



Alumnae Diana Occhiuzzi and Mary Chavez purchased clothing at thrift stores to illustrate professional clothing options on a limited budget.

First impressions are critical in an interview setting, and knowing what to wear is key to success. The MCC Alumni Association partnered with Career Services at the spring Opportunity Fair to coach students.

Knowing student budgets are tight, Diana Occhiuzzi and Mary Chavez, members of the MCC Alumni Association Advisory board, purchased professional clothing at thrift stores. Using mannequins provided by MCC's Fashion Design Program, each display included a tag that cited where the items were purchased and total cost for the ensemble. Students also received information on the subtle message that various colors convey.

“Many students were surprised to learn that orange should be used judiciously because it conveys fun and playfulness, which may only be appropriate to certain company settings,” said Diana. “Google, which uses bright orange, was at a nearby table and perfectly illustrated my point.”

Alumni volunteers assisting Diana and Mary noted how many students stopped by the display and were interested in and appreciated the information.

If you're interested in volunteering to help MCC's current students, read about our enhanced partnership with Career Services or consider submitting an interest form to serve on the alumni advisory board at mesacc.edu/alumni-board.

COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Alumni give back to students, partner with Career Services

Dear Mesa Community College Alumni,

Over the past year, alumni from a number of different graduating classes and degree programs have reached out to see how they as individuals can give back to the MCC community. We've heard your call to action and have partnered with Mesa Community College's Career Services Department to bring your knowledge and experience to the student body.

The Alumni Association and Career Services are looking for alumni with a diverse set of workforce expertise to supplement existing Career Services programming. Interested alumni will join career services professionals during classroom visits to discuss topics such as university transfer, networking, and working in the field from their unique perspective as a former MCC student entering the workforce.

We encourage you to consider adding your name to our growing list of alumni volunteers giving back to the MCC community.

For additional information and to get involved with our Community in the Classroom Initiative, please complete the form available at mesacc.edu/alumni-cic.

*Questions can be directed to **Stephanie Baldwin** in Career Services (stephanie.baldwin@mesacc.edu, 480-461-7429) or **Jennifer Biggs** in Alumni Relations (jennifer.biggs@mesacc.edu, 480-461-7794).*

Sincerely,

Marcy Snitzer

Interim Director, Institutional Advancement



New Z Degree program allows students to earn degree with no textbook costs

Dr. Annalisa Alvrus, MCC Anthropology faculty member, and Laura Ballard, MCC director of eLearning, create free educational resources so students don't have to purchase textbooks.

Mesa Community College offers a new Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) Z Degree, providing an opportunity for students to earn an associate's degree without ever having to step foot inside a classroom or purchase a textbook.

The MCC Z Degree, or zero textbook cost degree, embraces online education and provides a lower-cost alternative to MCC students. Numerous studies indicate when students decide to attend college and select a major, the decision is mostly based upon the costs, attendance and instructional materials. MCC Z Degree students can save up to an estimated \$8,332, or 62 percent, over the cost of a traditional associate degree program.

Add in commuting savings to and from the college campus and potential child care costs and savings increase even more.

Classes in the Z Degree program use open educational resources (OER), streaming media, library databases and faculty-developed content. Instructors work closely with the MCC Center for Teaching & Learning team to develop the content for each Z Course offered.

The MCC Z Degree Program is funded by the eLearning Department and inspired by the Maricopa Millions initiative, a grant established in 2013 by Maricopa Community Colleges to support use of OERs, which are intended to reduce educational costs for students while providing immediate and permanent access to learning resources. Maricopa Millions saved students more than \$11.5 million in its first five years, while MCC's Z Degree has saved students half-a-million dollars in its first three semesters.

Preliminary data shows that the first semester of Z Degree classes in Fall 2018 had a 6 percent increase in student success compared to non-Z Degree online classes and a 6-10 percent increase in learning retention when classes are conducted online.

Though the AGEC is MCC's first Z Degree, the college offers 20 Z Courses. Students in a Z Degree program are expected to take two Z Courses per eight-week semester, allowing them to earn their associate's degree in 18 months.

In addition to converting more classes to Z Courses, MCC plans to roll out a second Z Degree. An Associates in Business Administration is expected Fall 2019, along with an additional six Z Courses per semester through Spring 2020.



Resource finder conceptualized by MCC students is available in the Apple App Store

Mesa Community College students conceptualized the development of RISE, an iOS app connecting people with sources for nominally priced food, shelter and healthcare. Conceived as a class project, the resource locator is now available in the Apple App Store.

The Resource Information Services for Everyone

resources, affording more opportunities to focus energy on education verses where to find food, shelter and healthcare.

Studies such as those done by the Wisconsin HOPE Lab indicate more than a quarter of college students struggle with food security. The statistics are mirrored

Free app locates food, shelter and healthcare resources

(RISE) app may be used by all Maricopa County Community College District students, plus other community college systems and higher education institutions. Ideally RISE will help students at MCC and others in the Maricopa County Community College District more easily connect with basic needs

at MCC. RISE helps students privately identify resources to help meet basic needs.

A RISE kiosk is available in the library corridor of the MCC Southern and Dobson Campus for easy access by students and others who may not have access to an iOS mobile device.



Volunteer Today for the MCC Alumni Advisory Board

Your application awaits:
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 mesacc.edu/alumni-board or call 480-461-7794.

2018-19 MCC Alumni Board Members

Terence Azbill	Brian Koeneman
Patty Blankenship	Diana Occhiuzzi
Jackson "Jack" Bogle	Tony Occhiuzzi
William Brickhouse	John Powell
Mary Chavez	Emmet Ronan
Wade Denman	Heather Smyth
Thomas Gardner	Arlen Sykes
Scott Jackson	Doug Trimble

MCC Alumna Jessica Lake Returns to Navajo Reservation to Teach

For Mesa Community College alumna Jessica Lake, (1997-1999), leaving the Navajo reservation to begin higher education studies was a big step. She had never been away from family and didn't quite know how to plan her schedule of required classes. But Lake went on to earn her associate's degree from MCC, her bachelor's degree at Arizona State University and later her master's degree in multicultural bilingual education at Northern Arizona University.

Today she is a teacher at the Kayenta Unified School District in northern Arizona, the same school she attended in her youth. She advises her students and her own children that attending a community college is a smart, economical way to attend college.

"MCC was five hours away from home, I had no relatives there and things were really different. It helped me become more independent," said Lake.

"The American Indian Institute at MCC was helpful and supportive. At one point I had my book money stolen and the staff there helped me find a way to buy my books."

While at MCC, she enjoyed her time on the women's basketball team, traveling



around the country when the team won the regional tournament.

"Basketball was my passion from an early age," Lake said. "Playing on the MCC team was a good experience. I had never been out of Arizona and to travel to Kansas and Connecticut when we won the regional tournament was wonderful. I tell students that if you set your mind to it, basketball can take you places. But keep your grades up."

Lake teaches early childhood education to high school students in addition to coaching sports at local schools. She emphasizes that dual enrollment is especially beneficial for high school students.

"By the time they finish high school, if they've done dual enrollment, they already have 25 college credits when they leave."

Lake is happy with where she is in her career, although she says as her own children begin college, she might want to follow their lead and take some classes.

"Overall, I'm happy to be a teacher," she said. "Life is good."

Alumnus Thomas Patzner Now at CBS News



Thomas Patzner typically begins his day early, around 3 a.m., preparing for CBS This Morning, a national news-features program that CBS has aired for several decades. Patzner, an MCC alumnus, has been with CBS since 2014, working as an audio engineer and technician.

He draws from more than 10 years of experience which began with MCC's Audio Production Technology Program, where he graduated with an associate's degree in 2006. He's done it all, supporting television, live music, theater, music/voiceover recording sessions, AV conferencing, and other major special events.

At CBS, he usually supports the morning broadcast from the audio side, mixing the talent on air, but also handles back end communications for producers, other technicians and reporters who may be out in the field. He assists other broadcasts as needed.

"I do enjoy my job," Patzner said. "It's a good mix of technical skills, keeping a changing rundown of events in your mind as you go through a live show and then in between, getting maintenance projects done, keeping things updated."

When he first began at CBS, he helped launch CBSN, a streaming video news channel operated by the CBS News and CBS Interactive divisions of the CBS Corporation. He helped get CBSN off the ground during the election season, then they pulled him over to the network side of things, where he is now.

Patzner's interest in audio engineering began at MCC, where he enjoyed classes with Andy Seagle, an instructor in the Audio Production Technology Department.

"He gave me a lot of time in the studio, a lot of one-on-one time," Patzner said. "We started up the Audio Engineering Society (AES) student section when I was there and at that time, they were really building out the studios."

After graduating from MCC, he worked at Allaire Studios, a New York recording studio, then finished his bachelor's degree at State University of New York at New Paltz in 2009.

"That led me to work in entry level television work, reality shows and news," Patzner said. "It was a shift from working in recording studios. The studios were shutting down those years, but they needed television show technicians, so I worked my way up that way and wound up jumping over to news broadcasts at Bloomberg News before finding my home at CBS in 2014."

Patzner said he was surprised when he started at how big CBS was.

"CBS takes up a whole city block," Patzner said. "I was in the digital section, but then I realized what we had available and all the systems they had.

"It's a union job, which is great. That's something you don't always get as an audio technician. That's been a big help to me."

He said he runs across a lot of famous people at work but didn't get into it because of that.

"That's just how it is," he said. "The hours aren't convenient, you show up before and leave after the guests are there. I've spent a lot of time on the road and met a lot of interesting people. There's also a lot of creative stuff going on and

opportunities to do music production. We have a band every Saturday on our shows. Sometimes we'll be taping the band and suddenly there's breaking news, like the president or a disaster and we've had to stop the band to turn the cameras to someone at the desk. It's a challenge to do both in the same studio."

He tells other students that the news broadcast field has a lot of jobs for audio engineers.

"It might be a bit tough, but you can find them," Patzner said. "The hours are off, they can be late or early, but it's a good mix of technical skills and supporting the arts with big systems. You can go in a number of directions, like theatre, television, radio and then online streaming platforms, which are going to be more prevalent.

"If you can maintain good production standards for audio, you can do it for television. Doing it right was what Andy always taught."

He said his experience at MCC was valuable.

"The whole time I was there, if I wanted to get an outside project off the ground or get funding, there were always people to facilitate that, like Seagle or Keith Heffner," he said. "I was involved with the MCC student band, Scuba Cats. We went to Disney with the band. It was a creative spot to be in. There is a lot of good music in the Valley."

Professionally, Patzner plans to stay at CBS. He is currently training to mix other shows like the CBS Evening News.

MCC partners with Boeing to train future workforce



Boeing Mesa Employee works on electrical cable harness wiring in the Electrical Center of Excellence.

Mesa Community College partners with The Boeing Company to identify and train future electrical cable harness wirers. Registration is open now for summer Cable Harness Wiring Boot Camps.

The accelerated two-week [eight-day], three-credit hour college course, includes taking the industry certification exam IPC/WHAM-A-620 [Requirements and Acceptance for Cable and Wire Harness Assemblies]. The earning of this industry-recognized certification demonstrates competencies for employment.

“This is an amazing opportunity for individuals to embark on a career path as well as an education pathway,” said Leah Palmer, executive director of the Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AzAMI) located at MCC. “Boot camp instructors are Boeing employees, experienced individuals with first-hand knowledge of the skills needed in the industry.”

“We worked closely with MCC staff and faculty to develop the pre-assessment and course curriculum to ensure individuals receive real-world training to acquire the industry skills needed,” said Vonda Davis, Electrical Fabrication director for The Boeing Company. “Students who successfully complete the boot camp will be provided an opportunity to interview with us, and if successful, will be eligible for full-time, benefitted positions.”

Students earning the wiring harness certification will be reimbursed the full tuition of \$255 with an out-of-pocket investment of only \$15.

“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 MCC Wiring Harness Boot Camps start every two weeks through Aug. 1, 2019. Morning sessions are from 7-11:30 a.m. and afternoon sessions run from 3 to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday at the MCC Southern and Dobson Campus, 1833 W. Southern Ave., Mesa, Arizona 85202.

Those interested in earning an Electrical Cable Harness Wiring Certification and pursuing a growth-oriented career in the aerospace industry are required to complete a pre-assessment online at mesacc.edu/wiring-bootcamp.

Direct questions about the boot camps to Cesar Becerra, MCC career navigator, at 480-461-7216 or AzAMI@mesacc.edu.

Eight-week boot camps will also be offered during the fall 2019 and spring 2020 semesters.

New online tool aids career and education decisions

Mesa Community College releases a customized version of Emsi Career Coach, a web-based tool which uses comprehensive labor market data to help students match their interests to specific occupations and identifies available academic programs to achieve their career goals.

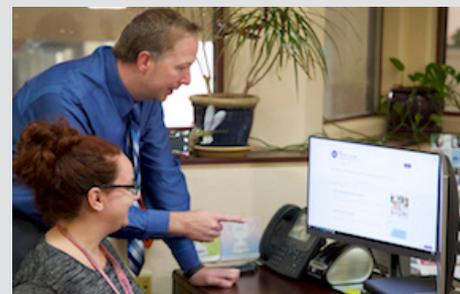
In addition to compiling rich, Valley-specific workforce data such as occupational growth and wage information, Career Coach presented by MCC includes an assessment based on personality and strengths to help users explore careers.

“It is important to align careers with education and training to help people make informed decisions when planning their future,” said Michael Voss, MCC dean of Career and Technical Education. **“It is our hope that anyone who is considering a career change or needs help identifying a career will use our tool.”**

Transitioning military service members can use their military occupation code to match their current job with civilian occupations.

There is no cost or login necessary to access the current Arizona labor market and wage data or the online assessment to explore careers based on personality and strengths provided in the Career Coach tool.

Emsi Career Coach, customized for MCC, is accessible at mesacc.emsicc.com.





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EXCITING START, EXTRAORDINARY RETURN

Alumni & Friends is published by the Office of Institutional Advancement (IA) for the alumni of Mesa Community College

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REMINDER

**MCC
Hall of Fame**

Now Accepting
Nominations

Nominations are being accepted through June 28, 2019, in the following categories:

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

To review criteria for each award and submit a nomination, visit www.mesacc.edu/awards.

Now Accepting Nominations!

The MCC Alumni Association will host the fifth 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.