

Kyana Young began her successful global STEM career path at MCC



Kyana Young said she was not prepared for her first year in college but Mesa Community College gave her a second chance to launch a successful engineering and college faculty career focusing on global water quality issues. Reflecting on her own education challenges, the MCC Class of 2005 graduate has made it a mission to serve as a mentor to help underserved students achieve STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) careers.

MCC was her choice because she wanted some place warmer than Michigan and, in addition to reasonable tuition, the partnerships with the Arizona state universities meant she could transfer directly after earning an associate's degree.

Engineering path

In high school, she excelled in calculus, chemistry and physics. After her first college attempt, she worked at a Michigan automotive factory. Because she did really well at all the STEM tasks and was 30 years younger than most of the workers, her supervisor suggested she go to college for engineering. He explained engineers used the science and math she enjoyed in many ways.

"MCC had all the engineering prep courses and my academic education was good even with some cultural challenges," she said. "I think the model of community colleges is great, especially for returning students and those who need to accommodate work schedules."

Kyana noted that females and students of color are still underrepresented in engineering but in 2003 she was a rarity in STEM classes and sometimes did not feel welcomed. In retrospect, she chuckled that she realizes the social awkwardness of engineers in general played a role in the class atmosphere.

Student support

Kyana added, "I did connect with some faculty and with Nina Robinson (former director of MCC Multicultural Services) who was a really positive, bright spot for me. Knowing that an influential administrator was there to support me and was an advocate for me was so important."

Nina developed the annual Diversity Leadership Camp where hundreds of students have been involved in activities to foster cultural awareness while developing positive cross-cultural relationships.

"It brought together students from all different backgrounds to talk about what prevents us from connecting with each other. There were powerful takeaways for me including that we can be creating our own barriers. We need to lead to create positive impacts with others in our communities."

After earning her Associate in Science degree from MCC, she achieved a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Arizona, and a Doctorate in Civil and Environmental Engineering with minors in Global Health, and Humans and the Global Environment from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

She became an assistant professor, Department of Engineering at Wake Forest University (WFU), Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in 2019. She is also an affiliate faculty member in the WFU Biology Department and the Environment and Sustainability Program.

Leading to STEM

Kyana worked to place high school students in STEM business internships when she was a postdoctoral researcher at Marquette University in Madison. At Wake Forest, she started the Girls as Citizen Scientists for fifth through eighth graders to interest students in pursuing STEM classes in high school. Kyana also serves as the lead for undergraduate research for the WFU Department of Engineering.

Kyana said "As an engineering professor, I teach students to think creatively, while using their technical skills to solve many of the global challenges communities experience. My expertise and research focus are in water treatment/quality, working with communities to improve their water infrastructure, and providing water systems following emergency situations such as natural disasters, internal conflicts and outbreaks."



Kyana's engineering choices include exploring and researching in the outdoors.

January through July 2023, she will be on leave at a university in Kumasi, Ghana researching the costs and the associated health risks of relying on individual water bags as the primary source of drinking water. Also, her

research will compare perceptions of water quality, economic costs, and the actual water quality in Ghana with communities in the United States where citizens have water quality concerns.

Kyana concluded, "As engineers, it is our job to let people know this field is for everyone. I have combined it with public health but you can connect engineering with so many other disciplines."



Dear Alumni & Friends,

Enjoying on-campus life this past spring has been so energizing and a welcomed return to our dynamic normal. I'd like to share a few of our recent accomplishments and updates on some important initiatives in progress.

The college is moving forward on offering an MCC Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education: Dual Language degree as well as a Bachelor of Applied Science in Data Analytics and Programming. We are seeking approval of the Governing Board of the Maricopa County Community College District as well as our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission, so that we may begin offering bachelor's degrees as early as fall 2023.

We've also added new certificates and degrees to meet the needs of business, industry and our students. The college celebrated the first graduates of the inaugural class of the Concurrent Enrollment Program between the MCC dental hygiene program and Northern Arizona University. The students graduated with an Associate of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene from MCC and their Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene from NAU.

Following the 20th Anniversary of MCC's Red Mountain Campus, progress is underway on recommendations from the Red Mountain Vision Team including actions to establish a Health Science and Education Hub with the creation of an Allied Health Department to include Dental, Emergency Medical Technology, Health Care Technology Systems and Paramedicine programs. To lead this effort, we have hired Mary Boyce as Dean of Health Sciences, housed at the Red Mountain Campus.

In April the MCC American Indian Institute celebrated 35 years of service to indigenous students by gathering to honor the founders of the Institute, hear remarks from student leaders and participate in a native blessing and traditional dance.

As some of you know, I am retiring and MCC will have a new president starting July 1 - Dr. Tammy Robinson. My experience at MCC has been immensely rewarding, even through some challenging times. Working with staff, faculty, alumni and the community to put students on the path to success has been a privilege and honor.

With Thunderbird Spirit!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori M. Berquam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Lori M. Berquam, Ph.D.

Interim President, Mesa Community College



Commencement



2019 - 2020 - 2021 - 2022





MCC's first in-person May commencement in two years was magical! The MCC Class of 2021-22 graduated more than 1,600 students who collectively earned 2,300+ degrees and certificates. Nearly 400 students walked the stage May 13 at the Arizona State University Desert Financial Arena in Tempe, enjoying an air-conditioned venue – a first for MCC. Graduates from the classes of 2019-20 and 2020-21 also joined the celebration since the pandemic delayed their commencements. Thunderbird pride rocked the arena.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to celebrate our students with an in-person commencement acknowledging their successes,” said Marcy Snitzer, MCC Graduation Tri-chair and Associate Vice President of Communications, Marketing and Philanthropy. “Commencements, drive-thru celebrations, were great to recognize students during the pandemic but nothing parallels the joy and excitement of walking across the stage with your friends and family cheering from the stands.”

“I am excited and honored to congratulate all of our graduates who have worked hard for this achievement,” Interim President Lori M. Berquam said. “I also want to congratulate the spouses, partners, children, families, extended families, friends and faculty who celebrate this accomplishment with you. The college is proud of your accomplishments and extends best wishes as you embark on the next chapter of your life.”

Vicente Ortiz, president of the Associated Students of Mesa Community College (student government), who plans to attend the Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University to continue his studies, welcomed graduate candidates and guests.

This year's class honors speaker Gabriela Mansilla, who moved from Guatemala to the United States at age 25 seeking a college degree, said she was pleased to discover MCC fit her needs in many ways, with a staff deeply committed to helping students. While on campus, Mansilla was a member of Psi Beta (Psychology Honor Society), ASMCC (student government), Phi Theta Kappa (International Honor Society), the Student Success Foundation and worked part time in the MCC New Student Welcome Room.

“Believing that I could one day get here regardless of barriers is what kept me going,” Mansilla said. “As a woman in STEM, I know that I will need that discipline, work ethic and resilience in order to succeed in my field.”

2021-22 ACADEMIC STATISTICS:

1,644 individuals earning a degree or industry certificate, for the summer, fall and spring semesters

2,920 degrees and certificates earned

Top three Career and Technical Education Degrees:

Associate in Applied Science in Nursing

Associate in Applied Science in Construction Management

Associate in Applied Science in Dental Hygiene

Although every graduate has a tale to tell of the path that leads to meeting their goal, a few stories are compiled demonstrating Thunderbird resiliency. Be inspired. Review this year's stories online at mesacc.edu/graduation/graduation-success-stories.



Join the Thunderbird team at Mesa Community College!
We are seeking qualified applicants who are enthusiastic about serving our students and our college.
Apply today at maricopa.edu/about/careers



Marvin Scott pays forward his MCC joy of music student experience

Believing that music has the power to change lives, Marvin Scott has focused his career on connecting kids to the joy and magic of making music, which was his student experience in the Mesa Community College Music Department.

Prior to attending MCC, Marvin was enrolled at Arizona State University. In the fall of his freshman year studying in the ASU College of Music, some friends recommended the MCC music program to learn more about his interest in jazz.

“MCC has had a long-standing reputation in the Valley for having a great band program, specifically for jazz music” he explained. “I met the late Grant Wolf at the beginning of the spring semester. He and Don Bothwell schooled many generations of talented musicians for 35 years at MCC from the 1970s through the early 2000s. After speaking to Grant, I registered for his jazz improvisation class.” By the end of the semester, Marvin was hooked. “I transferred to MCC to study saxophone with Grant and to play in his ensembles. He was an amazing teacher and mentor.”

Marvin attended MCC from 1996-2000, while he worked part time. **“I have so many wonderful memories of being a student in the MCC music program. One of them was going on my first trip to New York City for an international jazz convention.”**

Because most of his credits were in music, he spent some time deciding what he wanted to do in that field. Ultimately, he decided to become a teacher and transferred from MCC back to ASU, earning a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education in 2004.

It was Wolf who told Marvin about a part-time teaching opportunity with a fledgling charitable organization in Phoenix called Rosie’s House, which would eventually provide him with a path to purposeful work and deep-rooted friendships over the course of his career. The organization, situated in a small home in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood, offered after-school music lessons to children in the area. Marvin was hired to teach saxophone there in 2000, while working part time and attending classes at ASU. After graduation he continued in his faculty position at Rosie’s House, even while teaching in the Phoenix Elementary School District and the Alhambra School District through 2011.

And then he made a life-changing move when friends who taught with him in Phoenix encouraged him to apply for a job at the school where they had recently taught in Istanbul, Turkey. Marvin taught English there for five years.

“Going to Istanbul was my first time living outside Phoenix and traveling outside the United States,” he said. **“It was one of the greatest experiences of my life.”**

Returning to Phoenix, Marvin taught in the Pendergast School District and worked as a program manager for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix. But then in 2019, Rosie’s House needed a program and community engagement director and Marvin returned to the place where he first connected kids to music.

“It’s such a sincere and welcoming environment. I feel very connected to the kids and the mission of service to the community, which has never wavered,” he added. **“Rosie’s House offers students opportunities to participate in music that they would not ordinarily have had on their own, and it paves pathways for students to achieve success and reach their full creative and personal potential.”**

The Phoenix native said, “MCC gave me a strong foundation as a musician and helped me make critical and lasting connections with other musicians and with job opportunities in Phoenix, specifically with Rosie’s House to teach saxophone. I love being able to create opportunities for students to have positive and meaningful experiences in music and for parents to get joy from seeing their children achieve success.”



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EXCITING START, EXTRAORDINARY RETURN

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Now Accepting Nominations!

The MCC Alumni Association will host the annual MCC Hall of Fame event this fall. The Hall of Fame honors alumni, community members, and MCC employees whose personal and professional accomplishments and positive contributions to the college and community set them apart.

Nominations are being accepted through Friday, July 1, 2022, in the following categories:

- **Alumni Achievement**
- **Community Partner**
- **Service**
- **Distinguished MCC Staff**
- **Excellence in Teaching**
- **Outstanding MCC Athletes**
- **Outstanding MCC Coaches**

To review the criteria for each award and submit a nomination visit mesacc.edu/alumni/hall-fame.