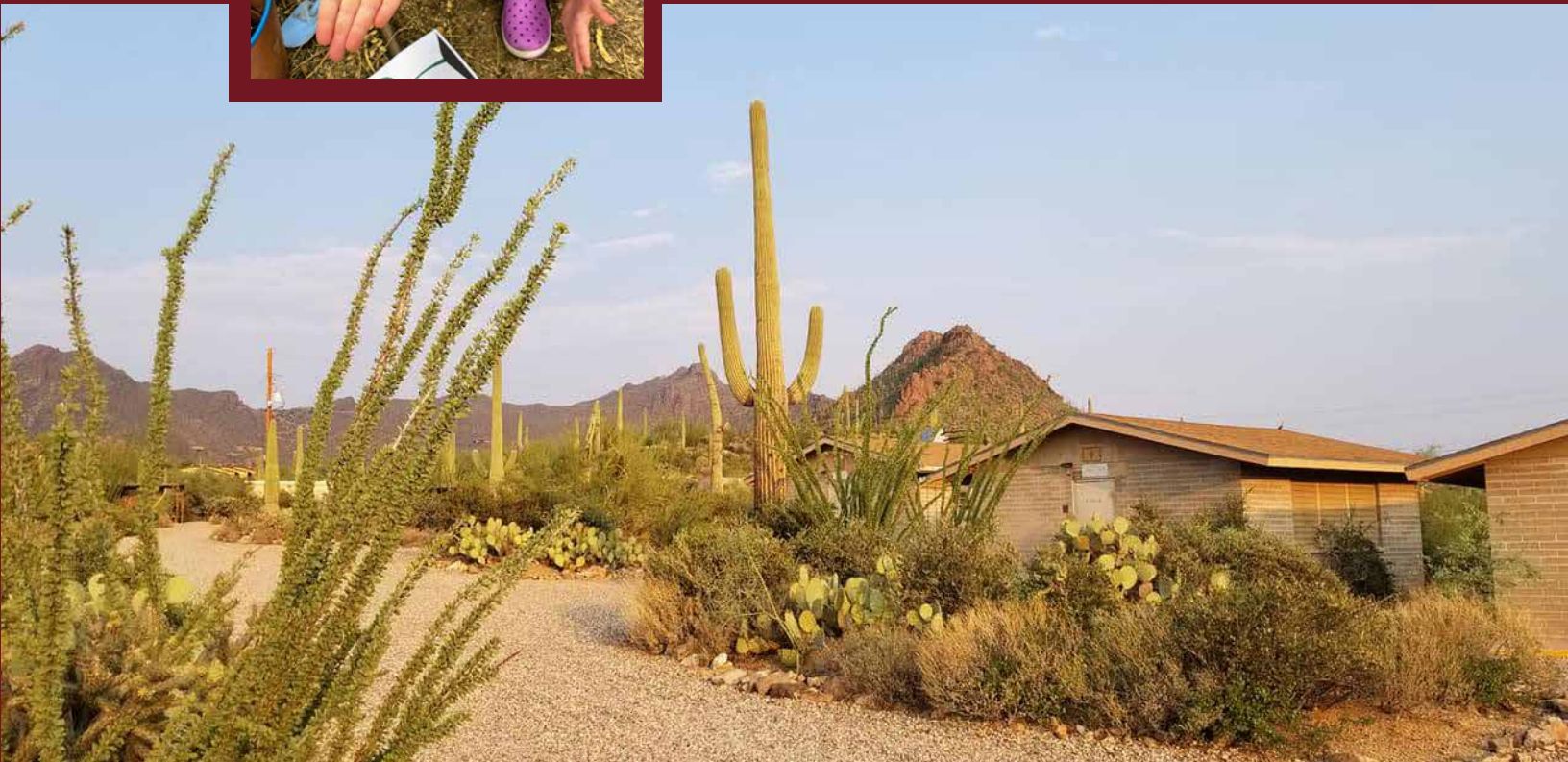




COOPER CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING
Strategic Plan 2021-2026

NOV. 2021



A Letter from our Director

Welcome to our 2021 - 2026 Strategic Plan.

This plan includes a review of the successes and challenges from our previous Strategic Plan (2017 - 2020) and puts forth goals and projections for the next five years.

A key development since our previous plan is a record 20 year renewal of the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) that manages Cooper Center, extending until 2039. This agreement, between the University of Arizona College of Education and Tucson Unified School District, represents a turning point for us, as it clears the way for major facility improvements and capital fundraising unavailable to us under the previous three-year agreements. Facility improvements will be undertaken to enhance our capacity to serve, which will have lasting and positive impacts on students, educators, our staff, volunteers and the Tucson community at large.

Cooper Center has experienced tremendous growth during the past three years. Our field trip programs have expanded in numbers and we are adding new programs for preschool and high school students to our repertoire. This will help us to create a continuum of experiences for grades PreK - 12 that will inspire learners of all ages to pursue a lifestyle that understands, appreciates, and takes care of our home, the planet Earth.

We have also stepped up our support of classroom teachers. Thanks to new partnerships and donors who see the importance of professional development for educators, we are proud to offer workshops and training sessions that help teachers to be better science instructors in the classroom, while also sharing with them the value of real-world connections to the environment for their students.

In this Strategic Plan, you will learn more about these programs and our goals for each as we move forward. You will also learn more about key support structures that allow these programs to thrive, including our staff, plans for facility improvements and our growing efforts to market our programs and reconnect with Camp Cooper alumni from our 55+ year history.

We are sharing this plan with you because of your interest in our work. This is an exciting opportunity for you to see the impact your involvement will have on the success of the Cooper Center moving forward. On behalf of our staff, advisory board, and the students, teachers, and families we serve, thank you for your support.



Handwritten signature of Colin Waite in blue ink.

COLIN WAITE
Cooper Center Director

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2017-2020 Strategic Plan Review

COVID-19 sidelined normal operations in 2020 & 2021, however a strong 2019 performance and record bookings for 2020 indicate that our 2017-2020 plan was on track.



Steady Growth Despite Challenging Circumstances


















In 2017 we set a goal to increase our annual number of students served from 2,100 in 2017 to 3,500 by 2020. To reach this goal, we also projected to add one staff position to our education team.

During the 2018-2019 program year, Camp Cooper reached over 3,000 students for the first time since 2015. In the recently completed 2019-2020 program year, we were on pace to serve more than 3,200 students in grades PreK - 12, before the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of all field experiences as of March 13th, 2020.

2017-2020 Performance Scorecard

The table below shows a comparison of our projected 2020 performance (extrapolated from 2019 performance and 2020 field trip bookings) against our original plan, and against our 2017 actual performance. Based on our assumptions, were it not for a pandemic, 2020 would have been our best year to date, above plan in most areas.

 above comparison
 below comparison

	Adjusted 2020 vs Plan	Adjusted 2020 vs 2017
Bookings		
Students		
Trips Scheduled		
Trip Cancellations		
Student No Shows		
Average Group Size		
Days & Nights Used		
Schools Served		
TUSD Schools		
Other Schools		

This Strategic Plan is divided into five areas: Programs & Staffing, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Facility Improvement, Marketing, and Fundraising.

Programs & Staffing

Our program goals include increasing the number of students served annually from 3,000 to over 3,800 by filling our current programs, optimizing our utilization, and adding new programs for preschool and high school students. This will also require the addition of educational staff to support our growth.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

In an effort to strengthen the diversity of our team, we are investing in educating our staff and board, while conducting outreach to organizations that work with the populations we serve. In the years ahead, our recruitment process and new hires will help us build an organization that is more reflective of the students and communities we serve.

Facility Improvements

Eco-friendly bathrooms, showers and a solar-shaded outdoor classroom comprise the first phase of a \$3.25M master plan, expected to take five years to complete. Future phases will include renovated sleeping cabins, new classroom and administrative spaces and a commercial kitchen with sustainable food service.

Marketing

Marketing will support organizational and programmatic goals through targeted program marketing, improved communication with teachers, parents, alumni and donors, and by advancing Cooper's efforts to adapt to the changing landscape of remote/online education, enabling Cooper to serve more students and reach new audiences.

Fundraising

Cooper Center priorities include the expansion of operational fundraising, as the number of students we serve grows, while simultaneously investing in facility improvements through annual capital fundraising rounds that comprise a sustainably designed Master Plan.



Programs & Staffing

2021-2026



To forecast our future growth, we look back to 2018-2019, our last full year of normal, in-person field trip operations before the pandemic.



More Than 3000 Students Served

In program year 2018-2019, Camp Cooper served 3050 students, the highest number served since 2015.



100% Staff Retention

Also in 2018-2019, the Cooper Center retained 100% of education staff for the first time after creating full time, career track positions.

Five-Year Program Goals

2019 Actuals vs. 2026 Plan

Our projections are based on historical growth patterns, as well as planned program expansion to serve more students, and a wider age range. We anticipate that program changes will impact both the number of students we plan to serve, and also the staff we need to hire. In addition, considerations have been made around Master Plan facilities improvements and how construction may impact our ability to conduct in-person programming.

	2018-2019 ACTUALS	2025-2026 PLAN	CHANGE
Bookings (Classes)			
Scheduled	102	118	+16%
Attended	89	102	+15%
Students			
Scheduled	4,347	4,961	+14%
Attended	3,050	3,816	+25%
% TUSD Students Served	70%	75%	+8%
Average Group Size	34	37	+9%
Days			
Used	142	157	+10%
% Of Available Days	93%	103%	+10%
Daily Utilization	3,268	4,508	+38%
Nights Used			
Used	61	71	+16%
% Of Available Nights	50%	59%	+16%
Nightly Utilization	1,933	2,587	+34%
Schools Served			
TUSD	39	45	+15%
Total (TUSD & Others)	56	60	+7%

New Programs

Expansion of field trip experiences at Camp Cooper includes adding new programs while improving the impact of our existing programs.



In program year 2021-22, we will pilot preschool and high school offerings to add our traditional K-8 experiences. These programs have been in development over the past two years have been delayed 1 year due to the pandemic.

Once these programs are established, we will add additional experiences created by The Institute for Earth Education (IEE), an international organization that designs age-appropriate programs for learners from birth through adulthood. We expect to add three of these IEE experiences between 2022 and 2025. Cooper Center staff and volunteers will work closely with IEE to establish these programs at Camp Cooper.



Program Goals for 2021-2026

- **2021-22** Pilot preschool program & high school citizen science program.
- **2022-23** Integrate new preschool & high school programs into our core programming. Pilot Rangers of the Earth 4th grade program.
- **2023-24** Restart Sunship III program, a 3-day program for middle schoolers.
- **2024-25** Pilot Lost Treasures 3rd grade program.
- **2025-26** Implement Lost Treasures as the new 3rd grade full day program.

Teacher Development workshops bring the Cooper Center ethos into the classroom.



In collaboration with **Partners for Equitable Science Instruction**, Cooper Center offers teacher professional development workshops to improve classroom science teaching and to get teachers excited about Camp Cooper field trip experiences. Many schools and districts have been forced to eliminate or limit teacher professional development due to budget cuts. Thanks to philanthropic support, Cooper Center is in a position to help fill this critical need.

2019-20 2 workshops completed
2020-21 2 workshops completed

2021-22 4 workshops planned
2022-23 5 workshops planned
2023-24 6 workshops planned
2024-25 7 workshops planned
2025-26 8 workshops planned

Our Campus Outreach Team works to integrate environmental learning into the higher education experience at the University of Arizona.

Since this project began in 2016, we have been integrating values at the heart of the Cooper Center's mission into the University of Arizona's campus culture. We believe the University of Arizona can fully realize its potential as a sustainable model for our local, national, and global communities when its students, faculty, and staff are willing to make ecologically sound changes at home, work, and school. Participants in our events also become wiser and more comfortable with engaging in leadership roles for important environmental issues.

Accomplishments

'Skip the Straw' campaign with Student Unions - In an effort to reduce plastic straw use, we collaborated with student, staff, and research groups to decrease use of disposable straws. Campus awareness was increased through signage posted throughout the Student Unions advocating for post-consumer composting and recycling. Signage work has been done in partnership with University of Arizona Compost Cats and Office of Sustainability, and Student Unions have reported decreases in straw use during the campaign.

'SewTrue' Virtual Event – Film screening and panel discussion on sustainability issues within the fashion industry.

Greek Life 'Dodge the Dumpster' Campaign – This campaign involved collection of items to be reused and donated within our local community.

Campus Outreach Team Moves To Office of Sustainability

The goal of our Campus Outreach Team has been to increase student, faculty, and staff engagement around issues of sustainability at the University of Arizona. During the four years of this grant-funded project, we were successful in doing so. As a result, the University of Arizona Office of Sustainability has taken over these efforts for us, including the hiring of three of our team members. The Office of Sustainability leads the way with campus outreach and education activities, and Cooper Center will continue to be active in their efforts.

While the majority of campus outreach happens on campus, our desert facility is an important resource for student, faculty, and staff groups seeking a unique space to host meetings, workshops, special events, courses, or retreats. As we modernize our Camp Cooper facility in the coming years, we look forward to bringing more university groups on site for education, relaxation, connection with nature and inspiration to live more sustainably on our planet.



Staff

Our passionate and knowledgeable staff enable our programs to be successful, helping students build emotional connections with the natural world.



Since 2008, when the UA assumed day-to-day operation of Cooper, gradual increases in staffing have enabled us to:

- Improve the teacher-student ratio for all programs.
- Provide more varied educational programs across grade levels.
- Increase overnight utilization of Cooper facilities.
- Give students more impactful and memorable experiences.

These gains in staffing have been made possible by the incredible generosity of philanthropic individuals, foundations, and businesses from our local community and beyond.



Staffing Accomplishments

- Cooper Center now hosts interns and students from more University of Arizona campus units than in 2017, including students from the Peace Corps Coverdell Fellowship, College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture, Departments of Natural Resources and Hydrology, and the Arizona Institutes for Resilience (formerly Institute of the Environment).
- Our Program Coordinator position is in place with secure funding, and our goal is to provide the opportunity for our educators to rise into this position as they gain experience in all aspects of Cooper Center operations.
- Wages for education staff were increased 45% between 2017 and 2020, and educator positions transitioned from seasonal (August - May) to year-round, providing each staff member with a more stable position in our organization. This led to all educators returning for a second year in 2019, the first time that this had occurred since University of Arizona took over operations in 2008.
- Cooper Center has made progress connecting with our various audiences and the local community. We successfully transitioned from a contracted marketing consultant to a half-time, salaried marketing coordinator.



As our programs expand and grow, and as our facilities are improved to accommodate more and larger groups, our staffing levels will increase in turn.

Staffing Goals for 2021-2026

- Expand our education, campus outreach, and marketing staff
- Increase student internships and volunteering
- Improve compensation for all staff to better align with norms in our field
- Use hiring to advance our missions for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- **2021-22** Hire 2 Educators (fill positions left open due to pandemic)
- **2022-23** Add 1 Educator
- **2023-24** Add 1 Leadership Position (Program Coordinator or Assistant Dir.)
- **2024-25** Add 1 Educator
- **2025-26** Maintain staffing, increase salaries



2021 Cooper Staff



Colin Waite, Director (he/him)

The 2020-21 program year marks Colin's 18th year at the Cooper Center. As director, Colin oversees programming, fundraising and leads outreach and marketing efforts for the Cooper Center.



Paige Humphrey, Educator (they/them)

Paige was welcomed onto Cooper's education team in August of 2018, following their completion of their B.S. in Biology from Kansas State University.



Mariah Kuehl, Educator (she/her)

Mariah, born in Tucson, received a BA in environmental studies and has worked as a first-grade math and science teacher at Basis Oro Valley. Mariah has also worked at the Tucson Children's Museum and Tucson Botanical Gardens.



Brittne MacCleary, Educator (she/her)

Brittne joined the Cooper Center in 2018. Before working at Cooper, Brittne served three Americorps seasons on conservation corps based in Tucson, Maine, and Montana.



Nate Byerley, Marketing (he/him)

Nate is a graduate of TUSD, University of Arizona, and a proud Camp Cooper alum. In his career, Nate has worked to popularize products and ideas that benefit people and the environment.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

We want the Cooper Center to be a place where diversity is celebrated, and where every learner is capable of having a meaningful natural experience.

In fall 2020, Cooper Center staff and advisory board adopted a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Mission to identify how awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion can support our overall mission by inspiring the next generation of environmentally responsible citizens.

Cooper Center Diversity, Equity, & Inclusivity Mission

A key element of our mission at the Cooper Center for Environmental Learning is to provide an inclusive space for all to learn about and care for our environment. We work to foster supportive relationships throughout our community, honoring and valuing the heritage and diverse perspectives of the students, teachers, and families we serve.

We often tell the story of Camp Cooper by starting with Herbert Cooper, our namesake, who acquired the land that Camp Cooper sits on for TUSD in the 1950s. This is only a small part of the story of this land, and as we have looked deeper into our organization and considered the rich cultural heritage of our region, we realize that leaving out the rest is neither inclusive nor culturally aware.

The land on which Camp Cooper and much of Tucson reside were taken from the Tohono O’odham and Pascua Yaqui peoples. These tribes and others like them cared for these places for generations, and they continue to do so despite their traditional homes being taken. As an organization, Cooper Center has pledged to reach out to the Tohono O’odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe in the hopes of building relationships that will benefit us all.

In the summer of 2020, the Cooper Center team began conversations with College of Education colleagues in the Indigenous Teachers Education Project (ITEP) to create a land acknowledgement statement for Cooper Center. ITEP Program Coordinator [IngriQue Salt \(Dine’/Navajo\)](#) advised us to foster cultural awareness and engagement as we initiate conversations with tribal communities. We have since discussed a larger partnership to serve students, faculty, and staff in the ITEP program.

It is crucial that we work with the Tohono O’odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe to develop a unique Cooper Center land acknowledgement statement, and this work will take some time. While we build these important relationships, ITEP has graciously shared the land acknowledgement (on the following page) that their students, faculty, and staff created for the College of Education earlier this year.



Land Acknowledgement

The Cooper Center for Environmental Learning, an outreach program of the University of Arizona College of Education, sits on the traditional homelands of the Tohono O’odham and Pascua Yaqui, who have stewarded this land from time immemorial. Aligning with Cooper Center’s and the University’s core value of a diverse and inclusive community, it is an institutional responsibility for us to recognize, represent, and acknowledge the ancestors, people, culture, and history our community resides on.



2021 DEI Focus: Recruitment & Representation

The field of environmental education, and the environmental movement at large are collectively reevaluating the ways in which individuals, voices, experiences and groups have been marginalized and unseen.

In an effort to strengthen the diversity of our team, we are investing in educating our staff and board, while conducting outreach to organizations that work with populations we serve. We are also drawing upon HR expertise at the University of Arizona to ensure that our recruitment process and new hires will help us build an organization that is more reflective of the students and communities we serve.



Our goal is to have the populations we serve better represented within the staff of the Cooper Center, and within the Advisory Board that helps to guide our organization.

Creating A More Inclusive Camp Cooper Experience

Our goal is that learners of all ages and abilities can have safe, comfortable, and enjoyable experiences in the natural world and we will work to ensure that all learners who come to the Cooper Center will have the agency to participate fully and as independently as possible in our programs alongside their peers. We believe that everyone has the right to access nature and deserves to engage with both natural and human communities while having their needs met.



Cooper Center staff are working with University of Arizona faculty and students in Disability Studies to modify existing programs to make them more inclusive and accommodating.

Accessibility is a major consideration of the Facility Master Plan. Read more about our Master Plan starting on page 14.

Read our full inclusion statement at www.coopercenter.arizona.edu/DEI

Facility Improvements

2021-2026



Camp Cooper has hosted children from across Southern Arizona since 1964, and current facilities have been in place since the early 1970s.

While the rustic feel of Camp Cooper is a big part of the experiences we provide, it is also important that the Camp Cooper facility supports our future goals:

- Serve as an environmentally sustainable model for our community, using a variety of ecological systems that can also be incorporated into our education programs and events.
- Support the expansion of Cooper Center programs by making our facility more comfortable, accessible and welcoming to people of all backgrounds, and different comfort levels with the great outdoors.
- Increase facility rentals that can take place outside of program time and provide revenue to support camp staffing, operations, and facility upkeep.

Design Considerations For All Phases



- Access for people with disabilities
- Native desert preservation
- Water conservation
- Energy efficiency
- Solar power generation
- Showcasing the above to our visitors



DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION PHASES		PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
	Nature Play Space	2020-21
	Design Phase I: Bathrooms & Showers	2020-21
	Construction Phase I: Bathrooms & Showers	2020-21
	Design Phase II & III: Cabins, Classroom & Office	2021-22
	Construction Phase II: Sleeping Cabins	2021-22
	Design Phase IV: Kitchen & Multipurpose	2022-23
	Construction Phase III: Classrooms & Office	2022-23
	Design Phase V: Dormitory & Storage	2023-24
	Construction Phase IV: Kitchen & Multipurpose	2023-24
	Construction Phase V: Dormitory & Storage	2024-25

Phase I: Sustainable Bathrooms & Showers

Improving and expanding our facilities will improve our educational programs and add new opportunities for learners and guests of all ages.



Master Plan Phase I: Sustainable Bathrooms & Showers

Our existing bathroom facility will be expanded and renovated with the addition of showers. This will provide a more comfortable experience for overnight visitors, including our multi-night field trips with upper elementary, middle, and high school students and other facility uses by university students and adults.

New bathrooms with showers will also make Camp Cooper more appealing to prospective rental clients - retreats, workshops, and special events - which could become an important revenue stream as we expand.

Phase I includes eco-friendly bathroom and shower facilities, plus a solar-shaded classroom, replacing facilities built 45 years ago. This upgrade will more than double our capacity while using less water and electricity. We have partnered with architects at Swaim Associates to lead the design of the Camp Cooper Master Plan. Watershed Management Group has been engaged to consult on water conservation technologies and composting toilets with Tucson Electric Power and Technicians for Sustainability consulting on solar energy systems.

Nature Play Space

Realizing that our facility and terrain are too rugged for young children, we brought together designers and preschool educators to help conceptualize our Nature Playspace, an approximately 5200 square-foot area adjacent to our main gathering ramada where students often eat meals and receive instruction while shaded from the sun. Construction to begin summer 2021.



Phases II & III: Sleeping Cabins, Classroom & Office

Accessibility and sustainability are central components to the redesign of our facilities as we work to serve students from all backgrounds at Camp Cooper.



Master Plan Phase II: Sleeping Cabins

Although the goal of Cooper Center experiences is for visitors to spend as much time as possible outdoors enjoying and learning about the desert, it is necessary to have a comfortable place to relax and rest overnight.

Additionally, overnight programs improve our staff and facility utilization, thereby reducing per student costs and increasing our measurable impact. Student and teacher feedback suggest that overnight programs have the highest reported impact on students of all our program durations. The case for improving our ability to serve overnight visitors is clear.

Phase II of our Master Plan encompasses renovation of 6 sleeping cabins, including new beds and gathering areas. Sleeping cabin revitalization will also provide further opportunities to model sustainable concepts that visitors can apply to their own living spaces, including solar energy, efficient heating and cooling solutions, water harvesting and more.

Master Plan Phase III: Classroom & Office

In order to provide space for more than one classroom of students, or for large meetings or retreats, a larger classroom space is needed. The current space holds 25 children. Planned expansion of our classroom space would allow for groups as large as 75 students, enabling educational workshops, teacher development and other adult workshops. In conjunction with classroom renovation, Phase III includes office upgrades to improve usability as well as modernization with insulation, HVAC and improved lighting.

Marketing & Communications

2021-2026



Since 2017, we have made significant progress in our marketing efforts and we continue to grow in these areas.

Crowdfunding

Our annual Crowdfunding campaigns have met or exceeded their fundraising goal in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Staff

Thanks to the Southwestern Foundation for Education & Historical Preservation, we have transitioned from no marketing staff in 2017, to contracted marketing support at 6 hours per week in 2018, to a half-time marketing staff member hired in 2019.

Website

In 2020, we successfully relaunched our website with support from University of Arizona College of Education. Our new website promotes news, events and fundraising, hosts educational content, gathers contacts to build our email list, and will ultimately support online registration and scheduling, freeing up precious education staff time.

Media

In-house public relations efforts have landed the Cooper Center coverage in The Tucson Weekly, The Arizona Daily Star, KVOA, KGUN, KOLD, Morning Blend & This is Tucson.

Communications

Since hiring a marketing consultant in 2018, we have sent out monthly newsletters and 4 - 6 press releases annually. Regular communication has helped us stay 'top of mind' for donors and supporters, and has contributed to our fundraising success.

Social Media

Regularly sharing updates on social media has helped us grow our following, driving traffic to our annual crowdfunding campaigns while helping recruit new teachers and classes to attend our programs.

Focused marketing & communication will support our growth in the years ahead.

Launch and promote new programs

In addition to growing the number of students served by our existing educational programs, we aim to launch new programs for both preschool and high school students. Marketing will focus on filling new programs while promoting existing programs, thereby maximizing utilization.

Promote longer duration programs

Longer duration programs (overnight and multi-night) help us maximize our facility and staff resources. Additionally, longer programs have a bigger impact on students. Successfully marketing longer program offerings will help us fulfill both our mission and financial goals.

Promote online learning

Online courses, temporarily the norm during pandemic, offer us the ability to serve more students in more places than ever before. This remains true, even when in-person instruction resumes. Marketing will leverage this emerging educational channel to serve more students, aid in alumni outreach and expand our email contact lists.

Integrate DEI into marketing, recruitment & messaging

Marketing staff are participating in training focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion with the goal of improving representation of our local community at Cooper Center. Other goals include improvements to the Cooper website to ensure our web content is accessible to all, as well as creating marketing materials in Spanish.

Reconnect with alumni

Reconnecting with Camp Cooper alumni is a top priority, which we believe can be achieved by leveraging our online content, in-person events, networking opportunities. As our alumni database grows, we will nurture alumni as potential future supporters of Camp Cooper.

List building: amplify, direct, connect

Social media functions best as a tool to amplify our message and connect with our audiences - parents, teachers, students, alumni and potential donors. These efforts should drive website traffic where we can capture email addresses to reconnect with teachers, parents, alumni and others.

Modernize our contact database

Centralize our contacts in a single database that will enable us to communicate more effectively with stakeholders, including educators, administrators, colleagues, parents, alumni, fans, donors, and the press.



Fundraising & Development

2021-2026



Cooper Center’s success and growth during the past 3 years can be directly traced to our successful fundraising efforts. We thank each of our donors for their generosity.

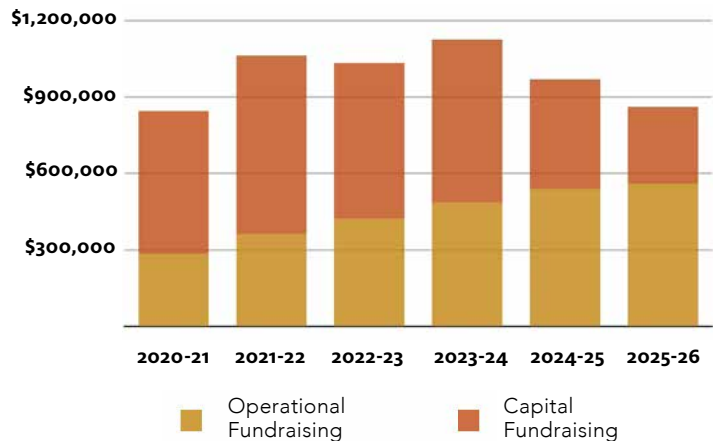
Support for Cooper Center comes in many forms. We receive monetary gifts from philanthropic individuals, foundations, and businesses. We also accept tax credit donations that directly support school field trip expenses. In-kind gifts enhance the Cooper experience, including reusable water bottles from our friends at Bookmans, overnight gear from Summit Hut, household items that make overnight trips easier, and firewood for our memorable campfires.

Our fundraising success can be attributed to a carefully crafted development plan and employing best practices from the world of non-profit and university philanthropy. Each year, we are proud to add new supporters to our family. As our work gains notoriety and as we reconnect with alumni of Camp Cooper programs, our numbers will continue to grow.

Cooper Center fundraising is led by Director Colin Waite, in partnership with University of Arizona

College of Education Development Director Lee O’Rourke and the development teams of the University of Arizona Foundation. These efforts are supplemented through the work of the Cooper Center Advisory Board, described on pages 22 & 23.

Fundraising Targets 2020-2026



Staffing & Operations

Cooper Center’s goals for future expansion of programming and staff are, of course, directly tied to growth in fundraising. The following fundraising goals support staffing for education, marketing, and administration.

More on program & staffing goals on pages 8 - 13.

2021-22	\$362,000	Hire 2 educators
2022-23	\$424,000	Add 1 educator
2023-24	\$488,000	Add 1 leadership position
2024-25	\$540,000	Add 1 educator
2025-26	\$560,000	Increase salaries



Capital Fundraising Goals

Cooper Center has grand plans for revitalizing our facilities to make our programs better than ever. For this to happen, we will need to encourage existing donors to invest in capital improvements in addition to staffing and operations, and we will need to attract new donors as well.

Learn more about our capital fundraising goals on pages 14 - 17.

2020-21	\$20,000	Nature Play Space
	\$49,000	Phase I Designs
	\$500,000	Phase I Construction
2021-22	\$100,000	Phase II & III Designs
	\$600,000	Phase II Construction
2022-23	\$60,000	Phase IV Design
	\$550,000	Phase III Construction
2023-24	\$37,000	Phase V Design
	\$600,000	Phase IV Construction
2024-25	\$430,000	Phase V Construction
2025-26	\$300,000	Reserve for Additional Work



TOTAL	\$3,237,000	Projected Master Plan Total Cost
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Advisory Board

The role of the volunteer Cooper Center Advisory Board is to bring expertise and resources to bear on issues critical to our continued growth and stability.

We are actively recruiting people interested in supporting our mission through volunteer Advisory Board service. Each member of our Advisory Board serves on one or more committees - below is a list of our current committees.

Interested candidates can contact coe-coopercenter@arizona.edu or call 520-626-1825.

Advisory Board Committees

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

- Review the responsibilities and “best practices” of nonprofit advisory boards.
- Assess the current makeup of the board, recognizing strengths and weaknesses.
- Cultivate, recruit, and onboard new board and committee members.
- Ensure all members are active in meaningful work that furthers the organization’s mission and vision.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

- Uphold and expand our commitment to provide an inclusive space for all to learn about and care for our environment.
- Foster supportive relationships throughout our community, honoring and valuing the heritage and diverse perspectives of the students, teachers, and families we serve.
- Advocate for communities underserved and underrepresented within the Cooper Center staff and volunteer body.

NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS

- Inform the neighborhood locals about Cooper Center’s mission and activities.
- Promote neighbor participation in events, activities, and funding opportunities.
- Provide feedback to Cooper Center staff from the neighbors and their collective groups.

MANAGEMENT & PLANNING

- Inform business models with data and analysis.
- Evaluate Cooper Center operations and for planning and goal-setting.

FACILITIES

- Develop and monitor a comprehensive maintenance program (both preventative and ongoing) for Cooper Center campus and buildings, in cooperation with any existing TUSD or UA maintenance programs.
- Assess future needs of Cooper Center and make recommendations.
- Coordinate and oversee design and building projects.
- Develop and maintain a log of major equipment and facilities resources.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to work to ensure our programs are inclusive to people with disabilities, Spanish speakers, and continually evaluate the cultural sensitivity of our programming.
- Promote and support research-based, hands-on lessons in science and earth education at Cooper Center.
- Link our curriculum to Arizona State Science Standards for teachers to use in classrooms.
- Grow our professional development workshops to assist educators with implementing science and STEM integrated curriculum in schools.
- Forge higher education partnerships to prepare future educators.

FUNDRAISING & EVENTS

- Coordinate donor and outreach events.
- Support long range fundraising strategy & planning.
- Provide input for annual fundraising goal setting.
- Review related materials and provide input for improvement.
- Identify and cultivate donor prospects.

Advisory Board Members

Volunteer Advisory Board Members



Pam Francis - Pam recently retired as Executive Director for the Educational Enrichment Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to serve the students, educators, and families of Tucson Unified School District. She has also served with PTA's and committees for many local schools, and was a Camp Cooper parent when her children were young! She brings fundraising experience and expertise to our team.



Barbara Jones - Barbara is an activist for her neighborhood, just up the hill from Camp Cooper. She has organized dozens of events for removing invasive buffelgrass from our Sonoran Desert landscape, and she also works with Manzo Elementary School as a Reading SEED coach and helps with the Southern Arizona Research, Science, and Engineering Festival (SARSEF). Barbara chairs our Neighborhood Relations Committee.



Marcus Jones - Marcus comes to us after many years of service as the Director of Engineering for Tucson Unified School District. He has served on the Board longer than any other member, and has been instrumental in facilities planning. He currently chairs our Facilities Committee, and is working to improve Camp Cooper for the future.



Earl Mendenhall - Earl spent time as a Boy Scout earning the rank of Eagle Scout and as such comes to us with a love of the outdoors and of connecting people with it. Earl's two kids came to Camp Cooper as kids, and he had the "pleasure" of chaperoning! He has long served his community as a financial consultant, including work with school boards and bond committees. His experience and knowledge of the local community have made him invaluable to our work.

Cooper Center or College Of Education Staff Board Members

Ben Markwart - College of Education Data Solutions Analyst

Colin Waite - Cooper Center Director

Nate Byerley - Cooper Center Staff, Marketing & Communications

Partners

Tucson Unified School District

From its inception until 2008, Camp Cooper was only available to TUSD teachers and students. With the forging of TUSD’s partnership with The University of Arizona College of Education in 2008, Cooper programs became available to any educational group.

In the 1950’s, TUSD administrator Herbert Cooper was assigned the job of acquiring new school sites for Tucson District #1, as TUSD was then designated. Mr. Cooper, with the aid of the City and County, projected school populations, and acquired land over the following years - Camp Cooper site was acquired as one of these sites.

In the mid 1960’s, Title I programs offered the possibility for expanding nature study in an outdoor education setting, and a number of TUSD educators realized the potential of the Camp Cooper site. Soon, a project began that brought students from west Tucson schools to the site for nature study activities, and the District then built the bathroom building, amphitheater, large ramada, cookout grill, and concrete slabs on which large canvas tents could be placed. Cabins were built on those slabs in 1972 and the site was officially designated “Camp Cooper.” Shortly after, the new cabins were transformed into kitchen, classroom, office, and sleeping areas, and the rest is history.

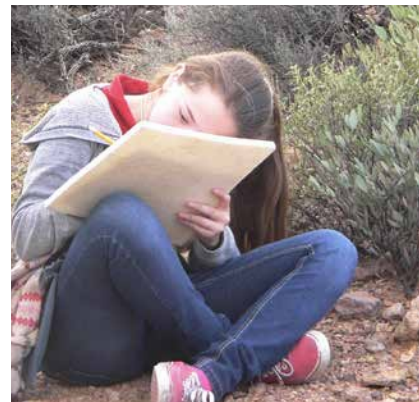
The TUSD vision of Camp Cooper back then and its growth during the past 50+ years is what has allowed our programs to thrive in the present day. Though Cooper’s programs have changed throughout the years, the camp has always been committed to providing each child with a memorable, first hand experience in our Sonoran Desert.

As the largest school district in Southern Arizona, TUSD strives to provide a world-class education that is equitable, empowering and inspiring for all learners. They work to equip, inspire and enrich the strengths of all learners with relevant educational experiences for lifelong learning, and Camp Cooper is an important part of achieving that mission. Camp Cooper provides an interdisciplinary experience for each student using the Sonoran Desert as our classroom. TUSD’s curriculum helps students to see the connection between their local and global environments and think conscientiously and critically about their roles in these relationships.

Today, Tucson Unified is a key partner in the management and operation of Cooper Center. Cooper Center staff regularly work with District administrators on curriculum and instruction, teacher professional development, and issues related to the Camp Cooper facilities themselves. Financially, TUSD is responsible for all Camp Cooper maintenance and utility costs, as well as some janitorial services and supplies.

For more information, visit www.tusd1.org

TUCSON UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT



University of Arizona College of Education



The College became a partner at Cooper Center in 2008, when then Professor of Environmental Learning, Dr. Bruce Johnson (now Dean of the College), put forth a proposal to TUSD to operate the facility's educational programs. TUSD accepted the proposal, and the two agencies have worked together for the last 12 years. In September 2019, the TUSD Governing Board and Arizona Board of Regents agreed to a new 20-year agreement which ensures the partnership's security through 2039.

The College's vision, simply put, is "Enhancing Education Equity. Transforming Lives." The College promotes learning, research, and transformative action to create a more inclusive and equitable community and world. This is accomplished through dynamic learning experiences that help students connect theory and research with practice, innovative teaching and educational technologies that enhance all student experiences, research that speaks to core questions of policy and practice, strong partnerships and collaborations, and diversity and inclusion within all college practices. All of these elements are exemplified through the important outreach work of Cooper Center.

More specifically, Cooper Center plays an active role in several degree programs within the College, including undergraduate degrees in Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, and Literacy, Learning, and Leadership, and graduate programs in Science Education and Environmental Learning. Cooper is a collaborative site for student interns and researchers, both from within the College and from the broader University community.

Cooper Center's Campus Outreach project has also brought environmental learning and earth education into work across University of Arizona to engage students, faculty, and staff in a more sustainable University community. Each year, Cooper Center increases its reach at University of Arizona, partnering and collaborating across campus units to further its mission - a well-educated community that lives more lightly on our planet.

In addition, the College of Education provides direct financial support for the Cooper Center Director, administrative, financial, human resources, marketing and communications support for all Cooper Center staff, and philanthropic support from the College's Development Office.

For more information, visit coe.arizona.edu

Partners



The Institute for Earth Education

The Institute for Earth Education (IEE) was formed in 1974 to provide an alternative to traditional nature study and environmental education. The work spread to other countries as outdoor leaders discovered this fresh way of introducing people of all ages to the natural world and its ecological systems and communities. IEE’s emphasis on building structured programs based on key ecological concepts challenged nature and outdoor educators to do more. As IEE’s educational focus is in designing and developing programs - carefully crafted, longer duration experiences that immerse learners in the natural world and inspire them to live more lightly on the Earth.

More at www.ieetree.org



Partners for Equitable Science Instruction

Partners for Equitable Science Instruction (PESI) was started by retired science education specialists who spent many years at the school district level providing teachers with professional development and support.

PESI’s mission is to advocate for and support equitable science instruction for all students in Tucson schools. The primary way to achieve this goal is to support student learning through professional development for teachers and administrators. This includes workshops, curriculum development and review, classroom demonstrations, and mentoring teachers in high quality science instruction.

PESI works with Cooper Center administration and staff to advise on program curriculum and to help design our teacher development workshops inspired by the Cooper Center’s approach to hands on, experiential learning.

More at pesitucson.org



Our Supporters



John & Helen Murphey Foundation • Ruth McCormick Tankersley Charitable Trust • Davis Memorial Scholarship Fund • Ohio Children’s Foundation

How To Support Our Work

University of Arizona Foundation - Our Development Partner

www.uafoundation.org

As an outreach program of the College of Education, the Cooper Center operates under the non-profit umbrella of the University of Arizona Foundation (UAF). UAF helps Cooper Center to maintain a strong relationship with its donors and supports, and it helps us to find and attract new philanthropic support.

The Cooper Center Can Use Your Support In Three Main Areas

Our donors choose to support more or more aspects of our development, based on our current needs and the wishes of the donor.

Operations

Supplement fees for Title I schools, pilot new programs, support teacher education & more. More on our program goals on pages 8 - 13.

Capital Improvements

Our five year, \$3.25M Master Plan will completely transform our education facility. Learn more about our plans on pages 14 - 17.

Endowment

Endowment gifts provide long-term financial stability for our organization.

Other Ways To Give

There are many ways to give to the Cooper Center. For giving options listed below, we encourage you to contact us for more information.

LEGACY GIFTS

A legacy, or planned, gift allows you to make a lasting impact that will support the Cooper Center that costs nothing during your lifetime.

GIFTS OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES

In most cases, gifts of this nature offer both a market value charitable deduction plus avoidance of any potential capital-gain tax.

GIFTS THAT PAY INCOME TO YOU

A charitable gift annuity can support the Cooper Center while paying you income throughout your lifetime.

GIFTS OF TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY OR REAL ESTATE

Almost any type of real estate may be donated and many forms of tangible personal property as well. Please contact us for gifts of this type.

GIFTS FROM RETIREMENT PLANS

Because of special tax considerations, retirement plans can make an excellent choice for funding a charitable gift. More information on this strategy is available by request.

GIFTS OF CLOSELY HELD BUSINESS STOCK

A business owner who contributes closely held stock will be allowed a charitable deduction for the fair-market value of the stock.

Contact Us About Giving

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LEE O'ROURKE

Director of Development,
UArizona College of Education
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Donate Online

Gifts to operations, capital improvements or endowment can be done online through our development partner, University of Arizona Foundation.

coopercenter.arizona.edu/donate



Thank You

Thank you for taking this opportunity to learn how, together, we can make an even greater difference for learners of all ages in our community.

Cooper Center for
Environmental Learning

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