

# YC360

YAVAPAI COLLEGE, YOUR COMMUNITY & YOU | FALL 2020

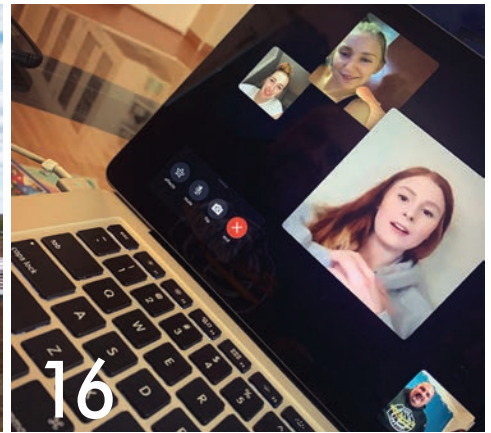


## The New Normal

Your Guide for Safe & Smart Study in Fall 2020

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### YC360

A Yavapai College Publication

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#### COVER SHOT

How do you educate during a Pandemic? With a carefully crafted, color-coded plan that balances learning with safety and gives students, faculty and administrators the ability to adapt as conditions require. *Photos by Bill Leyden. See details, pg.4.*

# Message Board

Yavapai College President  
Dr. Lisa Rhine

*f*irst, I would like to welcome back every student attending Fall semester at Yavapai College. To us, the beginning of a new school year is always special.

*This year, it's more special than any of us want!*

With the threat of COVID-19, the national debate over the virus and the political football that opening schools has become, it would be very easy to get distracted as you return to class.

Don't be. Remember: your education is about you. It's your chance to learn; challenge and surprise yourself, and rise to the level of your dreams. So quiet the noise around you, and focus on your field of study. Learn. Experiment, and discover. Today's headlines will be just a curiosity years from now. But you have the potential to go very far on things you'll learn in this moment.

This is a challenge, I know. Our world is quite different from even six months ago. This issue is full of adjustments and precautions you must observe. Abide them with grace. Trust the work we've done to create a safe learning space, act wisely, and focus on your own development. That's where the wonders are.

In time, you'll look back on these days with pride. "I accomplished all that," you'll say. "During a pandemic."



Lisa B. Rhine, Ph.D.  
President



# Yavapai College Offers a Safe, Data-Driven Reopening Plan



by Michael Grady

As a new school year approaches, and students seek to complete degrees and start careers, Yavapai College has released a five-phase COVID-19 Re-Entry plan, designed to safely resume classes in the shadow of the pandemic.

“As you know, there is currently no vaccine for COVID-19, and therefore, no way to stop the virus entirely.” YC President Dr. Lisa Rhine said. “However, I believe this plan encompasses every avenue that Yavapai College can take to help protect people as much as possible.”

Drawing from Governor Ducey’s Yavapai County data on [www.covidactnow.org](http://www.covidactnow.org), county-level testing results from [www.azdhs.org](http://www.azdhs.org), and internal assessments, the College’s Executive Leadership Team has created a color-coded scale that aligns access and safety measures with the severity of the virus in our community. (See chart)

YC’s Fall 2020 semester will commence August 17, at Phase Orange, with 85% of classes taught online; labs and face-to-face activities limited to ten people; 80-100% of non-essential workers telecommuting and face masks and social distancing required at all times.

Executive Leadership is monitoring the virus locally, and will move the College up (or down) the scale as circumstances demand. YC will also require, and enforce, a facemask policy and social distancing rules on all campuses. The College has produced an eight-point safety protocol checklist, with guidelines for virus protection, available [here](#).

For more information, including resources and tips for remote learning and wellness, please visit the College’s [COVID-19 Re-Entry Plan page](#).

## COVID-19 Re-Entry Plan



### CODE RED

#### Highest Risk of COVID-19 Community Transmission

- General Education classes: All remote
- Non-essential employees: 100% telecommute



### CODE ORANGE **Current Level**

#### High Risk of COVID-19 Community Transmission

- Masks required in YC buildings
- Social Distancing (6 ft.) required on campus
- General Education classes: Remote learning
- Labs & Face-to-Face activities: Group limit of 10
- Non-essential employees: 80-100% telecommute



### CODE YELLOW

#### Medium Risk of COVID-19 Community Transmission

- Masks required in YC buildings
- Social Distancing (6 ft.) required on campus
- General Education classes: Remote learning
- Labs & Face-to-Face activities: Group limit of 50
- Non-essential employees: 50-80% telecommute



### CODE GREEN

#### Low Risk of COVID-19 Community Transmission

- Masks recommended in YC buildings
- Social Distancing (6 ft.) required on campus
- General Education classes: All classes face-to-face eligible
- Labs & Face-to-Face activities: No group limit
- Non-essential employees: 20-60% telecommute



### CODE CLEAR

#### Lowest Risk of COVID-19 Community Transmission

- Effective vaccine developed and widely available
- Classes resume as normal

# 4 Questions About Returning to Class

## Q: What will be different about my classes this fall?

**A:** This fall, 85% of YC classes will be held online. We are currently at Code Orange, which means if a class can be effectively taught online, it will be. Classes requiring an in-person component will meet under appropriate conditions, your instructor will provide the details.

## Q: Will my campus be any different?

**A:** Yes. Yavapai College is requiring that masks and facial coverings be worn at all campuses and learning centers. We will also require social distancing: six feet between people, at all times.

## Q: What about libraries, labs, student services, cafeterias, etc.?

**A:** Labs and in-person class activities will be limited by size and plan phase (see Alert Bar) and scheduled by your instructor. The libraries will be closed to in-person visits but available for online browsing and curbside pick-up of materials. Student services – tutoring, advisement, financial aid and others – are still available in a remote capacity. The cafeterias will offer take-out only. The fitness centers, pool, and tennis courts will remain closed.

## Q: How will I know if YC's COVID-19 status changes?

**A:** College leadership constantly monitors and evaluates the spread of the virus. Status changes will be announced through all available YC channels, including text alerts, emails, social media and the College's COVID-19 Website.

**You Can.  
We Can.  
Together.**

# SAFETY PROTOCOLS

**IN OUR EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY, PLEASE ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING 9 SAFETY PROTOCOLS AT YAVAPAI COLLEGE.**



**1. Face Coverings** required for all employees, students, and guests except when outside with adequate social distancing.



**2. Social Distancing** maintain at least 6 ft. between others at all times. Avoid hugs, high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, etc.



**3. Student Waiver of Liability and Harmless Agreement** Students are required to sign a waiver of liability and harmless agreement prior to taking classes of any kind. Please visit your myYC Portal to view and sign the waiver.



**4. Illness/COVID-19 Test** Stay home if you or someone you have had close contact with experience any symptoms of COVID-19 or are awaiting COVID-19 test results.



**5. Obligation to self-report if Tested Positive for COVID-19** Students and Employees who test positive for COVID-19 are obligated to self-report in the myYC Portal in the COVID-19 tab. Employees must notify their supervisor. Students who test positive for COVID-19 must notify their instructor. This is necessary to conduct contact tracing in order to prevent spreading of the disease on our campus.



**6. Cleaning & Sanitizing** In addition to our YC custodians' cleaning, YC will provide employees, faculty, and students with cleaning supplies so they can disinfect their respective areas.



**7. Personal Hygiene** Students, employees, and guests are required to follow CDC recommendations for safe hygiene:

- Frequently wash hands or use hand sanitizers
- Do not touch face, mouth, or eyes
- Practice sneeze/cough etiquette (use the crook of your elbow to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze)



**8. Temperature Check** During some Phases, YC will require temperature checks for students and staff who are at higher risk of exposure. Temperature check kiosks have been installed in buildings 19 and 4 on the Prescott Campus, building L on the Verde Valley Campus, and at the Prescott Valley Center. Required students and staff include:

- Essential employees
- Students and faculty in First Responder, FEC, and Performing Arts programs
- Coaches and athletes
- Residence Halls students
- Any staff whose position requires significant community interaction



**9. Wellness Check** YC students and employees are expected to conduct a daily wellness self-check PRIOR TO coming onto campus. Wellness checks can be conducted by using the CampusClear app on your mobile device or desktop computer. For more information, and to download the app, visit [www.yc.edu/campusclear](http://www.yc.edu/campusclear).

# What's News

## Athletics Delayed Until Spring

After meetings with NJCAA, ACCAC and campus leadership, the Roughriders have decided to postpone all athletic competitions until Spring 2021.

"We have spent a lot of time this summer evaluating what athletics would look like during this COVID-19 pandemic, and felt that it would be best to postpone athletics until it is safer to return to play," YC Athletics Director Brad Clifford said.

Discussions on how to balance Soccer, Volleyball, Baseball and Softball during the Spring 2021 are still on-going. But the safety of student athletes will remain the department's priority.

For more information, please visit the Roughrider Athletics webpage.



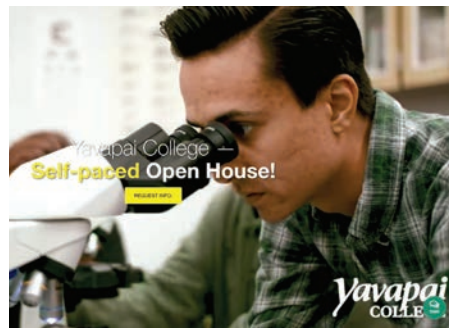
### Dr. Askari, Thumb Butte Honored for Service During the Pandemic

In an honorary luncheon tailored to the needs of the moment – masks and social distancing, carry-out entrees, and a quick return to work – Yavapai College thanked Dr. Hojat Askari and his staff at **Thumb Butte Medical Center** in July for their tireless work providing testing and treatment for the Prescott community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between March and late July, Dr. Askari and TBMC provided drive-up testing for COVID-19. As one of the few testing centers in Yavapai County, their daily patient count quadrupled: 600 people a day – including non-COVID clients – and 200-300 drive-up patients.

"Today, we recognize Dr. Askari and all the medical professionals here for your care, compassion and courage." YC President Dr. Lisa Rhine said. "The world needs more of that right now."

Please note: Drive-up testing at TBMC is no longer available. For current test sites, please visit <https://www.yavapai.us/chs>



### All Aboard for a Virtual Tour!

Lockdowns and access restrictions shouldn't stop prospective students from kicking the tires on their future. So the College has digitized its hallowed halls, varied programs, personal stories and limitless possibilities into a **Virtual Open House**.

The Virtual Open House is a smooth, top-down ride across all things YC, from its warm welcome and mission statement to its big picture-look at the College's six schools and the classes offered there. Visitors are free to wander where they will: breaking down the nuts-and-bolts of individual degree and certificate programs; viewing the stories of the high school grads, second careerists, and working parents who found success here; sampling science, technology and healthcare videos or flying (via drone-cam) across the College's six campuses and learning centers. The Virtual Open House is self-propelled and obligation-free, with a chat botton in the right-hand corner if immediate questions arise.



### Jeannine Skousen Named FEC Interim Director

The Dell E. Webb Family Enrichment Center turned to a dedicated childcare advocate with in-house experience when it selected Jeannine Skousen as its Interim Director this spring.

A mother of four with a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Relations and Human Development from Arizona State University, Jeannine established and ran her own in-home day care center for more than ten years before moving to Prescott. She assisted in creating and opening the FEC's infant classroom when it opened in 2008.

She will continue the FEC's focus on providing authentic opportunities for children to learn, in class and in the world around them. "The joy of being with children as they experience the world is indescribable," she says. "Each day is filled with wonder and I am amazed by the new things I learn with them."

# focus

on the Yavapai College Foundation

## Welding Passion and Practicality

By Michael Grady



Mary Jane Earnes Scholarship recipient  
Cassie Lilly, of Flagstaff.

“I really enjoy doing artwork with it and want to own my own business one day.”

### In a way, wild horses drove Cassie Lilly to welding.

“We have horses on our property,” she explained. “They’re very intelligent, and they break things so they can go wherever the hay is.” Cassie took a high school welding class to help her Dad stay ahead of the repairs ... and got hooked. “I enjoy everything about it.”

The nineteen-year-old recipient of YC’s Mary Jane Earnes Scholarship sees a world of possibility under the torch. “The pandemic did push me back quite a bit and I won’t be done until the spring,” she explained. “But I’m looking at it as a blessing in disguise because I decided to get my pipe [welding] cert.”

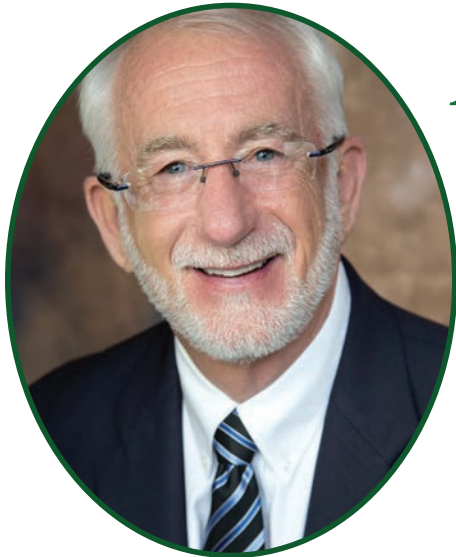
Cassie has a three-part plan for what’s next. “First, I want to work in industry.” She is currently pursuing an internship that will allow her to add diesel mechanics to her résumé. “Then, I want to transfer into fabrication.” Cassie’s phone holds impressive photos of wreaths and decorations she crafted from sheet metal. “I really enjoy doing artwork with it and want to own my own business one day.”

YC’s CTEC campus is the closest welding school to Cassie’s Flagstaff home. So twice a week, she makes the hour and forty-five-minute drive to attend. “I stay overnight with my grandmother and great-grandmother, who is 93.” She helps with caregiver work before driving home, where she balances school and a part-job.

Though welding has been traditionally male, Cassie doesn’t see herself as a pioneer. We had a lot of girl [welders] in high school. I remember our freshman visitation day – when you visit all the elective courses to choose – I saw a girl in the welding shop, and thought, ‘hey, maybe I could do that...’

Which brings her to the third phase of her plans: “Eventually, I’d like to teach welding,” she says. I love watching when the lightbulb goes off and people ‘get it.’” She has already inspired her younger sisters and cousin to pick up the torch and wouldn’t mind being that ‘girl in the shop’ who makes others think ‘I could do that.’ “My mom is a teacher,” she says, “and she’s freaking awesome.”

# A Solid FOUNDATION



## *A Message from the Executive Director*

**YC Foundation Contributes a  
Record \$700,000 in Scholarships**

**T**his new school year is getting underway during a significantly challenging moment in our history. The Yavapai College Foundation recognizes the heavy financial burden the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed on many of our students, and we are working hard to help.

YCF is providing the College and its students with more than \$700,000 in scholarship aid for the 2020-21 academic year.

Every day, since the pandemic began, the YC Foundation has been stepping forward to discover “the new possible” in the New Normal. This includes everything from new messaging and donor outreach to the development of innovative virtual fundraising initiatives. An effective YC Foundation has become more important to Yavapai College’s ability to survive and thrive – right now and for generations to come.

I have every confidence in our ability to rise to the challenge. Working together, we will continue to advance education and its power to transform lives in our Yavapai County community.

Sincerely,

Paul Kirchgraber  
Executive Director  
Yavapai College Foundation

## **New Tax Deductions Available**

**This year only, the CARES Act enables you to give when it means the most**

### **IF you do not itemize deductions:**

The CARES Act includes a one-time deduction available to taxpayers who do not itemize deductions for cash contributions of up to \$300 made to charitable organizations, even though they take the standard deduction. Married-filing-jointly taxpayers will get an above-the-line deduction of up to \$600.

### **IF you do itemize deductions:**

Limits on deductions for charitable contributions in cash – which are usually capped at 60 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI) – are being suspended for contributions made in 2020. This means individuals and joint filers can make cash contributions equal to AGI and they will be 100 percent deductible at this crucial time for nonprofits.

The CARES Act also lifts the cap for corporations from 10 percent to 25 percent of taxable income for 2020.

*Please note: The window for taking advantage of these changes closes on December 31, 2020.*



# YC FOUNDATION at Work

Every day, the Yavapai College Foundation continues its mission to support the College through resource development and community awareness.



## Toasting the Art of Child Development

Children's art work – and child development – took the spotlight at the Performing Arts Center just before Spring Break, when the Friends of the Family Enrichment Center (FoFEC) hosted its 10th Annual Framing the Future cocktail reception, Friday night, March 6.

Supporters and their guests enjoyed appetizers, bid on beautifully framed children's masterpieces, and hoisted their beverages at an event that raised nearly \$40,000 for the Dell E. Webb Family Enrichment Center. Founded in 2008, the FEC has set the standard for high quality, developmental childcare in Yavapai County, earning a coveted 5-Star rating from Arizona's Early Child Development agency, First Things First.



## Prescott Antique Auto Club Revs Up Scholarship Commitment

The COVID-19 pandemic did not stop the Prescott Antique Auto Club from renewing its commitment to the next generation of automotive technicians. PAAC members Fred Volpe and Robert and Barbara Nash met with YCF representatives this spring to review their 20-21 scholarship contributions.

The Prescott Antique Auto Club's generous support will provide nine YC automotive technology students with scholarships for the academic year. The PAAC is also working on building their endowment, with an eye toward providing student scholarships into perpetuity.



## AZ Eastern Star Supports Canine Service Training

This summer, service dogs and those who depend on them found a critical ally in the Arizona Order of the Eastern Star. The Masonic organization awarded a \$2,500 grant to the Foundation's Sage Canine Scholarship Fund, supporting service dog training through YC's Canine programs.

YC's Service Dog and Therapy & Team Skills certificate programs provide foundational and advanced training, allowing homegrown participants to train with their canine companions.

"There's definitely a need for a program like this," said Anita Wulf, Past Matron and Service Dog Chairman of Eastern Star's Golden Rule Chapter #1. "So many people need a service dog who can't afford one."



## New Crowdfunding Platform

Students, faculty or staff members seeking to raise money for a YC project have a new hi-tech ally at their command. RuffRaiser, a new crowdfunding program administered by the Yavapai College Foundation, offers the training, tools and technology fundraisers need to get their project started. Crowdfunding is a 30-day online fundraising campaign approach where passionate project advocates tell their story through print and video. They then solicit online donations from a large group via email and social media. If you would like to raise money for a Yavapai College venture, RuffRaiser will provide the training, tools and technology you need – and the YCF staff members will be available to assist, as well. Contact the **YC Foundation** at: (928) 776.2025.

To learn more about the Yavapai College Foundation, join its activities or make a donation, please contact Mary Talosi at [foundation@yc.edu](mailto:foundation@yc.edu), or call: (928) 776-2025.

# Building a

Verde Campus  
Ready to Train Tom



The bulldozers, cranes, backhoes and cement mixers withdrew from the Verde Valley Campus this past spring. The changes are more evident on the inside: flexible teaching and “mak-er spaces” to accommodate more technical education courses; updated science labs to instruct the increasing variety of healthcare disciplines; improved building security, fire safety and energy-efficient operation.

The process was like that, too. On the outside, it may appear to be a \$6.9M facility facelift. But L’s renovation was actually driven by extensive strategic study. The decision was made after a careful examination of emerging workforce trends and close consultation with the Verde Valley’s civic and business leaders. And it was propelled by a shared desire to answer the community’s changing education and employment needs in the years ahead.

– Mike Grady

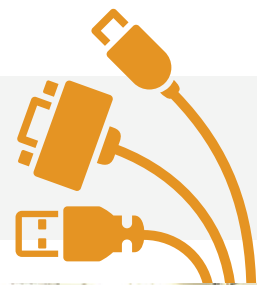
# Better “L”

us Building is  
morrow’s Workforce



- Originally constructed: 2002-03
- Renovation began: August 1, 2019
- Estimated overall cost: \$8,568,800
- Completion date: August 15, 2020

# WIRED FOR SUCCESS



Justin Phelps (left) leveraged a knack for electronics and an Associate of Arts Degree into a six-figure career as an Enterprise Sales Engineer. He credits CTEC Electronics instructor, Rick Peters (right) for getting him started.

## CTEC Grad Comes Full Circle from Electronics Class

by Michael Grady

When Justin Phelps studied Electrical Instrumentation at CTEC in 2013, his instructor, Rick Peters, would occasionally break up the lab work by reading aloud. "He'd read messages from old students. They'd tell him: 'Now I'm working at this company, making 'X' amount of money.' I always remembered the money part." Justin laughed. "It kept me motivated."

This was, he recalls, a dark time. "I didn't have a degree, but I had an affinity for electronics. I had been working as an electronics tech until I got laid off in 2008." He took multiple jobs to support his family. "I was a mechanic, a landscaper and a professional mover. But I couldn't find something I enjoyed that would make enough to support a family." A FAFSA scholarship got him into YC, and Rick Peters' classroom.

"He was just a really, really great teacher. He's a blast in class. But he also explains theories so you understand how to use them in the real world." That ability to translate

formula into technology became a theme in Justin's career. By 2014, when he earned his Electrical and Instrumentation Associate of Arts Degree, Justin had just started as a \$18/hour electronics assembler at a Tempe medical equipment manufacturer.

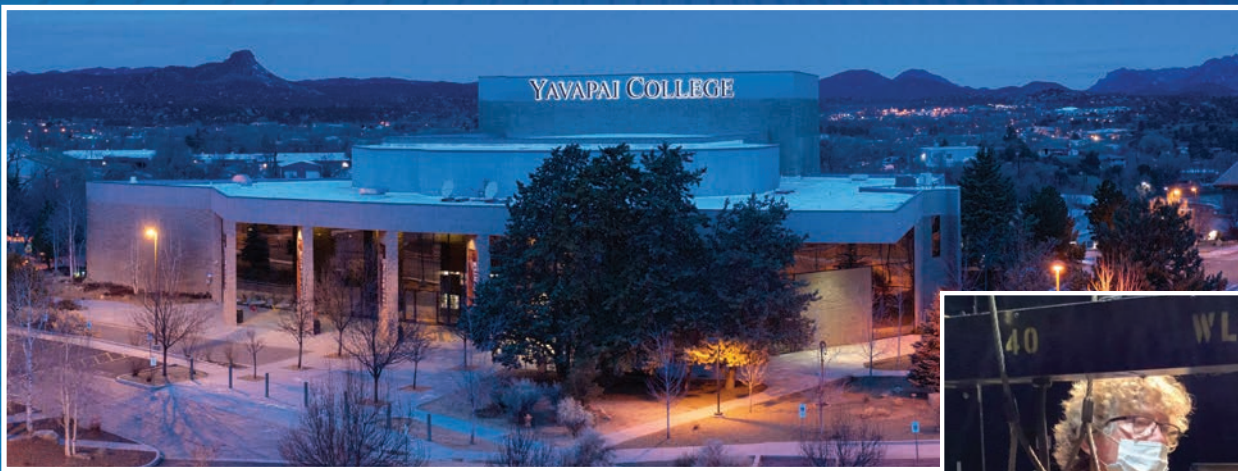
"It was a small company: Six engineers, with bachelors or masters degrees. I asked the owner if he'd ever hire a non-degreed engineer. He said, 'definitely not.' I took that as a challenge." He began applying what he'd learned. "Things Rick taught me helped me solve problems the degreed engineers were unable to. That's when I thought I was onto something." In less than two years, Justin was made an Engineer. He began designing medical equipment. "Now, basically, all the heart valves go through machines I helped work on or design."

He then became a sales engineer, traveling to Mexico and Costa Rica to troubleshoot equipment and build client relationships. He was offered a \$120,000 salary to come

to Samsara, then one of America's fastest-growing companies. "I was blown away by that," he said. "I thought, 'Really? With an Associates Degree?'" After a year at Samsara, Justin became an Enterprise Sales Engineer for a startup company. Now he works from his Tempe home, travelling occasionally to the Silicon Valley, as part of a position paying \$200,000 per year.

"I've been here four months now, and it's good. It's really hard. But I've always enjoyed challenges and the feeling like I'm drowning." He laughs. In his spare time, Justin develops pet engineering projects at home, and enjoys the thought that he is now one of Rick Peters' letters.

What would he say to someone hearing those letters at CTEC? "There's no time like the present to get started. Don't wait for a perfect time. There will always be obstacles. Give yourself permission, don't allow excuses, and don't stop."



# Cleaning, Refurbishing & Preparing for “All Clear”



## Yavapai College Performing Arts Center Remains a Hive of Activity

By Michael Grady

Many of us measure the pandemic in terms of darkened storefronts and quiet downtowns. But at Prescott’s largest building, the sleepy demeanor is just a façade. Inside, Yavapai College Performing Arts Center remains a hive of activity as it cleanses, retools and prepares for the curtain to rise again.

### The Wake of the Lockdown

“We’re doing very well, and learning this is all about being flexible.” YCPAC Managing Director of Operations Helen Stephenson said. “Though we don’t care for the circumstances, we all see the time as a gift to catch up on things that had been put off for a long time.”

That included reaching out to patrons about refunds. Twenty-three shows had to be postponed or cancelled after mid-March – a total of 6,142 tickets. Stephenson and Artistic Director Dr. Craig Ralston didn’t want PAC patrons to learn about cancellations from a stranger. “We made a lot of calls,” Stephenson said. “People wanted someone to talk to. It made the process longer but it was as much about communicating as about refunds.” Many donors generously turned their refunds into donations.

YCPAC’s remaining full-time staff continues live-streaming Cornerstone Church’s Sunday services. And PAC Technical Director Mitchell Pietz and Stephenson have hosted Social Distance Dinner Theatre – streamed movies with a local ZOOM talkback – since March. The PAC produced and directed many of the College’s virtual events, including last spring’s Commencement, and this month’s Convocation.

### The Inevitable Question

YCPAC has also used its “downtime” for a makeover. New curtains replaced the worn, dust-sotted ones that draped the stage longer than anyone can remember. New lights, a new projector and new lenses have been installed. Every one of the PAC’s 1,030 red velvet seats has been steam-cleaned. Working from the Event Safety Alliance’s Guide for Reopening, the crew has conducted safety checks and workshops; Front of House Manager Susan Youngblood has configured different seating charts to accommodate social distancing guidelines. And the facilities staff has adapted lobby, restrooms and concession areas to meet or exceed safety and hygienic guidelines. Website upgrades, maintenance and staff training projects are ongoing.

Which leads to the question: “When will the PAC reopen?” With the virus still present locally, the date remains a moving target. “We are going by the College leadership direction,” Stephenson says. “Current social distance requirements only allow us about 240 seats. There will still be new systems and procedures in place when we reopen. It may be very different.”

Even so, she said PAC staffers look forward to the night they can unhook the velvet ropes.

“Oh, we will be back! We are already working on some wonderful ideas! It’s time to get creative – and creativity is where the arts shine!”

# Keeping the Ball in the Air

## Roughrider Volleyballers Use Creativity, Technology and Teamwork to Train

Nowhere in collegiate life has the pandemic hit harder than in sports. This year, the Roughrider Volleyball team was hoping to follow up on its stellar 2019-20 season, which included an NJCAA Region I Championship, a 20-6 overall record, and a 3.74 team GPA.

The isolation and uncertainty are daunting. But a team that won the NJCAA's Academic Team of the Year Award doesn't give up. Roughrider Volleyball found creative ways to train for the season ahead.



### SNAIL MAIL AND SISTER GROUPS

Coach Zach Shaver and Assistant Coach Jordan Bickett began by going Old School: "I wrote a hand-written letter to each player," Shaver said, "so they would know how communication used to occur before the technology we use today."

Communication, collaboration and personal responsibility served as their foundation. "Coach Jordan does a great job at giving us workouts essential for our sport," Sophomore Kennedy Wright explained. "There's more responsibility on me working out alone." Motivation, she says, has been a challenge during the lockdown. "It's easy to say you will do it tomorrow. I'm lucky to have teammates, family and coaches to stay on top of me so I can get what I need to get done."

The strength and conditioning exercises combined workouts that could be done at home without equipment; workouts to be done on FaceTime with a teammate; and workouts requiring gym equipment or a weight room when available.

Shaver and Bickett also had the players work out in pairs. "We created 'sister groups,' within the team to work together on FaceTime," he said, "and we created group chats with specific questions so players and coaches could get to know more about each other."

### BONDING BY ZOOM

With the athletes unable to assemble, Shaver and Bickett worked to break the ice between players and build the team dynamic. Athletes were given written homework: puzzles on teammates' names and background, as well as YC Volleyball rules, jargon and history. It gave them a sense of shared culture when they gathered for team meetings on Zoom.

"I feel I'm still being connected with my teammates even though I am not with them," Wright said. "We're always keeping in touch and making sure that each teammate is doing well and always making sure to ask if they need help."

In mid-July, the NJCAA announced that most Fall sports, including Volleyball, would be postponed until Spring semester. Roughrider Volleyball is now tentatively scheduled to commence in January 2021. When they do take the court again, Shaver believes their online training will give them a head start. "It led to ideas that we plan to continue after the pandemic." He said. "It allowed us more time to interact with our players, because we don't see each other regularly face-to-face."

# A VIEW from the TOP

## Award-winning Aerial Cinematographer Pilots Her Own Path to Success

by Michael Grady



Aerial Cinematographer Maria Davis created her own production company, Totality Films.

**A**erial Cinematographer Maria Davis is constantly making calculations.

In the “behind the scenes” footage for the video *Streaming Air*, the 2018 Film & Media Arts graduate skillfully maneuvers her drone’s camera around looming shadows and branches. *Streaming Air* is a song from Grammy-nominated musician Ryan Farish. As the writer/director of its music video, Maria battles changing light, uneven ground, wind, actor hiccups and battery life to create a piece so fluid it feels like it filmed itself.

“The whole point is to let the music and visuals tell a story.” She explains.

The job may be complicated. But for Maria, becoming a cinematographer was a simpler calculation: follow your passion, learn your craft, and trust the journey.

“I had been filming on my own for years. Then I acquired a drone and took to the skies.” She’d listen to music as she flew near her Prescott Valley home. Before long, the music and the drone began a kind of dance. “I fly to the music,” she says. “It has a kind of uniqueness to it.”

Her professional epiphany came by an unlikely route. “In 2018, I was following the Croatian World Cup [Soccer] Team, and became friends with actor Goran Visnjic (*ER*). He invited me on location, to see the filming of his series, *Timeless*. Once

I got on that set – seeing how everybody worked together, seeing the attention to detail – I knew. This is what I wanted to do for a living. The very next day, I applied for a Pell Grant to go back to college.”

She enrolled in YC’s Film and Media Arts Program to hone her skills. “It really helped. My instructor, Christopher Sheets, said once: ‘Your script is tight, but can it be tighter?’ That resonated with me. Whatever you’re working on, don’t drag it out. Tighten as much as you can without losing the quality of the story you’re trying to tell. It was simple, technical advice, but I wouldn’t have been able to take that leap without it.”

She shot a short film, *A Journey Through Arizona*. “That was fun to do. I travelled 1,400 miles within the state.” She entered the film in AZDronefest – an international festival of aerial cinematography – hoping to win a local category. She won the Director’s Choice Award instead. “Everything snowballed after that.” She became a featured artist on cable’s *The Amazing Drone Show*. She shot a video to the Ryan Farish song *We Are Free*, and contacted the artist for permission to use his music. “He was so encouraging. Now we’re good friends.”

With two more films in this year’s AZDroneFest, Maria continues to pursue new opportunities. “The thing is, I love it,” she said. “As soon as a project is over, I’m looking for something new. As long as I’m creating something.”



## **Outstanding in Their Field**

*In a normal summer, Horticulture students would work the fields and Professor Justin Brereton would be “sending emails and setting a good example.” But the pandemic pressed Brereton (left) adjunct instructor Rich Peterson and student worker Tiffany Mulkey into farming the Chino Agribusiness Center themselves. Together, they’ve kept the greenhouse, orchards, corn, pumpkins and strawberries on schedule. “This has been a reconnection,” Brereton says. “I love it as much as I ever have. Photo by Bill Leyden.*