

PRESS RELEASE

Office of Marketing and Communications



Mandy Heil

Associate Dean of Marketing and Communications

(928) 314-9594

mandy.heil@azwestern.edu

Contact:

Lou Gum

KAWC News and Operations Manager

Arizona Western College

Lou.Gum@kawc.org

(928) 344-7694

KAWC earns Local News Initiative grant for \$15K

Radio station and college faculty collaborate to establish student newsroom

Yuma, AZ (March 25, 2024) – KAWC received one of six inaugural grants from the Local News Initiative of Southern Arizona to support a new KAWC Student Newsroom.

An initiative of the [Community Foundation for Southern Arizona](#), the Local News Initiative awarded KAWC with a \$15,000 grant to establish a Student Newsroom in partnership with Arizona Western College. Grant recipients were selected by a committee comprised of diverse community volunteers from throughout Southern Arizona that considered the applicants' capacity to produce and deliver news and information that community members need and their ability to reach traditionally underrepresented communities.

"Local media is best placed to deliver the stories and information a community needs to thrive," said KAWC News and Operations Director Lou Gum. "KAWC looks forward to helping build a pathway for students to become the next generation of journalists and media professionals in our community."

Gum shared that this grant reinforced the existing dreams of KAWC staff and AWC faculty to create more learning and storytelling opportunities for students. AWC Professors of English Kevin Kato and Trisha Campbell collaborated with KAWC on the effort and quickly came up with an idea to test run a summer program that combines classroom knowledge with professional development.

Trisha Campbell shared, "Since I arrived here at AWC four years ago, I have been trying to get some kind of synergy going between my vision for Media Arts and podcasting and the KAWC studio and programming. Once I was able to get the Introduction to Podcasting course off the ground and filled with students, it seemed like the perfect time to start building a co-creation between the college and KAWC. Coincidentally, with a hint of kismet, Kevin Kato and I had been talking about how to build this program when KAWC reached out about a potential way to fund a literal pathway between the newsroom and the college and the college and the newsroom. From there, the grant process was underway and we couldn't be more excited with several students already eager to apply."

Students will rotate through numerous roles, including host, producer, field reporter, audio engineer, and social media

manager, gaining critical skills and professional journalism experience. The newsroom will establish a curriculum that will help up to four students create news spots, feature reports, and podcasts focused on the 2024 election cycle. The coverage will focus on voter perceptions of federal, state, and local campaigns, with an emphasis on younger voters.

The final productions will be distributed on [KAWC/KOFA-Border Radio](#) broadcasts, websites, and podcasts distributed by the NPR Network through KAWC. As the only public media source serving both Yuma and La Paz counties, supporting the next generation of local journalists is critical to the work at KAWC, a non-commercial, educational radio station based in Yuma, Arizona.

###