

Mesa Community College President Shouan Pan leaving for post at Seattle Colleges



Maria Polletta, The Republic | azcentral.com 4:51 p.m. MST April 18, 2016

His departure creates an additional layer of uncertainty for faculty, students and community leaders already grappling with declining enrollment and dramatic budget cuts.



(Photo: Mesa Community College)

Mesa Community College President Shouan Pan has been named the next chancellor of Seattle Colleges, a role he is expected to assume in early July.

Pan, who has overseen MCC's two campuses since early 2008 (</news/articles/0310mccprez0311.html>), confirmed he had accepted the appointment in a statement emailed to MCC colleagues and supporters Monday afternoon.

"This decision was very difficult to make because of the prospect of leaving a special college that I love," he wrote. "It is hard to say good-bye to so many wonderful community college educators and professionals with whom I share the same ideal and commitment: changing lives and enabling dreams. Without question, the past eight years at MCC have been the most challenging, most enriching, and most rewarding part of my professional career."

Pan's pending departure creates an additional layer of uncertainty for faculty, students and community leaders already grappling with declining enrollment and dramatic budget cuts (</story/news/local/mesa/2015/11/27/mcc-losing-students-red-mountain-campus-risk/76217450/>). Details regarding a search for a successor and a transition timeline have not been released.

"I'm so happy for Dr. Pan, but so very saddened to see Mesa Community College and our city lose him," Mesa Chamber of Commerce President Sally Harrison said. "My hope would be that the replacement for Dr. Pan is someone who engages in the community and has a passion for education, business and our city like he does."

Vice Mayor Dennis Kavanaugh, whose council district includes MCC's main campus at Southern and Dobson, also said he hoped Pan's successor would "continue the strong partnership MCC has forged with the city of Mesa and ... strive to keep programs and offerings innovative and accessible to all of our residents."

Kavanaugh said Pan had "done an outstanding job during his tenure at MCC, guiding it through difficult economic times, overseeing the last of the capital improvement projects from the 2004 community college bond issue and presiding over the 50th anniversary celebration for Mesa Community College."

More recently, Pan helped MCC implement ongoing retention and sustainability measures at its east-side Red Mountain campus (</story/news/local/mesa/2016/04/08/mesa-community-colleges-red-mountain-campus-not-closing-now/81487852/>), which was at risk for closure late last year.

He and other college officials have also been in talks with Grand Canyon University, Arizona State University Polytechnic, Brigham Young University-Idaho and Mesa Public Schools about possible partnerships that would encourage more students to complete a degree. It was not immediately clear whether those collaborations could be finalized before Pan's exit.

MCC is the largest of the Maricopa County Community College District's 10 schools, with more than 21,000 students enrolled at the start of the 2015-16 school year. Seattle Colleges enrolls nearly 50,000 students each year at its three colleges, four specialty centers and vocational institute.

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