

Class of 2007 highlights

ASU graduated a record 224 nurses at its spring commencement in May.

Also included in the graduating class of more than 6,500 students are 950 teachers, 525 engineers, 880 undergraduates and 650 masters in business administration, nearly 100 architects, 45 urban planners, 130 designers and 178 lawyers.

Employers plan to hire nearly 20% more new college graduates this spring than last, according to a report from the National Association of Colleges and Universities, which cites business growth and expansion as the reasons for the increase.

Confucius Institute in Tempe

A comprehensive effort to teach Chinese language and culture in Arizona's elementary and secondary schools is a major focus of a new ASU-Sichuan University Joint Confucius Institute.

Located at ASU's Tempe campus, the institute will also be committed to promoting Chinese language and culture to the general public in Arizona. The initiative includes developing curriculum for heritage speakers of Chinese and linking K-12 schools with cultural resources in the community, such as museums, cultural centers and community groups.

"We have a responsibility to prepare our students in Arizona for the global challenges and opportunities that lie before them," says Anthony "Bud" Rock, ASU's vice president for global engagement.

Predicting crowd behavior

Patterns of human behavior and movement in crowded cities – the tipping point at which agitated crowds become anti-social mobs or the design of retail space that fosters walking – are at the core of an immersive, three-dimensional computational model under development by ASU geographer Paul Torrens.

Torrens is creating a realistic computer model that can be put to use to assist city planners, shopping center developers, public safety and health officials, and researchers in exploring the dynamics of individual pedestrian and crowd behavior in dense urban settings.

A prototype of the model already has been developed and used to model crowd dynamics following outbreak of a fire in a dense part of a city with only a single point of evacuation.

Torrens' research will be aided by a National Science Foundation CAREER Award of \$400,000 over five years.

Arizona's top seniors choose ASU

Ten of Arizona's premier high school seniors have chosen to attend ASU next fall on a Flinn Foundation Scholarship. The award provides four years of study at an Arizona university, academic-focused travel abroad, personal mentorship by faculty members and other benefits. The package is valued at more than \$50,000.

The 20 Flinn Scholars were chosen from an applicant pool of 425 of Arizona's high-achieving students. As a group, the class averaged scores of 1,435 of a possible 1,600 on the SAT, and 32 of a possible 36 on the ACT. Eight are National Merit Scholars, and one is a National Hispanic Scholar.

"During their four-year stays, we see Flinn Scholars become student government leaders, national graduate fellowship winners, community service project leaders and active members of ASU's intellectual community," says Mark Jacobs, dean of Barrett, the Honors College.

Students achieve "strategic" win

Two teams representing ASU's School of Global Management and Leadership won "Business Strategy" competition awards in the recent Best Strategy Invitational that featured 176 teams from around the world.

The two-week online competition tested each team's ability to manage an athletic footwear company in head-to-head competition against companies run by their international peers.

"The competition helped broaden our knowledge about the business world. It gave us the opportunity to experience the challenges executives face when making decisions," said team member Brandon Newcomb.

Participation in Best Strategy is by invitation only and is based on senior students' semester-long in-class competitions.

Grant advances neuroscience project

The National Institutes of Health recently awarded a four-year, \$1 million grant for a research project being conducted in the Neural Microsystems Laboratory in the Harrington Department of Bioengineering.

Jit Muthuswamy, associate professor in the department, is the principal investigator in the project. The research involves brain implants that pick up neural signals and transmit them to an artificial limb or an external electronic device such as a computer, which Muthuswamy says will one day help people who are paralyzed or have spinal injuries or pathologies such as Lou Gehrig's disease.

Muthuswamy says current brain implants fail within a few months after implantation and are not consistent and reliable in sensing the neural signals. The project aims to develop a brain implant that can move through the brain to seek the neurons with the strongest signals and therefore improve the reliability and consistency in sensing neural signals.

Faculty honors

- Sandra Simpkins, assistant professor in the School of Social and Family Dynamics, has been named a William T. Grant scholar and received a five-year, \$350,000 grant to support her research focused on the contextual and individual factors that predict Mexican-origin adolescents' participation in organized after-school activities.

- Ron McCoy, ASU's university architect, has been named to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, which recognizes "the achievements of architects as individuals, but also their significant contribution to architecture and society on a national level."

- William Peterson, assistant professor of operations management technology, has been selected to receive the American Society of Engineering Educators Lifetime Achievement in Engineering Management Education – the Bernard R. Sarcher Award. He also has been elected president of the Institute of Industrial Engineers' Society for Engineering and Management Systems.