



JIM'S JOURNAL

BTC has reached a pivotal milestone in our mission to expand access and flexibility for students. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) has officially approved BTC to offer courses using a Competency Based Education (CBE) model.

This accreditation approval is a substantial landmark in BTC's journey to meet the evolving needs of our students, particularly those balancing education with work, family, and other commitments.

This is a major step forward for BTC, our students and community. Achieving accreditation for CBE offerings required significant preparation and collaboration. The Accreditation Sub Committee led the effort to ensure our systems, policies, and educational practices met NWCCU's rigorous standards for quality and accountability.

Members of this dedicated group include:

- Heidi Ypma
- Michele Waltz
- RaeLyn Axlund McBride
- Ray Kubista
- Susan Parker
- Todd Waters
- Tracy Reilly

In parallel, the CBE Advisory Team has been working to develop and implement CBE programming, exploring instructional design, student support systems, assessment strategies, and more.

BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE | JUNE 2025
BELLINGHAM TECHNICAL COLLEGE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INSTITUTION

This cross-functional team brings together employees from all areas of the college who are passionate about transforming education at BTC. The members of the advisory committee are:

- Kelly Vogel
- Todd Waters
- Susan Parker
- Mark O'Connor
- Michele Waltz
- Ray Kubista
- RaeLyn Axlund McBride
- Katie Honeycutt
- Anna Blick
- Chantel Fields
- Heidi Ypma
- Dawn Hawley
- Zoe Fraley
- Christopher Flack
- Brian Aries
- Jeffrey Halfacre
- Jacen Johnson
- Scott Cory
- Cierra Johnson
- Russell Mitchell
- Jackie Elm
- Andrew Riggs
- Tracy Reilly

Thanks to the combined efforts of these teams, we are now poised to launch our first Machining CBE courses in the fall.

This achievement not only reflects BTC's leadership in educational innovation, but also our steadfast commitment to equity and student success. As the college moves forward with CBE, it will continue to prioritize flexible, learner centered pathways that prepare students for meaningful careers.

VET TECH

June 6 marked the final day of the 2024–2025 BTC Vet Clinic! Operating on Wednesdays and Fridays, the clinic has provided care for foster cats and dogs from the Alternative Humane Society (AHS) throughout the year. Each hour-long appointment has not only offered top-notch veterinary care to these animals, but has also given our students invaluable hands-on learning experiences in working with rescues. This meaningful partnership between BTC and AHS continues to make a lasting impact on both students and the animals they serve. Thank you to everyone who made this year a success!



VET TECH CLUB

BTC's Vet Tech students are in their final quarter on campus and currently studying exotic animal medicine. Thanks to funding from the ASBTC, 11 members of the Vet Tech Club were able to visit Woodland Park Zoo this month. Students spent a few hours touring the zoo to see the animals and then spent time with the veterinary staff at the zoo vet clinic. Students got to see the laboratory spaces and look at exotic blood cells from an elephant and a viper and explored the area where the staff completes surgeries on zoo animals, such as lion root canals. Students were able to see many radiographs taken of the zoo animals, including a penguin lovingly nicknamed "Rock Bottom" who was full of rocks and had to have surgery to remove them. We saw the inside of the zoo ambulance where tigers and gorillas are transported, as well as the area where the zoo completes their necropsy.



A11Y CHAMPION OF THE MONTH

Did you know? Accessibility has 11 letters between the A and the Y? It is abbreviated A11y - and TRACI TAYLOR is our A11y Champion of the Month!

Traci has been a member of the BTC Accessibility Team for many years, and has been an active participant in many accessibility-related projects during that time. She has been an early adopter of the new WCAG standards, which she has incorporated into all areas of her work, including procedural tutorials for staff and libguides for students. She has completed all of the accessibility micro-courses. She regularly seeks out accessibility-related professional development for herself, and has attended several webinars to help her improve her digital accessibility knowledge and practices. Congratulations, Traci!

BTC CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF ACCREDITATION

In the 1999-2000 academic year, BTC was first granted accreditation by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Colleges (later renamed the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, or NWCCU). Accreditation by NWCCU means that BTC meets or exceeds NWCCU standards for institutional quality. BTC's accreditation was most recently reaffirmed by NWCCU in 2022 based on our Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness self-study and a visit by peer reviewers. Based on our Mid-Cycle Evaluation report and October 2024 visit, we had some of our 2022 recommendations for improvement cleared. Thank you all for contributing to these reports and talking with our visitors! Maintaining an active institutional accreditation status doesn't happen without every single person on campus coming together to put in the hard work to support BTC's mission. Thank you again, everyone.

DEI NEWS

Pride in Bellingham is coming up Sunday, July 13, in downtown Bellingham.

BTC will be participating in the parade from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and will have a table set up throughout the festival in the Depot Market Square from 12-4 p.m. Stop by and see us while you're out and about!

OUTREACH EVENT DATES

Save the dates for on-campus outreach events for the upcoming academic year!

Partnerships & Pathways: Tuesday, Oct. 14, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.

Tour Day: Tuesday, Nov. 18, 9-11 a.m.

Learning with Leaders: Tuesday, Feb. 24, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Info Session Night: Tuesday, May 5, 5-8 p.m.

LOVELY LAVENDER: DID YOU KNOW?

Lavender is indigenous to the mountainous areas of the countries bordering the western European part of the Mediterranean region. When early travelers brought it back, the plant spread fairly rapidly to other parts of the world, and by the sixteenth-century lavender was already a much-loved plant in English gardens. The first lavender plants found in America made their way here sometime after the first European settlers.

Records show lavender has been in use for over 2,500 years. The early uses of lavender were at least as numerous as today's, but they tended to be more of a medicinal nature. Biblical references to lavender are found in the gospel of Luke by the name used at that time, spikenard. Lavender was also used in ancient Egypt for mummification, and the Romans scented their public bathhouses with it. The name lavender is derived from the Latin verb lavare — to wash.

Lavender's association with washing and bathing has an interesting history.

In Medieval and Renaissance Europe, washerwomen were known as "lavenders" because they spread their laundry over lavender bushes to dry for the scent it gave. Royalty is known to have used lavender for the bath, most notably Louis XIV who loved bathing in lavender-scented water.

Lavender has long been considered an herb of love, and Cleopatra supposedly used it to seduce Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. In Tudor times, a lavender brew was taken by maidens on St. Luke's Day to discover the identity of their true loves. Lavender under the beds of newlyweds ensured passion and put in the pillows of Alpine maidens it brought hopes of romance. For centuries it's long been thought to be an aphrodisiac.

The Lavender Circle blooms from mid-June through September, peaking in July/August. When you stroll through the circle this summer stop by and enjoy the fragrance and sound of buzzing bees.



BTC FOUNDATION

BTC Foundation outcomes compare favorably with peer colleges in the state and around the country

The BTC Foundation recently undertook a study which compares themselves with other peer colleges in three key metrics: funds raised, endowment assets which support student success, and scholarships distributed to students.

Here is a summary of the results:

1. The BTC Foundation was **first** in all of the above categories as compared to the four other technical colleges in the Washington State CTC system.
 - Renton Technical College (Renton)
 - Lake Washington Technical Institute (Kirkland)
 - Clover Park Technical College (Lakewood)
 - Bates Technical College (Tacoma)
2. The BTC Foundation compared very favorably with its self-identified peer colleges, ranking **first** in scholarships raised, **third** in endowment assets and **first** in scholarships awarded to students. Those institutions were:
 - Albany Technical College (GA) Foundation
 - Cochise Community College (AZ) Foundation
 - Eastern Maine Community College (ME) Foundation
 - Moraine Park Technical College (WI) Foundation
 - Texarkana College (TX) Foundation

"The results of this study reflect the positive perception BTC has within our community, which includes our graduates, programs, college trustees, and all the staff who contribute to student success at the college. We are grateful for the dedicated donors, amazing Foundation Board of Directors and foundation staff for these tremendous results that contribute to student success here at BTC," said BTC Foundation Board Chair, Tiffany Blair.

The BTC Foundation welcomes new board member



The Bellingham Technical College Foundation recently elected a new member to its Board of Directors. Sarah Longman has lived in Bellingham for 25 years. After graduating from WWU, she worked for the City Parks Department running youth programs. She returned to school, attending BTC's LPN program and then RN program. Sarah has worked in healthcare for the past 17 years in several roles.

For the last few years, she has served as a director for a local medical group. She feels passionate about supporting our community with high quality care.

In her free time, she enjoys bike riding, hiking, and playing on the water with her husband and two boys, as well as squeezing in time for gardening.

Sarah will serve a three-year term on the Foundation board from 2025-2028.

"The Foundation is excited to add Sarah to our board as we work together to support student success at BTC. Not only is Sarah a BTC alumnus, but she can help us identify potential opportunities for increased philanthropic support of our allied health programs at the college," said Dean Fulton, Director of the BTC Foundation.

UNIT PLANNING

BTC piloted its first unit-level planning process last year for non-instructional units and added an assessment component in 2025. This simple and flexible process allows all BTC units — such as Advising and Career Services, Computer Information Support Services, and the Library — to identify how their work connects with the College's Strategic Plan, reflect on progress in the prior year if they submitted a plan previously, and make plans for the 2025-26 academic year.

College employees can find more information about the process here. Your supervisor (or unit lead) will reach out with more details as your unit engages in this important campus-wide process sometime between now and the end of September 2025. Questions? Email para@btc.edu, and/or talk to your Planning & Resource Allocation (PARA) Committee representative.

CISS - GONE PHISHING?

Phishing attacks are common and, unfortunately, they are growing in prevalence.

Phishing is, to put it simply, a ruse or a swindle. It occurs when someone tries to trick you into disclosing to them private or sensitive data, such as student data, credit card details, passwords, or even social security numbers. They could accomplish this by pretending to be a reputable business or organization or even someone else at BTC when they send you emails, texts, phone calls, social media or through conferencing applications like Zoom.

The consequences of falling victim to phishing attacks can be severe and far-reaching, affecting both individuals and organizations. Some of the potential consequences include:

- Financial Losses
- Data Breaches
- Reputational Damage
- Legal and Regulatory Consequences

By understanding the potential consequences of phishing attacks, we can better appreciate the importance of remaining vigilant and proactive in our cybersecurity practices. For more information, go to the BTC Intranet page and click on "Phishing" under the "Data Security and Malware" section. You can also use the direct link to the [Phishing page](#).

PROCURE TO PAY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Welcome to the Procure to Pay Question of the Month (QOM) section! Each month there will be a new question with answers to help with your purchasing, contract, shipping & receiving and accounts payable questions. Do you, or someone you know, have a question you would like to have answered in a future installment?

Email Melisa Nelson, Director of Purchasing, at mnelson@btc.edu with the subject: Procure to Pay QOM and your question might be answered in an upcoming Notable News!

June QOM: Why are there fiscal year-end deadlines and why are they so far from June 30?

Thank you to everyone who worked hard to meet deadlines and get their requisitions and orders submitted on time!

I know it feels like the purchasing deadlines are early, but there is a good reason for this. BTC's fiscal year end dates are not set by the college, but by the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) based on State of Washington dictated dates. Setting the purchasing and expense cutoff dates allows the Business Office, Mailroom, and Purchasing to finish our year-end tasks on time. These three areas already feel the pinch of getting everything done within the deadlines. We understand it feels tight for you on your end, but it is even more so for Purchasing, Mailroom, and the Business Office.

As we are still in the midst of spring quarter during that time, there are certain programs and areas of the college who receive exceptions to keep animals alive, utilize fresh ingredients in labs and Café Culinaire (most people do not want a menu made up of pantry staples and frozen ingredients), assist in commencement and end of year activities, and in order to keep the campus in good repair.

How can you plan each year for these cutoffs? Make sure you are forecasting as a part of your unit planning activities. Make a plan for what is needed and when you will be purchasing these items and make sure you are well stocked for the end of year by purchasing early. Don't wait until spring quarter.

Purchasing in ctclink will reopen in July, tentatively scheduled for July 14, 2025. An email will be sent out confirming that everything is ready to go.

For more information, feel free to email me or stop by the office in CS206 for a chat during office hours. I have closed spring office hours and summer office hours will be posted to the Purchasing SharePoint site in early July.

Keep your eye on this section this fall, a new format will be coming!

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

This month's employee spotlight is shining on **Melisa Nelson**.

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

A: I am the Director of Purchasing for BTC. My position is mainly responsible for the process of buying things the college needs (accessible purchases, contracts, policy/procedure, Purchase Orders, P-Cards, training on any and all of it, etc.). I also support our fantastic staff in the mailroom.

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

A: My partner Paul and most of our three adult kiddos (30, 25, 23) and their partners love to go camping, hiking, and riding bikes. Truthfully, we are often found in our backyard enjoying our mortgage. I am a voracious reader and have a wide range of genres I like. I read 80 books last year, all at night or while camping. It's how I wind down. Two of my favorites were *The Warm Hands of Ghosts* by Katherine Arden and *Nine Tailed* by Jayci Lee.

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

A: I am the baby of nine but was basically raised as an only child by my father.

Q: Any pets or pet plans?

A: We have a relatively recent addition to the family, a 5-year old German Shephard (Athena), as well as our 12-year old Shepsky (Leigh), a 13-year old orange tabby (Fiona), and a 13-year old tuxedo (Elis). Ask and I am happy to share pictures of them all.

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

A: For food I would bring russet potatoes. You can live for quite a while on those and maybe I could grow more if there was the right dirt. My book would be *SAS Survival Handbook* by John Wiseman. Surviving seems like a good tactic. As for movie, this one was hard, but I ultimately settled on *The Cure: Anniversary 1978-2018 Live in Hyde Park*. I'd rather have music than movies any day.

Q: Anything else we should know about you?

A: I am now "what bird is that - let me look it up in my Merlin app" years old and want to talk about them/point them out to people I'm with all the time. I do this with flowers when I'm hiking, too. I am definitely more about the journey than the destination.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Do you have some Notable News of your own? Share it with us! Your unique perspective is what makes BTC (and this newsletter) interesting.

Submit your articles, news tips, photos, and other fodder for publication in our prestigious academic campus community newsletter using the [Notable News Submission Form](#). Submissions are always open and should be made no less than two weeks prior to publication.

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