



Report Submitted by Robert Fischer September 2005

UNIVERSITY

Dr. Michael Crow had the following opinion column published in the Arizona Republic on Monday, September 19, 2005.

Education economics will pay off

Regarding "Shameful shaming, sniffing at a city rule, tax shenanigans" (Opinions, Sept. 9): *Republic* editorial columnist Bob Robb once again reminded us of the fact that he is opposed to modern educational infrastructure as a public investment.

By "modern educational infrastructure," I mean linked educational access from pre-kindergarten through graduate school, and coordination in complex social and economic settings. Central questions for any community today are how to provide for the common good in the midst of rapid social and economic change, and how to better equip the next generation so they can prosper in an increasingly competitive world. Phoenix has reached a challenging moment in its history.

In the past, securing the common good meant building traditional public infrastructure (transportation, police and fire departments, parks, etc.). But to ensure its future, the city needs more than public amenities and public safety.

Phoenix needs a vibrant and comprehensive educational sector, running from pre-kindergarten through graduate school. Investment in education not only helps the overall economic performance of a city by creating a highly skilled, innovative workforce, but it returns benefits in many other areas.

Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon approached me while still he was still a candidate for office with a simple question. He wanted to know how he could help make Phoenix more economically competitive and provide a better standard of living for future generations. We talked about many ideas: new kinds of schools at the kindergarten through Grade 12 level, research centers and programs, and the expansion of Arizona State University in downtown Phoenix.

The questions for ASU were how to provide greater educational access for the citizens of Phoenix and how to enable Phoenix to benefit from the presence of a full-scale university in the community itself. We also saw a need to focus on the building of downtown Phoenix as a city core, and both the mayor and I feel that an expanded ASU could have the same effect as similar projects in Atlanta; Portland, Ore.; Milwaukee and elsewhere.

ASU is prepared to move five schools to a downtown Phoenix campus and build an entire new college on this site. We are prepared to cover all of the costs of making the schools and the campus work through our normal operating budgets.

As a state-assisted university, ASU receives only about 30 percent of its budget from the state of Arizona. We receive no support from the state for construction of educational facilities in downtown Phoenix and, as a result, need help with land and buildings to get started.

In expanding the downtown Phoenix campus, we can achieve three objectives:

- We can double the capacity of ASU in Phoenix to 30,000 students (15,000 each at the west and downtown campuses).

- We can enhance the economic vitality of downtown.
- We would greatly expand our connections to the rest of the educational institutions at all levels in Phoenix.

ASU is an institution chartered and partially funded by the state, and it proudly serves the people of Arizona in every way it can. It is also an institution responsive to the needs of the region.

We are pleased to have been invited by the city of Phoenix to build an expanded educational sector in Phoenix and to locate ASU schools in the emerging financial, public service and entertainment center downtown.

Both ASU and Phoenix will benefit from the vibrant intellectual, cultural and social setting that will result but, more importantly, the city will meet its commitment to future generations to provide prosperity and a high standard of living for all.

