

College hopes to offer more money in scholarships

by Erin Carey

"The board firmly believes that borrowing money to go to the first two years of school is just not a good idea, so whatever we can do to help break through that financial barrier, that's what we're doing, said Foundation executive director Greg Fitzgerald. And with a campaign to raise \$10 million for both scholarships and community projects, that's what members of the Clackamas Community College foundation board like Fitzgerald are aiming to do.

Started by an engagement process with the community called Imagine Clackamas, CCC wanted to know what they could do to improve themselves in the eyes of the community that surrounded them. "We're approaching our 50th birthday, and we've got some big initiatives going on in preparation of that," said Janet Paulson, CCC spokeswoman. "One of those was the bond, and another is the campaign and the third is our brand development process."

The campaign began two years ago through Imagine Clackamas. So far the foundation is on their way to the goal of \$7.5 million for scholarships, and \$2.5 million for community projects like restoring the headwaters of Newell Creek near Environmental Learning Center. "We had this need, because the No. 1 barrier still today to our students accessing an education is financial," said Fitzgerald. "So we needed to dramatically increase the amount of scholarships that we had."

Endowed scholarships are funds that are a constant source of money, to keep the scholarships that CCC has alive and well. Currently the Foundation managed about \$9.5 million in scholarship money, and with the campaign, hope to raise enough for at least \$15 million in endowed scholarships.

And the people who are doing the most donating? Those who work at CCC. "This college has the highest percentage of employee participation in annual giving that I've seen anywhere at least on the West Coast," said Fitzgerald. "Seventy five to eighty percent of employees give every single year to the Foundation, either scholarships or Funds for Excellence. That's unheard of."

With more than 600 applications coming in a year, and annually about \$581,675 given away in scholarships, it's the foundation's goal to make sure that those who apply for scholarships get the funding they need to continue their education. "Our applications are coming in faster than ever," said Fitzgerald. "A couple years ago, it was close to deadline and we had 60 applicants. Now, it opened a week or so ago, and we've got 200 applicants in the first week. We've never had that before."

The types of scholarships have a wide range, leaving no student in the dark when it comes to scholarship opportunities. Job skill endowments, manufacturing and military family endowed scholarships are just some of them that are offered. No matter what they're for, everyone is in agreement that this campaign is important to the future of the college.

"It's going to take everybody, and that's the nice thing about a fundraising campaign for scholarships," said CCC president Joanne Truesdell. "There really isn't an amount too small from one person, and there isn't an amount too large."

NEED MONEY FOR COLLEGE?

— Deadlines for CCC scholarships:
March 4 for undergraduates

— Visit Clackamas.edu/Scholarships

— FAFSA deadline
June 30 at 10 p.m.

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