



STUDENT AND ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

First bachelor's degree graduates: Rheanan Heller and Amanda Jansen.

Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) awards: Regional top three Distinguished Chapter, College Project, and Honors in Action Project honoree. National Distinguished Member, Zoe Bell, and Distinguished Chapter Officer, Saffron Wells.

ALL-AZ honorees: [Beka Namachanja](#) and [Kesha Shelton](#). Beka was also selected as an ALL-USA scholar.

Small Business Pitch Top Winners: Shaniqua Hopkins, Maya Mack, Jose Armando, Angelique Pickett, Guadalupe Perez, and Sasha A. Michaels ([spring](#) and [fall](#)).

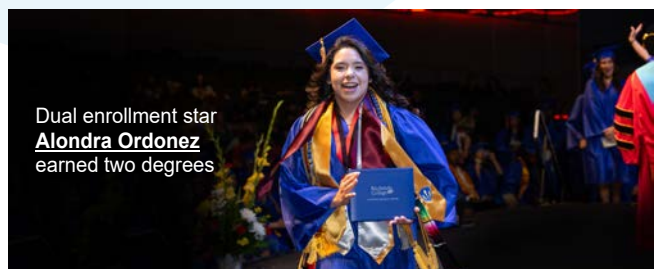
Chancellor's Civic Leadership Medallion Award, Maricopa Community Colleges (MCCCD): Shaniqua Hopkins, Tara Hayman, and Saffron Wells.

National Society of Leadership & Success (NSLS) student spotlight: [Tara Hayman](#) and other members addressing local hunger and homelessness.

A record 104 adult education High School Equivalency graduates earned a college credential or certificate— 70 more than last year.

John McCain Award, MCCCD Veterans Education Taskforce: Alumnus [Abe McCann](#).

Mr. Indigenous 1st Attendant and MLK Jr. Student Servant-Leadership Award, Arizona State University: Alumnus [Cordero Holmes](#).



I am not a testament to sorrow or hardship, but as a living, breathing example of resilience and hope. My life's journey is marked by trials that could easily break the spirit.... Yet here I am before you, not merely unbroken but empowered and strengthened.

[Ana Sandoval](#), Rio Salado National Adult Education Honor Society, induction ceremony student speaker



COLLEGE ACHIEVEMENTS

SANsational Award: Outstanding efforts in compliance and innovation for developing a cost-effective compliance calendar.

Mabel K. Edmonds Excellence in Equity Award, National Council for Workforce Excellence.

PTK National Awards: Paragon Advisor, Student Affairs Tech Michele Kemp; Distinguished Advisor, Faculty Chair for Accounting and Small Business Lily Davidov; and Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction, President Kate Smith.

Top 2024 Great Colleges to Work For® Honor Roll: Recognitions for Compensation and Benefits, Professional Development, Confidence in Senior Leadership, Faculty and Staff Well-being, Shared Governance, and Faculty Experience.

Promising Practice, American Association of School Personnel Administrators: BA in Education program to address teacher shortage.

Most Engaged Campus for Student Voting, ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

Four **Regional Edward R. Murrow awards** and three **Public Media Journalists Association awards** for outstanding news coverage by [KJZZ 91.5](#).

Homer Sarasohn Award: Counselor Mitra Mehraban.

NISOD Excellence Award: E Cole, Cydney Doupe, and Ramsey Itani.

Excellence in Delivering Integrated Education Training Services Award, Arizona Adult Education Institute: Adult Education workforce career training pathways.

Top 50 Women Leaders of Phoenix, Women We Admire: Vice President Janelle Elias and President Kate Smith.

Community Circle Award, Arizona Association of Addiction Professionals: Faculty Chair for Addiction Studies and Behavioral Science [Patricia Hernandez](#).

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Open Pedagogy Fellow: Faculty Chair for Psychology [Jennifer Moore](#).

Teacher of the Year, Arizona Education Foundation: [Emmett Burnton](#), Boulder Creek High School dual enrollment teacher.





PARTNERSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS

MCCCD, NAU and TSMC semiconductor [apprenticeship program](#) launched, preparing students for manufacturing careers at TSMC.

University of Arizona Center for Semiconductor Manufacturing [partnership](#) created to develop educational pathways for high school and college students to enter the industry workforce.

Partnership between **MCCCD and State of Sonora** established to create workforce development opportunities in seven industries for Arizona and Sonora students through exchange programs, apprenticeships, and internships. President Smith helped facilitate this partnership as the Arizona Mexico Commission Education Committee Co-Chair.

Second Chance Pell Online Laptop [Pilot Program](#) graduated the first cohort of Incarcerated Reentry Education (IRE) students to access online instruction and earn online certificates.

Higher Learning Commission [Student Success Academy](#) team established to evaluate and improve student outcomes.

NACCE Everyday Entrepreneur Program and Wells Fargo **partnerships** launched *Small Business Pitch* competitions and *30-Day StartUp Sprint* program. NACCE awarded a [\\$20K grant](#) to sponsor 2025 entrepreneurial programs.

Glendale Community College [partnership](#) expanded GED® test preparation and workforce development offerings.

Partnerships to increase voter access included Sun Sounds of Arizona multilingual audio recordings of Arizona's Clean Elections Voter Guide; KJZZ 91.5 special election coverage with the Arizona Media Association and Local News Foundation; Student Life voter information events with civic non-profits; and the college serving as an official ballot drop box.

Honoring Smiles Dental Hygiene Honors Program [partnership](#) with the **University of Arizona School of Public Health** awarded grant from the Delta Dental of Arizona Foundation and Mars Wrigley Foundation to continue providing free dental services to people in need at the Mexican Consulate of Phoenix.

IRE program at Perryville and Lewis awarded [\\$45K from Lowe's Foundation Gable Grants](#) for OSHA training and certifications, infrastructure upgrades, and lab space.





ENGAGING

President Smith attended the [Raise the Bar: Classroom-to-Career Pathways summit](#) hosted by President Joe Biden, First Lady Jill Biden, and U.S. Department of Education. She also joined fellow members of the **Presidents Forum** for a **Capitol Hill briefing** on higher education and workforce development.

Faculty Chair for Educator Preparation Jennifer Gresko served on **Governor Katie Hobbs' Educator Retention Task Force** to address Arizona's teacher shortage.

Faculty Chair for Dental Programs Monica Nenad began serving the **American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation**.

Faculty Chair for Addiction Studies and Behavioral Science Patricia Hernandez worked with the **Arizona Association of Addictions Professionals** on the passage of **SB1062** to transform addiction counseling practices. She also joined **President Smith** to [meet U.S. Department of Education representatives](#) to address behavioral health expansion (HB2691).

VP Janelle Elias published a [Community College Daily commentary](#), *Applying an Entrepreneurial Mindset to Design your Higher Education Administrative Career: Ten Tips for College and University Administrators*. She also contributed an [Education Technology Insights editorial](#); *Digital Micro-credentials Serve the Workforce and Adult Learners*.

President Smith joined the [EdUp Experience](#) and [Presidents Forum](#) podcasts to discuss Rio Salado's adult education, dual enrollment, incarcerated re-entry, workforce development, and other customized programs that increase access to higher learning.

The **Tempe Chamber of Commerce** hosted its **2024 State of the District breakfast** at Rio Salado with **U.S. Representative for Arizona's 9th Congressional District Greg Stanton**.

The college hosted numerous events to increase community engagement including an MLK Day celebration; Empowering Abilities: Inclusive Practices and Innovations; Fostering Belonging: Understanding Introversion & Extroversion; a Jewish History Month Virtual Holocaust Tour; and Arab American Heritage Month celebration.

Philanthropy: NSLS students prepared 13,392 meals at **Feed My Starving Children**, **Dash with Splash** racers raised \$3,600 for scholarships, **Be A Student's Hero** donors raised \$5,350 to keep students in school; the **Faculty Senate** raised \$1,700 for the **Jo C. Bennett Student Assistance fund**, **United Way** donors raised \$11K for the community, and the college ended the year launching its **EmpowerEd** campaign for future students.



INNOVATING

Certificate of Completion (CCL) and Microcredential Pathway in Precision Optics Level I launched to prepare students for entry-level tech jobs.

Textbook Access & Affordability Taskforce increased low-cost, no-cost and Open Educational Resources textbook options to **60% of Rio Salado's 651 courses**. The team also launched an awareness campaign and [website](#) to help more students save money.

Artificial Intelligence: The Innovation Think Tank published an AI Adoption Report assessing employee sentiments and suggestions for college policy and strategies integrating AI. The team also created a tutorial and chatroom for employees to engage. The Institutional Advancement team adopted Synthesia AI to produce on-demand, cost-effective instructional videos.

[Academic Life Coach program](#) launched to support underserved students as part of Avanzar, Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) grant funded initiative.



We're not just preparing students for jobs; we're cultivating visionaries who will illuminate the path of progress.

Faculty Chair for STEM Initiatives Rick Vaughn