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CENTENNIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Flagstaff– At today’s Board of Regents meeting, the Board expressed support for Governor Napolitano’s request to the P-20 Council to move forward with the Centennial Scholars program, offering to take the lead in designing and establishing the program in concert with other stakeholders.

The Centennial Scholars program was proposed by Governor Napolitano in her 2008 State of the State address to open the doors to higher education to today’s eighth graders, who are Arizona’s centennial high school class of 2012.

Under the Governor’s proposal, eighth graders would sign a pledge to uphold certain standards during high school – to do well in school, stay out of trouble, and devote time to community service. If they met these standards during high school, they would receive four years of free tuition to any of Arizona’s community colleges or state universities.

The state’s budget situation prevented funding of the Centennial Scholars Program in the 2008 legislative session.

In making her request to move forward with the scholarship program, Governor Napolitano said “We need to look to the future and cannot wait to get this program underway. It’s too important. The promise of today’s eighth graders -- these *Centennial Scholars*-- is the promise of Arizona’s next 100 years.”

The Board of Regents plans to collaboratively work with representatives of the K-12 system, the community colleges, private philanthropic groups and other stakeholder groups to assess how best to design the program and implement it within the mix of scholarship and financial aid programs currently in place.

The Board also expects to evaluate the extent to which the financial need of students should be factored into the program and the scholarship awards.

“We agree with the Governor that we need to work now to make this program a reality,” said Regent Fred Boice, President of the Arizona Board of Regents. “We must do what we can to assure Arizona’s young students that they can walk through the doors of our community colleges and public universities if they buckle down in high school and stay out of trouble.”

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