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## **College of the Desert Welcomes Seasoned Director of Public Affairs and Community Relations**

*Higher education leader joins local college bringing 15+ years of strategic communications experience*

**PALM DESERT, CA (June 9, 2026)** -- College of the Desert (COD) warmly welcomes Genesis Gonzalez as the new Director of Public Affairs and Community Relations, who began Monday, June 8. A seasoned communications professional with more than 15 years of experience, including nine years in higher education, Gonzalez will lead COD's public affairs, media relations, and community engagement efforts.

"Genesis will serve as a strategic liaison to our community partners as well as our faculty and staff," said Superintendent/President Val Martinez Garcia. "Her extensive experience in higher education will greatly support the college's ongoing mission of an inclusive, student-centered community college focused on preparing workforce professionals and leaders."

Gonzalez brings extensive strategic communications and marketing experience to the role. Most recently, she worked at the University of California, Riverside for the past six and a half years as the Marketing Manager for the Division of Undergraduate Education and formerly the Director of Communications for the Office of Student Affairs, where she oversaw crisis communications, event management, and student retention. Her professional background also includes public relations management roles at the University of La Verne and Loma Linda University Health.

"College of the Desert is such an essential part of the Coachella Valley, and I look forward to collaborating with the campus community and community members to shape its future," said Gonzalez.

Her strengths include strategic leadership, a passion for storytelling, and her unique background as a former lifestyle reporter in the Orange County and Las Vegas regions.

Gonzalez earned a masters in creative writing from National University and a bachelors in broadcast journalism and public relations from Chapman University.

Gonzalez can be reached by email at [ggonzalez@collegeofthedesert.edu](mailto:ggonzalez@collegeofthedesert.edu).

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## **About College of the Desert**

College of the Desert serves more than 20,000 students across five campuses in Palm Desert, Indio, Mecca/Thermal, Desert Hot Springs, and Palm Springs. Founded in 1958 and opened in 1962, College of the Desert is governed by the Desert Community College District Board of Trustees. Through the pLEDGE program, the college offers eligible students two years of tuition-free education, removing financial barriers and expanding access to higher education in the community. College of the Desert provides the Coachella Valley with affordable degrees, certificates, and transfer pathways, offering in-demand programs that prepare workforce leaders and strengthen the local economy.