

CORNERSTONE OF THE COMMUNITY

Poway Adult School monitors industry trends, student and faculty feedback to meet community's needs

By Anne Stokes

Poway Adult School offers students a wealth of learning opportunities with more than 300 personal enrichment and career pathway courses. Each quarter, the school averages over 3,400 enrollments in their Community and Career Technical Education programs. The school stays abreast of industry trends in order to best serve their students' career goals while simultaneously serving the community.

"Poway Adult School's slogan is 'Live. And Learn,'" says David T. Guzman, assistant director of Poway Unified School District's Career Technical and Adult Education. "Learning is a continuous journey, and we are here for our students. Whether it's a personal enrichment class to keep you healthy and active, or a computer technology course to enhance your job skills, our school is here to meet your needs."

Meeting local industry needs

Staying relevant with industry trends and new technology is key to preparing students who are looking to start a new career in a continuously changing job market. Poway Adult School works with industry partners to identify gaps in the workforce and the skills needed in those areas to develop the courses that meet those challenges. Two new programs that were recently added to address those workforce demands are Home Caregiver Certification and Court Reporter Voice Writer. These courses are providing students the skills and knowledge to attain these high-demand jobs.

"We've already certified over 350 community members as certified Home Care Givers," Guzman says. "Because there's such a void in the industry right now, they just can't keep up with the vacancies. After each course, our business partners are already lined-up, waiting for students to be certified so they can hire them. That's how big the demand is right now in our community."

Poway Adult School's Court Reporter Voice Writing program is a perfect example of changing technology and practices to meet industry trends and needs. Voice



David Guzman, assistant director of Career Technical and Adult Education, says keeping programs affordable and accessible for all is important to the community. Photo by Charlie Neuman

writing is expanding the options beyond stenography in courtrooms throughout the state, and Poway is one of the few adult schools that offer this program.

"It's a high-wage, high-demand job that's going to be putting people onto a profitable career path," Guzman says. "It's not limited to court system duties, they can support with depositions, transcripts or closed captions, it's a wide-open field."

Meeting students' needs

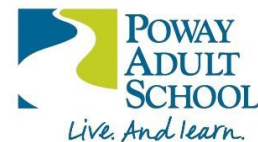
Student and faculty feedback are key factors in course implementation and refinement. While ensuring courses meet industry standards, it's equally vital that student and faculty input be included in the process. Administrators rely on this joint effort to ensure coursework is serving students and their future goals.

"Collaboration with students and teachers allows us to make any necessary adjustments to the curriculum by placing greater emphasis in certain areas or to reduce redundancy. It's all based on their input," Guzman explains. "Course success is achieved through universal feedback on the curriculum from all involved stakeholders."

Affordability is another vital aspect of Poway Adult School programs. Through

funding from grants or other financial support, some courses—such as ESL and the home care provider courses—are offered for free. For other career programs, costs are significantly less than other public and private organizations.

"I challenge others to look at the fees at various locations because there's a huge difference in cost," Guzman says. "While we strive to make our classes affordable, we also pride ourselves in providing a culture focused on student care, a positive learning environment and understanding the adult learner."



Poway Adult School is one of almost 300 adult schools in California that are operated by K-12 school districts. California Adult Schools provide education, training, and support services to ensure that adult learners reach their education and workforce goals. For more information, visit powayadultschool.powayusd.com or call (858) 668-4012.