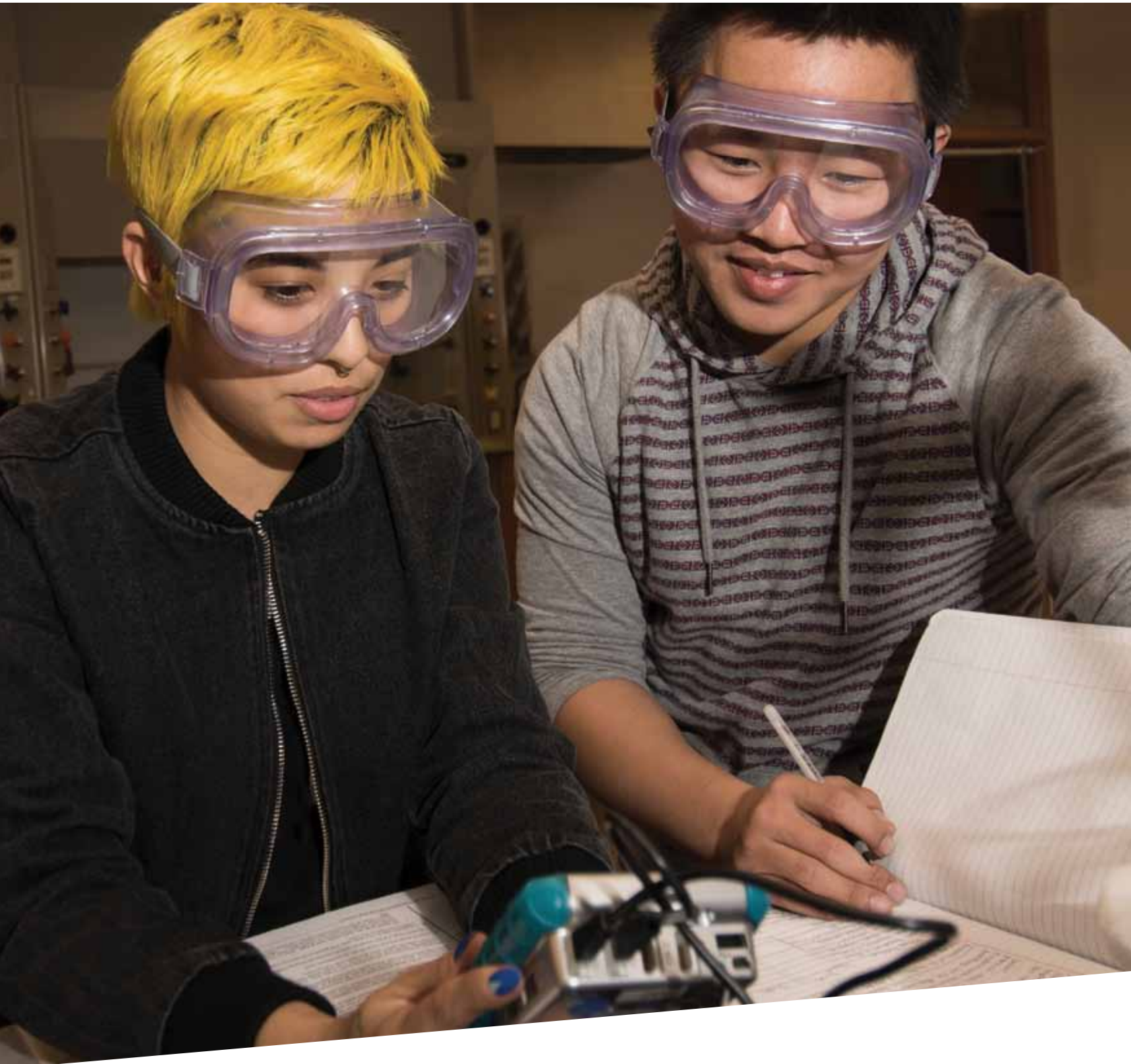


SPOTLIGHT

Showcasing the impact of determination, compassion, and academic excellence



SEATTLE COLLEGES
Central • North • South • SVI



Our individual success is magnified when we invest in others. By weaving our knowledge, expertise, and wisdom into the fabric of a community, we promote goodwill and our common humanity.

Seattle's robust economy and forecast for continued growth are providing us opportunities to live and work at a pace not seen in decades. Now more than ever, we can have an extraordinary future, regardless of our past.

For many, Seattle Colleges is the pathway to this prosperity. We help people get to work—and back to work. We lift up individuals and communities by giving everyone a chance to succeed on their terms.

We invite you to read stories about our students.

They are from all walks of life and demonstrate what happens when support, determination, and compassion intersect.

All-USA Academic Team a high honor for high school dropout

Growing up in an isolated town on Washington's coast, David Yama lived with his parents and seven siblings in a one-bedroom apartment. After receiving poor grades in school, his parents were told he needed behavioral medication and that he would never "make it."

At 14, he dropped out of high school and worked in a series of dead-end jobs, fulfilling the prediction of his teachers. In his mid-20s, he decided that he wanted a different life, and that higher education was his best path forward.

He also volunteered at South as a STEM tutor, started a STEM study group, tutored children at Neighborhood House, and provided support at Duwamish Alive! restoration events.

Prior to graduation, Yama was named to the All-USA Community College Academic Team as one of the top 20 scholars in the nation by Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society. This is the most prestigious academic honor for students attending community college.

Yama recognized that, at 30, he was better able to concentrate on academics than he was when he was younger. But he also gives a lot of credit to the college: "They're very interested in your success, and willing to help."

At 27, he enrolled at South Seattle College, where he earned his GED and received his associate degree with a 3.97 GPA. He transferred to the University of Washington (UW) and plans to get his doctorate in bio-engineering and become a professor.

Yama credits much of his success to South's faculty and staff, as well as the many opportunities available to apply his learning. While studying for his degree, he volunteered up to 30 hours a week conducting lab research at the UW.

Yama received financial support from a variety of sources, including the South Seattle College Foundation. "I sought out the scholarship because I needed more money to complete my studies, but money was the smallest thing it gave me," Yama said.

"After receiving the foundation scholarship, I realized that maybe I belonged here, in school, and that I could succeed. The support gave me confidence, and it was one accomplishment after another, after that. I have made it."

David Yama (r) with Deok-Ho Kim, Assistant Professor, Bioengineering, College of Engineering, University of Washington





David Yama was a high school dropout without a bright future. At 27, he enrolled at South Seattle College to get his GED, took advantage of opportunities to apply his learnings, and graduated with a 3.97 GPA. He transferred to the University of Washington, where he plans to get his doctorate in bioengineering.



Scholar gave help, got help, on a 7,000-mile journey to graduation

The road was 7,000 miles long. It was laden with experiences that propelled Niloufar Ghodsian to her graduation from South Seattle College.

A refugee from Iran, Ghodsian said she and her family left their home for educational and economic opportunities. (As a member of the Bahá'í faith, she was not allowed to attend college in Iran.)

In October 2012, Ghodsian moved to the United States, and she started attending classes at South in the spring of 2013. She was a math and science tutor for the TRiO program, a federally funded program to help underrepresented students. And she received help in her own advanced math and science courses from other tutors.

"Not only did South give me the support and encouragement I needed to persevere during this time," she said. "It also gave me important academic help."

Ghodsian received scholarships from South's foundation and was named a 2014 University of Washington Martin Achievement Scholar. This scholarship is awarded to top students from community colleges in the Puget Sound area.

Ghodsian was a member of the Ready! Set! Transfer! Academy, a National Science Foundation program that provides tools and support to STEM students. It fueled her passion for science and she joined the Women in STEM Club. She was also in the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

"I am thankful to South's staff and faculty for their support, which has brought me closer to realizing my dreams," said Ghodsian. She transferred to the University of Washington to pursue her studies in environmental health.

Niloufar Ghodsian's passion for science skyrocketed at South Seattle College. She tutored beginning math and science students, found tutors for her own advanced studies, and joined the Women in STEM Club. These additional academic activities, along with her GPA, helped her to be named a University of Washington Martin Achievement Scholar.



Culinary Academy alumni at the leading edge of Pioneer Square revitalization

A star turn on the first episode of CNBC's "Restaurant Startup" helped Garrett Doherty and Shane Robinson realize their dream of opening a brick-and-mortar restaurant. But by no means were they overnight sensations. Their success story began eight years before, as students in the culinary program at Seattle Central College.

"Everything we know about the fundamentals of owning and operating a restaurant we learned at the Seattle Culinary Academy," said Robinson. "The program gave us a strong foundation and skills we use to this day."

"This day" finds Doherty and Robinson among a growing number of entrepreneurs in Pioneer Square,

a neighborhood that had fallen along with the economy. Their restaurant, Kraken Congee, is a rising star that has received considerable attention among foodies around the region and nearby office workers.

Their lunch business is good, and it will be even better now that Weyerhaeuser has finished construction of its new headquarters (the first new building in Pioneer Square in eight years). Now they want to capture tourists and the dinner crowd.

"There's business to be had," Doherty said. "There are lines of tourists who want to see the oldest section of Seattle. But after the tours, they leave. We're working to make sure they know there are places to go afterward."

"We're also working to let local residents know it's safe here," he added. "The area fell into disrepair with the closure of art galleries and with more homeless people in the parks. I can't stress enough the great support of the Pioneer Square Alliance in cleaning things up and attracting businesses and people back to the neighborhood. The First Hill Streetcar and light rail are also bringing people to the area."

"We knew opening here carried some risk," said Robinson. "The area is still in transition, and it is just on the cusp of returning to its full capacity. But all signs are good. We did our research and ran the numbers—just like we learned in the program—and decided to go for it."

Shane Robinson (l) and Garrett Doherty (r)



Garrett Doherty and Shane Robinson received great support throughout their studies at the Seattle Culinary Academy at Seattle Central College. Here, they share their experience and give advice to those entering the field.

What else did you learn in the program?

Robinson: This may be too simplistic, but we literally learned everything we need to know to be successful. A bonus of the program at Seattle Central is it is highly regarded in the industry. The instructors are well connected and they are generous with using their network to help students and alumni.

Why did you choose this program?

Doherty: I grew up working in kitchens, then left the culinary industry for about 10 years. When I wanted to return, I thought I should get some formal training. I heard the culinary academy had a great program, and it was convenient to where I lived, so I enrolled. It turned out to be a great resource for someone like me (who switched careers) and provided me with the tools and opportunities to be successful when I finished.

Robinson: Primarily because of its connections with restaurants throughout the city. Now we're one of those connections, and it feels great to give back. When I find out someone has gone to Seattle Central, I make it a point to talk with that person.

I want to add that there's absolutely no reason to go to a school where your tuition is going to be more than what you earn when you first graduate. The culinary academy is affordable, and the value well exceeds the cost of tuition.

What advice would you give to someone just starting out?

Robinson: This is a labor of love. If your heart's not in it, you should find something else. You'll know pretty quickly if a career in culinary arts is for you, since 50 percent drop out after the first quarter. Not because of the program, but because instructors paint a very realistic picture of what it will take to be successful. You don't finish after two years and become a chef. Everyone starts out as a prep cook, and it takes years of experience to move up.

I worked full time at the W Seattle as a cook and went to school full time. I'd be at work until 11 o'clock at night preparing for a banquet, and up at 6 o'clock the next morning to go to school. It was a tough schedule, I loved it, and it all paid off.

Doherty: If you stick with it, you'll advance twice as fast because of the program. It provides such a solid foundation—from fundamentals to the chef-of-the-day project—and you're prepared for anything that you encounter in the real world. Because of the training, it's quite possible you could be running a kitchen in six months.

CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENT PARTNERS FUND NEW BEGINNINGS

Opportunity Week supports lifelong change



Opportunity Week, a 40-hour intensive, gives clients of the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) a chance to learn about resources and training that will help lead to positions with income growth.

Seattle Colleges leads Opportunity Week content, instruction, and staffing coordination. SHA clients spend the week at one of our campuses, meeting successful professionals from different career fields, developing interview skills, creating resumes, understanding how to apply for college, and learning what the college experience might be like. They also learn about resources such as child care, transportation, short-term training, and other educational opportunity pathways.

Participants earn college credit for completing this training.

Each participant receives a workforce and education assessment that identifies strengths and weaknesses. This is used to prepare a customized employment and education plan that is a road map to the jobs and training programs the individual is interested in pursuing.


Opportunity Week is a joint effort of five organizations: Seattle Colleges, Seattle Housing Authority, Seattle Jobs Initiative, Workforce Development Council, and Financial Empowerment Network. It is funded by a grant from the JPMorgan Chase Foundation.

Program helps immigrants and refugees get Ready to Work

Seattle Colleges has teamed with the city of Seattle in Ready to Work, a program that gives eligible immigrants and refugees the opportunity to improve their English proficiency, become computer-literate, gain critical job skills training, and learn workplace basics.

“This is an innovative approach to adult learning and employment,” said Chancellor Shouan Pan. “We are doing more than helping local citizens obtain jobs. We are building a foundation for further education, training, and career development—items I view as key to individual growth and prosperity.”





Seattle Colleges embraces and understands its public purpose. We seek private and public partnerships that help Seattle residents, particularly the underserved, achieve their American dream.

Stitching together a new future

In early fall 2014, Thesvy Cashen and Deborah Vandermar bought a dozen sewing machines, rolls and rolls of fabric, miles of thread, lights, and, well, everything sewers need.

Vandermar is a retired apparel engineer and Cashen is Seattle Colleges' project manager for corporate and customized training.

Their shopping spree was the first step in a partnership between Seattle Colleges and the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) to establish an industrial sewing class for SHA residents. Course instructor Vandermar teaches students who have never operated a sewing machine. Yet, after just three eight-week sessions, comprising 96 hours of instruction and an hour each week of open lab, the students are proud to display a portfolio demonstrating the quality and variety of specific stitches they have mastered.

Students in the first two cohorts of this course were recent immigrants from Argentina, Ethiopia, Mexico, Somalia, and Vietnam, and almost all were women. An exception was a man with his own entrepreneurial idea.

Tadele Kebede is a 49-year-old father of five. He came to the U.S. from Ethiopia in 2005, having made his mark "back home" in the 1990s by being instrumental in founding two private colleges in Addis Ababa. One of his sons is a graduate of North Seattle College; another is a

student at Seattle Central College, where Kebede himself took ESL classes and went through an I-BEST IT program.

Cashen is hopeful that this program will grow and help others learn a skill that will change their lives.

Cashen believes there is a good market for industrial sewers in Seattle, citing local industries in outdoor sporting goods, airplane interiors, sails, boat covers, and more. Some of the students see this as an opportunity to start their own businesses.

He obtained certifications in Microsoft Office and CompTIA A+ hardware. Now, he plans to start a business making clothes for the more than 30,000 Ethiopians and Eritreans who live in Seattle.

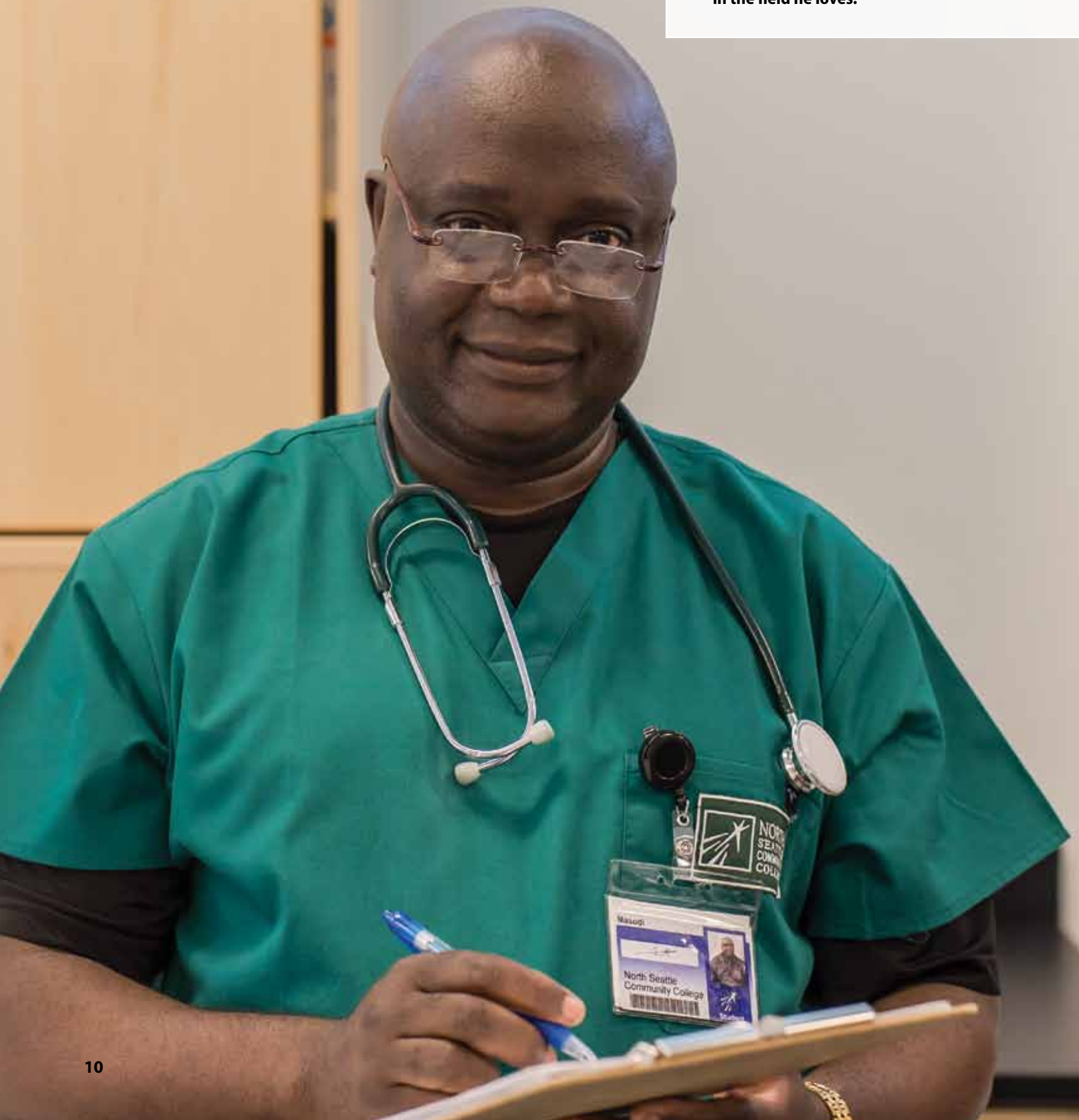
"People need these traditional clothes to keep the culture. They are important for special occasions, church, graduations, and weddings," Kebede said.

"It's all about economic opportunity, and being able to compete in the marketplace," Vandermar said. And Kebede backs her up.

"The teacher said, 'Without quality, there's no business.' I always remember that," he said, as he returned to his work on the sewing machine.



Raymond Masudi Kitanga was a physician in his home country, but his license wasn't recognized in the U.S. With the help of a Workforce Development Council grant, he received his associate degree in nursing at North Seattle College and can get back in the field he loves.



Grant creates pathways to nursing careers for underrepresented students

Raymond Masudi Kitanga was driving in his native Democratic Republic of the Congo when he was stopped and robbed by rebels. The physician gave them his money, but it wasn't enough. They threatened to kill him if he didn't give more, so he removed his shoes and watch.

It was 1999, and the third time his life had been threatened since civil war erupted in the country. "I started thinking then that if I keep staying around, maybe the fourth time will be the last," Masudi Kitanga said. "I had to leave."

Masudi Kitanga is a long way from that Congolese road. He arrived in the U.S. in 2000, and his journey led him to North Seattle College. He recently received his associate degree in nursing along with nearly 30 classmates.

The program, funded through a Workforce Development Council grant, provides nontraditional students who face barriers to entering and succeeding in nursing programs with free tuition, fees, and books. The grant also connects students with extensive support, such as free tutoring and

a case manager to help them navigate their education, careers, and lives.

For Masudi Kitanga, the largest obstacles stemmed from starting over in a new country and finding ways to pay for school. He learned English through courses primarily at Seattle Central College, got a job in the billing office of Virginia Mason Hospital, and pursued an education in the medical field—something he had to do again.

responsibility was to work hard and stay focused on learning."

Like Masudi Kitanga, students in the program have persisted through hardships. Many of them are role models for their families because they're the first to go to college. They are entry-level health care employees, are immigrants, or are students who work part time and go to nursing school full time.

"I want to lead and teach by example, and bring compassion to people so that I can make a difference in their lives," Masudi Kitanga said. "This entire experience has been humbling, but that's life. You never know where it may take you."

A clerical error at his university in the Congo prevented his physician's license from being recognized in the U.S.

"I wanted to do a lot of things but couldn't because of financial problems," Masudi Kitanga said. "This grant was so helpful and important because everything was paid for. Our main

The program is a partnership among North Seattle College, the Workforce Development Council of King County, TRAC Associates, and local health care employers.

For Masudi Kitanga, the program has allowed him to start over in a field he loves.



Entrepreneurship Program bridges the gap between science and business

A master's degree in environmental sciences prepared Jakob Sjoberg for a career working with environmental technologies. The Entrepreneurship Program at North Seattle College propelled him to leading a division at the forefront of water treatment technologies all across the region.

he developed a product or service, bringing it to market was out of his hands.

"I thought I could create a niche for myself if I also had a business background," said Sjoberg. "I wanted to bridge the gap between science and business."

"I feel really fortunate to be able to play a part in Seattle's growth in an environmentally responsible way," said Sjoberg. "I was at the right place at the right time. But more importantly, thanks to the Entrepreneurship Program, I had the right experience."

For several years, he worked with environmental projects and technologies that address the growing need for companies to be sustainable. He put his education to good use, yet once

His search led him to the Entrepreneurship Program. This three-quarter certificate program guides students through business planning and making a business concept a reality.

After going through the program, Sjoberg went to work developing technology for managing stormwater treatment projects. Polluted stormwater is the number-one toxic threat to Puget Sound and effective treatment is of increasing importance.


As Sjoberg got more involved in the industry, he saw the need for new treatment solutions. He started up a new Environmental Water Treatment Group for the Mukilteo-based company University Mechanical Contractors, Inc. (UMC) and created the CORETECH water treatment system brand.

"UMC was the perfect fit," said Sjoberg. "As one of the leading mechanical contracting companies in the nation, UMC had the expertise and resources needed to build the high-quality treatment systems I was designing."





Jakob Sjoberg had a master's degree and developed products that helped companies to be sustainable. He wanted to take his own designs to market, but he lacked business savvy. The Entrepreneurship Program at North Seattle College taught him what he needed, and he now leads a division that is at the forefront of water treatment technologies.



Shaina Huntley knew that a college education was a way forward for herself and her young son. She entered North Seattle College with a 1.97 high school GPA, excelled in her classes, and received a scholarship to fund her education. She graduated with a 3.5 GPA in general business and has transferred her skills to managing her father's tech support company.

A scholarship and support services help business student succeed

Shaina Huntley is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the community college national honor society, and is proud to share that her cumulative GPA is 3.5. She's not boasting; it's just that she finds these accomplishments astonishing, given the fact she ended high school with a 1.9 GPA.

By the time Huntley was 25, she had been through a lot, including being a witness in a trial when she was 17 and dealing with related symptoms of PTSD. She had been married and divorced and had a young son to take care of. But Huntley said she has always managed "to find a silver lining and persevere against all odds."

After her divorce, she said, "I realized the smartest thing I could do for myself

and for my son was to go back to school and get started on a career path."

Huntley enrolled at North Seattle College, incurring some debt in the process. "As a single parent, it's hard to make ends meet. But I'm determined."

"I never dared dream of the possibilities that I see now," said Huntley. "My son and I are in this position only because of the amazing support system at my school. The advisors and faculty are all invested in my success."

She found some programs to help offset the costs of attending college, including a scholarship from North's Education Fund. "When I was chosen for the scholarship, I felt so much relief and gratitude. I have a hard time

expressing it in words," she said.

"Suddenly the financial burden was lifted completely and I was free to put all of my energy into my education and raising my son." A program at North also helped with the latter.

Huntley's son went to school with her and stayed at the ASB-sponsored child care center while she was in class.

Huntley graduated with an A.A.S. in general business and has her sights on another degree.



As we move forward, our **resolve** is to be part of the solution for the region's rapidly growing inequity. This will quicken our pace and drive our inspiration.

We are **renewing** our fundamental mission to provide excellent and accessible educational opportunities that prepare students for a challenging future. Our commitment extends to working with educational institutions, business enterprises, and nonprofit organizations to create career pathways for everyone.

We are also **reestablishing** our economic development promise. By leveraging our comprehensive career and technical education programs with our public and private partners, we will prepare more displaced workers and marginalized youth for middle-wage jobs.

Seattle Colleges has a unique set of responsibilities and the distinct honor of being the open-access college of Seattle. We are moving forward with a purpose and a plan, and we thank you for your continued support, guidance, and investment.





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