

CITY OF TEMPE

2017 Youth Town Hall Report and Six Month Update

May 2017



Mayor's
Youth
Advisory
Commission

Dear Mayor and City Council:

This has been another productive year for the Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission (MYAC). The activities organized by MYAC have allowed Tempe's youth to contribute their ideas and assist in the continued development of our City. We would like to thank you for your on-going support of our Commission and its projects.

MYAC was active in our community over these last six months. We participated in a variety of civic engagement events including the Arizona Youth Town Hall where we learned how local governments fund programs, the Future Leaders Town Hall where we discussed how to fund K-12 education, and just recently the Governor's Youth Leadership Day where we had the chance to network with other youth commissions and sharpen our leadership skills.

MYAC has been intentional about being present in our community. We have partnered with the College Connect Tempe program to promote and enhance the existing services, we presented ideas on increasing solar power usage at the State of the Neighborhoods Address in April, and we volunteered at the 2017 YouthFest Changemakers and Courage Awards Banquet.

MYAC's annual Youth Town Hall was held on February 16, 2017. The event allowed youth and community leaders to exchange ideas on issues concerning youth. A summary of the event's activities and recommendations are detailed in this report. These recommendations are the original ideas of Tempe's youth to solve problems our community faces.

Additionally, each year MYAC implements a community service project. We are currently planning a 5k-9 walk/run event to raise awareness about shelter animals that will likely be scheduled for the Fall 2017.

On behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank you again for your dedication and commitment to the youth of Tempe. The successes we have had could not have been achieved without your support.

Sincerely,

Nomith Murari, Chair
Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

2016-2017 Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

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Tempe Youth Town Hall Report

Presented by:
Sophia Gonzalez
Youth Town Hall Chair

The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission (MYAC) sponsors Tempe's Youth Town Hall each year in order to bring together teens and adults from the community to discuss issues of concern to Tempe's youth and offer recommendations for practical solutions to these issues.

This was Tempe's 37th year to sponsor Youth Town Hall, which was held Thursday, February 16, 2017 at the Tempe Center for the Arts. To ensure input from all sectors of our community, representatives from middle schools, high schools, service clubs, youth organizations, community centers, local businesses, the Tempe Police Department, and the Juvenile Court were invited to participate.

After a warm welcome from Mayor Mark Mitchell, participants were divided into eight discussion groups covering four topic areas:

- **Future Career Planning** (2 groups)
- **Promoting Political Awareness** (3 groups)
- **Teen Cultural Involvement** (2 groups)
- **Teen Homelessness and Poverty** (1 group)

The facilitated small group discussions included defining the problem, identification of contributing factors and realistic recommendations for solutions. Each group had the opportunity to present their recommendations back to all Town Hall participants to allow for shared understanding amongst the full group.

MYAC makes the Tempe Youth Town Hall Report available to schools, service clubs, and local organizations, so that they can use it as a planning tool in our community. We hope that Tempe's Youth Town Hall will continue to be a successful model for other communities on how to effectively engage youth and gain their direct input on the issues that impact them.

Future Career Planning – Group 1

The first **Future Career Planning** group addressed the major challenges youth face when preparing for their plans after high school. Mark Kulik, Transition Coordinator for Tempe Union High School District and Desert Vista High School, presented about the current efforts the school district and the City of Tempe’s College Connect program are making to assist students in their college and career planning.

Though there are many high-quality college and career resources available, the group felt that many youth are not aware of these services and many feel overwhelmed by the process to prepare for, apply to and pay for college and/or search for a career. It was also noted that many youth aren’t exposed to the variety of college majors or careers that are available.

The group felt it was most important to raise awareness about the current resources available including College Connect Tempe’s one-on-one mentors so that all youth in Tempe can have successful futures.

Recommendations:

1. Promote College Connect Tempe One-on-One Mentors

- College Connect Tempe has a core group of volunteer mentors that provide youth with individualized guidance on college and career planning.
- Suggested outreach strategies included social media channels such as snapchat and Instagram and promoting on middle and high school campuses with flyers on presentations.

2. Develop a College and Career Day

- College Connect Tempe and TUHSD staff can plan “College and Career Day” panels at local middle and high schools that include professionals from different career fields and colleges. Panelist could highlight their careers and the steps needed to get into that field. Colleges can share information on the credentials or degrees needed to obtain that career.
- The College and Career Day panels should take place during lunch so that all students can have access to this resource.

3. Incentivize College and Career Awareness

- Partner with local restaurants who could offer discounts to students who attend college and career events such as Tempe Union High School District's (TUHSD) College Nights and College Connect Tempe's workshops. This could draw in students who do not regularly attend college and career events.
- Promote incentives through the current TUHSD Remind 101 text messaging system, during school field trips, and social media.

Future Career Planning Group 1 Participants

Facilitators

Darryl Bess	Inspire Arizona
Emma Moriarty	Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Amanda Abdelsamad	Corona del Sol High School
Jennifer Albino-Acosta	Tempe High School
Alexis Precious Alvarez	Tempe High School
Macy Bodrero Fees	College Preparatory Middle School
Amaya Cornelius	Corona del Sol High School
Liam Hamm	ASPIRE Academy at Connolly Middle School
Allison Jensen	Connolly Middle School
Michaelyn Moses	Mountain Pointe High School

Adult Participants

Candice Figueroa	
Mark Kulik	Tempe Union High School District
Amy Lamer	Gililand Middle School
Tonia Smith	Boys and Girls Club of the East Valley

Future Career Planning - Group 2

The second **Future Career Planning** group defined College and Career Planning as:

College Planning: Taking the right tests and classes to prepare for college acceptance.

Career Planning: Developing skills and understanding to pursue a specific job. Youth can start this in high school and a person can do career planning without doing college planning (certificates, apprenticeships, etc.).

After developing shared definitions, the group identified the root cause for this issue to be students' feelings of stress about college and career planning because of the cost, misunderstanding the application process, testing, and the weight of deciding on a major. As a result, many youth can become overwhelmed, discouraged and don't participate in preparation activities.

This discussion group felt that goal setting and time management are the two most important things that should be addressed by the City and school districts to ensure Tempe youth have college and career success.

Recommendations:

1. Develop an Index for Success

- Create an index using www.wiki.com that connects Tempe youth with small businesses in the city for internships, work, and volunteer opportunities. The index should be able to be edited by college and career access professionals throughout Tempe so that it remains current. This effort could be led by an appointed City of Tempe Councilmember and a volunteer committee.
- Not only could this promote and encourage small businesses in Tempe, but it would help build the work experience of Tempe's youth.

2. Promote a Social Media Site for College and Career Success

- The Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission could help create and promote Instagram and Twitter accounts to share upcoming local college access events. The social media sites could be maintained by College Connect Tempe one-on-one mentors and further promoted by all Tempe Union High School counselors.

3. Create College and Career Support Groups

- College Connect Tempe could create a support group for middle and high school students that would allow participants to meet with experienced college students, adult sponsors, and/or teachers on a bi-weekly basis to discuss college and career options.
- This group could create a “roadmap” to college, help students prepare and stay motivated, and assist youth in coping with stress often experienced while planning for college and career endeavors.

4. Promote College Connect Mentors

- Widely promote College Connect Tempe one-on-one mentors so that they can meet with Tempe youth to discuss all aspects related to college and career planning.
- Promotion and outreach strategies include flyers, posters, and morning announcements at all of the Tempe middle and high schools.

Future Career Planning - Group 2 Participants

Facilitator

Nicole Burner	City of Tempe- Human Services
Clara Moffitt	Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Natalie Arellano	Tempe High School
Aimee Cheng	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Zachary Cortez	Mountain Pointe High School
Morgan Cryder	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Cassidy Durland	Tempe High School
Rachel Early	Ward Traditional Academy
Alexus Flewelling	Ward Traditional Academy

Cannon Kartchner	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Ivan Ordaz	Tempe High School
Jason Pejay	Tempe High School
Cameron Pickard	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Carter Sampson	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Alexis Schlotterback	Tempe High School

Adult Participants

Akshay Kamath	Arizona State Univeristy
Ana Maria Rodriguez	Maricopa County

Promoting Political Awareness – Group 1

The first **Promoting Political Awareness** group began by defining political awareness as “having interests and concerns, and an understanding of political systems and current political matters. Political Awareness is also the knowledge of underlying agendas and the effects of public powers, organizations, and structures.”

The group further discussed the issue of youth involvement and knowledge of both local and federal political processes. They generally felt that most youth in Tempe are not very politically aware or involved. It was noted that many youth do not feel safe to discuss politics with their peers or adults because they believed political discussions don't end positively. Youth also often do not feel safe to discuss current events and political topics because the issues can be emotionally charged and, as a result, are not discussed respectfully among youth.

To ensure that youth feel knowledgeable and safe in discussing political processes, the group felt that it is most important to bring civic engagement opportunities to youth while they are in school and during their extracurricular activities. These efforts would also demonstrate that political awareness and civic engagement can be both fun and accessible to all young people.

Recommendations:

1. Form a Political Awareness Committee (PAC)

- Create a Political Awareness Committee (PAC) that could be modeled after MYAC in order to engage middle and high school youth in Tempe who are passionate about political involvement. The PA could include 15-20 youth members recruited from middle and high schools in Tempe.
- PAC should be a year-round committee in order to ensure that political engagement is in the forefront of youths' minds rather than just during one-time political events. The group would meet biweekly to plan activities and would require an adult liaison to coordinate recruitment and event planning. The liaison could be a City of Tempe staff member, grant-funded employee, or community volunteer such as an Arizona State University political science professor.

2. Develop Online Political Discussions in Tempe Union High Schools

- Include weekly postings about current events on the online learning management “Canvas” system within the Tempe Union High School District.
- All freshman English teachers and Social Studies teachers in middle schools and high schools could post weekly assignments to discuss current events and political topics in a moderated environment. Topics could include immigration reform or economic policy. Students could receive a participation grade by posting responses and replying to two other students’ comments. Some topics or logistical details could also be developed by the previously mentioned Political Awareness Committee.

3. Require A Historical and Current Event Argumentative Essay

- In order to increase Tempe youths’ understanding of historical and political topics and how they relate to current world events, all social studies classes and freshman English classes could be required to research and write argumentative essays on historical policy. (For example: discuss how the Cold War affects current political and economic policies in the United States.) The assignment could be a brief, five-paragraph essay that would be graded and required within all Tempe Union high schools and Tempe Elementary middle schools.

4. Hold an Annual Mock Election in Tempe Union and Elementary Schools

- To help youth in Tempe understand how policies affect their lives and to expose them to the voting process, plan and hold mock elections during the first week of November annually.
- All social studies and freshman English teachers could have a day when students research current and past local political candidates such as mayors, council members, and school board members. The students could then hold mock elections in their classrooms and discuss the election results.

Promoting Political Awareness – Group 1 Participants

Facilitators

Hilary Cummings

Tempe Community Council

Nicholas Hargis

Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Zachary Cortez	Corona del Sol High School
Jill Cota	Corona del Sol High School
Aidan Duncan	Connolly Middle School
Julia Jackman	Corona del Sol High School
Alexis Staggers	Kyrene Middle School
Isabel Warriner	McClintock High School
Keishaud White	Compadre High School
Ellie Young	Marcos de Niza High School

Adult Participants

Rick Horvath	Tempe Elementary School District #3
Heather Lozano	City of Maricopa

Promoting Political Awareness - Group 2

The second **Promoting Political Awareness** group started with a mock election to help participants understand how political candidates are often researched and elected. They then defined political awareness as “having interests and concerns, and understanding of political systems and current political matters. Political awareness is also the knowledge of underlying agendas and effects of public powers, organizations, and structures.” The group felt that the main reason many youth are not involved in local or federal political processes is due to limited knowledge of government and politics.

The group felt that increasing and incentivizing opportunities to learn about politics and government would be most beneficial to Tempe youth.

Recommendations:

1. Form a Tempe Youth Political Awareness Committee

- A committee similar to the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission could be created among Tempe Union high school and Tempe Elementary middle school students. The committee would meet quarterly and be timed with specific local and national elections to raise awareness about current candidates and political initiatives. This group would inform students on politics, current events, and develop strategies to make politics engaging for young people.

2. Create a Kid Vote Day

- The Tempe Union High School student councils could implement “Kid Vote Day” via the online curriculum during English classes to in order vote for local representatives. This day would educate students on politics and how to properly research political candidates and elected officials.

3. Offer Students a Political Involvement Certificate

- Tempe Union high school students could receive a certificate offered by the City of Tempe. Youth would earn the certificate by participating in activities such as volunteering, attending city council meetings, writing articles, and informing the community about propositions. Students could be selected by their teachers and school administrators. This incentive would increase youths’ knowledge of and involvement in local and federal political processes and help build their resumes.

4. Create a Tempe Union High School District Rally

- The Tempe Union High School District Board members could hold a rally/pep assembly annually at each Tempe Union high school and Tempe Elementary middle school. Food would be offered and students could meet local Board members and other political candidates. There can be a contest amongst the candidates and Board to raise money to pay for event costs.

Promoting Political Awareness – Group 2 Participants

Facilitators

Jeremy King	City of Tempe- Community Services
Hayden Eastwood	Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Sasha Beamon	Connolly Middle School
Carter Bower	Corona del Sol High School
Brach Drew	Marcos de Niza High School
Olivia Harris	Corona del Sol High School
Alyssa Hollingsworth	Maricopa High School
Jaida Mullins	Kyrene Middle School

Adult Participants

Sandy Lowe	Tempe Union High School District
John Rush	City of Tempe Police Department
Katie Suarez	Arizona State University

Promoting Political Awareness – Group 3

The third **Promoting Political Awareness** group began with a “youth in government” presentation by Jevin Hodge. The group then held a mock election to illustrate how many people currently engage with local and federal political processes. The group discussed issues such as political apathy, or a widespread disinterest in politics and low voter turnout. The group felt that much of the information on social media and television about politics and government is ideological and polarizing. Consequently, youth are less likely to engage in political processes.

One of the main issues the youth identified was that they often are not able to share their voice within political and governmental processes because they are not easily accessible to youth. As a result, youth tend to avoid engaging in politics.

Recommendations:

1. Lower the Voting Age to Sixteen for Local Elections

- Since youth are most affected by local politics (attend school, use public transit, play in parks and community centers), the group believes that lowering the voting age to 16 would allow youth to have a larger voice in local government. Youth younger than 16 could have the opportunity to volunteer at events and learn about the political process from their teen peers.
- By lowering the voting age for local elections, youth would also be able to develop civic interest and a voting habit. Additionally, local officials would focus on needs of youth in an effort to reach that voting demographic.

2. Increase City Council Presence on Social Media

- Mayor and City Council could post on Instagram and Snapchat about current city issues in order to engage youth via avenues they relate to. This would help to connect Tempe youth to their local government and policies in an approachable and zero-cost manner.
- City Council and Mayor could connect with youth by advertising their social media feeds in civics classes and by providing presentations to schools.

3. Create Mayor and City Council “Meet and Greets” at Middle and High Schools

- Since many youth do not attend city council meetings due to time constraints and limited transportation, the Mayor and City Council could visit schools. Mayor and

Councilmembers could come to monthly school assemblies and present about current events and initiatives. It would be important to allow time to meet with students afterwards, so that youth could offer ideas and ask questions.

- This initiative would allow youth to understand politics in a comfortable, familiar setting, with the goal of making them more eager to learn about and participate in local government.

Promoting Political Awareness – Group 3 Participants

Facilitators

Mauricio Suchowlanski	Arizona State University
Juliet Farr	Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Alessandra Avendanio	Ward Traditional Academy
Reyna Cruz	Tempe High School
Alan Dupre	Mountain Pointe High School
Erin Granillo-Walker	McClintock High School
Jacqueline Kirk	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Morgan Kubasko	Ward Traditional Academy
Stella Lovelady	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Alec Mitchell	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Jeremy Tun	Ward Traditional Academy

Adult Participants

Jevin Hodge	Arizona Democratic Party
Tracey Mahon	Tempe Union High School District
Senator Juan Mendez	Arizona State Senate
Sara Ruiz	Arizona State University

Teen Cultural Involvement - Group 1

The first **Teen Cultural Involvement** group started with a performance by local artist Zarco Guerrero. The performance set the stage for the discussion where participants defined cultural identity as “who people are based on where they are from, what and how they speak, what they eat, and what they do (such as sports, arts, holidays, and food).” The group’s goal was to understand how to increase multicultural acceptance and engagement.

The main issue the group identified was that many youth have a limited understanding of different cultures due to their inability to attend cultural events outside of school because of cost and time constraints. The group felt that these challenges could best be addressed by bringing more arts and culture into the school environment.

Recommendations:

1. Enhance Youth Diversity Awareness Through Arts and Theater

- Add a cultural component to City of Tempe arts and culture activities and events (for example Arts Career Day, Youth and Family Arts Grants, Arts Programming, Youth Art Shows at Tempe Festival for the Arts, and the Art 7 Exhibit).
- Youth could submit art pieces to activities that reflect their cultural backgrounds.
- There could also be a cultural component to the Tempe Arts grants and youth could be included in the grant application review process.

2. Provide Cultural Field Trips to Tempe Union High School Students

- Offer annual field trips for high school and middle school students held at various cultural exhibits and museums. Each grade could go to a specific museum or cultural site (for example: freshmen go to the Pueblo Grande Museum, while juniors go to the Phoenix Art Museum). Field trips could be funded by class fundraisers and donations from local businesses.

Teen Cultural Involvement – Group 1 Participants

Facilitators

Isela Blanc	Arizona State House of Representatives
Andrea Lara Romero	Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Princess Ixora Richard	Corona del Sol High School
Kailey Arnold	Connolly Middle School
DeAnn Bergeron	Corona del Sol High School
Candace Farling	ASPIRE at Connolly Middle School
Dalila Mendoza	Fees College Prep Middle School
Enrique Ruiz	Fees College Prep Middle School
Christina Schultz	Kyrene Middle School
Grace Smith	Fees College Prep Middle School
Hailey White	Kyrene Middle School

Adult Participants

Larry Baggs	City of Tempe Police Department
Karin Moffitt	Tempe Preparatory Academy

Teen Cultural Involvement - Group 2

The second **Teen Cultural Involvement** group focused on understanding the challenges youth face to increasing cultural awareness. Participants noted that the underlying issues are discrimination and racism, and felt that many youth have varying perceptions of what racism and discrimination are. In addition, some participants felt the Tempe community has limited knowledge of and motivation to understand people with diverse backgrounds.

The discussion group determined that the Tempe community should work to address cultural biases and increase cultural competence amongst residents to ensure the success and acceptance of all Tempe youth. It was noted that while the City of Tempe offers a number of cultural events (“AZ Dragon Festival,” “Pow Wows,” “Dia de Los Muertos,” and “The Aloha Festival”), youth are not often able to attend these events due to personal and familial barriers including limited financial resources, extracurricular commitments, family needs, homework, and limited personal time.

Recommendations:

1. Create a Diversity Awareness Week, Day or Event

- Expand Mountain Pointe High School’s Diversity Week to other high schools in order to expand awareness on diversity and cultural awareness. Each school could develop their own unique interpretation of a diversity week, day or event based upon the culture of their school in the Fall of 2017.
- These events could entail a presentation, week-long exploration of cultures, a day of awareness, etc. The goal is to produce unique school events that help reduce barriers that affect students’ ability to learn about each other and feel accepted.

2. Require Cultural Awareness Courses for Tempe Teachers

- The Tempe Union School District, Tempe Elementary School District, and Kyrene Elementary School District Boards could implement cultural awareness courses or trainings to help educators integrate cultural awareness education into their classes. All teachers would be required to complete the training course that could be delivered by Tempe City staff, Arizona State University staff, or other experts who focus on diversity, inclusion and engagement.

- Teachers could attend training during the Fall semesters of each school year. During Spring semester teachers could recommend and implement cultural awareness assignments to students in all grade levels.

Teen Cultural Involvement – Group 2 Participants

Facilitators

Greg Reents	Mesa Community College
Liam Huggins	Mayor’s Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Jayla Alston	Mountain Pointe High School
Dylan Bia	Corona del Sol High School
Lauren Everett	Mountain Pointe High School
Nathan Hemingway	Corona del sol High School
Karla Eva Islas	Tempe High School
Teddy Ladley	Corona del Sol High School
Lindsay Lawrence	Corona del Sol High School
Aaron Martinez	Gililand Middle School
Kale Quismorio	Kyrene Middle School
Alberto Valenzuela	McClintock High School

Adult Participants

Sheryl Houston	Tempe Union High School District
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Teen Homelessness and Poverty

The **Teen Homelessness and Poverty** group identified some of the root causes of teen homelessness and poverty in the Tempe community. The group believed the causes include: youth having volatile home environments, youth having limited life skills, youth experiencing familial and community rejection due to their sexual orientation or identity, youth experiencing insecure foster care situations, and a lack of awareness about available support services and resources. Additionally, the group felt current resources are underfunded and that there are limited prevention resources. Some of the existing resources the group identified were Tumbleweed programs, Tumbleweed's Mobile Outreach vans at the First Methodist Church, Tempe Community Action Agency, and iHelp.

Recommendations:

1. Create a List of Crisis Hotlines for Homeless Youth

- Develop and maintain a list of crisis hotlines and physical service sites for teens so they can access information and resources including shelters, meal programs, and safe places sites (QT/Valley Metro). Safe place sites are designated locations where youth can go to in metro Phoenix if they are in a crisis and they will be met within 30 minutes by a crisis worker to help them.
- Hotlines to include are the suicide prevention hotline, Tumbleweed crisis hotline (602-841-5799), and the Safe Place TXT 4 Help campaign.
- This list with signage could be posted at public transit stations, the Tempe Public Library, and schools.

2. Increase Homelessness Prevention Education

- Develop and show public service announcements and presentations in schools to remind teens of the Safe Place emergency response resource. Tumbleweed Youth Resource Center could provide the presentations in partnership with the schools.
- Presentation suggestions include assemblies and announcements in classrooms.

3. Increase Funding for Existing Homeless Programs

- The City of Tempe and Tempe Union high schools could run donation drives for existing homeless teen resource centers. Additional funding and donations could augment their efforts and ultimately reduce the number of homeless youth in Tempe.

Teen Homelessness and Poverty Group Participants

Facilitators

Brittany May	Tempe Community Member
Daniel Bish	Mayor's Youth Advisory Commission

Youth Participants

Syeda Akter	Gililland Middle School
Ivan Alexander	Tempe High School
Jacob Beltran	Gililland Middle School
Michael Bernard	McClintock High School
Katherine Camberg	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Kelly Clark	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Mandy Fernandez	Connolly Middle School
Shandy Htun	Tempe High School
Donovan Jimenez	Gililland Middle School
Kobee Marion	Corona Del Sol High School
Alexis Massie	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Charlotte McIntosh	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Emiliano Miranda	Gililland Middle School
Joey Olivas	Tempe High School
Grayson Pfluger	Connolly Middle School
Quyen Pham	Mountain Pointe High School
Isabella Schmoker	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Jaqueline Serrano	Gililland Middle School
Amaya Tanhueco	Connolly Middle School
Gabriel Tortoles	Fees College Preparatory Academy
Caden Van Dahm	Tempe Preparatory Academy
Tyler Woodroffe	Tempe Preparatory Academy

Adult Participants

Autumn Brookins	Arizona State University
Kendra Johnson	Arizona State University
Khalid Jenkins	Kyrene School District
Mariah Secrest-Comer	Tumbleweed Youth Resource Center