when Jake Fay and Jake Conrad aren’t teaching classes in diesel technology, they’re occupied with acquiring new tools and machines for students to work on. The recent arrival of a used transit bus is an example.

The bus, which has 598,000 miles on it, is fully equipped with an electronic engine and transmission. It was purchased for $3,000 from Intercity Transit of Olympia.

The two Jakes, both assistant professors of diesel technology at Centralia College, have the same goals: to bring updated and diverse equipment to their program and be hot on the heels of technology. They want to incorporate more modern construction equipment and off-highway vehicles for students to study. And ultimately, to enhance the quality of the final product – the student who graduates from Centralia College’s diesel tech program.

“We both have seen plenty of people who cannot perform the basic requirements of their job. No basic knowledge or skills – they were so far from being real technicians. We want to cut down on that,” Fay said.

Fay and Conrad also spend time networking for industry support. They solicit donations to pay for equipment and scholarships. They recently acquired a $12,500 forklift for the cost of freight - $1,500; and obtained a $20,000 grant from Caterpillar - $5,000 will be used for diesel student scholarships.

The two Jakes want to give back to Centralia College.

Fay, 31, of Adna, began teaching at the college during fall 2008. He graduated from Centralia College with an Associate in Technical Arts degree (now known as Associate in Applied Science/Diesel Technology) and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Diesel Technology from Montana State University - Northern (MSU-N).

He was working for Cummins Northwest in 2002 when Mike Garrison, retired Centralia College diesel technology instructor, convinced Fay to be a member of the college’s Diesel Advisory Committee.

“I was working swing, so it was convenient to come in to help during the day,” Fay said, “which got me back involved with the college after being away for a few years.”

Garrison suggested that Fay become involved with writing tests for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) in Seattle. He began interviewing and hiring people and discovered that those looking for work were missing some knowledge; so he wanted to return to the college to make the program stronger.

“It got me more interested in what we were teaching” Fay continued. “I became more concerned about what was being taught and what the final product was coming out of the program.”

Fay covered classes while Ken Rakoz, retired Centralia College diesel tech instructor, went to conferences and a sabbatical to Africa. He’d work his regular swing shift and teach during the day.

When Garrison retired, Fay stepped in. “Ten years ago, I never thought I’d be here.”

About six other colleges around the state teach diesel technology. “We serve a pretty wide geographic area,” Fay said. “We have students who come from Grays Harbor, Cowlitz and Thurston counties.”

“And one who drives from Vancouver every morning,” Conrad added.

Conrad, 32 of Rochester, started working at Centralia College in January. He has an 11-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter. Like Fay, Conrad graduated from Centralia College and MSU-N. Conrad worked for Smith Tractor in Chehalis and then Papé Machinery in Tacoma and Montesano before joining the college.

“We want our students to have the basic knowledge and skills and professionalism to work with customers and get things done correctly,” Conrad said.

Students in the diesel program learn the fundamentals of fuel systems, electronics and hydraulics operations; theory and the basic physics of how things work. No one can learn everything – meaning all engines, makes and models – but the two Jakes expect students to be able to figure it out.

Conrad tells his students, “Go back to your roots, the theories and the basics to solve problems.”
Robin Chadwick and Lynn Lewis, two talented piano musicians, will perform on Sunday, April 10, in a benefit concert to help raise funds for the Charlie Albright piano maintenance fund.

The two will be playing music by Johannes Brahms, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Maurice Ravel, Manuel Infante, and Michael Cox.

The Duo Concert will be performed beginning at 2:30 p.m. on the Corbet stage in Washington Hall on the college campus. Tickets are available by calling 360.736.9391, ext. 777, at the foundation office, Book ‘n Brush, Heymann’s Whinery, and Sterling Savings.

Chadwick is a graduate of the famed Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan and the Mannes College of Music in New York. She earned her Master of Music degree from Southern Illinois University, where she studied with Ruth Slencznyska. She taught at McKendree College in Illinois and at Saint Martin’s University in Lacey.

She now teaches privately in Chehalis, and is active in the Washington State Music Teachers Association as a clinician and adjudicator.

Lewis, a graduate of the University of Southern California, studied with Dr. Rudolph Ganze, Mme. Rosina Lhevinne, and Lillian Steuber. She is the winner of many competitions and awards, and has appeared as a soloist with the Chicago Symphony.

As the winner of the Sterling Staff Concert Series Auditions, she was awarded a two-year concert tour of the United States. Lewis currently is teaching piano in Olympia.

Chadwick and Lewis have performed as a team throughout the Northwest including performing at the Governor’s Mansion in Olympia.

There are a few keys on the Charlie Albright piano keyboard mockup still available for purchase. Please check out the foundation’s Web site: <http://foundation.centralia.edu/givingplans.html> or call the foundation office at 360.736.9391, ext. 290.
Centralia College alumnus David G. Blanchard EDD, a 1963 Centralia College graduate, has challenged his fellow classmates to create a scholarship endowment to help at least one student attend Centralia College. “The timeline for the initial goal of raising $30,000 is June 2013, in time for our 50th reunion,” Blanchard said.

He’d like to extend this invitation to classes of ’62 and ’64 – to those students who attended college the same time Blanchard did.

“After speaking with Julie Johnson (foundation director of Donor and Alumni Relations), I came to the conclusion that to reach the maximum goal for at least one student, the amount would need to be well beyond Centralia College’s allowed limit to have an endowed scholarship,” he added.

The foundation requires a minimum of $17,000 to establish a named endowment. With an endowment, a percentage of the earned income is used for a scholarship while the principal continues to accrue interest. The foundation awarded close to $300,000 in scholarships and financial aid to 172 students for the 2010-11 academic year.

“My hope is that it will continue to grow until we have left the scene and Centralia College will be able to help students for many years beyond,” he said.

Attending Centralia College was one of the major highlights of Blanchard’s life.

“I know for a fact that if I had not attended this great community college, I would not have made it through my first year at West Point,” he continued. “In my long career both in the military and in higher education, when the opportunity arose, I firmly stated that my two-year college education prepared me for the rest of my life.”

Blanchard earned a BS degree in Engineering at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY. He received his master’s and doctorate degrees in education from Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY. He also earned two bronze stars for heroism and two Purple Hearts during the Vietnam War.

He retired from being the Dean of Graduate Admissions at Hofstra in 2003, and moved on to help St. John’s University in Queens, NY, develop a transfer program.

“When they told me what they wanted me for, I jumped at it. In three and a half years, I was able to sign 10 articulation agreements with community colleges in the New York metropolitan and New Jersey areas.”

He continued by stating that a community college alum with a positive experience makes a difference. He also taught one class each year to first-year students as an adjunct professor and continues teaching Ethnic History of New York City. He opens each semester with a statement of his first two years in college.

At Centralia College, Blanchard was student government president and was on the basketball and track and field teams. He was a member of a relay team that held the school record for several years.

During his years at Hofstra, Blanchard worked in the Alumni Office as an Associate Director.

“Two roles in that position were influential in how I feel about endowments. I was honored with the responsibility for helping create two major scholarships and I was the university representative to help the Class of ’39 through their 50th Reunion (Hofsta’s first class).”

He’s a retired colonel of the U.S. Army Reserves, retired Dean of Graduate Admissions from Hofstra and is working as an adjunct faculty at St. John’s University.

The newly acquired forklift is a tribute to the dedication of the college’s diesel instructors. They work hard to bring in equipment and tools to help students learn. This forklift (photo, left) is valued at $12,500 and will serve as a training tool acquired for $1,500, the cost of shipping it from Texas. The donation was made by Kiewit Corporation, a big supporter of diesel programs across the country. Jake Fay, who was attending a conference for diesel instructors, suggested to conference co-attendee Jared Longabaugh, Kiewit Corp. oil lab manager and a Centralia College grad, that the college could benefit from a forklift. As they say, the rest is history. And now the program’s students are beneficiaries.
A few years ago, John Hofman, now 33, was pretty much at the top of his game. As a family man, he was working and running his own construction company and was teaching Sunday school, another of his passions. He and his wife were buying a home so plans were in place for the long haul. Life was good.

Then came the economic recession. It was early in 2009, when Hofman faced the reality that consumers weren’t spending. Work spiraled downward and his company closed.

With no income it wasn’t long before Hofman and his wife lost their home to foreclosure. It was while at the bottom of the pile that the couple decided that John would go to college and train to become a civil engineer.

“I did okay in high school, not great. Music and church were all I really cared about back then,” said Hofman. Right out of high school he landed a position as an intern pastor and spent time working in the youth ministry.

He soon found that his church job, while rewarding on the spiritual level, wasn’t providing the financial security he needed to support his growing family so he started in construction, working for an industrial installation company. He liked the work, was good at it, and soon started his own company.

“We had three kids while my business was prospering,” he said. Then the bottom fell out of the economy bringing about his return to college. He enrolled in Centralia College and found he had a skill for engineering. Several of his faculty members agreed and encouraged Hofman to switch to the engineering transfer degree program. Even though it added at least two years of schooling, he and his wife believed that in the long run it would be worth the effort. To help matters on the financial front, he applied for and received a STEM scholarship, which is paying tuition and book expenses. With those expenses taken care of, Hofman has more time to study and to provide for his family.

Hofman carries a 3.67 grade point average, is a paid engineer intern with Centralia City Light, and serves on the City of Refuge Resource Team (Centralia), a program that works with the homeless, teaches job-hunting skills, helps with resume-writing, holds sports clinics for kids, and hosts a free medical clinic.

As a student, Hofman volunteered as an AutoCAD tutor, was a study partner for students, and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa (the two-year college honor society), Rotaract, and TRiO organizations.

“I want my kids to be able to go to college and get a good education. I believe that what I’m doing serves as a good example to my children. I’m showing them that I’m willing to do what it takes to better myself for my family, and showing them the importance of a college education. Those are significant endeavors that I have undertaken since coming to Centralia College,” said Hofman.
Thank you very much for playing a part in advancing educational opportunities at Centralia College through your support of the Future Leaders Fund.

I am pleased to support your continuing efforts to provide opportunities for deserving students in Lewis and South Thurston counties helping them to reach their full potential by attending Centralia College.

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of:
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Thank you very much for playing a part in advancing educational opportunities at Centralia College through your support of the Future Leaders Fund.

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Thank you!

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
The foundation is pleased to announce that it is now offering Charlie Albright’s first CD, Vivace, available for $25. The CD features Charlie performing works of Haydn, Menotti, Schumann-Liszt, Chopin. The CD also contains Touch the Peace, one of his own works. Please contact the foundation now to get your Charlie Albright CD.

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To make your tax-deductible donation to support deserving students attending Centralia College, please fill out the card above, clip it, and mail it to the Centralia College Foundation, 600 Centralia College Blvd., Centralia, WA 98531.