Two faculty members earn Exceptional Faculty Award

Two Centralia College faculty members, Sharon Mitchler, professor of English and Humanities, and Calvin Taylor, professor of Electronics, are the Exceptional Faculty Award recipients for 2013. The award recognizes instructors who bring an extraordinary level of commitment, excellence and innovation to the college and the community. Both are receiving the award for the second time.

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“Most of those in Congress have a four-year college or university educational background,” Mitchler said. “They need a better understanding of community colleges. I will be able to use research to bring new information about the differing needs of our students to further their understanding.”

Mitchler has served as the chair of the national Two-Year College English Association and has chaired national committees for that organization. Her duties have included advocating for community colleges.

She serves as a reviewer for journals in her field, including: Teaching English in the Two-Year College and College Composition and Communications.

One of the biggest changes in her life since first receiving the award in 2004, has been her work toward her doctorate. She will defend her dissertation this year, the final step toward her Ph.D.

With her Ph.D., Mitchler believes she will carry more influence when she speaks to Congressional leaders about the importance of two-year colleges and the increasing numbers of students who attend those colleges.

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For Cal Taylor, receiving the Exceptional Faculty Award is recognition of his continued commitment to quality instruction. Taylor received the award the first time in 2002.

“I really enjoy teaching,” Taylor said. “Teaching electronics is important but I believe that it’s equally important to more fully develop each student.” For him, that could mean to find the weakness of a student and fix it or find the strength and reinforce it.

“Each class of students is different, with different challenges and I continue to learn from them.”

(Continued on back page)
There are few people who value Centralia College the way Gordon Aadland does; fewer still are those who have backed that passion with more than five decades of service to the college.

Gordon began his career in 1961, teaching English. He rubbed shoulders with teaching legends including Rufus Kiser and Katharine Kemp and he helped usher in the college’s first president, Dr. Nels Hanson. Although he retired from teaching in 1985, he has continued to remain active in college life.

Over the years, his work expanded to encompass the duties of the college’s first public information officer, telling the college’s story to the community. He, too, knew the potential of the college and the value of public support.

In 1982, he and fellow instructor David White started the college’s Distinguished Alumnus Award program and has served on the selection committee just about every year since. He was the motivator behind the foundation’s drive to commission the Margaret Corbet/Katharine Kemp statue, expected to be placed just off the Aadland Esplanade during the coming year. The Esplanade, the brick walkway that bisects the campus, was named in his honor in 2006.

When Gordon’s life-long friend Al Neuharth, founder of USA Today, put together the world’s only interactive museum of news to demonstrate how news is gathered and disseminated, Gordon talked him into turning the exhibit into a traveling road show. During a two-year nation-wide tour, “Newscapade’s” only stop at a city with a population of less than 100,000 was its visit to Centralia, a tribute to Gordon.

There are other examples of how Gordon has stood for Centralia College, been a motivating force behind important events and activities, and has dedicated his life to bringing a special brand of optimism to his adopted college.

Because of the depth of his passion molded around his 52 years of service, Gordon received the Distinguished Lifetime Service Award, the first such honor given by the college and the Centralia College Foundation.

Centralia College still tops in student success

There is some outstanding news for Centralia College graduates (and their parents) that reflects very favorably on the students’ commitment to learning and the college’s commitment to providing quality education and promoting student success:

Over the past eight years, Centralia College has posted an average graduation rate of 41 percent compared to a graduation rate of 28 percent posted as an average by all other comprehensive two-year colleges in the state.

This means that students coming to Centralia College, who are intent on earning their degree, are more likely to succeed than if they attend any other two-year college in the state.

This year, about 625 students met requirements for graduation. The number is not a record but is close. Of the associate degrees awarded, the majority, about 330, were Associate in Arts, the signature transfer degree for Centralia College.

In addition to associate degrees, the college awarded certificates of proficiency, high school diplomas and General Educational Development (GED) credentials.

Gordon Aadland receives Distinguished Lifetime Service Award

Gordon Aadland
Centralia College Foundation welcomes new faces, personalities to the board

Peter Abbarno
Abbarno is a man who holds education near and dear to his heart.

“It is the key to many doors and a price cannot be placed on a person’s education. Any opportunity to help our community opening the education door is an opportunity I will take,” Abbarno said.

With that motivation Abbarno accepted a position of the Centralia College Foundation’s Board of Directors.

The Centralia attorney serves as president of the Lewis County Bar Association and is a member of the United Way of Lewis County and Lewis County Legal Aid boards.

Abbarno has worked in politics for most of his life. Before leaving for law (Vermont Law School), he was the executive director of the Washington State Republican Party. He returned to Washington then attended the University of Washington for a Master of Laws in Taxation.

“An educated workforce is the key to our community. Our local college must produce minds and skills for our children (and second chance adults) that are desirable in our community and other communities. Ultimately, my hope is that businesses will move to our area because of the great things Centralia College is doing,” Abbarno said.

His long-range vision for the college begins with foundation support for expansion of degree options including the addition of four-year degree programs. He also wants to see more integration of the college in the downtown area and in other aspects of the community.

Abbarno and his wife Holly (Hawes), who is a Centralia College alum, have been living in the area for about three and one-half years. The couple has two children together, Sophia 22 months and Antonio 5 months.

Amanda Price
Price is a lifelong Centralia resident and has worked for the county for the past 13 years; the past six has been at the county Assessor’s Office. Growing up, she knew that she would go to Centralia College, her father and sister are both Centralia College graduates. She initially tried to go to a university first but hated it and came home. She graduated from Centralia College in 1996 and then went on to Central Washington University, earning a degree in business in 1999. Going to Centralia College gave her the confidence and experience to go to a university and to be a successful student.

“My children are a bit older now and it is time for me to get back into serving in the community, giving back is what I believe in. Besides, I want to encourage my children to go to Centralia College,” Price said.

“Without the foundation there would be students who would never have the opportunity to go to college and everyone who wants to go to college should be able to go to college,” she added.

Even with younger children and with a husband who works out of town, she will find a way to get involved and to help out where she can. “I’m a really good “worker bee,” she said.

“The foundation is on the right path with scholarships. I would like to see this expanded, for there to be more opportunities for students to receive scholarships,” she said. One of the goals for the foundation is to make going to college as financially easy as possible for students.

“We should make sure the community knows just how important the college is to the community and the future of Centralia. It’s an amazing facility with incredible instructors. Students who attend community colleges do better once they go to university,” she said.

Keith Macy
Macy has lived in Centralia for the past 11 years with his wife and 2 children. He is a senior vice president, mortgage lender and branch manager for Timberland Bank. Macy earned his bachelor’s degree from WSU with a major in agricultural economics and a minor in animal science. His son Landon is currently a student at WSU and his daughter Cora is a Running Start student at Centralia College. Macy has served on the Centralia School Board and the Lewis County Farm Bureau.

“With my experience on the school board I know just how important an education can be in affecting change in someone’s life,” said Macy. “That is what the foundation does; it changes people’s lives.”

Community involvement is the key to what Macy believes in and what the foundation exemplifies through hard work and service to this community.

“Because of my experience with education and finance, it was a natural fit for me to help out on the finance committee, but I will always step up and help out wherever I can,” Macy said.

“Centralia College is a significant asset for this community. I think some people don’t realize what an incredible facility it is and how important it is for the future of our community.

“Letting the community know what an incredible facility Centralia College is and how much the foundation does for the community are important pieces to the future,” he said.

Chuck Higgins
Higgins is a Vietnam veteran and 40-year TransAlta employee. His connection with Centralia College begins with his time as a student and graduation in 1977. He went on to study business at City University through a program available at Centralia College. He earned his undergraduate degree in 1997.

Higgins is married and he and his wife have four children. His wife is a special needs instructor. He is a hobby tree farmer and works with the Lewis County Farm Forestry Association.
Centralia College Foundation welcomes new faces, personalities to the board

As a Centralia College alumnus, long-time donor and Centralia native he has always been interested in the college. The foundation fits his view of how the world should work.

“How Centralia College relates to the community is very important to future economic development. We have to have an educated workforce,” Higgins said.

“The board has helped me to find ways to fit in with my strengths. I’m on the committee that is handling forest land donations,” he said.

Higgins believes that many folks wouldn’t have the opportunity to go to college without the help the foundation provides. “I want to continue with the core mission,” he said.

“I believe in the foundation and its current goals. I want to help expand them to offer more scholarships, making it easier for people in this area to better themselves through education.”

Amy Gibson

Gibson has owned Express Employment Professionals in Centralia since 2008 and her route to that business position wasn’t a straight path. From Tumwater, Gibson went to beauty school and then graduated from Trend Business College in Olympia in 1989. She worked for the state Department of Ecology and the Department of Health for approximately 15 years. “I love helping people and with this job I get to help everyone, businesses and workers. I get to help people put groceries on their table, it’s very rewarding,” Gibson said.

“I had heard about the board and the incredible work members do. I missed out on going to college and with the kind of work I do I really see the need for an educated workforce in this community. In today’s society, college is really important. It’s exciting to help people go to college,” she said.

“Lewis County has many needs, it has been hit hard now for several years but is finally turning around. Going to college is one of the best ways to improve your life and your community,” she said.

“I’m still learning where I will fit in on the board but I am willing to help out wherever I can. I love this community and how supportive people are of each other. It’s very exciting to see the addition of the bachelor’s degree program for this community. It makes going to college that more accessible,” she said.

Gibson believes that the foundation needs to raise money for scholarships, but also needs to raise awareness in the community about what an incredible facility Centralia College is. The science center rivals that of some of the bigger universities, he said.

“Raising awareness in the community, helping people to see what an incredible facility the college is and how good it is for the community are important goals,” Gibson said.

The Centralia College Foundation is getting bigger, one forest at a time. For the second time in the past three years the foundation accepted a gift of a forested tract of land.

Long-time Centralia College alum, foundation supporter, and Alaska contractor Bill Watterson (’61) and his wife Helga donated 17.5 acres, including standing timber, to the foundation.

The foundation has formed a committee to determine the best use of the property. Central to use of the land will be that any proceeds be used to establish an endowment for scholarships to support deserving students.

“We are very pleased to accept this property. The Watterson family has been very important to the foundation and to the college, and the generosity of this family is greatly appreciated,” said Julie Johnson, the foundation’s director of Donor and Alumni Relations.

In 2010, Robert O’Neill transferred ownership of 20 forested acres. The college’s science faculty uses the land as a natural learning lab for students.

Watterson played basketball for Centralia College and is a member of the Centralia College Sports Hall of Fame. He continued his basketball career at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. He remained in Alaska and eventually formed his own construction firm.

The Wattersons continue to keep their connection with the college and have expressed their appreciation of the college’s growth.

“I am very enthusiastic about the new bachelor’s degree program and the impact this will have on the community,” Watterson said.

For information on making your donation of property or other resources to help deserving students at Centralia College, please contact Julie Johnson at the foundation, 360.736.9391, ext. 290, or via email: jjohnson@centralia.edu.

“Views Through My Lenses”

Co-founder of the prestigious Pacific Cataract and Laser Institute Dr. Helgi Heidar has written of his journey from his native Iceland to Chehalis.

Read the riveting story of that journey in his memoir Views Through My Lenses. And now a portion of the purchase price will help support deserving students at Centralia College.

Books available at the Centralia College Foundation, Book ‘n’ Brush and Market Street Bakery for $11.95.
Do something you've never imagined!
(Manage your money by giving it away)

Invest in the Centralia College Foundation through a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust, and you'll help to sustain Centralia College and ensure that the foundation can continue to have a favorable impact on deserving students.

By donating, you can receive income payments for life, some of which may be tax-free. Also, your charitable donation could earn an immediate federal income tax deduction.

Giving something away has never felt so good.

One important option that allows individuals or families to make a difference in the lives of Centralia College students is the Legacy Society. The Centralia College Foundation conceived The Legacy Society to welcome donors who have committed to a future gift through a will or bequest. Such generosity will help the college change lives and brighten the future through innovative facilities, program initiatives, and especially scholarships for deserving students.

Visit http://foundation.centralia.edu/trusts, or call the foundation at 360.736.9391, ext. 290.

Centralia College gym named in honor of Michael Smith

In the early 1960s Michael Smith was a star on the Centralia College basketball court. The gym where he played, in the college’s Health and Wellness Center, will now carry Smith’s name thanks to a donation to the foundation by Orin Smith, Michael’s brother and former CEO/CFO of Starbucks.

The naming of the Michael Smith Gymnasium took place this spring and was complete surprise to him. Smith and his brothers were on their way to the airport when they stopped by the college for, what Smith thought, was to be a tribute to his friend. Instead, it was a salute to him.

“This is a great honor,” Smith said. “This is the greatest thing that has happened to me,” he said.

Smith was a basketball standout for the Blazers from 1962-64. He was the top junior college scorer in the state with a 22.1 points per game average, and was named to the All-state Junior College Team, both during the 1962-63 season.

Smith was also a member of the Blazer track team.

The following year he was again among the leaders in scoring until a severe ankle injury sidelined him.

“Centralia College was very important to Michael,” said Kevin Smith, one of the three Smith siblings who attended the ceremony. “Over the years he has been involved in Centralia College and has been committed to giving back to the college. This is a very well-deserved honor for Michael.”

The third brother, Orin, is the college’s 1963 Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient.

Class of 1952-53 to hold reunion in August

Class of 1952-53 is planning a class reunion on the Centralia College campus on Wednesday, Aug. 7.

Alumni from the early ’50s are invited to join them under the Clocktower at 11 a.m. for a tour of the campus. There will be a “boxed lunch” available for $7.50 following the tour.

The group plans on having dinner together at the Olympic Club in downtown Centralia; however, reservations are required. If you are interested in participating please contact the foundation office at 360.736.9391, ext. 290, to make your reservations.

Thank you donors!

“I am very thankful to you for the donations received. Your help has brought me a step closer to reaching my goal (of earning a degree in accounting). Thanks to you I am able to set my studies as my first priority. I thank you for this generosity and for giving me this opportunity to expand my education.”

Gerardo Gomez, a 2013 foundation scholarship recipient

Smith Brothers, from left, Orin, Michael, and Kevin

Following his career at Centralia College, Michael transferred to Central Washington State College but another ankle injury ended his basketball career.

Smith went on to a successful career in real estate in the Seattle market. He formed an independent partnership, which then became affiliated with Century 21. His office was the top in gross commissions among all Century 21 offices in the Northwest in 1984. He then formed an independent company, Michael Smith and Associates.

The Michael Smith Gymnasium was built in the mid-1930s and was home to the high school and the college until the high school moved to its current location.
Bachelor’s program finishes first year, braces for second cohort

After much excitement surrounding its launching, and a year of hard work by students, faculty and staff, the first cohort of the Bachelor in Applied Science in Management (BASM) program has proven to be a huge success for Centralia College and the community.

The first cohort of 26 students surpassed expectations with a 100 percent retention rate (all students passed and are moving into the second year) as the 2013 academic year comes to a close, Larry McGee executive director of Centralia Colleges’ BASM program, said.

“This kind of student retention demonstrates the value in the program,” said McGee. “The need for this program in the community is without question.” He also noted that the commitment of the students is huge. It demonstrates the value these men and women hold for the program and the prospects of using their learned skills without having to leave the area.

The second cohort of BASM students has now been chosen and classes are filled for fall 2013.

“The quality of students is excellent and because of the success of the first year, we now have students on a wait list,” said McGee.

Over the past year, four BASM students have reported job promotions, all based on the fact that the workers were in the program.

Julie Lind is one example: After 21 years of service with Washington State Employees Credit Union (WSECU), Lind recently accepted a position with America’s Credit Union as vice president of lending.

She attributes her promotion due in part to her participation in the BASM program and to her experience with WSECU.

“The long-term benefits are worth the short-term sacrifices when it comes to getting an education,” said Lind. “If I wasn’t in the BASM program I wouldn’t have been eligible for the promotion.”

The need for the BASM program was evident in the support from the community at large. Businesses in Lewis County stepped up with financial support and opportunities for future internships, said BASM leadership and organizational behavior instructor Dr. Atara MacNamara.

“Our job is to supply high quality graduates to fill the need for a better educated workforce so that employers won’t have to look outside the community to fill management and supervisory positions,” MacNamara said.

With the success of the BASM program, the college is now taking the preliminary steps for a second bachelor program, including a recently completed state required needs assessment survey.

Because of the demand and the success of the BASM program, the college is anticipating launching a Bachelor in Applied Science in Diesel (BASD) program in the fall of 2014.

Exceptional Faculty Award (Continued from front page)

His motivation comes from his desire to pass on the success he experienced as a student here. ‘I don’t get tired of doing this,” he said.

“Success comes when the student learns but more importantly it comes when lives are changed,” he said. Taylor recognizes that students enroll because they want the skills that will land them a good job.

“The electronics program is very good at that,” Taylor said. He continues to maintain solid connections with industry leaders such as Intel. He invites representatives from these companies to visit the campus and meet the students. This, he said, often results in job offers being made, even before the student graduates. “That is a very good measure of success.”

“I strive to give each student the maximum opportunity for success. I work very hard to do my best for the benefit of our students.” Part of that is making sure he changes with the times.

“The basics of electronics won’t change but new technologies come into focus and what people do with electronics can change,” Taylor said. He mentioned the growth in robotics.

“This is a growth industry now. A lot of job opportunities are available, which is why we have an emphasis on that,” he said.

Taylor first became interested in electronics in the early 1960s and he took his first class in that field at W.F. West High School in 1966. He began teaching at the college in 1979.

“I was fortunate to have very good instructors when I was a student and very fortunate to get a job here and work with such great faculty and a top-notch administration,” Taylor said.