

REPORT TO FACULTY SENATE

FROM: President Robert Robbins <http://president.arizona.edu/>

DATE: October 2nd, 2023

GOALS and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OSIRIS-REx:

- NASA's University of Arizona-led OSIRIS-REx mission spacecraft completed its historic 7-year journey to Bennu and back, traveling billions of miles since its launch in September 2016 to obtain a sample from the near-Earth asteroid Bennu. This astonishing achievement – NASA's first asteroid sample retrieval – has been the work of many here at the University of Arizona and at our partner organizations. The sample will allow scientists in Tucson and around the world to **pursue a diverse range of questions**, including the origins of life, the formation of our solar system and much more. University Communications will post **OSIRIS-REx stories** throughout the day with updates.

SPBAC Retreat Regarding UAGC Integration and Arizona Online:

- The Faculty Senate Strategic Planning and Budget Advisory Committee accepted the President Robbins' invitation to sponsor a retreat this Wednesday, October 4 from 8:00 am-2:00 pm on UAGC integration. Thank you to SPBAC Chairs Cindy Rankin and Greg Heileman and all members of SPBAC for the work they have already done and for leading and participating in the retreat.

Student Engagement:

- On Sept. 20-21, 249 staff and faculty participated in the **Graduation & Beyond Summit** presented by **Student Engagement & Career Development** in partnership with Academic Advising, the Office of Undergraduate Education, and UAIR. The summit offered professional development and discussions related to defining student success beyond retention, progress and degree completion.
- Keynote speakers included Dr. Amelia Parnell, VP Research and Policy, NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and Dr. Z Nicolazzo, associate professor with the Center for the Study of Higher Education.
- Faculty and staff are invited to submit proposals on behalf of their departments for seed grants to initiate projects that will support equitable post-completion outcomes for University of Arizona graduates. See <https://career.arizona.edu/graduation-and-beyond-seed-grants/> for details and application instructions.
- The Summit and seed grants are made possible through the support of Strada Education Foundation, through a Post-Completion Outcomes cohort grant awarded to Abra McAndrew and Megan Forecki of SECD. The core team also included Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Rico Silva and Ryan Winet.

Research Updates:

- The NSF awarded RII's STEM Learning Center with a grant to support its [postdoctoral fellowship program aimed at promoting educational equity and diversity in STEM fields](#). The fellowship, known as the NSF Research on Educational Equity and Diversity in STEM (REEDS) Postdoctoral Fellowship, will provide exceptional scholars with an opportunity to conduct cutting-edge research and foster inclusive learning environments. The fellows began the program this month.
- The Water & Energy Sustainable Technology (WEST) Center received a \$7 million grant from the U.S. Army to investigate [solutions to sustainable water management and reuse and develop a training program in water technicians for military personnel transitioning to civilian careers](#).
- University of Arizona faculty and staff from the College of Optical Sciences were selected for the [NSF VITAL Prize](#). The multiphase challenge supports teams developing novel learning technologies with entrepreneurial training, customer discovery support, seed funding and mentorship to build K-12 learning innovations for adoption nationwide.
- With the start of the fall semester, the RII Office of Societal Impact launched the [STEM Learning Communities program](#) through a \$5 million Department of Education Title III HSI STEM Articulation grant. These learning communities are specially designed for students from historically excluded groups in STEM.
- Late Professor Tom Meixner's passion for the Cienega Watershed lives on in [a new virtual tour](#). The project was a partnership between the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy and several private, nonprofit, county, and national entities.
- The first cohort of [Indigenous DataSET Fellows](#) have been selected by Native Nations Institute (NNI) faculty and staff. The fellowship's selection committee nominated 14 early-career researchers to participate in a year-long professional enrichment program for professional researchers in Arizona. The cohort includes representation from ten Native nations, including three researchers from ASU, seven from NAU, and four from UArizona.