



## *News Release*

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### **INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS STUDENTS**

Gresham, Ore. — Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) has partnered with Portland, Ore.-based Worksystems, Inc. to award “Finish Up” scholarships to MHCC students. Worksystems is a nonprofit organization that coordinates regional workforces in the city of Portland and Multnomah and Washington counties.

The scholarship awards will allow Anselmo G. Aispuro and Kimberly A. Larson to complete their Integrated Metals program at MHCC – tuition free. These two individuals were amongst a total of 28 final scholarship recipients who were at risk of being unable to complete their studies due to their financial situations.

Before receiving the scholarship money, MHCC student Anselmo G. Aispuro was dependent on the College’s machine tools to complete his school projects. “I was finishing paying for past classes and had no funds to purchase the pricey tools,” he said. The money will allow Aispuro, the first in his family to attend college, to complete his associate degree in machine tool technology this summer. “This scholarship has helped me excel dramatically and see things more clearly. It has been a beacon in the middle of a storm,” he said.

Like Aispuro, Kimberly A. Larson received the “Finish Up” scholarship money at a pivotal time. A mother of two, she could not afford to work and go to school. “I didn’t expect it, and it gave me a big confidence boost when I needed it,” she said. Graduating Phi Theta Kappa from MHCC, Larson will use the extra funds to help pay for necessary graduation items, including the regalia, membership and robe associated with the honor. “When I started school, it was to get out of a bad situation. MHCC has changed my goals in life,” she said.

(more)

To be eligible for the “Finish Up” scholarship, students were required to (1) complete a degree or certificate program in MHCC’s Integrated Metals program this spring, (2) complete a scholarship application and (3) complete the intake process, which consisted of entering demographic data, proof of legal work eligibility and, for males, selective service registration. The scholarship award amount ranges from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

The \$82,632 “Finish Up” scholarships were funded from a surplus from a U.S. Department of Labor’s Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant.

"The success of the WIRED program is a great example of a workforce investment board partnering with a community college to meet industry's demand for highly skilled workers," said Andrew McGough, executive director of Worksystems.

The WIRED program provides grant support for innovative approaches to regional economic development. In 2007, Worksystems began administering the \$5-million WIRED grant on behalf of a 10-county region of northwest Oregon and southwest Washington. Several planning sessions with workforce, education and economic development partners identified a regional priority for encouraging low-income students to complete advanced manufacturing certificate or degree programs through a scholarship program. MHCC was one of the partners and was one of five community colleges that played a role in the program’s curriculum development.

Worksystems and MHCC have a long history of collaboration to meet the needs of emerging and advancing workforces. “The College’s 20-plus year history of collaborating with Worksystems has been one of the most rewarding partnerships MHCC has had,” said Kim Freeman, MHCC’s dean of economic and workforce development. Outcomes of this partnership have included the College’s Vocational ESL (VESL) Career Pathways programs in Allied Health and Integrated Metals, which have been models for other colleges across the country, and Project YESS (Youth Employability Support Services), MHCC’s Summer Youth Employment program that is funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) through Worksystems.

For more information on the “Finish Up” scholarship, contact Kim Freeman at 503-491-6161 or [Kim.freeman@mhcc.edu](mailto:Kim.freeman@mhcc.edu).

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Serving more than 31,000 students each year, Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) provides students the education needed for the career of their choice. MHCC offers more than 70 associate degrees, certificate programs and transfer options in a wide variety of disciplines. Students can also earn a bachelor's degree through partnerships between area universities and MHCC. Classes are offered at several locations – the [Bruning Center for Allied Health Education in Gresham](#), the [Gresham Campus](#) and the [Maywood Park Campus](#).

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