



# West Valley VIEW

*The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ*  
Phone (623) 535-8439

Friday, July 31, 2009

## **Get a 4-year degree in your own backyard** *Estrella Mountain Community College announces partnerships with 2 universities*

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West Valley residents will soon see an increase in the number of cardinals and lumberjacks in the area.

In response to the growing desire of students looking to get a college education while staying close to home, Estrella Mountain Community College has developed a new relationship with Northern Arizona University and the University of the Incarnate Word.

While NAU, home of the Lumberjacks, has its main campus in Flagstaff and UIW, home of the Cardinals, is based in San Antonio, both universities are offering programs through Estrella Mountain Community College giving students the opportunity to get their four-year degrees without straying from the region.

"The flexibility of class schedules, convenient locations, and seamless transition from community college to university provide students with the opportunity to ensure their success in achieving their educational goals," said Sarah Padelford, NAU's program coordinator.

### **The NAU Connection**

The NAU Connection is a partnership between the Maricopa Community College District and NAU that allows students to complete a bachelor's degree after receiving their associate's degree by attending courses either on the community college campus or at another location in the community. As part of the program, an NAU adviser is located at the community college campus to assist interested students.

The NAU Connection will be available to students interested in pursuing either a Bachelor of Science in elementary education or a Bachelor of Arts/Science in interdisciplinary studies (BIS) with an emphasis in public management.

Rather than the traditional setup in which community college students are only able to take two years' worth of classes before transferring to a four-year university, the BIS program will allow students to transfer 90 community college credits to NAU, saving them an extra year's worth of university tuition.

Padelford will have an office on the Estrella Mountain campus in Avondale, helping students make as smooth a transition as possible.

"They start with me here and I advise them all the way through the program," Padelford said.

After completing their first two years of study at Estrella Mountain Community College, students can transfer right into the NAU courses needed to complete their bachelor's degree. The courses are offered in the immediate vicinity of the college so students don't need to travel away from their community to complete their degree.

### **UIW aims to keep costs down**

UIW offers a number of bachelor's and master's degree programs, including nursing, business administration and organizational management. Students can complete almost three years of their studies at EMCC before completing their last 45 hours of credit with UIW at courses taught in Goodyear.

Along with making getting a college degree more convenient, UIW is making the experience more affordable by offering free textbooks to students taking UIW courses.

"We have had a presence in the West Valley since 2007 in close partnership with Estrella Mountain Community College," said Cyndi Wilson Porter, vice president for extended academic programs. "Our tuition rate, with no educational fees and free textbooks, makes us very competitive to other schools in Arizona."

The partnerships with NAU and UIW are just the latest among numerous partnerships Estrella Mountain has with other universities.

For information about the NAU Connection, contact Padelford at 623-935-8558. For information about UIW programs, contact Steve Swatzell at 623-523-3226 or Debbie Patton at 623-523-1721.

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