



MARICOPA
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

BRAND MESSAGING GUIDE

Because **how** you say something is just
as important as **what** you say.



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CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS A BRAND MESSAGING GUIDE?

WHAT IS A BRAND MESSAGING GUIDE?

The Maricopa Community Colleges brand is more than a logo or a tagline—it's the essence of how our audience perceives us. Our brand represents our values, mission, and identity, creating a lasting impression that builds trust and loyalty over time. Through a consistent and authentic brand, we establish a connection with the diverse communities we serve that reinforces who we are and why we matter to them.

A brand messaging guide is a blueprint for communicating our brand with clarity and purpose. Outlining our brand voice, values, and key messaging ensures that every piece of communication—whether it's an ad, social media post, webpage, or conversation—reinforces our brand identity.

The purpose of this guide is to align every team member across Maricopa Community Colleges in telling our story consistently, accurately, and with maximum impact in order to strengthen our recognition, foster a deeper connection with our audiences, and ultimately support our students.

This brand messaging guide is a resource to inspire you and your teams to communicate in ways that represent our brand and resonate with our target audiences.



CHAPTER 2

DEFINING OUR BRAND

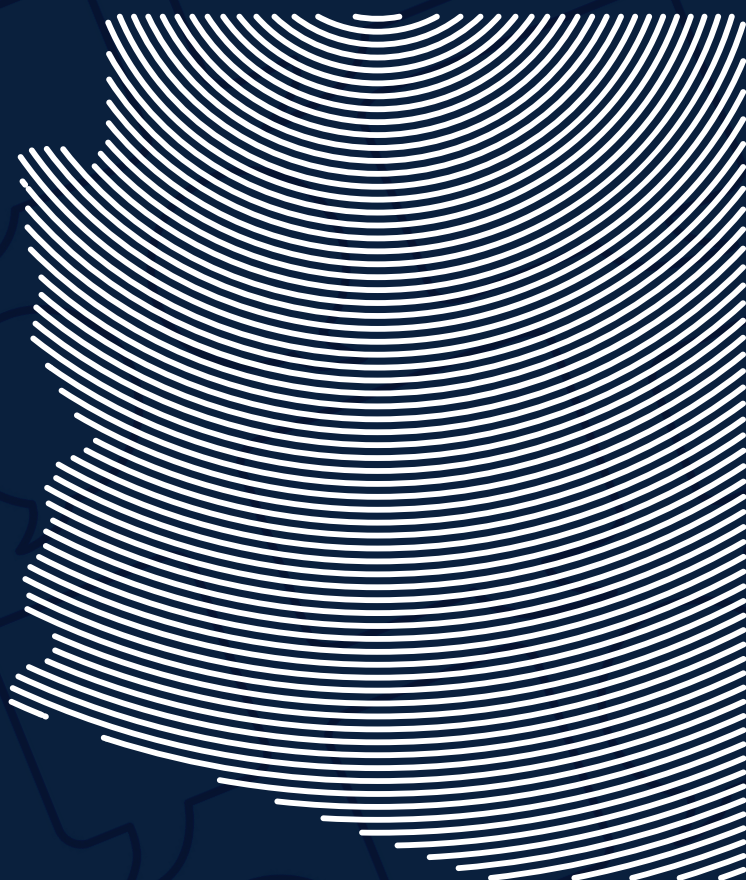
**We believe
there's a
better way
to do
college.**

**MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES IS REDEFINING
COLLEGE ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.**

Our commitment to an affordable, high-quality education has not only made us the most accessible higher education provider in the Valley—producing the second-largest number of college graduates in Arizona—but a higher education disruptor in the midst of a national reckoning about the true cost and value of a college degree.

With rising costs, mounting debt, and uncertain returns on investment, many students are no longer asking if they want to go to college—but whether they can. For many students and their families, college feels out of reach.

**AT MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES,
WE ARE SHOWING STUDENTS THERE'S A BETTER WAY.**



FOCUS ON PEOPLE—NOT PROFITS

Guided by our mission of enriching communities and empowering lives, we are committed to giving students unparalleled access to life-changing opportunities that create immense value for themselves and their families and for Arizona.

From the programs we offer to the partnerships we nurture, we are proud to create more value and opportunity for Maricopa County residents than any other college or university system in the Phoenix metro area.

Nearly half of our students are the first in their families to go to college, and close to 90% of our students are residents of Maricopa County—**further underscoring the significance of the role we play in our community and our state.**

DEFINING OUR BRAND

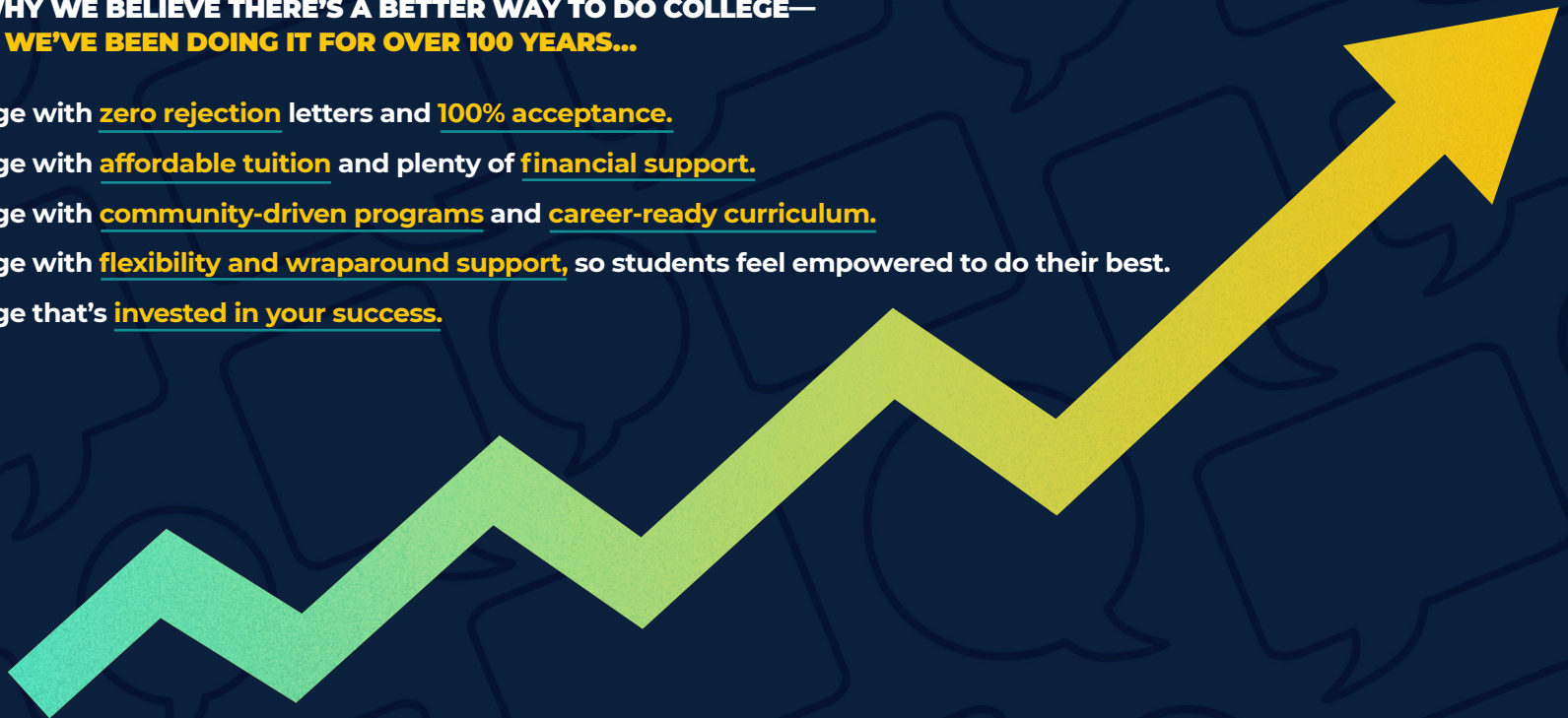
FEWER BARRIERS = MEANINGFUL ACCESS

We believe in giving students meaningful access to a college education—meeting them where they are and removing any barriers that stand in their way.

When we give students meaningful access to college opportunities, we help to reduce inequality and enhance economic mobility, boost innovation and economic growth for the state, and improve the overall health and well-being of our communities and the productivity of our workforce.

THAT'S WHY WE BELIEVE THERE'S A BETTER WAY TO DO COLLEGE— THE WAY WE'VE BEEN DOING IT FOR OVER 100 YEARS...

- ... college with zero rejection letters and 100% acceptance.
- ... college with affordable tuition and plenty of financial support.
- ... college with community-driven programs and career-ready curriculum.
- ... college with flexibility and wraparound support, so students feel empowered to do their best.
- ... college that's invested in your success.





10 COLLEGES. UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES.

When it comes to college accessibility, Maricopa Community Colleges is more than a Valley leader—our 10 colleges are the exception.

Without us, **there is no us.**

“

I simply want to celebrate the fact that right near your home, year in and year out, a community college is quietly—and with very little financial encouragement—saving lives and minds. I can’t think of a more efficient, hopeful, or egalitarian machine, except perhaps the bicycle.

”

Laureate Kay Ryan, *U.S. Poet*



CHAPTER 3

WHO WE ARE (AND WHY IT MATTERS)



OUR VISION:

Excellence in education for a better world.

OUR MISSION:

Ignite talent. Transform lives. Enrich communities.

OUR VALUES:

STUDENT CENTRIC.

Students are the essence of our work; we partner with students as leaders and decision-makers in their own learning.

INTEGRITY.

We foster a culture of honesty, trust, and transparency.

COLLABORATION.

We work together using system thinking in pursuit of our vision and mission.

INCLUSIVENESS.

We value all contributions and diverse perspectives.

INNOVATION.

We advance a culture that stimulates big ideas, creativity, and exploration.

RESPECT.

We treat each other with dignity, civility, and kindness.





MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES IS ...

- The most accessible higher education provider in the Valley for over 100 years.
- The second-largest producer of college graduates in Arizona.
- The largest provider of workforce training in the state.
- The largest community college system in the nation.

Americans are increasingly questioning the value and impact of a college degree.

At Maricopa Community Colleges, we are changing that.

Nearly half of our student population are first-generation college students, many of whom are navigating school with the help of financial aid, scholarships, and student support resources—positioning us as a leader in accessible education statewide. **In Fall 2024, we served 47,588 first-generation students—approximately 20% more than Arizona State University, 70% more than the University of Arizona, and 80% more than Northern Arizona University.**



CHAPTER 4

OUR BRAND PILLARS



OUR BRAND **PILLARS**

These four pillars define our brand and represent the essence of who we are. Let them guide you in your work and interactions with students, colleagues, and the community.

OPPORTUNITY.

We provide high-quality, affordable college opportunities for everyone.

ACCESSIBILITY.

We offer meaningful access to life-changing opportunities—meeting students where they are and doing everything we can to support their success.

COMMUNITY.

We are community-driven at our core—made up by the community, for the community—committed to providing more value, opportunity, and support for our community.

INDUSTRY.

We serve as a critical economic engine for Arizona—creating programs and partnerships that ensure our state's growth, prosperity, and competitiveness.

“

For more and more people, community colleges are the way to the future. They're giving real opportunity to students who otherwise wouldn't have it. ... One of the things that make community colleges so special is they do not pick and choose their students—they work with all students.

”

Dr. Jill Biden, *First Lady of the United States and Community College Professor*



CHAPTER 5

BRAND PILLARS | PROOF POINTS

PROOF POINTS

Our brand pillars and key messages are backed up by these proof points.

OPPORTUNITY

We meet students where they are to support their success.

- Maricopa Community Colleges is the largest community college system in Arizona and the nation, serving more than 140,000 students annually.
- We educate more Arizonans than all three state public universities combined, with 47% being first-generation college-goers.
- During the 2023-24 academic year, 6,672 Maricopa Community Colleges students transferred to in-state institutions, 74 to out-of-state institutions, and 1,436 to online institutions.
- Over 5,000 students have enrolled in our new bachelor's degree programs that are a fraction of the cost of a traditional four-year degree. Students save \$7,000-10,000 each year compared to the average annual tuition cost at Arizona's three in-state universities.



ACCESSIBILITY

We ensure access to opportunities for all.

- For over a century, Maricopa Community Colleges has delivered on a promise to offer an affordable and accessible pathway to earn a postsecondary education, accepting 100% of students who apply.
 - Our system remains steadfast in its commitment to people over profits, with lower-level tuition at \$97 per credit hour and upper-division tuition at \$145.50 per credit hour.
 - Maricopa Community Colleges offers easy access to higher education for all learners with early college programs for high school students, non-credit training, reskilling and upskilling, and lifelong learners.
- All 10 Maricopa Community Colleges are designated as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) by the U.S. Department of Education. Over half of Hispanic and Latino postsecondary students in the U.S. attend an HSI, and nearly 40% of those students attend a two-year HSI.

COMMUNITY

We are a system made up by the community, for the community.

- One out of 28 jobs in Maricopa County is supported by the activities of our 10 colleges and their students.
- The system produces the second-largest number of college graduates in Arizona.
- Choosing their local community college for postsecondary education, nearly 90% of our students are Maricopa County residents.





INDUSTRY

We are an economic engine for Arizona.

- During the 2021-22 fiscal year, the system added nearly \$8 billion in income to the Maricopa County economy.
- Maricopa Community Colleges is the largest provider of workforce training in Arizona, offering over 600 certificates and degrees, including the highly successful baccalaureate degree programs that contribute to the economic vitality of the growing region.
- Across its 10 colleges, Maricopa Community Colleges is on pace to educate nearly one-third of Arizona's nurses, producing the highest number in the state.

“

For decades, community colleges have been the backbone of American workforce training. Because they are nimble and closely attuned to local community needs, they are inherently positioned to be influential leaders of the movement for a sustainable economy.

”

Ed Begley, Jr., Actor



CHAPTER 6

OUR BRAND VOICE

OUR BRAND VOICE

Our brand voice defines who we are and helps humanize our brand. It ensures a recognizable style, reflects our identity, and reinforces trust and connection.

If our brand were a person, this is what they would sound like:

CONFIDENT

Innovative | Straightforward | Transparent

We are grounded in our mission and communicate clearly, directly, and sincerely to students.

Example:

“We keep tuition low, so you can focus on your goals—not your bank account.”

“Discover why we’re the #1 choice of Arizonans”



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If our brand were a person, this is what they would sound like:

WELCOMING

Warm | Belonging | Egalitarian

We approach our students' identities and perspectives with respect and empathy.

Examples:

"No matter who you are or where you come from, you belong here."

"We believe in opportunity for everyone."

"Here, everyone is accepted."

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SUPPORTIVE

Encouraging | Compassionate | Helpful

We actively solve problems and provide support and understanding to our students.

Examples:

“Together, we will make your college goals a reality.”

“If you’re wondering how to pay for college, you’re not alone.”

“We want to help you achieve your goals.”



OUR BRAND VOICE

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If our brand were a person, this is what they would sound like:

INSPIRATIONAL

Hopeful | Curious | Forward-thinking | Energized

We are positive about the future and invested in our students and their success.

Examples:

"We can help you pay for college."

"We are here to support you every step of the way."

"Learn how we're making college work for you."



CHAPTER 7

OUR KEY AUDIENCES



OUR AUDIENCES

The audience may change, but the message is the same—just framed in different ways.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

“We want to make college work for you.”

“We’re changing college—for the better. Join us.”

“Experience a better way to do college.”

CURRENT STUDENTS

“You’re not alone. We’re here to support your success.”

“Let us know how we can help.”

“It takes persistence and perseverance to get to the finish line—but we’re with you every step of the way.”

ALUMNI

“Graduation isn’t the end—it’s just the beginning.

We can’t wait to see what you’ll do next.”

“

Unlike most four-year colleges and universities, community colleges don't select our students—we take whoever comes.

”

Eduardo J. Padrón, *President Emeritus of Miami Dade College*

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

“We're making college work for Arizona.”

“We're changing college—for the better. Partner with us.”

“Together, we can build a bridge to our future.”

COMMUNITY MEMBERS | THOUGHT LEADERS | BUSINESS LEADERS

“Discover how we're making college work for Arizona.”

“We don't just support our community—we shape its future.”

“Our commitment goes beyond support—we have a stake in Arizona's future.”



CHAPTER 8

WRITING TIPS

WRITING TIPS

Know your audience:

Who are you talking to?

What do you want them to know or do?

Why should they care?

- Use an active voice. It's often more clear, concise, and conversational.
- Don't bury the lede. Hook your audience early.
- Avoid jargon and cliches. Don't assume your audience understands acronyms, common sayings, etc.
- Introduce acronyms. In general, don't overuse acronyms. Before using an acronym, spell out the full name. Support your points. Use evidence, data, facts, and examples to strengthen your writing.
- Speak directly to your audience. Use "you" whenever possible.
- Incorporate white space. Make your writing more digestible for your audience with white space.
- Provide a call to action. Invite your audience to take action. Be clear about what you want them to do.

MARICOPA-CENTRIC LANGUAGE

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

Access to opportunities | Removing barriers

Empowering success

100% ACCEPTANCE.

Everyone is welcome | Every student is heard and seen

All students belong here

ALL THE SUPPORT AND FLEXIBILITY YOU NEED.

Extra resources to support your success

All students are supported



“

I want to write so well that a person is 30 or 40 pages into a book of mine before she realizes she's reading.

”

Maya Angelou, *Writer and Poet*

