

Q&A:

"I've had a lot of freedom to innovate and I've just been incredibly fortunate to work here 24 years."

— David Miller

With David Miller

David Miller, a full-time Spanish-German instructor and World Language department chair of 20 years, will be retiring at the end of spring term. The Clackamas Print sat down for a question and answer interview with the soon-to-retire World Language instructor.

STORY AND PHOTO BY AUTUMN BEREND
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Clackamas Print: *What is your role at the college?*

David Miller: "I am a Spanish and German instructor and the outgoing world languages department chair."

TCP: *How long have you worked here?*

DM: "Twenty-four years, 20 of that is full-time."

TCP: *How did you first arrive at CCC?*

DM: "I got my masters degree in Spanish and German in 1994 and I sent out resumes to various community colleges, and that included CCC and there happened to be an opening for a part-time Spanish instructor."

TCP: *Where are you from?*

DM: "I'm from Rockaway Beach, Oregon."

TCP: *What's one of the best elements of working at the college and in your department?*

DM: "I've been teaching here. I like to do teaching more than anything else. The rest of it is just paperwork and meetings, but its the teaching I live for and the teaching that makes me want to get up every morning and come to work."

TCP: *Are you going to miss CCC when you leave?*

DM: "I believe I will, yes."

TCP: *What do you plan on doing after?*

DM: "I'm not sure. I've been advised to not have anything specific planned and see what happens after I have the experience of being retired for a few months. I tell people I'm going to do more of what I do now on weekends and vacations. I'm a volunteer for hospice and I'll continue to do that. I started doing that a year ago as a sort of

bridge to retirement so I could have some structure in my life," Miller said with a laugh. "That's something I had to get out and do. Other than that, I'm going to travel around and see a few friends around the country."

TCP: *You said you volunteer for hospice. Could you go into more details?*

DM: "It's for people who have terminal diagnoses who have less than six months to live and there's several different programs. Providence has one, that's the one I volunteer for, Kaiser Permanente has one, Legacy has one, and it's a team of people which consist of doctors, nurse and social workers and a volunteer to go spend time with dying people; the volunteers, typically someone who offers respite care, which just means if the hospice are usually at home and the primary caregiver needs a break, to go shopping or just relax for awhile. We go for four hours a week and give them a break and get to know the patient."

TCP: *How long have you been doing that?*

DM: "I started a year ago and my first patient started in September and he died just three weeks ago. And then I have, had, one more but I never really got to know him because he died within a week after my first visit. So I'm very new. And another faculty member here, who actually took my German class, thought that I might consider doing hospice."

TCP: *Do you plan to also travel the world when you retire?*

DM: "I've traveled a lot as part of my job. I've used a lot of professional development funds from the college to make several trips to different countries where Spanish and German are spoken. I think I've probably been to Germany seven or eight times. I've done my sabbatical in Hamburg Germany and I've traveled to Spain with college

help and Mexico with college help and I did my second sabbatical in Chile. So, I've traveled pretty much as much as I want to. However, my wife is interested in further travel. She wants to go to the British Isles."

TCP: *What classes do you teach the most?*

DM: "I teach two Spanish classes and one German class."

TCP: *How popular are your classes or the language classes here at CCC?*

DM: "[Not so much] anymore. They used to be, especially in Spanish. We had a waiting list in every first year first term Spanish class. And our numbers dropped in all our classes except for [American Sign Language] which is increasing. And that trend is true nationwide. So now it's rare to have. Once in a while, we'll have a full Spanish 101 class, that's first year for the first term, but that's becoming less common. Ten years ago I had kids sitting out in the hall, hoping to get into a Spanish class. Waiting for a student to drop so they could get a seat."

TCP: *Any final words goodbye?*

DM: "I can't believe how lucky I was to have found and to be hired full-time at CCC. I love teaching and this has been a wonderful place to teach. A place that has been flexible and enabled us to help students in lots of wonderful ways. And cutting a lot of red tapes. And CCC's good for that. I've had a lot of freedom to innovate and I've just been incredibly fortunate to work here 24 years."



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Christi Finholt | Regional Advisor
Partnering with Clackamas Community College
Harmony Center | 7738 SE Harmony Road
Portland, Oregon 97222

