



# Is Higher Education Ready for Arizona's Future?



Highlights of the 102nd  
Arizona Town Hall

April 21-24, 2013  
Tucson, Arizona



David Rhoades, and Len Bell sit on Panel Ocotillo and discuss Higher Education at the 102nd Arizona Town Hall in Tucson.

**T**o achieve readiness by 2020, the state -- its government, businesses, and citizens -- must unite and embrace and aggressively pursue as its highest priority the strengthening of its educational structure and outcomes.

- From the 102nd Arizona Town Hall Report of Recommendations

**F**or over 50 years, Arizona Town Hall has engaged, educated and empowered Arizonans to create solutions to critical policy issues.

Arizona has many areas in which it can improve its higher education system to better support a competitive and prosperous future for Arizona. The participants of the 102nd Arizona Town Hall identified these areas and proposed recommendations to achieve readiness by 2020.

Prior to the Town Hall session, participants from throughout the state reviewed a comprehensive background report developed by the University of Arizona. Meeting in facilitated small groups for two days, the participants addressed a common set of discussion questions. Trained recorders captured points of consensus and the entire group gathered for a plenary session on the third day to adopt a report of findings and recommendations. Although not every Town Hall participant agrees with every conclusion and recommendation, their report reflects the overall consensus achieved by the 102nd Arizona Town Hall.

This publication is a summary of the complete report including the background research and the report of recommendations. Town Hall reports are published and made available to Arizona Town Hall members, elected officials including the Arizona Legislature, public libraries, and the general public. Download or order copies online at [www.aztownhall.org](http://www.aztownhall.org), or call 602-252-9600 to request a copy.

# Key Points from the Background Report prepared by the University of Arizona

## Arizona's Economy and Higher Education

- Educational attainment is strongly correlated with a state's economic wellbeing.
- In the future, the most in-demand jobs will require education beyond a high school diploma.
- Those with higher levels of education are less likely to be unemployed.
- There is a strong correlation between education level and personal income, productivity, civic participation, life expectancy, employment status and the strength of a community.

### AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Less than 9th Grade	\$36,450
Grade 9-12, No Diploma	\$40,000
High School Graduate	\$55,567
Some College	\$70,547
Associates Degree	\$76,601
Bachelor's Degree	\$109,065
Master's Degree	\$130,876
Doctorate Degree	\$160,498
Professional Degree	\$188,930

## Arizona Statistics

- Arizona currently ranks 40th in the nation in the percent of high school students who go on to higher education.
- Arizona's younger generation is less educated than its older adult population.

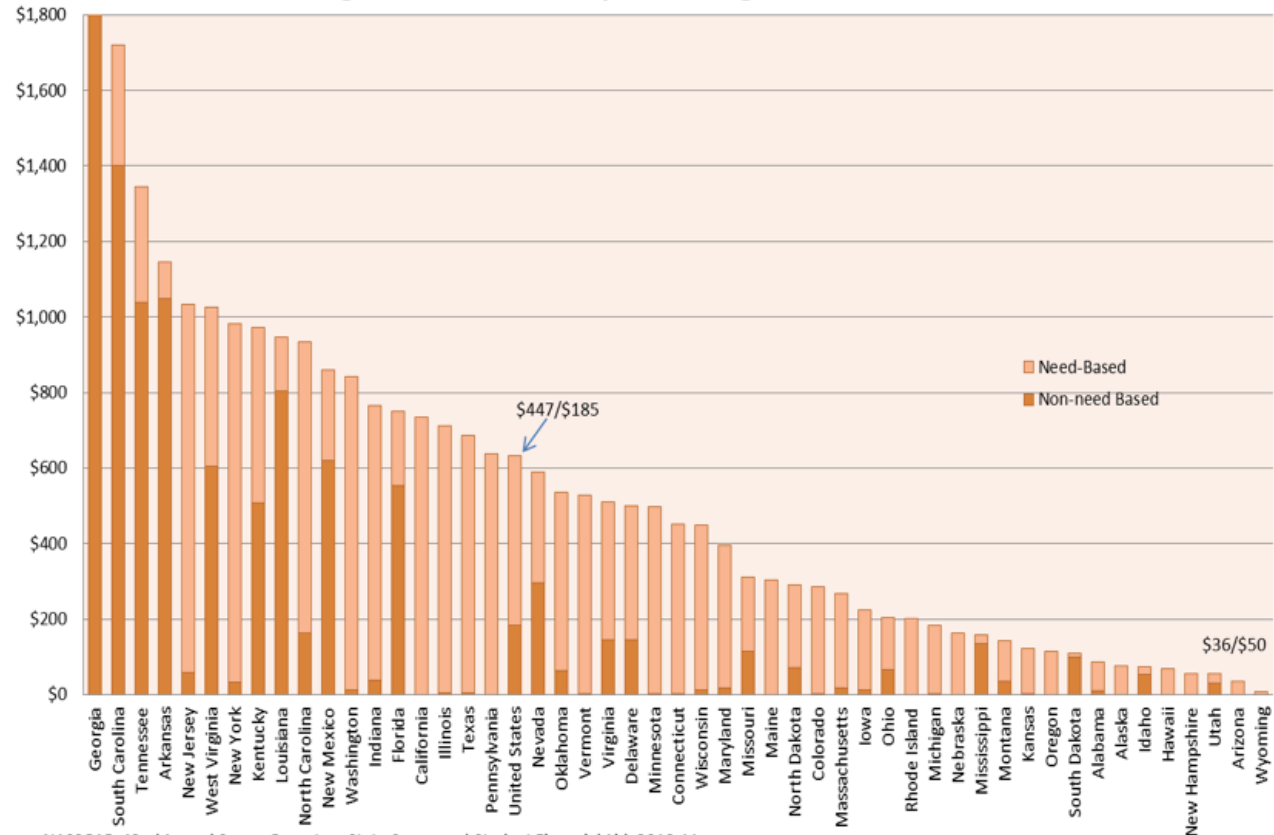
## Student Cost

- Nationally, tuition for higher education has continued to increase at a faster pace than inflation.
- Arizona ranks near the bottom of the 50 states for state-funded financial aid for undergraduate students.

For specific resources and links, download the full report from the "Past Town Halls" page of our website:

[www.aztownhall.org](http://www.aztownhall.org)

State Undergraduate Grant Aid per Undergraduate Student, 2010-11



NASSGAP, 42nd Annual Survey Report on State-Sponsored Student Financial Aid, 2010-11



Karen Francis-Begay shares her thoughts with other members of Panel Ocotillo.

**W**orkers in Arizona with bachelor's degrees earned 80% more than those with only a high school diploma and those with graduate degrees earn 135% more than those with only a high school diploma.

- From the 102nd Arizona Town Hall Report of Recommendations

# Report of Recommendations

After reviewing the full background report prepared by the University of Arizona, participants in the 102nd Arizona Town Hall convened in Tucson from April 21-24, 2013. The result: a consensus of recommended actions to help prepare Arizona to support a competitive and prosperous future for Arizona.

## CREATING SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

- Align Arizona's education systems at all levels to refine and improve the preK-12 pipeline. Specifically align high school curriculum standards and graduation requirements with higher education entrance requirements.
- Implement a grant and scholarship program focused on low and middle income students.
- Authorize DREAMERS, individuals who came to Arizona at an early age and graduated from high school, to qualify for "in state" tuition.
- Expand mentoring for students and their families and job skills training at Arizona's institutions of higher education.

## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

- The Governor and the Legislature must provide long-term, balanced solutions to funding higher education at competitive levels. At a minimum, this includes increasing financial aid, expanding tax credits, increasing funding for public higher education and targeting programs for underrepresented and first generation students.

- Encourage the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) to periodically analyze the coordination between, and the proper weightings, effects, and effectiveness of metrics used by universities, tribal colleges, and community colleges.
- Remove the requirement that enrolled members of Arizona tribes be "on reservation" residents to qualify for "in state" tuition.
- Eliminate Joint Committee on Capital Review (JCCR) oversight of university projects.
- Consider removing structural barriers to increased funding for higher education (such as Proposition 108).
- Consider changes to Article 9, Section 7 of the Arizona Constitution to allow public higher education institutions to invest directly in private entities whose principal asset is intellectual property developed at the institutions.

## FUNDING AND AFFORDABILITY

- Ask ABOR, universities, tribal colleges and community colleges to identify and support alternative approaches to increase funding, including expanding partnerships with local



Monday evening's speaker was **Diana Elliott**. Ms. Elliott is research manager for the Economic Mobility Project at the Pew Center on the States. She supports Pew's efforts to build broad and nonpartisan agreement on the facts and figures related to mobility and to spark an active debate on how best to improve opportunity in America.

and state community foundations and the enhancement of current endowment models.

- Restore the required state match funding for the system-wide adult basic education program that provides pathways to post-secondary education for those who currently do not have a GED.
- Give ABOR state appropriations and bonding authority to finance statewide research infrastructure
- Advocate for the restoration and continued funding of federal programs, such as Trio, Upward Bound, Talent Search, Student Support Services and Gear Up which prepare middle and high school students to be college ready.
- Urge the Legislature to consider a return of over \$400 million to the university and community college systems to be used to make higher education more accessible and affordable.

### **COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION**

- Increase the role of experiential learning in higher education through internships and active partnerships with businesses, local governments and other organizations.
- Continue to develop and implement technological innovations that improve the efficient delivery of higher education.
- Enhance formal and informal coordination between institutions of higher education to develop a long-term strategic plan.
- State and local economic development agencies and higher education institutions

must work together to better align and coordinate strategic plans and initiatives to achieve a more sustainable economy for Arizona.

- Arizona's institutions of higher education must meet, discuss and encourage the implementation of best practices, including coordination with high schools and middle schools and their students, student organizations and families so that they understand, engage in and prepare for higher education.

### **INDIVIDUALS**

- Town Hall participants must become advocates for higher education in Arizona. This includes sharing the report, participating in follow-up activities and creating public service announcements to broadcast our message.
- Organize a youth summit to strengthen student engagement in higher education.
- Town Hall participants should send a clear message about the importance of higher education to Arizona's leaders, including the Governor and the Legislature.



Participants of the Youth Town Hall discuss Higher Education.

# Youth Town Hall on Higher Education

On April 10, 2013, the Arizona Town Hall, in partnership with Maricopa Community Colleges, held a Youth Town Hall on Higher Education that drew hundreds of high school and college students from around the state. Following are some of the key points developed from the gathering.

## IMPACT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- There is a direct impact by increasing the number of educated individuals and thereby improving the economic and social health of our communities.
- Crime and poverty rates are reduced.
- Students and the parents who support them become role models for others and provide inspiration to future generations to pursue higher goals.
- The quality of decisions made in the community will be improved if more people have achieved a higher educational level.
- Having an educated workforce available will attract businesses to the community.
- On a personal level, a college education provides greater job opportunities, higher income, lifelong skills, increased civic engagement, and greater appreciation for diverse perspectives.

## CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING HIGHER EDUCATION

- Information about careers, college and financial aid is lacking for middle and high school students.
- The main obstacle to accessing higher education is cost.
- Grants and scholarships to cover application and testing fees are not widely available, and there is misinformation about who is eligible for financial aid.
- Proper documentation is an issue for immigrants and their children.
- Many students must work at least part-time to afford higher education or support their families and this creates scheduling and studying challenges.
- Encourage college students to visit high schools to promote higher education, and to advise and inform high school students about opportunities to learn more.

## ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

- Technology plays a great role as an enabler and is not a substitute for a classroom experience.
- Recent advances in technology, such as the “blackboard” and video in classes have helped bring concepts to life and engage today’s students.
- Online classes offer flexibility, self-paced learning, and access for those who are not near a college campus or have transportation issues.
- Online learning can have a negative impact on writing and social interaction skills, which are important in school and throughout life.
- Technology is not always reliable and not everyone has technology available to them, so other resources need to be available as well.
- Working with technology during their educational careers helps students develop skills that they will use in other areas of life

## ROLE OF SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT, FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES

- The motivation and support to pursue a higher education begins with the family.
- Schools, government, families and businesses can work together to push the next generation to obtain a higher education.
- Mentoring programs between adults and college students and between college students and high school students will improve attendance and graduation rates.
- Businesses can provide more paid internships to give students hands-on experience in their career field and orient them to the working world.
- Schools can do a better job of providing information, resources, and workshops for students and their families.
- Business and government should let students know about employment opportunities available and provide tuition incentives.

“I gained a new appreciation for the community and learned that no matter what your age, your opinions and decisions can affect our community.”

Bailey Alka, Gila Ridge H.S.



## Higher Education Quick Links

- For recent news and information on community, technical and junior colleges <http://ccweek.com/>
- For information on how to pay for higher education go to <http://www.fastweb.com/> <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
- For information on how to move from high school to community college to a four-year degree go to <http://aztransfer.com/aztransfer/>
- For information on Arizona's Community Colleges <http://www.arizonacommunitycolleges.org/>
- For information on Arizona's public universities <http://www.azregents.edu>

## How You Can Have An Impact

- Be the change. Model the behavior you expect from elected officials, youth and others.
- Use available resources, such as those referenced in the background report for the 102nd Arizona Town Hall, to partner with existing organizations and develop ideas for encouraging civic leadership in your community. Download the full report at <http://www.aztownhall.org>.
- Keep up to date on relevant programs in your community and action you can take through the Arizona Town Hall (<http://www.aztownhall.org>).
- Arrange a program in your community. Arizona Town Hall can provide resources, speakers, and printed materials. Use social media and personal networks to share information.
- Share your knowledge and the work of Town Hall participants with family, friends and coworkers.
- To join existing efforts to pursue recommendations from the 102nd Arizona Town Hall, contact the Arizona Town Hall office.

Participants gathered on Tuesday evening where student participants were recognized.

Arizona must expand access to higher education, especially for Arizona's underrepresented students, including minority students and students from low-income families, rural areas, and tribal areas.

- From the 102nd Arizona Town Hall Report of Recommendations



We welcome your involvement,  
questions, and perspectives.

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Since 1962, Arizona Town Hall has been educating, engaging and empowering Arizonans. Town Hall recommendations are a valuable resource for policymakers because they do not represent the agenda of a particular group or political perspective. Instead, Arizona Town Hall reports contain the informed consensus of Arizonans from different political parties, professions, and geographic areas of the state. A private, non-profit civic organization, Arizona Town Hall has served as a catalyst for conversations and recommendations that have influenced significant changes in Arizona's public policy over the years. Countless local, state, and national leaders have cited Arizona Town Hall as an important factor in educating people about complex issues, and fostering the development of civic and community leaders.

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