



News Release
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Regents' Cup: Arizona Companies Support Competition Showcasing Free Speech at Arizona's Public Universities

Phoenix, Ariz. – Several Arizona companies have signed on as sponsors for the inaugural [Regents' Cup](#), including Salt River Project as the event's platinum sponsor. Showcasing freedom of expression among students at the state's public universities, the Regents' Cup competition will celebrate civil discourse and democratic engagement at the universities during an event where students compete for scholarships and course credit.

Sponsors' support for the event that will take place Nov. 16 at the University of Arizona are through platinum, gold, silver and bronze levels. Sponsors and their level of support are:

- Salt River Project; Platinum Sponsor
- Arizona Public Service Company, AZ Strategies; Gold Sponsors
- Arizona Community Foundation, W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc.; Silver Sponsors
- Cox Communications, Tucson Electric Power; Bronze Sponsors

"We're grateful to our sponsors who are supporting free speech and civil discourse at Arizona's public universities. Through these companies' leadership, our student competitors will be able to earn scholarships for winning teams while showcasing freedom of expression that is characterized by respect," said Regent Karrin Taylor Robson, who envisioned the competition. "We appreciate our sponsor's commitment and generosity."

The inaugural Regents' Cup competition features reasoned debate during an era when free-speech issues on college campuses are part of the national conversation. Arizona's public universities are recognized as exemplars in free speech; Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona are all recognized with the highest [rating from FIRE](#) (the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education).

"Civics and civil discourse are critical foundations to a successful democracy. Developing these skills in young adults will serve our country well," said Molly Greene, Salt River Project Senior Director of Arizona Government Relations and Public Policy.

Students participating in the Regents' Cup will compete in the debate-style competition during an event showcasing the commitment of the universities to upholding the intrinsic rights of all students to freedom of speech. During the competition, team members will participate in a round of civil dialogue, solutions debate and persuasive storytelling. Judges - including policymakers, civic leaders and educators - will score the teams and declare first, second and third-place winners.

“Free speech is foundational to our democracy. It needs to be celebrated and protected. This is a great opportunity for state’s scholars to do so,” said Jessica Pacheco, Arizona Public Service Vice President, External Affairs.

The inaugural Regents’ Cup honors the historic tradition of debate on public university campuses that fosters leadership in students and teaches skills such as articulating different points of view in an environment where competitors remain civil and respectful.

“This inaugural event celebrating freedom of expression and civil discourse is an important testament to the value we put on ensuring free speech at our universities. I appreciate our sponsors’ support and I thank Regent Taylor Robson for bringing this concept to the board and proving instrumental in ensuring the Regents’ Cup success,” said ABOR Chair Larry E. Penley.

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