



Greetings, Cougar Fans....since the framework of our new library has now begun to arise, it brought back visions of when the first walls of the permanent 24th Street campus were erected back in 1981.....the story below from January 21 of that year documents those very early days of SMCC, as led by the hard-hat clad Dr. Raul Cárdenas....

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CLASSES GO ON NEAR CONSTRUCTION SITE

South Mountain CC Still In Limbo

Having just begun its second semester of existence, South Mountain Community College is a school without a home, but still serves about 800 students.

Due to a delay in the completion of the college's permanent facility, located at 2406 S. 24th St., classes have been held, last semester and this one, at Greenfield Junior High School and South Mountain High School at night and at Holy Family Catholic Church during the day and evening.

During its first semester, the college had seven full-time and 70 part-time faculty.

College president Raul Cardenas estimates that the permanent facility will be occupied by July 15 and what a home it will be. With a total potential occupancy of 1,200 full-time students, the new facility will cover 70 acres with 13 buildings having 107,000 square feet of useable space.

THE COLLEGE ALSO will have a number of tennis and multipurpose courts, playing fields, an amphitheater and an activity center which will be available for community use, Cardenas said. A day-care center with a 50-child capacity also will be on campus to aid parents attending daytime classes.

"I want this to be a community-centered, community-oriented institution," Cardenas said.

That desire is reflected in the school's curriculum, community facilities and 15-member citizen's advisory committee which has been an active participant in the college's development since it was first conceived.

CARDENAS SAID the new school, the seventh campus of the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), is designed to provide a number of different educational programs to meet the different needs of the area's population.

A comprehensive two-year program is offered for those wanting to transfer to a university for a four-year degree or those going right into jobs in their field. The foundations for a vocational degree also are available along with non-credit academic and leisure-activity courses.

The college president said a MCCCD study and resulting master plan determined that the new college should offer a full range of studies, but not duplicate vocational programs currently offered at Maricopa Technical Community College. The full curriculum for the business, office education and other degrees will be available at the college, Cardenas said, but those vocational programs with expensive labs — like auto mechanics and welding — will offer only the introductory courses.

He hopes the full program for heavy vocational skills will be offered at the school later, when funds become available, along with additional programs like data processing and electronics. Cardenas added that the school hoped to develop transportation for those area students without cars who were taking upper-division vocational classes at other campuses.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION at the school was not overemphasized, at both his and the advisory committee's request, because there was a desire to present the students with a program where they could "go anywhere they want," Cardenas said.

Development of communication skills also will be heavily emphasized at the school, he said. The inability of students to clearly express themselves both in speech and writing is a national problem, he said, which affects some area students more because of their previous educational background and socio-economic environment.

South Mountain College will work with Rio Salado Community College to present courses for a high school equivalent degree at the new campus, said Cardenas.

The school will follow a strong developmental education program, he said, to help students pick a career and develop basic communication and math skills. Tutoring also will be available to help them through problem spots in their courses.

A WIDE VARIETY of leisure-activity classes — such as conversational Spanish and hobby skills — also will be developed, Cardenas said, which is a must in such an area with a large senior citizen population.

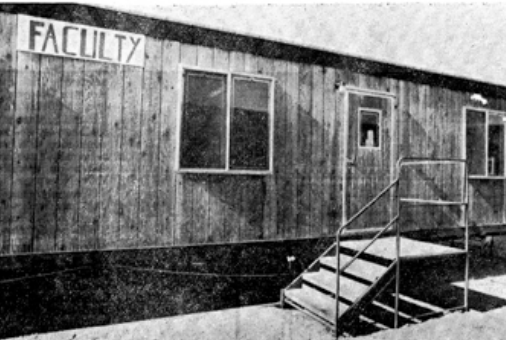
He said the school was conducting a needs assessment study to determine how to modify its educational program to meet the job requirements of local employers and interests of local residents and high school seniors.

More than 800 students attended the school's satellite sites during its first semester and nearly 700 had registered as of late last week for its second semester which began Jan. 15. Cardenas said 68 percent of the first-semester students were college first-timers and that "probably more" of them would have gone to school had there been no South Mountain Community College.

Though classes already have begun, students have until Thursday to late-register for this semester. Further information is available by calling 243-6668.



Dr. Raul Cardenas, president of South Mountain Community College, points out some of the new construction on the growing campus.



The trailer is one of seven temporarily support services, located just north of the new-campus construction site.