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ABOR Approves Revision to Residency Policy for Enrolled Members of Arizona Tribes

Changes go into effect beginning spring 2014

(Phoenix, AZ) – Students who are enrolled members of one the sovereign Arizona federally-recognized tribes now will be eligible for in-state tuition at Arizona’s three state universities as a result of recently approved residency policy changes by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR).

The policy revision goes into effect the spring semester of 2014.

This revision also provides an incentive for American Indian students from one of Arizona’s federally recognized tribes who attend out-of-state colleges to return to Arizona to complete a bachelor’s degree. Approximately 4,200 American Indian students currently attend one of Arizona’s state universities either as an undergraduate or graduate student.

More than 35 tribal colleges exist in at least 13 states. These largely two-year institutions attract many Arizona Native American students who will consider transferring to four-year universities. Previously, ABOR residency classification policy would have prevented these students from being considered for in-state tuition, and prompting many of these students to remain in the state of the tribal college.

“Due to lack of infrastructure and jobs, many Arizona tribal members move off-reservation to work and attend school,” said Regent LuAnn Leonard, executive director of the Hopi Education Endowment Fund. “By approving these policy changes, the Board acknowledged this reality for Arizona tribes while ensuring that students who have been moved away know that our universities are working to welcome them back home.”

The policy revision is not retroactive to previous semesters. Continuing students who have been classified as non-residents must contact the residency office to change their residency classification.

“This is excellent news for Arizona’s Native American communities and our three universities,” said ABOR President Eileen Klein. “The Board is committed to student success and this policy revision is reflective of that commitment and the Board’s recognition of the higher education needs of the Arizona American Indian tribes.”

The revised policy states: “For purposes of residency classification, enrollment as a tribal member in a federally recognized Arizona tribe will be sufficient to establish residency for tuition purposes.” ([ABOR Policy 4-203 C. 8](#)) To be eligible for in-state tuition under this revision: 1) the student must provide proof of being an enrolled tribal member; 2) the tribe must be one of Arizona’s federally-recognized tribes, and 3) the student must be a U.S. citizen, OR a lawful permanent resident of the U.S., OR have lawful immigration status in the U.S. ([ABOR Policy 4-102](#)).

“I commend the Board of Regents for taking this important step that encourages Arizona’s American Indian students who have moved away to return to our state to further their education,” said John R. Lewis, executive director, Intertribal Council of Arizona. “Ultimately, it will aid in strengthening workforce development and diversity for our state.”

Information about university deadlines is available through the following links: [ASU](#), [NAU](#) and [UA](#). Native American students who are not enrolled members of an Arizona tribe may qualify for residency under other ABOR policies. Those policies are available [here](#).

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