

Central Oregon Community College

# COCC

magazine

2020



## INSPIRING ALUMNI

Six former students put their talents and passion to work

# Education Changes Lives



## Who We Are



**\$1.7M** in COCC scholarships and program support in 2019-2020

2019-2020 scholarship students **3.36 GPA AVERAGE**

**90%** scholarship students completed courses with a C or better

Apply today for a COCC Foundation Scholarship!



To learn more, apply for a Foundation Scholarship or donate online, visit [cocc.edu/foundation](http://cocc.edu/foundation)

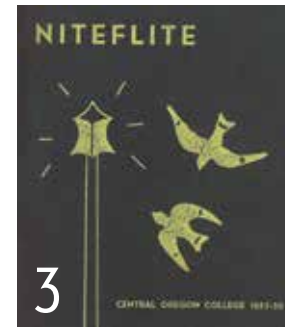
Our scholarships provide financial support, but for many students being a scholarship recipient means something more. It means someone believes in them enough to provide the financial resources they need to attend COCC. It means someone else believes in their dreams.

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## Letter From the President

Welcome to the 2020 edition of COCC Magazine. I hope that you are keeping safe and doing as well as possible during these trying times. Like you, Central Oregon Community College is adapting to this new world and putting our best foot forward.

And we're here to assist you in doing just that. It might be a free advising session through our Small Business Development Center, a new training option if you are a displaced worker, or an enrichment class if you are looking for something to dive into while the storm passes.

While our classes and resources might be remote for the time being, they're backed with all the support, knowledge and attention that have always defined them. I'm truly in awe of how fast our faculty and staff have leaned into the challenge of creating a fully virtual campus. The learning never stops!

The very week that this magazine was being finalized and prepped for printing, COVID-19 became the new global reality. We debated how to best proceed with this publication, if at all. Maybe a magazine should wait for better days? In the end, we decided that stories of inspiration, partnership and community togetherness are more important than ever right now.

In these pages, you'll read about community connections—both deeply set and newly formed—that help make us who we are. You'll see how COCC is working with regional high schools to provide a range of student opportunities. You'll get a feel for how the College is responding to specific workforce gaps, molding training for here-and-now needs. We also made room—at the last minute—for a story that speaks to remote learning, a new necessity that taps into a strong background at COCC.

Every COCC student has a story. Some, like me, are the first in their family to attend college. Some are starting a new life script. Others are turning scholarship aid into belief in themselves. Some want to brush up on skills, or maybe quickly launch a career. There are undecided students and there are those who are actively sighting their way to an advanced degree. This is a place where all stories are welcome—and supported.

Enjoy this edition of the magazine and see for yourself the good things that are happening at your community college. I think you'll be proud of what you find.

Be well and take good care of each other,



Dr. Laurie Chesley  
COCC President



Central Oregon Community College  
**COCC**  
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# Raising a Mascot

Bucket after bucket, running baseline to baseline, Jim Crowell from Bend was putting on a commanding performance. The year was 1955, and Crowell, slight of build but tenacious with his two-pointers, was racking up a memorable game for the Central Oregon College Nighthawks—as COCC and its mascot were then known. He ultimately tallied a school-record 34 points in the 96-67 rout of Oregon Tech.

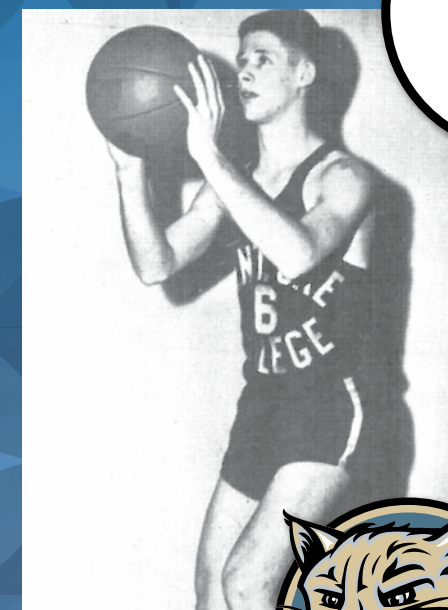
The College, still in its infancy and strictly a night school at the time (sharing quarters with Bend High School downtown), had recently decided on the mascot. With its nimble wings and a nighttime disposition, the bird seemed like a natural fit.

“We played maybe 18 games,” Crowell recalls of the Nighthawk’s season, which took on JV squads from places like Willamette University and Portland State, and hosted home campaigns in the old Kenwood brick gym on Newport Ave. “In ‘55, it was just basketball,” he says of the College’s fledgling sports program.

When the campus moved to its current home on Awbrey Butte in 1964, and with the College no longer just a night school, the nighthawk got nudged into early retirement. The students voted-in a new mascot, the bobcat, partially inspired by a presentation from a former circus trainer who’d brought several of the tamed cats along to show. Clever, strong and adaptable, the animal made an impression.



2019 COCC Bobcat Rugby Team



Jim Crowell, 1955



Original Central Oregon College Nighthawk logo



Current Central Oregon Community College sports logo

Over the years, COCC would expand its sports offerings—and its successes. In the 1980s, for instance, the men’s Nordic team won three consecutive National Ski Association titles. Sports options have scaled back since then, but the College still fields a range of competitive teams, from baseball to triathlon. The rugby team, an emerging powerhouse, won the Northwest College Rugby Conference championship in 2018 and competed in the 2019 National Challenge Cup.

Crowell, still spry, shoots hoops in the Mazama Gym from time to time, occasionally sharing the space with the rugby players when they duck in for a foul-weather practice day. Just a Nighthawk and some Bobcats, bound by the love of sport and the span of a college’s deep history. ■

Got a Nighthawk or Bobcat sports memory to share?



Let us know! [collegerelations@cocc.edu](mailto:collegerelations@cocc.edu)

# Learning Momentum

Regional high schoolers are getting a jump on higher education thanks to some dedicated COCC partnerships and empowering opportunities

It's an April afternoon on the Bend campus and things are a bit of a circus. Dressed in a rainbow-colored tutu, a comically small glittery hat and striped socks stretched high, assistant professor of mathematics Jessica Giglio doesn't seem outfitted for an average day at the office. But this is no ordinary day—this is COCC's annual High School Math Contest, where a circus theme has set the stage for nearly 175 regional mathletes to converge on the College for fun-spirited, number-crunching competition.

The event, which takes a new theme each year, puts students through a series of game-oriented math challenges as the day unfolds across the campus. As Giglio and her colleagues—including a mime, two clowns and even a lion—watch them go, students from 17 schools, such as the Redmond Proficiency Academy and La Pine High School, are darting across the Mazama Gym in the popular sprint-and-solve relay race.

Sneakers thump and squeak across the gym floor. Students reach tables on the opposite side, grab pencils and quickly plunge into math problems. "Let's go Will!" someone yells out. "C'mon Krystal!" cheers another team. They ponder, scribble and sprint again. The energy is like a sporting event—with calculators.

"This is always such a fun day," says Giglio. "I think it's helpful for these

students to see they have peers from all around Central Oregon who think math is just as cool as they do." The contest, supported by a legion of staff volunteers and sponsored by the biotech company Lonza, got its start in 1978.

It's an atmosphere where math minds truly shine. "The contest was difficult, but a blast," recalls Josiah Cruikshank, who competed on the Mountain View High School team several years ago and helped take home top honors. "It helped me grow in my math and competitive abilities." Cruikshank went on to attend COCC and is now serving as the state president of the Oregon Future Farmers of America Organization while readying to pursue a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering this year.

While having fun is the heartbeat of the day, there are some concrete goals, too. The College awards a fully paid COCC class to the day's top scorers and all participants take a test for a chance to compete in the annual Oregon Invitational Mathematics Tournament. Many have earned that opportunity.

When the circus tent folds, so to speak, and the students head back to their schools, they do so with more than a feeling of camaraderie or personal achievement. They've taken a good look at a college campus. And they've seen how an academic discipline is literally celebrated by their community college, with faculty who fully embrace the experience of learning, clown noses and all.

## Laying Tracks

Supporting the educational mission of regional high schools has long been a priority of COCC. By offering access to coursework and credits, by helping spark interests and steering ambitions, the College lays tracks for higher learning. Transcripts are set in motion. Career options are illuminated. It gives students a stronger grip on their future, maybe even reaffirms a passion for a subject or a vocation.

Jenni Newby, Ph.D., instructional dean at COCC, points to the state's "40-40-20" educational goal as a framework for these efforts. Oregon's mandate, she explains, is aimed at a 40 percent college graduation rate, a 40 percent community college graduation rate, and a 20 percent high school graduation rate.

"I think it's helpful for these students to see they have peers from all around Central Oregon who think math is just as cool as they do."

"One way we're addressing that goal is by creating strong partnerships between secondary and post-secondary, in order to more seamlessly transition students to college credit programs," she explains. "We're focused on building and nurturing those meaningful partnerships."



HIGH SCHOOL → COLLEGE



At COCC's Regional High School Science Fair, for instance, budding scientists can share novel research while polishing their presentation skills. In categories ranging from bioengineering to social sciences, past projects have included things like a spray-foam wound sealer and a self-charging battery. The judged event is an opportunity to qualify for the Northwest Science Expo (some even go on to the international event), earn scholarships and win prizes.



Students can take their future into their own hands—quite actively—at the Central Oregon Skilled Trades Fair. The annual expo is packed with hands-on demos, including opportunities to run an excavator, dabble in computer code, go under the hood of an electric car and weld with virtual reality simulators. Plus, there's plenty of face time with trade and education reps. The College has helped shape and host the fair, together with the High Desert Education Service District and other partners, and this past year it outgrew the Redmond campus and expanded to the Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center.

Opening channels to college credit is another way COCC is reaching students—and it's a central one. The chance for teenagers to engage at the college level, early on, not only saves money, it serves to scaffold that link between high school and higher education.



## This past year, the Central Oregon Skilled Trades Fair outgrew the COCC Redmond campus and expanded to the Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center.

On a November afternoon in the College's Science Center, a group from Madras High School is seated around lab worktables, each affixed to a stout microscope. They swab their own cheeks for cells, slip the slides into place, and learn how to finesse the instrument. With the slow spin of a fine adjustment knob, a female student suddenly finds clarity: Doused in blue dye, a trio of packed-together cells looks like a little skillet's worth of fried eggs, nuclei for yolks.



"Miss Glogau, look how great I focused this!" she beams, signaling her science teacher over. Kathleen Glogau, with a smile, moves in for a peek. The fieldtrip is a byproduct of the school's brand-new AP biology articulation with COCC, and this is a special occasion to utilize College equipment.

Nineteen high schools are linked with one or more of COCC's courses through College Now, classes that are taught by teachers and mentored by COCC faculty. And the options vary, depending on the school. At Culver High School, for instance, a business class can yield college credit. At Mountain View, two

psychology courses connect with credit. It's momentum for more learning, and more than 2,100 high school students took advantage of this opportunity this past school year—saving some \$656,586 in tuition dollars.

For Glogau, the haul down from Madras with 25 students is clearly paying off. "We have one of these microscopes at my school," she shares, visibly moved by the active scene in front of her. Another student beckons her and she heads off.

Sarah Fuller, associate professor of biology, has orchestrated the two-hour lab. She, too, sees the value playing out in real time. "To get the experience of a college lab and to be in a campus environment is pretty special," she says. The class has helped put a lens to an unclear picture.

## Nineteen high schools are linked with one or more of COCC's courses through College Now, classes that are taught by teachers and mentored by COCC faculty.



## Specialty Studies

A morning session at Summit High School begins with a respectful bow. "Shàngkè," says Lin Hong, signaling the start to her Chinese 101 class. Her students stand, bow to their instructor, and respond "Lǎo shī hǎo" ("Hello teacher").



Hong, an associate professor at COCC, stands among the ordered rows of seats, peeling through a deck of flashcards and reading phrases in Mandarin. The first student to properly translate wins the hand. She starts out easy ("I like cats") and then the sentences begin to thicken. Soon they hit a stumper...and she repeats it. Silence. Then suddenly, a female student brightens, cracking it: "My older sister's kid is three years old," she says. "That's very good," says Hong, pleased with their comprehension after just several months of instruction.

The class is a special "contract" course with COCC, where students can earn four college credits. "The first term I had 22 students," says Hong of last year's initial offering. "We were surprised—happily." So they rolled out a second year. And added a 200-level course.

"They really can learn this language faster than adults," Hong says. "It's an excellent opportunity for students who want to learn about cultures other than Western cultures."

Another unique partnership is underway at Ridgeview High School in Redmond. In the school's career-technical education wing, five hospital beds and several mannequins have framed a realistic clinical workspace. As of two years ago, students interested in health care occupations have been able to immerse in certified nursing assistant training.



CNAs are an in-demand position—they provide frontline care in clinics and hospitals—and the program is a tailored response to student interest and industry needs. Twelve students are currently going through the one-year program.

## The high school CNA curriculum is the same as the College's. It involves clinical training and students must complete a mock skills week.

The curriculum, explains school nurse Donna Gilmore, is the same as the College's, with things like monitoring vitals and managing catheters. It involves clinical training at Regency Care and St. Charles. They also do a mock skills week. "They're tested as if by an examiner," says Gilmore, who teaches the classes in conjunction with a COCC instructor;



the arrangement requires approval by the Oregon State Board of Nursing, which the College maintains.

It yields career-building skills that puts high schoolers on paths to jobs or additional training. And it opens eyes to more education. "I'm very excited for what our students have done," adds Gilmore. Across the College's district, that seems to be a shared sentiment. ■



LEFT TOP  
College Now Biology Class  
Photo by Cady-Mae Koon

LEFT BOTTOM & LEFT RIGHT  
Central Oregon Skilled Trades Fair  
Photos by Eugen Helmbrecht

TOP  
Lin Hong, COCC Associate Professor of Chinese  
Photo by Timothy Park

BOTTOM  
COCC Allied Health Fair  
Photo by Eugen Helmbrecht



# Inspiring Alumni

A look at how six former students have put their talents and passion to work for communities and causes

**M**orning light glints off the ponds at Prineville's Crooked River Wetlands Complex, where constellations of mergansers, in wobbly formation against a chalk-blue sky, are flying in and angling for watery landings. It's a crisp December daybreak and birdlife, though thinned out for the season, is very much a presence.

Eric Klann (Engineering studies, '96), standing in front of the signage kiosk in the parking lot, watches as a red-tailed hawk glides in low and abruptly lands on a nearby light post, casting its stern glare on the surroundings. The engineer for the city of Prineville smiles at the sight.

 Timothy Park

“There have been birds here that have never been seen in Crook County before,” he says, commenting on the spot’s allure. Count the Pacific golden plover among them. And the tundra bean goose, sighted last spring—a bird that’s only been seen a handful of times in North America.

But Klann isn’t much of a bird man. He’s more of a solutions man. And here, a city’s wastewater treatment system has been reimagined. The wetland is actually an engineered site, designed by Klann to safely and naturally (not to mention far more economically) handle a vital and ongoing process. At the same time, it kick-started habitat for birds, butterflies and others. It shaped a place for people to recreate, for school groups to learn.

“When we were building the ponds, it was 120 acres of dust out here,” Klann recalls, looking around at the site just three miles from the heart of town, cradled in a valley of rimrock and rolling hills. The process, which includes a treatment plant, features 15 cells as filters. “The real beauty with

**Eric Klann**  
Engineer  
City of Prineville

the wetland is they continue to treat the wastewater—all the bacteria that live in a natural wetland—and we can dispose of water year-round. We were one of the first to do this in Oregon.”

**“...we can dispose of water year-round. We were one of the first to do this in Oregon.”**

The forward-thinking project has drawn attention. The National Association of Clean Water Agencies and the Environmental Protection Agency, among others, have bestowed awards on the project. So has the East Cascades Audubon Society. “Word is spreading and Prineville is becoming a regular, and almost obligatory, stopover for the hundreds of birders who make an annual trek from the Valley to Malheur,” says Chuck Gates, a founding member of the birding chapter. Birds, too, know a great thing when they see it.

Klann remembers his initial foray into college studies: “I made it two or three days.” But a year later, he returned, ready to learn, and spent a year at COCC. “It worked really well to give me that initial taste,” he says.



**Jennifer Wisniewski**  
Registered Nurse  
St. Charles Health System

### A Healing Mission

In an era of ever-widening natural disasters, Haiti’s earthquake in 2010 was immense. An estimated 220,000 people in the severely impoverished nation died from the 7.0 magnitude event, which displaced over a million more and leveled everything from homes to hospitals. A decade later, the country continues to struggle: Infrastructure is still in disarray, mismanaged aid funds have led to riots.

But it’s a home away from home for Jennifer Wisniewski, RN (Nursing degree, ’13), who’s gotten to know the communities of the hilly “Southern Claw” over the past five years, leading yearly volunteer medical teams into the countryside.

“We show up and there’s 300 or 400 people, and often they haven’t seen any true medical provider since we’d been there the time before,” she says. “One by one, we stay as long as we have to, so that everyone is seen.” They stage themselves in schoolhouses, stringing up impromptu clinic stations and pharmacies. “We’ve been in churches, but oftentimes you’re on dirt floors, part of the roof is gone.”

Timothy Park

Wisniewski organizes the multi-week trips as her annual vacation time. She maps out everything from rides to daily meals, all coordinated through Oregon-based Project Helping Hands (which recently dissolved) and assisted by an on-the-ground pediatric clinic. Malnutrition and typhoid are reoccurring issues; the team helps where they can, makes referrals where they can. “What we can do is go in and teach them to have clean water. We give them what’s sustainable—education,” she says. Sustainability, together with cultural sensitivity, act as the guiding principles.

The Redmond High School graduate got a shaky start at COCC, dropping out soon after starting. But she came back in her 30s—backed by a COCC Foundation scholarship—with a mission to earn her nursing degree and incorporate volunteer medicine. She works for St. Charles in the emergency room when not in transit.

**“We show up and there’s 300 or 400 people, and often they haven’t seen any true medical provider since we’d been there the time before.”**

Though a recently planned visit for her 11-member team was thwarted by political unrest, she hopes to launch again soon, and to find a new nonprofit to operate under. Along the way, she’s inspired many others—COCC students among them—to take similar aid-based trips to places like Cambodia and the Dominican Republic.

The need is overwhelming, but she’s heartened by changes taking place. “A lot of them come back time and time again to see me, and sometimes it’s just to say, ‘You taught me this last time, and I went and taught my community,’” she says. “Those are the kinds of things that are so hopeful.”

Karen Cammack



**John Overbay**  
Business Owner  
Former COCC Board and Foundation Board Member

### Strengthening a Community

Looking back on his successful career, John Overbay (Business studies, ’53) knows that even the small steps played a part. His path into the independent grocery business, and later the world of property development, started out as a clerk ferrying bags to cars. “I did everything at one point,” he reminisces. “But I wanted to go into business for myself.”

Soon, he would get there. After a time of overseeing growth for United Grocers—“I was building stores all up and down I-5; ninety-five of them in 11 years”—he took out a loan and purchased a Bend grocery chain, Wagner’s, from his father-in-law. And he guided it into a new era: He employed hundreds at three different stores, won a national top-five independent grocer award, and developed bustling shopping centers around the markets.

He credits his COCC student deferment in 1952 for not just keeping him clear of the Korean War, but allowing the untold opportunities that followed—raising a family, working

hard and flourishing, giving back. To this day, he feels gratitude.

**“When I got a chance to buy Wagner’s, I told myself if something goes absolutely great with this, I want to give back.”**

“That was a big decision in my life,” he says. “So in 1980, when I got a chance to buy Wagner’s, I told myself if something goes absolutely great with this, I want to give back.” Last year, Overbay presented the COCC Foundation with a \$1 million gift for an endowed fund that will provide scholarships for generations to come.

It’s a donation that underlines his decades of generosity and community involvement. He served on the COCC Foundation board of trustees for 20 years—one of the longest tenures of that body—and held a 13-year seat on the College’s board of directors. When word of his gift got out, letters of thanks came in, social media lit up and he got hugs around town. An appreciative community showed their own gratitude. “I’m just glad I had the opportunity to do it,” says Overbay.



**Sonya Littledeer-Evans**  
Deputy Director  
Deschutes County Juvenile Community Justice Department

"I come from a pretty impoverished family background," she says. "I was involved in child welfare, I was in foster homes. I went through the juvenile system in Deschutes County, from beginning all the way to the end." With seven siblings and an upbringing riven with troubles—from running away to substance abuse—she was on a rocky path. But she stayed in school, persevered and merited a "turnaround" tuition award to begin attending COCC.

career began by working in the detention center, soon shifted to being a probation officer; in Jefferson County, she was Oregon's probation officer of the year in 2012.

**"I didn't open those doors by myself. It's cliché to say it takes a village, but it really does."**

And she found support when she needed it. "I got to know the folks at the math lab really well," she laughs, recalling her academic nemesis. "By the end of my time at COCC, I was acing all my math classes." Along the way, a kind couple embraced her passion and potential, backing her with a COCC Foundation scholarship to finish her studies.

"I didn't open those doors by myself," says Littledeer-Evans. "It's cliché to say it takes a village, but it really does." She worked hard, transferred to the University of Oregon for a bachelor's degree and later earned a master's degree in public administration at Portland State University. Her

Today, she's the Deputy Director for Deschutes County's Juvenile Community Justice department, overseeing a team of 44 officers and administrators. She has built community coalitions, served as an equity trainer and lectured at national conferences. And she's helped champion and implement a new approach in juvenile justice. "It's a really cutting-edge, evidence-based supervision model for the juvenile system," she explains. "It isn't punitive stuff—it's cognitive behavioral interventions. We're helping teach kids how to change their behavior, to not only not break the law anymore, but to engage pro-socially. Our outcomes are amazing." So is reaching for unexpected heights.

**Encouraging New Heights**

In downtown Madras, painted across a section of ordinary cinderblock wall, there's a proud celebration taking place. On the colorful mural is a girl in a cap and gown, smiling and standing strong, her arms raised triumphantly aloft. The words "Reaching Beyond the Expectation" call out to passersby.

The mural is the work of the Girls' Advisory Board, a youth group founded by Sonya Littledeer-Evans (Transfer degree/criminal justice focus, '97) when she worked for Jefferson County as a juvenile system administrator. The girls picked the theme, but for Littledeer-Evans, it's a message with personal resonance.

**A Voice for the Forgotten**

The U.S. homeless crisis feels like a runaway train these days. It's an issue facing many lives and many states, from New Mexico to New York, where factors like affordable housing and stagnant living wages are stoking the surge. Nationwide, the homeless population climbed 2.7 percent this past year; in California, numbers saw a staggering 16 percent jump. Some cities are simply overrun, tents and tarps lining sidewalks, camps squeezing into slivers around highway overpasses.

Seattle is one of those places. And those makeshift camps are the beat of journalist Scott Greenstone (Transfer degree, '14), whose job as a reporter and engagement editor for *The Seattle Times* is to share the stories of the homeless, as well as document the efforts—effective and otherwise—of systems that are trying to help them. Short-term remedies in Seattle have included tiny house villages and pairing property owners with container-type homes in backyards.

**His road into journalism began when a COCC English professor noticed a gifted voice in one of his early essays.**

Greenstone sees his role as somewhat of a translator, spelling out the differences between basic and enhanced shelters, articulating the gulf between chronic homelessness and newly homeless. "I've talked to a lot of people who are experts on homelessness, and they don't understand what the public doesn't understand," he says. "I can act as a go-between."

His road into journalism began when a COCC English professor noticed a gifted voice in one of his early essays. She encouraged him to consider working at



**Scott Greenstone**  
Reporter and Engagement Editor  
*The Seattle Times*

*The Broadside*, the student paper, and he soon cut his teeth as a campus reporter, worked his way up to editor. After earning a transfer degree, Greenstone went on to the University of Oregon (where he edited the student-run *Daily Emerald*), interned at OPB and NPR, and ultimately arrived at *The Seattle Times*.

For his on-the-street sources—he counts 20 or so homeless individuals as story contacts—and the more than 11,000 homeless in the Seattle area, his work is about more than illuminating the issues. It's about making sure humanity isn't lost in translation. "It's a tough job," he says of the realities he sees on the streets. But it's reporting that can help open dialogue for a struggling city—and potentially, for other places too. Last January, the Central Oregon Homeless Leadership Coalition counted 880 people who were experiencing homelessness. It was a 12 percent jump from the prior year.



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**Dawn Holland**  
 Founder  
 Dawn's (Directly Assisting Women Newly Sober) House

Oxford Hotel encouraged her to further her education, she enrolled at COCC. This would lead to a business class and a project built around devising a business plan. Holland picked a sober house as her idea, honoring something that had so truly turned her around.

**“It really solidified a lot of the work I’ve done – I went four years without a wage. It was very, very hard.”**

It quickly progressed from idea to all in. When she was told she needed 501(c)(3) status, Holland recalls having a blank look. “I didn’t even know what that meant,” she says. But she learned fast and marshalled support. She held fundraisers, even sold a beloved classic car she’d inherited from her grandfather to raise money. It all led to the formation of Dawn’s (Directly Assisting Women Newly Sober) House, with doors opening in 2015. Today, she runs three different homes in Central Oregon for women in drug and alcohol recovery. In five years, she has provided a safe, healing harbor for more than 200 individuals.

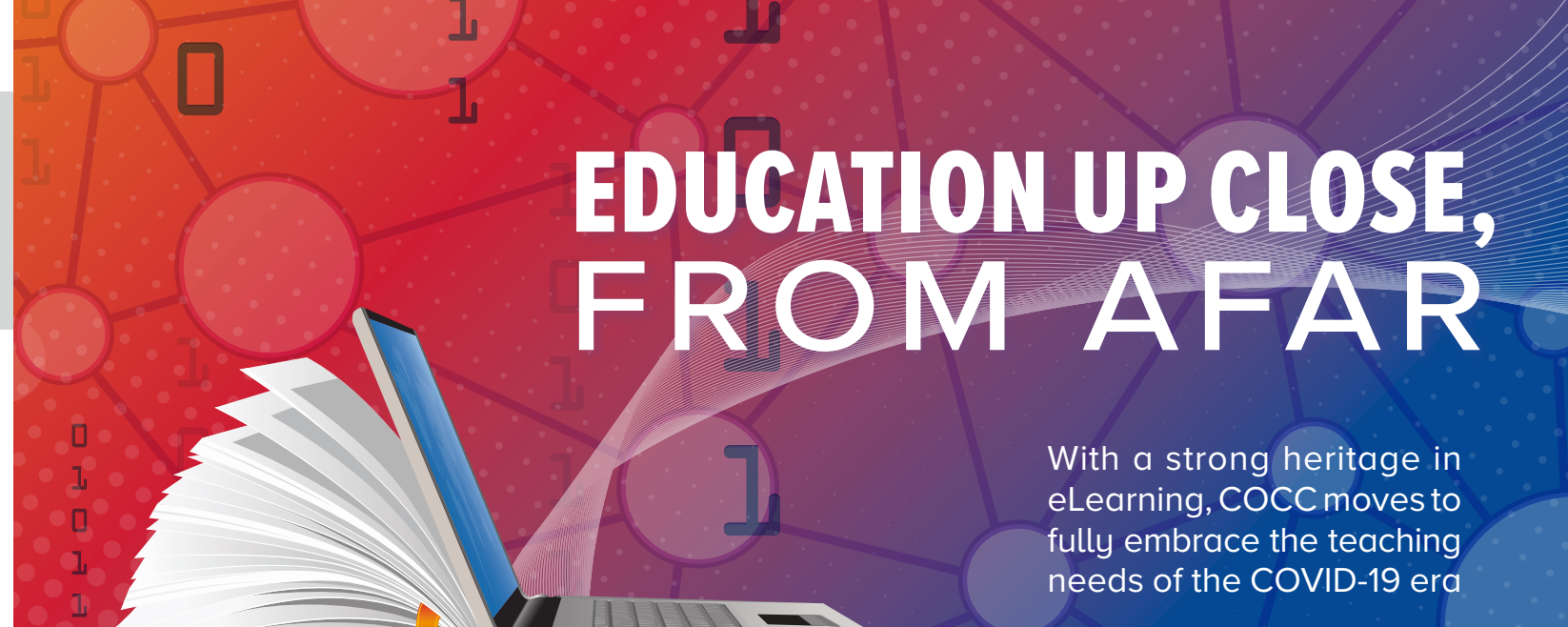
“We’re very much a self-sufficient program,” she explains. “Here, we keep them on track with their sobriety, we teach them life skills and self-sufficiency. Without those, you’re not going to have sobriety.” She stresses accountability and structure, with the women expected to hold jobs, do chores and pay rent. “There’s kindness, there’s friendliness, there’s security, there’s stability,” says a current resident. “It all comes when you say you want to live at Dawn’s House.”

Holland credits many sources for helping with her mission, from donations and grants to support from groups like Central Oregon Health Council. But her passion and sacrifice has held it all together. For her impact on the community, she received the 2019 Bend Chamber Woman of the Year award. “It really solidified a lot of the work I’ve done—I went four years without a wage,” she says. “It was very, very hard.” Her 13-year-old daughter was with her at the ceremony. “When I got called up on stage and I looked at her, I saw pride, and I saw she understood what mom did.” ■

**Setting Up Safe Harbor**

Dawn Holland (Business Administration degree, ‘15) spent her 29th birthday on the streets of Seattle, in a car parked on Pioneer Square, with a pet rabbit, a radio and a bottle of vodka to keep her company. That homeless lifestyle would be her reality for a full two years, the result of a downward spiral into alcoholism that began while working on fishing boats. Luckily for Holland, her sister intervened, bought her a bus ticket to Central Oregon, and things started to turn around—slowly.

In Bend, she received help through a sober house. She struggled, but ultimately achieved sobriety. When her boss at the



**EDUCATION UP CLOSE, FROM AFAR**

With a strong heritage in eLearning, COCC moves to fully embrace the teaching needs of the COVID-19 era

For Jessica Thaxton of Bend, her hard-earned college degree might not culminate with an in-person graduation this June, owing to the current climate of social distancing. But then again, her education wasn’t exactly in-person either.

“Out of 22 courses taken prior to the COVID-19 precautions, I took 17 of those online,” says the web development student. “As someone who works full-time, the availability of many online

courses was the primary determining factor in my decision to return to school.”

**“As someone who works full-time, the availability of many online courses was the primary determining factor in my decision to return to school.”**

Plugging into an online education is now a sign of the times—virtual campuses are the only campuses as the world navigates the coronavirus. But it’s long been a focus at COCC.

“Pharmacy tech, computer information systems and our business program are all areas where a significant portion of the courses are available online,” says Betsy Julian, Ph.D., vice president of instruction, pointing to three of the College’s biggest distance-learning programs.

Many other COCC academic paths offer the convenience of some online and hybrid components. In fact, roughly 12 percent of all college classes during the 2018-19 academic year were delivered online.

For a number of years, students at COCC have had a wide range of virtual studies to

choose from—from classes in microbiology and ethnic studies to early childhood education and health and human performance. Last year, four out of 10 students utilized those learning opportunities.

Now, of course, all learning is offered remotely until the tide turns on COVID-19. But that can foster unexpected connection.

“The truth is,” says Michael Murphy, Ed.D., director of eLearning, “online courses offer students great access to faculty. For example, many use email, blogs, interactive discussions, journaling, announcements, chat sessions and conferencing tools to connect with their students in a myriad of formats, which can increase their interactions with faculty.”

Backed by an established eLearning department, and drawing on honed resources to support the adaptability of COCC’s instructors, the College’s learning environment has shifted gears with tech like Blackboard and Zoom. Yes, geology fieldtrips now fit into the viewfinder of a GoPro camera. And an art class might transpire in a student’s own garage. But discovery, as always, is just where you find it. ■



Timothy Park

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Karen Cammack



# Arts for All

COMBINING EXHIBITS, CONCERTS AND OTHER CREATIVE OUTLETS, COCC COMMUNITY ARTS TAKE CENTER STAGE

**B**en Lawson strides to the front of the stage at Redmond High School, looks out at the swelled-to-capacity audience in front of him and grins as the crowd hushes. “This is probably the fullest I’ve ever seen it,” says the school’s music director to laughter from the packed auditorium.

It’s a winter’s afternoon and the city of Redmond has turned out in force to welcome its newest artistic voice to the community. Many voices, actually. After an introduction from Lawson, 64 members of the Redmond Community Choir file onto the stage, suited in red and black for the occasion, and take their place on the risers amid applause.

Then, in an instant, their voices ascend together. Ken Piarulli, the choir’s founder and director, his hands sweeping and dabbing, conducts them through a range of songs, from gospels to some holiday classics. It’s a first-ever performance for the program, just months in the making, and they lift off like a seasoned show.

“From the opening measures of ‘America the Beautiful’ during our first rehearsal, I was hooked,” says choir member Jennie Mitschke of the Continuing Education class. “Ken knew how to bring about the perfect balance of fun and work.” Piarulli says that while the diverse group varies in experience, they unite in song: “There’s a real sense of joy and pride.” That seems to apply to the community, too. Free tickets to the show, all 575, went quick.

Central Oregon prizes its arts. And so does its community college. COCC, since its early days, has been an active part of the region’s artistic DNA, helping cultivate and celebrate the arts through concerts and theater, literary events, opera and exhibits. Groups like the Cascade Winds Symphonic Band, Big Band Jazz, and, of course, the Central Oregon Symphony have all sprung from COCC, drawing community musicians together.

Art shows are continually in circulation at the Barber Library, where juried and solo exhibits, as well as statewide traveling

collections, often fill the soaring Rotunda Gallery. Recent attractions include an 80-piece exhibit by the Watercolor Society of Oregon and a woven display by the Weaving Guilds of Oregon.

The Pinckney Gallery in the Pence art building sees a steady string of shows throughout the year that turn the cove-like space into an enveloping experience. Many local and regional artists, including students, have shared work in this spot.

On opening night at a recent show, the crowd is a mix of community artists, students and fans of art. They filter through, eddying for moments—or minutes—in front of work that speaks to them. It sparks conversations, triggers discussions.

And the art itself is a mix, representing the mediums of a number of different COCC fine arts instructors. A lushly painted abstract canvas by Ian Factor hangs on one wall, while directly across

*“From the opening measures of ‘America the Beautiful’ during our first rehearsal, I was hooked.”*

from it, light floods a case of intricately worked metal jewelry by Mary Jo Weiss. A wall-mounted TV plays looped video of abandoned, outmoded phone booths, with two visitors connected to the Bill Cravis installation (and its eternally ringing soundtrack) by the attached headphones.

There is precision-cut collage work. And boldly patterned ceramics pieces. It’s a full palate of visual art, testament to the range and depth of fine art appreciation at the College.

“We make the performing and visual arts an equal partner in the education and ‘continuing’ education of the human mind and spirit,” says Michael Gesme, chair of the Fine Arts department. “We strive to support that personal enrichment.” ■



**LEFT PAGE**  
Redmond Community Choir  
Photo by Timothy Park

**RIGHT MIDDLE TOP**  
Michael Gesme, COCC Professor of Music  
Central Oregon Symphony Conductor  
Photo by Benjamin Edwards

**RIGHT TOP**  
COCC Barber Library, Rotunda Gallery  
Photo by Timothy Park

**RIGHT MIDDLE**  
COCC art student, Jesus Amador  
Photo by Shin Yeon Jeon

**BOTTOM LEFT**  
Pinckney Gallery, COCC Bend Campus  
Photo by Timothy Park

**BOTTOM RIGHT**  
Full Circle COCC Coats Campus Center sculpture  
Photo by Eugen Helmbrecht

# CONCRETE STEPS

## INDUSTRY-DRIVEN TRAINING PROGRAMS ARE OPENING WORKFORCE DOORS

Olivia Boynton used a nail gun to reframe her future. As one of the first students through the College's construction training program, Boynton is drawing on skills from the three-month course to kick-start a new career as a contractor.

"I learned construction math skills, how to use basic hand tools and power tools, how to take and note measurements, blueprint reading...basic employability skills," she says. "It was a great opportunity to see how worksites function."

Typically held two nights a week at the Redmond campus, the classes cover more than framing basics and safety essentials. They yield a certificate from the National Center for Construction Education and Research—with points tallied toward apprenticeship readiness. Boynton is applying to High Desert Apprenticeship's electrical program; others are using the experience to learn or sharpen jobsite fundamentals.



The program materialized at the urging of local construction companies, whose declining workforce needs a new generation of job-ready tradespeople. "It's supported by state funding and local industry," explains Rachel Knox, program manager. Scholarships, she adds, can cover students' costs.

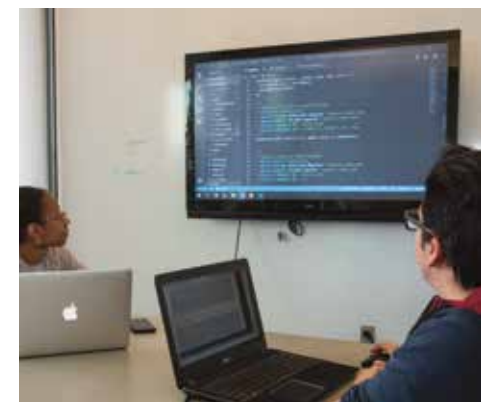
And it's representative of a broader mission at COCC: to partner with busy industry sectors and establish dependable workforce pipelines. All while ensuring that the education, while condensed, leads to living-wage jobs.

Apprenti, for instance, has filled a high tech niche. The five-month software

development module—fully subsidized for participants—has put future coders into paid apprenticeships with local firms. Now, the Continuing Education department is offering standalone software classes that target those same skills in more of a "byte-sized" format.

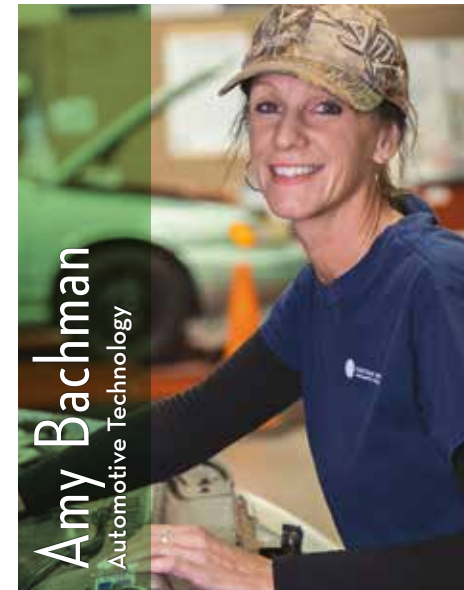
For these students, non-credit programs and career samplers are a relatively quick pivot in a new direction. Local employers can help define the training. It's a blueprint for a stronger region.

"With these workforce programs, we aim to open new doors," says Glenda Lantis, director of Continuing Education, "while answering the call of our community." ■



# CAREER AWAKENINGS

Lifted by COCC Foundation scholarships, students find their stride



Amy Bachman  
Automotive Technology

When Amy Bachman signed up for an automotive class two years ago, she did so with more than a measure of trepidation — it had been 25 years since she was last in a school setting and her engine knowledge was nominal. But two things spurred her on: The prospect of teaching her own children about vehicles and the determination to expand her education.

Not long into the program, the single mother of four discovered it was a dream fit. "I realized how much I enjoyed this work and what I had learned in such a short amount of time," she shares. "I decided that this was what I wanted to do for a career."

Bachman is now earning a Master Automotive Technician certification and an Associate of Applied Science degree in Technology in Electronics and Diagnostics. Along the way, she became a tool room



assistant and now serves as the program's Outreach Liaison. She hopes to pursue a position in electric vehicle repair or programming. The recipient of the College Automotive Repair Scholarship (CARS), Bachman was selected as one of four students to represent the College on the 2020 All-Oregon Academic Team.

"It's very satisfying to feel confident in myself when working on my own vehicle," she says. "My COCC instructors have given me a confidence in myself. Not only confidence working on vehicles, but in life in general. Because of them believing in me, it's made it easier to believe in myself."



Olen Grimes  
Addiction Studies and Human Services

Olen Grimes is a big believer in the power of personal metamorphosis. The Addiction Studies student looks to his own transformation as setting him on this career path, of ultimately defining his story.

"My checkered past and my history of substance use have proved to be an asset in this field," says Grimes, who overcame his own addictions and currently works as a certified recovery mentor at a local agency. "There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a person's life significantly change from the work they put in on personal recovery," he adds. "One may show up completely broken, scared and hopeless, but over time, they become confident, happy and are able to help others find a new way to live as well."

A father of three, Grimes received the Addiction Studies and Human Services Scholarship, sponsored by the Central Oregon Health Council, and is studying to become a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor-1. He has sights on higher levels of certification — and beyond. "I try not to think too far ahead, but I would also like to finish my bachelor's degree in either social work or counseling," he says. One ambition he has is to be involved in the creation of a community inpatient drug and alcohol treatment facility, a resource he believes is essential.

"I feel COCC has helped me get back to the path I was intended to be on," he adds. "The education I am receiving not only helps my family, it helps my community."

# NOTEBOOK

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

## Textbook Answer

The price tag of textbooks is a major barrier for many students. To help curb costs, the College is utilizing **Open Educational Resources (OER)**—materials that reside in the public domain or have an open license. “Inevitably, the students who don’t purchase the textbook either drop or fail the course,” says Hal Wershow, assistant professor of Geology. Wershow is using a grant from the state’s Open Oregon Educational Resources to fund his time for the adaption of an OER text and other no-cost materials for his courses. “I like being able to use publicly available articles from science news sources,” he says. “They’re typically more accessible, written for normal people by journalists who have already done the job of digesting the scientific jargon.” Thanks to the collective efforts of COCC faculty and the College’s library staff, a seismic shift is underway: A recent report from Open Educational Resources estimates that from 2017 to 2019, COCC saved students more than \$2 million in materials expenses.



## A Moveable Feast

The newest member of Cascade Culinary Institute’s (CCI) teaching team is taking training in a new direction. Well, many different directions. The “**Shirley Ray,**” a **fully equipped food truck**—and its accompanying curriculum—is showing students how to succeed in one of the fastest-growing restaurant sectors, from creating menus to obtaining permits. Named for the Bend benefactor whose COCC Foundation donation enabled the purchase, the mobile kitchen is customized with CCI’s specifications, including interior cameras so instructors can observe from beyond the galley. Akin to the student-operated restaurant, Elevation, the training provides real world flavor. Student Shannon Merrill sees mobile kitchens as offering more than flexibility and a way to keep pace with food trends. “They somehow add a curiosity and energy and sense of community to the whole interaction,” says the aspiring owner of a gluten-free food truck. Follow the feast at [cascadeculinary.com](http://cascadeculinary.com).

## Going Digital

When *The Broadside* shuttered in 2018, two factors were largely responsible: waning student participation and a plummeting readership. Still, many in the College community were hopeful that a rethinking of the long-running student newspaper might lead to a successful reboot. The paper, after all, has served as a First Amendment platform for decades, provided work experience for many and even launched some careers (see page 13). At the direction of COCC’s former president, and with stewardship from a work group, *The Broadside* underwent a complete review and recommendation process. And this past fall, it began the journey back. The paper will now operate with a digital format, reach readers in a new way, and integrate with a mandatory journalism lab. A digital news specialist is serving as advisor and overseeing the process as the paper shifts away from its printed past. It’s a new era for College news.



**THE/BROADSIDE**  
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## Automotive Assistance

A pair of grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) has allowed the COCC Automotive Technology program to guide a **major shift in the field of electric-drive maintenance training**. It’s a growing segment of the auto industry that, to date, hasn’t set a standardized certification process for techs. The College is taking a lead on this by co-devising a national credentialing system, one that will be technology-focused, not manufacturer-specific. “We’ve defined the categories, we’ve developed webinar training,” explains Ken Mays, the program’s director. Also involved: the Society of Automotive Engineers. “They’re partnering to take our standards and put them in a working format to be applied nationwide,” adds Mays. As an offshoot of navigating the NSF grant process, Mays decided to complete mentor training to help other colleges secure their own advanced technology grants. He’s been partnered with schools like Bismarck State College, North Georgia Technical College and Onondaga Community College as they seek to implement new standards in things like manufacturing and mechatronics instruction. The pay-it-forward mentoring will have a lasting impact.

## The Power of Two

For the 2018-19 academic year, 567 students were part of the new **COCC/OSU-Cascades Degree Partnership Program (DPP)**, a collaboration that optimizes academic resources and access to things like financial aid. The bachelor’s degree-oriented program links both schools in a more formalized manner, opening up more course options (and class schedules) and offering more connections with faculty. Students can start at COCC, then shift to OSU-Cascades. Makayla Wallace, currently working toward her arts, media and technology bachelor’s degree at OSU-Cascades, took two classes at both schools this past Winter term. “With access to twice as many things, I was able to have a broader scale of classes I can take, which has been super helpful toward my degree,” she says. “I am paying for college on my own, so by doing the DPP program, I am saving myself a lot of money.”



## A Need for Nurses

As the nursing shortage continues to loom over the U.S.—a reality created by waves of RNs reaching retirement age and a sizeable boomer generation requiring a scaled-up health care system—COCC is aiming to be part of the solution. Beginning this fall, the two-year program is **expanding its cohort size from 48 to 56 students**. “Each year, we have three times the amount of applicants than we have space for,” says Jane Morrow, department chair. “Having this larger program will enable us to get more students in the door and connect graduates with a workforce that’s in serious need.” In other Nursing news, the program is now receiving national accreditation, an added standard that will bring further integrity and reputation to the College’s nursing education.

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