

Contact: Sarah Harper, (602) 402-1341, sarah.k.harper@azregents.edu  
Julie Newberg, (602) 686-1803, julie.newberg@azregents.edu

## **News Briefs from ABOR June 10-12, 2020 Meeting** *Responding to COVID-19 Overshadows Board Agenda*

Phoenix, Ariz. – Following are news briefs from the Arizona Board of Regents virtual meeting June 10-12. Board materials are available [here](#).

### **Responding to COVID-19: Board Adopts Response Planning Principles; Approves Policy for Pay Reduction; and Suspends Presidential Pay and At-Risk Increases**

- **Board Adopts COVID-19 Response Planning Principles**

The board adopted COVID-19 response planning principles to provide a blueprint for universities to follow in the months ahead, focusing on the health and safety of students, employees and members of university communities.

“In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the board and universities are committed to managing through the challenges presented by the virus,” said ABOR Chair Larry E. Penley. “The principles adopted today focus on minimizing health risks for students and members of the university communities as well as maintaining academic excellence and the student experience. The principles are derived from guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and represent what is needed in Arizona at this time to make our university campuses as safe as possible.”

The guidelines adopted by the board recognize the universities operate throughout the world and with multiple learning modalities; therefore response planning will be university specific.

A full news release on the principles is available [here](#).

- **Board Adopts New Policy for Pay Reduction**

Providing an option for university presidents and the board’s executive director to respond to severe university-wide budget constraints, the board approved a pay reduction program. The program also provides flexibility to reduce pay in response to substantial reductions in state appropriations, natural or physical disasters, terrorism or public health emergencies.

Under the new policy, a university president who wishes to implement or amend a pay reduction program must first provide a description of the program or amendment to the board chair and the executive director of the board. If ABOR’s executive director plans to implement or amend a program, the executive director must submit the program or amendment to the board chair.

A pay reduction program must be for a specified duration and may consider employment categories and levels of compensation. It may, but is not required to, provide for paid flex time. A pay reduction

program may, but is not required to, include a provision that would allow employees to accrue vacation leave hours in excess of the limit provided in ABOR Policy 6-803(B).

Once approved, the president or executive director may implement the pay reduction program in accordance with applicable law.

More information is available [here](#).

- **University Presidents, ABOR Executive Director Ask Board to Suspend Compensation Increases, At-Risk Compensation**

The board approved on consent agenda a request from university presidents and ABOR's executive director asking the board to suspend previously scheduled compensation increases for presidents as well as decisions regarding achieving at-risk compensation for the presidents and executive director as they manage challenges and issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The measure suspends assigning new at-risk compensation goals as well as approving decisions by the presidents to lead and participate in university reduction-in-pay initiatives or approved furlough programs. At-risk compensation goals assigned to the presidents by the board reflect the board's strategic imperatives, including increasing educational attainment in Arizona, generating solutions to societal challenges, enhancing efficiency and affordability and enhancing the quality of students' experiences.

The measure also authorizes the presidents to enter into contract amendments if needed for head coaches and athletic directors to participate in reduction in pay initiatives or furlough programs. Additional information is available [here](#).

## **Presidents Update Board on Fall 2020 Operations**

University presidents presented updates on anticipated campus operations this fall, which align with the board's COVID-19 response planning principles. The presidents conveyed the universities have the knowledge, expertise and capacity to provide the excellent education students expect, through multiple modalities, and are employing appropriate safety protocols for the university communities.

Examples of measures universities are taking for the fall semester include:

- Limited capacity in classrooms.
- Multiple modalities for learning delivery.
- Use of face coverings when social distancing is not possible and, at ASU, in all buildings.
- Providing care items to support healthy practices, including hand sanitizer, face coverings, thermometers and more.
- Increased cleaning and disinfection of classrooms and other areas.
- Limited capacity in student housing.
- COVID-19 testing, tracing and treating.
- Encouraging self-screening for symptoms.
- Messaging and communication campaigns to create awareness of protocols.
- Training programs to inform, educate and encourage healthy living and practices.
- Isolation and treatment protocols for those who may have been exposed or infected with the virus.
- Use of digital apps for health screening as well as using telehealth and tele-counseling services while limiting the size of groups.

Each university is planning for the fall semester with enhanced safety and mitigation measures. Detailed information is available on the universities' websites (linked here), including:

- [Arizona State University](#) is offering three options for learning this fall: ASU immersion - the on-campus, technology enhanced learning; [ASU Sync](#) - technology-enhanced, interactive remote learning that can be used simultaneously with some in-person instruction; and iCourses – courses delivered entirely online with lectures available on demand.

ASU President Crow’s presentation to the board is available [here](#).

- [Northern Arizona University](#) is using [NAUFlex](#) a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning to ensure a quality and highly personal experience on the Flagstaff campus, also offering students the opportunity to continue their education where they live at 20 locations around the state, and continues its long history of online offerings. NAU will also start and end the fall semester early to take advantage of lower student travel and a period of expected lower COVID-19 case rates.

NAU President Cheng’s presentation to the board is available [here](#).

- The [University of Arizona](#), as part of its overarching campus reentry plan, will provide two masks for every student, staff and faculty member, allow both double and single occupancy rooms, a selection of standard meal plan options and will announce final plans for fall in July. In addition, they will closely monitor COVID science and best practice to inform necessary modifications to their plans.

## **New ABOR Metrics Deliver ‘Promise’ to Increase Educational Attainment and Seek Solutions to Societal Challenges**

With a focus on student success and accountability, the board approved updated strategic metrics and an ongoing commitment to the state through a new “promise” to Arizona -- to increase postsecondary access and attainment for Arizona students, to seek solutions to societal challenges and to do both while increasing quality, affordability and efficiency.

“I’m encouraged by our new strategic metrics that are designed to not only inform the board on the success of our universities, but to dig deeper into students’ experiences to advance their satisfaction and success,” said ABOR Chair Penley. “Equally, because the universities are so intrinsically tied to the economy of our state, I am confident these metrics help the board and universities deliver vital outcomes for Arizona, including the development of a strong workforce positioned to succeed in the New Economy.”

“Our promise to Arizona and new strategic measures underscore the fiduciary role of the board through a focus on efficiency and accessibility for students and service to the state,” said Regent Fred DuVal. “The promise puts affordability front and center and underscores the inherent value we offer to students as they earn their degrees at the universities.”

New metrics are designed around four pillars: increasing attainment; generating solutions; enhancing efficiency and affordability; and enhancing quality of students’ experiences.

Among the 15 approved metrics are new measures designed to indicate student success, including:

- Percentage of Arizona public high school graduates enrolled by each university.
- Total resident adult undergraduate enrollment.
- Resident bachelor’s degrees awarded.
- First-time, part-time immersion freshman retention.
- Net price of attendance.
- Average debt per degree for Arizona residents.
- Percentage of resident students graduating with no debt.
- In-state graduate wage outcomes.

- Satisfaction of university experience for current students and graduates.

The board will continue to measure these metrics which have previously been part of the board's strategic plan: total bachelor's degrees awarded; community college transfer degrees awarded; research and development expenditures; first-time, full-time immersion freshmen retention; and six-year graduation rate. Universities will propose three-year metric targets to the board for approval this fall.

New three- to five-year strategic forecasts are included with the new metric framework and will provide the board with information about each university's future scale and direction. Forecasts include total enrollment, enrollment and degrees awarded by modality and location, total research and professional doctoral degrees awarded, four-year degree completion and community college transfer graduation rate.

Additional information is available [here](#).

## **For Pioneering Achievements, Board Awards Highest Faculty Honor to UArizona Professors**

Pioneering theories in ecology and human motivation and groundbreaking research in Alzheimer's disease and climate variability span the accomplishments of five University of Arizona professors awarded the title of Regents Professors by the board at its meeting today. The title of Regents' Professor is the highest faculty honor awarded at Arizona's public universities.

"We are honored to have scholars at our universities who represent the top tier of academia, professors who make a difference in the lives of countless students and who contribute immensely to the global community, our state and to their fields of study," said Arizona Board of Regents Chair Larry E. Penley. "I congratulate these exceptional individuals and sincerely thank them for their outstanding efforts."

Following are the new UArizona Regents Professors:

- Peter Chesson, Ph.D. (College of Science)  
An expert in ecology, Dr. Chesson has conducted pioneering studies which have had a profound effect on environmental issues and the management of natural populations. He is considered by peers from all over the world as one of the most influential theorists and original thinkers of modern time.
- Jeff Greenberg, Ph.D. (College of Science)  
An international leader in social psychology, Dr. Greenberg developed a unique conceptual framework called Terror Management Theory (TMT) to address the psychological conflict between the self-preservation instinct and the realization that death is inevitable and unpredictable. TMT provides today's most comprehensive account of human motivation.
- Connie Woodhouse, Ph.D. (College of Social and Behavioral Sciences)  
Dr. Woodhouse is the world's foremost authority on the use of tree-ring science (dendrochronology) to understand the variable flow of river systems on time scales from years to millennia. Her research has fundamentally changed our understanding of natural climate variability in determining the availability of freshwater resources in semi-arid regions.
- Roberta Diaz Brinton, Ph.D. (College of Medicine)  
Dr. Diaz Brinton is an internationally recognized neuroscientist whose research on Alzheimer's disease has led to critical insights into the causes of the disease as well as innovative therapies to treat it. She was presented with the Prize for Excellence in Alzheimer's Drug Discovery in 2017 from the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation and received the Scientist of the Year award from that same

foundation in 2015. Under her leadership, the UArizona Center for Innovation in Brain Science has received more than \$71 million in research awards since 2016.

- Judith K. Brown, Ph.D. (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences)  
Dr. Brown, considered a world-expert on emerging plant viruses that infect cotton, has focused her work on the intersection of biology and society. Her research has focused on viruses and bacteria transmitted by insect vectors to agriculturally important plants – especially the geminiviruses and the whiteflies that transmit them. She was the first to use a “gene gun” to inoculate genomes of these viruses.

The title of Regents’ Professor is the highest faculty honor awarded at Arizona’s public universities. Per ABOR policy, the rank is conferred only on full professors whose pioneering contributions and achievements have brought them national or international distinction. Additionally, the title may be awarded to no more than 3 percent of tenured and tenure-track faculty.

More information is available [here](#).

## **Game Design and Behavior Focus of Board-approved Undergraduate Degree Programs at UArizona**

Students interested in learning game design and development skills necessary to create virtual interactive environments, or learning about game design principles and human behavior now have two new undergraduate degree program options at the University of Arizona.

The new degree programs – a Bachelor of Science in Game Design and Development and a Bachelor of Arts in Games and Behavior – were approved by the board today. Both degree programs, which will be implemented in the 2020-21 academic year, equip students with competencies that lead to numerous employment opportunities.

The video game industry has been steadily growing in recent years. As the technology advances and new mediums, such as virtual and mixed reality arise, application areas of video games expand beyond entertainment, spanning areas from training and education to health care. A few examples of job opportunities for students seeking these degrees include careers as a game designer, game programmer, modeler, animator, audio programmer, user experience researcher, cloud architect, user experience analyst, artificial intelligence programmer and more.

All academic degree programs go through multiple review and approval processes to ensure their currency, quality and relevance. As part of a new degree request for board approval, the universities define learning outcomes, assessments and measures of the outcomes, and evidence of market demand.

“Clearly outlining the specific competencies and concepts of a degree program helps students make a better judgement about whether to enroll in that program,” said Chair Penley. “Outcomes assessment is essential to the responsibility that the board has to the citizens of Arizona, and explicit concepts and competencies clarify what should be assessed in graduates.” Chair Penley indicated he looks forward to further development of the protocols to define new degree concepts and competencies.

More information is available [here](#).

## Board Approves NAU Multi-Year Men's Basketball Coach Employment Contract

The board approved a five-year contract for Shane Burcar as head men's basketball coach at Northern Arizona University. Burcar served as interim head men's basketball coach since June of 2019 at the university where he has demonstrated leadership on the court as well as a deep commitment to players' academic success.

"As the interim coach this past season, Coach Burcar led the team to an impressive 16 overall wins, which surpassed the program's combined total of the two previous seasons," said Chair Penley. "His commitment to success on the court is equal to his commitment to students' academic success – having increased the team's overall GPA to 3.18 from 2.49 just a few years ago. As part of the Lumberjack family, his achievements already are impressive and we look forward to his vision and leadership to build a championship program."

During his tenure as interim head coach, Burcar compiled an impressive record including wins over second, third and fourth place Big Sky Conference teams; a conference road sweep for the first time since 2014; and the first time since 2014-15 to achieve a four-game conference winning streak during the season.

Burcar's five-year contract extends to March 31, 2025, at a base salary of \$198,000. It includes incentives such as grade-point averages, academic progress and athletic performance. Additional details related to his contract may be viewed [here](#).

## Consent Agenda Items Approved

Approved consent agenda items include:

- [Arizona Teachers Academy fiscal year 2021 budget;](#)
- [Extension of June submission of universities annual operating budget, including waiver of ABOR policy 3-403;](#)
- [ASU amended capital development plan;](#)
- [UArizona amendment to City of Phoenix ground lease;](#)
- [UArizona amendment to Dignity lease;](#)
- [ABOR policies revisions: Overview of capital development process and phases; ownership and procedures; leases of real property;](#)
- [ABOR policy revision: Multiple year appointments of head coaches and intercollegiate athletics directors;](#)

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