



Training Workforce Is Next Phase in Longstanding Relationship with The Boeing Company

Mesa Community College takes its relationship with the world's largest aerospace company, The Boeing Company, to the next level. Together, we are identifying and training veterans with industry certifications and on-the-job-training, as a way of showcasing and validating their transferable skills into manufacturing. To date, these programs, Earn to Learn and Test Drive the Talent, have successfully transitioned 23 veterans into internships and 18 have earned portable industry certifications, increasing their value to the workforce.

Earn to Learn and Test Drive the Talent are part of an effort to support the high demand for IPC 620 cable harness, NIMS (National Institute for Metalworking Skills) and AWS (American Welding Society) welding certifications that validate skill levels in over 23 technologies. Cable Harness Wiring Boot Camps launched at MCC in March 2019. More than 185 students have completed the program being taught by The Boeing Company employees, four of the instructors have become certified MCC adjunct faculty and Master IPC Trainers.

Wiring Harness Boot Camps are the result of a grant from The Boeing Company that allows students the opportunity to participate on a cost-neutral basis through scholarships, after successfully completing the program. Additionally, students have the opportunities for hands-on workplace experiences that have resulted in future employment.



"My dream came true," said student Jocelyn Johnson, who is now a permanent employee of The Boeing Company. "The boot camp was exactly what I needed. It helped me get to my goal of a permanent position, which means a lot to me and my family."

The Wiring Harness Boot Camps at MCC represent the latest development of a 20-year relationship with The Boeing Company, the Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation and the Maricopa County Community College District in which more than \$1.5 million in financial support and in-kind donations have been contributed. Working together to prepare students for successful careers, the entire community has benefited as highly trained students enter the workforce as skilled employees, many directly with The Boeing Company.

"Our relationship with The Boeing Company has provided for an amazing opportunity for individuals to embark on a career path as well as an educational pathway," said Leah Palmer, executive director of the Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AzAMI) located at

MCC. "Preparing students to successfully earn an industry-recognized certification validating skills in high demand by local industry is an investment in our community, in the success of our students and the economic success of Arizona," said Palmer.

The Boeing Company also donated four A160 helicopter engines to the Aviation Program at Chandler Gilbert Community College (CGCC) and established a Boeing Corporation Aviation Scholarship Fund for students enrolled in the CGCC aviation program. The company also donated a 1995 International Darley Model 4900 fire truck to the MCC Fire Science Program and a marble slab for the MCC Performing Arts Center.

"This relationship is a powerful example of a public/private partnership that through collaboration, has had unprecedented outcomes," Palmer continued. "It's created education pathways for new students with a chance for lifelong learning, while improving the economic landscape of Maricopa County's manufacturing sector."

Brian Spicker, interim president and CEO of the Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation added, "The Foundation and the Maricopa Community Colleges expect to collaborate with more businesses like this over the next year, to benefit students at all 10 colleges using The Boeing Company as a model partnership."



MCC home of lifelong learning for Wayne Balmer

Pays it forward with scholarships

The Wayne Balmer learning affair with Mesa Community College began in the early 90s when he was community development manager for the City of Mesa. He says he studied to refresh his mind and focus on something besides his job, choosing those classes of interest that could fit into his work and life schedule.

Named Williams Gateway Area Manager in 2001, Balmer became the project manager for the civilian development of the Williams Air Force Base conversion into an international airport for cargo. He earned a Certificate in International Business and used the knowledge to establish a foreign trade zone, which attracted business investors and helped make the project a success.

Throughout his career, which culminated in 2014 when he retired as planning administrator for the Town of Queen Creek, he took online courses in a vast array of topics such as sociology, death management, human resources and marriage/family therapy. He has served on the MCC Commission on Excellence in Education since 2004.

Although still consulting, Balmer faced the dilemma of what he calls PIPs – previously important people. Those accustomed to making decisions and being busy but then finding themselves without that work purpose and too much time on their hands. To cope, Balmer turned to MCC.

“I thought as health issues creep up, how can I prepare for the next chapter in my life,” he said.

“I pursued a degree in exercise science to help me understand the facts versus opinions about nutrition and exercise.”

He adds, “I was concerned about going to MCC. Are they going to laugh at the old guy in the exercise science class? Are students going to act as though I’m not a part of the class and think I dress funny? That didn’t happen! Often students came to me and asked for help or advice. I felt very included in nearly every class.”

Balmer began helping students he saw could be successful with a push through the hard parts and someone to show them skills such how to create a PowerPoint. In an Anthropology class, students seemed timid about pursuing a bachelor’s degree so he took the group to an Arizona State University open house where they saw they could belong there.

Seeing so many students struggling financially, Balmer established a scholarship that now provides \$1,000 each semester for up to five Exercise Science Department students. Faculty choose the recipients who send Balmer a thank-you note.

With five associate’s degrees and 10 certificates, Balmer is still enjoying classes for knowledge and fun. Recently he took The History of Sports in American Film and Literature because it looked interesting, which he said it was.

“You hear about retired people being lonely,” says Balmer. “Come get involved in something new. Take a class and, as a senior, the already affordable tuition is half priced. After I got started on campus, it was pretty cool.”

His dedication to MCC and its students has been recognized. Balmer is being honored as MCC’s Hero of Education at the April 8, 2020 Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation Heroes of Education celebration.

In selecting him for the honor, Christos Chronis, MCC chief development officer, said, “Wayne is a shining example of our mission of teaching and learning. We are eternally grateful for his continued friendship, service and charitable support.”

Mesa Community College alumnus Diego Santos is thriving at Empire Southwest, a top-performing Caterpillar dealer, the leading global manufacturer of the massive equipment that builds the world. He says community college offered an affordable start in higher education and a supportive opportunity to fit classes into a full-time work schedule.

“I had looked at the cost of education at the major universities and realized that I would have to eat ramen noodles for the next three decades of my life in order to afford it,” said

combines classroom with practical learning of the technology behind today’s high performing earthmoving machinery. Graduates receive an Associate in Applied Science degree and are fully credentialed Caterpillar Dealer Service Technicians.

“I loved the program,” Santos said. You learn the material in the classroom and get to apply the knowledge hands-on in multiple shops. You gain valuable on-the-job experience, plus you earn a degree. A lot of vocational schools have very high tuition with little to no possibility of earning college credits.”

developing and creating a career path for others, and adapting methods and mindset in the constantly changing workplace.”

As a leader, Santos says he makes a point to schedule time for developing the team so he isn’t just putting out constant fires and missing the big picture growth.

He added, “As management, ensuring that you are constantly providing the best value and growth for your clients and team can be tough, but we always collaborate toward the main goal. My main priority is for my team



Diego Santo pursues ThinkBIG success at MCC

Santos, who is first in his family to earn a college degree. “MCC tuition was a fraction of the cost of universities and, with smaller class sizes, I could be more involved.”

DEGREE AND CREDENTIALS

He was taking automotive courses with an eye toward engineering when he decided to join a friend who was in the ThinkBIG apprenticeship program, a partnership between MCC and the Valley’s Caterpillar dealer Empire Southwest. The program

Admission into the ThinkBIG program is competitive. Interviews are held annually between January and March, with classes starting in August.

LEADERSHIP

Since graduating from the ThinkBIG program, Santos was selected for a management program.

He said, “I love it. I thoroughly enjoy management, juggling 85 things at once,

to make it home safely to their families every day. With all of that, you have to have fun and have a good attitude.”

Post MCC Santos earned a bachelor’s degree in management from ASU and is working on his MBA to eventually achieve his original goal of a degree in management and mechanical engineering because he says “it’s a pride thing.”



Earnhardt Ford Automotive Career Exploration program now at MCC

In September 2019 we announced Earnhardt Ford chose Mesa Community College to sponsor the Ford Automotive Career Exploration (ACE) program. The ACE program is a partnership program between Ford Motor Company, Ford and Lincoln dealerships and secondary and post-secondary educational institutions. The program, now available free of charge to MCC Automotive Technology students, raises awareness and increases interest in career opportunities within the automotive industry, specifically as a service technician.

Students attending a Ford ACE partnership school obtain valuable knowledge of Ford/Lincoln vehicle systems by completing web-based training via a learning management system.

"MCC students who complete the program will have inside knowledge of specific Ford automotive training," said Stephen Skroch, MCC Automotive Service program director. "The additional training enhances our current curriculum and provides our program graduates an additional competitive edge when seeking employment."

The courses are a subset of those taken by current Ford dealership technicians. By completing the trainings students are one step closer to a career in the automotive industry, beginning as an entry level automotive service technician at a Ford/Lincoln dealership. There are more than 3,200 Ford dealerships in the U.S., resulting in many opportunities for employment across the country.

Course topics include the Ford Motor Company, Dealership Operations, New Model Training, Electrical Systems and Steering and Suspension.

The MCC Automotive Service Program offers Certificates of Completion and Associate Degrees. Students learn how to diagnose, service, test, and repair complex, computer-controlled automotive electrical systems. Graduates of the program acquire essential entry-level skills to pass national ASE Certification Tests.

Additional information about the MCC Program is available online at mesacc.edu/search/google/automotive.





MCC interim president named

Mesa Community College Executive Vice President, Dr. Lori Berquam, was named MCC interim president, effective Feb. 1, 2020. Berquam's more than 30 years of leadership experience in higher education includes vice provost for Student Life at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Recently she completed a prestigious fellowship through the American Council on Education, serving in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Arizona.

In January, Dr. Berquam met with the MCC Alumni Advisory Board where she shared her new 4Hs Initiative (Head. Heart. Hands. Health.), which offers specific ways to achieve the student success goals of Guided Pathways.

The appointment of Dr. Berquam was made by Dr. Steven Gonzales, interim chancellor of the Maricopa County Community College District, after meeting with stakeholders and leaders from the college's shared governance structure.

"Dr. Berquam's extensive leadership experience coupled with the support she has earned from college leadership, students and employees for advancing key initiatives, namely student success, makes her a strong and very logical choice as MCC's interim president," said Dr. Gonzales.

Dr. Rich Haney, who served as MCC president since July 2018, submitted his resignation early in January. Dr. Gonzales noted, "While Dr. Haney was not with our system long, his impact was significant. We will miss his leadership, passion to serve our students and his friendship."



PerkSpot discounts

Did you have a New Years resolution to be a bit more frugal with your entertainment dollars? If so check out PerkSpot off the Maricopa Community Colleges. PerkSpot is a one-stop shop for exclusive online discounts in dozens of product and service categories.

PerkSpot is free and accessible from any digital device.

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Join the MCC Alumni Association Board

The Mesa Community College Alumni Association (MCCAA) is overseen by a volunteer board of alumni. The board serves in an advisory capacity, working closely with the Office of Alumni Relations to carry out the MCCAA mission. Board members are appointed to three-year terms and convene quarterly.

If you're passionate about helping to direct the future of MCC, guiding the college's alumni family, and cultivating a rich college experience for students, consider becoming an Alumni

Board member. You can also nominate someone for board membership.

If serving on the Board isn't for you, consider becoming an alumni volunteer.

You can help current students make their dreams realities through a donation of your time and talents. Volunteer opportunities include reviewing nominations for the MCC Hall of Fame or scholarship applications, assisting with on-campus events or giving class presentations.

Reviewing scholarship applications is a 2-3 hour time commitment and can be done from the comfort of your own home or office.

Let the Office of Alumni Relations know how you'd like to get involved by visiting mesacc.edu/alumni/membership and filling out the Alumni Board/Committee Interest form linked on the left.