

425

FIRST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Business

JESSICA RAYMOND
MARKETING MANAGER
AT BITTITAN

HER BOSS

HER KIDS

BALANCING ACT

Can company policies make life more manageable for working parents?

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MAKING CASCADIA A LOCAL TALENT PIPELINE

Eric Murray has called the Eastside home for only five years, but he's certainly immersed himself in the area during that time. Today, Murray — who moved to the Eastside shortly after he was named president of Cascadia College — is a planning commissioner for the city of Redmond, serves on the boards for the Bothell Chamber of Commerce and One Redmond, and takes regular walks through Redmond and other Eastside cities so he can stay current with new developments. We asked Murray to elaborate a bit on what he feels makes his college unique and vital to the Eastside. — STAFF REPORT

1 What is your Cascadia elevator pitch?

Residents in our service area — Bothell, Kirkland, Redmond, Woodinville, and out to Duvall — have discovered that Cascadia provides the best pathway to a bachelor's degree. A majority of our students come to Cascadia to take advantage of the small class sizes, our exceptional instructors, and the campus we share with University of Washington Bothell, and then transfer their credits to four-year programs. Cascadia transfers students to programs throughout the state and country, and places the highest percentage of its student body to the UW system than any other college in the state. While we specialize in transfer education, we also offer basic skills, English as a second language courses, and a few professional degrees, including our new bachelor's degree in sustainable practices. We have about 4,000 students come through our doors each year.



ABOUT THE EXPERT

NAME

Eric Murray

TITLE

President, Cascadia College

RESIDENCE

Redmond

EDUCATION

Bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. from UCLA

IN HIS FREE TIME

Biking and walking the Burke-Gilman Trail, enjoying coffee and a donut at Top Pot in Bellevue or Redmond, and spending time (lots of it!) at 24 Hour Fitness in Redmond and Bothell (he says he can eat more donuts that way). Exploring Puget Sound neighborhoods by walking around and playing cards in a local coffee shop. Spending a long weekend (about once per month) at his family's home in Coeur d'Alene.

2 How does Cascadia serve the Eastside business community via continuing education?

Continuing ed, or those classes offered for people not seeking a degree, are designed to help people advance in their careers or to help companies improve the skills of their employees. Through our continuing ed center, we offer professional development coursework for individuals in areas such as Lean Six Sigma, human resources, project management, and leadership. For small business owners, we offer a small business accelerator program that helps with growth and expansion. For companies, we offer a variety of corporate training options as well as help obtaining the funding for those opportunities.

3 Can you tell us about your Corporate and Continuing Education Center and its outreach into area cities?

The program is very successful and is meeting its business plan goals. Offering corporate training and continuing ed is a specialized business. The community college system has found that doing this through a consortium model with other campuses is effective at providing the best service and increased options. With that in mind, Cascadia paired with Everett Community College to help offer our program.

With ECC's experience in aerospace, this has been hugely helpful for some of the pipeline companies in Redmond. A number of other industries have recently come to us to develop custom programs to help train their employee workforces to meet new demands.

4 How many Cascadia grads enter the workforce in the Puget Sound as opposed to leaving the area? Are there enough jobs?

Eighty percent of Cascadia grads transfer to a university, so this is a little hard for us to determine. Most of them stay in the area. Of our students who study a professional-technical program such as computer science or environmental technology, 70 percent of them are employed nine months after graduation. In certain industries, you are almost guaranteed an opportunity locally if you have the skills upon graduation. Computer science, manufacturing, and other technology-based industries can't hire enough grads. Like any time in our history, the job market mirrors the consumer demand. As the economy has picked up, other industries are starting to thrive again as well. I think this is an excellent time for job seekers with technology-based educations.

5 Why should students start at a two-year college?

It's a much more affordable option to spend two years with Cascadia because of the high success we have in transferring students to their desired four-year institution and the low cost of tuition (less than \$4,000 a year). Bachelor's degrees are becoming the minimum standard in almost every industry now, so starting with Cascadia gets you on that track while staying on the Eastside. Students who start at Cascadia can transfer to UW Bothell to earn a bachelor's degree in computer science or transfer to Bastyr University to earn a degree in integrated human biology in arrangements we've made to be the location where students complete their first two years. ■