

AWC Horizon Symposium 2024

Executive Summary

Event Description

On Friday, November 15, nearly 150 people attended the AWC Horizon Symposium at the Yuma Campus. Three presentations covered the three strategic pillars of the new plan: Access, Excelencia and Disruption.

- **Reimagining the Path to Access & Success**, Liz Murphy, CEO, CampusWorks
- **Living Up to the Promise of Access: How Practicing Excelencia Advances Student Success**, Dr. Marla Franco, University of Arizona Vice President of HSI Initiatives
- **Next World, New Workforce: AI in 2025 and Beyond with the University of Arizona's AI Core**, Ash Black, The Institute for Computation & Data-Enabled Insight, University of Arizona, Adjunct Lecturer & Creative Technologist, joined by students Kashyap Nadendla, Denisse Guerra, Taoseef Aziz, Amimmul Zoha, Jackson Grove

After hearing all three speakers, participants joined a mixed table of internal (students, faculty or staff) and external constituents, including partners from universities, K-12, government, parents, and business & industry. A staff moderator facilitated a focus group featuring the following three questions:

- 1 What resonated most with you from today's speakers?
- 2 What ideas do you have that would help AWC meet our goals of Access, Excelencia!, and/or Disruption?
- 3 Describe the future state when the college has fully realized the connection between Access, Excelencia!, and Disruption. (Use language like AWC will be.. Or will do.. Or will achieve....)



Event Share Out – AWC “Future State”:

What is your #1 “future state” when the college has fully realized the connection between Access, Excelencia!, and Disruption”:

We should be more accessible, where cultural barriers shouldn't impact the are of study. We will create a disruption to stay relevant in the future.

Develop outreach to families to reinforce value of higher education, including trades.

Expanding credit for experiences outside the classroom for the mastery they demonstrated.

AWC will have a streamlined on boarding process that is outlined in a one page checklist for new students

AWC's curriculum and extracurricular activities will be culturally responsive and inclusive to reflect our diverse student population

AWC will promote and expand the Early College Experience (ie dual credit concurrent enrolment etc..) to all areas of the community and the Early College Experience become the norm.

AWC will work on a national level to promote the work/education already being done and use this platform to expand programs and reach.

AWC will encourage orientation module in Canvas so student understands their expectations for their course.

Better connections, involvement and execution between industry and AWC while focusing on what local industry needs and wants are.

A place where students don't choose between working and going to school. Expand student employment opportunities.

We can eliminate the “red tape” that extends and complicates the pipelines of both students and staff. If we stay the same, we never evolve, and we are no longer relevant. We need to adapt.

Redefine “workforce development” beyond CTE/ Trades. All of our students, no matter the major, are our future workforce.

AWC will respond to regional needs and partner to provide reliable internet and transportation access.

AWC will create a workforce to help have a clear view of what ethical rules, advantages & disadvantages come with AI, have clear expectations by knowing the process to protect student rights & privacy.

Communication and reinforcing professional development with our high school partners to improve technology skills or pedagogy for faculty and staff.

AWC will be the first college to boldly embrace AI technology to circumvent bureaucratic process that impede or diminish student experiences.

Students are supported in all languages available to them in their program of study.

Strengthened bridge between EC and LS.

2. Leverage Technology - Internationally use and integrate software for support to ACCENT student connection, belonging and support alongside personalized support for each student.

AWC will reduce barriers for Hispanic students and creating solutions to help them succeed whether it's financial time, linguistic, etc.

1. Establish a First Year Experience - a Seminar/ Orientation style 1-credit course for foundational development, (foster community, connection, success and belonging, key for fulltime faculty engagement.





Event Focused Table Group feedback

A synthesis of the Horizon Tabled Focus Groups, reflecting on the most common themes and “Future State” concepts:

1. Embracing AI in Education

AWC aims to boldly integrate artificial intelligence into educational processes, viewing it as a tool for student support, learning enhancement, and breaking traditional educational barriers.

2. Student-Centered Approach

The document emphasizes creating a highly accessible and supportive learning environment that caters to diverse student needs, particularly focusing on first-generation, Hispanic, and non-traditional students.

3. Technology and Innovation

AWC aims to become a technology-rich training center that leverages cutting-edge tools, disrupts traditional educational models, and prepares students for 21st-century workforce demands.

4. Workforce Development

There’s a strong focus on creating direct pathways between education and local industry, ensuring students gain practical skills and local businesses have a robust talent pipeline.

5. Removing Educational Barriers

The strategic plan prioritizes eliminating obstacles like complex prerequisites, language challenges, and inflexible course structures to make education more accessible.

6. Culturally Responsive Curriculum

AWC wants to develop curriculum and activities that reflect the diverse student population, ensuring inclusive and relevant educational experiences.

7. Flexible Learning Modalities

The institution plans to offer diverse course options, including evening classes, online formats, and shorter course durations to accommodate different student needs.

8. Professional Development

Continuous learning and training for faculty and staff are emphasized, with a focus on understanding new technologies and pedagogical approaches.

9. Community Engagement

The strategic plan should highlight the importance of strong partnerships with local high schools, industries, and community organizations to enhance educational opportunities.

10. Dual Enrollment and Early College Expansion

AWC aims to expand and market Dual Enrollment and Early College programs, particularly targeting minority communities and first-generation parents. This initiative seeks to strengthen pathways for younger students and create more collaboration with high schools, middle schools, and even grade schools.

This list was aided by the use of Perplexity AI.



What's Next

The AWC Strategic Plan Steering Committee will work in **December** and **January**, with Liz Murphy and Dr. Corr, to understand the research and feedback to date, and look for common themes and the biggest opportunities to deliver on the college's mission and vision for the 77% of our students who identify as Hispanic, and by extension, all of our students.

On **December 2**, the college will be invited to a College Town Hall to hear the status of the plan development, along with the announcement of awarded projects for the 2025 Innovation Fund.

In **January**, the Steering Committee offer interaction with the draft plan through a hands-on experience on our campuses.

The Steering Committee will present a plan to Dr. Corr in early **February**. Dr. Corr will contribute in his own way to that plan and present a draft to the elected District Governing Board at their **February** meeting. In **March**, Ashley Herrington, AWC Chief of Staff, will initiate an implementation process that calls on faculty and staff from the impacted areas to lead and participate in creating plans and executing plans to support this strategic work.

We will continue to update the college's webpage dedicated to Strategic Planning at azwestern.edu/strategy.

If you have questions about the Strategic Planning process, or the college's implementation of the plan, or would like to partner with the college or the AWC Foundation, please contact Lorraine Stofft, Vice President for Advancement and Executive Director of the AWC Foundation at **928-314-9595** or lorraine.stofft@azwestern.edu.

