



Dear Governor Ducey,

As you are well aware, the Arizona Board of Regents has recently unanimously adopted a new strategic plan for the public university enterprise. Student success is at the center of these plans. Most importantly, this plan also recognizes the significant changes in the economy and particularly in the higher education marketplace.

On behalf of the ASU University Senate, I write today to express the senate's strong support for the Arizona Board of Regents' new strategic plan and proposed funding model and ask that you give this model your most serious consideration.

The updated plan frames a new model for defining and operating Arizona's public university system while continuing to serve our constitutionally mandated public purpose. ASU, like our other public universities, exists in an intensely competitive environment. We believe it is our moral imperative as well as our constitutional obligation to provide Arizona students and their families with an opportunity to pursue an affordable, high-quality education.

Adoption of this new funding model is a dramatic and dynamic shift that would end the era of funding institutions and instead define state investment in terms of Arizona resident students. We believe this model provides a solid strategy for the long-term success of our public universities and the Arizona residents they serve.

The proposed funding model would promote further alignment between the K-12 and higher education systems and inspire young students by dedicating state funding to their ability to qualify for a university education. The board's updated strategic plan also envisions the universities staking out a stronger role as a complement to your efforts to improve education outcomes among K-12 students.

Please review the specifics of how this new state investment model measures state support through a comparison to per-student expenditures. For example, in FY 2016, the state appropriation will provide approximately 34 percent of a resident student's cost of education. That support level is down from 41 percent in FY 2015 and from recent levels that exceeded 70 percent. The new model sets a state support long-term goal of 50 percent based on available state resources.

By concentrating state appropriations on the support of Arizona resident students, the universities are better able to address the affordability concerns that rightly worry families and policymakers. Tuition pressures are no different today than they were at our state's founding—the constitution speaks to tuition and compels universities to remain nearly as free as possible. We also know that for an increasingly diverse state population to be equipped for the jobs of the future, it is essential that Arizona's citizens can access higher

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education. Currently, a college degree is out of reach for many students and families due to affordability.

While this plan positions the state as one of many investors, it is important to underscore that the state has been and remains a critical component of public higher education. Changes in state finances have left the financial relationship between the state and public universities undefined. This must be remedied. We have a constitutional duty to guarantee access to public education at the highest levels, the purpose for which our universities were created. But the values and virtues of public higher education will only endure to the extent we uphold them and make them available to students.

As representatives of ASU faculty and academic professionals we believe this plan upholds that commitment and represents a serious and significant shift of intention and action to reposition Arizona's outstanding public higher education system for long-term viability. With its adoption, it will become one of the most meaningful ways by which we can assure opportunity for all in Arizona.

In conclusion, we as university faculty and academic professionals support keeping university education affordable. The proposed new model requires a state investment. We are committed to student learning, achievement and their investment in research and creative activities. The graduates of our university will enhance our social, economic and cultural well-being, not only in Arizona, but in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

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University Senate President and Chair University Academic Council

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