

Our History

Peninsula College celebrated its 60th Anniversary during the 2021-2022 academic year. The college was founded in 1961 because a group of local citizens wanted to be able to continue their educations without having to travel great distances to college centers in Bremerton or across Puget Sound. The first classes were held in a small building on the Port Angeles High School campus, but the number of students who enrolled in the college quickly became more than the available facilities could accommodate, and plans were soon underway to build a permanent campus elsewhere in the city.

Construction of the new campus began in 1964, and a year later the first classes were held on the present PC site with additional classes being offered all across our district. Today, the main campus spreads out over 75 acres of land in the foothills of the Olympic Mountains, overlooking the city of Port Angeles and its busy, international harbor.

Our facilities include a Student Services Center; Maier Performance Hall; Allied Health and Early Childhood Education Building; Arts and Humanities Building; a new Science and Technology Building and ṽaṽkṽustəṽáwṽxṽ House of Learning Peninsula College Longhouse; Library/Media Center; computer labs; a lecture hall; and a student union building, known as the Pirate Union Building, or PUB. The PUB houses a theater, art gallery, Pirate Cove Cafe, Bookaneer bookstore, lounge area, Internet café, performance areas, Esports alcove, and student government offices.

Maier Hall is the largest building on campus, with 62,950 square feet. The intimate 130-seat performance hall is the centerpiece of the facility. Outfitted with the latest in sound and lighting equipment, it has been physically shaped to provide superb acoustics and ideal conditions for music, lectures, or poetry readings. Completely equipped art and ceramic studios and spacious music practice and rehearsal rooms allow students to fully explore all of the arts and discover their talents. Rounding out the facility are classrooms, a Transitional Studies Center, faculty offices, and a learning lab area that includes computer, math, English, and foreign language labs.

The 56,000 square-foot Keegan Hall Science and Technology Building contains a lecture hall, 13 labs, five classrooms, faculty offices, and two conference rooms in two separate wings—a Science Wing and a Technology Wing.

Situated between Maier Hall and Keegan Hall is a signature art and water sculpture that invites students and visitors alike to sit in a relaxing atmosphere that echoes the natural environment of the Olympic Peninsula. Seven of the most prominent mountain peaks in the Olympic Mountain range have been recreated in aluminum and mounted on basalt columns that are situated in water pools. The effect is an oasis of calm and reflection in the middle of a busy campus.

Standing in a grove of cedar trees on the south end of campus, ṽaṽkṽustəṽáwṽxṽ House of Learning, Peninsula College Longhouse was the first longhouse in the nation built on a community college campus. The vision of a Longhouse as a center for cultural expression and educational achievement for all students and community members has been woven together by Peninsula College and the six local tribes: Hoh River Chalát', Quileute, Makah, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Jamestown S'Klallam, and Lower Elwha Klallam.

In 2007, leaders from the six local tribes and the College opened ṽaṽkṽustəṽáwṽxṽ House of Learning, Peninsula College Longhouse with a cedar bark ribbon-cutting ceremony. This ceremony was the culmination of more than two years of planning and construction and honored important tribal and community relationships.

In fall 2010, tribal leaders, elders, and youth from all six tribal nations and community members joined Peninsula College to witness and celebrate the historic raising of a 20-foot Welcome Pole at the entrance to the Longhouse. The Welcome Pole was carved on campus by Jamestown S'Klallam master carver, Jeff Monson, from a pole graciously donated by the Lower Elwha Tribe. The college celebrated the tenth anniversary of the ṽaṽkṽustəṽáwṽxṽ House of Learning, Peninsula College Longhouse in 2017 and 2018 with an artist retrospective and a celebration honoring the tribes and those instrumental in its construction.

The 26,680 square-foot library is a centrally located campus resource with a smart classroom, individual and group study areas, conference rooms, print and electronic collections, and research workstations. Students are able to engage in reading, studying, and collaborative learning.

In 2015 Peninsula College celebrated the grand reopening of our Forks location in a new, state-of-the-art-facility.

In 2016, the college opened a newly renovated building on the Fort Worden campus in Port Townsend. In 2017, the new Allied Health and Early Childhood Development Building opened on the Port Angeles campus.

The Allied Health and Early Childhood Education Building is the College's newest building and houses the instructional programs of Nursing, Medical Assisting, Medical Office Assisting, Phlebotomy, Nursing Assistant, and Early Childhood Education. The building features state-of-the-art smart classrooms and clinical lab spaces designed to provide a learning environment that mirrors the earning environment. The building's Community Demand Lab is a flexible space that can accommodate rotational instructional programs to meet immediate and future community demand.

The Childcare Center is also housed in the building as part of the Early Childhood Education program and includes four classrooms, a full kitchen and an outdoor playground. The Center is designed to serve up to 28 infants and toddlers and 40 preschoolers.