

## Janice A. Lawhorn, Ph.D.

Spending the early years in Tucson and all her teenage years in Safford, Arizona, as a Safford High School graduate, she began attending classes full-time at Eastern Arizona College to become a Chemical Engineer. When Calculus didn't work out the way she hoped, she became a college statistic, not as a graduate – but as a college drop-out. She worked at the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Safford for about six years and then went back to school attending evenings at EAC and through Northern Arizona University's satellite Elementary Education program while raising three children – Kara, Katie, and Justin – with her husband, Curtis.

Dr. Janice Lawhorn received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Elementary Education in 1996/1997 from Northern Arizona University. She taught elementary school from 1997-2000 at Triumphant Learning Center, also located in Safford.

She began her higher education career at Eastern Arizona College as an adjunct faculty member in 1997 teaching Business and Computer courses. She was hired full-time in 2000 in the Business and Computer Division. She received her Master's degree in Computer Information Systems in 2003 from the University of Phoenix.

In 2008, Dr. Lawhorn was promoted to the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction and responsible for the Carl Perkins grant, Cosmetology, Distance Education, the Center for Teaching and Learning, Allied Health, Business, Prison Programs, Industrial Trades, articulation, and all curricula. Also in 2008, she received a Ph.D. in Educational Technology Management from Northcentral University.

In 2020, Dr. Lawhorn was promoted to the Senior Dean over the Gila County Payson and Gila Pueblo Campuses, having the opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, students, and the communities in Gila County.

While at Eastern, she served on a plethora of local, regional, and state committees and in all capacities in the Arizona Occupational Advisor's Council, including President, before her retirement in June 2022.

From August 2022 until June 2025, she served as the Interim President for the Gila County Provisional Community College District, successfully leading the accreditation process with a team of consultants to achieving Candidacy Status in January 2025 through the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).

Dr. Lawhorn was selected as the first president of the newly independent College in March 2025. Gila Community College will begin officially operating on July 1, 2025.

Dr. Lawhorn understands first-hand the challenges and obstacles community college students face having been a first-generation student, college drop-out, part-time student, and full-time working mother herself. Dr. Lawhorn also worked as an online adjunct faculty member for Arizona State University teaching Organizational Leadership courses and understands the

challenges of teaching and taking distance education courses. She is confident her experiences will help her connect with students from all backgrounds and provide educational opportunities for the residents of Gila County all while building and supporting the mission and values of Gila Community College. She is excited about the future of the College and looks forward to the continuing expansion and development of Gila Community College as YOUR community college.