A Message from the President

Congratulations, graduating class of 2021!

Welcome to Rio Salado’s Alumni Association! As a valued member of the Rio Alumni Family, you join a cadre of more than 95,000 Rio alumni who have earned approximately 115,000 degrees and certificates since the college’s inception in 1978. Through Rio’s alumni association, you will find noteworthy information and ways to support students as you venture beyond commencement toward a life without limits!

Welcome, Rio alumni to the June edition of the alumni newsletter! This month, we are excited to share important college updates and highlights we hope you’ll find informative and inspiring.

For more than a year, Rio Salado has successfully pivoted in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. I am proud to report that Rio continues its educational mission by responding quickly to the challenges students face. Through the deployment of new innovative solutions, we are prepared to support students where they are, providing online instruction as well as food boxes to those students in need during extraordinary times. This April, Rio Salado instituted a recovery plan to gradually return to normal business operations. We expect to be fully operational before classes begin this fall. The leadership, faculty, and staff are excited to again welcome students for the upcoming semester and are re-energized to empower learners everywhere through innovative education.

Rio Salado Alumni Association offers a variety of opportunities for you to remain engaged and connected. It would be a pleasure to highlight your personal and professional successes by featuring you in an Alumni Spotlight and in upcoming issues of this alumni newsletter. Please let us know if you are interested in sharing your educational and career journey with us by emailing: alumni@riosalado.edu.

We look forward to hearing from you.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to members of the Rio Alumni Family who have generously contributed financially to help currently enrolled students continue their educational journey toward earning a degree or certificate. Your donations are instrumental to our students’ success. If you are contemplating a donation to assist students to achieve their educational goals, please learn more at https://www.riosalado.edu/alumni/give-back.
Rio Salado College is committed to providing you, members of Rio’s Alumni Family, with important information and updates that inform and inspire. I encourage you to stay in touch as we find new opportunities to engage and connect.

Enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,

Kate Smith
President
Rio Salado College

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**College News**

**Kate Smith Named Rio Salado College’s 5th President**

After a comprehensive nationwide search, the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) named Kate Smith to serve as Rio Salado College’s next president beginning May 15. Smith, who has been serving as Rio Salado’s interim president since August 2018, joined the college in 2016 as the vice president of academic affairs and chief academic officer.

*Learn more about her journey!*

**Hear Arizona Podcasts Tackle State’s Teacher Shortage**

Hear Arizona and Rio Salado College have teamed up, with support from the F2 Family Foundation and Intel, to develop a podcast series that addresses Arizona’s teacher recruitment and retention issues. Where have all Arizona’s teachers gone? For years, headlines have said Arizona’s schools are in trouble. Hear Arizona’s new podcast *Education Cliff* is an in-depth discussion about solutions.

**Rio Salado College Dental Hygiene Program Celebrates (Finally!) Class of 2020**

This long-awaited dental hygiene pinning ceremony for the graduating cohort of 2020 took place in May. Countless hours were attributed to calibrations, meetings, adjustments, and calculative research to ensure the safety of all patients, students, faculty, and staff. This ceremony served as a representation of crossing a finish line that seemed so far out of reach when it was postponed last December.
The Dental Hygiene Program has been a part of Rio Salado College since 1998. The program, which is rigorous and demanding, cultivates students into prepared registered dental hygienists with a graduation rate of 90%.

Learn more about the newest Dental Hygiene graduates

Thank You, Mr. Ballantyne

On April 7, 2021, the Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation hosted the Annual Heroes of Education 2021. The event recognized Maricopa Community College District heroes while also raising scholarship funds. Rio Salado College offers its deepest gratitude to Reginald M. Ballantyne III for his Silver Sponsorship which will support student scholarships and student success at Rio Salado College.

Tempe Chamber of Commerce Micro-Credential Survey

Rio Salado College, in partnership with the Tempe Chamber of Commerce, has created a micro-credential survey to address the workforce needs of the Greater Tempe, Arizona region. A micro-credential is a qualification or credential that verifies that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved. Micro-credentials are designed to be industry-aligned and completed within six months to a year to provide individuals with employable skills quickly. The survey will help us identify education opportunities that will best serve the Tempe Chamber of Commerce membership and business and industry partners.

Rio Salado College is a leader in providing workforce certification. The micro-credential will provide an opportunity to revisit the current local workforce needs and prepare individuals and businesses with a solution to addressing workforce needs quickly.

Rio Salado PTK Alpha Chapter Earns 8 Awards

Over the past year, student and employee team members of Rio Salado's Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Alpha Theta Omicron Chapter chose to use their time to achieve academic excellence and make a difference in people’s lives. They were recognized this spring for their outstanding achievements with two Hallmark Awards from the PTK Honor Society and six Hallmark Awards from the PTK Arizona Region Honor Society.

Read more.
In 2014, Patrick Valenzuela finally realized the three goals he had set for himself ten years earlier in high school: he had already joined the U.S. Navy and become a police officer. The third goal, to graduate from college, became a reality when the Glendale, Arizona native earned an associate degree in law enforcement technology from Rio Salado College. So what is Valenzuela up to today? Find out in our alumni profile series.

In 2011, Janet Lamar was already established professionally when she took a break from work to care for a parent with Alzheimer’s. When preparing to re-enter the workforce, Janet came to Rio Salado to earn a certificate in eLearning Design and give her career a jumpstart. Did it help? And what has she been up to since then? Find out here.

Would you like to share your alumni story?

Email us at riosaladonews@gmail.com
Class of 2021 Achievements in the Face of Adversity

Many famous people quoted throughout history refer to adversity as the impetus, not the roadblock, to success. Take renowned author of *Harry Potter* novels J.K. Rowling, who said, “rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life.”

Adversity can have empowering effects, as demonstrated by the achievements of Rio Salado College’s Class of 2021.

Like many people around the world, Rio Salado students faced numerous adversities this year; COVID-19, unemployment, food insecurities, homelessness, social injustice, racial and political tensions, isolation, depression and more. Many found an inner strength to realize their greatest potential.

On May 6, 2021, Rio Salado hosted a virtual commencement ceremony to honor and celebrate their resilience and accomplishments.

*Read more about the Class of 2021*

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**Upcoming Events – June/July/August**

**Join Rio’s Insurance Studies Summer Camp**

Rio Salado College is excited to offer INS100 and INS200, two unique hybrid courses that give students the opportunity to learn about the growing insurance industry and career paths available in this field. There are 10 full scholarships available for each class. Scholarships include paid tuition for the courses. Students are responsible for registration fees.

*Learn More.*

**Pride Month Celebration June 22**

Rio Salado’s First Annual Pride Celebration - all are welcome!

Rio Salado will be celebrating on June 22nd from 12-1pm. Our keynote presenter will be Mr. Neil Giuliano,
former Mayor of Tempe (first LGBTQ+ Mayor).

**Register in advance for this meeting**

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

In honor of Pride Month, the Rio Salado College Library staff compiled a subject guide.  *This guide is designed to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ pride and to support and celebrate our LGBTQ+ community.*

Learn more at:  
[https://libguides.riosalado.edu/pride_month](https://libguides.riosalado.edu/pride_month)

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**Alumni Needed to Meet Students on September Roadtrip**

This September, Roadtrip Nation (RTN) is making a documentary following three Rio Salado College students as they journey across the country. The student roadtrippers will meet and interview inspiring RSC alumni to learn about their careers and how the school prepared them for success. If you are interested in participating, let us know! We’d love for you to share your stories, advice and experience with current and newly-graduated Rio Salado students. RTN producers will select the alumni to be interviewed along the journey.

[https://forms.gle/WLQxPZiZaKSUpizA7](https://forms.gle/WLQxPZiZaKSUpizA7)

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**Join our Virtual Movie Camp in July**

Rio Salado will celebrate the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act by hosting a virtual summer movie camp in July. Join us as we explore the movie Crip Camp (view for free here), an Academy Award nominated documentary about a summer camp in New York for teens with disabilities. The film focuses on several campers who turned themselves into activists for the disability rights movement and follows their fight for accessibility legislation. We will engage in a discussion about what living with a disability was, is, and will be in the coming years. Virtual Summer Movie Camp meets Wednesday mornings in July, from 7:30-9 a.m.  [Sign up to join us on the adventure here](https://forms.gle/WLQxPZiZaKSUpizA7).
RSC & APUS Join for DEIB Collaborative Forum

You’re cordially invited to join us for the next Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Collaborative Forum between Rio Salado College and American Public University System on Tuesday, June 29, 2021 from 3–4:30 p.m. ET; noon–1:30 p.m. AZ time.

The discussion will feature keynote speaker Dr. Larry Parker and focus on the continued theme of belonging with an emphasis of how to create sustainable support. His published research is a qualitative study of the experience of organization members utilizing the theoretical framework of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory.

The forum is part of an ongoing effort of both institutions to understand and address social justice and economic mobility issues. Join us for a panel discussion of relevant topics featuring students, faculty, and subject-matter experts.

Register now

Career Corner

A Freedom Financial Employment Opportunity

Customer Service – Debt Relief: As a Client Advocate, you are the primary point of contact for consumers experiencing financial hardship. Working in a fast-paced and energetic environment, you will partner with our clients through complex issues, providing logical and rapid solutions.

What makes you a Client Advocate?

- You have 1-3 years' experience in a phone based/customer service role.
- You care about people and want to see them succeed.
- You display strong problem-solving skills.
You are a great conversationalist and people love talking to you.
You are a self-starter who is comfortable taking initiative and making swift decisions.
You know how to multitask, prioritize, and manage time effectively.

Visit their website here:
https://jobs.freedomfinancialnetwork.com/

Join the State Farm Community of Good Neighbors

Make an impact while being a part of the number one auto and home insurer in the United States. State Farm, a Fortune 50 company, is consistently recognized as a top employer in the U.S. We have just the right balance of training, mentoring and development you need to succeed.

Two Spanish Bilingual opportunities (part-time customer service and full-time sales) available with a 3/22/21 start date:

Part-Time CCC Retention Specialist II (entry level)

- $1,000 sign-on bonus + $1.25/hr extra bilingual pay following training period.
- Our part-time roles come with our Total Rewards Benefits Package, including tuition assistance after 6 months of service for many insurance-related majors!

Spanish Bilingual - CCC Acquisition Specialist (*Sales*)

- Competitive candidates have a minimum three years’ customer service sales experience, omni-channel preferred.

Learn more on the State Farm Career Page

Tempe Chamber of Commerce Job Board

The Tempe Chamber of Commerce represents nearly 650 businesses with more than 70,000 employees. For more than a century, the Tempe Chamber has been dedicated to sustaining Tempe’s quality of life and keeping our community and economy vibrant. To see a listing of employment opportunities available from Tempe Chamber members, visit the job board at: https://tempechamber.org/jobs
Best Companies for Class of 2021 Grads

With graduation season in full swing, nationally recognized, award-winning Arizona-based companies are preparing to hire 2021 graduates. As you get ready to enter the workforce, check out BestCompaniesAZ's list of the Best Workplaces for Graduates that are now hiring! Whether you are a passive job seeker, or an active job seeker, or are simply looking to network with the best of the best, they have exactly what you are looking for.

Link: [https://bestcompaniesaz.com/best-companies-for-new-graduates](https://bestcompaniesaz.com/best-companies-for-new-graduates)

Apply Your Employer Training Credits Toward a College Degree

Did you know you can apply credits earned during employee training through Rio Salado toward a college degree? Whether a current or former employee of one of our partners, your credits never expire. Have questions about Partnership Credits? For more information, email mynavigator@riosalado.edu

Scholarships

Maricopa Community Colleges Foundation

The Foundation has two main scholarship cycles each year - March and September. All Maricopa Community College students are encouraged to apply, including clock and credit hour students, as well as students paying out of state tuition. Fall scholarships will be available beginning September 1, 2021, at [https://mcccdf.academicworks.com/](https://mcccdf.academicworks.com/)

Rio Salado College Alumni Association Survey

The Rio Salado College Alumni Association is interested in providing opportunities to engage our alumni in activities at the college. What's important
to you? Please provide us feedback by taking the Rio Salado College Alumni Association Survey.

The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) is an EEO/AA institution and an equal opportunity employer of protected veterans and individuals with disabilities. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or national origin. A lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in the career and technical education programs of the District.

The Maricopa County Community College District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs or activities. For Title IX/504 concerns, call the following number to reach the appointed coordinator: (480) 731-8499. For additional information, as well as a listing of all coordinators within the Maricopa College system, visit http://www.maricopa.edu/non-discrimination.

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(You can also send your request to Customer Care at the street address above.)