



CLASS ACT

West Valley communities strengthen higher education to build a more skilled workforce

BY MICHAEL GOSSIE

Tom Dickson, CEO of Banner Thunderbird Medical Center, says he cannot overstate the importance of having quality school districts in the West Valley.

"We're fortunate in that we have many excellent public and private institutions located throughout the region," Dickson says. "We depend on them to produce the high

quality employees we'll need in the future."

As West Valley leaders try to convince new businesses to locate to the region or encourage existing businesses to expand in the region, it's that quality and educated workforce that could make or break the deal.

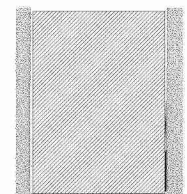
"The West Valley is very fortunate to have ASU's West Campus, Midwestern University, Thunderbird School of Global Management, two great community colleges in Glendale and Estrella Mountain and many others," says Michelle Rider, president and CEO of WESTMARC. "These raise the profile of the West Valley and enable unique business to education partnerships that enable workforce training and other business needs."

Dickson says the Maricopa Community Colleges district and private universities in the West Valley have been outstanding partners in helping ensure that organizations like Banner Health have a continuous pipeline of highly-trained and capable staff members, whether it be medical imaging professionals, financial analysts, nurses or physicians.

"We enjoy a close relationship with several local colleges and universities," Dickson says. "They've done an excellent job of working with us to identify the greatest areas of need when it comes to worker shortages and putting into place the training programs necessary to help us close those gaps. We truly view these institutions as our business partners and are thankful for all that they do to prepare our young people for challenging and rewarding careers in healthcare."

The higher education facilities aren't only preparing the next generation of West Valley workers, but they are also keeping existing workers up-to-date with the latest information and technologies available.

"One of our primary objectives is to continue the learning and development of our staff, and we've found a number of well-respected educational institutions here to help us achieve this objective," says Matthew McGuire, senior vice president of operations at Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) at Western Regional Medical Center. "Our relationships with Grand Canyon University, Estrella Community College and Arizona



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State University have allowed us to utilize the higher education available on the west side, and use it to benefit the entire Phoenix community and anywhere our patients reside."

With solid educational institutions already calling the West Valley home and other colleges and universities moving into the space, economic development experts say the challenge ahead is taking higher education facilities to the next level.

"If you look at ASU's Polytechnic campus in Mesa, it has helped transform Mesa and the area around Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and it continues to be a driver of excellence in the Mesa market," says Barry Broome, president and CEO of the Greater Phoenix Economic Council. "If the West Valley is going to compete on a bigger economic scale, it has to look at ASU West

like that: what is ASU West going to be for the West Valley?"

Broome says that while Trine University in Peoria is attracting and educating gifted engineering students and the region needs to utilize Grand Canyon University, which is paying a great deal of attention to high-performance students, the West Valley will ultimately need to be anchored by ASU West.

"ASU West needs to have same kind of impact that the Polytechnic campus had in Mesa," Broome says. "We have to keep higher education affordable, do a better job with science and technology at higher education levels and decide what centers of excellence will be developed at ASU West so it can produce the engineers, science and technology students that the West Valley needs to keep building its economy." **AB**

WEST VALLEY HIGHER EDUCATION

Arizona State University at the West Campus

Arizona State University is ranked as one of the top 100 research universities in the world. The West campus offers degree programs through three nationally recognized colleges: New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College and W. P. Carey School of Business.

The Communiiversity @ Surprise

The Communiiversity is Arizona's only partnership of higher education institutions and a public high school district offering occupational certificates, and associate, bachelor's and master's degrees in one location. Ottawa University is an integral Communiiversity partner.

Estrella Mountain Community College

Estrella Mountain Community College awards over 1,600 degrees and certificates each year and most of those students live and work in the West Valley. **EMCC** is the lead institution of a consortium of colleges awarded a \$13.5M grant in 2012 from the U.S. Department of Labor to develop programs to train the state's energy workforce of the future.

Franklin Pierce University

Franklin Pierce University, which welcomed its inaugural doctor of physical therapy (D.P.T.)

class in 2009, has combined resources with Abrazo Health Care of Arizona to address the critical shortage of health care practitioners in Phoenix's West Valley. The programs include state-of-the-industry labs and all the equipment required for students to gain the skills needed for effective patient care in today's growing health industry.

Glendale Community College

Glendale Community College offers more than 100 degree and certificate programs and more than 1,000 courses. Glendale Community College has established Arizona's only Procurement Technical Assistance Center to help West Valley businesses compete for federal contracts.

Grand Canyon University

Grand Canyon is a premier private university which provides bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs. The rapidly expanding university has recently invested \$280M in its 110-acre West Valley campus and technology, and is currently evaluating more expansion opportunities.

Midwestern University

Midwestern University is Arizona's largest medical school – and it's in the heart of the West Valley. Its 144-acre campus houses five graduate colleges: Osteopathic Medicine,

Pharmacy, Health Sciences, Optometry and Dental Medicine. Midwestern will break ground on the state's first College of Veterinary Medicine in 2013, a \$100M investment.

Thunderbird School of Global Management

The world's number one ranked school for international business is located in the West Valley. The Thunderbird School of Global Management has been developing international leaders for sixty years, offering world-class programs for full-time students and working professionals.

Trine University

In October 2012, Trine announced a partnership with the City of Peoria to open a campus. Trine has students enrolled in online classes and intends to begin offering seated classes this summer. "Trine University's engineering program is the culmination of more than a century of experience. It is very exciting for us to be investing in the West Valley," said Dr. Earl D. Brooks, II, president of Trine University.

The University of Phoenix

The University of Phoenix has reinvented higher education for today's working learner, offering associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs from campuses in the West Valley, across the state of Arizona and online throughout the world.

