

Follow us on **Facebook** for daily updates on what is happening on and around campus: <http://www.facebook.com/greenrivercurrent>

# The Current

Green River Community College

Visit our website to check out slide-shows, video footage, editor biographies and all kinds of other extras: [www.thecurrentonline.net](http://www.thecurrentonline.net)

January 28, 2011



**Rocking out to Koji Kondo and what that has to do with chocolate**

Page 6

**Future of plan for state department of education uncertain**

Page 11

**The case for a college-wide, uniform grade conversion scale**

Page 12

**How to do it outdoors in the winter - a guide to snow camping**

Page 15

# Campus



Also inside: "That the weather outside is frightful doesn't mean camping can't be delightful."

Megan Carter, page 15



[www.thecurrentonline.net](http://www.thecurrentonline.net)

Every few months a new exhibit is hosted in the Helen S. Smith Gallery, located in the Holman Library. Here is a collection of photographs from the 2010-2011 exhibits, check out the slideshow on our website.

Photos by Kerry Kralovic /  
THE CURRENT

## Sun, spiders and other stories from down under

This is the first of four installments that will be published in *The Current* this quarter. Text by Bruce Haulman, history instructor and a supervisor on the trip. All quotes are from students on the trip. A full account can be found on our website: [www.thecurrentonline.net](http://www.thecurrentonline.net)

This is a day-by-day account of students in the Australia-New Zealand Study Abroad Program. The Group left Seattle on Jan. 4 for Melbourne, Australia where we will be for four weeks with one week to travel before leaving for Auckland, New Zealand, where we will be for four weeks with one week to travel. We return home on March 12, in time for spring term to begin.

This is the eleventh year of the Green River Australia-New Zealand Study Abroad Program. Nearly 300 students have participated in the program and have returned with a new appreciation for these two island nations on the other side of the world.

### Thursday, Jan. 6

Newman College, University of Melbourne, is a Jesuit Roman Catholic residential college with dorms, a dining hall, a chapel, and The Academic Centre where classes are held. We live in dorm rooms, which, while simple, are well equipped with the basic accoutrements for each student and have internet connection.



**Sydney Daquil** - This being my first study abroad trip, I did not expect to meet so many amazing people. I know that quite a few of them will become longtime friends and I am very thankful for that.

### Saturday, Jan. 8



Saturday dawned bright, sunny and warm. We left early for Lorne, a surfing beach along The Great Ocean Road. The famous "Pier to Pub" swim was scheduled that day with over 4,000 swimmers taking part, including the Premier of Victoria. Surfboat races between surfing clubs from all over south-east Australia took place during the morning, and the swim in the afternoon. Many of us got sunburns from the harsh Australian sun despite being well covered with sunblock. Our pale Northwest complexions were no match for the Australian sun. But now, weeks later, we are all tanned and beginning to look like Aussies!

### Monday Jan. 10

We began classes with an introduction to Aboriginal Culture by a visit to the Melbourne Museum. That afternoon we met with Dr. Jess Carneil, lecturer in Australian Studies, to begin our Australian Culture class. Jess developed ideas about how we study cultures, and what distinguished Australian from American culture.



**Kaitlyn Abrams** - "I went to the aboriginal museum this morning, and as I was walking outside and looking at aboriginal plants, a butterfly landed on me! She just hung out on my shoulder for five minutes as I walked around. It was the coolest thing ever."

### Thursday Jan. 13



Dr. Carneil taught us about Aboriginal-European interactions in the morning, focusing on the question was Australia settled or invaded. In the afternoon we visited The National Gallery of Victoria to see the Aboriginal art exhibit. This is one of the finest collections of Aboriginal art in the world and represents artists and styles from all over Australia. In the evening we viewed the film "Rabbit Proof Fence," the story of young Aboriginal children who were taken away from their families, and walked 1,200 miles across the deserts of Western Australia to return home. They were part of what is known as the Stolen Generation.

**Olivia Branham** - "Yes, there are spiders in my room, saw my first one today. But we have an understanding: they don't show themselves to me, and I don't smash their faces in."

### Friday Jan. 21



**Ashley Henry** - "I don't really know what I was expecting, but this definitely wasn't it. Australia is so unpredictable, with blazing hot sun one day and torrential rain the next. It's funny how similar it is to home, with the history and superficial landscape/weather, and at the same time nothing is the same. It is too much to capture on one trip. This place is amazing."

# Campus



Editor: Jean-Pierre Garcia  
campus.editor@mail.greenriver.edu

## Teacher Spotlight: Monica Clement

**Full name:** Monica D. Clement

**Position:** Adjunct professor of geology, oceanography, IDS, and astronomy

**Date of birth:** March 8, 1952

**Year at Green River:** This is my fourth year at GRCC

### Why geology?

I didn't know what geology meant when I met with my academic advisor at WSU my freshman year. I had signed up for an English course, but my advisor said I didn't have to take it because of high test scores in high school. He recommended a lab science. I had always liked science, so that seemed like a good idea. My options were biology, chemistry, physics and geology. I had taken the first three in junior high and high school, so I asked him what geology was exactly. The study of the Earth. That sounded great.

I really did want to know about those mountains I had to cross to go to Pullman, the cliffs down by the Columbia River, and the rolling Palouse Hills outside the town. I was pretty much hooked from the first class really. I'm just a nature and an outdoor lover so geology is a natural. I ended up going to Central and graduated from Western where I took my first geophysics course. I liked that so much that I majored in geophysics in graduate school (University of Utah).

But why geology? Because it's about our Earth, what it's made up of, where our resources come from, how it works from the smallest scale to the biggest. It's about my home planet.

From your years of teaching, what's your favorite memory?

I think my favorite memories are of taking



Chelsea Namikas / THE CURRENT

fifth graders out to look for fossils outside of Manhattan, KS where I taught at Kansas State University.

Elementary teachers would call up and ask if I could lead a fieldtrip for their class. Kids are really excited about learning and being outside. The energy level was always so high. I'd love it if all my students still had that pure curiosity and enthusiasm for our planet.

**What do you see yourself doing in the future?**

Uhm... sitting in a hot spring out in the forest somewhere.

**What would you probably be doing right now if not for teaching?**

I might still be working for an oil company, so I guess I'd be a lot richer...

**What is the craziest thing you've ever done?**

Well, some things really shouldn't be printed in The Current.

I'd have to say that it was crazy of me to think that my field partner and I would be seen by, picked up by, and saved by, a car on a deserted dirt road in the middle of a valley,

the Basin and Range in

Nevada. We were conducting a gravity survey of the area (picture a series of long, linear mountains and valleys in the Nevada desert - summer, hot) and got our vehicle stuck. We ended up walking 22 miles to the paved highway. We could have gone a shorter route, but we had seen a car coming into the valley earlier and reasoned that it would have to come back out. By the time we got to the highway we really didn't think we would see anyone, and were figuring out where we could lie down and maybe sleep, figuring in things like the possibility of scorpions and such. It was dark and we were dehydrated and exhausted. But, a car did stop - it was a family on vacation. They gave us some jello and that tasted so so good. They drove us back to the town where we were staying (Baker, Nevada) and I will never forget them.

**What's the nicest place you've seen in your life?**

The depths of the Olympic Mountains.

**What was (were) your**

**childhood dream(s)?**

I don't remember having really big dreams - just to be happy pretty much. When I got a bit older (around 15) I wanted to be a hippie. I worked on that for a few years.

**What is your favorite rock?**

Anyone who has taken my geology class knows that my favorite rock is the Morton Gneiss from Minnesota. It's black and white and pink, very sparkly with a beautiful swirl pattern. It's quarried there and shipped all over the world to be used as facades on buildings.

There's probably some of it in downtown Seattle. I was told by the quarry owner that Bill Gates ordered \$800,000 worth of it to build a privacy fence around his house. The Morton Gneiss is about 3.8 billion years old, which makes it some of the oldest continent on our planet.

You can find the complete Monica Clement and other Teacher Spotlights at:  
[www.thecurrentonline.net/campus](http://www.thecurrentonline.net/campus)

## Man on the street



Every other week, The Current's editors crawl out of their cave to ask the campus random questions. Suggest a subject at: [thecurrent@greenriver.edu](mailto:thecurrent@greenriver.edu).

Here is a selection of this issue's answers. For more, plus an archive of old questions, visit our website: [www.thecurrentonline.net](http://www.thecurrentonline.net).

### How has the shooting in Tuscon affected you?

"Like the Virginia Tech shooting, I'm more alert and pay attention to the environment we live and work in. I'm more cautious and more vigilant to behavior we take for granted. Little things could be turn out to be big things."

- Clarence Smith Jr.



"It's in an in your face reminder that it can happen anywhere. Most people have halo effect, like nothing bad is going to happen to you, it will."

- Carsh Wilturner



"To be honest, I don't think it has affected me much. I feel sad about it but there's no personal connection. It's almost too common and desensitizing. It's surprising, but not."

- Megan Miller



"My boyfriend and I listened to a podcast of a person who tackled the shooter .... [It was] emotional, especially when I heard about the nine-year-old girl. Nobody deserves to get shot for no reason."

- Kelsey Mitts



"Honestly, it didn't affect me. I'm not there. Like Darfur, you hear about it but it doesn't sink in until you see it. If you don't see it, you don't care."

- Sam Quint



# Campus



Editor: Jean-Pierre Garcia  
campus.editor@mail.greenriver.edu

## Green River Speaking Center opens its doors

By: Samantha Wang  
Staff Writer

Where do I look? How do I stand? What do I do with my hands? Do I use notes? Should I go slower? Or faster? What if I turn red? How do I make it interesting? What if they don't pay attention? Will they notice my heart is racing?

If you're an average college student, the odds are you've asked yourself these questions before. Speaking in public or in front of a class has always been a haunting experience for many.

Providing students with guidance and speaking

skills, both in and outside of the classroom, therefore seemed like an urgent issue to many instructors and staff members. Faculty, Capital Projects and Media Services collaborated to create the Speaking Center, which opened its doors this quarter.

Students sign up for 20 minute sessions in the center, which is located on the second floor of the Holman Library. With an outline and notes prepared, instructors focus on the delivery of students and deliver feedback on the content of speeches, overall flow and transition of ideas afterward.

To further study their performances, the Technology Fee Committee spent a little under \$2,000 on start-up equipment and DVDs. Students are given DVD recordings of their speeches for review at the end of their sessions, free of charge.

Kate Katims, a communication studies instructor, was one of the driving forces behind making the Speaking Center a reality. "I have been campaigning for a speaking center since I came to Green River almost 25 years ago," she said.

Katims always believed that there should be a place for students to get one-on-one help to

increase skill and confidence. All of the communication studies instructors shared this vision, she said.

Katims garnered administrative support from Joyce Hammer, dean of transfer education, English, humanities and tutoring centers, Christie Gilliland, executive dean of transfer education, and April Jensen, executive vice president.

She then visited each division on campus soliciting feedback from students and did a survey to gauge student interest and needs.

"The response from both faculty and students was overwhelmingly pos-



Matthew Montoya / THE CURRENT

Kate Katims, communication studies instructor, reviews the recording set-up before starting a training session.

itive," Katims said.

Currently, communication studies instructors are at the helm, but the center hopes to recruit student tutors soon. The Speaking Center is open

to both students and faculty, but Katims said she hopes to expand to also make the center available to all members of the community some time in the future.

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON | TACOMA

Earn your  
**UW degree**  
in Tacoma

**W**

Why wait for fall?  
Qualified transfer students are  
being accepted now.

**SPRING QUARTER 2011  
APPLICATIONS**  
are due February 15, 2011

253-692-4400 [tacoma.uw.edu](http://tacoma.uw.edu)

Someone you know  
has an STD...  
and doesn't know it.

Condoms reduce the risk.

**PLANNED  
PARENTHOOD**  
OF THE GREAT NORTHWEST

Celebrating  
National Condom  
Week with **FREE**  
condoms at every  
health center  
from February  
13 to 19.

We're Here.

800.230.PLAN (7526) | [www.ppgnw.org](http://www.ppgnw.org)

- Emergency contraception
- Well woman exams
- STD & HIV testing
- Comprehensive sex education
- Family planning
- Peer-to-peer education

©2011 Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest. Ask if you qualify for reduced fee services. Monthly budgeted payment plans available. We'll bill most major insurance companies.  

# A&E

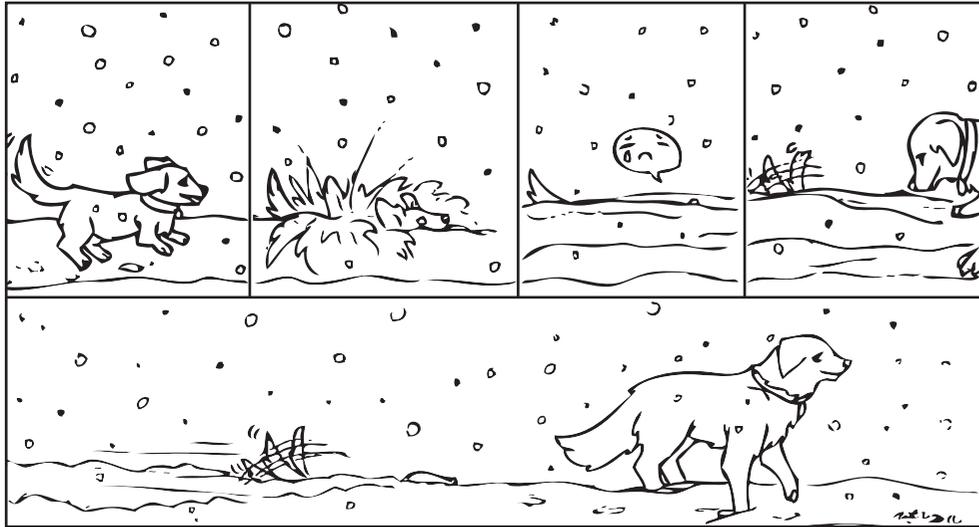
Also inside: "We have the ability to choose our leaders, and we must make the most of it."

Alyssa Ryan, page 13

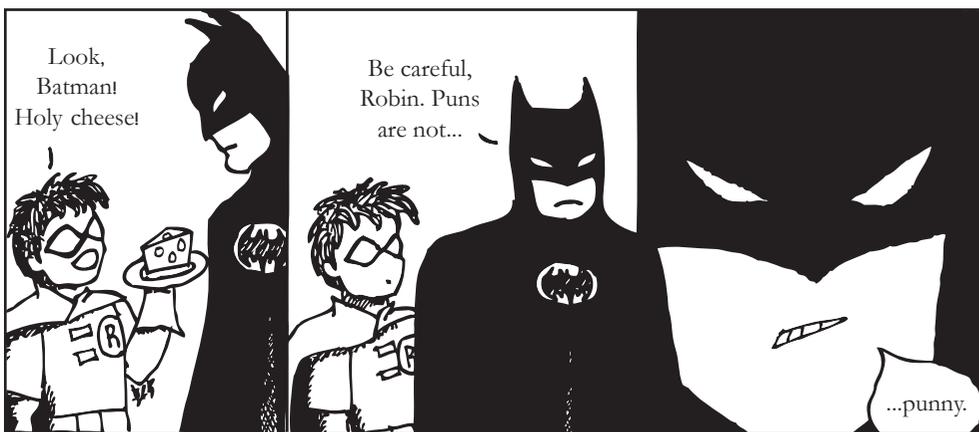


## COMICS

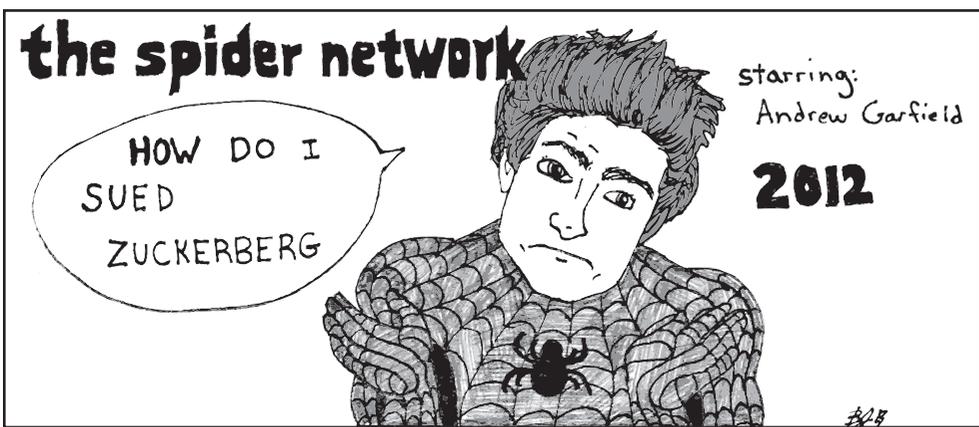
By: Whitney Gerard



By: Bailey Jo Josie



By: Bailey Jo Josie



When a student was stabbed on campus...



...our followers were the first to find out.

[facebook.com/greenrivercurrent](http://facebook.com/greenrivercurrent)

## SUDOKU

Easy

4	8	2	7				9	
	6	5	2			4		
				6	4			2
							3	1
			8	3	1			
6	1							
5			1	4				
		6			9	8	2	
	2			5	1	4	9	

Medium

		8	4	5		7	3	
4								9
	9		1			2		
1	2		7			6		
	6			8			2	
		9		4		8		3
		1			8		9	
9								8
	7	3		9	5	4		

Hard

	4			3	1	5		
5	2		9					4
3							2	
		4			3		7	9
1								5
6	7		8			4		
	8							6
7				4		5	1	
		5	7	6			4	

Very Hard

				4		7		
	7	9	2		8		3	
3							4	9
	1			9		2		
		2	6		1	4		
		4		3			1	
7	4							8
	9		8		4	3	6	
		3		1				

## WORD SEARCH

E	M	I	T	T	E	N	S	W	E	A	T	E	R	P	B
S	Q	R	C	S	Y	C	A	P	R	I	C	O	R	N	E
J	H	C	V	C	A	N	C	E	R	A	R	I	E	S	A
A	I	A	Q	U	A	R	I	U	S	S	C	A	R	F	N
C	B	V	L	W	T	S	V	L	B	G	E	M	I	N	I
T	E	F	I	O	P	H	I	U	C	H	U	S	M	I	E
P	R	S	L	U	S	H	V	T	A	U	R	U	S	B	N
Q	N	Y	L	I	B	R	A	Y	S	C	O	R	P	I	O
S	A	G	I	T	T	A	R	I	U	S	F	R	O	S	T
Y	T	D	I	C	E	S	K	A	T	I	N	G	X	D	O
W	E	R	W	F	R	E	E	Z	E	H	T	N	O	L	O
O	X	G	S	L	E	D	D	I	N	G	B	I	L	E	O

Aquarius, Aries, Beanie, Cancer, Capricorn, Freeze, Frost, Gemini, Gloves, Hibernate, Ice Skating, Leo, Libra, Mittens, Ophiuchus, Pisces, Sagittarius, Scarf, Scorpio, Sledding, Slush, Snow, Sweater, Taurus, Virgo

## TRIVIAL TRIVIA

- Which religion has the most adherents worldwide?
  - Islam
  - Buddhism
  - Christianity
  - Taoism
- In Islam, how many names does God have?
  - 87
  - 93
  - 99
  - 104
- What percent of the world is agnostic, secularist, or atheist?
  - 5%
  - 10%
  - 15%
  - 20%
- In Buddhism, once a person reaches nirvana:
  - Suffering ends
  - Samsara is attained
  - Rebirth is finished
  - They become Buddha
- In Hinduism, the power of a god is often symbolized by:
  - Lightning bolts
  - Rings of fire
  - Animals
  - Many arms
- The most liberal thinkers in ancient China were:
  - Legalists
  - Taoists
  - Confucians
  - Followers of Xunzi

Answers:

1.c, 2.c, 3.c, 4.c, 5.d, 6.b



## Games, music, chocolate

It's not hard to be nostalgic and affectionate toward music in games. After listening to the same tunes for hours on end, the tracks tend to be instilled in your psyche. That said, it's also not hard to question whether this music is actually good or just second-nature familiarity like Urkel on Family Matters.

Video Games Live (VGL), a concert series where video game music is played by an orchestra, tries to disprove the latter, and does so with both the grace of an opera and the attitude of a rock show - it is both yet neither.

*VGL and the game equivalent of throwing panties at rock stars.*

On Jan. 23, the show came to Seattle. Music from major games like Mega Man to Final Fantasy were played, and soundtracks of smaller games like Shadow of the Colossus and Afrika were featured as well. Local and internet talents, including a girl in full Link costume complete with Navi the fairy, were also brought in to perform and flesh out the two and a half hour melodic nerd-gasm.

Each song was played by an orchestra in front of a massive video screen that showed footage from the game. This, along with flashy lights and the music, led to a euphoric response from the audience that was probably the game equivalent of throwing panties at rock stars. It's as if every audience member thought "Oh my God! I played that game" every time the emcee, video game composer Tommy Tallarico, shouted the name of the next tune.

The big screen is what made the show. From

the opening number - a medley of arcade classics like Pong, Frogger, and Donkey Kong - it felt like

### Game Prose

Alexander Bevier



the orchestra was merely providing the soundtracks and reactions to the screen, causing the audience to react whenever the screen showed a poor move made in Tetris.

The orchestra also played the music to an Assassin's Creed trailer - complete with dialogue and sound effects. It was probably the closest to seeing a classic silent film - they were often accompanied by live music - I will ever get to. But without the high-definition visuals of a guy getting stabbed at a masquerade ball, I wouldn't know where the song came from.

In the end, VGL doesn't prove or disprove that game music can hold its own; it shows how intertwined a game and its music are. We can't play Mario without thinking about Koji Kondo's legendary tunes. We can't look at Pac Man without expecting to hear the iconic "wakka wakka." Doing so would be like watching the Scooby Doo gang do anything but chasing ghosts.

In 2011, everyone is talking about convergence: all media together. We want video for our written articles online. We want Facebook to connect with our other social networks and run our games. VGL, with the help of an orchestra and a JumboTron, shows that a game's visuals are too important to be split from its loving syncopations. We don't want just peanut butter and we don't just want chocolate - we only want those delicious peanut butter cups.

## Renaissance Rome never looked so deadly

By: Alexander Bevier  
Senior Writer

Of all the new franchises that were born during this console generation, none were as compelling as the Dan Brown-Meets-The Matrix series Assassin's Creed.

The latest game released under that moniker, 'Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood,' is the sequel to 'Assassin's Creed II,' but it is not Assassin's Creed III. It is a fantastic game, however.

The subject of the series is Desmond, a run-of-the-mill, bland-as-bread male protagonist, who is abducted by Catholic Templars. These nefariously religious men want to use this gizmo-thing called an Animus to let Desmond relive his ancestor's experiences in order to find a biblical, World-ending MacGuffin called a Piece of Eden.

Along the way, the main character gets rescued by modern-day assassins, and does for them pretty

much does what he was doing for the Templars, except the assassins aren't as evil.

If none of that made sense, stop reading this now. The game gets more confusing.

Each game in the series with a numeral at the end represents a playable character and time period for the protagonist to experience. In the first game, players control one of Desmond's ancestors, who is fighting in the Middle East during the Crusades. In II and Brotherhood, players play as Ezio, an Italian playboy who lived in the Renaissance period and whose best friend is Leonardo DeVinci.

Over the course of II, players learn that the Pieces of Eden are responsible for every major event on the planet. Nikola Tesla created the alternating current system because he was using one. The Assassins had JFK assassinated because he had one, and even the

atomic bomb was a creation derived from these things.

The game ends with players getting into a fist fight with the Pope, and God telling you to fight global warming. No game will ever rival this one in terms of bizarre endings.

'Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood' picks up with Ezio heading back to his estate, slightly puzzled over the confusing ending to the last game. It's not long until the Borgia family (real people, look them up) are at his doorstep, trying to kill him.

After the death of Ezio's uncle, the game becomes a mission to build a league of extraordinary assassins - and you do just that.

Because the game is a sequel, Ezio starts off already good at killing people. In II, Ezio was a boy living the good life. Now, he's a cold-blooded assassin and players can stab, shoot and poison everyone and anyone who looks at him funny.

The people he doesn't

kill will join him in his escapades. By the end of the game, players will be able to summon their assassin buddies and kill an entire militia by holding a single button by a few seconds.

There's also a multiplayer component where players try to assassinate each other while looking inconspicuous, but the single player storyline is so long you may just never get to it.

All of this takes place in the vibrant recreation of Renaissance Rome, filled with the wonders that still stand today. This is a key part to the Assassin's Creed experience. As you are reading this, there are people in Italy doing Assassin's Creed II tours around Rome to see the sights that were so elegantly portrayed by Ubisoft, the developer.

With a vibrant world, and a utility belt's worth of killing tools, 'Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood' is a wonderful follow up to last year's 'Assassin's Creed II'.

## And the winner is...

...up to you. Go to our website, find out what others think and let us know who you feel should win the Oscars: [www.thecurrentonline.net](http://www.thecurrentonline.net)  
A full list of nominees can be found at <http://www.imdb.com/features/oscars/2011/nominations>.



	Jean-Pierre Garcia	Bailey Jo Josie	Stirling Radliff
<b>Best motion picture of the year:</b>	The Social Network	Inception	Black Swan
<b>Best performance by an actor in a leading role:</b>	James Franco, 127 Hours	Colin Firth, The King's Speech	Jeff Bridges, True Grit
<b>Best performance by an actress in a leading role:</b>	Natalie Portman, Black Swan	Natalie Portman, Black Swan	Natalie Portman, Black Swan
<b>Best performance by an actor in a supporting role:</b>	Geoffrey Rush, The King's Speech	Christian Bale, The Fighter	Geoffrey Rush, The King's Speech
<b>Best performance by an actress in a supporting role:</b>	Hailee Steinfeld, True Grit	Helena Bonham Carter, The King's Speech	Hailee Steinfeld, True Grit
<b>Best achievement in directing:</b>	David Fincher, The Social Network	David Fincher, The Social Network	Darren Aronofsky, Black Swan
<b>Best animated feature film of the year:</b>	How To Train Your Dragon	How To Train Your Dragon	How To Train Your Dragon
<b>Best achievement in cinematography:</b>	Black Swan	True Grit	Black Swan

# A&E Review & Preview

## Calendar

### Concerts:

- Jan 28 Interpol  
@ ShowBox SODO  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. all ages, SOLD OUT)
- Say Hi  
@ Neumos  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. all ages, \$12)
- Jan 29 Led Zepagain (Tribute to Led Zeppelin)  
@ ShowBox at the Market  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. 21+, \$15-\$18)
- The Ghost of a Saber Tooth Tiger  
@ The Crocodile  
(Doors open at 9 p.m. 21+, \$12-\$13)
- Midnite  
@ Neumos  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. 21+, \$20)
- Jan 30 Wide Eye Panic  
@ El Corazón  
(Doors open at 7:30 p.m. all ages, \$8)
- Jan 31 Jubilee  
@ The Triple Door  
(Doors open at 7:30 p.m. all ages, \$13)
- Feb 1 Daniel Lanois' Black Dub  
@ Neumos  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. 21+, \$17)
- David Garrett  
@ Paramount Theatre  
(Doors open at 7:30 p.m. all ages, \$36-\$62)
- Feb 2 The Get Up Kids  
@ Neumos  
(Doors open at 7 p.m. all ages, \$21)
- Feb 4 Sarah McLachlan and Friends  
@ Paramount Theatre  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. all ages, \$35-\$65)
- Motorhead  
@ ShowBox SODO  
(Doors open at 7 p.m. all ages, \$32-\$35)
- Against Me!  
@ Neumos  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. all ages, \$15)
- Feb 5 Super Diamond (Tribute to Neil Diamond)  
@ ShowBox at the Market  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. 21+, \$15-\$20)
- Ozzy Osborne  
@ Tacoma Dome  
(Doors open at 7 p.m. all ages, \$29-\$79)
- Feb 10 STS9 (Sound Tribe Sector 9)  
@ ShowBox at the Market  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. all ages, \$22-\$25)
- Feb 11 Social Distortion (Feb 11-13)  
@ ShowBox SODO  
(Doors open at 7 p.m. all ages, \$30-\$35)
- Feb 12 Cake  
@ Moore Theatre  
(Doors open at 8 p.m. all ages, \$37.50)

### Movies

- Jan 28 From Prada to Nada - PG13  
Kaboom - NR
- Feb 4 Sanctum - R  
Waiting for Forever - PG13
- Feb 11 Just Go With It - PG13  
Gnomeo and Juliet - G

## S-s-stammering to become worthy

By: Jean-Pierre Garcia  
Campus Editor



On the eve of Britain's declaration of War with Nazi Germany, a fearful Prince Albert (Colin Firth) struggling under the strain of an anxious nation and his father's impatience in "The King's Speech."

A regally stern Michael Gambon plays King George V, who is uneasy about his line of succession. King-to-be Prince Edward (Guy Pearce) has no royal ambition and plans to shirk his duty to attend to his fancies with an American divorcee. This leaves Albert with the responsibilities of kingship, but he is easily intimidated and constantly

living in the shadow of his crippling speech impediment. The only one who truly has faith in him is his wife, Lady Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter). She compliments Albert in a way that is reminiscent to the subtle role women play in the shadow of a looming World War II. She pushes him to find his voice, even after several failed speech therapists - in one instance, Albert literally chokes on his words with marbles in his mouth. Elizabeth proactively introduces him to one last speaking coach: a rejected and unlicensed Shakespearean Australian actor Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush), who tries to transform Prince Albert into King George VI.

The new relationship



COURTESY PHOTO / thestar.com

Prince Albert (Colin Firth) in front of the one thing he so dreads - the microphone.

is awkward and filled with unusual but effective speaking methods. The natural approach and quirky demeanor of Logue is entertaining to watch, and a supporting actor Oscar nod is well deserved.

Overall, the film is slow and choppy, but the pac-

ing mirrors Albert's speech impediment and character development. The sense of accomplishment that follows the film feels like you just completed a critical thinking exercise. The film definitely deserves recognition when it comes to golden statues this February.

## The Current Picks

### Movie:

*Conspiracy*



'Conspiracy,' a 2001 HBO docudrama, is based around the Wannsee Conference - a secret meeting of 15 mid-ranking SS commanders and government ministers on the "Jewish problem" and "the thousand years plan."

Reinhard Heydrich (Kenneth Branagh) and SS Major Adolf Eichmann (Stanley Tucci) head the conference. Dr. Wilhelm Stuckart (Colin Firth) is a secret half-Jew who hopes the Third Reich will adopt an "integration process" that would make Jews more German (and sterile), but his opinions are instantly denied.

A great watch for anyone interested in the inside workings of Nazi Germany.

By: Stirling Radliff

### Book:

*iYo!*



A father's blessing, a stalker's rant, and a roommate's companionship are just a few perspectives that pull together to tell the tale of fictional storyteller Yolanda Garcia in Julia Alvarez's 'iYo!'

There is deeper meaning in the title: 'yo' means 'I' in Spanish.

The book revolves around a single character as told through a myriad of compelling vignettes. It is poignant in the telling and illuminates character flaws, writer tools, and social unrest in the Dominican Republic.

It isn't all pretty and it doesn't punch you in the face quite like Sapphire's "Push" (inspiration for the movie Precious), but it's only slightly gentler.

By: Jean-Pierre Garcia

### Music:

*Middle Cyclone*



Neko Case, also a member of the band The New Pornographers, produced the most compelling album of her solo career in 2009's 'Middle Cyclone,' an eclectic mixture of alternative indie country and the saddest lyrics since Steven Morrissey. She intertwines her hardships in love with the raw intensity of all things natural and wild.

She herself becomes nature in songs like "This Tornado Loves You," "I'm an Animal" and "Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth."

Her lyrics are hard-nosed yet vulnerable, and her voice is powerful - a little like Florence + The Machine, but with far less optimism.

By: Bailey Jo Josie

www.thecurrentonline.net

# ANOTHER YEAR ANOTHER ROUND THE CUTS ARE COMING WHAT THEY WILL MEAN FOR GREEN RIVER

By: Lacey Steward & Remco Zwetsloot

**“EVEN IF THE ECONOMY WERE TO START CREEPING BACK UP, [OLYMPIA] IS SAYING, IT WILL BE 8 TO 12 YEARS TO GET BACK TO WHAT THE FUNDING WAS BEFORE IT GOT CUT. IT’S A LONG PROCESS. IT’S NOT A SPRINT - IT’S A MARATHON.”**

**- JOHN RAMSEY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

November state revenue forecasts were lower than projected and prompted an additional 4.6 percent cut to the 2010-2011 Green River budget. The college had already taken a 6.3 percent cut in September, making this year’s total cut 11 percent, or roughly \$3 million. The state still has to cut \$600 million from this year’s budget, but due to laws requiring the state to support higher education it is unlikely that money will come from community colleges.

**11% BUDGET CUT THIS YEAR**

So far, the college has been able to deal with the budget woes relatively well. After three subsequent years of cuts, the college has yet to lay off any employees - though a state-wide hiring freeze has been instituted by the governor - and no services or programs have been eliminated. Instead of cutting, the college has elected to not fill vacant positions and to use the salary savings and extra money from the international and Running Start programs to deal with shortages.

### Future cuts

The state’s 2011-2013 general fund - the budget out of which, among other things, public education is paid - shortfall is projected to be about \$4.9 billion, which means that, if Green River takes a proportional share, the college will face an 18 percent cut, or about \$4.5 million, cut over the next two years. It is unlikely this will happen though; in Gov. Christine Gregoire’s recent budget proposal, technical and community college budgets are to be reduced by 10 percent.

The exact percentage of Green River’s cut will remain unknown until the legislature passes a budget, something administration officials don’t expect to happen until the very end of the legislative session in mid-April. “In reality, everyone is waiting for the March revenue forecast,” said John Ramsey, director of public information. But “a cut greater than 10 percent is likely since higher education took less of a cut this year than other state agencies,” he added.

The governor’s proposal also included a 3 percent salary reduction for all state employees, which includes all faculty and staff at the college. “But at Green River we can’t just arbitrarily reduce faculty salary, it goes against the contract,” said Ramsey.

“So either we have to negotiate that with the faculty - they have to agree to it, in other words - or the college has to make up their 3 percent reduction elsewhere in the budget.”

### Tuition increases

“[Tuition] is going to go up,” said Ramsey. “The question is how much.” In her recent budget proposal, Gregoire called for a 10 percent tuition increase in each of the next two years to make up for cuts to the community college budgets. The House and Senate will eventually make their own proposals and the governor’s plan won’t go through the legislature unaltered, but it’s unlikely the eventual

increase will differ much from what is on the table now.

The 10 percent increase is for in-state students only. Out-of-state tuition would go up as well, but rather than 10 percent it would go up the same dollar figure as in-state tuition. This would translate to an \$8.70 per credit the first (2011-2012) and a roughly \$9.60 per credit rise in tuition costs the second year (2012-2013).

“The only alternative I have to cutting more is to raise tuition,” Gregoire told community and technical college trustees at their annual legislative conference in Olympia earlier this week.

### Cutting services and classes

What the projected shortfall means for service and staff cuts won’t be certain until the legislature gives some indication as to the size of the college’s budget cut. “A 10 percent cut, backfilled with a tuition increase would probably not mean cuts to programs or services,” said Ramsey. “Deeper cuts could, but that’s speculation right now and no plans have been made [for those] yet.”

The biggest issue for community colleges is “the restoration of worker retraining funding that is slated to sunset on June 30 of this year,” according to Ramsey. Last year the legislature allocated around \$17 million to fund extra worker retraining enrollment spots at colleges and from all schools eligible for the money, Green River is the largest recipient. If the funding were to be cut, that would amount to an additional \$1.1 million decrease in funding.

“More importantly, what would disappear is the enrollment slots,” said Ramsey. During fall quarter, the college had 726 full-time equivalent (FTE) worker retraining students, of whom a significant portion would not be able to attend Green River without state funding.

### Budget think tanks

The college held nine think tank sessions throughout November and December through which faculty and staff submitted suggestions on budgetary matters. According to President Eileen Ely, the college received and is now in the process of sifting through 520 submissions. They will be separated into three categories: ‘already in process,’ ‘not feasible at this time’ and ‘will examine further.’

The suggestions include common cost-cutting measures - posting class material online instead of having handouts in classes, eliminating bottled water on campus and turning off lights - but the list also included undoubtedly controversial proposals such as selling KGRG, the campus radio station, laying off staff members deemed dispensable and college-wide salary reductions.

The college will soon start similar sessions with students.

### Construction projects

At the start of this academic year Green River had three building projects planned for the coming four years. Following the completion of Salish Hall, all HS, SS and BI occupants and classes would be moved to the new building, after which all SMT occupants would move into the HS, SS and BI complex to clear the building for renovation.

After renovations were done all functions would return to the SMT building and the HS, SS and BI complexes would be demolished. A new Trades and Industries (TI) building and a new Student Life building were also being planned but may be postponed because of cuts to the capital budget (the budget construction is funded from).

According to Ramsey, renovation of the SMT building is still covered in this year’s capital budget, but it’s not entirely clear whether it will make it through the process. “Right now it’s in, but if the state’s ability to borrow money continues to deteriorate, then it will be out. And if it’s out, then it pushes everything back [at least] two years.”

### Enrollment and the open-door policy

Every year, the legislature sets a target for a community college’s enrollment numbers. The college only receives support from the state for the targeted number of state-supported students - in other words, if the target is 7000 students, the college doesn’t get funding for student 7001 and up - but it gets to keep all tuition income from over-enrollment, whereas normally a part of it is returned to Olympia. For Green River, the target is currently 5,899 annual FTE, which it is above by 10 percent.

Whether this influences a college’s budget depends on its efficiency, according to Ramsey. “We are at a 96 percent fill rate across the institution, that’s hugely efficient. One and a half years ago we were at 84 percent efficiency.” There is a limit to how much over enrollment a college can handle, however, and with a close-to-complete fill rate, Green River is nearing that limit.

The exceedingly high enrollment numbers have caused some in Olympia to worry about the possible erosion of community college quality. The governor is among those concerned, but she has “left it up to the colleges to find where that point is, in defining when quality starts to slip,” said Ramsey. The college is not considering changing its enrollment policies for the rest of the year, but in the long run “nothing is off the table, to be honest,” he said. “It depends how bad the situation gets before it gets better.”

None of these proposals are final and nobody will be completely sure of anything until the March revenue forecast and the end of the legislative session in mid-April. What is certain is that it’s going to be a tough decade for community colleges. “Even if the economy were to start creeping back up, [Olympia] is saying, it will be 8 to 12 years to get back to what the funding was before it got cut,” said Ramsey. “It’s a long process. It’s not a sprint - it’s a marathon.”

**10% TUITION INCREASE PROPOSED**

**POSSIBLE \$1.1 MIL CUT TO WORKER RETRAINING**

**CURRENTLY 96% CLASS FILL RATE**

**POTENTIAL 3% SALARY REDUCTION**

### Budget process

By: Celeste Monroe

While Washington State’s budget is created for a two-year period - a biennium - and is constructed using a 10-year budget plan guideline, Green River’s budget is prepared annually over an approximately seven month long period.

### November

Budget preparations typically begin in November, though this year’s planning suffered setbacks due to a lower-than-projected state revenue forecast and uncertainty within the legislature. The planning process has been forced to basically restart, and it is now more focused on specific adjustments. The process starts out with the initial strategic planning and development of budget items. Items are prioritized based on need and a budget training process is put into action in order to stay within budget guidelines and to ensure that there are no errors within the budget development process.

### February

The Green River Cabinet and President’s staff begin their strategic work session in February using this information to finalize budget items for recommendation. The planning and budgeting instructions are then submitted to Green River staff.

### March

A state revenue forecast update that can possibly impact budget procedures is announced in either February or March.

### April

The budget items are then submitted by the college for review in April and are then subject to revision by the President’s Cabinet.

### June

The final budget is issued to the Board of Trustees in June for action.

This month, Governor Gregoire made her recommendations for the 2011-2013 state budget. Come May or June of this year, the funding for GRCC will be established for the July 2011 to June 2012 fiscal year and money will be allocated to the projects that survived the projected budget cuts.

# News

Also inside: "When I got a bit older I wanted to be a hippie. Worked on that for a few years."

Monica Clement, page 3

## Can the college prevent a Loughner incident?

By: Kelli Wyatt  
Managing Editor

Loyer D. Braden, Seung-Hui Cho, Asa H. Coon, Jared Lee Loughner. All college students. All troubled. All took innocent lives.

The recent shooting in Arizona has brought on a debate of what - if anything - colleges can do to prevent such tragedies from happening.

"None of us can determine if anyone is really 100 percent safe to be on campus," said Deb Casey, dean of student services.

Casey worked at the University of Florida when serial killer Danny Rolling shot and killed five students in 1990, and she instituted many of the policies used there since she came to Green River five

years ago.

One of them was the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). The team holds meetings every other week with its five members: Fred Creek, director of campus safety; Liz McKinney, counseling faculty; Cyndi Rapier, director of housing and international programs; and Tim Malroy, assistant director of student services and judicial affairs. During these meetings, the team discusses all reports of disruptive behavior in order to monitor and prevent situations from escalating.

"We are being proactive about addressing risk reduction," said Devon Klein, counseling services faculty member, "but you're never going to be able to reduce risk down to zero. It's just not possible."

sible."

Several of the reports received by the BIT come from the Red Flag system, which is currently in its second year. Through this system - which can be accessed through the college website - members of the community can report situations that may compromise the safety of the campus community.

The exact process a student goes through from this point varies greatly. "It's an individualized process," explained Casey. "It's really about serving that one student and [assessing] what the needs are to put wrap-around services in place."

According to McKinney, "Our goal is to intervene prior to there being a crisis. If we can catch things early on, we will be in a much better place."

The procedures at the college have been an example to other community and technical colleges in the state, according to Casey. "Green River has been one of the leaders across the state at community colleges with our Behavior Intervention Team," she said, and added she has facilitated several all-day informational workshops on the BIT for the other 33 community colleges in Washington. "We have been innovative and ahead of the game in addressing how we implement this process and serve our students."

Still, even with policies that have thus far proven to be successful, there's no way to be certain someone won't slip through the cracks. Pima Community College, the school Loughner attended, had

policies similar to that of Green River in place, and here too there have been instances where students have been at least temporarily expelled for safety reasons.

Regardless, "[Most students] say they appreciate that somebody noticed something wasn't going well for them, that somebody cared enough to say something," said McKinney.

Especially with constant budget cuts and staff reductions, the amount of hours on-campus counseling is available to students is decreasing. The absence of an administrative assistant has forced Klein and McKinney, the only two full-time counselors at the college, to take on work that takes time away from face-to-face counseling. "Any amount

of time that we devote to administrative tasks is time that we can't be seeing students," said Klein.

Although the International Association of Counseling Services recommends a minimum of 1 counselor for every 1,500 students, the current counselor-to-student ratio at Green River is 1 to 4,831. In part as a result of this, distressed students are often referred into the community if they are in need of long-term counseling.

"Our job is to think about the community, and how students are being served to get the resources they need," said Casey. "In the end, it's really a [matter of] figuring out how to fit all the puzzle pieces together so that students can be successful and the community safe."



*Texas Hold 'em tournaments every Wednesday at 7 p.m. with free food prizes, free interactive trivia games, free WiFi, free delivery to campus & CCA with \$10+ purchase?*

*Only \$2.00 for a slice of pizza and fountain drink when you show your Green River ID?*

## How could you go wrong?



Located at The Season's shopping center on Lea Hill.

253-929-8783



## Education system overhaul proposed

By: Zach Murray  
Staff Writer

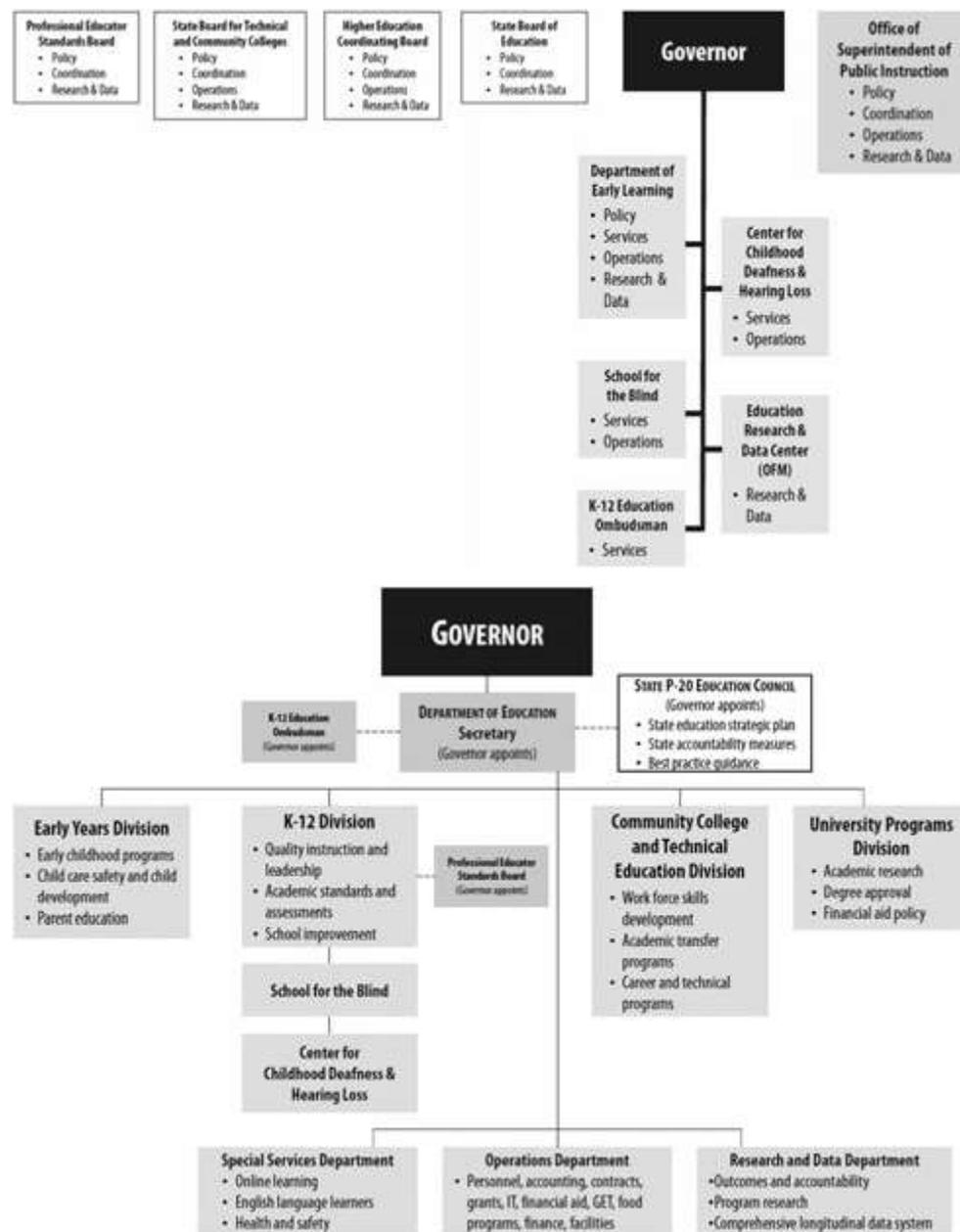
Governor Christine Gregoire proposed creating a state Department of Education that would bring together portions of the state education system that are currently handled by separate agencies.

Gregoire contends that a unified department will not only run smoother than the current system, but may also help to raise the number of college graduates while drastically lowering costs - matters essential to the state's current budgetary problems.

The proposal, made on Jan. 5, which can currently be found on the governor's website ([www.governor.wa.gov](http://www.governor.wa.gov)), also outlines further goals which she hopes to achieve in the next few years. One of Gregoire's largest concerns, with college education in particular, is that Washington will not be producing enough college graduates to keep up with the expected job growth in the state. It is estimated that two out of three jobs to be created in the next eight years will require applicants to have a college-level degree. To keep up with these numbers, Gregoire proposed that Washington State public universities should be expected to graduate 6,000 more students per year than they do currently - 2,000 of those graduates earning degrees in science, math or technology - job sectors that are predicted to experience the largest growth.

To help schools attain these goals, Gregoire also proposed that colleges and universities be allowed to raise tuition should public funding be cut in the future. This would mean that if state funding falls below a certain baseline, schools would be able to bring in more money through tuition to continue giving a quality education to a larger number of students.

The announcement has



Top: the current organization. Bottom: the system proposed by Governor Gregoire.  
Graphs are courtesy of the Office of Financial Management.

drawn mixed reactions from Washington's education community. Some critics calling the governor's proposal unconstitutional, citing Article III of the state's constitution, which says "The superintendent of public instruction shall

### Opponents assert the governor's plan is unconstitutional, future uncertain.

have supervision over all matters pertaining to public schools, and shall perform such specific duties as may be prescribed by law." This appears to some to be in direct conflict with the governor's plan to have an appointed secretary of education head the new department

who that would supersede the superintendent of public instruction - a statewide elected office - on all matters pertaining to the public education system.

Randy Dorn, the current state superintendent, said that, while he agrees

with the governor that the education system does need to be streamlined, he objects to the creation of the secretary of education position.

"I am an elected official," Dorn said. "My boss is the people of this state, not the governor. That is state law, explicit in Article

III of the state constitution. Would the governor also suggest that the other elected officials report to a governor-appointed official?"

Dorn went on to say that "the most pressing issue we face is lack of funding ... consolidating commissions and eliminating agencies isn't a bad idea, but it takes time and energy away from much more pressing issues."

As of yet, the policy is still in the proposal stage and has not been introduced to state lawmakers. It is currently uncertain when the plan will be debated by the legislature, but the plan is expected to reach the floor during the current session, which lasts until mid-April.

## The Undercurrent

### Angelou event postponed second time

Maya Angelou's speaking engagement, which was scheduled for Feb. 16, has been postponed and will now be held on March 10.

Angelou, dubbed a "true renaissance woman" on her official website for her experience in theatre, music, film, writing, and teaching, has cancelled all events on her west coast tour because President Obama is awarding her the Presidential Medal of Freedom in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 15.

The Medal of Freedom is given to individuals who have made "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors." The award is the highest civilian honor in America, and past recipients include Stephen Hawking, Mother Theresa and Walt Disney.

The March 10 event will be held in the Green River gymnasium, with doors set to open at 6.30 p.m.. Any previously purchased tickets will be honored and seat assignments will stay the same. The event is still sold out and no new tickets will be sold for the new date.

Angelou's event was originally scheduled for Nov. 4 of 2010, but for health reasons that visit had to be postponed as well.

By: Lacey Steward

### Effort to digitize material in testing phase

Currently, students on average pay about \$1000 annually for textbooks.

To lower these costs, the Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges created the Open Course Library (OCL). The program will make all class material available online. The content will be gathered by instructors and librarians and will range from instructional YouTube videos to purchased online textbooks. The board hopes to cap the cost per OCL class at \$30 per student.

With a matching grant of \$750,000 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the program is being tested in 43 high-enrollment classes, ranging from biology to introductory English, this month.

Green River currently does not have plans to become involved with the program.

By: Kelli Wyatt

### Board of Trustees member replaced

Arlista Holman, who has been a member of the Green River Board of Trustees since 2000, officially stepped down from her position during the board's Jan. 20 meeting.

College Board of Trustees members in Washington are limited to serving two terms of five years. Holman's term was extended for a year due to her active involvement in the college's search for a new president.

Holman, whose father-in-law, Hayes Holman, played a big role in the creation of Green River as superintendent of public instruction - the Holman Library is named after him - was the board's chairwoman during the 2002-2003 and 2007-2008 school years,

She will be replaced by retired Auburn School District Superintendent Linda Cowan, who has already been appointed by the governor. Cowan has a BA in education from WWU and an MEd from the UW.

By: Remco Zwetsloot

# OpEd

Also inside: "We only want those delicious peanut butter cups."

Alexander Bevier, page 6

## Editorial Staff



Remco Zwetsloot  
Editor-in-Chief



Kelli Wyatt  
Managing Editor  
Advertising Manager



Josh Davidson  
Webmaster



Bailey Jo Josie  
A&E Editor



Jean-Pierre Garcia  
Campus Editor



Alyssa Ryan  
OpEd Editor



Lacey Steward  
News Editor



Kerry Kralovic  
Photography Editor



John Knowlton  
Advisor

## The grade disaster

**Editorial Board:** Remco Zwetsloot, Kelli Wyatt, Josh Davidson, Bailey Jo Josie, Jean-Pierre Garcia, Alyssa Ryan, Lacey Steward, Kerry Kralovic

One of the main ideas behind our educational system is to reward hard work while punishing, for lack of a better word, those who don't make an effort.

Yet the current grade conversion system - or rather, lack thereof - goes completely against this philosophy. By having an arbitrary percent-to-GPA conversion scale, the college is fostering an unfair system which, in some cases, rewards the lazy and punishes the diligent students.

Many sections of the same class are taught by different instructors (English 101 is being taught by 25 teachers this quarter, for example), each of whom are currently allowed to decide whether or not they think a 90 percent is worth a 3.3 or a 3.7, and whether you fail the class with a 60 percent score. In such a system, it is entirely plausible - even likely - that a student who works twice as hard as someone else of similar intelligence gets the same grade just because his instructor used a different scale.

This not only goes against basic educational philosophy, it is simply unfair to students and something must be done about it. Though it is inevitable that some instructors grade easier than others, there are steps the college needs to take to address this.

First of all, there should be one college-wide conversion scale so that a 95 percent or an 82 percent score is worth the same in every class. This way, students can't get stuck

with lower grades than others just because their instructors have different opinions of what a certain score is worth.

This universal scale should be made tougher than the ones generally used now. Due to grade inflation it has become harder and harder for great students to distinguish themselves from the simply good ones, and when implementing a new system the college will have the chance to do something about it. The difference between five percent points, 85 and 90 percent, for example, is often 0.5 GPA, yet in the same scale 95 percent and 100 percent are both a 4.0. This discourages hard work and deprives hard-working students from an opportunity to display their prowess.

It wouldn't make sense to intentionally toughen the conversion scale without considering what effect it would have on a student's ability to transfer, though - this would make it harder for our students to compete

with those at other community colleges, who might be using an easier scale and are therefore getting higher grades. Luckily, universities around the country that have been struggling with this issue have already come up with good countermeasures, such as posting median grades of each class on student transcripts. This would allow universities that are evaluating college applications to see how much above or below average a student generally performs, thus putting grades into context and cancelling out the negative effect of a lower GPA score.

The administration should realize what is best for its students and appoint a commission with the goal of implementing a fairer and organized system. And after changes are made, the college should lobby other institutions in the state to do the same so that all Washington community college students will eventually be evaluated fairly and by the same standards.

## The Editor

By: Remco Zwetsloot

And so it begins again. It's been over two months since our last production weekend and it felt a little weird getting into the rhythm again and basically living in my office for several days.

During winter break I went home to Amsterdam for the first time since arriving here one and a half years ago, and it felt oddly familiar straight away, something I had not expected after such a long absence. It felt so familiar, in fact, that after being gone for just under three weeks, life in Auburn took a lot more getting used to than I had anticipated. (Me unsuccessfully attempting to avoid a jetlag by staying up for 33 hours straight didn't exactly help the situation either, I'm guessing.)

But a few weeks into the quarter, things seem to have fallen back into place, and I have returned to being my pestering, overbearing self - undoubtedly to the pleasure of the section editors and Kelli in particular. This quarter we're working with a completely new set of reporters and two new section editors - Alyssa Ryan for OpEd and Lacey Steward for News - but things are nevertheless going more smoothly than ever, and I'm very excited about the talent we have in the class. We were actually able to start production on schedule for once and I, for the first time, managed to finish all assignments for my classes a week ahead of time so I could focus solely on the newspaper, a feat my body and sleeping rhythm appreciated.

As far as the issue goes, I am most excited about the editorial; I'm really hoping we can start a discussion on the subject of grade conversion and whether the current system really best serves students.

Contact Remco Zwetsloot with a question, complaint or simply a comment at [thecurrent.editor@greenriver.edu](mailto:thecurrent.editor@greenriver.edu)

### Editorial Policy

The Current is a limited public forum for student expression, in which student editors make policy and content decisions. Green River Community College delegates editorial responsibility for the content of the publications. The college acknowledges the dual free purpose of student publications as instructional tools and as vehicles for free inquiry and free expression in the academic community. The views and opinions expressed in The Current do not necessarily reflect those of the college or student body.

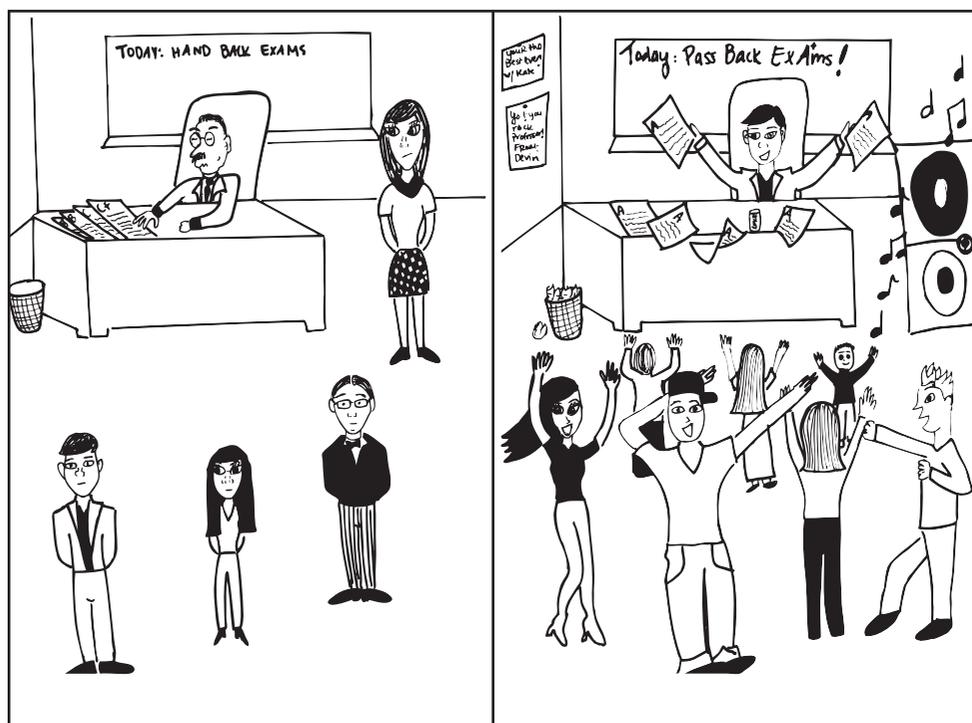
### Theft Policy

A person commits the offense of publication theft when he or she willfully or knowingly obtains or exerts unauthorized control over more than three copies of The Current that is distributed on campus [with the intent to prevent other individuals from reading that edition of the publication]. A "publication" includes any periodical that is distributed on a complimentary or compensatory basis. In addition to the imposition of other campus disciplinary penalties, a person who violates this provision is responsible for compensating the publication for all reasonable costs incurred, including, where appropriate, the refund of advertising fees.

### Letters to the Editor

The Current encourages all its readers to be involved and will publish letters. We don't accept anonymous letters and the editor reserves the right to reject or edit letters on the basis of length, libel, or propriety. All letters become property of The Current. Letters should be sent to [thecurrent@greenriver.edu](mailto:thecurrent@greenriver.edu)

## Editorial Cartoon: The Grade Disaster



By: Kierra Elfalan

**Assistant Editors:** Julia McDonough (Sports), Stirling Radliff (OpEd)

**Senior Writer:** Alexander Bevier

**Staff Writers:** Kierra Elfalan, Gentry Seipert, Zachary Murray, Haley Bridges, Megan Carter, Mallory Litzinger, Devin Svetjipo, Samantha Wang, Celeste Monroe.



## Democracy for sale, a year later

By: Alyssa Ryan  
OpEd Editor

November 2010. Campaign ads litter the sidewalks, front yards and other open areas. Speakers boom everything from a candidate's plan for the budget to their grade in a sophomore science class into your car. Oh the horror of election season.

The general public has always been bombarded with commercials, flyers and other annoying antics of campaigning, but this past November was especially unpleasant. What caused the change? The elections were the first elections held after the Supreme Court decision that allowed unlimited corporate spending on campaigns.

This Jan. 21 marked the anniversary of the Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission case, which was decided in a 5-4 vote by the U.S. Supreme Court and made corporations equivalent to persons under the law, thereby establishing their right to free speech. This meant corporate donations, which are regarded as a form of speech, could no longer be limited.

The ruling also allowed big businesses to donate anonymously; whereas political contributions were previously required to be publicized, donors can now remain in the shadows. This makes it difficult for the media and the general public to determine whether a campaign is being influenced by corporate investors and if a candidate can retain any form of independence if he gets elected.

While this ruling may seem distant and perhaps insignificant to the general public - it has no real effect on anyone's daily life, after all - it has an impact many may not be aware of. Now that political campaigns have unlimited access to

corporate money, more will be spent on creating commercials, fliers, and other means of advertising. Negative ads will permeate the airwaves even more than before, and although many voters attempt to remain objective, such a bombardment of often faulty and skewed information hardly ever fails to influence even independent minds.

The ruling allows corporations to essentially buy candidates, using them to carry out their personal agendas. Politicians that are completely dependent on corporate donations will have to put the interest of big business before that of the people if they want to retain their positions. Big business is greedy, power hungry and selfish - it is, after all, established only to make a profit - and when it gets involved in elections, democratic values tend to take a back seat.

Even though corporations now have more power to influence candidates, we as citizens can and should decide not to elect the candidates that are in the pockets of big business. We should disregard the bombardment of false information in campaign ads and get our information from reputable sources. We should be distrustful of any candidate who doesn't disclose their campaign contributions. We should base decisions not on what a candidate says but on what they do and have done.

This Supreme Court decision was a betrayal to the common people. The road to reversal will be long and hard, and it's likely there will be quite a few elections before anything changes. But remember that the people still make the ultimate decision; we have the ability to choose our leaders, a luxury so many do not have, and we must make the most of it.



Matthew Montoya / THE CURRENT

Opponents organized a rally at the Kent Regional Justice Center on Friday, Jan 21., the anniversary of the ruling.

## Civility begins in the mind

Another tragic shooting, this time in Arizona. It is altogether fitting in this new year of a new decade to resolve for an era of civility in a media, which has been an

### Letter

alleged accomplice in creating an environment of fear and hatred. As flawed human beings, we well know the likely fate of such resolutions. Good intentions, in and of themselves, are not easily transformed into actions. But they are a starting point.

Certainly, we must live in the world we have, not in one we wish to have. We cannot simply wish it otherwise. But from wishes springs contemplation, from contemplation

springs predispositions, intentions, and eventually actions. No doubt this is true with good as well as bad wishes.

The mind is fertile ground for the planting of seeds of many kinds. Some seeds will take root, if the soil is sufficiently cultivated, fertilized by new ideas, and watered regularly. We must also take care not to let the weeds predominate.

So the real question is not whether we can be more civil in our discourse, but whether we can become better in our contemplations. That may well depend upon who, or what, is watering the soil.

- Frank Primiani,  
Business Faculty

## Saved by the curve

By: Kierra Elfalan  
Staff Writer

It's finals day on campus - students are coming out of classrooms, their faces bearing either the look of success or the dreadful disappointment of failure.

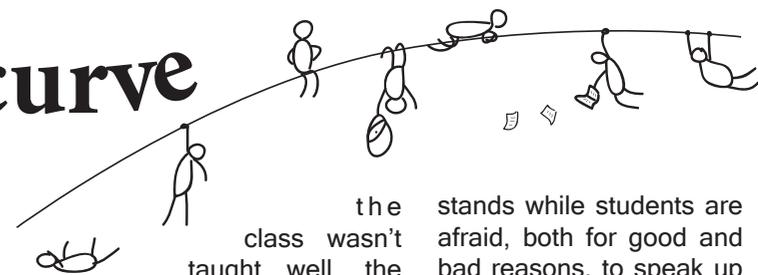
Those who walk the long plank of shame think back to the past few days. Did they really not study hard enough? They might have procrastinated a little, but they couldn't have known the test was going to be this hard. Half of the questions weren't even discussed in class, and now they're going to fail their class just because it was poorly taught?

Admittedly, some students do deserve to fail their classes or get a low grade. But far too often students are getting punished for something that is out of their control, (most

notably bad teachers and textbooks).

To prevent this from happening, instructors should adapt the method of curved grading that assigns a 100 percent score to the best result in any test and grades the rest of the students accordingly. This way, students aren't graded based on sometimes unreasonably demanding grading scales but on what can be reasonably expected from them.

If it is possible to get all the questions right, odds are at least one student will, which would make the scale a normal one - the highest student, whose score determines the 100 percent grade, scored 100 percent. If it's near impossible to get a good score because the questions are too hard or



the class wasn't taught well, the grading scale is pegged down to what the brightest student of the class could, with effort, accomplish.

The grade curve is perceived by some as an unfair way of grading because it rewards laziness. In some cases this is true, but no system is perfect. Some students who didn't put in effort might be awarded some points when the highest score is low, but the system on the whole will help more hardworking students than it does lazy ones.

The grade curve is beneficial to instructors as well. It regularly happens that a teacher is going further and further into a topic they wrongly assume everyone under-

stands while students are afraid, both for good and bad reasons, to speak up and ask a question.

When they adapt this method of curved grading, instructors will be able to recognize their lack of connection without having to fail half their class. If an instructor does teach effectively, a student will score 100 percent, and the scale would revert back to normal.

With this kind of system students can, next to knowing they prepared the best they could, assume they won't be held accountable for circumstances beyond their control.

Even if their final was unreasonably difficult or they somehow couldn't prepare as well as they normally could, there is always a chance they will be saved by the curve.

# Sports

Also inside: "I am an elected official. My boss is the people of this state, not the governor."

Randy Dorn, page 11



## New track program set to start running in spring quarter

By: Julia McDonough  
Assistant Sports Editor

Following the return of the cross country program last year, the college is bringing back its track team after an absence of almost two decades.

In most colleges, cross country and track virtually belong together, so forming a track team was "a natural evolution" after cross country was reintroduced, said Athletic Director Bob Kickner.

Tori Ammons is the head coach of the cross country team and will also be leading the track team. She had been thinking of forming a track team since she arrived at the college in 2009. "I

knew it was important for the cross country runners to have an opportunity to run track," she said.

It was challenging to recruit runners for the team. The recruitment process takes preparation time the team didn't have, so "this season we are going to start small," said Kickner. However, giving cross country runners "a reason to run in the spring time" would make recruiting for next year easier, he added.

With recent budget cuts, forming a new sports team can be difficult, but because the program will only begin on as an extension of the cross country team, there is no immediate need to buy equipment for sports

like shot put or discus. As with all other Green River teams, most of the funding for the track program will come from the school's 522 budget, which is paid for by students.

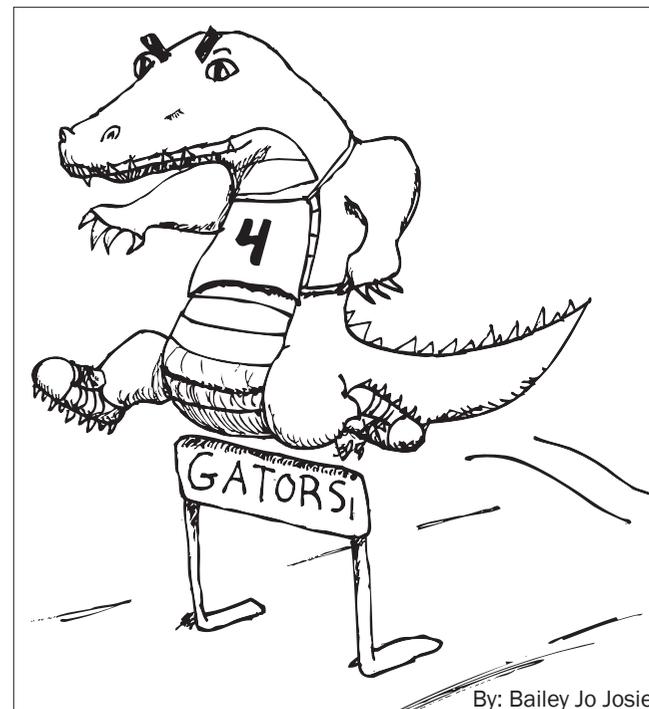
Ammons comes from a long running background as both an athlete (10 years) and a coach (13 years). She competed in track and field at Washington State University, where she placed in the Pac-10 Championships and was the MVP for her team. "[This is] my passion and I want to provide opportunities for athletes at this level," she said. It was in large part thanks to this passion that Ammons was named the region's cross

country coach of the year this season by the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges (NWAACC).

Participation for the track team is open to all students who are enrolled in at least 12 credits and passing both winter and spring quarters. Ammons will be assisted by her husband Ernie Ammons.

"I take coaching and this sport very seriously. We will have practice five days a week with six meets on Saturdays," Ammons said. Since Green River doesn't have a track field, the team will be practicing at local high schools in the Auburn and Kent area.

Practices will start shortly after an informa-



By: Bailey Jo Josie

tional meeting on Feb. 4, and the first meet is on March 12. The season will come to a close at the NWAACC Championships on May 23-24.



**EMBRY-RIDDLE**  
Aeronautical University  
WORLDWIDE

Join the leaders in  
**AVIATION, TRANSPORTATION,  
LOGISTICS and MORE!**

Undergraduate and graduate programs  
Learn in a **NEARBY CLASSROOM**  
or from **YOUR HOME!**

*Continuously seeking adjunct faculty*

**worldwide.erau.edu/lead**

**800.522.6787**

When a student was  
stabbed on campus...



...our followers were  
the first to find out.

*facebook.com/greenrivercurrent*

**Get  
Focused**  
on Student Life

After hitting the books, unwind  
by working out at the fitness  
center or joining a rec sports team.  
Dodgeball, anyone?

**W**  
BOTHELL

**Join us for a campus tour!**

Monday - Friday, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
UW-1 Welcome Center

Get Focused  
on Your Future

425.352.5000 | [www.uwb.edu](http://www.uwb.edu)



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON | BOTHELL

# Sports

Editor: Remco Zwetsloot  
thecurrent@greenriver.edu



## How to do it outdoors in the winter

By: Megan Carter  
Staff Writer

That the weather outside is frightful doesn't mean camping can't be delightful. Winter can actually be a great time for outdoor enthusiasts - imagine traceless snowfields, silent evergreen forests, air as fresh as ever and thousands of stars that far surpass anything on display at your local science center.

However, snow camping requires some basic know-

how.

"A lot of people think they know what they're doing when it comes to camping in the winter months," says John Hearing, assistant scoutmaster of Boy Scout troop 945 and a seasoned outdoor aficionado. "But they fail to realize that it's a lot different from camping in the summer."

Here, then, is a short overview of things to remember for those who want to dabble their feet into the adventure that is snow camping.

bar. Not only will it be tasty, but it will be just the boost your body needs to warm you up. It is also vital to drink water, even when you don't think you're thirsty. Dry winter air will dehydrate you quickly, but you often don't notice until it's too late.

### Get the tough stuff

Going into the wilderness prepared is crucial to a successful snow camping experience. First, as you will, after all, be hiking, you'll



need good boots. To find these, go somewhere like REI or Sports Authority and just try on boots until you find the right fit. They should support your feet and your ankles, but not be so tight that you can't feel your toes. A tent that can stand up to winter weather conditions is also important, but don't feel like you should go out and find the most high-tech and expensive winter tent out there - most three-season tents are suitable for mild Western Washington winter camping conditions. The third essential is a supportive pack. The pack should be big enough to hold your food, water, extra clothes and other gear. It should have a hip buckle and sternum strap along with an external or internal frame. If all of that sounds like complete gibberish to you, talk to a knowledgeable friend or an associate at an outfitter who knows a thing or two about packs. These are just the essentials - there are complete checklists of equipment you might want to bring available online.

### Know where to go



Once well equipped, you'll be ready to start planning where to go. You need to know the area, the weather conditions and the most efficient route to civilization. Some great snow camping locations in Western Washington are location around

Mt. Baker, Crystal Mountain, Snoqualmie pass, Hyak, and Alpentel.

Most summer campsites are available for snow camping in the winter, but the best way to find out whether a site is open is to contact its manager. To find the perfect camping spot for your trip, you have to do some research; ask experts, ask seasoned campers or look online.

Many local organizations such as The Mountaineers offer courses and trips you can go on for a relatively small fee. If you have never snow camped before, find someone or a group that you can go with the first few times. Don't attempt to wing it - it goes without saying that it's not entirely safe to camp out in the snow without experience.

With a fair amount of knowledge, someone with experience to help and preparation, you will be ready to camp in almost any frozen wonderland.

In the end, the hazards and the cold noses are worth enduring; the frigid beauty, the pure landscapes and that amazing feeling of adventure far more than make up for them.

## Calendar

### Women's basketball

Jan 29 Lower Columbia - Green River, 5 p.m.  
Feb 2 Green River - Grays Harbor, 6 p.m.  
Feb 5 Tacoma - Green River, 3 p.m.  
Feb 7 Green River - Centralia, 6 p.m.  
Feb 9 Green River - Highline, 6 p.m.

### Men's basketball

Jan 29 Lower Columbia - Green River, 7 p.m.  
Feb 2 Green River - Grays Harbor, 8 p.m.  
Feb 5 Tacoma - Green River, 5 p.m.  
Feb 7 Green River - Centralia, 8 p.m.  
Feb 9 Green River - Highline, 8 p.m.

## Scoreboard

### Women's basketball

Nov 27 Green River 60 - 62 Portland (OT)  
Dec 3, BBC Bulldog Classic  
4, 5 Bellevue 72 - 43 Green River  
Mount Hood 49 - 45 Green River  
Dec 13 Green River 83 - 39 Northwest Indian  
Dec 18 Green River 52 - 68 Seattle  
Dec 29 Portland 66 - 70 Green River  
Jan 3 Grays Harbor 69 - 72 Green River  
Jan 5 Green River 66 - 71 Tacoma  
Jan 8 Centralia 60 - 57 Green River  
Jan 12 Highline 56 - 46 Green River  
Jan 19 Green River 49 - 52 Clark  
Jan 26 Green River 44 - 72 Pierce

### Men's basketball

Nov 30 North Seattle 68 - 70 Green River  
Dec 3, Spokane/NIC Tournament  
4, 5 Clackamas 84 - 94 Green River  
Spokane 77 - 67 Green River  
Highline 79 - 83 Green River (OT) 3rd place  
Dec 7 Green River 107 - 84 Northwest Indian  
Dec 17, Blue Mountain Crossover  
18, 19 Walla Walla 91 - 88 Green River  
Bellevue 93 - 78 Green River  
Dec 30 Green River 89 - 75 Olympic  
Jan 3 Grays Harbor 66 - 76 Green River  
Jan 5 Green River 69 - 81 Tacoma  
Jan 8 Centralia 67 - 71 Green River  
Jan 12 Highline 76 - 60 Green River  
Jan 15 Green River 75 - 72 South Puget Sound (OT)  
Jan 19 Green River 61 - 64 Clark (OT)  
Jan 26 Green River 56 - 68 Pierce

You can find full league results, team figures, standings and more at [www.nwaacc.org/basketball](http://www.nwaacc.org/basketball)

### Dress for the occasion

You can't go off into the snowy wilderness without some basic essentials. Depending on the conditions, you almost always want to have a minimum of three layers. The first layer should be close fitting, but comfortable. Next you want an insulating layer such as a fleece coat, and finally an outer shell made from some sort of waterproof material.



The key is loose fitting layers to trap the warm air. Absolutely don't wear cotton - when cotton gets wet, especially in freezing or near freezing conditions, it is nearly impossible to dry and it will only keep you cold. If the insulation surrounding your body is wet and is starting to freeze, so will your body. In most cases you'll just be really, really cold, but if you wear wet cotton clothes for a while you could end up with hypothermia or frostbite.

In addition to layering up, make sure your extremities are well insulated. Boots should be waterproof, gloves should be appropriate for snow, bring socks (lots and lots of dry wool socks), and take a warm hat. Like the saying goes, "if your feet are cold, put on a hat." Over half of your body heat can be lost through your head, so keep a hat on you or on your head at all times.

### Stock up on munchies



To keep your body fueled for hiking, it is imperative to keep yourself hydrated and comfortably full of food. It is crucial to maintain energy and the best way to do so is to take in plenty of carbohydrates. Snack on foods like granola bars, nuts, bread, and for meals go for easy fixes like pasta and cheese or those delicious freeze-dried meals. If you wake up shivering in the middle of the night, reach for a quick snack like a high calorie candy

Check out our website for daily updates, videos and photos of events around campus, the newest Teacher Spotlights and much, much more.

[www.thecurrentonline.net](http://www.thecurrentonline.net)

# DISCOVER EDUCATION FOR THE *careers of tomorrow*

*National Open House* – February 12, 2011



## **2 Seattle Area Locations**

Bellevue | Federal Way

Saturday, February 12th

To register, call 888-460-9559 or visit [DeVry.edu/seattle](http://DeVry.edu/seattle)  
Follow @DeVryUniv on [twitter](#) and join  
the conversation at #DeVryNOH

**DeVry**   
**University**

\*Available for those who qualify. Program availability varies by location.  
©2011 DeVry Educational Development Corp. All rights reserved.