

Currents

THE SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE PREMIER MAGAZINE • SUMMER 2018

A Dream Come True!

For two years, Jordan Shelley imagined what it would be like to receive the Sydney S. McIntyre, Jr. Memorial Scholarship. This year, his dream came true.

- see page 5

Focused on Excellence: Access • Achievement • Community



Skagit Valley College is making a difference throughout our community by opening the doors to higher education for everyone who seeks a better future. I am proud that we have created a diverse learning environment where all are welcomed and valued. It's a place where students of all ages, from many backgrounds and perspectives, and with various skill levels and life experiences, receive the support they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

As we welcome students to our campuses and centers, they discover that college takes determination, patience, and persistence – and a lot of studying. It also takes the support and encouragement of others along the way. So, we want to thank and acknowledge you, the caring family, friends, and donors who contribute so generously to the students in your lives.

To honor the milestones reached each year, we always look forward to celebrating student success at various college gatherings, including our annual Commencement and Honors Receptions. With every handshake, we know each of them have taken an important step in their educational journey: completing a degree or certificate that prepares them for employment, earning a transfer degree that leads to a bachelor's program, or receiving a high school diploma that paves the way to college.

In this edition of Currents, we will showcase a few of the accomplishments that made this year so special. And, in the pages that feature the SVC Foundation, you will see how your support makes a difference in our students' lives, with highlights about donors, scholarships, and special events. This year, the SVC Foundation announced its highest-ever allocation of scholarships district-wide, more than \$600,000!

On behalf of the SVC Board of Trustees, SVC Foundation Board of Governors, faculty, staff, administration, and students, thank you for joining our commitment to students. With your support, many lives in Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties are being touched in a meaningful way.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas A. Keegan
President

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Achievement: *Drive To Succeed*

SVC graduate and mechanical engineer Miguel Strouse lands his dream job at TESLA.

Miguel was raised in an unstable and financially precarious family setting. Working small jobs to help support the family from age 11, he was brought to the US as a child. When his mother's employment fell through and she returned to Mexico, Miguel was left in Sedro-Woolley. He was 16, didn't speak English, and had no family support.

"Those were lonely times," he recalls. But soon, he established goals and set about working toward reaching them. His first goals were to learn English and graduate from Sedro-Woolley High School. He immediately began to make an impression, and teachers nominated him for the Champions of Diversity scholarship at Skagit Valley College. After graduating in 2008, he entered SVC, where he received guidance and support from college staff and instructors.

He first joined the Automotive Technology program, but soon realized his real interest was in the engineering of the engines. Gaining confidence, he set his sights on earning a transfer degree. He graduated from SVC in 2014 with an Associate's Degree in Engineering/Physics and was admitted to Washington State University.



During three years at WSU, he focused on science and math. He served as vice-president of the Society of Latino Engineers and Scientists, an organization dedicated to industry and faculty networking, and mentoring support for incoming students.

In 2017, he earned a Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering and began a quest to join a premier firm in engineering and technology. After submitting many job applications and undergoing several interviews, he landed his dream job. Today, he is employed at Tesla, where he is leading small groups of engineers in quality analysis.

Miguel's journey is the story of remarkable personal drive and achievement. It is also a story of a community supporting the success of young people. Patient tutors, inspiring instructors and anonymous scholarship donors have all played a role in Miguel's amazing progress.

"I feel very grateful for all the support I received and I intend to pay it forward to others," Miguel says.

ACCESS



Skagit Valley College was pleased to nominate Valerie McCormack for the Washington State Association of College Trustees (ACT) 2018 Transforming Lives Award. This award recognizes current or former students whose lives have been transformed by pursuing higher education at a community or technical college.

As a single mother and an older student returning to college, Valerie McCormack is highly motivated to pursue her educational goals and transform her life, despite many personal challenges and tragedies.

“Thanks in part to scholarships from the college, I can get an education. I know this is my second chance in life and I’m willing to do what it takes.”

From an early age, she suffered abuse and neglect from an alcoholic mother and a father who was in and out of prison. The final betrayal came when Valerie was 13: “My mother’s boyfriend was sexually assaulting me and when I told her, she chose him over me and kicked me out. I joined a gang and dropped out of school in the 8th grade. At 14, I became a teenage mom and was in an abusive relationship. At the time, I thought there was something wrong with me and this was how I was meant to be treated.”

Later, Valerie suffered heart-breaking tragedies, losing two of her four children—an eight-year-old daughter to cancer and a five-month-old son to SIDS. Devastated, she turned to drugs and alcohol and, at her lowest ebb, attempted suicide. “At a turning point, I was invited to church where I met my angels who helped me have hope, and I put myself into treatment. I am happy to say I now have many years of living clean and sober.”

In sharing her courageous story, Valerie offers a message of hope and perseverance: “When I think about my life, I realize that I have overcome many challenging obstacles. My advice is: Don’t let what others say affect your decision about your educational dreams and goals. Education is the pathway to success. It’s never too late to go back to college.”

The future is a bright one for Valerie McCormack. She earned a high school diploma through SVC’s High School 21+ program and is enrolled in the Human Services program.

An Amazing Gift that Changes Lives:
**THE SYDNEY S. MCINTYRE, JR.
 MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Congratulations to two exceptional SVC students, *Jordan Shelley* and *Alexander Hood*, who both received the Sydney S. McIntyre, Jr. Memorial Scholarship. This coveted scholarship provides full tuition, books, room, and board for two years at any Washington state public college or university for students pursuing a bachelor's degree in math, science, or engineering.

For **Jordan Shelley**, life is a blend of global experiences and unwavering optimism. Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in a poverty-stricken family, Jordan was six when his father died and he and his siblings were taken to an orphanage. After six months, they were adopted by a family from Greenbank, Washington. Jordan says, "I've been blessed, unlike many, with a great opportunity and for the sake of myself and those who have sacrificed to get me where I am, I strive to reach my highest potential." This fall, he will attend the University of Washington and is motivated to become a doctor. "I desire to receive a college degree that will allow me to get a career that will provide financial stability and medical knowledge. With both in hand, I'll have the power to give back to my present community, as well as one day have the ability to travel back to Ethiopia to aid my people."

ALEXANDER HOOD & JORDAN SHELLEY
 with **PRESIDENT TOM KEEGAN**
 Sydney S. McIntyre, Jr. Memorial Scholarship 2018



With the natural beauty of Anacortes all around him, **Alexander Hood** learned to appreciate the environment. Although neither of his parents went to college, they encouraged him to do so. After graduation from high school, he delayed college plans and spent time operating his own handy-man business. Realizing a better future was out there, he enrolled at SVC with the goal of becoming an engineer and excelled academically and found his niche in life. This fall, he will attend Western Washington University to pursue a degree in electrical engineering with a special emphasis on renewable energy. The future is a bright one for Alexander: "As a solar engineer, I will utilize my skills to develop new solutions for alternative energy to help curb the threat of climate change."

HONORS RECEPTIONS

The Honors Reception is held at the Mount Vernon and Whidbey Island campuses to honor a number of distinguished SVC students who have earned the President's Medal, department and club awards, scholarships, and the Lewis and Yates awards.

- Endowed funds have grown to over \$14 million
- SVC Foundation manages over 200 restricted and endowed funds.

The SVC Foundation is grateful for the support and generosity of many individuals, families, service groups, and businesses that are committed to helping students achieve their dreams through higher education.

Over **\$600,000** awarded districtwide 

Mount Vernon Campus
 600 in attendance
241 SCHOLARSHIPS
 to 168 students

Whidbey Island Campus
 200 in attendance
84 SCHOLARSHIPS
 to 46 students

DANIA JARAMILLO
 Lewis Award 2018



CHRISTOPHER LEYVA VERA
 Yates Award 2018



COMMUNITY: *Events & Highlights*



The 30th Annual Ford Golf Classic

The 30th Annual Ford Golf Classic was held on Friday, May 11th at Avalon Golf Links in Burlington. The day's mission was to celebrate Dr. Jim Ford's vision of supporting students, while having a great day of golf and we did not disappoint! The day began at 8:00 am with a commemorative toast and photo of those in attendance as a nod to Dr. Ford who passed away in May 2017, shortly after our 29th Ford Golf Classic. We hosted 216 golfers, 35 amazing sponsors, 45 in-kind donors and 50 volunteers, helping to put us over the \$1.25 million mark to support the SVC Foundation.



The First Annual SoulFest Event was a welcome addition to our Skagit summer! Open to the community, designed with a family-friendly atmosphere in mind, and originated by Skagit Valley College freshman Elizabeth Wilson to benefit the Women's Soccer program, the event incorporated live music, food trucks, and showcased local breweries, as well as SVC's very own Cardinal Craft Brew.



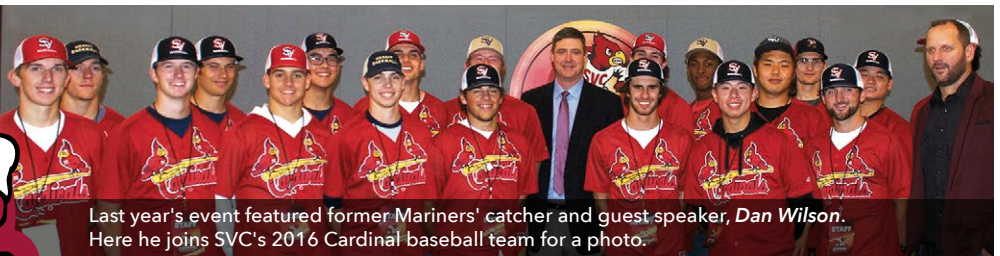
The New Soccer Field!



Arriving This Summer!



You might have noticed something new on our MV campus! Groundbreaking began on SVC's newest addition, a soccer field in April of 2017. Due to construction and weather delays, the field is finally on track to open this summer. The field will be used by many in the community, including SVC's own men's and women's soccer teams, local leagues and will be available for local schools to rent. Thank you to the United Soccer Football Club and Skagit County Parks and Recreation who were major supporters of this project.



Last year's event featured former Mariners' catcher and guest speaker, Dan Wilson. Here he joins SVC's 2016 Cardinal baseball team for a photo.

The **16th** Annual Sports Auction

Cardinal Athletics would like you to save the date for **Saturday, October 20th** for our 16th Annual Sports Auction. This highly anticipated event benefits student athletes, the athletic department and the SVC community. More information will be posted on the athletic department website at <https://athletics.skagit.edu>. Just follow "Red" the Cardinal Mascot!



Events, Parties & Celebrations, Oh My!

We think everyone deserves a good party, so we like to do it a lot!

Our Foundation's mission is to raise the profile of the college and share the College's good deeds and progress with our supporters and community. As we head into the new year, we look forward to gathering our friends, new and old, to celebrate and give thanks. Our guests are always welcomed and appreciated because we like how it feels to hear a laugh, to share a story and to personally connect with our community. Thank you to all who joined us this year, we had a lot to celebrate!

Currents

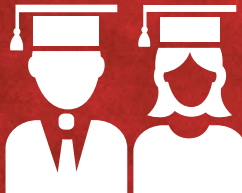
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www.skagitfoundation.org
www.skagit.edu/currents



Currents was awarded a 2018 Silver Medallion Award for magazines by the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations.

ABOUT THE CLASS OF 2018

1,756 Degrees, Certificates & Diplomas Awarded



787 Academic Degrees

91 Running Start Students Graduated

813 Professional/Technical Degrees & Certificates

129 High School Diplomas, including 50 from our High School 21+ Program

16-68 The Age Range of our Graduating Class

71 International Students Graduated from 10 different countries



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Skagit Valley College provides a drug-free environment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or age in its programs and employment.