October 2026 Board Highlights

Division 1, Verde Valley Campus

Verde Valley Career and Technical Education

Pathways to Careers Exploratory Day Welcomes 200+ Students
September 24, 2026

Yavapai College's Verde Valley Campus welcomed 202 students for the Pathways to Careers Exploratory Day. Students explored career and technical education pathways through engaging demonstrations, conversations with student presenters and instructors, and connections with education, industry, and community partners. Representatives from the Arizona Community Foundation, Rotary, and other community organizations joined the event in support of career exploration and student success. The event highlighted the strong partnerships that help students discover local education and training opportunities leading to rewarding, high-demand careers.





9.24.26 Pathways to Careers – EMS
9.24.26 Pathways to Careers – Law Enforcement



9.24.26 Pathways to Careers – Cosmetology

Viticulture & Enology and Horticulture

Leza Live Spotlights Upcoming Verde Valley Programs – Wine & Wags and Horticulture Symposium Events
September 23, 2026

Verde Valley Campus Coordinator Bobbi Evans and Verde Valley CTE Coordinator Kristin Varon-Burkhart appeared on the September 23 broadcast Leza Live to promote upcoming Yavapai College programs and community events. They highlighted Wine & Wags, the Viticulture and Enology program, the Grand Crew Club Wine Pull benefiting the Verde Valley Humane Society, and the second annual Horticulture Symposium. The appearance helped connect community members with academic programs, student-led activities, and special events at the Verde Valley Campus and Southwest Wine Center.

Watch the interview: Leza Live video
Listen to the broadcast: Leza Live audio



9.23.26 Leza Live – KVB and BE

Electrician Technician Certificate

CBT 111 Students Gain Hands-On Circuit-Wiring Experience

Students in CBT 111 Basic Electricity for the Trades put classroom concepts into practice while working on circuit wiring. The hands-on activity develops practical, industry-relevant electrical skills, reinforces safe work practices, and builds the technical experience students need for workforce readiness in the skilled trades.



Electrician Technician Students – CBT 111- Circuit Wiring - 1



Electrician Technician Students – CBT 111-Circuit Wiring - 2

Horticulture

Yavapai College Connects with the Local Horticulture Community
October 3, 2026

Verde Valley CTE Coordinator Kristin Varon-Burkhart and Verde Valley Campus Associate Dean Heather Mulcaire represented Yavapai College's Horticulture program at Verde River Growers' annual "A Day in the Garden" event.

They connected with local horticulture enthusiasts and shared information about YC's academic Horticulture program, Community Education offerings, and the upcoming Horticulture Symposium at the Verde Valley Campus. Community members also received plants seeded and grown by students in the fall Horticulture Production course as part of their class curriculum, highlighting the hands-on learning taking place at Yavapai College.



10.3.26 A Day in the Garden – Horticulture

Division 2, Workforce Development, Public Services

Paralegal

Students shine with Dr. Tiffany Kragnes at the 4th Annual Arizona Legal Paraprofessional Summit!

Dr. Tiffany Kragnes, law professor and program director, joined students at the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law for an inspiring day of professional growth. While Dr. Kragnes accompanied students participating in person in Tucson, many other students from the program dedicated their day to tuning in virtually to engage with the future of legal services.

Throughout the event, students gained invaluable insights from legal leaders, including Arizona Supreme Court Justice Maria Elena Cruz, and explored advanced topics in courtroom advocacy, legal writing, and professional ethics. The summit highlighted the incredible dedication of these future Legal Paraprofessionals as they prepared to shape Arizona's legal landscape.



Tiffany Kragness with law students

Small Business Development Center

SCALE Grant Award to Strengthen Local Manufacturing

Yavapai College's Small Business Development Center has been awarded a U.S. Small Business Administration SCALE grant to launch the Yavapai County Supplier Readiness Initiative. The two-year project, beginning September 28, 2026, will help 25 manufacturing supplier candidates prepare to compete for larger commercial and government contracts.

Participating businesses will receive on-site readiness assessments, individualized improvement plans, and assistance addressing certifications, cybersecurity, production capacity documentation, and capital readiness. Collaboration with APEX and Manufacturing Extension Partnership partners will provide specialized support and connections to potential buyers, including those in the Phoenix market.

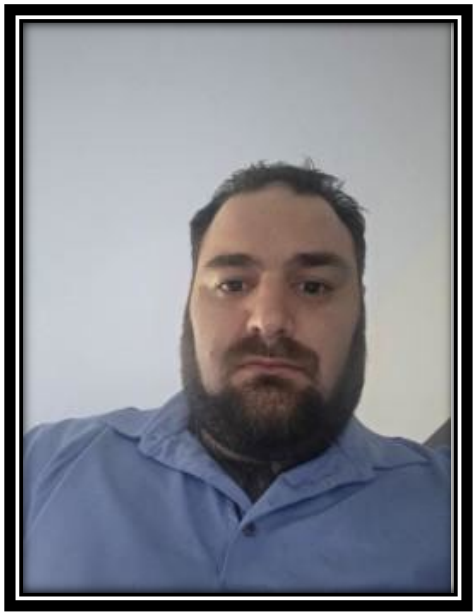
The initiative will help rural manufacturers pursue new business opportunities and strengthen Yavapai County's manufacturing economy, advancing the College's commitment to regional economic development.



The Yavapai College Small Business Development Center team

American Job Center/Prescott

Prescott Valley Job Fair, September 9, 2026
From Opportunity to Employment: A Prescott Valley Job Fair Success Story



Daniel Liguori, newly hired as a dispatcher
with Prescott Unified School District.

“My name is Daniel Liguori. I recently accepted a position as dispatcher at The Prescott Unified School District.

I have had the strong desire to live and work in Prescott for a long time. My journey came true. I have had the opportunity to work with Richard James regarding employment opportunities.

I found out about the Prescott Valley job fair and there I met a Human Resource Department representative with The Prescott Unified School District. I applied for the position interviewed for it and was hired.

Richard was extremely helpful to me with providing me with resources in the community. The American Job Center has really helped with showing
my skills that I can benefit. I realized I have talent and
have what it takes to succeed.

Daniel Liguori”

Division III, Visual and Performing Arts

Patty McMullen-Mikles Art Gallery

HeART of America

The Patty McMullen-Mikles Art Gallery opened *HeART of America* on October 1st, celebrating America 250 through a diverse juried exhibition exploring the symbols, icons, and stories that shape the American experience. The opening reception brought together artists, community members, students, and guests to celebrate the exhibition and the many perspectives represented through the artwork. Featuring interpretations of everything from the American flag and Statue of Liberty to historic landmarks, and everyday objects, the exhibition invites visitors to reflect on what it means to be American.







Film & Media Arts

Manhattan Short Film Festival

The YC Film & Media Arts Program brought the Manhattan Short Film Festival to Prescott again this year, with a sold-out screening at The Elks Theatre & Performing Arts Center. The festival gives audiences the opportunity to experience some of the best short films created by filmmakers from around the world. The highlight was welcoming several FMA students to attend at no charge, giving them the chance to see a diverse collection of films and learn from the work of filmmakers across the globe.





Visual Arts

Empty Bowls

More than 35 members of the Yavapai College ceramics and broader community came together this year to make and glaze bowls for the 29th annual Empty Bowls on the Square in Prescott. YC volunteers created and glazed more than 500 bowls, adding to the collection contributed by other community ceramics organizations. The event also featured delicious soups prepared by area chefs, bringing the community together in support of a great cause. The annual event typically raises more than $34,000 to support local food banks.



Performing Arts

Brown Bag

The Performing Arts Department recently hosted a Brown Bag Recital highlighting students enrolled in private voice and instrumental study. Seven students performed a diverse program featuring works by composers including Bach, Brahms, Handel, Mozart, and others, providing an opportunity to share their individual musical growth in a supportive performance setting. The recital showcased the important role that one-on-one instruction plays in developing students' musicianship, confidence, and performance skills.

Pictured below from left to right: Steven Biakeddy, Holger Durre, Adam Dinsmore, Patti Sheaffer, Kathleen Cuvelier, Justin Miller, and Connor Forry



Marcus Shelby's *Black Ball* Performance and Master Class







Yavapai College's jazz program welcomed award-winning bassist, composer, and educator Marcus Shelby for a two-day residency centered on jazz performance, history, and education. Shelby led a well-attended masterclass on the music and legacy of John Coltrane before joining the Roughriders and Trailblazers Big Bands in concert for *Black Ball: An Evening with Marcus Shelby*, featuring jazz standards as well as the Arizona Premier of Shelby's original *Black Ball Suite: The Negro Leagues and the Blues*.



America 250

On Sunday afternoon, October 4th, all of our choral and instrumental ensembles came together for a concert celebrating America's 250th anniversary. This special collaboration occurs only about once every 18–24 months, making it a rare opportunity to showcase the breadth of our music program in a single performance. The concert drew a great turnout and received enthusiastic feedback, making it a memorable and successful celebration. Pictured here are directors Dr. Chris K. Tenney and Dr. Mike Carter.



Division IV English, Humanities & Social Sciences

Academic Programming

Professors Chris Harrison (History/Political Science) and **Nichole Guzzo (Psychology)** presented YC curriculum at the First Friday Faculty Professional Development Workshop Oct. 2 in the CLI on the Prescott campus. The workshop demonstrated innovative ways students are learning how to become researchers in the various courses they're taking at YC.



The YC **English Department (Laura Cline, Department Chair)** was awarded the annual prize for exemplary assessment during YC's GOAT Assessment Day (Sept. 18), which was held in the CLI on the Prescott Campus. "Gather Outstanding Assessment Thinkers" invites faculty and staff to the study and discussion of YC student learning assessment strategies. The award singled out the English Department for its level of faculty participation in assessment.







Division 4 Dean **Dr. Irina DelGenio** co-paneled a presentation with Deans Baker and Robertson at the Arizona Community College Administrators Conference, held Oct. 7-9 on the YC Prescott Campus. The presentation, "Empowering Innovation with Integrity: Faculty-Administration Collaboration for Responsible AI Use in Community Colleges," showcases innovative ways YC faculty in Divisions 3-5 have incorporated AI literacy in their courses.

Dr. Karen Palmer presented at two other sessions at the ACCAC: "Leading on the Frontier: Growing Your Leadership When Resources Are Limited" and "Stronger Together: How Arizona Community Colleges Are Collaborating to Advance Student Success."

Finally, the **English Department's** literary arts journal *Threshold* held a release party at the Prescott Campus Art Gallery October 9, 5:30-7:30. The party featured author readings and information about the upcoming volume. Submissions are now being accepted by all at YC; for details, visit https://yavapaicollegeartgallery.submittable.com/submit.



Division of Lifelong Learning

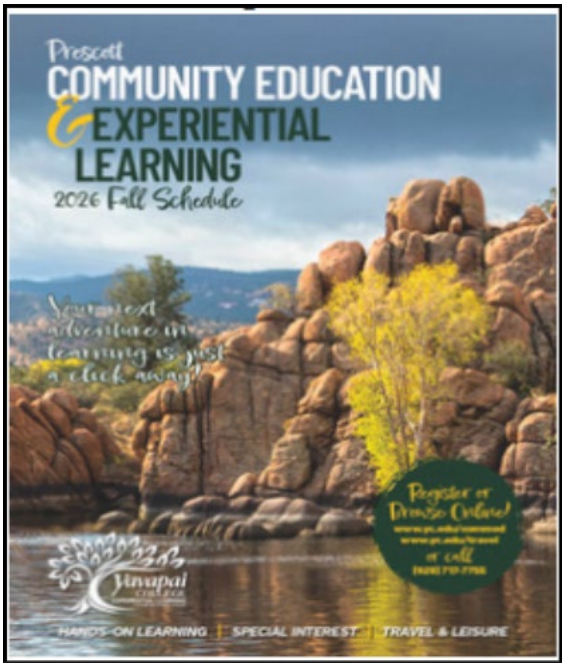
OLLI at Yavapai College in Prescott, Prescott Valley, Sedona, and the Verde Valley

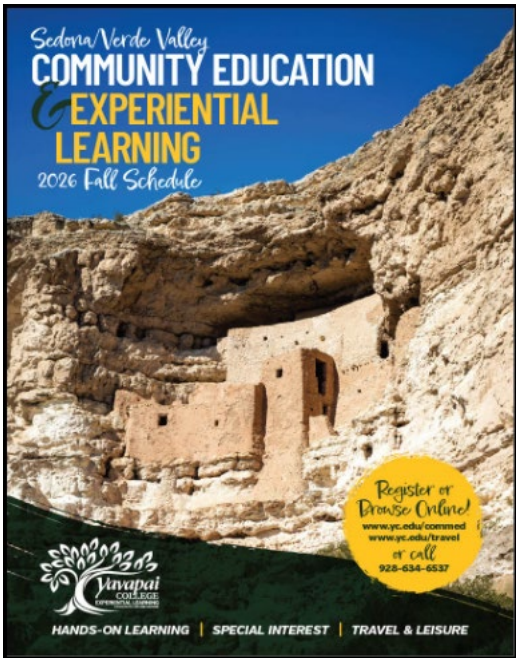


On November 7, "So Said the River" will be presented by author and adventurer Colleen Miniuk who will take the audience on a journey down the Colorado River, sharing stories, photographs and insights drawn from her memoir, So Said the River: Life, Loss, and Pie on the Colorado. This **free** event is sponsored by OLLI and the Jane Reti Speaker

Series at Yavapai College. The Jane Reti Speaker Series began in 2023 with a grant from Andy Reti to honor his late wife. The couple had been married 42 years when Jane passed in 2022. “This program is the result of Andy Reti’s generous grant to honor Jane’s commitment to new ideas, engaging in continuous learning, helping people in need, supporting the arts and sharing the joy that comes from an active curiosity,” said OLLI Director Tricia Berlowe. “Andy brought his vision of honoring Jane’s life and vibrance to us. Together, we enable that legacy to live on.”

Community Education, Experiential Learning and College for Kids (C4K) at Yavapai College in Prescott’s Quad-Cities, Sedona, and the Verde Valley





Fall 2026 Community Education & Experiential Learning: Enrollments and revenue are up as much as 115% from the Fall 2025 term

Verde/Sedona

- **2026:** 142 enrolled, $16K revenue
- 2025: 66 enrolled; $8K rev

Prescott

- **2026:** 296 enrolled, $34K rev
- 2025: 290 enrolled; $29K rev

Experiential Learning

- **2026:** 124 enrolled, $30K rev
- 2025: 111 enrolled; $23K rev

Fall 2026 Community Education programs are offering several new classes, such as Swing Dancing, Musical Theater Dance, ChopChop Knife Skills, and Reiki, as well as community favorites Tap Dancing, Yoga, Qigong and Art.





Community Education and Experiential Learning Managers are continuing to invest in community outreach to bring new instructors and course offerings to the Prescott and Verde Campuses for both programs:

- Attended the **Wine & Wags** event on the Verde Campus on October 1 to promote Division of Lifelong Learning programs.
- Recruiting prospective CE instructors from participants in the **Artist Studio Tours**.
- Offering several trips in central and northern Arizona this fall through the **Experiential Learning** program, including an overnight trip to **Petrified Forest National Park** and **Canyon de Chelly** on September 30.

Office of Instructional Support

Assessment Day 2026

Yavapai College held its annual Assessment Day on Friday, September 18, bringing together 131 participants, including 86 faculty and 45 staff and college leaders, for professional development and collaborative work focused on improving student learning.

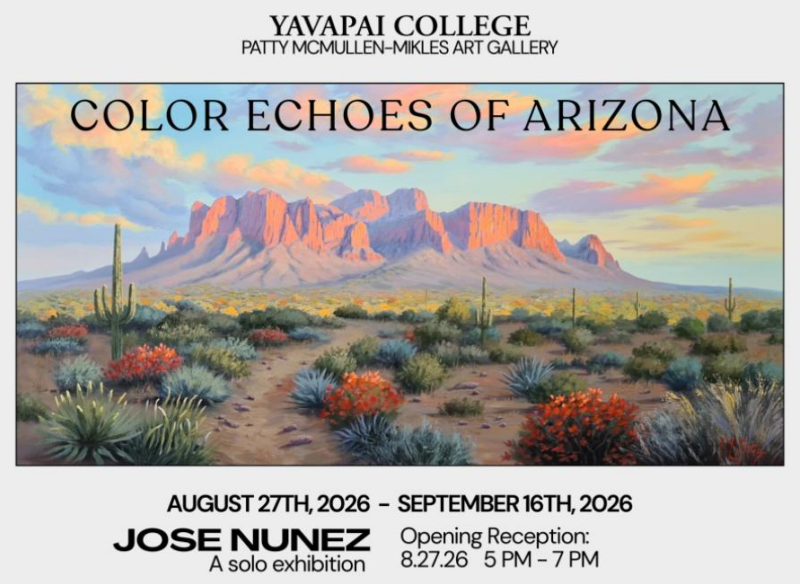
This year's event offered five learning tracks: Assessment Foundations, General Education Assessment, AI in Assessment, Assessment Processes, and Cocurricular Assessment. Participants explored new approaches and tools, examined evidence of student learning, and worked collaboratively on assessment planning and continuous improvement.

New and expanding work highlighted this year included Canvas Outcomes, Digital Literacy as a new Institutional Learning Outcome, IgniteAI in Canvas, and continued development of cocurricular assessment.

Verde Valley Campus Events

The Patty McMullen-Mikles Gallery:

Color Echoes of Arizona, a solo exhibition opening Thursday at the Verde Campus's Patty McMullen-Mikles Art Gallery, captures the transcendent beauty of the Grand Canyon State, as seen through the eyes of Jose Nunez, an internationally acclaimed painter and the winner of the 2025 Prescott Plein Air Festival.



Verde Valley Campus Housing Open House:

Yavapai College celebrated new student and workforce housing at the Verde Valley Campus in Clarkdale with a public ribbon-cutting event on September 16. The project features RV housing options and tiny homes built by YC construction students, expanding attainable housing while providing hands-on career training. College leaders thanked the Town of Clarkdale and community partners for helping bring the project to life.





Listening Tour at the Verde Campus with Dr. Doug Berry:



Following the Verde Valley Campus Housing Open House, Dr. Berry stayed on campus to continue conversations and connect with the campus community. He then hosted an informal listening session in M-137, giving faculty, staff, and students an opportunity to share ideas, ask questions, and discuss topics important to them in a welcoming setting.

Sit, Sip and Share with Dr. Marylou Mercado:



The Verde Valley Campus welcomed Dr. Marylou Mercado, Interim Provost and Vice President of Workforce Development, Health Sciences, and Public Services, for “Sit, Sip & Share” on October 1. Faculty, staff, and students were invited to enjoy a light lunch and an informal listening session, offering an opportunity to share ideas, ask questions, and connect through meaningful conversation.

Third Annual Wine & Wags event:

Yavapai College's third annual Wine & Wags brought more than 100 attendees to the Verde Valley Campus on October 1 for an evening of live music, student-crafted Southwest Wine Center wines, food, a wine pull and local pet vendors.



(Diana Dowling manning the Recruiting booth. Employee David Ellison and his black pup greeting a guest.)



Held at the Mabery Pavilion, the dog-friendly celebration benefited the Verde Valley Humane Society while highlighting its mission and introducing adoptable dogs to potential forever families—bringing the community together for a paws-itively meaningful cause.

(Janet Nix embracing puppy love.)

Center for Learning & Innovation



ACCAC members attend a networking event and presentation in the CLI Building 19-147 community room.

YC Hosts Arizona Community College Administrators Conference

ACCAC, a state-wide conference for all 11 community college districts in Arizona, is hosted by different community colleges across the state each year.

Between October 7-9 higher education leaders from 13 institutions across the state met to connect and learn from each other on Yavapai College Prescott Campus. The week was filled with networking events, podcast recordings, vendor hall tables, workshops, and keynote speakers. YC was selected to host the 2026 event by David Borofsky and the Arizona Community College Coordinating Council at last year's conference.

On Wednesday, the conference started with tours of the Center for Learning and Innovation, CTEC, and local workforce organizations. Wednesday evening The Pines hosted a networking event with brisket donated by K4, activities like ax throwing and line dancing, and plenty of community college camaraderie.

Throughout the week 175 registered attendees comprised of leaders, managers, deans, directors and C-suite gathered to learn and share with each other. It was a welcomed event that carried across our district campuses with many attendees commenting on the fun, friendly, exciting, and collaborative vibe of the event.

PHOTO CAPTION: AACAC attendees in newly remodeled 19-147.

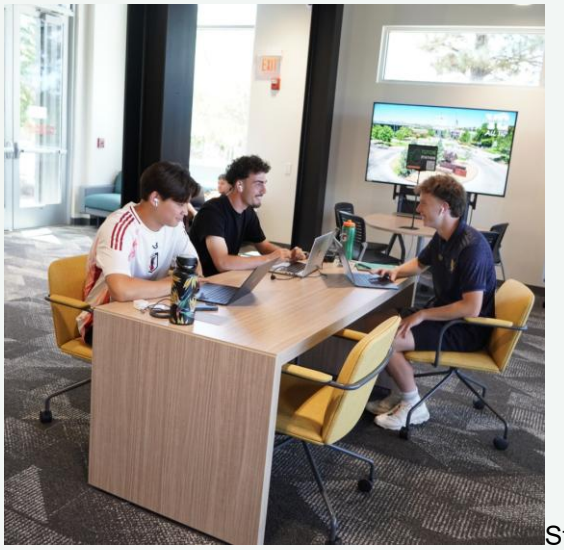
Library & Tutoring Services



A librarian handing out snacks from the Treat Trolley during Finals Fest & Master Your Midterms

Finals Fest Expands Academic Support and Student Well-Being

Library and Tutoring Services hosted **Finals Fest & Master Your Midterms**, offering students extended library and tutoring hours, academic support, and activities designed to reduce stress and encourage success during midterms. From September 27 through October 9, students had access to additional weekend support, Thrive Bags, Finals Fuel Stations, calming immersive experiences, and other activities that promoted student well-being, connection, and academic success.



Students studying in the Prescott CLI

Grant Award Expands Academic Support

Ustadza White, Director of Academic Support & Learning Technologies, collaborated with Tania Sheldahl, AVP of Student Affairs, and the Grants Office to successfully secure a Title III grant that will expand academic support services at Yavapai College. The funding will increase embedded tutoring opportunities and extend Library and Tutoring Services operating hours at the Center for Learning & Innovation (CLI) on both the Prescott and Verde Valley campuses, providing students with greater access to academic resources, learning spaces, and personalized support.



Students enjoying cake with the Government Documents Librarian

Celebrating 50 Years of Free Access to Government Information

The Boyd Tenney Library at the Prescott Center for Learning & Innovation (CLI) celebrated its 50th anniversary as a Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) institution, alongside Constitution & Citizenship Day. This milestone highlights Yavapai College's longstanding commitment to providing free, public access to government information and supporting civic literacy, informed citizenship, and lifelong learning throughout our community.

Teaching & Learning Services



Canvas IgniteAI pilot underway

Instructional Designer Nicolas DiPaolo is leading a group of approximately 20 faculty in a pilot of the Canvas LMS artificial intelligence tools we have been given access to through the rest of the calendar year. After a successful kickoff event at Assessment Day, the group is meeting bi-weekly to discuss findings and continuing to exchange experiences and information in a dedicated Zoom chat. We look forward to continuing the effort to support the college's strategic initiative