

# LEGACIES

Central Oregon Community College Foundation Magazine Fall 2019



## A Natural Path Planting Futures in Forestry

Growing Gifts

The Power of Scholarships

Welcoming COCC's New President



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The Foundation will award \$1.7 million in scholarships this year — a record-high figure.

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The Harvey M. Waldron Jr. Herbarium is invaluable in confirming correct identification of unknown plants.



**COVER**  
Karen Cammack

**ABOVE**  
Timothy Park

**LEFT**  
Eugen Helmbrecht

**RIGHT**  
Eugen Helmbrecht

THE COLLEGE'S FOREST TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES PROGRAM IS ONE OF ONLY TWO PROGRAMS IN THE STATE ACCREDITED BY THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS.

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COCC Foundation  
Scholarship  
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# LEGACIES

Fall 2019

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## Letter From the President

It is my great privilege to welcome you to our 2019 issue of *Legacies*, and to extend my warmest gratitude for your part in changing lives at Central Oregon Community College. In the short time that I've been here, I have seen firsthand how this community supports and surrounds its College with both heart and investment. It helps make COCC such a remarkable place—and is a big part of what brought me here.

Since this summer, I've gotten to observe some of our programs and people in action. And my initial impressions are confirmed: It's truly an inspiring College. As we head into our 70th academic year, I'm eager to continue advancing lives through learning and to keep building on a distinguished tradition.

My goal as president is to reinforce what makes this College special, while also looking for new chances to respond to the needs of Central Oregon. That might involve expanding online classes. Or integrating new programs. Or finding new ways to reach potential students. The voices of our stakeholders, like you, are essential to this process, and I welcome your partnership.

Now, to this issue of *Legacies*. In these pages, you'll read about three very inspiring scholarship students, on three unique—and impressive—journeys. Our future nurse, lawyer and doctor all cite one common denominator that not only opened doors for them but came with implicit encouragement: their Foundation scholarship. And I think it's important to emphasize that it's more than tuition assistance, it's a you-can-do-it endorsement of the individuals and their personal goals.

Each of these journeys—and hundreds of others over the years—were assisted by a carefully managed endowment. In "Growing Gifts," you'll see what goes into guiding this productive endowment and the lives that are touched. We also remember a friend, Marjorie Ettinger, who created an endowment of her own to preserve a wonderful plant archive.

Like Central Oregon, Michigan, where I'm from, has a history steeped in the woods, where once upon a time camps and towns sprung up around the pine forests and sawmills. We've come a long way with our resource management practices since then, and I think you'll enjoy reading how our Forest Resources Technology program is on the leading edge of training tomorrow's stewards. It made me want to head out and explore my new surroundings.

With that in mind, I wish you a wonderful fall. I look forward to our work together as we collaborate on creating vibrancy and success in our College and communities.

With much appreciation,



Laurie Chesley

Laurie Chesley  
COCC President



## Gratitude Day

This past May, 40 scholarship recipients gathered for the first-ever Gratitude Day. Students shared their gratitude and the personal impact of receiving a scholarship through videos, letters and messages. Thank you!





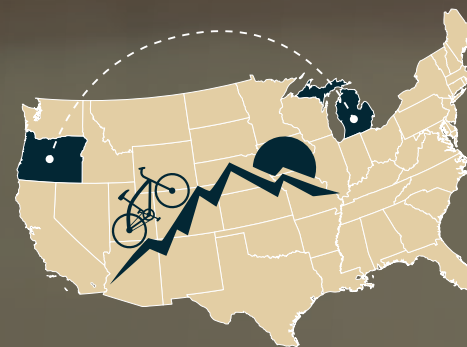
# Q&A

with **Laurie Chesley**  
Meet COCC's Sixth President

“It’s an honor and a privilege to serve our students and Central Oregon.”

— by Zak Boone —

*Dr. Laurie Chesley, or “please, just Laurie” as she’s quick to say, began her tenure as COCC’s president in July. She’s the sixth president in the College’s 70-year arc. Laurie was an English professor before entering the administrative side of academia, and has spent nearly two decades in educational leadership. I wanted to introduce her to you, our Foundation friends, and thought this Q&A would be a good way to share some of Laurie’s impressions and perspectives on this new life chapter, on COCC and on education in general.*



**Zak:** You’ve only been here a short time, but what is one impression Central Oregon has made on you?

**Laurie:** There is such a strong sense of community and civic responsibility that pervades the region and the College. That’s been very apparent.

**Zak:** What are you most excited about in your new role?

**Laurie:** The opportunity to lead an institution whose core work is helping students and the community succeed. Education transforms lives and communities. To me, that’s fundamentally exciting.

**Zak:** What will you miss most about living in Michigan?

**Laurie:** My friends. Fortunately, Bend is such a beautiful place that I know I’ll have frequent visitors. Also, as a cyclist, I miss the flatness of the bike trails. These local hills might take a little getting used to!

**Zak:** What is something you’ve seen around the country in higher education you might want COCC to consider?

**Laurie:** The national movement toward establishing Guided Pathways for students, and all it entails, intrigues me. Guided Pathways, at its heart, is a redesign—a clarification and streamlining—of academic programs and student-support processes to improve student goal attainment.

**Zak:** Tell us about how your experience as an instructor helped prepare you to be a president?

**Laurie:** So much of what a president—or any leader—does is actually teaching. Leading an institution or programs or processes is a lot like teaching. You establish clear goals, figure out how to reach them, measure your progress and then redesign to improve.

**Zak:** Is there anything else you would like our donors and supporters to know about you?

**Laurie:** Just how grateful I am to be here—it’s an honor and a privilege to serve our students and Central Oregon. ■

*Zak Boone is the executive director of the COCC Foundation.*



# Growing Gifts



community college endowments, we proudly embrace a mix of progressive policies that both perform and preserve,” explains Jeffrey Stuermer, chair of the Finance & Audit Committee and a principal at Northline Wealth Management in Bend. “Modern portfolio theory and the ‘efficient frontier’ concepts have guided our decision-making and allowed us to determine the right balance of risk versus return.”

Avoiding exotic assets has been a central investment tenet. During the Economic Crisis, the Foundation was able to sidestep significant losses because of its focus on traditional asset classes. Meanwhile, schools with larger endowments, Harvard and Yale among them, tied to illiquid assets—such as private equity and restrictive hedge funds—went through some major drawdowns. The College also benefitted from some fortunate timing when several large estate gifts were received during advantageous market cycles.

“Our approach has been to keep it simple—to win by not losing,” says

Stuermer. “Our conservative bias and our strict adherence to a well-crafted investment policy statement have been the key to the endowment’s relative outperformance,” adds Judy Smith, board trustee. This playbook, as Stuermer calls it, will serve future iterations of Foundation leadership and stewardship.

**For the 2019-20 academic year, approximately 400 fully funded scholarships were offered, representing \$1.7 million in combined endowment and annual fund dollars.**

When it comes to endowment spending, scholarships are certainly the primary receiver. But the Foundation’s mission incorporates other objectives, too: promoting community engagement through events, maintaining affinity societies, and working toward the general well-being and advancement of the College. “We have an appropriate and realistic spend rate against the endowment of five percent,” Stuermer continues, “with one percent to operating, four percent to program.”

A study this year by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (representing more than 1,900 colleges and universities across the country) puts the Foundation’s 10-year net return, of 7.26 percent, in the top decile within its peer category of two-year public and community colleges holding endowments under \$25 million.

And though the endowment grows, so does the need. “With less state and federal attention going to financial aid, and education costs continuing to trend higher nationwide, our donors are as crucial as ever,” says Foundation Executive Director Zak Boone. Yes, it was a banner year with more than 400 scholarships offered, but many other hopeful students applied and weren’t able to receive support. “Our endowment is strong,” adds Boone, “but it’s the long-term support from our donors that is our true strength.” ■

## An update on the Foundation’s endowment and its pivotal role at COCC

**F**orestry is the focus of this edition of *Legacies*, and since we’re putting a spotlight on our Forestry program—and on healthy forests and deep-rooted, flourishing things in general—it seems like a perfect time to touch upon another deep-rooted, flourishing aspect of the College: the Foundation’s endowment.

Today’s endowment is strong, exceeding \$23 million. For the 2019-20 academic year, this means that approximately 400 fully funded scholarships were offered, representing \$1.7 million in combined endowment and annual fund dollars.

That’s a record-high scholarship figure for the Foundation. And it wouldn’t happen

without the backing of individuals and organizations, like you, who believe in championing lives—and impacting communities—through education.

Boosting this generosity and expanding its reach are the endowment’s caretakers and decision-makers: the staff, board and the Finance & Audit Committee of the Foundation. They, in turn, rely on a long-standing, collaborative relationship with Commonfund, a Connecticut-based asset management firm, to prudently oversee your investment.

Both active and passive strategies are part of the approach. “As one of the top-20

*Misty Bouse, major gifts officer, contributed to this article.*

*Mark Russell Johnson is the staff writer in COCC’s College Relations department.*

## COCC Foundation Total Endowment Value at Fiscal Year End





# A NATURAL PATH

— by Mark Russell Johnson —

## SCIENCE, STEWARDSHIP AND A CROWN-TO-THE-GROUND CURRICULUM ARE GROWING FUTURES IN FORESTRY AT COCC

A barrel-thick ponderosa pine towers over the woods west of the Deschutes River near Pringle Falls, its trunk spiraled with gouges, looking like a half-ton housecat has used it as a scratching post. The marks are the work of a lightning bolt—some years back it struck the crown and traced the twisted grain down\*, instantly turning the water in the tree's xylem into steam and leaving the “pondo” upright but otherwise fried. Then the beetles moved in.

Bret Michalski, a COCC Forest Resources Technology professor, walks around the base of the copper-colored tree, pointing out several small oozing wounds to his class of nine students. He plucks a resin blob from one of the holes, holding it up on his finger for the class to assess.

“Red turpentine beetle,” a student quickly deduces. “*Dendroctonus valens*,” adds another. “Very good, very good,” replies Michalski, happy for the one-two punch of common and scientific names.

\*See *Roots of Knowledge* on page 12







Several clues have helped the students collar the culprit. The raisin-sized beetle typically infests larger pine species, particularly stressed-out trees. They also initiate their pitchy tubes several feet off the ground. Case closed, the class hikes on.

It's a messy May afternoon in Central Oregon—slush falls from the sky one minute, then the sun belts down—but the Forest Entomology/Pathology class is unfazed. Climbing over downed trees and picking their way through the woods, the students are like a roaming forensics team, stopping periodically to peer into rotted stumps or pull apart sheets of bark litter, looking for cases to solve.

"THEY'RE GETTING A MUCH BROADER LOOK THAN THEY WOULD IN OTHER PROGRAMS."

They examine gall growths and crumbling cube rot. They identify root disease and the presence of sequoia pitch moths. Crouching beside a minuscule bouquet of bitterbrush sprouting riotously from the forest floor, Michalski frames the little buds in his fingers and turns to the group for an explanation. One of them pegs it, accurately, as a squirrel cache—the stockpiled seeds somehow forgotten by their keeper.

From sprouting seeds to decaying trees, the big and small stories of the forest's health—the full narrative—are all part of the class. They stop to examine some aged beaver chew along the river, then turn and head off, moving deeper into the woods.

## A STATE OF WONDER

Oregon absolutely bristles with trees. The state holds the second-highest percentage of national forest in the union (after Idaho), which covers about a fourth of its landscape. Other tracts of federal forest—collectively the size of West Virginia—fall under the sphere of Bureau of Land Management. Then there's the state-managed forests,

some 745,000 acres' worth. And Native American lands. Plus, private timber holdings. Nearly 200 state parks and sites pepper the coast, mountains and expanses in between. From national monuments and land trusts, to farms and swaths of private property, the woods run thick in the Beaver state. It's a great place to learn about, and launch, a forest-centered career.

The College's Forest Technology Resources program, or Forestry as most refer to it at COCC, is one of only two programs in the state accredited by the Society of American Foresters. Its three professors merge specialties in wildlife management, physiology and dendrochronology, creating a comprehensive range of study. "They're getting a much broader look than they would in other programs," says instructional dean Michael Fisher, Ph.D., who got his own forestry start at COCC.

The curriculum builds in ecology and surveying, dendrology and fire science. Students learn about harvesting trees one term, and then focus on conservation the next. They study Geographic Information Systems and mapping. Hardhats on, they put lectures into practice out in the field.

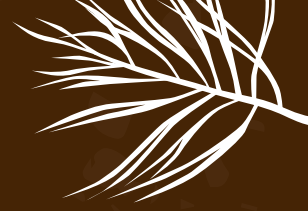
Within weeks of starting up, new students will seek out federal jobs for the following summer, a mandatory co-op that usually involves fighting fire, marking timber or rooting out invasive species. It gets them aligned with professional goals. The department also encourages and facilitates participation in events held by the Oregon Society of American Foresters, sending students to meetings. A COCC Forestry Club helps spotlight career paths, opens eyes to opportunities.

And like the forests themselves, the program's own landscape continues to evolve. "We constantly have to update where we are in terms of technology and curriculum," says professor Ron Boldenow, Ph.D.

On a June afternoon, new technology is front and center in the Cascades Hall Forestry lab (the department moved into

## A PLACE FOR PLANTS

### Remembering Marjorie Ettinger (1924-2019)



There's a closet door on the first floor of the Science Center that doesn't look like it would take you anywhere. But beyond it, and inside a bank of floor-to-ceiling cabinets, a small universe awaits. Stored in the six cabinets are the thousands of plant specimens that comprise the Harvey M. Waldron Jr. Herbarium, a resource named for the biology professor and former Navy pilot who orchestrated its development beginning in 1970.

Marjorie "Marge" Ettinger, who took botany under Waldron in the 1980s (and who, soon after, was inspired to earn her bachelor's degree from OSU at the age of 68), devoted herself to collecting, keying and pressing plants, bringing thousands of them to the Waldron Herbarium over the decades. She hiked all over Oregon to find flora, from the Willows to the Steens, even receiving special permission from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs to collect specimens.

Ettinger and her husband, Dick, who also loved botany, created an endowment in 2000 to care for and maintain this collection. The fund covers upkeep and materials, purchases reference books, and has paid student workers to help index and organize the vast body of flowers, plants and lichens. Its goal is to reach \$100,000 and be able to dedicate annual funding for a part-time research assistantship.

"Currently, we use the herbarium as a resource for General Botany," says co-curator Sarah Fuller, associate professor of biology, who works in tandem with retired biology professor Christine Ott-Hopkins to oversee the resource. "It's invaluable in confirming correct identification of unknown plants," she adds. The hope is to make it a more accessible, shared resource for schools and researchers. "My vision is to get it digitized," says Fuller. The Ettinger passion for plants keeps blooming.







the remodeled building in 2018), where seven students flank the projector screen and discuss PhoDAR, or photogrammetric detection and ranging, a new means of utilizing imaged data from drones. A slice of digitized forest, resembling a video game's 3-D backdrop, rotates and tilts on the screen.

The image is part of a dataset from The Nature Conservancy, which used a drone and software to do a virtual tree headcount of a site near Black Butte Ranch. COCC's capstone class wanted

to ground-truth the new technology, to test its reliability. So, over the span of 10 weeks, they visited the three-acre parcel, breaking it into measurable plots and fact-checking every count.

"We split the data into identified and unidentified trees," student Rieghly Sitton explains to an audience of faculty and regional forestry professionals. When the trees in the woods were denser and grouped, the team discovered, the number of unidentified trees went up. In those cases, the software wasn't able

to distinguish individual trunks. ("Groupy" and "clumpy" became go-to nomenclature for the project.)

The team discusses how the technology works, the "point cloud" of overlapping pixels and the basics of the software's algorithm. In the end, they calculated that unidentified trees comprised up to 35 percent of the stand—a rather sizeable miss. Not a banner day for emerging technology.

"The use of PhoDAR, based on data available, is not an effective tool for

mosaic quality," Sitton summarizes to the audience. "For now, it's better to put boots on the ground."

"I want to thank you," says Ian Reid, U.S. Forest Service ranger for the Sisters district. "I didn't know anything about PhoDAR before this presentation." Also in attendance is the drone pilot. "It really helps clear it up for me," says Kirk Metzger, wanting to see how his flying might yield a better data grab. He mentions that finding a different flight pattern might cut down on variability.

## "WE CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT - IT'S IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIETY."

For the student team, the technology may have stumbled, but the project didn't. "It took all the skills we've learned and put them to use in a real world setting, to see if it's something forest managers want to use in their work," says Karra Showen, a Foundation scholarship recipient. Personal growth benefitted as well. "I thought it was interesting seeing different people take the reins," says Jon Goodwin of budding leadership skills. With fieldwork and feedback, the team helped put a lens to a new era in forestry.

## SEEDS OF PURPOSE

Out at the Region 6 Bend Seed Extractory, a Forest Service facility within the National Forest Nursery system, Kayla Herriman has the future in her hands—of trees and plants, that is. The COCC graduate, a Foundation scholarship recipient, went on to receive a master's degree in forest resources from the University of Idaho and now manages the busy operation.

"We currently work with seed from across the United States from more than 4,000 different species of grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees," she says. From rare orchids to Joshua trees, they handle seeds that go to restoration projects and research. "It's much like garden seed that people purchase at their local hardware store, but with native species that land

managers are using for restoration projects on public land."

And the future is now. With carbon output escalating worldwide, sequestration is more vital than ever. Megafires, influenced by climate change and forest policy, are seemingly the new norm. In fact, a study published this year by the University of Idaho found that the use of prescribed burns—to thin forests and help minimize colossal fires—has actually declined in the western U.S. over the last 20 years (though in the southeast, prescribed burns are ramping up). For the West, funding and an aversion to smoke are both underlying issues.

There's an aspect of "greater good" embedded in the College's Forestry program, of encouraging the future foresters to see themselves as stewards. "One of the things we want our students to understand is that we do this for society," says Boldenow. "We care about the environment—it's in the context of society."

Bill Smith, a longtime Foundation advocate and donor, who helped reinvent Bend when pine logging ran its course, got his foothold with the Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Company. "Forestry students learn balance," says the developer. "Having a population that includes people with an understanding of the value of the multiple uses of forest ensures that we will better optimize the forest's assets for the benefit of all."

Back in the woods, Bret Michalski's class is in their van, soggy from the elements and rattling down a corrugated Forest Service road, heading home. On the way in, the professor had pointed out a section of airy forest with widely spaced ponderosas, thinned out with chainsaws a while back to maintain forest health. "This unit here...this is a good representation of what this looked like 100 years ago," he'd told them a few hours before. As the van rolls by, a sizable herd of elk, hunkered down from the rain amid the trees, looks over curiously and watches them go. ■



## ROOTS OF KNOWLEDGE

Campus arboretum is an open-air classroom for students and the community

A spiral-grained ponderosa pine, long-ago expired and lying like a behemoth paperweight just to the left of the Boyle Education Center entrance (placed there as a landscaping feature in 2018), isn't technically on the College's arboretum tour. But as a sheer curiosity—the cause of the spiraling is an unknown anomaly—it's a neat start to the roughly 60-species walking tour of the Bend campus. The nearby weeping Norway spruce, bent into a humble greeting, is perhaps a more legitimate leaping-off point.

The COCC arboretum officially "opened" in 2009 and features plenty of still-living Central Oregon standbys,

such as Western juniper and Douglas fir (Oregon's state tree). But it also includes a wide variety of other specimens, with Scotch pine, Yunnan crabapple, black cottonwood, and even four species of cherry in the mix.

"You can tell it's a cherry by these two little glands," explains Rebecca Franklin, Ph.D., assistant professor, standing behind the Boyle building on a June morning and holding a leaf stem to show the pin cherry's tiny red glands. The nectar glands draw in helpful insects, like ants, she explains, to help the tree combat detrimental insects.

Over on the track that encircles the athletic field, Franklin walks up to a bushy shore pine that hugs the perimeter. "It's a setting conducive to on-campus labs," she says, examining an odd growth on the pine's top. The professor hopes to oversee an arboretum-focused capstone course in the near future, with the dual goal of updating the treed resource (some trees and plaques haven't survived the decade) while also seeking official Tree Campus USA status for COCC. In the meantime, visitors looking to self-navigate the arboretum can find a PDF brochure for general reference at [cocc.edu/about/visitors](http://cocc.edu/about/visitors).



# FALL UPCOMING EVENTS

# 2019

## OCTOBER

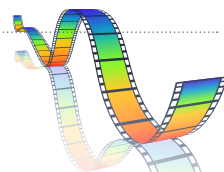


October 5-December 6  
**Watercolor Society of Oregon**  
 Enjoy featured works from the Oregon Watercolor Society in the Barber Library Rotunda Gallery this fall. Attend the opening reception on Saturday, October 5 in the Barber Library at 4 p.m.

October 18 & 23

### Forbidden Movie Screening

*Forbidden* illustrates the intersection of queer and immigrant issues facing LGBTQ minorities who have grown up in the rural South. Fri. 18 at 4 p.m. in Hitchcock Auditorium, Pioneer Hall, Bend Campus. Also showing on Wed. 23 in the Redmond Technology Education Center at 4 p.m.



October 19-21

### Central Oregon Symphony

Enjoy the harmonic sounds of the seasoned Central Oregon Symphony. Tickets are complimentary, but required. See [cosymphony.com](http://cosymphony.com) for details. All shows are at Bend Senior High School Auditorium. Sat. 19 at 7:30., Sun. 20 at 2 p.m., Mon. 21 at 7:30 p.m.



# 29

### October 29 Food is What Connects Us: Immigration, Community and Activism at the Dinner Table

Join Amy Harper, Ph.D., professor of Anthropology, Central Oregon Community College, and explore ways in which food can be used to build community. Wille Hall, Coats Campus Center at 6:30 p.m. Free and open to the public.



October 31

### Halloween Hall

Join us at Wickiup Residence Hall as we transform it into a fun experience for the whole family with candy, games and more. Free and open to the public. 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.



## NOVEMBER



November 8

### COCC Preview Day

Potential students of COCC will get a taste of Bobcat life and the College's academic offerings at the annual COCC Preview Day, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., on Friday, Nov. 8 at the Bend campus's Mazama

Gym. Preregistration is required; call 541.383.7500 or search "Preview Day" at [cocc.edu](http://cocc.edu).

November 11



### Veterans Day

Thank you to all of those who served or are serving our country. COCC closed, no classes.

November 17

### 20th Annual Turkey Trot Run/Walk

Join us for our annual 3-mile Turkey Trot run/walk, a benefit for the COCC Foundation. Free for COCC students and \$10 for all other participants. Starts on the COCC Mazama track behind Coats Campus Center. Information: [mgreenleaf@cocc.edu](mailto:mgreenleaf@cocc.edu).



November 18 

### America – A Global Perspective

Lulu Garcia-Navarro spent years abroad as a foreign correspondent in places like the Middle East and Latin America that have been heavily impacted by U.S. policy. How does the rest of the world see us and how do we see the world? Tower Theatre at 7 p.m. Tickets \$15 at [towertheatre.org](http://towertheatre.org).



November 24

### Cascade Winds Symphonic Band

Listen to the soothing sounds of the Cascade Winds Symphonic Band. Summit High School Auditorium. Free and open to the public.



November 28-29

### Thanksgiving Break


COCC closed, no classes.

## MORE

For more information and a full event schedule for the Nancy R. Chandler Visiting Scholar Program, visit: [cocc.edu/foundation/vsp](http://cocc.edu/foundation/vsp)

For more information on all campus-wide events, visit: [cocc.edu/home/events](http://cocc.edu/home/events)



 Nancy R. Chandler Visiting Scholar Program event

## DECEMBER

December 2

### Big Band Jazz

Be inspired by some of the best jazz musicians in Central Oregon performing traditional and contemporary big band music. Tickets \$10 for adults and \$5 for seniors and students. Wille Hall, Coats Campus Center at 2 p.m.



December 3 

### Patient Rights at the End-of-Life: The Evolving Landscape of Law, Medicine & Policy

Kathryn L. Tucker, JD, will discuss the evolution of law and policy governing end-of-life care, empowering attendees with information often hidden, which can aid in thinking about and planning for the final bit of the journey. Wille Hall, Coats Campus Center at 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$10 at [cocc.edu/foundation/vsp](http://cocc.edu/foundation/vsp).



# 3

December 7-8

### Cascade Chorale Holiday Magic

Enjoy the Cascade Chorale's annual Holiday Magic program featuring seasonal favorites and the Bend Children's Choir. Tickets available at [towertheatre.org](http://towertheatre.org). Saturday at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday at 7 p.m.



December 15

### COCC Foundation Scholarship Application Opens

Accepting applications for 2020-21 COCC Foundation Scholarships. See the Foundation's webpage for requirements: [cocc.edu/foundation](http://cocc.edu/foundation).

# 15

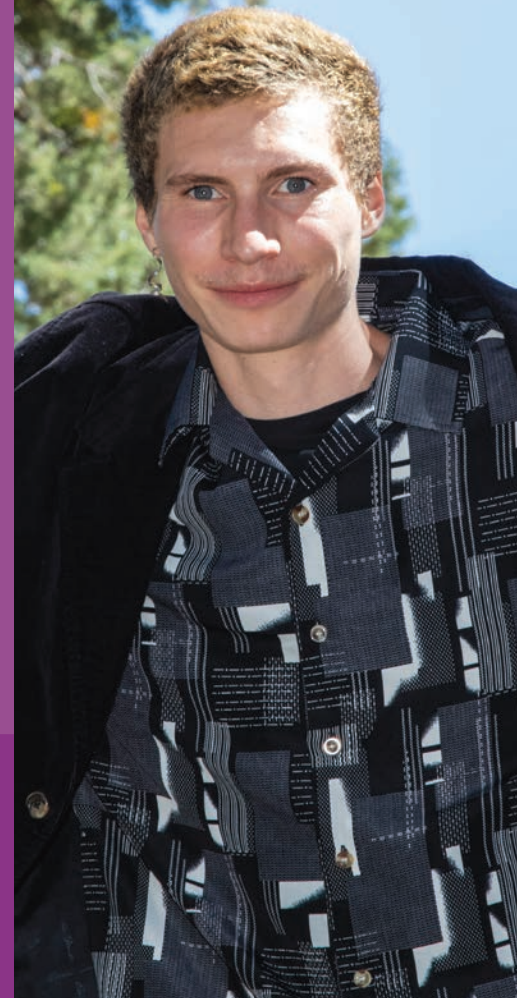
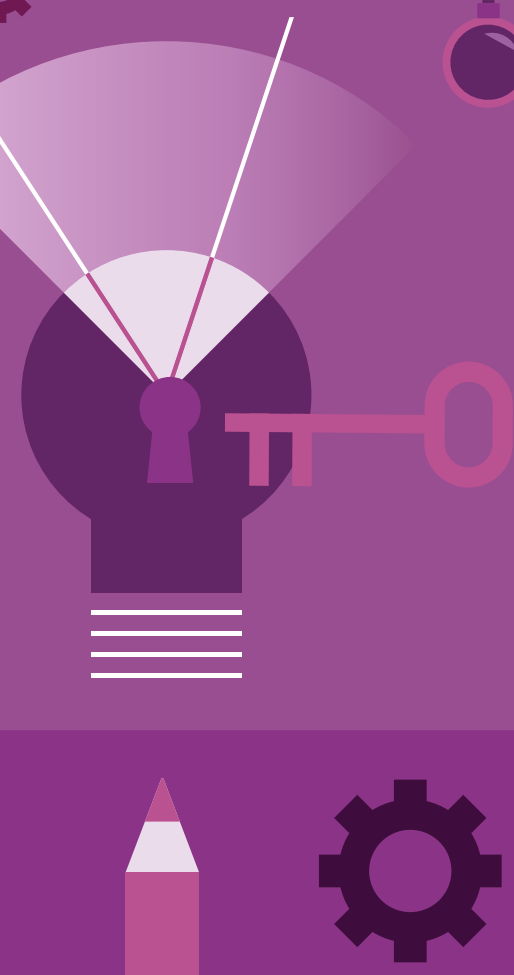




# The POWER of Scholarships

Three students with three very different stories spoke at this year's President's Scholarship Luncheon, where donors, students and college staffers gathered to celebrate the power of scholarships.

— by Mark Russell Johnson —



## ELIJAH HART

Psychology

Poverty and homelessness once threatened to derail Elijah Rain Hart's future. As one of four siblings, he often didn't have the basic daily necessities. But now, on a full ride to Lewis & Clark College—and immersed in neuroscience studies—Hart reflects on his COCC Foundation scholarship as a guiding light.

"It reiterated to me that higher education would serve as my 'declaration of independence,' of sorts, from poverty and its cyclical axis," he shared during the President's Scholarship Luncheon this past June. Hart, whose upbringing was "riddled with instability," now has plans for a doctorate in medicine.

For Hart, who struggled in high school, things brightened when he met Lindsay Buccafurni, COCC's former admissions coordinator, during a recruitment event at his Corvallis school. "Her kindness

and honesty spoke to me," he recalled. He signed up for the Oregon Promise, enrolled at the College, lived in the residence hall and soon became a student ambassador. He would travel to Barcelona with the study abroad program and go on to become a Ford Family Foundation scholar.

**"I truly came into the person I am today."**

"I truly came into the person I am today," said Hart of his COCC years, graduating in 2018 with an associate degree focused on psychology. Before returning to his bachelor's studies, he shared, he would spend the summer in France organizing art and music programs for foster children. "Your compassion has changed my life," he told the audience, "and many other students here at COCC."

## ERICA DENNEY

Nursing

Traveling the world as a minister, from Cambodia and Uganda to Uzbekistan and Nicaragua, Erica Denney would connect with people and communities, helping them in any way she could. "I knew since I was a teenager that I wanted to spend my life serving people," she shared. Eventually she realized she wanted to serve with more immediacy, to help in times of greatest need. That brought her to COCC's Nursing program.

**"These are people who have read through my application and they believe in me."**

Life, she pointed out, doesn't resemble a straight path. In fact, it tends to resemble, well, the trails around Central Oregon.

"You're going to encounter long stretches of flat, rather boring desert; at times, beautiful tree-lined creeks; occasionally, a grueling ascent to a gorgeous view; and, sometimes, we encounter a charred forest," she described. "Are there ever going to be any signs of new life?" Unsure she was even nursing material, the mother of three teenagers nevertheless applied for Foundation support.

"I got a letter in the mail that said I had been awarded a full tuition scholarship—and it brought me to tears," she said. "These are people who have read through my application and they believe in me." There was new life in the landscape. Denney's now a second-year nursing student and maintaining a 4.0 GPA. "I am deeply grateful."



## JOHN THORESON

Business Administration

Growing up, John Thoreson was made to feel "stupid" and "worthless" as he revolved through one foster home after the next—14 of them, to be exact—ultimately ending up on his own and thumbing his way around the country until he was old enough to enlist in the Army. When he got out, he spent an entire career fighting wildland fire and laboring at sawmills in the winters. But he'd use his free time to mentor and coach teams of at-risk youth, an experience that ignited a new calling in him, a desire to help advocate for youth through legal assistance.

"Every once in a while, somebody would 'come out of the bushes' in my life and pat me on the back and say, 'Here's another hill to climb—look from here, the view's different,'" he explained. "I can think of a half-dozen individuals

in my life that have done that, and this scholarship is one of those things. People that had never met me were saying, 'We believe in you.'" That pushed him to study hard at COCC; he finished in two years with highest honors.

**"I am going to become a better and better advocate for people."**

Now attending Western Oregon University's pre-law program, he said part of what drives him are the sobering stats that surround foster kids. "Only 50 percent are gainfully employed, able to take care of themselves at 24 years of age," he told the audience. "Three percent have any chance of ever getting a degree in their lives. I'm going to become a better and better advocate for people who had experiences like mine."




📷 Eugen Helmbrecht



# Scholarships by the Numbers

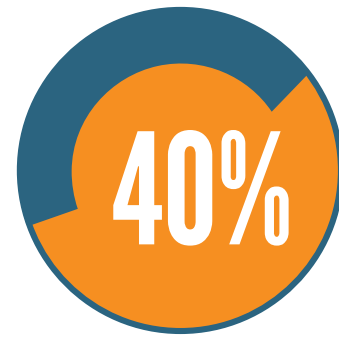
2019-20 COCC Foundation Scholarship Recipient Data

## First-Time Awards

 **622**  
qualified students applied



**250** students offered a first-time full \$4,000 scholarship



## Renewal Awards

students received a renewal scholarship from last year

**150** 

## Total 2019-20 Awards

**400**  
students offered a full scholarship




**1.72M**


offered in scholarship support

## COCC Foundation Scholarship Recipients

**3.36 GPA Average** 

**+ 2.3** more credits earned per term than average

**6.6%**   
of COCC credit students received a Foundation scholarship

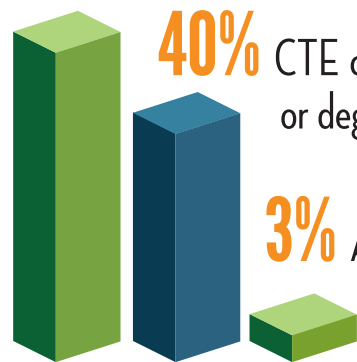
**90%**   
completed courses with a C or better

## Degrees Pursued

**57%** Transfer degree

**40%** CTE certificate or degree

**3%** AGS degree



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