

# CREATING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

## Mesa Community College Virtual Future Leaders Town Hall

### February 17, 2021 – Online via Zoom

#### **COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Group 1: Healthy communities are diverse. They encourage diversity by supporting it through community events and the arts. It is also important to provide jobs to community members. Communities, in essence, should take care of their own.

Group 2: The strongest elements of our community are the following: education and educational opportunities; good community design with outdoor spaces; great parks; and recreation. We can build on these elements by stabilizing small businesses, improving community safety through good community design, and supporting both indoor and outdoor space for social interactions.



#### **CURRENT EVENTS AND VIBRANT COMMUNITIES**

Group 1: COVID affects how we view racism and politics. As a result of government actions, we experience distrust in politics. Also, cultural beliefs of certain groups affect how the government addresses the pandemic. We need to gain the trust of our communities to assure that everyone has the same access to testing and vaccinations.

Group 2: Racism is still happening in our community. Because of COVID, racism has been elevated into the community conversation as a lack of healthcare impacts the overall community. COVID pandemic restrictions illustrate the fragile nature of mental health when in-person social interactions are limited, and mental health resources are unavailable. This is especially impactful to minority students who can't communicate with their peers and worry about high school traditions like graduation. Additionally, the impact of privilege and assumed privilege has been revealed with access to technology and affordable housing.

#### **WHAT I WOULD TELL ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS**

Group 1: Youth need to be taught how to take care of themselves before they become adults. This includes learning how to take personal fiscal responsibility which should be taught in high school. Relevant programs should be coordinated and readily available for those in need of services.

Group 2: Insuring students are able to catch up after the pandemic and are well prepared for their future careers is important no matter what school district educates the students. As technology itself advances, access is key in this mission—the gap between those who have it and those who do not continues to widen. Education and technology challenges are best addressed within a strong collaborative of education leaders, business partners, and state government. Elected leaders at the local, county, and state levels need to work to strengthen employment opportunities, vaccination availability, and access to affordable housing.

## **TAKING ACTION**

Group 1: Communities should be proactive in deciding their needs and desires. Parents should play a leading role in molding future citizens and leaders who are civically engaged. Leadership should be representative of their communities in order to produce flourishing neighborhoods.

Group 2: To make our community healthier and more vibrant, we must first recognize that we are the community and ask ourselves what we are doing to make the community better. Actions we will take to strengthen and support our community include: encouraging other community members to participate in community sharing of resources; being a voice for our community; supporting local businesses through patronage; and encouraging other community members to support local business. We will contact our elected state representatives to voice concerns and offer solutions for: ending jerrymandering; consideration of ranked-choice voting; improving social justice; and increasing affordable housing.