

## Top 10 Urban Legends of ASU

### 10. "ASU has open admissions - anyone can go there."

The law requires that the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) "prescribe qualifications for admission of all students to the universities." ASU uses the same admission requirements developed by the ABOR as the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University.

Not only is it not true that anyone can go to ASU, only 47.93% of Arizona high school graduates are even eligible under ABOR guidelines.

### 9. "ASU teaches remedial courses."

As stated under ABOR guidelines, students may be admitted if they meet the 16 core course requirements and have only one deficiency in two areas. In these cases, ASU may accept them but allow the students to make up these deficiencies by taking community college courses. These so-called remedial courses are not ASU courses. They are community college courses taken by students so that they can be prepared for their required ASU coursework.

### 8. "ASU isn't even that good of a school."

ASU students have some of the highest academic credentials in the nation. ASU is proud to boast that its 2007 freshman class included 148 National Merit Scholars, which represents an increase of 41% since 2002 and places ASU 17<sup>th</sup> in the nation. The class also includes 10 Flinn Scholars, 111 National Hispanic Scholars (an increase of 164% since 2002) and 265 National Scholars.

17% of our Arizona freshmen were in the top 5% of their class; 31% were in the top 10%; and 41% were in the top 15%.

Just recently ASU was proud to be named one of the top producers of Fulbright scholars. ASU currently ranks 4<sup>th</sup> among public research institutions and 14<sup>th</sup> in the country in Fulbright awards. ASU students submitted 45 applications and received 16 awards, one of the highest award percentages nationally. Furthermore, although the University of Arizona submitted the exact same amount of applications, they were only awarded 11.

### 7. "ASU is too big."

While it's true that ASU is growing at a rapid pace, the growth is happening at the West, Polytechnic, and Downtown campuses. The Tempe campus enrollment is holding steady at about 51,000 and should stay there for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, ASU is simply keeping pace with the fastest growing county in the country and a K-12 system that has completed 191 new schools or expansions from 2002 - 2006.

### 6. "No one ever graduates from ASU."

Improving five year graduation rates is something that almost all institutions of higher education are striving to improve. ASU's five-year graduation rate of 50% is remarkable compared to the average of other public universities which is only 42.8%.

The corollary to this myth is that the university is full of professional students who just want to lounge around and not get a job. The legislature addressed this issue by prohibiting state funding for students who have earned over 155 credit hours in 2007 with certain exceptions. For ASU this amounted to only 168 students, less than half of 1% of the entire student body.

## **5. "Tuition is too high and not as free as possible. A low-income family has no hope of ever affording college."**

Nearly free as possible has been debated for decades in Arizona and has been interpreted to mean "not excessive or unreasonable". Practically, ABOR policy has been crafted to ensure that tuition will never exceed the top of the bottom third of its peers. In 2007 ASU's tuition ranked only 39th in the country.

Moreover, ASU has made a commitment to significant financial aid support. This has resulted in a record level of \$105 million in total university funded merit and need based financial aid.

This money is used to fund such programs such as the ASU Advantage which guarantees that all direct costs associated with attendance such as tuition, fees, books, room and board will be covered for students whose family income does not exceed \$25,000. In the first three years approximately 1,000 students have entered ASU under the Advantage program.

Because of these types of initiatives, we have expanded the number of students from families below the poverty line by roughly 500%. Similarly, we have increased the number of Pell Grant recipients by one-third from 9,200 to 12,300 recipients.

## **4. "The middle class is getting squeezed and gets no help with tuition."**

While tuition has risen by 92% in the past five years, the relative cost to most students in relation to family income has not increased. In fact, while the relative level of tuition as a percent of per capita income has risen from a little over 6% in 1984 to a current cost of just over 14%, the tuition paid after scholarships and grants, but excluding student loans, has actually decreased from just under 4% of per capita income in 1984 to a present level of about 3%.

At no income strata does the average net (after scholarship aid) cost of tuition exceed 2% of family income and finally, the average in-state ASU student only pays \$670 per year for tuition.

## **3. "ASU only cares about research. All students don't benefit from being a Research I institution."**

ASU is firmly committed to all aspects of its mission, and research enhances all of these. Excellent research provides incredible learning opportunities for many students. At the new Biodesign Institute 157 undergraduate students are involved, 324 graduate students are employed and there are 56 post-doctoral appointments. Research dramatically improves the prestige of a university which in turn increases the quality of faculty and of students seeking admission. Moreover, ASU is encouraging use-inspired research as a way to positively impact the community and its economic development.

## **2. "Not everyone needs to go to college."**

As a public university, it is ASU's responsibility to provide access to a rigorous, quality education to all students who are qualified. However, we also need to be prepared for the future in which the majority of jobs will demand a college degree.

Even now, the differences between those who have a college education and those who do not are vast. Not only are the average annual earnings of individuals with a bachelor's degree more than 75% higher than the earnings of a high school graduate, but the average unemployment rate is also two points lower.

There is also a significant social impact. Regions with higher proportions of college graduates have lower crime rates, greater and more informed civic participation, increased charitable giving, and a general improved quality of life.

## **1. "You can't have access and excellence at the same time."**

So far, ASU has been able to accomplish this goal. ASU has experienced record growth. We have welcomed 20,000 net new students since 2003, with the most diverse freshman class recorded. ASU has had 100% occupancy in its residence halls along with record graduation and retention rates. As our numbers increase so has our ranking in the U.S. News & World Report. For the first time in 2007, ASU was named to the list of Best National Universities by U.S. News and World Report.

Finally, whether or not one thinks it is possible is irrelevant because it is quickly becoming a mandate. Not only is the marketplace demanding this, it is and should be what it means to be a truly public university.