

PRESS RELEASE

Office of Marketing and Communications



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leadHERship prepares for final workshop of 2024 and looks ahead to 2025 expansion

San Luis, AZ (Dec 3, 2024) – As the leadHERship initiative at Arizona Western College approaches its final workshop of the year, it is also celebrating a pivotal milestone: becoming a permanently funded AWC program.

Following a successful presentation at the ACCAC conference in Lake Havasu on October 22, 2024, where the program received enthusiastic support from Arizona’s community college administrators, leadHERship received an institutional commitment from AWC Vice President for Learning Services Dr. Kathleen Iudicello, who has allocated an annual budget of \$20,000. This matches the previous funding from the 2024 AWC Innovation Fund, securing resources for the program's future.

Maria Guzman, AWC Advising and Student Services Coordinator and tri-chair of the leadHERship board, will facilitate the December workshop titled, “Self-Connectivity While Evaluating Your Beliefs and Social Stereotypes.” The session will emphasize self-connection as the foundation for meaningful change, fostering empathy, and promoting a more inclusive perspective. Participants will leave with practical tools for maintaining self-awareness.

“Empowering students means equipping them with the confidence, resources, and opportunities to take control of their futures, create change, and lead with purpose,” Guzman said. “The leadHERship Program has brought opportunities to empower students to live a life of impact.”

Event Details:

Date: Monday, December 9

Time: 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Location: Room 104, San Luis Learning Center, 1340 N. 8th Avenue

With the December workshop marking the final session funded by the 2024 Innovation Fund, the leadHERship program is now prepared for continued growth and institutional support.

Dr. Sara Amani, Professor of Multilingual Composition/Specialist at AWC and one of leadHERship's tri-chairs, shared, "leadHERship has grown into something so much bigger than I imagined when submitting the initial proposal for the Innovation Fund in November 2023. It's become a true community where students can lift each other up and break through barriers together. Seeing the program become a permanent part of AWC means the world to me because it shows that our college believes in the power of women supporting each other to make real change. I'm so grateful for everyone who's helped us get here, and I can't wait to see how this community keeps growing and inspiring others to take on new challenges and lead with confidence."

Starting January 2025, leadHERship will expand to the Yuma campus, offering monthly workshops and a mentorship program. **Dr. Monica Ketchum-Cardenas**, Professor of History & Sociology, and **Dr. Kristine Duke**, Professor of Accounting, will join the executive board leading the Yuma campus efforts, while **Dr. Sara Amani** and **Maria Guzman** will oversee the San Luis campus. This collaborative leadership will support AWC's mission to foster a campus culture where every individual can grow and succeed.

The leadHERship initiative is driven by **Dr. Sara Amani**, **Maria Guzman**, and **Susie Zambrano**, Associate Dean for South Yuma County Services.

While the primary focus is on addressing issues affecting women, leadHERship encourages everyone, regardless of gender, to join these monthly workshops. The initiative seeks to foster a campus culture that supports the growth and success of every individual.

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