

COLLEGE HISTORY

Portland Community College began as the adult education program of the Portland Public Schools. On May 15, 1961, the school district established the college as a separately operating entity. Because the college included students from many areas outside of Portland, the school board appointed an advisory council in 1965 to supervise the college and to give representation to areas beyond the school district boundaries.

As the advisory council and the school board developed programs and plans for the rapidly growing college, it became evident that the college needed to be a separate governmental unit with its own elected board to represent Portland and its entire surrounding communities. In 1968, voters of the five-county area approved the formation of a new college district named the Metropolitan Area Education District. It included the school districts in Portland, Multnomah County, Lake Oswego, Columbia County, Newberg and Washington County.

At this time the voters also elected the first college board of directors and approved a tax base, which provided the college with funds for the local share of operation and building construction. In 1971, the name of the district was changed to Portland Community College District.

District residents showed continuing support for the college in 1980 and 1986 as they voted to increase the PCC tax base. Enrollment growth of 25 percent since 1986 led residents to vote "yes" a \$61.4 million bond measure in 1992 to expand facilities at all campuses, and repair and upgrade existing buildings. In 2000, another bond measure for \$144 million passed. As a result, the college opened new buildings at its three comprehensive campuses (Sylvania, Cascade and Rock Creek) in 2003 and 2004, and unveiled the new Southeast Center on 82nd Avenue in 2004. PCC joined other community colleges and universities from around the country in signing a national climate initiative that launched the college's climate action plan to reduce its carbon footprint. In 2008, area voters approved a \$374 million bond measure, which was the largest ever in the state of Oregon at the time. The money improved technology and workforce training centers, as well as addressed rising enrollment. The bond led to the completion of the the Willow Creek Center in 2009.

The energy-efficient Newberg Center opened in 2011 providing Yamhill County with a 12,000 square-foot education and community space. It is recognized as one of the most sustainable educational buildings in the nation, with solar panels, natural cooling and heating systems and natural lighting. During the 2011-2012 school year, PCC celebrated its 50th year of serving local communities. In 2014, the college championed both the transformation of the Southeast Campus into its fourth comprehensive campus, as well as the creation of the Swan Island Trades Center. The Swan Island Center houses continuing education, training, retraining and professional development for local businesses.

In 2014, PCC developed its first comprehensive Strategic Vision, guiding the college community in the realm of diversity, sustainability, student success and access, and excellence. In 2016, PCC welcomed its seventh president, Mark Mitsui, to the district. In 2017, local voters overwhelmingly approved a \$185 million bond measure to improve workforce training programs, expand Health Professions & STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math), and meet needs for safety, security, building longevity and disability access.

In 2020, PCC broke ground on the OMIC Training Center in Scappoose. The future center will be a hub for advanced manufacturing training in Columbia County and support OMIC's R&D work.