

Education

PCC Cascade Welcomes New Dean of Instruction



Charles Sieracki

Portland Community College recently hired Virginia higher education leader Charles Sieracki to take the dean of instruction position at the Cascade Campus.

Highlighting his experience in community outreach and previous dean of instruction positions, PCC Cascade Executive Dean Mildred Ollee said Sieracki is a perfect fit for the Cascade Campus.

"Charlie has an internal drive for excellence and the enthusiasm to get the job done," she said. "His previous experience in similar positions in Virginia and community team building skills made Charlie the right person for this position."

Prior to accepting the position at PCC, Sieracki served as the dean of Workforce and Community Development at Germanna Community College in Fredericksburg, VA., where he also held the position of dean of instruction from 1989-1997. Sieracki also held administrative and teaching positions at Thomas Nelson Community College in Virginia.

He received his doctoral degree from the University of Illinois, a master's degree from Marquette University and a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

Sieracki, who started in the position at PCC June 23, is eager to make a difference at Cascade. He

praised the work of his predecessor, Don Johnson—who retired in June after nearly 30 years at PCC—and others at Cascade for their tireless efforts to benefit the community and the college. Sieracki said that will continue under his leadership with the help of current staff and faculty, as well as new additions at the campus.

"I hope to keep our enthusiasm and focus while working with the creativity of the new members of the crew to renew our commitment to the community," he said.

On the job itself and relocating from the Northeast to the Northwest, Sieracki is equally excited.

"This is a wonderful opportunity in a great city, with a great community college serving a great city," enthused Sieracki. "I'm honored to be a part of that."

Sieracki will be responsible for providing primary leadership for planning, implementing, evaluating and coordinating the educational programs of Cascade Campus and other administrative duties as assigned by Executive Dean Ollee.

The Cascade Campus, which is located at 705 N. Killingsworth St. in Portland, served 8,700 students each year in the areas of job training, college transfer courses and self improvement classes.



"I Have A Dream" Program Empowers Portland Area Youth To Build Own Community

"Don't you want to drive a Lexus someday?" "Of course, we all do," Earl Ford told the group of 13-14 year olds sitting in front of him. "So how can we get to be one of the haves, instead of the have-nots?"

The 14 participants of the Whitman College-based "I Have a Dream" (IHAD) program, all local Portland area youth, shouted their answers: "Education." "By getting involved." "Vote!" Earl Ford, an eco-systems planner with the U.S. Forest Service at Gifford Pinchot National Forest Headquarters in Vancouver, Wash., smiled. As a guest lecturer returning for the second year to teach the IHAD students a lesson in environmental racism, he had achieved his goal—to instill the importance of dreaming, while also becoming actively involved in their futures to empower themselves.



During their field trip on environmental racism, IHAD students observed the conditions around Mill Creek in an industrial area of Walla Walla. Photo by Jennifer Kimura.



In a lesson on environmental racism, IHAD participants and counselors look on as Earl Ford points out the quality of facilities at Walla Walla's Washington Park. Photo by Jennifer Kimura.

students to observe the differences in use of natural resources. What the students noticed was ample evidence of environmental racism—picket fences in developed areas versus barbed wire or no fences near creeks in poor and industrial areas, and sheltered restrooms versus outhouses.

Perhaps the most visible difference was the abundance of lush shade providing trees in the better parks, versus hot basketball courts and dried grass at parks in the poorer parts of town. "What does this mean?" Ford asked the group in his booming voice.

It is discrimination—"not necessarily on color," he said, but environmental racism is a matter of availability of funds and the political decisions which guide them. "Poor people pay taxes too," he said. "Black people pay taxes too. Do we deserve to have rundown parks?" he asked the students, as they shook their heads. He stressed that environmental racism is not intended, but exists in every community, whether it be Walla Walla or Portland.

Ford does not want his students nor anyone else to point fingers at racism, but rather to stand up and do something about it. "You have to be politically involved to get justice," he said. His overall message was clear: that the power of educating oneself and becoming involved by voting is the key to success, as he has learned from personal experience. Ford, 45, was born and raised on a small farm in Louisiana with 14 siblings, he left home at 18 to pursue his education. He obtained his bachelor's degree in agronomy from Southern University, and later his master's in public administration from the University of San Francisco.

The field trip led by Ford was only one of many activities that provided focus into this year's IHAD program theme, "Empowering Ourselves to Build Our Own Community." Recent Whitman graduates and counselors Jason Smith and Ryan Hagemann taught a component on public speaking, having the students to choose a topic of importance to their community and prepare and deliver a persuasive speech as in a city council meeting. Smith and Hagemann believe that this skill is "indispensable to empowerment and the ability to contribute to a vibrant community."

Led by Whitman graduate Greer Bevel and Walla Walla College student Dawn Goldson, the Dreamers also completed a project in community planning and building. They worked on their writing skills as they composed descriptions of the parks, schools and homes and people in their neighborhoods, in addition to developing mock funding proposals for improvements in their community.

"Many young people today do not fully understand what it means to have a sense of their community," said Whitman IHAD director Evan Jones, a 1997 graduate of Whitman College. "We want to help them understand the importance of the concept, and that they have a certain power within themselves to change and affect their community in a positive way."

Oregon to Receive Funds for After-School Programs

President Clinton has announced \$40 million in education grants to establish and expand after school programs in 36 states across the country.

"This is an important step in helping our children say no to crime and drugs and say yes to a brighter future," said Democratic National Committee (DNC) General Chair Governor Roy Romer.

"A quality education is the most important tool that we can give our children to succeed in life. After school programs like these keep our young people off the streets and in the classrooms where they will get that education.

The 36 states receiving the grant money include:

Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.



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