



Happy Campus

Arizona Western College

AWC Partners with CampusWorks to Transform Lives and Create Thriving Communities

A College In Need of Direction

When Dr. Daniel Corr assumed the presidency at Arizona Western College (AWC) in July 2016, he quickly realized that in order to continue building on the College's success they would need a strategic plan to clarify the institution's goals and provide a sense of direction while reflecting the culture and characteristics that make AWC unique.

One such characteristic is AWC's close proximity to the Mexican border. With 10 locations spread across 10,000 square miles that serve both Yuma and La Paz counties in southern Arizona, a percentage of the College's employees and students are impacted by the U.S.-Mexico border and rely on technology to engage with classes and colleagues or travel across the border regularly to reach campus. Additionally, the state of Arizona has all but eliminated funding for higher education, challenging AWC to deliver more student-centric services with fewer resources. These factors have created a culture of commitment that is not seen at every institution.

Given this, AWC wanted a partner that would tailor the strategic planning process to the College's unique culture and needs. Research into successful strategic planning at other institutions followed by a request for proposal (RFP) led the College to partner with CampusWorks to facilitate the process.



- ▶ 10 locations across Yuma and La Paz counties in southern Arizona
- ▶ Enrolls 8,000 (according to IPEDS Fall 2022 data)
- ▶ Many employees and students are impacted by the U.S.-Mexico border

CHALLENGE

- ▶ AWC did not have a strategic plan to clarify its goals or provide direction
- ▶ IT was not aligned with the College's mission

CAMPUSWORKS PARTNERSHIP

- ▶ Led a strategic planning initiative that engaged campus and local community members in activities to co-create a shared vision of the College's future
- ▶ Served as interim CIO to provide critical technology leadership
- ▶ Provided managed services to lead and transform IT

RESULTS

- ▶ Brought together more than 2,600 members of the AWC community, including 200 students, to develop a shared vision of student success
- ▶ Modernized the College's IT infrastructure and optimized the IT organization to align with the institution's goals.
- ▶ Gained access to a diverse pool of specialized talent, ensuring that projects would no longer get delayed due to resource constraints.

Reimagining the Future

CampusWorks' strategic planning methodology employs an inclusive, transparent approach that tailors the effort to the institution's unique culture, interests, and demands. Over 13 months, CampusWorks brought together more than 2,600 members of the AWC community, including 200 students, to develop a shared vision of student success.

AWC'S VISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS...

- A connected community within which students are encouraged, challenged, and feel they belong.
- Programs developed and aligned with employment opportunities.
- A clear path to success and completion.
- Flexible, accessible services, and learning approaches.
- Contemporary technology that supports and enhances the AWC experience.

Leading a Culture Shift in IT

President Corr recognized technology as the great enabler for achieving this vision and saw the immediate need to modernize the College's IT infrastructure and optimize the IT organization to align with the institution's goals. To achieve this, the College needed a transformative technology leader.

CampusWorks' role expanded to mentor the College's CIO to lead this important undertaking. Ultimately, that individual departed the College, and CampusWorks stepped in as interim CIO to lead the transformation.

CampusWorks' CIO quickly discovered that the College's IT team was operating in a reactive mode, spending a significant amount of time putting out fires. They were also spread too thin, attempting to manage over 100 different projects simultaneously.

CampusWorks' CIO immediately prioritized their project list to help them operate more efficiently and effectively. This was augmented by an IT assessment, during which CampusWorks' assessment team evaluated AWC's infrastructure and security posture and developed a plan to modernize and strengthen them.

CampusWorks' CIO spent time with each member of the IT team to learn about their skills and experiences, which was

then used to implement a new staffing model that aligned their strengths with the institution's goals. This increased focus and alignment sparked a cultural shift within the IT organization, transforming it to one in which team members have each other's backs, celebrate victories, and take a proactive approach.

Transforming IT to Empower the Future

Despite the team's many achievements, it quickly became clear that AWC needed more hands on deck to transform IT into the proactive, world-class organization it envisioned. However, rural Yuma, Arizona lacked the talent pool to supply the specialized skills the College required.

Based on the partnership's successful track record, AWC tapped CampusWorks to provide IT managed services for five years. This new model allowed the College's IT staff to become employees of CampusWorks, which has repeatedly earned Great Place To Work® Certification and recognition from Fortune magazine as a Best Workplace. It also gave AWC just-in-time access to CampusWorks' diverse pool of specialized talent, ensuring that projects would no longer get delayed due to resource constraints.

Though our partnership began as a strategic planning engagement, it has yielded far more than a strategic plan. It incited a cultural and technological transformation that is empowering AWC to realize its community members' vision of student success.

"From the first visit on our campus, CampusWorks engendered confidence, excitement, and energy in our workforce and community partners to help create the beginnings of an authentic and credible Strategic Plan. When you partner with CampusWorks, you are getting the aggregate of the many thoughtful projects they've helped launch across the country."

Dr. Daniel Corr
President,
Arizona Western College