



Hello, again, History Buffs... today's clipping deals not only with SMCC, but all community colleges. At first glance, this editorial could have been written yesterday.....only the name of the U.S. President gives it away. This piece actually ran in the now-defunct *Tempe Daily News* on February 19, 1987.... 22 years ago. But the opening sentence was certainly prescient... and the closing paragraph is still right on the money. And as you enjoy your Thanksgiving weekend, know that your work and the work of all of us here at South Mountain, continue to have a huge impact on the citizens and communities we serve. Have a happy holiday weekend...

Community colleges' growing role

This nation and this state face some serious challenges in education and employment in the coming decades. In response to needs for adult education, illiteracy eradication, worker retraining and higher education, the state must provide a system through which Arizonans can avail themselves to help and training in these varied areas.

Fortunately, that system already exists, is already on the job and has been for more than 20 years. That system is Arizona's network of community colleges.

The jewel in that system is the Maricopa County Community College District. Mesa Community College, for example, is the largest community college in the state.

In recognition of the contributions of America's community colleges, President Reagan has designated February as a month in which to honor these unique and versatile learning institutions.

Changes in the economy, in fact changes in the very fabric of the American workplace, demand facilities

for retraining workers displaced by those changes. Community colleges are the key to that retraining need.

A large number of Arizona's adults are left out of the social and employment mainstream by their inability to communicate effectively in English. Some are illiterate and for some English is a second language. The community college can be the bridge across that language gap.

For many college-bound students, the best destination is the intensely competitive research university. For many others, however, the community college provides an easier transition into higher education, offering smaller class sizes with more one-to-one instructor attention, closer to home. The community college system even offers students college credit classes while still in high school.

The value of the community college, though inarguably vital to the community, will continue to become more vital to the state and the nation as the need to deal with these pressing problems in education and industry becomes more pressing.