The vision for a welcoming, learner-centered and flexible facility is on its way to realization. With the passage of the state’s capital budget this winter, the construction of the Phyllis and Charles Self Learning Commons is underway. The $34.9 million project, at the Cordata Parkway/Kellogg Road roundabout adjacent to Kulshan Hall, is the college’s first state-funded major construction project on campus since 2005. Colacurcio Brothers Construction of Blaine is the contractor.

On Wednesday, April 11, at 4 p.m. the community is invited to the groundbreaking, with refreshments following in Kulshan Hall.

The 65,000 square foot facility will mesh library resources and academic support services and is expected to open in Fall 2020. It includes the learning, math and writing centers, as well as tutoring. Instructional technology stations, collaborative work spaces, and individual and group study areas offer students a host of resources to power their learning.

In December 2013, the WCC Board of Trustees recognized the significant service and monetary contributions that Phyllis and Charles Self provide to the College by naming the building in their honor. Phyllis Self was a trustee from 1996 to 2006, served as trustee chair in 2002 and 2006, and has been a WCC Foundation Board Director since 1999. The Selfs generously support the College and WCC students through an endowed scholarship fund for students and a legacy gift bequest. Read more about the Learning Commons here.
WCC Cyberdefense Team Advances in Pac Rim Regional Competition

Cyber-criminals, beware! WCC’s cyberdefense team advanced to the next round at the Pacific Rim Regional Cyberdefense competition last month. Eight of our Computer Information Systems (CIS) students worked the entire school year for the opportunity to participate in the national competition. The cyberdefense team identifies and counters threats with measures to ensure network systems security.

As a national leader in cybersecurity education and a critical partner in filling the job gap in this rapidly emerging industry, Whatcom is one of just four National Cyberdefense Resource Centers designated by the National Security Agency.

Program options include the new Bachelor of Applied Science in Cybersecurity and IT Networking, an associate degree in CIS, and an Associate in Applied Science – Transfer in Cybersecurity. Students easily find work in this high-demand field. Learn more about Whatcom's programs in CIS and Cybersecurity.

Because Students Need a Place to Live

More construction will begin on campus this fall as the WCC breaks ground for a new building for student housing, to open in fall 2020. The location is on college property next to the west side of the Cordata Bus Station on Cordata and Orca Lane. This is a state-financed project, with WCC borrowing the funding, and paying back using rental income from housing.

Tiger Construction of Everson and designers Ankrom Moisan Architects of Seattle will build the three-story residence. The building, expected to be about 90,000 square feet, features apartment-style living units, including four-bedroom, two-bedroom, and studio configurations, with about 225-275 beds total.

To complete its intent to be a destination college, Whatcom is planning a comprehensive residence life program. Currently, Whatcom leases apartments close to campus, primarily for international students, although the new facility will be open to all students. Learn more about options for student housing here.
Janis Velasquez Farmer Is This Year’s Judy Hoover Awardee

In 2009, the WCC Foundation established the Judy Hoover Award for Excellence in honor of the exceptional contributions of former Foundation director and employee Judy Hoover. The employee who receives this award goes above and beyond their normal duties and consistently demonstrates excellence.

Janis Velasquez Farmer, WCC’s associate registrar, was selected for leadership equity work on campus, her significant role as co-chair of the college’s 2017-22 strategic planning committee, and her promotion of student success and creation of avenues for students to thrive.

Registrar Michael Singletary said, “Janis is always striving to do better. I believe she represents the best of what we offer at WCC, and a role model we can all admire.”

Thank you, Janis, for your inspiration and leadership!

Four Faculty Members Tenured by Board of Trustees

This month, the Board of Trustees awarded tenure to four fulltime faculty members: (from left) Paul Curd, Counseling; Tommaso Vannelli, Chemistry; Carrie Muir, Mathematics; and Jeanne Broussard, Visual Communications.

Per state regulations, in the third year of employment, faculty must be awarded, extended or denied tenure. The process to award tenure is led by a review committee and can span more than two years.

Faculty are evaluated on:
• Teaching and instructional support effectiveness
• College and community service
• Professional development

Evaluation includes peer observation, student feedback, and annual professional reports. Congratulations to Dr. Curd, Dr. Vannelli, Dr. Muir and Ms. Broussard.
WCC Alum Awarded $75,000 Grad School Scholarship

WCC alum Sharalyn Sentinella, who graduated from the honors program in 2015, has been awarded a prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Foundation scholarship of $75,000 for graduate school. The first in her family to attend college, Sharalyn taught herself HTML coding at 14 and dropped out of school at 16 to build websites. She earned her GED at Whatcom, where she maintained a nearly perfect GPA. She previously was awarded $40,000 a year by the same Foundation to complete her four-year degree.

As the college’s 2015 commencement speaker, she credited numerous faculty members who supported her and believed in her ambitious academic goals. Currently applying to graduate school following graduation from Western Washington University, she plans to pursue international studies.

We’re proud of students like Sharalyn, who may take a non-traditional path to higher education, and soar when they arrive here. Learn more about scholarships offered by WCC.

Sustainability on Campus Rewarded by STARS Program

For many years, political science faculty member Barry Maxwell and retired psychology faculty member Bob Riesenberg led efforts to make Whatcom a more sustainable campus. This year, Kaatje Kraft, geology faculty member and head of the college’s Sustainability Committee, with the help of many others, secured a bronze rating from STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System).

STARS is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges to measure their sustainability performance. Factors such as campus engagement, curriculum, energy, waste and innovation are scored. Most recently, the college’s Professional Development Day was deemed a zero waste event. This included using reusable plastic nametags, printing fewer paper programs, and generating no landfill garbage in food prep.

Ongoing efforts include Energy Star ratings for all campus buildings, HVAC upgrades, LED bulbs installed as other bulbs burn out, and grounds crew irrigation practices to avoid summer watering, to name just a few. Sustainability is a key initiative for the college.
Meet One of our 230+ Scholarship Awardees:

Nagla Mohamed-Lamin is WCC’s Transforming Lives Award Choice

Imagine studying English for eight years, and spending three more meeting requirements to come to the United States. WCC student Nagla Mohamed-Lamin, Whatcom’s selection for this year’s Transforming Lives award, was born and raised in a refugee camp in Algeria. She left school at 14 to help care for her mother and six siblings. After an American friend suggested she pursue higher education, she raised the necessary funds for tuition and selected Whatcom.

Nagla plans to transfer to a four-year university and major in sustainable development, with her dream to help refugees and continue to advocate for the rights of the Western Sahara people.

"I want to tell those who are currently attending a community college, or those hoping to attend, no matter how many barriers are in their way, nothing can stop them from following their dreams. Being part of WCC has convinced me there are so many hands willing to guide you to your success."

Nagla received the Whelan- Sharpe Family scholarship, established by former WCC trustee Phil Sharpe and his siblings to honor his mother, Eileen Whelan Sharpe. The daughter of Irish immigrants who taught her helping others was simply part of her being, she became a nurse. Her children wanted to do something in her honor to carry forward her family’s tradition of helping others. Phil said, ”She was particularly interested in helping young women who were willing to work hard to better themselves and their world. She saw these women as symbolic of her immigrant family’s struggle to better itself."

Learn more about the Transforming Lives Award.

Briefly...

- Another competition to fill the Orca Food Pantry is on. The four college divisions --- Arts and Humanities, STEM, Social Science and Business, and Academic Resources and Health Professions, are competing to see who will get the bragging rights for raising the most food this quarter. To date, 343.75 pounds have been donated, with Arts & Humanities leading the food-raising. It is estimated that up to 25% of all college students are food-insecure. Donate today.

- Kudos to our Combined Fund Drive (CFD) volunteers! Led by administrative assistant for the vice president of instruction Laurie Starr and fiscal specialist Jennie Sabine, the CFD (a charitable vehicle for government agencies in Washington) at Whatcom had a 51.2% participation rate for employees, 5.5% more than 2016, and topping most other community colleges in the state. CFD volunteers provide lunch for employees at various times throughout the year. Donations by employees to “buy” their lunch then are directed to scholarships, the Orca Student Success Fund, emergency aid, or any nonprofit they wish. Recently, Pi Day (3.14), with sweet and savory pies donated by faculty and staff, raised over $1,000 for math scholarships.

- Whatcom currently has over 400 students registered with the Access & Disability Services Office. Following the Americans with Disabilities Act, the office helps to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to the college. Since last fall, Whatcom has been participating in a yearlong study funded by the state to improve accessibility, including converting documents used here into accessible formats. Learn more about Access & Disability services on campus.

- Dr. Kathi Hiyane-Brown was honored as the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce’s Female Empowerment awardee at their January annual dinner. President Kathi’s selection cited her leadership and mentoring of women throughout the community.
At its March meeting, The WCC Foundation thanked retiring faculty member and Foundation board member Bob Winters for his faithful and collegial service.

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**Advancement Staff**

Sue Cole, executive director for College advancement; Marisa Ellis, communications and marketing director; Caite Holman, Foundation director; Stephanie Schmitt, Foundation operations manager; James Zyon, senior graphic designer; Kate Imus, Foundation program specialist; Laura Going, communications manager

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