

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Item Name: Update on Public Affairs and *Solutions through Higher Education*

Action Item Discussion Item Information Item

Issue: The Board will receive an update on Public Affairs activities and *Solutions through Higher Education*.

Background

ABOR public affairs staff routinely pursues proactive opportunities, through public outreach, strategic communications and media relations, to communicate the work of the board and the universities to key stakeholders. Staff also works closely with the public affairs staff of the universities to manage media relations and collaborate on public affairs activities, such as joint appearances on public broadcasting stations and newspaper editorial boards. ABOR public affairs staff also works closely with the government affairs staff of the Board to augment legislative affairs efforts with appropriate, strategic public affairs activities.

The *Solutions through Higher Education* Coalition and Public Awareness Campaign continues to work toward raising support for, and awareness of, the value of higher education for Arizona. This is achieved through building strategic partnerships with key, allied organizations, as well as public awareness activities such as presentations, media relations, special events, and social media tools targeted at key, strategic publics whose support is pivotal to the university system's future success.

Strategic Implications

An effective public affairs program is essential to the success of key strategic initiatives of the Board and the universities, and integral to legislative affairs efforts. The *Solutions through Higher Education* Coalition and Public Awareness Campaign advances the missions of the universities and university system by promoting greater awareness about the critical economic and social challenges facing Arizona, the ways in which higher education provides solutions to these challenges, and the issues facing higher education and Arizona's public universities.

Discussion

Several accomplishments in the area of proactive media relations and public outreach since the last meeting, including the publication of several opinion editorials by President Calderón, including one about system architecture that ran in the *Arizona Republic* on Sept. 1; one on student tracking systems that ran, also on Sept. 1, in the *East Valley Tribune*; and one on intercollegiate athletics, published on Sept. 13 in the *Arizona Daily Star*. Regent DuVal had an opinion editorial on the value of higher education run in the Aug. 28 edition of the *Phoenix Business Journal*. Staff is also working with President Calderón on a column for *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher*

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Education magazine on how the universities support and nurture the success of Hispanic students. That column will run in the Nov. 16 edition of the magazine.

Additionally, the ABOR public affairs staff continues to work closely with the public affairs staff of the universities on the joint appearances of leadership on public broadcasting stations and newspaper editorial boards. All three presidents appeared on KAET's Horizon program on Aug. 6 to discuss system architecture reform proposals.

The ABOR public affairs staff is nearing completion of an update to the ABOR Web site to give it a fresher, more contemporary look; make it easier to navigate; and provide new functionality. And, staff has initiated, under President Calderón's direction, "The Regents' Dashboard," a biweekly electronic publication of key indicators and metrics of the Arizona higher education system, as well as updates on strategic initiatives and current issues and events. The Dashboard is being distributed to approximately 400 key stakeholders, including business groups, community organizations, state leaders and former regents and alumni associations.

Additionally, staff is preparing a calendar of presentation opportunities for Regents; pursuing collaborative public affairs opportunities with allied organizations. Regent DuVal recently presented on system architecture and the Lumina MOA on Sept. 17 to the East Valley Think Tank, and President Calderón will participate in a panel discussion at Central Arizona College on Sept. 22.

Finally, staff completed, with strategic input from the communications committee of the Lumina Making Opportunity Affordable (MOA) project, a comprehensive strategic communications plan that would be executed should Arizona receive one of the five possible \$2 million MOA grants. The grant application and the communications plan were submitted to Lumina on Sept. 1.

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Activities to establish *The Solutions through Higher Education Coalition* as separate legal entities, a 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4), have been completed and a new board has been established. The Molera Alvarez Group LLC will continue to manage the day-to-day activities of the coalition.

Recommendation to the Board

This update is provided for the Board's information.