



Arizona Board of Regents  
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Arizona State University

Northern Arizona University

University of Arizona

June 28, 2006

The Honorable Kent Bennett  
 President of the Arizona State Senate  
 1700 W. Washington St.  
 Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable James Weiers  
 Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives  
 1700 W. Washington St.  
 Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Linda Aguirre  
 Minority Leader, Arizona State Senate  
 1700 W. Washington St.  
 Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Phil Lopes  
 Minority Leader, Arizona House of Representatives  
 1700 W. Washington St.  
 Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear President Bennett, Speaker Weiers, Senate Minority Leader Aguirre, and House Minority Leader Lopes:

On behalf of the Arizona Board of Regents and the public university system, we wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to you, and to each member of the 47<sup>th</sup> Legislature, for the meaningful policy deliberations and funding decisions made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session.

As difficult as the session was, with so many different perspectives on funding levels and goals of public higher education, we believe that the budget compromise reached between the Legislature and the Governor for 2006-2007 was a positive one for Arizona's public universities and will have a significant impact on our efforts to meet the needs not only of students but of the State of Arizona as a whole.

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We would like to express our gratitude not only for the increased funding for public universities in the state budget and with the enactment of a substantive state-employer salary increase through HB 2961, but also for specific policy changes that will have a tangible benefit to Arizona's university students.

One such policy matter is the recognition of a series of reasonable exemptions to the credit hour threshold now provided in statute. We hope to continue to work with the Legislature in our continued good-faith efforts to implement this new policy.

Another outcome from this session with which we are particularly pleased is the \$5 million in increased General Fund support for the Arizona Financial Aid Trust (AFAT) Fund. Perhaps even more important are the statutory changes in the AFAT funding ratios (now a 2-to-1 match) and the distribution percentages that will make a tremendous difference in this state's efforts to assist students with financial need to achieve their educational goals.

Legislators, both individually and collectively, dealt with regents and our representatives candidly and provided ample opportunity for our views to be heard. At every point in the process, even in those few instances where Regents' views differed from those of particular legislators, the dialogue was civil and fair.

We look forward to working with the 48<sup>th</sup> Legislature in our joint efforts to improve our public university system and its service to students and the people of Arizona.

Sincerely,

Christina Palacios  
 President

Robert Bulla  
 President Elect

Joel Sideman  
 Executive Director

c. Members, 47<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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