



Connections

January 21, 2021

Reflections

The nation and the world watched yesterday as a centuries-old tradition continued—a new President of the United States was sworn into office. Regardless of whether your preferred candidate won the election, the meaning of yesterday’s peaceful transfer of power should not be lost on any of us as we collectively work towards a brighter future. In the words of National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman,

“If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children’s birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with...”.

As I heard those words, and as I read them again now, reflected in these ideas are the reasons I do the work that I do. Our mission at WWCC is to change lives, provide opportunity, empower individuals, and help communities to flourish. I am inspired by Ms. Gorman’s words, and I find myself reinvigorated and evermore committed to our work. What we do each and every day, on behalf of students, is deeply meaningful, and it’s an honor to share that mission with you all.

As I watched and listened to Ms. Gorman recite her poem to the nation, I also was reminded why the arts and humanities are so important. She was able to capture “what oft was thought, but ne’er so well express’d,” (to quote another famous poet, Alexander Pope). Ms. Gorman finished her profoundly moving poem with a call to action.

“The new dawn blooms as we free it
for there is always light,
if only we’re brave enough to see it
if only we’re brave enough to be it”

Let's stay strong together, meet our challenges head-on, and never forget that what we do matters—to our students, to our communities, and to ourselves.

Weekly Highlight - VPI Search Update

The Vice President of Instruction candidates have met with the college community in a series of meetings and open forums. Feedback has been solicited and that information is being processed. Please follow this link to the feedback [form](#). Background checks and other deliberations are continuing, and we hope to reach a decision in the next week. Many sincere thanks to everyone who played a role in this exhaustive (and exhausting) search process. I have heard from several of the candidates how smooth the process was, and we have received compliments on our search advocate program, as well as the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion that was evident at all levels of the search process.

Capstone Kitchen Returns

Back by popular demand, Capstone Kitchen—Curbside (a la carte) will launch Wednesday, January 27. The link is www.wvcc.edu/capstone and you are asked to order and pay online. Pickup orders in the Enology and Viticulture Center's parking lot, with two designated parking spots. Hours of operation are Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The menu is limited, due to the challenges presented by the pandemic. Food will be fresh, delicious, and brought to your car with a smile (behind the masks). This is an educational opportunity for our culinary students and a gastronomic opportunity for the rest of us. As Chef Entrikin tells me, "education never tasted so good!"

Other quick takes

- **Federal relief funds.** Details are emerging, but it appears that the latest round of federal relief will arrive shortly. As before, a sizable amount of money (approximately \$1.2M) is earmarked for direct student assistance, with another roughly \$3.6M coming to assist the college with pandemic relief. This is most welcome, and buys us a bit more time to adapt to the enrollment decline and other claims on our resources due to the pandemic. It does not change the long-term financial situation of the college, given that funds must be expended by the end of the calendar year. We are looking to make infrastructure, technology, and other upgrades that allow us to serve students better, and that will persist beyond the end of the current year.

- **Strategic planning.** WWCC's strategic planning process is well under way, and a key component is collecting information from students, employees, advisory council members, trustees, and others affiliated with the College. The survey was shared widely via email, so thank you to everyone who has participated. A similar survey is set to be sent out to the external community in the next few days. Once that information is collected and collated, it will be reviewed by the Governance Council, among others, and follow-up information will be forthcoming.
- **Student email policy.** As previously announced, a new administrative policy has been adopted, giving direction on how emails from students should be handled. For all official communication with the college, this new policy requires students to use their wwcc.edu email addresses. Not only does this ensure compliance with federal regulations and privacy laws (such as FERPA), but it ensures that students will receive accurate and timely information from the college. The draft policy was widely circulated and vetted by student leaders, faculty, and administrators. In the future, a corollary policy regarding employee use of email and other communication methods will be developed. That policy will involve input from the college and may include guidelines for the use of social media, etc. Please stay tuned for that policy, but for now, the student policy may be found at this [link](#).
- **Covid vaccines.** College employees are coordinating with Walla Walla County Department of Community Health representatives regarding vaccine distribution. No detailed plans are in place, but information will be shared widely once it becomes available.
- **Board of Trustees:** The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 27, at 9:30 a.m.

WWCC Comings and Goings

Welcome to our new colleagues:

- Emily Zilliox-Program Assistant, Enrollment (2/1/21)
- Patty Mayberry-Fiscal Analyst 1, Business Services (1/25/21)
- McKinley Rennison-Athletic Trainer (1/19/21)

Best wishes to our departing colleagues:

- Phil Casali-Custodian, Clarkston (4/2/21)

- Maggie Miranda-Administrative Assistant 3, Foundation (3/5/21)
- Kerri Polson-Assistant Director of Payroll & Benefits (1/31/21)
- Caitlyn Charnley-Ovens-Media Technician Senior (1/11/21)
- Jacquelyn Meier-Director of Safety & Security (1/4/21)
- BreAnna Wright, Fiscal Analyst 1 (12/25/20)

Taking on new titles/roles:

- Brenda Sellner, Special Temporary Non-tenured Faculty (1/4/21)
- Celina Coffeen, Program Specialist 2 (12/16/20)

Looking Ahead

As we prepare for a post-pandemic future, as strategic planning progresses, and as we begin in earnest to implement ctcLink, there will be a number of weighty conversations in the coming weeks and months. We are engaging as many individuals and areas as possible in these conversations, through the Governance Council (which represents every employee category and location, as well as including student leadership); the FAST (Fiscal Analysis Sustainability Taskforce which likewise is reasonably inclusive); the strategic planning process, and an inclusive budget development process that will begin as soon as possible. College reorganization and resource reallocation processes can be scary, but we plan to continue our transparent, inclusive, and (reasonably) participatory approach to confronting our challenges. I hope that everyone who wishes to engage has found a way to do so, but I welcome your input however you care to share it. In the meantime, thank you for staying focused on serving students and on meeting our mission.

Comments or questions? Please email Connections@wwcc.edu