

# Chemistry Education for All Students

Max Montana, staff writer

Many students take an education for granted, but some are not so lucky.

Assistant Professor of Chemistry Harish Subedi found a unique opportunity with PVCC. He is teaching at a correctional institution this semester, bringing a valuable education to a group often neglected.

Subedi came to PVCC mid-pandemic, beginning in fall of 2020. He was born in Nepal, moved to the US to study at Kent State University, and went on to teach at Western Nebraska Community College. He loves to travel, saying his favorite destination has been California. Subedi said he has not had a bad experience traveling.

"I always expect the unexpected, things may go wrong," he said. "It's my choice; nobody pushed me to have to go."

This semester, Lab Manager Mark Little and Subedi have been able to bring a chemistry class to the Dillwyn Correctional Facility. Subedi explained that while English and History courses have been offered to the facility in prior years, this is the first time they have been able to offer chemistry classes, as it was a challenge getting the proper permissions and changing the course enough to keep the lab portion within the rules of the correctional facility. Subedi teaches the lectures, while Little teaches the labs.

"For example, we're not allowed to get strong acids or strong bases there, so we get something as an alternative for our reactions," Subedi said. "We don't compromise with the outcomes, so we have to really thoroughly modify our syllabi and teaching material and lab material."

Illustrating the strict restrictions imposed in the correctional system, Subedi brought out a specific flash drive approved for use in the facility. "It's a little different setting because we don't have internet there. If I forget to print



Harish Subedi. Photo courtesy of Harish Subedi

something, I'm in trouble, so I wanna make sure that I have everything ready: all the handouts, any homework, any video files. If I wanna show something, I have to make sure they are downloaded and they are on the jumpdrive. So logistic-wise, I have to be prepared beforehand," Subedi said.

"At the beginning, I was a little hesitant on the situation, like 'oh it's a prison, what's gonna happen,' you know, all sorts of things. But when I went there, and day one after the security check, and then I was in the classroom, I had no doubt, no fear, nothing. I was just teaching chemistry, so I didn't feel like something abnormal or different. So once I entered the classroom, it's all about chemistry. Students are enthusiastic, they're attentive, they're eager to learn, so I'm happy to be a part of the team," he said.

Subedi has enjoyed his experience with the new program, saying, "I think students appreciate that when we go there, they always appreciate the fact that 'he is here for our good.' I love the fact that they appreciate the time and effort we have for them."