



Arizona Board of Regents
2020 N. Central Avenue, Suite 230
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(602) 229-2500
Fax (602) 229-2555
www.azregents.edu

News Release
November 13, 2013
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Katie Paquet, 602-229-2543, 602-524-0009 Katie.Paquet@azregents.edu
Sarah Harper, 602-229-2542, 602-402-1341 Sarah.K.Harper@azregents.edu

REGENTS PRESIDENT: ARIZONA NEEDS HIGHER ED 'COMPETITIVENESS PACKAGE'

*Klein, University Presidents Outline Blueprint to Educational,
Economic Success at Inaugural State of the Universities Event*

PHOENIX - Arizona Board of Regents President Eileen Klein today called on lawmakers and community members to recommit to higher education and help move the state toward greater economic – and academic -- prosperity.

The Regents' proposed "Competitiveness Package on Higher Education" will include a request of the Governor and state lawmakers in the 2014 legislative session to authorize critical capital infrastructure projects and provide support necessary to bolster Arizona's universities and economy.

"It's critical that we have a 'Competitiveness Package on Higher Education' so Arizona's public universities can successfully take on the important task of helping to reinvent the state's economy to meet the challenges of a global economy that runs on knowledge and demands college-credentialed workers," Klein said. The package includes a [proposal to fund research infrastructure](#), and [\\$107 million in new dollars for critical university operations for FY2015](#).

In 2011, Arizona's business landscape was strengthened with the passage of the Arizona Competitiveness Package - legislation that streamlined the state's tax and regulatory environment and established Arizona as a leader in encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and business expansion.

The state's K-12 system also is undergoing one of the largest educational reforms in history with Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards - standards that are critical to preparing students for the rigors of higher education and the demands of a skilled workforce.

This recommitment to higher education is important to meet aggressive goals that ABOR has challenged our universities with, including:

- Doubling research, from \$1 billion today to \$2 billion by 2020;
- Increasing production of bachelor's degrees by 50 percent, to 30,890 by 2020; and
- Strengthening universities' impact on Arizona.

"Being a problem-solver for the state's most pressing challenges - making an impact - is an important goal we've set for ourselves," said ABOR Chair Rick Myers. "Our universities are prepared to contribute to action that impact health care, transportation, energy, technology, agriculture and water. We won't shrink from these challenges."

"I'm proud of the work our universities have done and continue to do to advance student attainment and pursue critical research and development activities," said Arizona Representative Jeff Dial, Chair of the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee.

More than 230 business, community, education and state and municipal leaders attended the "State of our Universities" luncheon at the KAET-TV Studios at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication in downtown Phoenix.

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The Arizona Board of Regents is committed to ensuring access for qualified residents of Arizona to undergraduate and graduate instruction; promoting the discovery, application, and dissemination of new knowledge; extending the benefits of university activities to Arizona's citizens outside the university; and maximizing the benefits derived from the state's investment in education. For more information visit www.azregents.edu.