Arizonans want higher education opportunities and they want them at the Arizona University System

The number of resident students attending Arizona State University is steadily increasing. In 1975, ASU enrolled 35,000 students. In the 2003 academic year alone, ASU has 57,500 students.

In response to this demand, since FY01, ASU has enrolled an additional 7,628 FTE students – but ASU has received no additional state investment for those students.

If we fail to expand ASU’s capacity to serve the rising demand for an ASU education, between 2005 and 2020, the cost to Arizona will be enormous. The net direct benefit to the State of Arizona in additional earnings of future college graduates is over $10.7 billion,
and that is only one measure of the lost opportunity Arizona is facing. Populations that are college-educated experience lower unemployment rates, lower incarceration rates and better health, as well as higher income levels.

**ASU addresses the needs of Arizonans**

Arizona has a burgeoning college-age population. The Governor's Task Force on Higher Education estimates that by the year 2020, more than 200,000 students will be in Arizona community colleges and almost 150,000 in the state’s three public universities.

Arizona is growing faster and has a larger proportion of people under the age of 18 than the national average. Yet, Arizona has fewer college graduates, lower per capita income, and a greater percentage of our population lives below the poverty line than the national average. By 2050, our population will be more than double what it is today. Maricopa County is currently the fastest growing large county in the United States. In order to serve this demand while enhancing both quality and access, ASU must continue to build a strong environment for teaching and learning.

Arizonans want an ASU education because an ASU education attracts economic opportunity. The U.S. Census Bureau reports a marked difference in average family income for households in which a member holds a college degree. In fact, on an average, a college graduate will earn $850,000 more during his/her working life (22 – 65) than the average high school graduate.

If Arizona is unable to provide higher education to its citizens, the impact will be crippling:

- ASU currently educates the majority of Arizona’s social workers.
- ASU is expanding its role in training Arizona’s nurses to address this critical shortage in our communities.
- ASU builds the foundation for a robust knowledge infrastructure, which supports the innovation that drives economic growth.
- ASU educates the strong knowledge workforce necessary to build economic growth and diversification.
- Companies cite an educated workforce as the highest priority in their decisions to locate.
• More highly-educated workers have greater incomes and create more revenue for Arizona.

• A diverse, well-educated citizenry is essential to building the communities of the 21st Century.

Recent student enrollment increases were accomplished with no decrease in the academic quality of the students entering the University. In fact, ASU has enrolled its best freshman classes in recent years. By FY05, this additional enrollment demand will have grown to 8,500 FTE students. But without core funding, ASU cannot continue to serve Arizona’s needs. Core funding for ASU can ensure that all qualified Arizonans will have a chance to realize expanded opportunities that a high-quality degree provides. Adequate core funding provides for a successful learning and teaching environment, enabling both increased access and enhanced quality.

Arizona is growing, ASU is reaching capacity and, if we are underfunded at the core, we will not be able to sustain the level of access and academic excellence that Arizonans demand.

**ASU is vital to the future of the State of Arizona**

ASU is key to building Arizona’s current potential into future success and ASU must expand to meet the demand for an ASU education or Arizona will be left behind; unable to educate our students and future community leaders in science, business, education, humanities and in the importance of civic engagement—both global and local.

The Arizona economy has suffered in recent years because it is less diverse and far less high-tech than the economies of neighboring states. The State’s economy also suffered because Arizona produces, proportionately, fewer college graduates than other western states. An educated workforce is critical to building a new, more diverse economy and will help attract new industries. College graduates contribute more to consumer spending and to the tax base because, on an average, they will earn almost $1 million more than high school graduates during the course of their work lives.
If Arizona is to continue to thrive, ASU must be empowered at the core to provide the highest quality product while enhancing access to the opportunities that higher education provides. ASU is more than a university. ASU is helping to shape the future for Arizona’s students and families. We educate Arizona’s sons and daughters and foster a lifelong learning environment for all Arizonans. We must ensure access to high quality, higher education in Arizona. Expanding ASU’s capacity to accommodate more students is vital to Arizona’s future.