



HOME > CITY NEWS

## ENLIGHTENED VISION FOR AREA GRADS WHO ATTEND MCC

 **BARBI WALKER-WALSH** ♦ FEBRUARY 16, 2024

*Incoming VP vows to reinforce campus' focus on inclusion, diversity*

Students from Corona del Sol and Marcos de Niza high schools may get a glimpse of a new era at Mesa Community College as Dr. Jeannetta Hollins takes the helm as the school's vice president of student affairs. Among her impressive tenure in higher education, Hollins brings decades of experience, spanning roles from adviser to dean. Say her advocates: She epitomizes a dedication to student success, embracing diversity, and fostering inclusion. Hollins' commitment to her work represents what has been called a visionary drivet for innovation and collaboration.

"I'm pleased to be joining MCC," said Hollins. "I look forward to enhancing the student experience, focusing on diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging." Hollins has a doctorate in educational leadership from Old Dominion University, which she says equips her to tackle the challenges and opportunities facing community college students. It is anticipated that her strategic oversight in student affairs and enrollment management will guide MCC teams in providing essential student services and programs.

"Today's college-aged students face various challenges, including mental health issues and insecurities," Hollins said. Affording college altogether is another stressor facing students. For those considering MCC, there are numerous options for students with limited financial resources. Prospective students can maximize their experience by tapping into available financial support, including scholarships through FAFSA and the Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation. From smaller class sizes and smoother transitions from high school, attending a community college has both financial and educational benefits for students, said Kim Hilgers, assistant superintendent for teaching & learning at Tempe Union High School District. These experiences can contribute to a higher retention rate and offer a more personalized experience for students, according to educators knowledgeable in the transition.

"The relationship between Tempe Union and local community colleges, such as MCC, is crucial," Hilgers said. She also points out that TUHSD has informational events and meetings with MCC representatives to help students and families navigate their future education. Another tool for prospective students is MCC's Career Coach online interactive tool, created to help students explore career options and align academic paths with their interests and goals. It helps provide insights into wages, employment outlooks, skills and education requirements, hopefully empowering users to make informed decisions about their futures.

"Education in recent years has changed with the integration of technology and virtual learning, and societal matters impacting institutional decisionmaking," Hollins said. Despite the continued rising cost of a college education, the value of a degree remains high, with graduates enjoying better earnings and career opportunities. Educational delivery is evolving rapidly, with online learning expanding access and flexibility, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. These advances offer more opportunities to more students, including alternatives to a traditional university four-year degree. MCC currently offers

Language, with more said to be in the pipeline.

Regardless of the choice of attendance, community college offers transformative opportunities for growth. "Community college is a transformational environment designed to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills," Hollins points out. The overall conclusion is that, in navigating an evolving landscape of higher education, balancing affordability, quality and relevance can be crucial to ensuring equitable access and meeting the demands of a changing job market.