

Access PCC

The future is accessible, and so is PCC.
Volume 2 Issue 07 - Spring 2025

Focusing on the Future: AI and Accessibility

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From the Dean

As we wrap up this academic year and head into summer, it is a great time to reflect on all the learning opportunities and connections that have been important to us throughout the year.

This summer we will be celebrating the 35th anniversary of the ADA, and while an anniversary like this can encourage us to rejoice in how far we have come, it can also serve as a prompt to reflect on how far we have to go. Disability pride shouldn't be celebrated only in July, and accessibility should be part and parcel of the way we work with and for each other all year round.

- Kaela Parks



AEDR is looking for enthusiastic folks to serve our students as In Class Aides.

In Class Aides assist students with disabilities with various academic tasks while in class. Tasks can include, note taking, describing visual information to blind/low vision students, helping with physical tasks in lab classes, assisting students with recording class lectures and more.

Apply Here:
[PCC Jobs In-Class Aide](#)

From the Editor

The future is yours, it is ours, and this issue explores how access and inclusive design are at the forefront. This year Global Accessibility Awareness Day discussed how AI is at our disposal to advance accessibility and to create a sustainable industry of employment for persons with disabilities. Josh Espanto writes of PCC's future eGaming Club, and as we roll into the Summer, we explore travelling with a disability, and how to make even exploring close to home a little more accessible and enjoyable. I hope you find exploring this issue the same.

- PJ Golden

LEVELING UP: A Scholarship, A Dream, and A Gaming Club in the Works

Hi everyone,

It's Josh Espanto here and I want to share some exciting news. I am a recipient of the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation Scholarship, which is helping me pay for college while I study in the Gerontology Program at Portland Community College. This means a lot to me, and I'm thankful for the support. Because of this scholarship, I'm also working on starting something new—a gaming club at PCC! It's still in the planning stage, but my goal is to create a fun and welcoming space where people with and without disabilities can come together, play video games, and learn about accessible gaming tools.

It's just the beginning, but I'm excited about what's ahead. If you're interested in being part of the club or helping out, let me know—I'd love to hear from you!

Thanks for reading,
[Josh Espanto](#)



Stop by the *Accessibility Hub* at the *Southeast Campus* at *Mt Tabor 136*

Hours:

In Person

Monday - Thursday 10 AM - 4 PM

Can't make it in person?

[The AEDR Virtual Lobby](#)
is available to [join on Zoom](#)
Monday -Thursday from 10 AM - 2 PM

See you there soon!

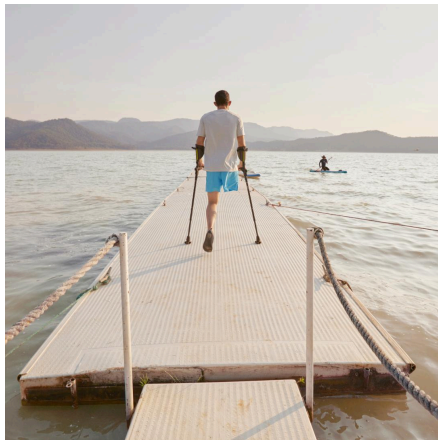
View the full calendar:
[Disability Cultural Alliance Events](#)



Have questions? Reach out to
dca-leads-group@pcc.edu

Access the World: Traveling with a Disability

PJ Golden



Summer is upon us and traveling with a disability can sometimes seem overwhelming and inaccessible. However, with thoughtful planning and preparation to ensure a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable experience, venturing out on vacation can be an empowering and rewarding experience as well. *Pre-trip, you might want to consider the following...*

Organize Your Medical Information and Supplies

Gather your medical records, prescriptions, and a list of emergency contacts. Keep these documents in your carry-on bag or a travel wallet for quick access. It's also advisable to have extra medication and necessary medical equipment, such as spare batteries for devices, to cover unforeseen delays.

Research Accessibility at Your Destination

Investigate accommodations, transportation, and attractions for their accessibility features. Contact hotels directly to confirm they offer accessible rooms and facilities. For transportation, check if public transit systems have accessible routes and stations. Apps like [AccessNow](#), and [WheelMate](#) can provide information on accessible routes, accommodations, and restrooms.

Notify Airlines and Transportation Providers

Inform your airline or transportation provider in advance about any specific assistance you may require. Airlines often provide special services such as wheelchair assistance, priority boarding, and assistance with baggage. [DisabilityInfo.org](#) recommends contacting the airline directly to make arrangements. Check out their [great list of airlines and contact information](#).

Choose Accessible Accommodations

When booking accommodations, search for hotels or vacation rentals that offer accessible rooms or facilities. Inquire about the availability of accessible parking, ramps, elevators, and bathroom facilities. Reading reviews from other travelers with disabilities can provide valuable insights into the accessibility and suitability of the accommodation. [Wheel the World](#) is a wonderful resource with a dynamic blog!

Assess Hotel Accessibility Features

When booking a hotel, start by researching hotels that cater specifically to travelers with disabilities. Look for properties that clearly detail their accessibility features on their

websites or booking platforms. Key factors to consider include the availability of ramps or elevators, wheelchair-accessible rooms, bathrooms equipped with roll-in showers or grab bars, and accessible entrances. If these details aren't clearly listed, don't hesitate to call the hotel directly to ask about specific features that matter to you. Asking for photos of the rooms or bathrooms can also help avoid unpleasant surprises.

Explore Accessible Transportation Options

Many car rental companies, such as [Hertz](#) and [Avis](#), offer vehicles equipped with hand controls, ramps, and extra space for wheelchairs. Be sure to confirm the availability of these vehicles ahead of time, as they may need to be reserved in advance. Alternatively, ride-sharing services like [Lyft](#) offer accessible vehicles in certain cities, including Portland. These services are ideal for shorter trips and often provide the flexibility needed when public transportation doesn't meet your requirement.

Make the Most of Focused Resources:

Many organizations, such as, [The National MS Society](#), and the [American Spinal Cord Injury Association](#), offer more focused tips and tricks to consider while traveling.

Practice Self-Care and Pace Yourself:

Traveling can be tiring, so it's essential to take care of yourself and pace your activities accordingly. Plan breaks and rest periods throughout the day to avoid fatigue. Listen to your body and adjust your itinerary as needed to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable trip.

In addition to the resources suggested above, tap into the resources that PCC and the greater community offers for support.

This issue features [a short article](#) highlighting the supportive self-care resources that the college offers.

Tabletop Wednesdays



Join us in Room 136 inside Mount Tabor Hall on Southeast Campus on Wednesdays from 10:30-3:30pm. Cocoa, tea, apple cider mix, and snacks are available. Check out games at the library or bring your own!

Share Your Talent & Creativity!

Whether it's painting, writing, or digital music making, we want to feature your work!

All Creative Art Forms are Welcome!

Please email precious.golden@pcc.edu To be featured!

Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD)

PJ Golden

This year, [Global Accessibility Awareness Day \(GAAD\)](#) was on May 16th, and [webinars from around the globe](#) were held, and recorded. This year, I attended one from [Disability:IN](#) that focused heavily on AI and technology, and the future of accessibility. Presenters discussed topics from web access updates to the boundless opportunities that AI technology can have for the global disability community.

[\(GAAD\)](#) is an annual event observed on the third Thursday of May, dedicated to promoting digital access and inclusion for the over one billion people worldwide living with disabilities. Established in 2012, GAAD aims to raise awareness about the importance of accessible digital experiences and to encourage discussions on how to make technology more inclusive for all users.

The initiative was co-founded by Joe Devon, a Los Angeles-based web developer, and Jennison Asuncion, an accessibility professional from Toronto. Their collaboration began after Asuncion discovered Devon's blog post advocating for greater attention to digital accessibility. This led to the creation of GAAD, which has since grown into a global movement with

events and activities across various countries.



The significance of GAAD extends beyond awareness; it drives tangible change in the tech industry. Over the years, major tech companies have introduced accessible products and features, such as Microsoft's adaptive controller and Apple's accessibility initiatives, often timed with GAAD to highlight their commitment to inclusive design. Xbox's release of its adaptive controller on Global Accessibility Awareness Day was intended to emphasize the importance of its new, accessible design.

Despite this technological advancement, there is much work to be done. Like compliance in the built environment, compliance in the digital environment is meeting the bare minimum rather than meeting the moment and maximizing the opportunity within it.

And like in the built environment, we must continue to demand that accessibility be a core requirement in the digital environment as well.

[Check out this year's recorded webinar here for more](#) and the [National Center for College Students with Disabilities "7 Strategies for Social Change"](#) for more.

Accessible and Affordable Support and Self-Care

- PJ Golden

You are not alone! For college students with disabilities, self-care is not a luxury but a necessity. Prioritizing mental, physical, and emotional well-being can help students navigate the challenges of college life more effectively, leading to greater academic success and personal fulfillment. As a student at PCC you have access to a diverse array of resources and support to meet your individualized needs. [The PCC Counseling Center](#) is available for individual, group and drop-in sessions.

The college offers **free, short-term counseling** to currently enrolled students for students facing personal concerns. For an appointment call: 971-722-8153, or [fill out an appointment request form](#).

If groups are more your groove, the center also regularly holds [workshops and groups](#) that support grief and loss and that can focus on support for stress and anxiety. They also have a [plethora of self-guided and online counseling resources](#) available.

In this time of political change and uncertainty, drop in counseling sessions are now available to students who would like to connect with a counselor about political stress. Counselors are available to provide

emotional support and build coping skills as students navigate the political climate and current difficulties. Sessions are brief and confidential. [Registered students may Zoom in at any time during the open drop-ins.](#)

These sessions are currently held on:

- Mondays, 11am – noon
- Tuesdays, 3 – 4pm
- Thursdays, 12:30 – 1:30pm

There are [crisis resources](#), [addiction resources](#), and in addition to serving the student community, PCC Counseling Center also has support and [resources available for faculty and staff](#).

Meet the [PCC Counselors](#), schedule an appointment, or drop in and say “Hi!” today!

NAMI Club Coming!

Have you heard about our upcoming NAMI club on campus?

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) on campus clubs are student-led, student-run mental health organizations on high school and college campuses. They raise mental health awareness with fairs, walks and candlelit vigils. Educate the campus with presentations, guest speakers and student panels. Advocate for improved mental health services and policies on campus.

[Sign up and connect with us!](#)

***Take Good Care!
See you next issue!***