



News Release
April 22, 2020
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New Report Shows Historic Increase in Degrees Awarded at Arizona's Public Universities

Phoenix, Ariz. – Arizona's public universities awarded more degrees to students last year at all levels, representing historic growth overall and in STEM and other high-demand fields, according to a new report from the Arizona Board of Regents.

The [ABOR Fiscal Year 2019 College Completion Report](#) documents the contributions of Arizona's public universities to improving the skills of Arizona's workforce and expanding educational attainment during an era where the majority of jobs in the state require education past high school.

Arizona's public universities are the state's largest provider of higher education, enrolling 195,672 students in fall 2019, of which 104,494 or 53.4 percent are Arizona resident students. Most of the universities' graduates remain in Arizona, find jobs and contribute to the state's workforce and economy.

"Arizona's universities are delivering results. ABOR's insistence on greater accountability and transparency as well as its aggressive goals and metrics have delivered results for our state. Over the last five years, the number of graduates with degrees has risen by 30 percent. Critical STEM degrees are up 62 percent. Health-related degrees are up more than 63 percent, an important contribution to Arizona's readiness to fight COVID-19. This board is committed to building on success. Right now, our universities are focused on the pandemic with the full force of their extraordinary biomedical research capacity. But, the impact of the New Economy will demand even more college-educated Arizonans in technical specializations. Ensuring the universities are positioned for success must be an absolute imperative for the state," said Arizona Board of Regents Chair Larry Edward Penley.

In addition to producing more bachelor's degrees, the university enterprise is also awarding a record number of graduate and doctoral degrees. However, the state still lags the nation in terms of educational attainment with 29 percent of Arizona's population with a bachelor's degree or more compared to the national average of 35 percent, according to the most recent census numbers.

"This report indicates positive trends for Arizona, but our state is still behind when it comes to the education of its citizens. Increasing educational attainment is not only a boon for individuals who earn higher wages, have less unemployment and better quality of life, but Arizona benefits with a highly-skilled workforce ready for the challenges of the future," said ABOR Executive Director John Arnold.

Highlights from the College Completion report include:

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- Arizona’s public universities all increased the number of degrees conferred in every type of degree (bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral) and kept pace with the board’s aggressive [metric goals](#).
- Arizona’s public universities continue to improve upon long-term degree trends, awarding 45,885 total degrees in 2019, a 30.4 percent increase over the last five years.
- All three of the universities significantly increased bachelor’s degrees in key STEM fields – together producing 8,757 bachelor’s degrees in 2019, a 15.5 percent year-over-year increase and a 62 percent increase over the last five years.
- The universities awarded substantially more bachelor’s degrees in health fields in 2019 than at any time in their history – conferring 2,655 degrees, an increase of 3.3 percent year-over-year and a 63.6 percent increase since 2014.
- In 2019, the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded in business continued to lead all other degree fields.

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