



## Monday, February 24

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### TIME

### SESSION

8:00 AM–9:00 AM

Registration / Breakfast / Networking

9:00 AM–9:15 AM

Opening Remarks



[Jean Andino, Ph.D., P.E.](#)

**Director**

Western Alliance to Expand Student Opportunities (WAESO)

**Associate Professor**

School for Engineering of Matter, Transport and Energy (SEMTE), Arizona State University

Dr. Jean Andino, WAESO Program Director, will open the conference and welcome attendees.

9:20 AM–10:20 AM

Panel Discussion: Experiences in STEM



[Meli'sa Crawford, Ph.D.](#)

**Assistant Professor**

School of Environmental & Biological Sciences, Rutgers University-New Brunswick



[Jacob Garcia, Ph.D.](#)

**Physical Scientist**

National Institute of Standards and  
Technology, Applied Chemicals &  
Materials Division



[Omar A. Escontrías, DrPH, MPH](#)

**Senior Vice President**

Equity, Research & Programs  
National Health Council

Hear personal stories and valuable insights from accomplished WAESO alumni who have navigated diverse paths in STEM. Get inspired by their experiences and learn practical advice for your own journey.

10:20 AM–10:30 AM

Break

10:30 AM–12:00 PM

Poster Session 1

Discover impactful STEM topics and engage with student researchers presenting innovative projects.

12:00 PM–1:00 PM

Lunch / Networking

1:00 PM–2:30 PM

Poster Session 2

Continue exploring student research projects, ask questions, and exchange ideas with presenters.

2:30 PM–3:30 PM

Workshop 1 (Choose an Option)

**MU 242 “La Paz”**

Option 1: *Drafting a statement of Purpose*

Led by Dr. Jean Andino, this hands-on workshop will teach you how to craft a standout statement for applications. Walk away with tips and tools to make your story shine.

**MU 241 “Ventana”**

Option 2: *Transitioning from Community College to a 4-year institution*

Dr. Filippo Posta shares strategies for a seamless transition to a 4-year institution, focusing on practical steps and resources to support your success.

3:30 PM–3:45 PM

Break

3:45 PM–5:15 PM

Poster Session 3

Dive into the final round of student research presentations. Take the opportunity to connect with presenters and faculty mentors.

5:15 PM–5:30 PM

Closing Remarks

Dr. Jean Andino reflects on the day's highlights and previews what's to come on Day 2.

## Tuesday, February 25

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### TIME

### SESSION

8:00 AM–9:00 AM

Breakfast / Networking

9:00 AM–9:10 AM

Opening Remarks

Welcome back! A brief introduction to Day 2's sessions and opportunities.

9:10 AM–9:30 AM

Cultural Performance: Native Spirit

Experience the rich cultural heritage of Native Spirit through a captivating performance.

9:30 AM–9:45 AM

Break

9:45 AM–10:45 AM

Panel Discussion: Career Options



**Danny Howard, Ph.D., P.E.**

**Sr. Director of Electronics**

Space, Intelligence and Weapons  
Systems (SI&WS),  
Defense, Space & Security (BDS)  
The Boeing Company



**Vernon Morris, Ph.D.**

**Associate Dean**

Knowledge Enterprise and Strategic Outcomes

**Affiliate Professor**

School of Earth and Space Exploration  
Arizona State University



**Sharon Stefan**

**Director**

STEM Center of Excellence

**Faculty**

Mathematics  
Estrella Mountain Community College

Explore diverse career paths in STEM with industry and academic leaders. Learn how to turn your academic background into a fulfilling career.

10:45 AM–11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM–12:30 PM

STEM Exposition

Discover exciting opportunities in STEM and meet representatives from leading organizations.

12:30 PM–2:00 PM

"WAESO Recognition" and Lunch

Celebrate student researchers and their outstanding contributions during the poster sessions. Enjoy lunch as we recognize their achievements.

2:00 PM–2:15 PM

Closing Remarks

Dr. Jean Andino will adjourn this year's conference and invite all participants to join us again in 2026!

2:15 PM–2:30 PM

Participation Verification / Networking

Complete the participation verification process and connect with attendees for one last networking opportunity.

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2:00 PM–5:00 PM  
MU 242 "La Paz"

Faculty Workshop: Activating Multicontext Theory in STEM



[Gary Weissmann, Ph.D.](#)

**Professor**  
Earth and Planetary Sciences,  
The University of New Mexico



[Roberto A. Ibarra, Ph.D.](#)

**Associate Professor Emeritus**  
Department of Sociology,  
The University of New Mexico

Join Drs. Weissmann and Ibarra in discovering the fundamentals of Multicontext Theory (MCT) in this engaging workshop. Learn how MCT can enhance your research, teaching, and academic career while exploring practical examples of activating these concepts in convergence research.