

COCC receives \$1 million donation

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Frank And Julie Jungers Donate \$1 Million To COCC Culinary Program

Frank and Julie Jungers, part-time residents of Central Oregon for the past 20 years, have committed \$1 million toward the Central Oregon Community College (COCC) Foundation Culinary Campaign. The donation kicks off the new campaign with a goal to raise \$3.5 million over the next three years to help COCC build a facility to house an expanded culinary program.

COCC announced the \$1 million donation at Saturday evening's Meal of the Year fund-raising event. The announcement was made at the Foundation's Meal of the Year, the annual fund-raising event, on March 3. Jim Weaver, executive director of the COCC Foundation said that the Meal of the Year generated more than \$200,000 prior to the \$1 million announcement.

The Jungers said they support COCC because of their personal commitment to higher education, the role COCC plays in the Central Oregon region and their belief in the college's culinary effort.

“COCC offers Central and Eastern Oregon educational and training opportunities that are generally unavailable outside the Willamette Valley,” Frank Jungers said. “It advances scholarship and practical training opportunities for all Central Oregonians.”

COCC has operated a culinary program since 1994 and has a current enrollment of 25 students. Most work toward a one-year culinary certificate, although the college now also offers a two-year culinary management degree. The goal is to enhance the curriculum and create a “best-in-the-West” culinary program, offering a two-year degree program for up to 100 students.

The college defines “best-in-the-West” with the following criteria:

the top regional education choice for culinary students; the standard by which those seeking culinary education use to make a school choice; the place for continuing education for culinary professionals; the place for epicureans and gourmands to seek educational opportunities, especially as it pertains to Northwest cuisine.

The Jungers’ relationship with COCC began a decade ago when Julie Jungers took a basic photography course from COCC instructor George Jolokai. She says he inspired her to pursue and improve her photography, which has now become her primary hobby.

“George is a talented photographer and dedicated instructor,” she said. “He strives to make his students improve their work through constructive criticism, yet he has a nice balance of being kind to the ego.”

The Jungers travel about a third of the year, connecting with cultures in more than 100 countries, on all continents. Julie captures the images of the travels and regularly donates photographs for local charity auctions.

Frank Jungers began working for Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) after earning a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Washington in 1947. He lived in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon for nearly 30 years, until he retired as ARAMCO chief executive officer and chairman in 1978. He has been an independent investor and consultant since that time and serves on numerous boards of directors.

COCC has chosen culinary as a program in need of expansion in order to meet the demands of the local area. The Oregon Employment Department lists “Eating and Drinking Places” as the third largest growth industry in Oregon, adding 15,000 culinary jobs statewide. Bend’s growth, OED says, is up 41 percent from 2001 to 2005. In Deschutes County, the number of restaurants doubled in the last 20 years and is predicted to double again in the next few years.

“This tremendous growth in the industry gives us not only the opportunity but also the obligation to respond,” said Jim Middleton, president of COCC. “With the outstanding restaurants and the expansion in destination resorts, we need to help meet their challenges by increasing the length of our program, upgrading the skills of our graduates and thus fulfilling the needs of the local industry,” Middleton said.

“The new culinary facility “ which will include a restaurant “ will be more visible and accessible than our current area and also allow us to use our existing campus buildings more efficiently for our other instruction programs,” he said.

The proposed facility is 14,000 square feet and includes a restaurant that will open to the public. The tentative location is on Mount Washington Drive, just north of the Shevlin Park Road roundabout.

The commitment from the Jungers includes \$500,000 up front, with the additional \$500,000 coming in the form of a match to contributions of \$25,000 or more generated through the Culinary Campaign.

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