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State of the College

Since its founding in 1888, Eastern Arizona College (EAC) has remained a cornerstone of education and economic vitality in the Gila Valley. The past year has seen significant accomplishments, with rising enrollment and expanded workforce program offerings to substantial economic impact and facility renovations. As the College invests in new initiatives and commits to addressing challenges, it is positioned to drive even greater positive change for the community. In response to a recent request from the chairman of the Graham County Community College District Governing Board, this State of the College update was created to ensure transparency and keep the community informed.

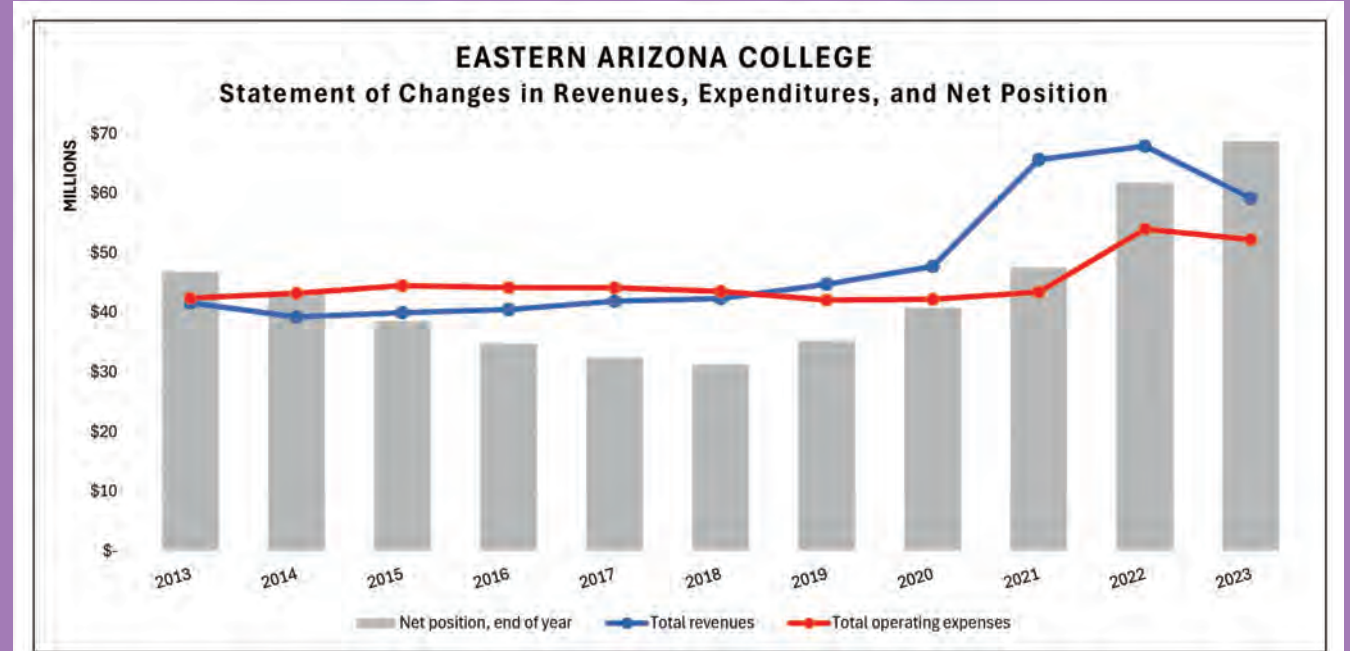


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Financial Stability and Resource Management

The Arizona Auditor General's recently completed audit underscores EAC's prudent financial management, with revenues significantly outpacing expenses. Over the past decade, EAC has seen operating revenues increase by 73% and non-operating revenues by 30%, leading to a 40% overall revenue growth since President Todd Haynie took office. During the same period, the College maintained disciplined spending with operating expenses rising by just 20%. The increase in reserves allowed the College to continue its practice of setting aside funds for future expansion and academic program development, rather than relying on bonded debt for capital projects. Despite these saved resources, state-imposed expenditure caps continue to limit the College's ability to fund critical programs and initiatives.



Arizona Auditor General's Findings: The Arizona Auditor General's 2023 audit reveals that Eastern Arizona College's revenue has outpaced expenses over the past decade, with revenues more than doubling operating expenses in recent years.

EAC's Enrollment is Steadily Increasing

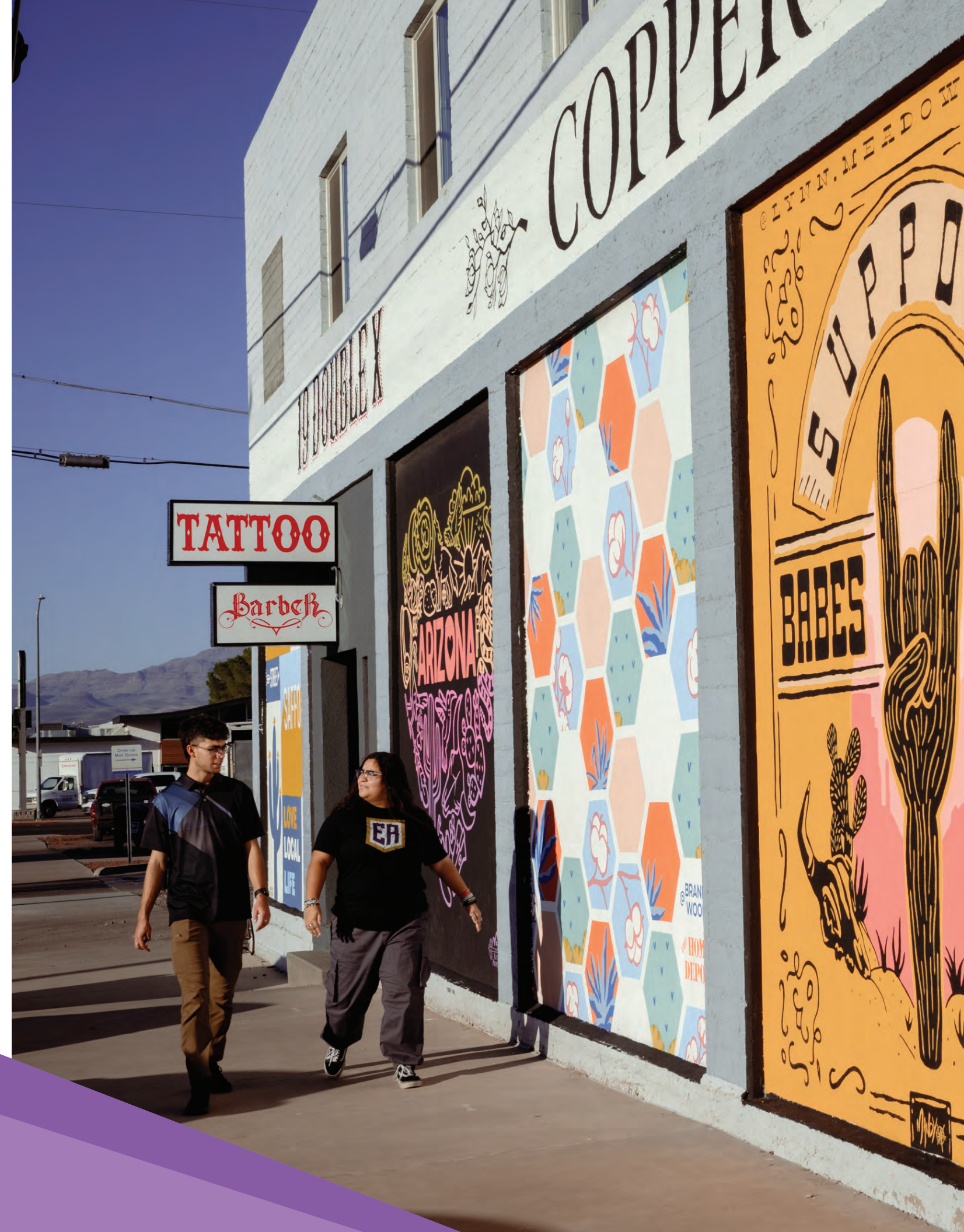
EAC's enrollment continues to rise, reflecting the growing demand for affordable and accessible education. Since 2020, the College's headcount has increased by nearly 16%, growing from 4,392 students to 5,076 in 2024. This enrollment growth supports local jobs and creates a steady pipeline of skilled graduates who contribute to the region's workforce. Additionally, the increase in non-local students boosts the local economy, with these students contributing \$9.3 million to the local economy and supporting 188 jobs.



Driving Economic Impact

A \$228.7 Million Annual Contribution to the Region

EAC remains the largest economic driver in Graham County, generating \$228.7 million annually for the local economy and supporting 3,006 jobs — accounting for one in every 13 jobs in the region. In addition, EAC generates significantly more tax revenue than it consumes — while ten percent of the College’s funding comes from local sources, 90% is derived from state support and external grants. EAC’s alumni further contribute \$184.4 million in added income to the regional economy, demonstrating the long-term impact of education on wealth creation and retention.



EAC Lowers Tax Rate for Graham County Residents for Sixth Consecutive Year

For the sixth consecutive year, Eastern Arizona College (EAC) has reduced the property tax rate for Graham County residents. The tax rate has steadily declined from \$3.34 in 2020 to \$2.46 for the 2025 budget year. Each year has seen a reduction: \$3.12 in 2021, \$3.09 in 2022, \$2.71 in 2023, and \$2.60 in 2024. The latest reduction lowered the rate by 14 cents from the previous year. This ongoing commitment to financial responsibility demonstrates EAC's dedication to balancing affordability with quality education.



Radiologic Technology Program Experiences Strong Demand and Career Success

Since its launch in 2022, Eastern Arizona College's Radiologic Technology program has consistently maintained full enrollment. Supported by a state-of-the-art Radiologic Technology Lab, the program equips students with essential skills for high-demand healthcare careers. Graduates are finding success, securing positions that help address the critical shortage of allied health professionals. By offering this training locally, EAC empowers students to pursue lucrative and rewarding careers without leaving the Gila Valley.



New Soccer Programs Enhance Student Experience

EAC proudly introduced the Gila Valley's first-ever collegiate soccer teams, adding a new layer of school pride, wellness, and community engagement. These soccer programs offer educational and recreational opportunities for both students and residents, while also boosting the local economy through increased campus activities and non-local students who spend money on essentials like housing and groceries. With athletes from the local area and around the world, the teams have created excitement and support within the community, further strengthening EAC's economic impact and community connections.



New Cosmetology and Healthcare Buildings

Expanding Capacity and Partnerships

EAC is investing in a new state-of-the-art facility to upgrade its Cosmetology Program and partnering with Mount Graham Regional Medical Center to offer an accessible medical clinic. Part of the new facility will be leased to the hospital for the medical clinic, while the Cosmetology building will enable the College to expand enrollment in its popular Cosmetology Program. Currently, the program can accommodate 70 students, but demand has consistently exceeded capacity. The new building will increase capacity to 130 students, helping meet the growing need for trained cosmetologists in the region.



Eastern Arizona College's new cosmetology facility will include 12,000 square feet dedicated to cosmetology and 7,300 square feet of medical space. (Rendering courtesy of EAC).

Grant-Funded Investment in Local Jobs and Education

EAC has consistently secured external funding to advance its mission. From 2021 to 2024, the College brought \$31.1 million in grant funds into the local economy. In the 2023-2024 academic year alone, nearly \$7 million in grants supported 19 full-time and 21 part-time jobs, creating direct employment opportunities. These grants also enhance EAC's ability to offer high-quality education and create new jobs without additional costs to local taxpayers. Some key grant-funded initiatives include:

TRACC Grant

EAC secured a \$2.2 million U.S. Department of Education grant for its Targeting Rural Accessibility to College and Career (TRACC) program, which aims to empower rural students by increasing access to higher education and career opportunities. This funding was used to create EAC's new Career Service Center. Additionally, the grant supports early college programs and enhanced outreach to rural schools, ensuring that students in these communities can pursue affordable education and career pathways without having to leave the local area.

Healthcare Partnership

EAC partnered with the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) to provide \$1.6 million in scholarships for students pursuing healthcare careers. This funding covers tuition, fees, and essential expenses for students entering high-demand fields like behavioral health and long-term care, helping to address critical healthcare shortages in the region and ensuring that residents have access to trained professionals.

Workforce Grant

EAC empowered local students to pursue workforce careers and other high-demand fields with free tuition and fees, made possible through the Arizona Community College Workforce Scholarship Program. Programs supported by this grant include Diesel Technician, Medical Laboratory Assistant, Advanced Emergency Medical Technician, and Cybersecurity, offering students valuable career training at no cost.

Two New Bachelor's Degrees Meet Community Demand

In response to local workforce demands, EAC launched two new bachelor's degree programs in 2024: a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences and a Bachelor of Music in Music Education. These programs, which attracted more than 400 applicants in their first year, prepare students for high-demand careers in healthcare and education at a fraction of the cost of traditional universities. By offering these degrees locally, EAC reduces the need for residents to seek education in more expensive urban areas.



Enhancing Campus Facilities in a Fiscally Responsible Manner

Eastern Arizona College has taken significant steps to modernize its campus facilities, including renovations to Nellie Lee Hall, Mark Allen Hall, the Residence Towers, and Wesley Taylor Hall. Rather than constructing new buildings at a much higher cost, EAC updated existing facilities in a fiscally responsible way, optimizing resources while still enhancing the student living experience. Wesley Taylor Hall, which sat empty for a decade, has been rejuvenated as part of these efforts. As a result of these strategic renovations, EAC's housing occupancy rate has dramatically improved — from 63% just three years ago to 100% today.



Building Workforce Partnerships to Launch the EAC Diesel Technician Program

EAC partnered with industry leaders Freeport-McMoRan and Empire Southwest to develop a Diesel Technician Program, which reached full capacity in its very first semester. The program provides students with hands-on training and technical expertise for high-paying careers in industries such as mining and transportation. Supported by a \$100,000 grant from Freeport-McMoRan, the program ensures that residents are prepared for in-demand careers while contributing to the region's economic stability.



Rededication of Mark Allen Hall and Reopening of the Activities Center

EAC marked the 60-year rededication of Mark Allen Hall and the grand reopening of the Gherald L. Hoopes Jr. Activities Center in 2024. These renovations highlight EAC's commitment to modernizing its facilities with fiscal responsibility while fostering environments that promote student success. The updated Mark Allen Hall now features expanded living spaces and communal areas for students, while the renovated Activities Center includes new recreational facilities, a food court, and other amenities designed to enhance student life. These improvements reflect EAC's dedication to creating state-of-the-art spaces that support academic achievement and student engagement, all while maintaining financial stewardship of its resources.



Expanding Career Opportunities with the New Career Service Center

Eastern Arizona College officially opened its new Career Service Center as a one-stop shop for students to gain career readiness skills and for local businesses to mentor, train, and hire EAC students. Located on the second floor of the EAC Alumni Library, the center offers services such as job placement, internships, and workforce development programs, bridging the gap between students and the business community. This initiative ensures that EAC students are well-prepared to enter the job market and that local employers have access to a skilled talent pool.



Scholarships Fuel Student Success

This year, over 250 EAC students received scholarships totaling more than \$500,000, thanks to the generosity of alumni, businesses, and community members. In 2023, the EAC Foundation received \$1.1 million in donations for scholarships and educational support, helping students alleviate financial burdens and focus on their studies. These scholarships provide direct benefits to students, ensuring they can pursue their educational goals without additional financial strain.



EAC Celebrates Indigenous Culture at Native American Festival

Eastern Arizona College demonstrated its commitment to inclusivity and cultural celebration by hosting the Native American Festival on Oct. 5 at John Mickelson Field. The event, held in partnership with the Southeast Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, welcomed more than 600 attendees to experience the richness of Native American traditions. The festival featured a vibrant parade, captivating performances from renowned Native American artists, and a variety of traditional foods and crafts.



EAC Nursing Program Recognized for Excellence

EAC's Nursing Program continues to set the bar for excellence, once again becoming the number one nursing school in Arizona according to RegisteredNursing.org. EAC achieved an impressive, weighted score of 99.64 — nearly three points higher than the second-ranked Grand Canyon University. Notably, EAC outperformed much larger institutions, including the University of Arizona, which ranked seventh. Celebrating its 50th anniversary, the program has consistently produced skilled nurses who serve in healthcare facilities across the state, ensuring that EAC continues to address critical healthcare needs in the region.



EAC Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

Eastern Arizona College proudly marked its 10th Annual Hispanic Heritage Month in partnership with the Eastern Arizona Hispanic Heritage Foundation, celebrating the vibrant cultural contributions of the Hispanic community. The month-long festivities began with a lively kickoff event featuring mariachi music, a piñata-making contest, and inspiring speeches from distinguished guests. A highlight of the celebration was the annual dinner and show, where a local family was honored as the “Family of the Year” for their outstanding community contributions. The evening also recognized the achievements of local educators and featured captivating folklórico dance and mariachi performances. A car show will be held later in the month. Through these events, EAC continues to foster cultural pride and community spirit, embracing diversity and celebrating traditions that enrich the Gila Valley.



President Todd Haynie Appointed to WICHE Commission

EAC President Todd Haynie was appointed by Arizona's Governor to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). This appointment raises EAC's profile in regional higher education, bringing new resources and partnerships to the College. Haynie's leadership on WICHE will help expand access to higher education across the West, further supporting EAC's mission of serving the community.



Addressing Student Housing Shortage Challenge

Eastern Arizona College is experiencing a housing shortage, with on-campus residences at 100% occupancy and limited availability in the local community. While this reflects the increasing demand for an EAC education, it also offers an opportunity for growth. The College is exploring solutions that include collaborating with local property owners to meet student needs. By proactively addressing this challenge, EAC aims to enhance the student experience and support future growth.



Expanding Facilities to Meet Program Growth

While Eastern Arizona College has recently expanded its offerings in Allied Health and Industrial and Technology Education, rapid growth has highlighted the need for more space. Newly renovated facilities for Medical Assisting, Medical Laboratory Assisting, Patient Care Tech, Phlebotomy, Radiological Technology, and Diesel Technology, have quickly reached capacity, creating a demand for additional facilities to accommodate hands-on training and classroom instruction. The College is actively exploring options to expand its facilities, ensuring that students continue to receive high-quality, practical education in these high-demand fields. By addressing space constraints, EAC aims to support the growth of these programs and maintain its commitment to preparing students for successful careers.





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