

# The Evolving Shelton Campus

With small class sizes, growing trade programs and a thriving community, big things are happening at OC Shelton.

Like Cheers, the OC Shelton campus, situated 37 miles southwest of OC Bremerton, is a place where everybody knows your name — and is willing to go the extra mile to help you succeed.

Students get more one-on-one time with faculty and staff thanks to small class sizes, says Allison Smith, administrator of the Shelton campus. As recent graduate Laurie Krebs puts it, “After your first couple of quarters here, you really get to know the staff, the professors and the students and you become like a little family.”

With an intimate academic environment and a host of exciting programs, OC Shelton offers something for just about everyone.

## Welding for the future

Shelton saw a surge in unemployment after both the Simpson lumber mill and Olympic Panel Products shut down in 2015 and 2016, respectively, according to OC welding instructor Ron Keeling. The closures displaced hundreds of workers in need of worker retraining ... and OC Shelton’s welding program was there to help.

“Job opportunities are endless right now in the welding industry,” Keeling says. A retiring workforce has left employers hungry for workers, and Keeling says his students have gone on to secure jobs with Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, General Dynamics Electric Boat in Bremerton, and Sierra Pacific — which, after acquiring Simpson Lumber, is in need of skilled welders at its newly constructed mill.

In 2017, OC opened a state-of-the-art welding facility on the OC Shelton campus: the 2,600-square-foot John Bremer Welding Center. The new facility increased the capacity for each class session from 16 students to 22. Previously, the welding program had operated on an off-campus facility.

“The students didn’t really feel like they were part of the college,” Keeling says. “But by moving them here to the campus, they got involved in the student body and started a weld club. It’s been a good, positive step for them.”

The students in the welding club recently created a metal sculpture depicting the college’s mascot, the Ranger, complete with a ranger’s campaign hat, pickaxe and shovel.

“It was a great opportunity for the upperclassmen to teach the underclassmen and get a little creative at the same time,” says welding student Cam Pennell, who helped create the sculpture. The college is working on permanently displaying the statue on campus with a commemorative plaque.

Enrolling in the welding program sparked Pennell’s interest in higher education. After graduating from OC this year, he plans to attend the Evergreen State College to study science, and hopes to combine his interests in building and ecology to help tackle environmental problems facing the Hood Canal area.

## A family affair

Laurie Krebs started the Student Life Club at OC Shelton last year.

“I wanted to get the students involved in activities other than studying, and help them meet one another,” she says.



Laurie Krebs, SGOC Shelton Vice President and founder of the Student Life Club at OC Shelton.

Krebs has also gotten involved in student government, serving as vice president for the student government of the Shelton campus. She started at OC Shelton in the fall of 2017 after her kids entered high school.

She graduates from OC this summer — as does her son, Cody. Both will graduate with associate degrees and transfer to universities. Laurie has been accepted to both Washington State University and Saint Martin’s University.

Not only will Laurie be graduating with her son; her daughter, Kai Ann Krebs, who graduated from Shelton High School in June, will start at OC Shelton this fall.

“Seeing my children continuing their education at the same school where I’m continuing mine has been an amazing experience,” Laurie says.

Cody Krebs says going to school with his mom helped keep him on track when it came to his studies.

“It was actually quite awesome,” he says. “She was able to help me get through college and make sure I woke up and got to school.”

Like his mother, Cody has found the Shelton campus a welcoming environment in which to complete the first step of his college education. "It's a pretty amazing campus," he says.

**Introducing carpentry at OC Shelton**

OC Shelton is expanding its course offerings by developing a carpentry certificate program expected to debut in the spring of 2020.

Campus administrator Allison Smith says she hopes to partner with building associations and trade unions to get OC's carpentry students plugged into apprenticeships. She hopes the college could eventually expand into other trades, like plumbing or pipe fitting.

There's huge demand for tradespeople, Smith says, which means there are lots of opportunities for people with the proper training to secure high-paying jobs.

"From everything we hear, we've done such a good job over the years of preaching the need for higher education that we have a lot of highly educated young people and very few people who are doing the trades — so the need is tremendous," she says.

**Growing for the future.**

OC Shelton is situated in a growing area of the city with a number of community resources slated to come online in the near future.

One of the most exciting projects is the upcoming YMCA, which will be located at the intersection of Shelton Springs Road and Wallace-Kneeland Boulevard, a little more than a quarter mile from OC's Shelton campus. Supporters have raised \$13 million toward a goal of \$16 million for the project after just one year of fund raising.

Another addition to the community is a forthcoming tiny home village designed to house homeless veterans. The village is being created by Quixote Communities, which has already built a successful tiny home village in Olympia.

Mason General Hospital, less than a half mile from the college, is constructing a new facility, dubbed the Mason Clinic, to house numerous outpatient practices under one roof. Construction is expected to be completed later this year.

**On the Cover:** OC Shelton Student Cody Krebs with his mom, SGOC Shelton Vice President, Laurie Krebs.

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Top Row: OC Shelton students in Computer Lab, Janaya Smart and Cody Krebs at the Student Appreciation Day welcome booth, OC Shelton. Bottom Row: Games on the lawn, free burritos from a food truck, Cam Pennell stands with the OC Shelton Welding Club's sculpture of OC mascot The Ranger.

ON THE COVER