony Spring Concerts

With guest artists Zachary Lenox and Jocelyn Thomas. Saturday, May 18 at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, May 19 at 2 p.m. Monday, May 20 at 7:30 p.m. Bend Senior High School



Central Oregon Symphony

THURSDAY, MAY 23

Jungle Run

Adventurous 4-mile trail run or 2-mile trail run/walk around the COCC Bend Campus. Thursday, May 23 at 5:30 p.m. COCC Track

Asian Pacific Islander Festival



SATURDAY, JUNE 1

2019 Salmon Bake

Join us for a traditionally prepared salmon lunch and a Native American celebration. Saturday, June 1 from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. COCC Mazama Field

Salmon Bake

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

24th Annual Storm the Stairs

Annual 2-mile run/walk that covers more than 450 stairs around the COCC Bend Campus. Thursday, June 6 at 5:30 p.m. COCC Track



Storm the Stairs

SATURDAY, JUNE 15

Commencement

Celebrate with the 2019 graduates. Saturday, June 15 at 10 a.m. COCC Mazama Field

Commencement



For complete event details, visit cocc.edu



A Healthy Outlook

CAREERS IN CARE ARE LEADING THE WAY IN THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE

Health care careers are having a heyday. As the country's baby boomer population—some 74 million Americans—phases into older age and as medical advances continue to nudge life expectancy upward, the fields of caring for people are rising like the sharp waves in a cardiogram.

Health care is now—for the first time in U.S. history—the biggest source of employment in the country, taking the mantle from the manufacturing and retail sectors, says a recent report by *The Atlantic*. And the future looks bright: The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 2.4 million new health care jobs will flood the workplace in the coming years, representing an 18 percent growth between 2016 and 2026 (the average growth for other sectors sits at seven).

On a recent day at COCC's Bend campus, students head for lectures and labs in the Health Careers Center, a contemporary, three-level facility (funded by the community through a bond measure) with innovative learning environments, including a fully functioning dental clinic and a simulated hospital wing. Program scrubs and shirts—such as green scrubs for Nursing, gray for Medical Assisting, and black polo shirts for Massage Therapy—are like team colors for career ambitions.

It's a busy building, home to the Nursing program—which includes a Certified Nursing Assistant program—and four Allied Health specialties: Dental Assisting, Massage Therapy, Medical Assistant and Pharmacy Technician. The Veterinary Technician program (veterinary medicine is also a field expected to jump—by 19

“Our graduates are particularly sought after due to our efforts to incorporate health community feedback, and provide leading-edge, accredited education.”

percent—says the Bureau of Labor Statistics) is based at the Redmond campus's Technology Education Center, in close proximity to a hands-on clinic setting.

With realistic workspaces and dedicated faculty, the programs have garnered strong reputations. “Our graduates are particularly sought after due to our efforts to incorporate health community feedback,

and provide leading-edge, accredited education,” says Deborah Malone, chair of the Allied Health programs.

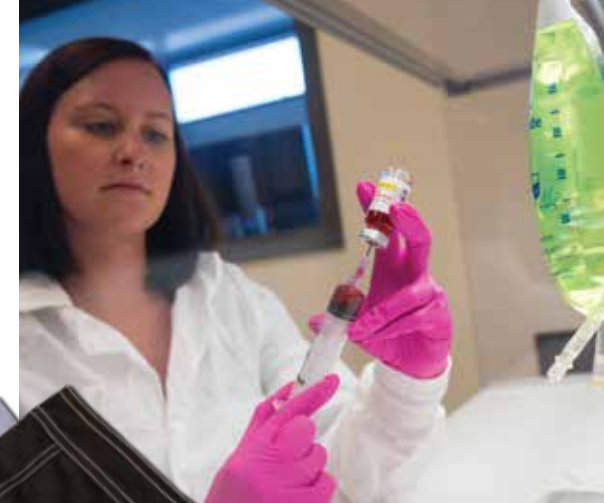
Every month, Allied Health offers a one-hour information session at either the Bend or Redmond campus where potential students, curious about career options, can get program overviews and ask questions. (The Nursing program does this too.) Several attendees are on hand at a recent session. Among them: a young female considering a future in massage and, sitting behind her, a guy who seems to be on more of a fishing expedition. “I'm not sure yet—undecided,” he tells Diana Kalanquin, the academic advisor who helms the presentations.

And it's a career calling for many. “This program opened so many doors for my career path,” says Medical Assistant graduate Brienne Sjolund, who recently earned her certificate and now works at the St. Charles Family Care clinic in Madras. “I've been given the opportunity to work for one of Central Oregon's largest health care systems, with a team of caregivers who all strive to deliver the highest level of care.”

No matter the specialty, COCC preps its graduates with skills and confidence for engaging, meaningful careers. And for a busy future. ■

The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics estimates that 2.4 million new health care jobs will flood the workplace in the coming years.

Kalanquin shares information about prerequisites and entrance requirements. She gives job descriptions and talks about average salaries: The mean wage for dental assistants in Oregon, she informs them, was about \$42,000 in 2017. And she goes through samples of academic plans, outlining the programs and their timelines. “They are structured on a cohort model,” Kalanquin says, “with classes taken as a group and graduating as a group. They're designed to immediately put you to work.”



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NOTEBOOK

A quick glance at some of the initiatives, actions and updates happening at the College

Redmond on the Rise

In 2018, figures from the U.S. Census Bureau tagged the Bend-Redmond area as fourth on the nation's fastest-growing metro area list—a 3.4 percent population jump, or about 6,200 people, from the year prior. To help meet the area's rapid growth, COCC has outlined plans for a Redmond campus expansion, requesting \$8 million in funds from the Oregon Legislature. This partial funding, combined with other revenue sources, would set the project in motion. The envisioned building (the campus's fifth) would house classrooms and science labs, as well as office space for full-time, on-campus faculty. An expansion would also open up more access for students in Prineville, Madras and surrounding areas. The legislative session concludes in June.



Strong Placement

When new students come to COCC, particularly those who've been out of school for a time, placing them at the ideal academic level—the best match for the individual—isn't always a precise formula. But a new approach, launched last year and modeled on some proven success at other colleges, is taking off. "Instead of giving students a single test we're using multiple measures to place students, by asking questions such as, 'What year did they graduate, what was their high school GPA, what was their last math or English course, and what was their grade in that last math or English course,'" explains Beth Wright, placement coordinator. In particular, Wright notes, GPA proves very informative. "And we've used these multiple indicators successfully to place students." With more accurate placement, students can accomplish their academic goals quicker. This new methodology is part of a larger-scale directive to boost student success and retention, with efforts supported by a five-year, \$2.25 million federal Title III grant awarded in 2017.



Next Level for Nursing

Nationwide, nursing education is undergoing an accreditation shift, moving toward a system that operates more and more under national review. Staying on the front edge of this new standard, COCC's Nursing program last year attained candidacy status from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, putting the College on the path to take its associate degree in Nursing to a new level of recognition. "Achieving ACEN accreditation is in line with our College mission to promote student success," says Julie Downing, Ph.D., instructional dean. "We're very much looking forward to our upcoming site visit and receiving national recognition." The programmatic upgrade will expand upon the integrity of the school's Nursing program and open up more employment opportunities for graduates. Approval from the national accrediting body is anticipated by 2020, following the site visit and program evaluation. COCC has trained and readied nurses since 1954, and today the program graduates about 48 RNs every year.



The Gift of Learning

Friends of the COCC Foundation last year helped raise \$1.6 million for student scholarships, a record level for the organization. This high-water mark opened up opportunities for more than 400 deserving local students and their educational pursuits. Community commitment to the mission of the Foundation comes in the form of direct donor support, participation in annual fundraiser events and by attendance at a series of Visiting Scholar presentations. Fundraisers like Meal of the Year, Taste of the Town and the annual Feast at the Old Mill—where Anthony's at the Old Mill District hosts the event and donates the entire dinner and staff time—are major community cornerstones of support.

Closer By Degrees

Some 30 percent of the students currently pursuing bachelor's degrees at OSU-Cascades began their educations at COCC. To help reinforce—and expand—this shared mission of bachelor's degree attainment, COCC and OSU-Cascades announced this winter a Degree Partnership Program that strengthens a longstanding relationship. Now, bachelor's degree-seeking students can choose to be admitted to both COCC and OSU-Cascades. As part of this program, students can take coursework at either institution while still accessing their optimal financial aid offerings, such as Oregon Promise dollars. Additionally, students are assigned an OSU-Cascades academic advisor to help them navigate course options, at both institutions, to best meet their academic goals. The arrangement allows students to take courses at any of OSU's campuses.



Five-Year Plan

Like a roadmap for achievement, COCC's five-year Strategic Plan (which began in 2018) is helping the College chart its future by identifying key commitments that are backed by actionable measures. Student Success, Student Experience, Community Enrichment and Institutional Efficiency are the four pillars of the plan, each braced with initiatives. "For instance, when it comes to Community Enrichment," says Matt McCoy, COCC's vice president, "the College is prioritizing more of a proactive stance in its workforce and education partnerships, so that our services and expertise can best mesh with community needs." While the "roadmap" remains constant, the initiatives—reviewed each year—will continue as is, flex, or even change to connect more accurately with specific goals.

Central Oregon Community College COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Saturday, June 15, 2019

10 a.m. to Noon

COCC Bend Campus | Mazama Field

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Gentry Strong

COCC Foundation Scholarship Recipient

Christmas Valley, Oregon
Structural Fire Science/Paramedicine

Firefighting has a way of stirring fascination from an early age—the trucks, the camaraderie, the helping of others. So it was with Gentry Strong, 20, of Christmas Valley. “Growing up, my father was a volunteer firefighter at the local station,” he recalls. “My fondest memories were going down to the station and getting to be ‘one of the guys.’”

It’s also a path of perseverance, of leaning in when adversity rises up. That’s something that Strong knows a bit about. With an upbringing that included some challenges—a low-income household in a single-parent home—he found that working through the tough times, and actually assisting others along the way (such as serving as a high school mentor in reading groups and at science fairs), proved an effective formula to make his way.

Strong researched COCC’s program early on and set about completing his prerequisites by junior year of high school, seeing it as “not only a childhood passion, but also a great field with high demand.” He then dedicated his savings to tuition.

Now a recipient of a Robberson Ford Scholarship, Strong is pursuing his degree in Structural Fire Science and Paramedicine, a three-year program. “With perseverance and dedication,” says the full-time student, “anything is possible, even in the most difficult times.”



Shannon Walker

COCC Foundation Scholarship Recipient

La Pine, Oregon
Nursing

When her youngest son was born with cystic fibrosis, requiring prompt surgery and a prolonged stay in neonatal intensive care, Shannon Walker, 37, discovered firsthand just how much of an impact nurses have on the world around them. “The situation was incredibly challenging,” she recalls, “but made easier by an incredible team of nurses that walked us through the experience.” That calming, can-do presence is something that stuck with her, and ultimately led her to COCC’s Nursing program.

Walker is proof positive that perseverance delivers. Growing up, she was often homeless, with parents who never finished high school and with “very little value placed on education because we were always in survival mode.” She left home at 15. But she lucked into a situation where she met some supportive people and would become the first in her family to graduate high school—and then the first to graduate college.

“I find it incredibly important to give back in the same way,” she says. To that end, Walker’s been active in her community by helping teens learn about the college application process and she’s even volunteered at a clinic, checking patients in and assisting with paperwork.

Having received the First Presbyterian Church Nursing Scholarship, Walker wants to educate others about how to live their healthiest life. “My long-term goal is to work as a public health nurse in health promotion... to be part of an amazing team of nurses that can provide the same peace of mind for patients in the future.”



“With perseverance and dedication, anything is possible, even in the most difficult times.”

“I find it incredibly important to give back in the same way.”



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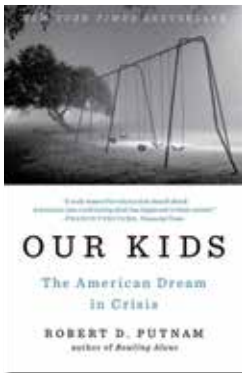
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