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Arizona Teachers Academy Advances Innovative Teacher Workforce Development

Flagstaff, Ariz. - The Arizona Teachers Academy, an innovative program created at Arizona's public universities to bring more teachers to Arizona's K-12 classrooms, graduated more than 100 students in its inaugural year, with over half accepting teaching positions in Arizona classrooms before graduation and more expected to enter contracts before the beginning of the new school year.

Detailed in the [Arizona Teachers Academy](#) first annual report, approved by the Arizona Board of Regents at its meeting today, the academy provides year-for-year scholarship for service program to reward graduates who serve Arizona schools. Academy students, who are committed to serving low-income, high-need districts and tribal schools, graduate with low-to-no costs for their instruction. The report data will be updated to reflect any changes prior to the end of FY 2018.

Arizona Teachers Academy programs began at Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona in fall 2017 after Governor Doug Ducey called on the board and universities to create a plan addressing the state's need for a prepared education workforce and provide a year-for-year tuition waiver for the costs of their program to teacher candidates who commit to teaching in Arizona, ensuring teachers arrive in classrooms highly qualified and unburdened by tuition debt.

Arizona's public universities responded to the governor's call by designing new programs, reallocating resources, prioritizing funding and utilizing existing programs and scholarship funds to develop an academy providing more top-flight teachers.

Innovative in its approach, academy offerings include bachelor's, master's and non-degree certification programs that meet the needs of traditional students and adult career changers, allowing individuals to participate at any point from undergraduates to returning professionals.

"Our universities continue to demonstrate innovation, efficiency and ingenuity with the creation of the Arizona Teachers Academy that has already placed new teachers in classrooms across our state," said Bill Ridenour, Arizona Board of Regents chair. "We look forward to working with the governor and Legislature to identify a dedicated funding source for the academy in order to bring more teachers to our high-need schools."

In fiscal year 2018, the academy at all three universities enrolled 221 students at an estimated cost of \$1 million, approximately \$4,500 per student. Among this cohort, 102 students completed a program of study after just one year and preliminary reports indicate 61 accepted teaching positions in Arizona classrooms as of May.

Growth indicators are strong for the academy with more students expressing interest in teacher preparation programs at the universities and applications outpacing available waivers. With an expected enrollment increase to 478 students by fiscal year 2019 at a cost of \$2.2 million, the universities are eager to expand but are limited by the absence of dedicated funds.

Media Interview Opportunities

Tinisha NaShea Gammage ('18), who graduated from the Arizona Teachers Academy at Arizona State University, is an early childhood education, special education major. When asked about working in a Title I district, where most of the students come from low-income families, she says, "I'm excited to work there. It's been one of my goals, and it corresponds with my own vision of how I see myself as an educator."

Contact: ASU Media Relations – (480) 965-3502

University of Arizona graduate **Chelsea Nicole Bush**, who initially earned a business degree, plans to teach ninth-grade algebra at Camelback High School in Phoenix. "I discovered that being in business wasn't my passion, so I made the decision to pursue my master's degree in education," Chelsea says. "What a wonderful decision it has turned out to be!"

Contact: UA Media Relations – (520) 621-1951

Northern Arizona University student Xaviera Moore is currently studying special and elementary education at NAU's Grow Your Own program in the North Valley's Alhambra School District. She is also a transfer student from Glendale Community College who came to NAU as part of the 2NAU program. "I love to teach. When I considered my career options, it was an easy decision to choose teaching," Moore said. "I look forward to the day I graduate from NAU and become a full-time teacher."

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