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**The Next Stage for Changing Directions
in Arizona Higher Education
*A Redesigned Public University System***

Reasons for Redesign

The path for redesign of the Arizona University System presented in this plan builds on the existing infrastructure of three state universities working hand in glove with the locally controlled community colleges, yet it proposes moving forward in substantially different ways of doing business than featured in current practice. But why? If the pride that Arizona and Arizonans have in their higher education system is justified, and it is, why must the Arizona Board of Regents pursue a new and different path? The reason is stark and simple: Arizona faces such significant challenges during the next two decades that “more of the same” will not serve the state well.

Arizona’s rapidly expanding economy and shifting social fabric will simply demand much more and much different postsecondary education than in the past. Without substantial change, the highly educated/highly skilled workforce that Arizona needs for the future simply won’t be available. Equally important, without substantial change, Arizona higher education will be ill-equipped to assure that all the State’s citizens will be able to benefit from and contribute to Arizona’s new economy.

So, what are these challenges facing Arizona that the Board of Regents finds so compelling as to require a redesign of the system? And, how can these challenges be turned into opportunities?

First Challenge – Expanding access: Arizona’s current system for delivering higher education – through three public universities, community colleges, and a modest private college sector – is ill suited to respond effectively to the exceptional growth in the number of both traditional and nontraditional prospective students in the near future, creating a demand likely to exceed every other state except Nevada. Current enrollment projections indicate that the university system must grow from the 115,000 students it serves today to 185,000 students by 2020. These projections assume that the community colleges and private sector of Arizona higher education will need to grow equally as rapidly to serve the emerging demand.

Second Challenge – Enhancing diversity: The success of Arizona’s university system and the state it serves is closely linked to the higher education success of all its future high school graduates. Still, the fact that Arizona will continue to see a noticeable shift in the racial/ethnic make-up of its high school graduates over the next decade demands an extraordinary focus on ensuring diversity in higher education. According to WICHE, during the early 1990s, underrepresented racial/ethnic groups accounted for approximately 35% of all public high

school graduates in Arizona. The proportion gradually increased to 39% by 2001-02 and is projected to continue increasing at a higher rate through 2017-18, reaching about 54% by 2013-14.

While Arizona has done a better job than many states in enhancing educational opportunity for students from different ethnic backgrounds, serious gaps continue to persist between the success of students from economically advantaged backgrounds and those from less advantaged backgrounds and from communities of color. To be a socially just and economically competitive state, Arizona must do better in serving students from diverse backgrounds and from its native people. Yet, the task of achieving parity in participation and success for all Arizonans will be even more difficult in the future. A disproportionate share of the tremendous growth in Arizona will come from Hispanic/Latino communities, communities that educators recognize they must serve in considerably larger numbers and with much greater success.

Third Challenge—The inefficiency of the current system: There is an unusual irony in the economic efficiency of Arizona’s university system. On the one hand, Arizona’s universities are quite efficient, compared to their peers. Yet, the system as a whole is comparatively inefficient. Arizona currently relies heavily on research universities to deliver undergraduate education. Institutions focusing on undergraduates serve other states so well, but such an alternative is not as plentiful in Arizona. As a result, the sum of the parts equals a very expensive whole, a whole that Arizona is already stretched to support. And the state can’t afford to grow with this inefficient system in place. For the system to support increased access overall, enhanced quality in undergraduate education through a broader array of undergraduate focused university campuses, and increased strength and prestige of the state’s two major research campuses, the system must be redesigned.

Fourth Challenge – Financial constraints on both the state and the students: Arizona, both the state and its citizens, can afford to pay somewhat more for postsecondary education, but not enough to sustain the desired growth within the inefficient delivery model that exists today. As Arizona grows, its tax base will also grow, providing additional state resources for public higher education and other state services. There will be many claims on these limited public funds, however, and higher education can’t expect that the average amount of funding per student in the future will remain at today’s levels. Furthermore, Arizona’s citizens must be able to afford college, which means there are constraints on how much they can be charged. The absence of adequate state financial aid exacerbates this personal affordability dilemma. Arizona policymakers must determine how to do much more with a little less in the future if it is to sustain access, enhance quality, and strengthen university research. And, Arizona must develop a financing plan that enhances access and achieves shared responsibility for paying for college. In other words, the system must be redesigned.

A Plan for Changing Directions: An Initiative to Ensure Excellence at Arizona's Public Universities

Just three years ago, in 2002, the Arizona Board of Regents initiated a comprehensive review of university revenue sources and management strategies to provide the universities with the resources they need to achieve their goals of providing high quality education and research in service to the state of Arizona. A significant element of the first phase of that *Changing Directions* initiative was to revise the Board's policy framework to enable the university presidents to reshape their programs to better meet the needs of Arizona's citizens and communities. Having hired exceptional individuals to lead the state's three universities, the Regents wanted to give these leaders the leverage necessary to manage the institutions as effectively as possible. As a result of these changes, each university's mission has become more focused, and each university has more flexibility to establish tuition plans, admissions standards, and programs and courses to match its mission. That first phase of *Changing Directions* defined the missions of the institutions, as follows:

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA will proceed with its plans to become a premier research university, adopting more rigorous admissions requirements at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. UA South will be developed as the UA response to growing demand for accessible, lower-cost instruction at the bachelor's and master's degree level.

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY will become a premier metropolitan university through its vision of "One University in Many Places": ASU at the Tempe Campus, ASU at the Downtown Phoenix Campus, ASU at the West Campus, and ASU at the Polytechnic Campus, each with its own well-defined mission.

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY will become a comprehensive statewide presence offering excellent undergraduate education, professional and undergraduate programs through 2+2 collaborations and distance learning, strengthened by the quality undergraduate, graduate, and research programs on its Flagstaff campus.

Changing Directions needs time to work. As Good to Great author Jim Collins points out, companies that make transformations from good to great have the discipline to stay the course and have strategies that allow them to make thousands of additional, consistent pushes that accumulate one after another into results. Companies that lurch back and forth, changing directions with every new CEO, new trend, or new fad, fail to make the transformation. Something similar can be said for Arizona's universities: *Changing Directions* needs more time to take hold.

Yet, further study by the Board of Regents over the last two years has made it apparent that while the first phase of *Changing Directions* has the university system heading in the right direction, there is still more to do to address the challenges facing Arizona over the next two

decades. It's not entirely evident how each university, and the system as a whole, will in a cost-effective manner:

- Respond to the surge of new students projected to seek admissions in higher education;
- Increase the number of students who earn college degrees and complete job training programs each year;
- Provide for greater diversity among students, faculty, and staff;
- Increase access and success for Arizona's middle- and lower-income families; and
- Build globally competitive research institutions.

Tackling these challenges to assure that all Arizonans can receive a quality postsecondary education is too important to the future of Arizona to be left to chance. Policies, and strategies to accomplish each one of them, must be explicitly identified by Arizona's trio of public universities.

Redesign Parameters and Features

The redesign discussions have been very helpful in illuminating a logical direction for Arizona to follow to address each of the challenges outlined above. Two features, *mission differentiation* and *a process for expanding on demand*, capture the essence of the way to the future. In some respects, it is not really accurate to reflect this as "the strategy," because these two features provide a number of points for possible departure in the future, depending on how circumstances evolve. Yet, the features provide a solid basis for moving forward; clear direction to the state's universities about how they must proceed to progress this agenda; and a strong nexus for working with the community colleges to guarantee access to quality undergraduate education through continued collaboration between the state's universities and the community colleges.

Real Mission Differentiation

Real mission differentiation not only sets distinctive missions for different institutions, but also includes explicit and binding commitments and guidelines to enforce such differentiation. Because this proposed plan preserves, at least at this time, Arizona's unique three-university system, some observers have wondered whether this new plan is truly a redesign. As they observe the proposed changes, however, they will see that this phase of *Changing Directions* is substantially changing the way of doing business in Arizona higher education. Arizona's university system used to be one in which there was little *official* distinction between institutions. The first phase of *Changing Directions* changed that, with distinct missions being defined between institutions. This phase now moves to the next step, further defining the distinctions *between* universities, but even more importantly defining the differentiation *within* each of the three institutions. Clearly establishing and articulating these differences is particularly important in Arizona because the idea of differentiating *within institutions* is an

unusual and untested, though promising, concept, but one that will need clear understanding and direction up front to ensure success. The features of this differentiation include clear delineation of two distinct types of differentiation - differentiation by services provided and differentiation in the way these services are funded.

Differentiation by type of service provided. With respect to differentiation by the type of service provided, each of the universities will provide a distinct type of service.

The Focus on Undergraduate Education

Because of the expected explosion of demand for undergraduate educational opportunities, each of the institutions will be expected to develop explicit ways to respond to this demand. This increase in demand will come not only from recent high school graduates, but also from adults needing and desiring to return to college to finish their degrees or to upgrade their work skills to compete in a knowledge-based economy.

Community College Collaboration. Arizona is one of only five states with over half its higher education enrollment in two-year schools. This makes it critical that Arizona's universities and community colleges collaborate to ensure efficient transfers and easy integration for community college students who want to earn bachelor's degrees. Arizona's universities have developed exceptionally strong collaborative relationships with the state's community colleges, and will maintain and further enhance these relationships. All current transfer policies and practices will be retained at all three universities. Whenever curricular changes are being considered at one of the three universities, be it at the institutions, school, or program level, it is essential that the community college perspective be represented in these discussions. Only through such close collaboration can the facile mobility of students from one sector to another be assured.

Furthermore, NAU and UA South will build on their collaborations through expansion of community college collaborative efforts, such as the education centers and 2+2 models, where the missions of community colleges to provide lower-division instruction and the universities' focus on upper-division undergraduate, professional, and graduate instruction are blended to provide a cohesive and efficient delivery of the total undergraduate education.

Baccalaureate-Focused Institutions. All three of Arizona's universities provide substantial undergraduate education. As described earlier, however, the exceptional growth in the future will require substantial growth within the universities. Because the largest growth in demand is projected to occur in the greater Phoenix area, ASU will share a significant portion of the responsibility in this area. ASU at the East campus and ASU at the West campus are institutions focused primarily on undergraduate instruction. ASU at the East campus will develop as an undergraduate-focused polytechnic campus, and ASU at the West campus will develop as a liberal arts and sciences-focused undergraduate and masters level institution. While both of these institutions will be primarily undergraduate, selective doctoral programs may be considered when those programs are deemed central to the workforce and economic development needs of the communities they serve. Each will grow substantially (15,000 to

20,000) to accommodate at least some of the growth anticipated for the Phoenix area. Initially, it is anticipated that these institutions and NAU, combined with the availability of collaborative programs, such as 2+2 programs, will provide sufficient expansion to meet demand. In the future, as Arizona grows to 8 or 9 million residents, it is quite likely that additional baccalaureate-focused institutions will be justified, at which point they may be created within one of the three universities or as new, additional, self-standing institutions under the Board of Regents.

One of the most difficult challenges for the universities in establishing these undergraduate-focused units *within* the universities will be changing the faculty reward structure to reflect different faculty roles consistent with the different missions of units within the universities. Currently, workload variability exists at all three universities with differences between campuses and some between colleges and schools within campuses and universities. It is essential that the universities continue to build differentiated workload models to ensure that faculty are rewarded in keeping with their expectations relative to their peer community, and aspirations, and the differentiated mission emphases between teaching and research.

Graduate Education and Research.

The distinction between “research universities” and “teaching universities” is not properly a dichotomy, but a matter of degree. All true universities are committed to both the creation and the dissemination of knowledge, but they balance these activities in very different ways. In Arizona a greater differentiation of missions among institutions is required, but these are distinctions of degree.

Graduate education provides the bridge that links teaching and research. At the doctoral level, rigorous intellectual development is based primarily on research, or learning through discovery, and this requires a faculty devoted to research. At the master’s level, instruction can be quite focused on training for the practice of professions, such as teaching and nursing, and this can be accomplished by faculty devoted to instruction, usually augmented by practitioners.

The State of Arizona must provide the full spectrum of graduate degrees of high quality, with special attention to access to professional master’s degrees for adults constrained by limitations of geography and time.

Tracking Mission Success

Equally as challenging for the universities is the necessity to provide this new incoming wave of undergraduates an environment that actively nurtures and engages them from first admission to graduation. As scores of recent articles point out, a major problem is that many students enter college, but never finish. Higher education is learning what works best to help students achieve their degrees, and Arizona should expect no less of its universities. Many of the new first-generation students that will seek access to the universities may need different or

enhanced resources to ensure a reasonable chance of success. With mission differentiation, the universities will provide different models of undergraduate instruction, with differing teaching and cost structures. Measuring what matters—performance, teaching, resources, and cost-effectiveness—is critical as the state responds to the higher education challenges that lie ahead. Essentially, the state and its universities must ensure that each student is served equitably, each student is able to complete his or her education efficiently, and the end result is effective. While performance in these areas is often difficult to measure, the ultimate goal is not, which is: Arizona must increase the percentage of its population holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

The Need for Stronger Research Universities

Today, Arizona's universities are in various stages of development in research and advanced education efforts, but greater stature for all is an imperative for Arizona to compete in the 21st century. As a growing state, with an emerging state economy that will demand a more competitive position with respect to research, Arizona needs to strengthen its research competitiveness.

In this redesign, all three universities will retain their current research missions. ASU and UA both seek to enhance their strength and national prestige in research and advanced degree studies, which will require both new approaches to funding research and clearly differentiated missions for specific colleges and schools within the institutions. At ASU, this will mean building out the current plan of "One University in Many Places." This plan identifies the greatest level of research intensity will occur at the Tempe campus, building on its strengths and infrastructure. ASU at the East campus, ASU at the Downtown Phoenix campus and ASU at the West campus will have research missions in keeping with their respective missions and focus. In the case of the UA, the intention is to focus the entire institution in Tucson more directly on research at the highest levels, which will mean that the growth in undergraduate education in the Tucson area must be accommodated by UA South and NAU. It is anticipated that UA South or NAU may ultimately become a fully developed baccalaureate and professional master's level institution serving the Tucson area if justified by enrollment growth in Pima County.

NAU will retain its primary focus on undergraduate education strengthened by its research and graduate education mission. NAU's research, embedded in its location in Northern Arizona and the Colorado Plateau, will serve critical economic development, environmental and public service roles. Also with its core campus at Flagstaff, NAU will provide undergraduate, graduate, and professional education programs through its more than 100 campuses and sites throughout the state, delivering education statewide via telecommunications, educational centers, 2+2 collaborations with community colleges, and, potentially, stand-alone four-year colleges in the future.

Differentiation by Price and Cost. For two reasons, *real mission differentiation* must also be accompanied by real differentiation in both the cost of the education provided and the price charged to students (tuition). First, costs must differ because simply providing undergraduate education costs less (at least it does everywhere but in Arizona) than it costs to provide

instruction and to do significant levels of research. Second, Arizona must find a way to provide undergraduate education less expensively and devote additional resources to research, or it simply cannot achieve its dual goals of enhancing access and diversity while also enhancing its research effort.

To achieve this differentiation by price and cost, the State of Arizona and the Board of Regents will need to modify the current funding policies and practices to enforce and motivate, through finances, compliance with the spirit of mission differentiation. Separate buckets of financial support for instruction and research will need to be created. The unique mission differentiation being proposed for Arizona, particularly the differentiation between research and instructional responsibilities of different units/campuses within each institution, makes this task particularly important and challenging. To some extent, the Board's funding structure already captured a distinction between research and instruction. Yet, that is not truly the case because the amounts provided for undergraduate instruction implicitly include substantial funding for graduate education and research.

One example of an alternative model would be to fund undergraduate instruction at a level comparable to the funding at undergraduate-focused institutions in peer states. This would reduce substantially the explicit level of funding for undergraduate instruction, but should provide sufficient funding for this purpose, given that other states provide quality services with this level of resources. Then, within this overall level of funding, the share borne by students could be established, perhaps as a percentage of the total costs. The universities would receive, in addition to the funding for undergraduate instruction, all the externally funded research they could attract, plus explicit state and student funding to support the increased research necessary to bring their research capacity to that of their peers.

The net effect of this approach would be to:

- Make the funding of both instruction and research more transparent to all Arizona stakeholders;
- Provide an easily understood and defensible differentiation of state subsidy for instruction and research; and
- Create a differential tuition structure, reflecting more clearly what students were purchasing with their tuition (primarily instruction, or instruction with the privilege of being part of a research university).

As a result,

- ❑ Tuition would be highest at the campuses where investments in research support and infrastructure are greatest, notably UA Main and ASU at Tempe.
- ❑ Tuition would be lower at the campuses where investments in research support and infrastructure are lower, ranging from the NAU Mountain Campus to ASU at the East campus, ASU at the West campus, and ASU at the Downtown Phoenix campus.
- ❑ Tuition would be lowest at the 2+2 locations throughout the state, including NAU-Yuma and UA South.

Financial Aid – The Missing Link in Arizona

A final, but critically important component to the finance plan is the need for a strong *state need-based financial aid system*. Given the likely increase in tuition that will be driven by limits in state capacity to support demand and the tremendous increase in demand, more financial aid will be needed to assure that students from low-income families can afford Arizona higher education. Arizona already lags well behind national averages in state aid and in the combined aid provided from all sources. It is both imprudent and organizationally unsound to expect that the institutions will be able to provide sufficient aid in the future to meet the needs of the state's population. Every dollar an institution devotes to financial aid is a dollar that cannot be spent on its primary focus to provide strong instruction and, if within the mission, research. Thus, funding financial aid within an institution creates natural tension. State need-based aid, on the other hand, fits comfortably the state's overall responsibility to keep college affordable and provides much greater transparency of the availability of aid.

A Process To Expand on Demand

The second feature of the redesign is a process to expand the capacity of the system to serve students based on increases in demand. This *expand on demand* design, a term borrowed from NAU's current strategy for responding to statewide needs, provides not only a positive approach to follow, but also implicitly eschews the oft-promoted but high-risk approach of *build it and they will come*. Arizona simply can't afford an anticipatory approach; yet it is well positioned within its current system of universities and community colleges to respond as the demand develops.

To be able to respond nimbly to increasing demand, however, requires a defined set of guidelines for determining when an institution's or unit's mission can be *redefined*; that is, when the level of service currently approved and being provided can be moved to another level. Furthermore, when an expansion or redefinition of mission is being considered based on established criteria, the Board of Regents must be sure to examine not only what is being gained, but also what may be lost.

Most obviously, the Board must assess the need for the additional service. Redundancy and associated competition in service are not inherently bad unless unnecessary and an inefficient duplication of service. Less obvious but equally important, the Board of Regents should always examine whether creating this new capacity will erode the level of service currently being provided (i.e., loss of community college or loss of cost-effective delivery of baccalaureate education). It is recognized that Maricopa County's West Valley may require new research investments. ASU would be expected to bring all of its resources to bear to address research needs in the West Valley, building on their campus presence in the region, without eroding the lower-cost, low-tuition model of ASU at the West campus.

Growth in the Arizona higher education system should follow the *expand on demand* philosophy that has guided NAU's recent expansion and will guide its future plans. Logical reasons for redefining the mission of a specific institution or unit would include:

- The initial decision to establish distance learning centers and services to serve a community until reaching the critical mass necessary for sustaining university degree completion space arrangements on community college campuses or other locations.
- The creation of 2+2 university facilities on community college campuses (similar to the Yuma model or other partnership models) when the demand reaches a sustaining level.
- The development of full campuses in urban locations, such as Prescott, when there is a critical mass (2,500 FTE upper-division students). These campuses could be relatively independent from Flagstaff with a campus executive officer and full control of their own faculty, facilities, and staff. Although this approach for growing a larger Arizona University system to meet geographical demand will be lower-cost than other options, it still costs, and funding methods will need to be developed.
- Retaining a primary focus on baccalaureate education with limited graduate programs until research need is not met by existing research institutions.
- Research allowed when it is needed and it absolutely won't erode support for existing research universities. (Expanding research capacity of existing research universities' units will often better serve new communities than will creating new research institutions.)

This university redesign proposal sets a path for Arizona's university system to carry out its mission to provide quality and access in ways that will meet the demands of the next decades. It also provides a commitment to accountability to assure the public that, in exchange for its support, it can expect certain results and choices.