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TECHNOPRENEUR EXPERIENCE PROGRAM DEVELOPS TALENT, SUPPORTS LOCAL BUSINESSES

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DAWN ZIMMER | **MESA COMMUNITY
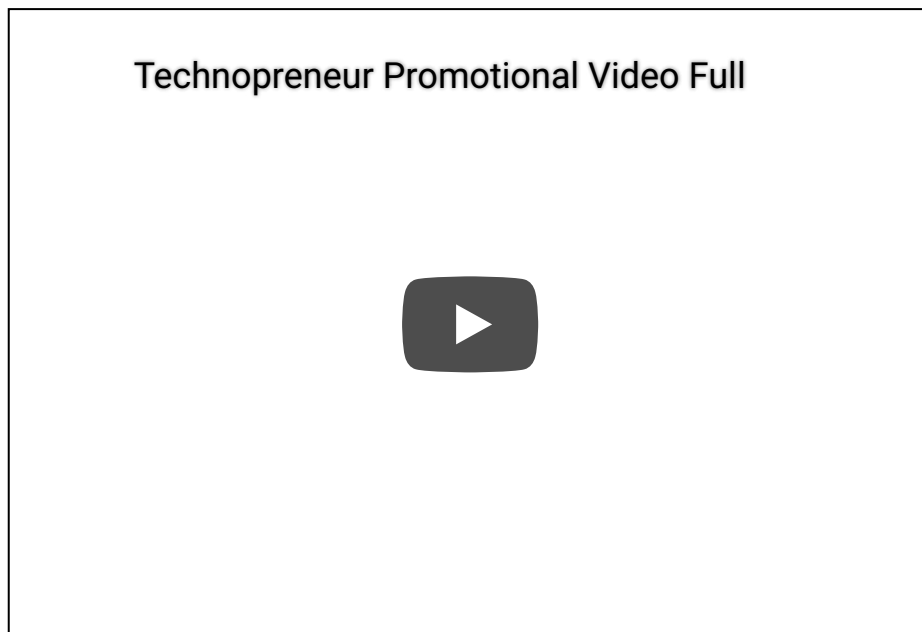COLLEGE**   A A A

Mesa Community College students gain valuable workforce experience
and practical industry skills while engaging in community impact work
with local businesses, through the **Technopreneur Experience** program.

The program enhances the experiences and employability of students
pursuing careers using emerging technology. Student talent teams are
assembled to help solve a technology deficit experienced by a local

business. The teams' aggregate knowledge and ability are pooled to develop a solution.

The model expands on the process used in developing Resources, Information & Services for Everyone (RISE) iOS app where a team of students and faculty partnered to help solve the problem of locating basic needs services.

Maricopa Community Colleges: Technopreneur Promotional Video

"We hosted conversations with healthcare, technology and East Valley businesses to learn what technology barriers they were experiencing," said **Diane Meza**, director of the Maricopa Information Technology Institute-East Valley (MITI-EV). "We quickly identified common themes. In addition to finding employees with specific technology knowledge, we learned there is a strong desire for talent with entrepreneurial aptitude to problem solve, the soft skills to work collaboratively and project management experience to execute."

Students with certifications in areas such as app development, cloud, graphic design, web development, website design and computer programming, all of which are taught at MCC, work together to reach a common goal, determining a solution to a problem, while honing their business and related soft skills.

The program, which launched in fall 2020, was developed through the insight and support from teams at the Mesa Chamber of Commerce and Apple Community Education Initiative. Sixteen Mesa

Chamber of Commerce member businesses indicated interest in participating in the MCC Technopreneur Experience program.

Recent alumnae Nicole Peterson, a first-generation college student who earned her Associate in Applied Science, Web Development in May 2021, gained valuable experience through her Technopreneur Experience capstone project. She helped create two apps, one for a Mesa coffee shop, Jarrod's Coffee, Tea & Gallery and another for ReachOutAZ.

"In addition to applying my newly acquired skills as a web developer, the capstone project gave me insight and experience in development methodologies. Attending weekly virtual Scrum meetings allowed me to collaborate with classmates and mentors that held varying abilities and talents," said Peterson. "I walked away with an earned degree, a valuable understanding of a related field of study, and the enthusiasm to continue community involvement"

The MCC Technopreneur Experience is one of six programs offered through the MITI-EV, a partnership between East Valley colleges, designed to grow talent to spur local business success and growth.

Businesses wishing to engage with MITI-EV to develop training for current employees, hire technology students, or have questions about the Technopreneur Experience program, should contact the director, Diane Meza, at 480-461-7077 or send an email to diane.meza@mesacc.edu.

Mesa Community College is nationally recognized by the Aspen Institute as one of the top 150 community colleges in the United States and is known for service learning, career and technical programs, civic engagement and innovative approaches to education. The college serves as a resource for career readiness, transfer education, workforce development and lifelong learning. Host to more than 30,000 students annually, MCC offers degree and certificate programs online and at its two campuses and additional locations.

Through the implementation of Guided Pathways with Integrated Support Services, MCC is transforming ways it champions student success; college completion, university transfer and career attainment for all students.

MCC is a Hispanic Serving Institution with a diverse student body, including more than 400 international students representing over 60 countries, who enrich campus learning experiences. Award-winning

faculty are dedicated to student success, providing the education and training to empower MCC students to compete locally and globally. Located in the East Valley of Phoenix, Arizona, MCC is one of the 10 colleges in the Maricopa County Community College District. Learn more at mesacc.edu.

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