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Student Advocacy and Success Cornerstones of Regent LuAnn Leonard's Service to Arizona Board of Regents

(Tempe, Ariz.) –A strong commitment to students at Arizona's public universities with a focus on Native American issues characterized Regent LuAnn Leonard's eight years of service on the Arizona Board of Regents. Regent Leonard's eight-year term is complete and she will officially exit the board when Gov. Ducey appoints a new regent.

Appointed in January of 2008 by then Gov. Janet Napolitano, Regent Leonard is the first Native American to be named to the board. She was instrumental in addressing issues such as student retention, the pipeline to universities from K-12 and ensuring consistent academic quality. Regent Leonard chaired the Academic and Student Affairs committee and the Regents' Award Selection Committee.

During a celebration of her service last week, Gov. Ducey acknowledged her contributions to the state, the board and Arizona's public universities during a [video](#) tribute. "As the first Native American appointed regent, you provided a broader more central understanding of the challenges Native American students face," Gov. Ducey said in his video. "Your efforts will strengthen the board's relationship with these students long into the future."

Regent Leonard, a descendant of the Tohono O'odam nation and an enrolled member of the Hopi Tribe, was instrumental in moving forward efforts such as the [ABOR Tribal Consultation Policy](#) that was adopted by the board last week. The policy implements consultation and communication principles governing interactions of Arizona's public university with Arizona's tribal nations on issues such as land use, education policy and research.

"Regent Leonard's consistent and unwavering dedication to our universities and specifically to advancing student success undoubtedly improved the lives of many students attending our universities, especially Native American students," said Arizona Board of Regents Chair Jay Heiler.

Regent Leonard's leadership was instrumental in establishing a [residency policy](#) change allowing any enrolled member of an Arizona federally recognized tribe to attend Arizona's public universities with in-state tuition, regardless of where they live.

Her leadership also was instrumental in incorporating students into the operational and financial reviews of the universities, an integral part of the tuition setting process, and providing student regents with time to update the board during meetings.

With Regent Leonard as chair of the Financial Aid Task Force, tangible changes were implemented at the universities including financial aid literacy programs, pilot programs that provide financial aid incentives for students and better collaboration between universities on financial aid issues.

Increasing accessibility to the universities also was a cornerstone of Leonard's tenure and she worked closely with the Getting Ahead Lumina grant which resulted in improved and increased pathways between the universities and community colleges throughout the state. Student safety was another primary focus for Leonard and she was integral to advancing a student safety task force during her term as a regent,

"Regent Leonard's exemplified tireless dedication as an exceptional voice for Arizona's students, an outstanding public servant and leader of our state's public universities," said Arizona Board of Regents President Eileen Klein. "Her influence will extend to new generations of students who benefit from her thoughtful leadership and competence that undoubtedly has helped create a better future for many in our state."

Regent Leonard served on the following committees during her service on the board: Regents Executive Committee; Human Resources Committee; Technology Oversight Committee; Resources Committee; Academic & Student Affairs Committee; Regents' Award Selection Committee; Audit Committee; and Health Affairs Committee.

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