



## **College Report – May 2022**

**Patty Erjavec, PhD, *President***

### Transform the student experience

**Runyon scholarship winners** – Students Alyssa Mestas, Olivia Tracy, Lee Files and Rebecca Mudd each recently received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Damon Days committee. Recipients were selected by PCC faculty members who are involved in journalism, history or English pathways.

Damon Days was created by community members to promote renowned journalist Damon Runyon, who grew up in Pueblo. The group’s goal is to honor Runyon’s story and promote the humanities – specifically journalism/mass communications, history and English/literature – by raising scholarship funds for PCC and Colorado State University Pueblo students.



**Phi Theta Kappa induction** – The newest members of PCC’s Alpha Rho Theta chapter of Phi Theta Kappa were inducted on April 25. The event was a welcome chance to honor the new PTK members and gather in person with students, faculty, staff and family.



**Design for Social Change** – Graphic design students created displays for the Design for Social Change exhibit this month. Students chose a social message that addresses a subject of community concern. They used their graphic design skills to convey both their message and information to support it. This year's topics included COVID pollution, life skills, bullying and homeless veterans.



**Welding club members take state honors** – Four students in PCC's SkillsUSA Welding Club took top honors at the SkillsUSA state leadership conference and qualified for the national competition this summer. The three-member fabrication team of David Niemet, Fabian Llaguno and Alan Aparizio-Apodaca and individual competitor Marco Rodriguez-Sena won gold medals at the competition April 6-8 in Colorado Springs. In addition, student Jake Mayes took home a bronze medal. The gold medalists will participate in the SkillsUSA Championships June 20-24 in Atlanta. The club is raising money for the trip by selling metal art and getting sponsors.



**Perseverance pays off for Space Grant team** – The Royal Guards, part of PCC’s Space Grant team, received special notice for its work during the Colorado Robotics Challenge presented by NASA’s Colorado Space Grant Consortium. The event took place at the Great Sand Dunes in Alamosa on April 16. Team members Vashti Trujillo and Jared Butler won a certificate and Lego trophy for perseverance. Despite having issues with their rover navigating the difficult terrain (and dealing with Jared’s cut thumb), they continued to reprogram it and change its tires until the end of the competition. For their efforts, the Royal Guards received a certificate of achievement for “unwavering perseverance” because they did not give up when circumstances were tough.



**Spring Fling returns** – The traditional Spring Fling celebration, coordinated by Student Life and Associated Student Government, returned this year after a pandemic-induced hiatus. A large crowd gathered outside on the Pueblo campus for food, music, fun and a

chance to learn about PCC clubs and community resources.



**Student employee recognition** – PCC celebrated its student employees during National Student Employee Recognition Week in April. Work-study students and their supervisors submitted short videos about the value of working on campus and the many ways student employees contribute to the daily function of the college. Work-study students were honored at a reception and April 11 and 12 and received a gift card for Einstein Bros. Bagels. They also had a chance to win prizes in a drawing.

Transform our own workforce experience

**PCC hosts PERSIST workshop** – The Pueblo campus hosted ECMC’s PERSIST workshop on April 21. The workshops are held at participating Project Success institutions as part of the U.S. Department of Education initiative. PERSIST was designed to help educators, faculty and staff increase the success rates of college students most at risk for dropping out – first-generation, low-income, commuter and nontraditional students of all ages.

Create education without barriers through partnerships

**New resource helps parents** – Children First and Illuminate Colorado hosted two mobile child care open houses on April 14 (Pueblo campus) and 20 (Fremont campus). The mobile classroom – a renovated RV – will visit places in southern Colorado where parents are addressing issues like mental health concerns, substance use disorders or employment challenges so they can access the services they need without worrying about arranging for child care.



**Workforce training boost** – PCC’s Corporate College received \$378,000 from the city of Pueblo’s American Rescue Plan Act funds for four workforce development programs:

- Creation of an Energy Smart Academy and Soft Skills Academy through PCC’s Place for Education and Academic Knowledge (PEAK) – Energy Smart will address the need for post-secondary education in weatherization and building energy performance; Soft Skills will address the need for critical thinking, problem solving, teambuilding, leadership and professionalism training
- Noncredit, fast-track STEM training offered at no cost to participants in areas including construction, electrical, manufacturing, and health care
- Funds to purchase an industrial paint so PCC can provide customized training and skills assessment for existing industrial painters and fast-track training programs to prepare them for employment as an industrial painter
- Funds to create an industrial sewing program to serve individuals impacted by COVID-19

**Safety and leadership training** – PCC will work with government services company Amentum to offer a customized safety and leadership certificate program (four classes, 12 credits) to add to the skill set of the company’s employees. Participants will receive an academic certificate upon completion. Classes are taught at PCC on Fridays and employees can attend in person, flex or watch recordings. Instructors have a background in manufacturing and safety. There are 20 students enrolled and a second cohort is planned for the fall term. Amentum is sponsoring the program cost for all participating employees.

**PCC selected for Second Chance Pell** – PCC will participate in the Second Chance Pell – Pell for Incarcerated Students Experiment under the U.S. Department of Education’s Experimental Sites Initiative. The initiative was created to "support reentry, empower formerly incarcerated persons, enhance public safety, and strengthen our

communities and our economy," according to a Department of Education press release. PCC is one of 73 institutions selected nationwide during this round of the project.

Raise value standards through excellence & accessibility

**Exemplary students, employees recognized** – PCC’s 2021 employees of the year and Student Excellence Award winners were honored at CCCS events in Denver in April. President Erjavec attended with other PCC representatives and family members of the honorees to recognize the great accomplishments of both groups.



**“Chicanas: Nurturers and Warriors”** – PCC hosted a community screening of the documentary “Chicanas: Nurturers and Warriors” on April 27. The film explores what it means to be a Chicana and shares personal stories of triumph that inspire and empower.