

THE ARIZONA STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION -STRATEGIC PLAN

Since 1974, the Arizona Students' Association (ASA) has represented all the students attending Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University. ASA works to ensure access and affordability to higher education in Arizona by advocating to elected officials, organizing campaigns on campus on issues that matter to students and by developing student leaders. ASA continues to represent the current 130,000 members and remains both student-funded and student-directed.

ASA 2010-2011 Board of Directors

Executive Director, Robyn Nebrich

THE ARIZONA STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION - STRATEGIC PLAN

A letter from the Board of Directors

Dear Arizona Students,

In 1974, the student body presidents of Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University came together to create ASA because they knew that only by creating a unified voice would they ever be able to win victories for students and make higher education more accessible and affordable. Their legacy and vision continues today with an organization that has saved students money on tuition and fees, has passed both state and federal legislation, and has developed more than 1,000 student leaders. Right now students are facing many challenges including the rising cost of attendance, larger class sizes, lack of parking, and a divestment in education from the Arizona Legislature. Once again, the only way that students will be successful is by coming together and having a unified voice.

ASA is continuing to focus on the three core strategies that have made us successful over the years, and that in the future will determine if we will continue to be triumphant. The core strategies are advocacy, organizing, and leadership development. Only by strengthening the student voice to decision makers, running campaigns on issues that students care about, and developing future leaders will we ensure that students' success is a priority in Arizona.

As students, and as leaders, we must work together as we have never before; we must rally, knock on doors, and build lasting coalitions that will enable us to win victories for students on the issues surrounding rising costs in tuition and textbooks as well as decreased financial aid and cuts for higher education in the state budget. Only by working together and speaking in a unified voice will we ensure that Arizona and its students are successful.



Sincerely,
Elma Delic

Elma Delic
Chair of the Arizona Students' Association

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

A New Vision

In January of 2010, the previous three-year strategic plan for the Arizona Students' Association was completed. The organization had undergone a transformation from an advocacy organization that only did lobbying, to an organization that focused on leadership development, grassroots organizing, and outreach. Over the three years, ASA helped to save students between \$100 and \$1,000 on tuition per student, quadruple the amount of state-funded financial aid available, and pass legislation at the state and federal levels to make textbooks more affordable. Additionally, ASA was able to create and expand the Southwest Student Leadership Conference, and in 2008 created an on-campus internship program. Through these leadership development opportunities ASA has been able to develop 1,000 new student leaders across Arizona. In 2009, the Board of Directors came together to review what ASA had been able to accomplish and what the state of the student currently looked like. The Board then came up with the roles that students and ASA would play in the changing landscape of higher education and the economy.

“When we created the strategic plan in 2007 we knew that we did not have a lot of money to influence politics, but what we did have was 120,000 members, and that was powerful.”

- Lindsay Bayuk, former Chair of ASA



This new vision for ASA was built upon through meetings with alumni, surveying the students, and conversations with student leaders. The new vision for ASA is one that

focuses on

strategic collaboration while working on increasing financial aid, containing the total cost of attendance, encouraging civic engagement, and creating the Foundation for Arizona Students.

ASA will continue to strengthen its current structure, its mission, its vision, and its core values in order to ensure that greater access and affordability to a higher education is reached in the next three to five years

MISSION

The Arizona Students' Association is a non-profit, non-partisan organization directed and funded by Arizona's public university students. ASA works to make sure that higher education in Arizona is affordable and accessible by advocating to elected officials, running issue campaigns to engage students, and by developing student leaders.

Student Success: As defined by ASA is ensuring that students have the resources needed to earn a higher education including: financial aid, affordable tuition, academic advising, adequate class sizes. affordable

VISION

It is the vision of ASA that there is increased student power and influence in Arizona so that higher education is both accessible and affordable. Higher education should be a top priority for decision makers in Arizona.

CORE VALUES

- ✦ To be good financial stewards
- ✦ To hold ourselves and our universities to a high standard for accountability and transparency
- ✦ To make public higher education affordable and accessible in Arizona
- ✦ To empower students
- ✦ To create thriving, diverse, self-sufficient Arizonans that will be contributing, productive members of society

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

Increase Collaboration with Community Colleges

In the Arizona Board of Regents' 2020 Vision, the Regents have the ambitious goal of getting 60,000 new students into the university system by 2020; in essence adding another Arizona State University to the system. To meet this goal, the Arizona Board of Regents has looked at expanding and creating more partnerships with Arizona's community college system which will include more 2+2 programs, 3+1 programs, and dual enrollment programs. As the cost of a four-year baccalaureate degree increases at the three universities, more and more students and families are making the decision to start their college career at one of Arizona's more affordable community colleges. In 2009, approximately 500,000 Arizonans took a class at one of Arizona's 13 community colleges. Additionally, over 50% of the students that ASA represents have taken or are taking community college courses in addition to attending an Arizona university. As the divisions between the universities and community colleges continue to blur, there is a need to increase the strategic collaboration with community college student leaders and ASA.



In the fall of 2009, as a first step towards collaboration, ASA hosted the Conference of Arizona Student Leaders (CASL) and the Student Leader Summit. CASL and the Student Leader Summit were the first time that the student leaders at all the universities and community colleges were brought together to collaborate and make decisions as a unified student voice. In order to increase collaboration and meet the objective of strengthening the student voice, ASA will continue to host an annual CASL that will focus on organizing, collaboration, and leadership development. This event will bring together all the leaders of the universities and community colleges in order to talk about common issues that their students face and opportunities to work together. The annual CASL will include a Student Leader Summit that will have 2 representatives per student government (and/or campus) and will focus on official ways for university and community college students to work together to increase student success.

- ✦ Work with community college students to create a unified voice for students in Arizona
- ✦ Work with community college students on shared priorities using ASA's core strategies of advocacy, organizing, and leadership development
- ✦ Increase the number of community college students involved with ASA's campaigns
- ✦ Create a structure for communication and collaboration with community colleges
- ✦ Continue to host an annual Conference of Arizona Student Leaders (CASL)
- ✦ Host an annual Student Leader Summit
- ✦ Create a student government toolkit that will be used to strengthen student governments in Arizona

Increasing Financial Aid

Arizona is ranked 46th in the country for state-funded financial aid and, according to the Arizona Board of Regents Financial Aid Report; in 2010 there were nearly 60,000 students in Arizona with unmet need. Unfortunately, there has been a lack of state-investment in financial aid; currently the state only invests three cents for every dollar of federal financial aid, which accounts for less than one-percent of the total financial aid in Arizona. In order to rectify this situation, students, community members, the universities, and the Arizona Board of Regents must join together to get funding for state-based financial aid. In addition to getting more funding for financial aid, ASA will fight to stop cuts to financial aid at the state, federal, and university levels.

- ✦ Increase state-based financial aid in Arizona
- ✦ Stop all cuts to financial aid in Arizona
- ✦ Retain funding for the Arizona Financial Aid Trust
- ✦ Build a coalition of financial aid supporters
- ✦ Release a financial aid report to get the word out about student debt, workload, and financial plight of students and families in Arizona.

Containing the Total Cost of Attendance

The cost of tuition has risen over 63 percent in the last three years, a percentage that would be much higher if it were not for the work of the ASA. Unfortunately, students are not just facing the rising cost of tuition; they are facing the skyrocketing total cost of attendance. The total cost of attendance at a university includes room and board, books, tuition, and fees. These costs have totaled upwards of thousands of dollars, including mandatory housing, mandatory meal plans, class fees, program fees, and expensive textbooks. Over the next three years, the ASA will work to heighten the conversation about the true total cost of attendance and will fight for policies that positively impact the total cost of attendance.

- ✦ To ensure that total cost of attendance is affordable, accessible, and predictable for students in Arizona
- ✦ To advocate to the Arizona Board of Regents during every tuition cycle
- ✦ To pass a policy reform proposal regarding the approval and oversight of fees, that will impact the university's fee setting process
- ✦ To shift the conversation regarding tuition to the total cost of attendance
- ✦ To revise policies that drive up the Total Cost of Attendance

Encouraging Civic Engagement

Since 1988, the Arizona Students' Association has worked to civically engage students through registration, education, and mobilization efforts. Over this time, we have registered to vote over 65,000 students and have ensured they voted on Election Day. In looking at the next three years in Arizona, it is critical that students continue to play a strong role in elections. In order to expand ASA's civic engagement work, we will focus on two objectives: increasing turnout and institutionalizing access to voter registration information.

- ✦ To increase youth voter turnout in Arizona
 - On campus polling locations
 - Vote by Mail
- ✦ To institutionalize voter registration on college campuses in Arizona
 - Implement HB2668 of 2010

Creating the Foundation for Arizona Students

As a 501(c)4 organization, ASA is able to spend a large portion of our revenue on lobbying and advocacy. Unfortunately, this also means that the ASA is often excluded from grant opportunities and is limited in the amount of fundraising that we can do for scholarships, leadership development and civic engagement. Over the next few years the Arizona Students' Association will work with alumni to create a 501(c)3 organization called the Foundation for Arizona Students that will focus on leadership development, scholarship opportunities, and strengthening the voice of students in Arizona.

Conclusion

This strategic plan establishes objectives that ASA will work to accomplish over the next three years. These objectives are: **strategic collaboration, increasing financial aid, containing the total cost of attendance, encouraging civic engagement, and creating the Foundation for Arizona Students**. ASA will continue to strengthen its current structure, its mission, its vision, and its core values in order to ensure that greater access and affordability to a higher education is reached in the next three to five years. Arizona is facing a challenging moment in history and only through coming together as a unified force will Arizona be able to fix the challenges that we are facing and solve Arizona's most pressing issues.

BOARD AND STAFF STRUCTURE

Board Structure

The Arizona Students' Association Board of Directors is the group of visionaries for the organization. Each year the Board of Directors sets the vision, goals, and priorities for the organization and works with staff to make these visions and goals a reality.

In 1997 when ASA first became independent from the universities and the Board of Regents, the decision was made to have a Board of Directors comprised of both elected and appointed leaders that would come together and put aside personal politics and school loyalty to make decisions that were appropriate for all students. At that time, the Board Members decided that there would be three districts and that all matters before the Board would have to pass all three districts in order to move forward. These districts are Northern District, Central District, and Southern District.

Northern District:

- Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff
- Northern Arizona University, Yuma

Central District:

- Arizona State University at the Tempe Campus
- Arizona State University Graduate and Professional Student Association
- Arizona State University at the West Campus
- Arizona State University at the Polytechnic Campus
- Arizona State University at the Downtown Campus

Southern District:

- University of Arizona Main
- University of Arizona South

Staff Structure

In order to carry out the Board's vision, ASA has a full-time professional staff comprised of an Executive Director, an Organizing Director, a Government Affairs Director, a Communications Director, an Office Manager, and four Campus Organizers. This structure allows for institutional knowledge, continuity, and expertise.