

With so many driven, loyal donors, Future Connect Program flourishes

PCC'S GROUNDBREAKING and successful Future Connect Program continues in its steadfast mission to enroll recent high school graduates — most are low-income and first-generation college-goers — who might not otherwise think about going to college. With support from one-on-one college success coaches who advise students on everything from classes to career paths, students are making strides. Future Connect students from the class of 2011 are transferring to Oregon State University and Portland State University among other institutions, exploring fields in biochemistry, science and psychology. They are definitely headed on their way.

The success of Future Connect relies on donors who believe in this next generation of students and know they will be part of the future leaders for the Portland region. A \$60,000 donation from the Renaissance Foundation provides dedicated coaching to students while at PCC and then awards ten selected students a scholarship once they leave to attend a four-year university.

"The Renaissance Foundation's primary focus is improving educational outcomes for students in need," said Irving Levin, Renaissance Foundation trustee and a retail financial services veteran. "Our scholarship students are very accomplished. Their dedication, added to the support the College can provide them, have resulted in high achievement in terms of student retention and graduation rates. Since many of our students are first-generation college students this is gratifying."

Significant support also comes through the Rask Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, PGE Foundation, and the cities of Portland, Hillsboro and Beaverton.

"A lot of PCC students go to heroic measures to support their families and go to school. It's not a cake walk," said Irving Levin. "They share our belief that the power of education changes lives. It's great to be around that."

The Future Connect Program has produced remarkable results. The student retention rate is 70 percent, versus a 20-percent rate for low-income, first-generation PCC students with a solid academic performance who are not in the program.

Future Connect continues to grow in numbers and geography. Launched in 2011 with about 140 students, the program started as a partnership among PCC, the City of Portland and the community with participants from throughout Multnomah County. It now extends into Washington County and in Fall 2013 nearly 600 students will be enrolled from Multnomah County and the Hillsboro and Beaverton school districts.

◀ Opposite Page, top photo: Tom Arenz of the Rask Family Foundation, which donates to the Future Connect Program, sends off PCC graduates Tan Nguyen, left and Marius Ibuye with a wave.

◀ Opposite Page, bottom photo: Irving Levin and Stephanie Fowler of the Renaissance Foundation have pledged their support to Future Connect.