



Rio Salado College

Carol Scarafiotti, Executive Consultant for Online Learning

PEARSON PROFILES: INSTITUTIONAL SOLUTIONS

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to a product that
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for students.*

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Executive Consultant
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Rio Salado College*

Rio Salado College, one of the Maricopa Community Colleges, is a fully accredited, largely virtual college dedicated to fulfilling the educational needs of working and adult students. Serving more than 60,000 students annually, with more than 27,000 of them enrolled in a wide range of online and distance-learning programs, Rio offers high-quality learning in a unique format emphasizing choice, access, flexibility, and affordability.

When most publishers talk about customer service, partnership, or working together toward common goals, what they're usually saying is that if they've done it before and it worked to their advantage, then they'll consider doing it again. No risk taking. No creative problem solving. No thinking outside the box. Pearson isn't most publishers. To prove it, Pearson has partnered with one of higher education's most innovative institutions: Rio Salado College.

"We made a conscious choice to shoot for the moon," says Carol Scarafiotti, executive consultant for online learning at Rio Salado. "We asked Pearson to create a solution that would satisfy our top three goals: reduction of textbook costs across the entire college by 50 percent, reduction in the number of edition-driven online course changes, and better alignment of our textbooks with course curricula. To our surprise, Pearson didn't balk. They explored the options—and came back with a model that satisfied all three requests. We were thrilled."

At the heart of this revolutionary new model is the Textbook Savings Program, whereby Pearson will exclusively publish custom textbooks for all of Rio Salado's classes, thereby significantly reducing students' overall upfront expenses for brand-new textbooks. The custom textbooks will contain content specifically selected by Rio Salado faculty, specifically customized for Rio Salado courses, and specifically tailored to the needs of Rio Salado students.

Rio Salado, which offers opportunities for course enrollment every week versus on a semester basis, is particularly pleased with the increased control over textbook edition updates that custom publishing provides. "Weekly enrollments represent one of the ways Rio fulfills its commitment to being truly student centered," says Scarafiotti. "But it gets complicated when textbook editions are updated randomly. Custom publishing means our textbook editions can be driven solely by pedagogy."

The program launched with the January 2008 term. It will be phased in by stages as new textbooks get added, and it is expected to be complete by October 2009. The first round of customized textbooks is offered in a variety of courses—including Biology 201 and 202, History 103 and 104, and Communications 110, for a total of 32 courses.

"The textbooks look great: they're color coded by discipline and include a letter from the president of the college explaining the program and its benefits," says Scarafiotti. "The bookstore had to order twice as many biology books to keep up with the demand. Reduced cost, targeted content, course standardization, and curricular consistency—it all adds up to a product that really makes sense for students."

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