

Meet Colleen A. Smith, Ph.D., CCC's new president

Dr. Colleen A. Smith will start as the newest president of Coconino Community College on Feb. 1, 2016.

"I am both thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to serve the students, faculty, staff and communities of Coconino Community College as the next president," Dr. Smith said. "Everyone I met during my visit to the college gave a warm welcome and demonstrated a strong sense of pride in CCC. I saw a spirit of determination and hard work at the college, and I saw evidence across the college of individuals setting high standards for student learning and student success. I look forward to working with the

District Governing Board, the community and the entire team at Coconino Community College in a collaborative environment that puts students first."

Dr. Smith's extensive experience as a community college administrator and a CEO has provided her with a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of higher education leadership. However, she credits her years as a full-time faculty member at Western Wyoming Community College as playing an integral role in her passion for the mission

of the community college, the students and communities served by that mission.

Throughout her career, Dr. Smith's focus on the students and her collaborative leadership style have served as the driving force behind learning innovations and success initiatives that effectively implement policy changes and launch new programs. She also has successfully negotiated

partnerships with universities and public schools to provide smooth transitions for students, as well

as with local municipalities for the development of mutually beneficial training facilities.

Her in-depth understanding of both the national and state higher education environments, and her CEO experience with budgets and facilities, have contributed to the realistic and results-oriented approach she brings to leadership in the comprehensive community college structure. Dr. Smith has presented at national conferences on various aspects of the assessment of student learning and has served as a consultant for a variety of colleges and universities throughout the United States and also in Canada.

Dr. Smith has served on the

Texas Association of Community Colleges Legislative Committee working with state officials and legislators to increase the community college span of influence in support of students. She now serves as chair of accreditation committees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Her leadership has produced successful reaccreditation processes at her home college in Texas and Wyoming.

Dr. Smith earned her Ph.D. from Texas Woman's University and both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Texas A&M Commerce (previously known as East Texas State University).



Dr. Colleen A. Smith

TRiO grant immerses student in ASL



CCC student and TRiO grant recipient Loriann Gigous stands outside the American Sign Language lab at CCC.

Loriann Gigous, 45, began attending Coconino Community College after raising four children.

She decided to major in American Sign Language.

"I want to work as an interpreter for the deaf and hard of hearing," Gigous said.

Last spring, Gigous learned of the American Sign Language Arizona Total Immersion program. In the program, participants eat, sleep and breathe American Sign Language for five solid days. The cost of the program was

about \$700, and it would not have been possible for her to attend without a grant from CCC's TRiO program.

In July, the U.S. Department of Education announced that CCC's TRiO program received a second five-year, \$1.1 million commitment in funding.

TRiO is designed to help with student retention, graduation and transfer to a four-year college by fostering a climate supportive of the success of low-income and first-generation college students and people with disabilities.

"This grant is extremely difficult to

secure - the competition is open to all colleges and universities throughout the 50 states and includes the US territories as well," said John Henneberg, CCC's former TRiO Program Director. "TRiO students achieve higher retention and graduation rates when compared to their peers not enrolled in the program. The grant will allow Coconino Community College's Student Services staff to continue serving hundreds of TRiO students, helping them succeed in achieving their educational goals."

Among the program services included are: Assigned academic

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CCC impacts localeconomy

Coconino Community College adds income, investment.

A single mother decides to go back to college to become a scientist to support her family.

A high school student wants to earn college credit while she's still in high school.

A veteran leaves the military after serving his country and wants training in a new skill.

These real stories, emotional and inspirational, happen daily at Coconino Community College, where student success is the heart and purpose of CCC's mission. The stories are as varied as the students.

CCC has real impact on real lives daily by playing a key role in helping students increase their employability and achieve their individual potential. Community colleges in Arizona like CCC also add billions in income and offer a variety of investment to local businesses and communities in our county.

That's the conclusion of a study released earlier this year by Economic Modeling Specialists International. EMSI, in its "Demonstrating the Value of Arizona Community Colleges," conducted a statewide economic impact study of Arizona's community colleges, including CCC.

According to the study, which focused on the 2013-14 fiscal year, Arizona's community colleges put about \$1.2 billion into the state's economy through day-to-day operations. Spending by community college students put another \$300 million into the state's economy, and the impact of alumni increased earnings added another \$13 billion.

The story is the same for Coconino County and CCC.

"The college serves a range of industries in Coconino County and supports local businesses," according to the EMSI study. "And society as a whole in Arizona benefits from an

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2015 GED Recognition Ceremony an intimate gathering



GED graduates receive their General Equivalency diplomas at the Fourth Street Campus on June 4, 2015.

Joie Ray was 17, two months pregnant and living in a youth shelter in Flagstaff when she started taking classes to get her general equivalency diploma.

Her son was born in late May, and on June 4, she joined six others for the 2015 GED Recognition Ceremony at Coconino Community College.

"It hasn't been easy, but it's definitely been worth it," Ray, who now lives in Yuma, told a gathered audience of about 50 at the Fourth Street Campus. The feeling of the gathering was intimate, and the room was full of laughter and warmth for the GED recipients.

The keynote speaker for the event was Katy Wiedmann, who received her GED through CCC.

"I did everything I could to make things harder," Wiedmann told the recipients of her experiences in high school. She made the choice to drop out, but she also decided to get her GED.

She eventually got an entry-level position at outdoor apparel business in Flagstaff,

and moved from working in the call center, to becoming an assistant buyer, to buyer, to merchandiser. The GED laid the foundation, and Wiedmann said if the seven GED recipients were willing to work hard, they could achieve their goals.

"I think it's amazing that you chose to be here," Wiedmann said.

Dr. Ingrid Lee, former Dean of Arts & Sciences, congratulated not only the GED recipients but their families and friends, who helped them in attaining their goal.

"These seven individuals sitting up here are exemplary, and I commend all of you," Dr. Lee said.

Several of the recipients took the opportunity to speak to family, friends, faculty and fellow students in the audience.

"When I decided to drop out, it was probably one of the worst feelings," said Taylor Davis of Cornville. She decided on getting a GED, studied, saw it through and succeeded. "The GED was my very first

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Student Success: Finding her passion for science at CCC

Heather Mead left her job in real estate to stay-at-home mom. After eight years of marriage, she divorced.

"I needed a job," Mead said.

The real estate business in Flagstaff hadn't rebounded after the recession, so she decided to attend Coconino Community College to find another career path. Her idea was to go into teaching secondary education, with an emphasis in science.

"As soon as I started taking the science courses, I realized that I was interested in science, not teaching," Mead said.

Now a CCC2NAU transfer student at NAU on track to get her degree in microbiology, Mead spent the summer at the Flagstaff office of Translational Genomics Research Institute, or TGen North, as a paid intern. She was paired with a principal investigator in a project studying the fungus that causes Valley Fever.

"I feel very hands-on in the project," Mead said.

LONG WAY

Mead started taking classes at CCC one or two at a time. Her youngest child was 4 years old when she started taking classes. She ran a cleaning business and kept taking bites out of the requirements to a degree. She applied for CCC2NAU and received scholarship assistance to help with the costs of tuition, and she took some classes online so she could fit an education into her busy life.

At CCC, she didn't feel out of place even

though she was older, a parent and not the traditional student. And it was at CCC she found her passion for microbiology. Doug Friedman, CCC Microbiology Instructor, nominated her for Science Student of the Year, and she won.

"That made me feel really good because I have so much respect for Doug and all the staff there," Mead said.

Then, one day, she was at her child's school for a science fair and learned about TGen. She was still at CCC.

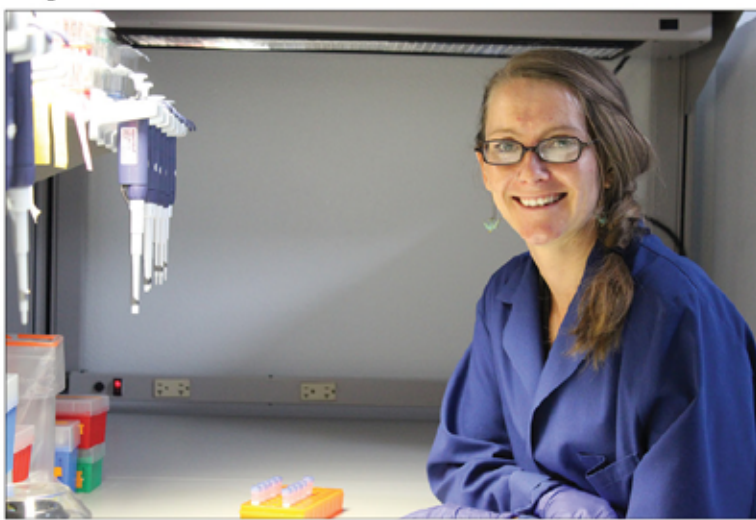
"That night, I went home and found out they have internships," Mead said.

The HELIOS Educational Foundation partners with TGen to make paid internships possible. It allows up-and-coming scientists get hands-on experience in a lab. Mead was one of three accepted for TGen North, and 45 interns total for TGen's operations.

She spent eight weeks on a project with the assistance of Dr. Bridget Barker that can be completed in that time. The goal was to complete the project and present the findings at TGen headquarters in Phoenix with all the other interns. The project dealt with "host interactions with coccidioides." Coccidioides is a fungus, and when it is inhaled by mammals, causes an infection that is commonly called Valley Fever.

CHUGGING ALONG

"I've learned more here than in a lot of my biology classes," Mead said of her



CCC2NAU student Heather Mead worked for TGen in Flagstaff last summer.

time with TGen.

After completing her internship, she returned for her second year at NAU. Her planned graduation is in 2016, the culmination of a six-year process, and it's a date she looks forward to.

"It feels really good to somebody who's been taking two or three classes for a really, really long time," she said, smiling. "I'm still chugging along."

After she gets her bachelor's degree, Mead is looking forward to graduate

school and a Ph.D. In the meantime, she will be working to build her reputation as a reliable lab employee.

And after graduation?

"My hope is to stay in research here in Flagstaff," Mead said.

She emphasized the support she received while she was a student at CCC.

"I so enjoyed my time at the community college," Mead said. "I miss it all the time. It was a really great move for me."

Navajo Nation students become Stars for the Future



CCC2NAU student Kiril Kirkov, left, and Astronomy Instructor Barry Malpas prepare a telescope for viewing.

Fourteen young students and their teachers from the STAR School in Leupp ate pizza and listened as Coconino Community College Astronomy Instructor Barry Malpas explained photographs of the moon, its craters and the planets.

"You can expect to take pictures like these," he told the students.

The students will be on the CCC campus every other week for the academic year as part of the "Stars for the Future" program. The program, created by

CCC2NAU student Kiril Kirkov, exposes the children to astronomy concepts.

The ultimate goal: "Someday, some of these children will go into space science," Kirkov said.

A PROJECT IS BORN

Kirkov received a NASA Space Grant available through NAU. The grant helps recipients develop skills in research of space sciences.

Kirkov's idea: Teach students from the STAR School how to do astronomy observations using telescopes at CCC, which

have tracking software to follow celestial objects.

"The idea is to work with children from indigenous communities in our area," Kirkov said.

He began enlisting the help of Flagstaff and Navajo Nation scientists and educators. The participants will be the school's fifth- and eighth-grade students. The program will introduce space science to the children and give a comparative look between modern and traditional understanding of the universe. The program will follow tribal cultural protocols and

"Someday, some of these children will go into space science."

Kiril Kirkov
CCC2NAU student

understanding of the skies.

Kirkov presented the program to the Leupp community during the Harvest Festival in early September. About 200 students, parents, faculty and staff showed up at the school. After the presentation, the people gathered went to the telescopes and were able to get a closer look at the Milky Way, Saturn and some of the constellations.

"It was an outstanding beginning," Kirkov said. "I was every excited. It was great."

ANTHROPOLOGY PASSION

Kirkov's passion is visual anthropology. The discipline, as he sees it, combines his loves of filmmaking, photography and indigenous cultures. He moved to the United States from Bulgaria in 2008 after he spent a career as a high school teacher who also delved deeply into Bulgarian folklore.

When he moved to the U.S., his focus was to study photography to practice another form of art. When he started school at CCC, his focus widened to include filmmaking and anthropology.

Kirkov will be using his own camera equipment for

the project. Twice a month on Thursdays, the students will come to CCC from Leupp to make astronomical observations and attend photography workshops and lectures. On Fridays, Kirkov will travel to Leupp for post-production of the photos.

Kirkov selected some of the students as a media team to make a documentary of the students' experiences during the project.

"The point is for the children to document the experience themselves," Kirkov said.

In April, the NAU School of Communication will donate time for the students to edit the project with Kirkov's supervision and come up with an hour-long documentary.

All of the photos and the documentary will then be used to create a student exhibit of the project. Kirkov said Lowell Observatory will be displaying the students' work. At the end of the project, he will invite the students, their families and people from all the participating institutions for the opening reception of the exhibit.

"The kids will be very happy and proud," Kirkov said. "The parents will be proud, too."

Teens score first jobs with CCC/Goodwill partnership program

Throughout the summer, Coconino High School sophomore Yesica Rodriguez, 15, worked at Goodwill Industries of Northern Arizona.

She greeted people at the door, salvaged donated items, priced items and worked as a cashier.

"I did basically everything," Rodriguez said. "But my main focus was cashiering. It was really great getting the experience."

Rodriguez and 10 other Flagstaff teens, all part of the First Jobs Summer Youth Employment Program, received diplomas of completion Thursday, July 30, at Coconino Community College's Lone Tree Campus.

"It truly is a first jobs program," said David Hirsch, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of Northern Arizona. "It's their first job, but it's a job on steroids."

First Jobs, a partnership between CCC and Goodwill, is in its sixth year, Hirsch added. When the program started, it was the only one of its kind in the county. There were six students in the first year, but the program grew to include 12, and this year there were 18 students who started the program.

First Jobs is funded with the help of Goodwill and the Flagstaff Community Foundation, Hirsch said. The students receive paychecks out of the funding for the eight-week duration of the program. Twelve of the available

jobs are with Goodwill, and the remaining six jobs are with businesses in the community – like Jitter's, Warner's Nursery and Findlay Toyota.

Students receive work-readiness training, attend classes, undergo workshops on how to work for employers, attend a "boot camp" to show hiring managers the skills they have learned. The classes are taught at CCC's Fourth Street Campus.

At Thursday's graduation, 45 parents and family members and employers attended to watch the 11 students receive their honors.

"It really renews my faith in your generation because you were just super," said CCC Instructor John Cardani, who was in charge of the classroom component of the program.

Rodriguez said she liked the social and behavioral sciences classes the most because they gave her information to help her work well with her co-workers as well as the customers at Goodwill.

Her most valuable lesson: Empathy.

"You really don't understand situations people are in until you engage with them," Rodriguez said. "That was really incredible."

She added, "I think (the program) is going to make me a much better employee in the future."



Yesica Rodriguez, center, receives recognition for completing the CCC/Goodwill First Jobs program.

Dr. Russ Rothamer, Vice President of Academic Affairs at CCC said, "These projects are wonderful. It's why we do what we do – to see the look not just on the kids' faces, but the pride in the parents' faces, too."

At graduation, Rothamer told the students, "I hope to see you back here someday in our classrooms, or working at CCC. Thanks for making CCC a part of it."

New member of the CCC District Governing Board appointed



Dr. Marie Peoples is the newest member of the CCC District Governing Board.

The Coconino Community College District Governing Board has a new member. Dr. Marie Peoples was sworn in as a District Governing Board member in late June at the CCC Lone Tree Campus. She will be representing District 3, which includes Williams, Parks, Bellemont, Kachina Village, Mountainaire and South Flagstaff. Coconino County Superintendent of Schools Risha VanderWey appointed Peoples to the post.

"I am excited to serve on the CCC District Governing Board," Peoples said. "Community colleges provide an incredible value to learners directly served and to the overall economic condition of the community. CCC prepares learners across the adult lifespan for careers and readies adult learners to transition onto continued higher education. I consider my

appointment as a privilege and look forward to helping CCC pursue its vision."

"We are thrilled that Superintendent VanderWey has appointed such an outstanding member of our community to fill the vacant seat on the board," said DGB Chair Patricia Garcia. "We all look forward to working with Dr. Peoples at this important time in the evolution of our college."

Peoples is the Chief Health Officer for the Coconino County Public Health Services District. The District oversees programs that include Immunization and Sexual Health Services, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, Environmental Services and the Medical Examiner's Office. Peoples has master's degrees in both Public Health and Sociology/Criminal Justice. She also has a

Ph.D. in Public Health Epidemiology.

Before coming to Coconino County in 2013, Peoples was the Director of Public Health for Cole County, Mo. She also served on the Jefferson City School Board during her time in Missouri.

Until recently, Peoples also served as a member of the CCC Foundation Board of Directors. Before Peoples could accept the District Governing Board position, she had to resign her post with the CCC Foundation Board of Directors.

Peoples takes over for Gioia Goodrum, who resigned her position in May. Goodrum served as vice chair and secretary. She was appointed to the Board in December 2013 and was elected to the post in December 2014 to serve for two more years.

CCC students \$ave2Learn

Alexa Greer is in her sophomore year at Coconino Community College.

It is a year that she won't have to worry about where the money is going to come from to afford college because she was accepted into the Coconino \$ave2Learn program.

"I was going to save money for college anyway," Greer said. "This made it easy, and it was too good of an offer to pass up."

Students in the Coconino \$ave2Learn program can earn money toward an education at Coconino Community College. The idea: Make an Individual Development Account, with a participant putting money into a savings account. That money is then leveraged through a partnership of private donors and federal funds. For every dollar students save, they will receive \$3 in matching funds from the private donors and federal funds.

The maximum students can save in the account is \$1,000, which means they will have \$4,000 available for an education at Coconino Community College. Students may reapply for a new individual development account for the next year.

Greer said she transferred funds from her standard account to the IDA and started putting money into the account.

"Watching it grow was amazing," Greer added. "I did my last deposit Thursday. It'll pay for the full tuition this semester and most of next."

Talks to start \$ave2Learn began last year, said Landon Earls, Community

Engagement Outreach Coordinator for Coconino County Community Services.

"It's shown great retention rates and improved grades compared to the entire student population," Earls said.

At that time, Janet Regner, director of Community Services, brought the idea to Coconino Community College after she learned of a successful program in operation at Mesa Community College. The MCC Individual Development Accounts had been in existence for about five years at the time.

The program was made possible by the cooperation among CCC, Financial Aid, Business Services, Coconino County Community Services and others.

The first \$ave2Learn participants were enrolled in January, and the first accounts were opened in March.

"As of right now, we've got 14 students enrolled and two more are being processed in," Earls said.

He added that the initial funding has created a capacity for 18 students. Funders include Sunwest Bank, the Raymond Educational Foundation and private donors.

"You've got skin in the game," Earls said, adding that the account offers students incentive to save in order to receive matching funds for education.

To be able to draw on the account, students must deposit at least \$25 each month for six months, Earls said. To receive the funds and matching funds, students make the request for the next available



CCC student Alexa Greer received benefit from the \$ave2Learn program at CCC.

academic semester, and the funds are disbursed to the CCC financial aid office.

To be eligible for \$ave2Learn, applicants must be at least 16 years old and a resident of Coconino County. The students must attend a free financial literacy workshop, and they must have a valid Social Security number or a federal tax ID number. They must prove they have a job, or be on a work-study program, and they must have an annual income between \$4,000 and \$23,000.

Students may attend full-time or part-time, but they must be seeking a degree. Earls said the plan is to expand

the program to include more students. New private donors include Arizona Community Foundation and the Forest Highlands Foundation.

Greer will be wrapping up her studies at CCC this year and is expecting to earn her AA degree in sociology before she transfers to NAU or UA for her junior year. Her debt will be minimal for her continued work toward her bachelor's degree and, ultimately, a Ph.D. She's heard there are similar programs for university students.

"It's shown me there are options out there," Greer said.

CCC Veteran Services helps veterans go to College

Starting college can be intimidating. New students need to enroll, register for classes, buy books, and then figure out how to pay for all of it. The process for a veteran returning to or attending college for the first time is even more complicated.

Carla Lugo, a student worker at Coconino Community College Veterans Center on the Lone Tree Campus, understands the ins-and-outs of helping veterans sign up for their military education benefits.

Lugo herself is no stranger to the military lifestyle. She served in the Air Force for seven years before transferring to the reserves where she continues to serve. Her wife, daughter, son and son-in-law are also serving in the military.

When Lugo decided to return to school to pursue nursing, she turned to Veteran Services to help her navigate through the paperwork required to use her military benefits and start classes. Now that Carla is a student worker at the Veterans Center, she helps other veterans start their college journeys.

"We give them a checklist," Lugo said. While Veteran Services at CCC focuses on helping student veterans secure their military benefits and start classes, they can continue to offer helpful information for the duration of a veteran's time in school, including information on tutoring, finding jobs, and taking advantage of resources available in the community.

"The VA offers tutoring assistance in

case you run into any issues for first-timers who are straight from the military going to school and have never attended college before," Lugo said.

If a student veteran is looking for a job, Lugo and her coworkers may know what places in town are hiring.

While CCC Veterans Services can't provide financial assistance to student veterans, it's a good place to find some information about what may be available in the community.

"We'll give you an extra tool to make contact with," Lugo said. "We offer (some) information if you need to get assistance within the local community, we can point you in the right direction."

According to Lugo, a little more

than 100 student veterans study at CCC. While there aren't any veterans clubs or organizations on campus yet, veterans are welcome to take advantage of the comfy chairs in the Veterans Center if they need to get some homework done or take some time to relax.

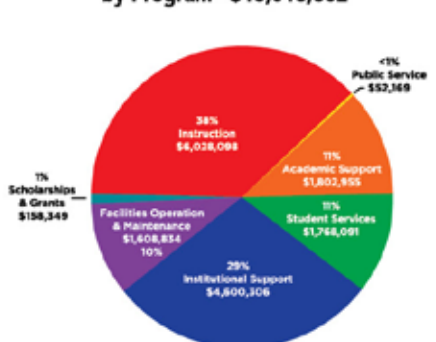
"Feel free to pop in. These seats are available if somebody wants to sit here, away from the Commons area, where it's a little bit quieter," Lugo said. "In fact, last semester, a couple people would just sit in here for an hour or two, just doing homework."

For more information about Veteran Services, visit them at the Veterans Center located in room 129, email cccvtets@coconino.edu or call 928-226-4309.

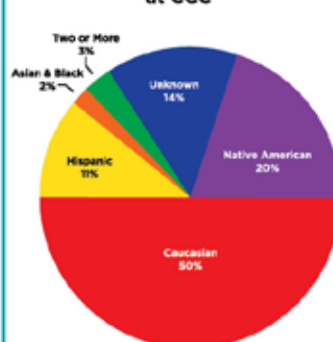
INCOME CREATED BY CCC IN FY2013-14
\$14.9 MILLION Operations Spending Impact
\$11.7 MILLION Impact of Student Spending
\$38.4 MILLION Alumni Impact
\$65 MILLION Total Impact

Source: Economic Modeling Specialist INTL

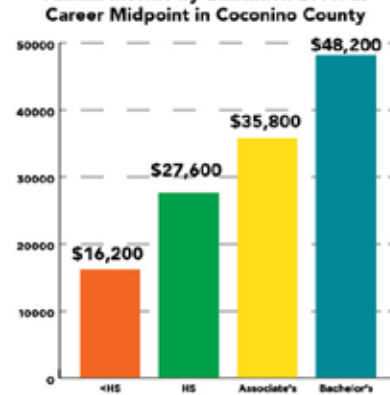
FY14 CCC General Fund Expenditures by Program - \$16,018,802



A Diverse Student Population at CCC



Annual Income by Education Level at Career Midpoint in Coconino County



Source: Economic Modeling Specialist INTL

The CCC STAR is a publication of Coconino Community College

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Page

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Technology Center
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Page, AZ 86040

928.645.3987

For class offerings at Grand Canyon and Fredonia, call the Page Instructional Site.

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CCC to host 'Dispassionate Landscapes' exhibit

The photograph shows sandstone mesas playing with shadows under a blue sky. A river cuts rusty rock through time. The scene cradles a human thought of beauty only the Southwest can deliver.

And then the tailing ponds from the potash mine come into view. Coconino Community College will host the exhibit, "Dispassionate Landscapes" by Flagstaff photographer Michael Collier and author Rose Houk from Oct. 21 to April 1 at the Lone Tree Campus. The exhibit kicks off Oct. 21 with two separate receptions at noon and 6 p.m.

How could The United States be filled with so much beauty and at the same time exhibit so much change at the hand of humans? With the wide availability of energy-rich minerals, other important natural resources and a high number of endemic plant species, the question is particularly relevant to the Southwest. Throughout the history of the United States, citizens have held and expressed a range of conflicting values on how nature's bounty should be used to benefit human society. The discussion is directly related to the philosophical and aesthetic values that pertain to wilderness.

Collier has created a new forum by which we as a community can exchange ideas of how humans use natural resources and the impacts of the industrial economy on the ecology of the landscape. His 40-year journey of photographing the continent, noticing the footprint of industry with mines, dams and wind generators along the way, clearly

demonstrates the complex and sometimes conflicting faces of industry and the environment.

The exhibit is meant to provoke discussion.

"At times, the discussion becomes too abstract, too polarized," Collier said. "And we risk losing sight of both industry and the landscape on which it resides. Maybe it's time to look at what really exists."

The photographs in "Dispassionate Landscapes" make no judgment: Right or wrong, good or bad. Viewers can weigh the merits of starkly differing values and draw their own conclusions.

The noon reception at the V. Philip Tullar Commons at CCC will feature a panel of students who will share their thoughts and experiences and invite others to join the conversation over refreshments. The 6 p.m. reception will also feature the student discussion, followed by comments from Collier and Houk.

IF YOU GO

"Dispassionate Landscapes" Photographs by Michael Collier, writings by Rose Houk

Oct. 21 - April 1, Coconino Community College, 2800 S. Lone Tree Road, Flagstaff

Student panel discussion and reception, noon and 6 p.m., Oct. 21.

For information, contact Bryan Bates at (928) 226-4273, or bryan.bates@coconino.edu; or Alan Petersen at (928) 226-4322, or alan.petersen@coconino.edu.



A potash landscape photo by Michael Collier is part of the "Dispassionate Landscapes" exhibit at CCC.

Artist Joseph Coco gives talk at CCC

Renowned artist Joseph Coco will be giving a talk and participating in a round table discussion on the CCC campus at the end of October.

Coco, who was a coordinator for the Flagstaff Arts Council in the late 1970s, will give a slide presentation about his work, and in particular the "Full Moon Series." The "Full Moon Series" started in 1972, and every December since then, Coco has painted the full

moon as it rises, as a synopsis of the year.

The series was created primarily in Flagstaff, and the presentation will be Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 6 p.m., in Room 528 on the Lone Tree Campus. On Thursday, Oct. 29, at 2:30 p.m., in Room 536 on the Lone Tree Campus, Coco will engage in a roundtable discussion with students about his work and life as an artist. Coco received his Bachelor

of Fine Arts from Northern Arizona University in 1978, and his Master of Fine Arts from Rutgers University in 1986. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and he has taught at various colleges and universities throughout the country.

Both events are free and open to the public. For more information about Coco's work, visit <http://www.kingbiscuittime.it/joecoco.html>

TRIO

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advisors; individualized academic tutoring; career exploration and major and course selection; information on types of financial aid, scholarships and grant opportunities available; and study skills assistance.

Gigous said her family is a one-income family, and she has had to work hard to keep her education from adding any financial burden to the family's bottom line.

"In order to go to school, I have needed to get grants and

scholarships because the cost of my education is not a part of our family budget," Gigous said.

She also availed herself of TRIO's workshops and tutoring, and the staff members are always there to support her and to help her stay on her educational path.

Gigous lives 40 miles outside of Flagstaff and has to commute to school four days a week. She applied for a grant through TRIO in the hopes of putting the funds toward tires and gas money.

Then she learned about the ASL immersion program - conducted exclusively in

sign language with no talking whatsoever. Gigous said that learning ASL is learning a foreign language, and the more practice and interaction a learner has with people conversing in that language, the more skilled the learner becomes.

"When I won the TRIO grant I knew exactly what that money would go to," she said. "I was really able to soak up and saturate in the culture and really got past, 'Can I do this?'"

Being a part of the immersion taught her that she could do it, and it would not have been possible

without the grant from TRIO.

"It has made a hugely significant difference in my skill level and my confidence level," Gigous said. "This is the career that I want to pursue, without any doubt. I know I'm on the right path."

Her ultimate goal is to finish her studies this spring at CCC with an AA degree and a certificate in ASL Interpreting. She will then move on to get a bachelor's degree and to consider an ASL interpreter position in deaf ministry.

"I'm very much looking forward to being able to help

other people like TRIO has done to support me," Gigous said.

"That feels really good to me and I'm glad to be a part of it."

After finishing the immersion program, Gigous wrote a letter of thanks to the TRIO staff at CCC.

"The assistance and encouragement I receive from TRIO has been extraordinarily important to me," Gigous wrote. "Your willingness to invest in me and my educational and career goals is valued beyond my words to express."

For more information about the TRIO program at CCC, visit www.coconino.edu/trio.

IMPACT

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expanded economy and improved quality of life. The benefits created by CCC even extend to the state and local government through increased tax revenues and public sector savings."

CCC, its students and alumni increase spending and bolster business productivity for the region annually, according to the EMSI study. Coconino Community College, through day-to-day operations, pumped about \$14.9 million into the local economy, and student spending put in another \$11.7 million. The impact of CCC alumni generated another \$38.4 million for local businesses through higher wages and increased output. All told, CCC generated about \$65 million for the local economy.

According to the study, "Coconino Community College creates value in many ways. It gives students the skills they need to have a fulfilling and prosperous career. The

College also supplies an environment for students to meet new people, increase their self-confidence and promote their overall health and well-being."

Return on investment for students, taxpayers and society shows CCC as a sound investment choice, according to the EMSI study. CCC students will receive higher future wages as a result of their education. For instance, annual income for workers in Coconino County with a high school diploma at the midpoint in their career was calculated at \$27,600. Workers in the county with an associate's degree made \$35,800 in annual income, an increase in earnings each year of \$8,200. So, for every dollar students invest in CCC, they receive about \$3.90 in higher future wages - a 15.6 percent rate of return. As for taxpayers, workers with post-secondary education earn more and contribute more in tax payments to support government services. Society in general will also save on costs for healthcare, the criminal justice system and unemployment assistance

with improved lifestyles of students who receive a college education.

The EMSI study concludes that CCC "creates value from multiple perspectives," including:

- Benefiting local businesses by increasing consumer spending in the region
- Supplying a steady flow of qualified, trained workers into the workforce
- Enriching the lives of students by raising lifetime incomes and helping them achieve individual potential
- Creating a more prosperous economy statewide
- Generating savings through improved lifestyles of students
- Increasing tax receipts across the state
- Reducing demand for government-supported social services

CCC provides affordable tuition and a wide variety of certificates and degrees, as well as career and technical programs, with more than 50 certificate programs

and two-year associate degrees in various fields including nursing, fire science, law enforcement and business.

Since 1991, CCC has served residents across 18,600 square miles of Coconino County. Today, CCC serves more than 7,500 students per year with two campuses in Flagstaff.

CCC reaches out to the more rural portions of Coconino County including Williams, the Grand Canyon/Tusayan, Page/Lake Powell, Fredonia, Tuba City and other remote areas on the Navajo, Hopi and Supai Tribal Lands. Instructional sites offer classes through online, in-person and Interactive Television classes to meet the needs of students in these rural and remote areas. Nearly 25 percent of CCC's students are Native American learners.

To see the complete EMSI study, visit http://www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org/EIS/ACC_MainReport_1314_Final.pdf

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GED

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accomplishment."

Janelle Walker of Flagstaff told the audience that she was a perfectionist with lofty goals for high school, where she would graduate at the top of her class with college credits to boot.

"I thought to myself, unless I accomplished all those things... I wouldn't be happy. It wouldn't be enough," Walker said.

She suffered anxiety, had to drop out halfway through her sophomore year and planned to go back. But she didn't go back. Feeling a failure, she took GED classes at CCC.

"Getting the GED was one of the best feelings in my life, honestly," Walker said. Walker is in college now, she added, and she is excited for the future.

In addition to Ray, Davis and Walker, graduates included Leia Boyce, Natalie Reichard, Michael Rhodes Sr. and Athena Smith.

During the ceremony, faculty members recognized student achievement in the Adult Education and English as a Second

Language programs. Several students were inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society. Those students were Hortencia Arvizu, Nannette Baldwin, Johanka Lastra, Shirley Delmar, Raina Sule, Joie Ray and Curtis Tsosie.

The 2015 and 2014 ceremonies have been smaller than previous ceremonies for a variety of reasons, said Pam Packard, CCC Adult Education Testing Examiner. In 2014, a new GED test series was rolled out that has significantly harder content that takes people more time to be prepared to take. The test is no longer paper and pencil and is Internet-based. The price tag to take the test is more expensive as well and requires people who want to take the test to have a credit card.

"Of course, history shows that numbers always drop the first year or two after a new GED series is rolled out," Packard said. "We are definitely seeing improvement in numbers this year over last..."

In her closing remarks to the graduates, Packard said the GED was just a beginning.

"This is not the end of anything," Packard said. "This is a stepping stone."