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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West-MEC offers students unique pathway to become future industry leaders and teachers

Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC) a career and technical education district, is partnered with Maricopa Community Colleges and Northern Arizona University to pioneer a postsecondary pathway that helps local students earn a degree in less time and at a lower tuition cost. A four-year degree can cost students approximately \$15,000.

The partnership with NAU provides a '90-30 Program' allowing students to begin college coursework while attending West-MEC and their high schools on an accelerated path toward a bachelor's degree. The program allows focused, career-minded students to pursue seamless pathways to maximize their potential and earn a degree in less time.

West-MEC students in the 90-30 Partnership Programs begin their associate degree while in high school by taking dual enrollment courses. Then, after completing an associate's degree and 90 credits at a community college that offers their program, they can finish with a bachelor's degree at NAU, needing just 30 credits. These credits, amounting to about a year of coursework, can be taken online or at an MCC campus, allowing students to complete an NAU degree without leaving their homes in Maricopa County.

Using their technical skills and industry certifications earned at West-MEC, dual enrollment students can work in their career field while attending college, to help pay for the already-lowered cost and gain work experience that will help them once they finish their undergraduate degrees. Often, employers will support employees with tuition reimbursement as they pursue further education goals. The 90-30 Program also keeps a pipeline of skilled workers in the West Valley, aiding in the growth of local cities and businesses.

In an ever-changing industry and job market, such change is needed and has already helped many future industry professionals.

“In each of our conversations with students there are the seeds of new future developments. Aspirations grow into real professional plans for college and careers and some of our CTE students will become our CTE teachers and instructional leaders of tomorrow,” said Speranta Klees, West-MEC Post-Secondary Partnerships Manager.

Furthermore, NAU also offers an Accelerated Master’s Degree in CTE. The master’s degree allows graduates to teach future instructors and industry professionals, while also pursuing higher education themselves. Students in the undergraduate program can take 12 credits that count toward a graduate degree, leaving just 18 credits remaining in their master’s coursework after they graduate with a BSED in CTE. The 18 credits can be completed in less than a year.

“During these unsettling times of the pandemic, our students and staff are uplifted and buoyed by the rollout of such optimistic and hopeful pathways from our post-secondary partner, Northern Arizona University,” Klees said.

For more information on West-MEC or its dual enrollment opportunities visit <https://west-mec.edu/dual-enrollment/>.

About West-MEC:

West-MEC is a career technical education public school district that focuses solely on innovative career and technical education (CTE) programs that prepare students to enter the workforce and pursue continuing education. West-MEC CTE programs provide students opportunities to earn college credit and industry credentials. West-MEC serves more than 37,000 students from 48 high schools, across 3,800 square miles in the northern and western cities of the Phoenix Metropolitan area. West-MEC now also offers adult education programs. Visit www.west-mec.edu for more information about West-MEC’s career-driven education opportunities or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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