



Mesa Community College alumna Shelby Lynch is seen holding her ballot on campus. (Photo courtesy of Mesa Community College)

NEWS

Mesa Community College continues to be a “voter friendly campus”

Rey Covarrubias Jr. 04/12/2023

Mesa Community College was designated last week as a “Voter Friendly Campus” for 2023 and 2024 by two nonpartisan organizations based in Washington D.C. that advocate for voter equality.

The Campus Vote Project of the Fair Elections Center and the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education celebrated MCC joining seven other colleges in Arizona.

Only 41 community colleges in the country have been recognized for their efforts to promote voter engagement and make it easier for students to participate in fair elections.

MCC has been recognized as a leader in the advocacy of fair elections in Arizona, with the 2023 thru 2024 election cycle marking the seventh consecutive year the college has been recognized as having a “Voter Friendly Campus”.

Earning the designation of a “Voter Friendly Campus” means a college has accomplished a variety of requirements, including having a tangible action plan that incorporates diverse students and staff who correlate with relevant campus demographics.

“It is an honor to have the opportunity to work with our national and community partners to identify new ways of heightening student participation in the democratic process,” said Debra Ohlinger, a program coordinator at MCC’s Center for Community and Civic Engagement in a recent release announcing the new campus designation.

The CCCE implements “civic action plans” across both MCC campuses to ensure there is an atmosphere of voter equality.

MCC benefits from direct feedback from the Campus Voter Project, which brings in a national and diversified perspective to the college’s “civic action plans”.

“Campuses can take this feedback into consideration as they move forward in implementing their plans specific to their own campus community,” said Dannette L. Turner, a community engagement specialist at the im CCCE who directly oversaw the development and implementation of these plans.

The plan is held to a review by the Campus Vote Project of the Fair Elections Center in collaboration with MCC in a dynamic effort to engage with students for years to come.

One of the core values of CCCE plans is to make elections accessible to all students, made evident last year by the use of drive-thru events at MCC, in which anyone could receive important voting information and have a chance to update their voting record with the Maricopa County elections department.

In recent elections, Turner says the CCCE saw a “general uptick” in voter engagement across both campuses, something she accredits as proof the action plan is working.

“During the election cycles, both campuses served as polling places for the convenience of our students. We improved our voter turnout over all, and this, in turn, worked to strengthen our culture of civic engagement here on campus,” said Turner

“MCC leadership has always been committed to serving our community in this area with an emphasis on servant leadership,” Turner added.

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Rey Covarrubias Jr. is a freelance reporter for the Mesa Legend. As a lifelong Arizonan, he has found his passion in learning and sharing the diverse cultural and natural wonders of the state.

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