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## Four innovative teaching and learning Maricopa Community College programs compete for prestigious award

Posted By *Lisa Irish* On January 11, 2017 @ 9:40 am In Submitted Story | [Comments Disabled](#)

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The [Maricopa County Community College District](#) collectively earned four finalist positions at the annual [Community College FUTURES Assembly Bellwether Awards](#) competition, to be held January 29-31, 2017.

The District's [Veteran Success Project](#) and programs from Estrella Mountain Community College and South Mountain Community College are three of the 10 finalists competing in the Instructional Programs and Services category; SMCC will also compete in the Workforce Development category.

"These nominations affirm the innovative, student-focused work happening at our colleges to increase access to education, meet the diverse needs of various student populations, improve educational outcomes and close the achievement gap," said Dr. Maria Harper-Marinick, chancellor of the Maricopa Community Colleges.

The Bellwether Awards recognize innovative and trend-setting post-secondary programs that are successfully leading community colleges into the future. Selected from 3000 nominations across the country, 30 finalists are invited to present in-person at the 23rd annual CCFA conference. A panel of peer experts will select one Bellwether Award winner from each category. Results will be announced at the conference on Jan. 31.

In the Instructional Programs and Services category, which highlight programs and activities that have been successfully implemented to support teaching and learning, three of the 10 finalists are from Maricopa Community Colleges. Estrella Mountain Community College will compete with "Student Success Fair: Increasing Completion Rates Using Tinto's Practices." South Mountain Community College presents "The Foundations Academy: Meeting Students Where They Are." The Maricopa Community College District will present "Supporting Veteran Student Success: Dedicated to Serving Those Who Serve," a program that supports students at all 10 colleges in the system.

SMCC will also compete in the Workforce Development category, ten presentations focused on public and/or private strategic alliances and partnerships that promote community and economic development. Leaders from SMCC will share "Pathway to the Pipeline of Entrepreneurial Success."

"South Mountain Community College is especially proud to have been selected in two CCFA categories. The innovative work of our faculty and staff reflects their dedication to serve the ever-changing needs of our diverse student body," said Shari Olson, president of SMCC.

The Community College Futures Assembly is an independent national policy forum for key opinion leaders to work as a "think tank" in identifying critical issues facing the future of community



colleges, and to recognize Bellwether Finalist colleges as trend-setting institutions.

For more information, see the [Community College Futures Assembly website](#).

### **About Maricopa Community Colleges**

The [Maricopa Community College](#) District includes 10 regionally-accredited colleges—Chandler-Gilbert, Estrella Mountain, GateWay, Glendale, Mesa, Paradise Valley, Phoenix, Rio Salado, Scottsdale and South Mountain—and the Maricopa Corporate College, serving more than 100,000 students with two-year degree, certificate, and university transfer programs.

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