



JIM'S JOURNAL

I am thrilled to share some exciting news with you regarding our recent enrollment trends. Over the past two quarters, BTC has experienced a meaningful increase in student enrollment, a testament to the hard work and dedication of our campus community.

During the fall quarter, we witnessed a 7% increase in total Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) compared to the previous year. The positive momentum has continued into the winter quarter, where we are currently up by an impressive 6.8% compared to the same period last year. This achievement is a direct result of the collaborative efforts put forth by our campus in areas such as outreach, retention, DEI, and classroom excellence. By implementing strategic initiatives, like guided self-placement and the elimination of Accuplacer testing, we increased access to a higher number of students to apply and ultimately enroll in our programs. Also, the college DEI efforts have helped to make BTC a more welcoming campus for students from all backgrounds and help create a more vibrant and supportive learning environment.

The decision to enhance access through these measures is proving to be vital for our students. We recognize that increasing enrollment is not just about the numbers; it is about providing more individuals with the opportunity to pursue their education and reach their academic goals, and ultimately enter the workforce and earn a family-sustaining wage. Students who don't apply and enroll cannot be retained and graduate, underscoring the importance of our efforts in expanding access.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to each member of our campus community for their commitment to making BTC a welcoming and accessible college. I look forward to continued efforts to work collaboratively and ensure that BTC remains a place where students feel welcome and thrive.

Warm regards,
Jim

BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE | JANUARY 2024
BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INSTITUTION

FOUNDATION

Anonymous donor adds \$300,000 to large donation to support BTC students in Nursing, Welding and Diesel Technology

An anonymous donor who made a record-breaking \$1.2 million dollar donation to the Bellingham Technical College Foundation in December 2022 has added another \$300,000 toward helping students pay for college.

The donor, who still wishes to remain anonymous, finalized the newest gift in late December 2023, and has directed the money to go toward scholarships for students in BTC's Welding, Diesel Technology and Nursing programs.

The initial \$1.2 million donation went toward scholarships and new equipment for BTC's Welding, Diesel and Automotive Technology programs. New equipment included: a robotic welding station, CNC plasma cutting system and 100-ton press brake so Welding students can get hands-on experience on the technology they'll use in the field; a Tesla Model 3, Toyota CH-R and Volkswagen Jetta to modernize and expand the learning fleet for Automotive Technology; and mobile column lifts, a hydraulic cylinder training system and several rail diesel engines to give Diesel students real-world experience in a controlled environment.

For the 2023-24 academic year, BTC's Foundation has awarded \$915,000 in scholarships, which included money from the initial anonymous donation.

"This generous gift will make a big impact on our students and their ability to focus on their studies with less financial stress," BTC Foundation Director Dean Fulton said. "We are so grateful to this donor and all of those individuals, businesses, service organizations and foundations that support BTC and our students every year."

FOCUS ON CHILDREN

On Saturday, Feb. 3, BTC's Child & Family Studies program will host the 40th annual Focus on Children conference! This year's conference will be held at the Four Points by

Sheraton, off of Lakeway. The program includes a keynote, "Making the Ideal Real: Get Ready for the Future of Early Childhood Education," by Marica Cox Mitchell, VP of Early Childhood at the Bainum Family Foundation, and Elisa Huss-Hage, Director of Early Childhood for HOPE Toledo. A variety of breakout sessions will be offered throughout the day in both English and Spanish.

Sponsors for this year's event include the Bainum Foundation, the Imagine Institute, Opportunity Council, Northwest Indian College, BTC Foundation, Whatcom Early Learning Alliance, and the Pacific Northwest Chapter of WAEYC. Please visit our website for registration and more information: www.btc.edu/focus



CHILD & FAMILY STUDIES PARTNERSHIP

BTC's Child & Family Studies program has received funding from the Chuckanut Health Foundation to provide parenting education and support to families currently enrolled at YMCA's Heart House in Bellingham. CFS program instructors will offer monthly large-group parenting education sessions with a variety of topics pertaining to raising toddlers and preschoolers. We will also offer quarterly sessions for age-specific topics such as Bringing Baby Home, potty training, and school readiness. The Chuckanut Health Foundation has committed to supporting this project for the duration of 2024, and will provide dinner for the staff and children who are in care during the sessions, as well as refreshments for the parents/caregivers in attendance.

Jan Knudsen, CFS Program Manager, worked closely with Anne Granberg, Director of Heart House Early Learning Center, YMCA, to design this partnership that will support the families enrolled in the program. During the development of the proposal, Anne shared the following:

Why Parent Ed is so important, especially now.....

Heart House has recently celebrated one year of operation. Now that we are moving into our second year it is important to look at what we can do to strengthen our connections with the families that we serve. Currently, 50% of families at Heart House are low income and 50% of families are from the BIPOC community which are highly contributing factors to the communities who often lack accessible resources for the current and future health, happiness and success of children. This is why it is important to be able to bring resources onsite to cut out barriers. Children are struggling with big emotions, big behaviors and boundaries right now as we still see the effects from the pandemic. I constantly get emails and phone calls about "what do I do when my child does this" or "how do I navigate my children's big behaviors." This is a perfect opportunity to bring in parent educators to help our families with these big questions. I sent out a parent education poll to each parent in our program to get feedback about what topics are important to them as well as when would be the best time to hold parent ed classes. I received a lot of feedback and was able to come up with specific topics, dates and times that would allow parents to come while their children were still in our care at HH. The most requested topics included setting boundaries/limits with your child, dealing with tantrums, understanding your child's temperament, responding to emotional signals, building confidence, sibling dynamics, and understanding the meaning of your child's behavior. There are so many amazing topics that will benefit the whole family and will also benefit our teachers as well. Fostering positive connections between families and early educators enhances a child's holistic development and creates a supportive learning environment. We are grateful for the opportunity to be able to bring such an amazing opportunity to our early learning community. ~Anne Granberg

We are excited to have the opportunity to support and connect more families in our community!

ASBTC CORNER



CUSP Advocacy Day

ASBTC Executive Team student leaders, along with BTC President Jim Lemerond, will be visiting with our local legislators at the Council of Unions and Student Programs (CUSP) Advocacy Day in Olympia on Jan. 25. These ASBTC Executive Team student leaders will be advocating for legislative support for increased aid to pay housing costs, affordable textbooks, student pay equity and increased financial aid, and to reduce harm from substance abuse.

Food Fight

Whatcom Community College, Skagit Valley College, and Bellingham Technical College students and employees are in a Food Fight! Each college is tracking all food donations to their respective food pantries.

The campus with the most food donations, by weight, will win the Food Fight! Colleges are accepting donations until Jan. 27. The winner will be announced at half-time of the women's basketball game between Whatcom and Skagit, held at Whatcom Community College on Saturday, Jan. 27. The game begins at 2 p.m. All BTC employees and students with BTC student or employee cards get in free. All others pay \$5 for entry. We hear there will also be a dodge ball tournament among the three colleges as the half-time entertainment! Contact an ASBTC Executive if you are interested in being on BTC's dodge ball team. Please continue to support our Food Fight by bringing in your food donations. And join us at the basketball game too!

2024-2025 Services & Activities Fee Funding Requests

The Associated Students of Bellingham Technical College (ASBTC) through the Services and Activities (S&A) Fee Budget Committee are responsible for the annual budgeting process for all student-funded programs and services. Annually, the S&A fees, paid by each enrolled student, fund a comprehensive array of student engagement and leadership development programs and services. The S&A Fee Budget Committee will be releasing the annual funding request on Friday, Jan. 19. All funding requests for the 2024-2025 year need to be submitted by Thursday, Feb. 22. The committee looks forward to reviewing your funding request(s) and allocating funding based on requests that best align with student success. Please reach out to Michael Carnahan, ASBTC's Director of Finance, at mcarnahan-asbtc@btc.edu if you have any questions or need support to complete your funding request(s).

DEI NEWS

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion News

안녕하세요 Annyeonghaseyo Campus Community,

Martin Luther King Day

BTC was proud to be a part of the 2024 MLK Celebration on Monday, Jan 15! The event had over 300 people in attendance, more than doubling the numbers from the previous year. The community enjoyed a wonderful breakfast with an amazing performance from the Blackhawk Singers followed by a dynamic conversation between Brian Young and Isabella McFrazier. After the speaking event, those in attendance were able to participate in community services through donation of food and hygiene products, winter shelter clean up, and making blankets and kits for the houseless. Overall, despite the chill outside, the community turned out in support and care creating a wonderful space for the celebration and remembrance of MLK!

Thank you to ASBTC Executive Motzo Bozic for the excellent event photos!



Don't miss the DEI programing this quarter; we have added a zoom hybrid option to several of the below events!

January

- **Friday, Jan. 26, 12-1 p.m.** in J Building Room 7:
Common Read Chapters 3-4

February

- **Monday, Feb. 5, 12-1 p.m.** in MC 211:
If BTC students were characters from "Encanto"
- **Wednesday, Feb. 7, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.** Zoom Meeting <https://btc-tech.zoom.us/j/82864561123>
Common Read Chapters 3-4
- **Tuesday, Feb. 13 12-1 p.m.** in MC 210:
DEI Module 2 for new employees or those who did not get the certificate last year and have not seen this yet
- **Thursday, Feb. 29, 9-10 a.m.** in H Building Room 17 and Zoom Meeting <https://btc-tech.zoom.us/j/82864561123>
Common Read Chapters 3-4

March

- **Monday, March 11, 12-1 p.m.** in MC 211 and Zoom Meeting <https://btc-tech.zoom.us/j/82864561123>
DEI and Is Cancel Culture Helpful or Hurtful?
- **Thursday, March 21, 12-1 p.m.** in MC 211 and Zoom Meeting <https://btc-tech.zoom.us/j/82864561123>
DEI Module 3 for new employees or those who did not get the certificate last year and have not seen this yet

About the DEI Certificate:

Completion requires modules 1-3 and attendance at two other optional DEI hosted/approved events, for a total of five trainings. Once completed, you will fill out a certificate request stating the dates of your trainings and events, and answer assessment questions. Utilize the DEI Tracking Form to help participants keep track their work and apply for the certificate when they have completed requirements. If you received the certificate last year, this is the same program and you do not need to complete again.

PROCURE TO PAY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

January Question: Should I be paying taxes on my P-Card orders?

Answer: Happy New Year! What a timely question. The answer is...most likely yes.

BTC is not a tax-exempt entity. We pay sales or use tax for almost every good that is not certain kinds of food, a digital exemption for the Library, or for to be used for resale. Very few departments here at the college are able to use our reseller certificate and they know who they are.

Sometimes, when buying from out of state vendors, sales tax will not be charged on your online order as that vendor is in a state where there is no sales tax (like Oregon). What does this mean for you?

You should always check your P-Card receipts to ensure tax was charged. If you don't see it, check your transaction in US Bank and see if it was charged after the point of sale and added to your final transaction total. Still no tax? Make a note of this in the comment section for that transaction in US Bank and email your receipt to acctspay@btc.edu. You can use something as simple as "No sales tax charged" for your comment. This will alert Accounts Payable that we might need to pay use tax on the purchase.

There are purchases that are non-taxable, such as:

- Membership and registration fees
- Newspaper and journal subscriptions
- Advertising
- Cold food (not prepared) – this is mainly for Culinary and Food Services

When in doubt, reach out! I'm always happy to help.

I still have questions! For more information about this topic feel free to email me at mnelson@btc.edu or Joanna Baxley at AcctsPay@btc.edu.

FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE SCIENCES

The Salmon in the Classroom Bellingham program is a collaboration for salmon education in K-12 schools. Community advocates for salmon recovery work with 18 Bellingham schools through the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife's School Cooperative program and BTC's Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences program. Salmonid eggs are spawned by BTC students in November and are provided to each school in January, to be reared in a classroom aquarium in conjunction with science curriculum focused on the salmonid life-cycle, water quality, and watershed health. When fish reach the fry stage, schools release their fish in a local creek.

Motivation to sustain this powerful STEM program comes from volunteers, including retired science educators, fishers, and community members, who have witnessed the positive impact of this educational project that continues to build awareness, knowledge, tools, and a collective commitment to salmon health.

Former BTC student Colin Apt owns The Photic Zone, a business that provides salmon tank supplies and trains teachers to set up and operate the cold-water salmon tanks for all of the schools signed up for Salmon in the Classroom. Former BTC student Kevin Clark, now a WDFW Region 4 Hatchery Manager, works to make sure that the hatchery system in Whatcom County can provide salmon eggs for the program, as well as for salmon recovery in the region.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

This month's employee spotlight is shining on **Mark O'Connor**.

Q: What's your position and title here at BTC? Now and in the future?

A: Mark O'Connor (he/him/his) - Executive Director of Student Access and Success. I am lucky enough to support the College Navigators, Mental Health Counselors, Trio Program, and our Outreach Team. Some people think I also work in IT but that's some other guy.

Q: What do you like to do for fun outside the office? Any hobbies?

A: The most important thing for me right now is getting time with my wife Kelly and our 17-month-old daughter Wren. Wren is growing so fast, it's both amazing and overwhelming. Each day I look back and think, "how did we get here so fast." I guess that's being a parent.

Some of my colleagues have known me as the guy recovering from major soccer or mountain biking injuries, but these days my hobbies are a bit slower paced.

More recently I have started fishing with Fly Fishing being a favorite of mine. I am now just dipping my toes into fly tying or as I like to call it, crafting with fishhooks. I also love spending time in my woodshop, building furniture and other wood projects. In fact, I made my good friend a live edge desk using wood that came from the trees that once stood in BTC's lower parking lot.

Q: Any fun or funny facts that folks might not know about you?

A: You might wonder, how is Mark always so laid back and relaxed... well, it's because I already had my 15 minutes of fame as the first kid born on Christmas in upstate NY in the winter of 85. I made the local news. Famous the day I was born!

It didn't hurt that my aunt worked at the news station, but really, I peaked early and now it's just coasting until they come back for the "Where Are They Now?"

Q: Any pets or pet plans?

A: We have an aging Blue Heeler named Rory. He is incredibly patient as Wren pulls his fur and screams with excitement. Despite his age he still sprints down the front steps to walk at least twice a day. I keep telling him, "If you don't slow down, you're going to hurt yourself," but does he listen? No. And has he hurt himself not knowing his age? Yes. Do we have that in common? No comment. He is a great member of the family and a loyal friend.

Q: If you could bring one food, book, and movie to a desert island, what would you choose?

A: Ok, I am thinking, how long do I need these supplies to last?

Rice and beans are stable for a long time, as long as you can keep them dry. They are a complete protein. I'll have to make a fire for cooking, but I have some limited practice in primitive fire making from my days as a guide in Minnesota.

I would pick the biggest book possible to have as much fire-starting materials for as long as possible.

Lastly, I would pick a movie that requires several DVDs or VHS tapes. My thought with the DVD's is, the more reflective surface I can have for signaling a plane, the better. If it's VHS, the more tape I can braid for cordage to make a raft and bow drill for fire starting, the better.

Q: Anything else we should know about you?

A: The most important thing to me is family. I am the youngest of 4 with 9 nieces and nephews. I have around 35 first cousins. Much of my extended family is back in New York state, where I grew up until the age of 14. Needless to say, regardless of which coast I find myself on, there is always a large raucous family get together for the holidays.

