

Design awards for Phoenix firm

It has been a banner year for architect Marlene Imirzian of Marlene Imirzian & Associates Architects. The Sunnyslope business picked up four major design awards in the American Institute of Architects' regional and state competitions. Among Imirzian's honors: the design of the Paradise Valley Community College Science Building, which opened in 2009.

Her intent was to have the building seamlessly connect with other space at the campus. Imirzian said her focus in all of her designs is to have the project contribute but not overwhelm the existing landscape, be it vegetation or other buildings.

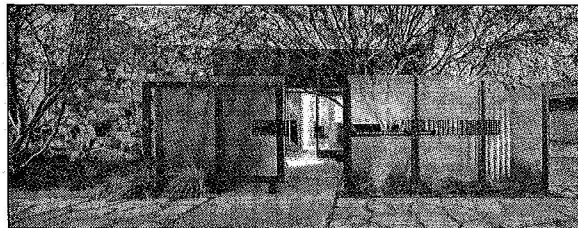
Imirzian also is happy to be contributing to the design of Phoenix. She is thrilled that the design for her own office was recognized with an award. "It's fairly unusual to recognize such a modest project," she said. "But part of what they (the judges) said was about the importance of small things contributing to the fabric of the city."

Below are the awards her firm recently received and details about the project:

— *Connie Cone Sexton/The Republic/azcentral.com*

2010 AIA Arizona Design Award

Winning project: Paradise Valley Community College Life Science Building, 18401 N. 32nd St. Among the design highlights: eight outdoor square "pods," accessible from the first or second floors. Designed for academic and social discussions, they are equipped with chairs, tables and a chalkboard. They're open-air, but giant industrial fans overhead cool things down. The space, Imirzian said, is to have a less structured, more public area that can be used by anyone on campus.



The office of Marlene Imirzian & Associates Architects was transformed from a stark, heat-generating site.

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2010 AIA Western Mountain Region Design Award

Winning project: The office of Marlene Imirzian & Associates Architects, 8906 N. Central Ave. The project is a low-cost, sustainable reuse of a modest 1950s office building in Sunnyslope. It transforms what was a stark, heat-generating site and building into a cool, multilayered oasis that buffers the building from the movement and noise of the street and creates a canopy that shades the building from the hot Arizona sun.

Through natural, sustainable intervention, the office has established identity and place in the urban environment. The strategies are designed to rejuvenate the building and site, improve the surrounding urban setting and reduce any negative impact on the environment. The project establishes the importance of designing sustainable solutions for the small urban lots that pervade the Phoenix area.

2010 AIA Western Mountain Region Design Award and the 2010 AIA Arizona Design Award in the Unbuilt category

Winning project: The Girl Scouts Arizona Cactus-Pine Council Camp Sombrero. The camp will be built on the existing campsite on the north slope of South Mountain. It will include a leadership/meeting center, cabins, camping, and outdoor activities. The new camp focuses outward towards the city with views to the downtown skyline and on the creation of flexible spaces for collaboration and training on the both the exterior and interior. The planned zones — for sleeping and activity cabins, pool area and lodge — will be separated but connected by decks raised above the desert to provide opportunities for communal outdoor spaces and activities and preservation of the Sonoran Desert.