

## **Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) Learning Community**

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**Oversight Person:** Political Science SAC Chair  
currently: Michael Sonnleitner.

**Jurisdiction:** District-wide, though with members also organized by campus.

**Meeting Times:** Irregular in recent years. Beginning in 2007: once per term.

**People Attending:** Open to all members of the PCC community, with primary communications with interested faculty.

**Purpose(s):** To maintain, update, and promote the Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) Program at PCC focusing primarily upon the PACS Program Awards while building support for the PACS Program within PCC Community and beyond through sponsorship of activities and events designed to achieve PACS Program objectives.

**Key Issues/Objectives:** To provide a multi-disciplinary means of exploring the structural causes and manifestations of violence in self, in society, and in the global community, and to consider alternatives to violent resolution of conflict. Those enrolled are encouraged to study, design, and participate in social and political structures that nurture peace and security, human rights and justice, racial and gender equality, environmental stability, economic equity, and responsible communications.

**Group History:** The PACS Learning Community originated in informal discussions to create a peace studies program at PCC beginning in 1986. A core group of about twelve faculty organized a “**PACS Task Force**” in 1988 which would meet 26 times over the next two years which successfully proposed the PACS Program that was approved by the Academic Advisory Council (AAC: the predecessor of the EAC), with the active support of PCC President Daniel Moriarty, on February 7, 1990. The PACS Task Force then requested formal Subject Area Curriculum Committee (SACC) status for the PACS Program, but found some mid-level administrative hostility to creating an interdisciplinary PACS SACC. This hostility turned to disinterest in acting upon the request for a PACS SACC following elections in November of 1990 which included property tax limitations contributing to a crisis atmosphere at PCC. Michael Sonnleitner was recognized as Chair of the PACS Program, which was to be administratively housed within the Political Science subject area.

Ad-hoc meetings of those previously associated with the PACS Task Force resulted in expanded offerings of the PS 211 “Peace and Conflict” introductory course, attendance and presentations at national Peace Studies Association and other conferences, and the hosting of the Oregon Peace Studies Consortium conference in the Fall of 1995 at Sylvania campus. Coming out of that 1995 conference (which brought together 50 people from 6 colleges and Universities in Oregon) came the decision create a “**PACS Learning Community**” which would meet to assist the Chair of the PACS Program with regards to curriculum issues as well as to undertake actions that might be consistent with PACS Program objectives.

While meetings of the PACS Learning Community have been irregular over the years, depending heavily upon the amount of energy its members have had to devote, several significant accomplishments stand out. These accomplishments include the creating of

the NEWSPEAK weekly free-speech forum series at Sylvania (a regular part of campus life for five years: 1999-2005), as well as weekly free-speech forums at Rock Creek (known as "Open-Mind-Open-Mic" (OMOM) beginning in 2003) and at Cascade (known as "Speak Out" beginning in 2005). In consultation with the PACS Learning Community, the "Community Service and Action" Seminar was created in 2002 as a team-taught 280B Cooperative Education experience which continues to fulfill requirements of PACS Program Award (levels II or III) students as well as those completing the PCC Gerontology Program. In order to expand section offerings of the PACS Program introductory course, "Peace and Conflict" began to be cross-listed as both PS 211 and SOC 211 in 2002 with enrollment Results that continue to be very successful. The PACS Learning Community has also facilitated PCC student field-trips to two national Peace Studies Association conferences (to Olympia Washington in 2000 and 2003) as well as the hosting of the Peace and Conflict Studies Consortium (a resurrection of the previous Oregon Peace Studies Consortium) "Building Cultures of Peace" Conference in May of 2006 (bringing to the Cascade campus 60 people from 10 colleges and universities in Oregon, Washington, and California).

One of the consequences of the 2006 Conference at Cascade was the realization that many of those previous active in the PACS Learning Community have either become retired or deceased. The need to rebuild PCC community support for the PACS Program has lead to having a table recruiting new PACS Learning Community members at the PCC Faculty In-Service in September of 2006, as well as to the calling of PACS Learning Community meetings on each campus of PCC during Winter Term of 2007. Perhaps it is again time to consider requesting **PACS SAC status?** In any case, it is high-time to to once again organize our collective energy we look forward to the 2008 Peace and Justice Studies Association national conference (scheduled for September 11-14, 2008), which will bring to Portland State University 300-600 academics, activists, and students from programs all over the U.S..