

MCC Announces Associate Degree in Sustainable Agriculture First program of its kind in Arizona

Mesa Community College now offers an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Sustainable Agriculture, the first of its kind in Arizona.

The Sustainable Agriculture degree will provide students with both the technical and small business skills needed to manage or develop a small farm or agricultural business. The program is focused on small scale and urban agriculture with an emphasis on natural practices and sustainability. Courses include Field Crop Production, Livestock Production, Aquaponics, Integrated Pest Management and Agricultural Marketing to name a few.

This degree is different from the certificate and degree programs in Sustainable Food Systems in that students gain hands-on experience in sustainable agricultural practices in the classroom and a working urban farm at the Center for Urban Agriculture. Produce is sold at the MCC Farmer's Market and the excess is given to local food banks.

"In response to an explosion in consumer demand for locally grown food, many existing local farms are expanding and new ones are cropping up around the Valley. Our goal is to prepare a highly skilled, trained workforce and new entrepreneurs for this growing field," said Peter Conden,

Many existing local farms are expanding and new ones are cropping up around the Valley.

Director of MCC's Urban Horticulture and Sustainable Agriculture programs.

Conden is passionate about his work at the college and reports concerns about the origins of his own food, sustainability, managing resources, and pollution of the soil and groundwater. "Our program is based on organic and natural production methods," he adds.

Seed money for the program came from a 2014 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) education grant of \$108,000 which included a 25-percent match from MCC. "With assistance from the EPA grant we were able to write new courses, rewrite old courses, purchase equipment, and put this new program together," noted Conden.

At the MCC Center for Urban Agriculture, students are able to take classes and receive hands-on, real life experience working on the college's urban farm and greenhouse.

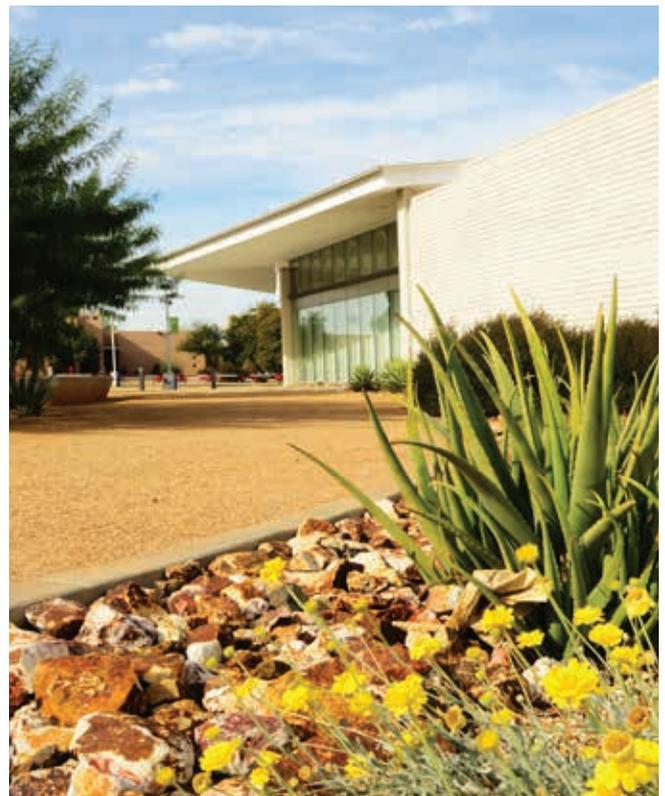
Registration for the summer and fall semesters begins March 21, 2016. Visit www.mesacc.edu to enroll.



MCC Art Gallery Grand Opening

Located near the MCC Theatre at the Southern and Dobson Campus, the Art Gallery will showcase student and faculty work in art, ceramics, photography, and electronic media. The Art Gallery also functions as a student lab serving the needs of those pursuing art management and gallery design degrees. Visit the Art Gallery this spring.

To learn about Art Gallery exhibits and events, as well as activities at MCC's performing arts venues, visit the new Arts at MCC website: www.mesacc.edu/arts



You're invited to celebrate the Grand Opening of the Art Gallery at Mesa Community College

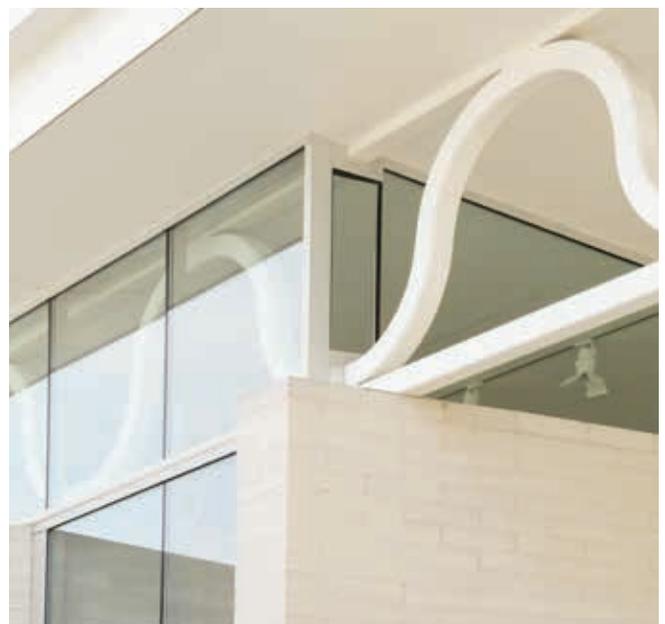
Celebrating 50 years of education in art, this exhibit will highlight artwork in a variety of mediums from the college's diverse history of acquisitions. Explore the works of Rachel Bess, Alexander Calder, Enrique Chagoya, Mark Klett, William Wegman and more in our brand new, state-of-the-art gallery.

**The Fifty Years of Collecting exhibit runs
February 24 to March 25, 2016**

**Gallery Hours:
Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
and during special events**

Admission is free.

mesacc.edu/art-gallery



A Letter from MCC's President

I am pleased to inform you that in January, Mesa Community College (MCC) was recognized by the prestigious Aspen Institute College Excellence Program as one of the top 150 colleges in the U.S. based on student outcomes in performance, improvement, and equity. 2016 will be of year of accomplishments accompanied by significant changes for our college and district.

As you know, MCC is part of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). We are overseen by a seven-member, elected Governing Board, which sets policy for our \$1 billion organization. This November, four of those seven seats are up for re-election.

MCCCD will also be conducting a search for a new chancellor. After 30 years of service to MCCCD, our current chancellor, Dr. Rufus Glasper, announced he will retire at the end of February. He has accepted a position as president and CEO for the League for Innovation in the Community College, and we wish him well. The chancellor reports to the Governing Board and provides executive leadership for our system of 10 colleges, two skill centers, and a corporate college for workforce development. The Governing Board has announced that the chancellor search committee will be chaired by ASU president Dr. Michael Crow and Maricopa Faculty Association President Salina Bednarek.

Over the upcoming months, I encourage you to check our district's website regularly for information about the election, Governing Board candidates, and the chancellor search. The District's website is www.maricopa.edu, but pages you might find most helpful are the Governing Board pages, administration.maricopa.edu/governing-board and the Center for Civic Participation, chancellor.maricopa.edu/public-affairs/center-for-civic-participation.

The upcoming year will also bring continued discussions throughout MCCCD about funding. Historically, MCCCD has been funded by three sources: property tax, tuition, and state allocation. Since 2009, MCCCD's state allocation has gone from \$59.5 million to \$7.4 million, and in 2016, state support was eliminated completely. With property tax and tuition as our remaining sources of revenue, the system is more sensitive to fluctuations in enrollment.

Since 2010, enrollment throughout MCCCD has declined 11%. At MCC, we've experienced a 19% decline. While we've sustained our current service levels, we are engaging in difficult discussions about how decreased revenues will impact our students and college.

MCC is already taking steps to consolidate resources. MCC's Community Outreach Center and Office of Community Partnerships which currently reside at the Downtown Center in Mesa will soon be moved to our Southern & Dobson and Red Mountain Campuses,

respectively. Ultimately, all property is owned by MCCCD, and our elected Governing Board will make the final decision about the future of MCC's Downtown Center.

MCC's Red Mountain Campus's fall 2015 enrollment was 2,962 students, which is a 33% decrease since 2010. A Task Force of Red Mountain employees convened over the past year to provide recommendations to boost enrollment at this important location. We are currently piloting a new class schedule that shows promise of attracting more students to the campus. More information is available at www.mesacc.edu/2-4-1.

MCC's commitment to student success continues to be a key priority. New data show that at MCC, the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students is closing, and students in development education are succeeding at higher rates. Overall success rates in developmental courses have increased from 62% in fall 2014 to 67% in fall 2015. As MCC moves forward with its new Academic Master Plan that focuses on Guided Pathways to Success which calls for more structure and a more coherent set of academic options for students, we expect to report even higher student retention and completion rates.

As alumni and friends of Mesa Community College, 66% of you still live in Maricopa County, giving you an incredible opportunity to stay engaged with your alma mater. Regardless of where you now reside, I hope that you'll engage in the dialogue surrounding your local community college. Data show that students who successfully complete college tend to earn more and enjoy improved quality of life, while their community benefits in terms of civic engagement and higher tax revenues. I hope you share my perspective that education is imperative, that it changes lives, that it helps drive the economies of the cities in which we live, and that it is the hope for the future of our country.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shouan Pan". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Shouan Pan, Ph.D., President

Mesa Optometrist Began at MCC



For most of us, the phrase “path of least resistance” probably does not include studying Psychology at a major university and advanced courses in science and math on the way to Optometry school.

But most of us are not MCC alumnus Dr. James Abbott, who came home to open his Optometry practice in Mesa 35 years ago.

“I started at MCC in the summer of 1972, and received my Associate of Arts degree in 1974,” James said. He transferred to the University of Arizona, and graduated in December of 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. “I was more interested in psychology as a major, and I picked up my chemistry, math and other sciences at MCC,” he said. “The way I went was the path of least resistance: I acquired my pre-requisites for optometry school at MCC.” James studied at the Southern California College of Optometry from 1976 to 1980, graduating with a Doctor of Optometry degree.

James received his full Optometry license in September of 1980. “I’ve been back in Mesa the whole time,” he said of his time since then. “I

grew up here and still have family ties here, and after I graduated it was still a nice place to come back to. I’ve built a successful practice here over the last 35 years.”

James said his time in MCC’s student government, men’s honorary, and marching band were his fondest memories. “Working with administrators and learning about various issues that they wanted student input on was fascinating,” he said of his work in student government.

I still look fondly on what I did at MCC. It served me well for the classes I took later in my academic career.

Calling MCC a “good stepping stone to higher education,” James said he recognized the advantages of staying home to pursue his education. “I wanted to be near home rather than face the total expenses of living on a campus somewhere else,” he said. “MCC gave me an opportunity to start college and still not have as many expenses. My goal was to go beyond to the university, but for some students two years is enough, depending on their field.”

Regarding MCC’s future, James said working with local business and industry to ensure that graduates have real world skills will continue to be important. “I’d like to see the college expand their communication with business and industry,” he said. “We need to look ahead and not just respond as issues appear, and

we can’t anticipate some of those changes without communicating with the real world outside and seeing what the workforce needs.”

Though other family members went straight to a university from high school, James is still glad he started at MCC.

“For me, MCC was a good choice,” he said. “My wife Linda is also an MCC alum. My son Jay went straight to the UofA and did well, but it’s not for everybody. I’m very positive about my experience at MCC. They definitely offer a bridge for those students who have a need to be home for economic reasons, or they can only attend part-time. When I was a student the night school at MCC had as many students as day classes, so it is an important part of the community.”

Alumni in the News

At MCC, we never tire of hearing about the pursuits and successes of our alumni. To see a compilation of alumni newsmakers, visit www.mesacc.edu/alumni/newsletters/spring-2016. If you or a fellow alum is featured in the news, send the information to marcy.snitzer@mesacc.edu.



Mesa Athletics Launches Booster Club

The Mesa athletic department invites you to join the athletic booster club.

Mesa teams won NJCAA national championships in baseball and women’s basketball in 2014 and finished among the top 10 in the nation 12 times over the past two years. The booster club will help keep T-Bird athletics in the forefront regionally and nationally.

The New T-Bird Athletic Booster Club will be an active organization

designed to help raise funds for program needs not adequately covered in the budget and bring fans closer to the entire athletic program. Funds raised will go toward such areas as team transportation, safety measures with equipment and facilities, as well as other operating expenses.

The club’s structure includes a Board of Directors and will hold periodic meetings with opportunities to meet with

coaches, staff and athletes. Joining the club brings benefits, such as season passes, exclusive athletic newsletters, and access to hospitality events.

Gifts are tax-deductible according to IRS regulations.

Join the Mesa Athletics Booster Club Today!

foundation.maricopa.edu/sslpage.aspx?pid=439

BENEFITS	BRONZE \$50-249	SILVER \$250-499	GOLD \$500-999	COPPER \$1000+
Mention in Mesa football and basketball programs				
Exclusive Mesa athletic newsletter				
Access to hospitality events when held				
Mesa athletic t-shirt				
Two season passes to MCC football and basketball				
Four season passes to MCC football and basketball				
Mesa athletic hat				
Two tickets to athletic banquet				
Mesa polo shirt				
Six season tickets to MCC football and basketball				

MCC Athletic Booster Club members enjoy a range of benefits.



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Editor **Marcy Snitzer**
 ☎ 480.461.7792
 ✉ marcy.snitzer@mesacc.edu

Volunteer Today for the MCC Alumni Advisory Board

Your application awaits: www.mesacc.edu/alumni-board

The Mesa Community College Alumni Association (MCCAA) is overseen by a volunteer board of alumni representing a diverse cross-section of MCC's unique alumni. The board serves in an advisory capacity, working closely with the Office of Alumni Relations.

MCC Alumni Board members:

- Provide advice on alumni programs and key college initiatives
- Are appointed to three year terms
- Attend quarterly meetings



If you're passionate about helping MCC, consider becoming an alumni board member.

To learn more and apply, visit www.mesacc.edu/alumni-board or call 480-461-7794.