

Foundation Grows to Give Students Hope

PCC boosts scholarships as enrollment surges

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for those with a high school diploma or less is about 12 percent. Compared to those who have a bachelor's degree, it's 4.5 percent.

Portland Community College, known for being an economical place to start a four-year degree, has seen its enrollment increase by 32 percent the last two years thanks to economic instability.

The college has become the destination of choice for people either getting a start on that bachelor's degree, or going back to school to receive more training. This has translated into more students utilizing financial aid and scholarships. This spring, the PCC Foundation received its highest number of completed applications for its many scholarships approximately 800, which is up from 500 last year.

Within the college there has been an increased awareness of the foundation due to the surge in students with financial need. The PCC Foundation awarded \$855,000 in scholarships in 2009-10, which was almost four times the amount dispersed in 2005-06.

"We noticed this year there was an increase in faculty involvement," said Erin Riley, PCC Foundation scholarship coordinator. "Faculty are so aware of students' financial plight that they were bringing students over to our office to find out about scholarships and calling to get information for students."

The interest comes on the heels of the foundation raising \$337,253 this year to match a challenge for the third consecutive year, which totals more than \$1 million in new money the last three years. In 2008, the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation challenged Oregon's community colleges to raise a record amount of money for scholarships, with the promise of matching gifts.

The PCC Foundation's success and growth has caught the eye of local dignitaries such as Portland Mayor Sam Adams.

Adams' office teamed with PCC to create the Future Connect Scholarship Program which are awarded to graduating high school seniors from Multnomah County who are at risk of not going to college, yet have high potential to succeed.

Ninety-five percent of the first Future Connect scholars are first generation college students. With support from the City of Portland and donations to the PCC Foundation, 200 students will receive scholarship support and dedicated advising to earn a degree at PCC.

"I always wanted to get involved



Norma Jean Germond introduces her scholarship recipient Rebecca Go-Akers (right) to former Portland Community College President Jim Van Dyke at the PCC Foundation's scholarship banquet.

in government to help make it easier for smart and hard working kids to get to school in the face of rising costs at colleges, universities and skill programs," said Adams at the inaugural Future Connect scholarship ceremony at City Hall.

According to PCC's Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 50 percent of PCC students required financial assistance to attend college this past year. For a full-time PCC student, one year's tuition, fees, books and other expenses amount to about \$4,500. A two-year degree will total almost \$9,000. Because household budgets are tight, financial aid applications at the college have grown by 75 percent since 2007-08.

"The PCC Foundation awards hundreds of scholarships every year to students who may not otherwise be able to afford an education," said PCC District President Preston Pulliams. "This support has made an invaluable difference to hundreds of PCC students and their families."

For information about the PCC Foundation, visit edu/foundation.

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