Alumni Spotlight - Meet Karlee Heath ‘15

- Why did you choose WCC? I was a Running Start student and chose to participate in the program mainly because my high school did not offer any AP or IB classes. I ended up graduating high school with my Associate’s degree, and then finishing my Bachelor’s at UW in two years. It saved me a lot of money and allowed me to study abroad in India my first quarter at UW (freshmen were not supposed to be allowed, but I was technically a junior in credits so an exception was made). After graduating, I went back to India for a language fellowship with the American Institute of Indian Studies.

- What are you doing now? I am the International Housing Coordinator at Whatcom. I work with Lynnette Berry, International Housing Manager, to coordinate homestays for international students at WCC. Together we recruit new hosts, make placements, coordinate student arrivals, and mediate issues in homestay. As a former international student who lived with two amazing host families in India, I am motivated to help create similar positive experiences and lasting relationships for our international students and hosts. If you think you might want to host an international student at Whatcom, email me at kheath@whatcom.edu!

- Favorite memory of WCC? I had a class on Religions of the Far East, which included a field trip to the Gurudwara in Lynden. I had already been interested in India, but hadn’t had any opportunities to study other cultures in my classes. Being able to see those other cultures in my own community was a very special and valuable experience. I learned so much from Mary Haberman, my classmates, and community members on our many field trips, but the Gurudwara especially since it connected to my already existing interest and travel plans in India.

- Favorite spot on campus? The library! I never really studied in there, but I had an internship at the library because I thought I wanted to be a librarian at the time, and I became such close friends with the staff. I love being back at Whatcom and getting to walk over and visit them on my breaks.

- Favorite professor? Maria Thompson. I had taken Spanish in high school, but it really began to click in her class, and has led to a life-long love of language.

“I am motivated to help create similar positive experiences and lasting relationships for our international students and hosts.”

-Karlee Heath ‘15

Are you interested in hosting an international student?

- Hosts must live on or near a WTA bus line within 45 minutes commute to WCC
- Provide a private furnished bedroom for the student
- Provide three meals a day
- Can be single, married / unmarried couples, with / without children or pets, native / non-native English speakers
- Compensation provided for hosting
- Email housing@whatcom.edu

Off campus housing on the left, Self Learning Commons on the right.
Making an Impact

During his seven year run as Chair of the engineering department at Whatcom Community College, Russell Sherif began to take notice of something. There was a concerning lack of female representation within the department. So much so, that when Russ checked the enrollment numbers, he wasn’t surprised to see that women only made up about 10% of the engineering students.

“As the father of three daughters, I asked myself what could be done to foster the interest of female students to our engineering program.”

And after some thoughtful consideration, Russ had an idea. If things like gendered assumptions and an old school style of thinking were barriers to entry, then there must be opportunities created specifically to encourage women to go into a traditionally male dominated field in order to counteract that.

In 2015, Russell started the Sherif Family Scholarship for Women in Engineering at Whatcom Community College. Since its inception the scholarship has supported numerous students on their path towards becoming professional engineers. In that time, Russell has also worked to create an additional award to be given to an outstanding female student selected by the engineering faculty.

Students like Prabjot Kaur (left), one of the recipients of the Sherif scholarship in 2018-2019 school year, who hopes to become a mechanical engineer in India, and had this to say about the scholarship:

“The Sherif Family Scholarship means a lot to me...As an international student, my tuition is 3x more than a regular student. It’s helped me in getting one step closer to my dream.”

- Prabjot Kaur, Sherif Family Scholarship recipient, ’18-19

As Russell reflects on why he decided to start an endowment at Whatcom Community College, he had this to say:

“...as I donate to Whatcom Community College each year now, I do so with a belief that it is my responsibility, that it is our responsibility, to try to make a positive difference in students’ lives.”

- Russell Sherif

If you’d like to learn more about how you can make a positive difference in students’ lives here at WCC, visit whatcom.edu/foundation.

Upcoming Events

- **September 20th**: Volleyball vs. Everett CC – 7pm (NWAC Home-Opener)
- **September 26th**: Nia: Mind-Body Fitness: An Free Introductory Workshop - Pre-registration required, register at whatcom.edu/academics/community-continuing-education/register-now
- **September 27th**: A Gathering to Celebrate Xw’ullemy (the Salish Sea): If you’re coming by land: gather at Marine Park at high tide for speakers, music, and a demonstration of unity.
- **September 28th**: Women’s Soccer/Men’s Soccer doubleheader vs. Skagit Valley CC – 5pm/7:15pm
- **September 28th**: Tour of Scotland - Free Information Session: Learn more about traveling to Scotland with Community & Continuing Education! This information session will provide an overview of our Tour of Scotland--a Community & Continuing Education road trip led by WCC English faculty Rhonda Daniels. Foundation Building 201C, Saturday the 28th from 11am-12.
- **October 19th**: Museum Road Trip: Chihuly Garden & Glass: Join local artists Trish Harding and Deb McCunn for a trip to the world-acclaimed Chihuly Garden and Glass at the Seattle Center. Registration deadline October 4, 12pm - tickets are $119; to register visit https://www.whatcom.edu/academics/community-continuing-education/road-trips or call (360) 383-3200.

We are Building Futures Together

Your gifts to the WCC Foundation support students, faculty/staff and college programs and initiatives.

**Contact us**: foundation@whatcom.edu I 360.383.3320 I www.whatcom.edu

**Make a gift**: https://www.whatcom.edu/giving