



## **President's Updates**

September 8, 2025 Faculty Senate

- **We begin the new academic year with a [new chapter for the university](#) and an upward trajectory:** [Implementation of the student success imperative from \*Delivering on Our Promise\* is underway](#), led by Provost Prelock, and we have [zeroed out the budget deficit](#).
- **Faculty-led initiatives:** Six transdisciplinary teams were selected as [awardees of the inaugural Big Idea Challenge](#), providing \$250,000 for two years and institutional support to help these projects attract extramural funding to solve society's urgent, global challenges.
- **Statewide engagement:** GCR and CALES will lead a university delegation to Yavapai County this week (9/8), with a visit to the V-V Ranch, the U of A Agricultural Experiment Station for Northern Arizona and home to a 350 head cattle herd. The trip will also include meetings with Extension professionals and area alumni.
- **University Budget Model:** The Budget Model Work Group has been hard at work considering the options for the various elements of a budget model that will further student success and contribute to enhanced financial resilience and sustainability. The current plan calls for public vetting of the draft model later this fall.
- **ORP/Health Sciences:** The Officer of Research and Partnerships brought in [seven Health Sciences research centers and institutes](#) into the division and updated its [Research Communications infrastructure](#) to improve capacity for sharing research success across multiple platforms and audiences. To streamline operations and enhance coordination, Health Sciences pre-award and select contracting teams transitioned to ORP on June 23. Clinical trials support remains within Health Sciences. Faculty were advised to continue working with their existing research and contracting contacts unless otherwise requested.
- **Federal Landscape:** We are monitoring the impact of SNAP-Ed funding changes at the federal level. Out of concern for those impacted by the cuts, the university is working with state and other partners to help explore ways to mitigate the effects of this loss of pass-through federal funds.

In support of ensuring clear communications across the institution around current federal funding, we have the following briefings and discussions:

- Bimonthly federal funding meetings with Associate Research Deans
  - Bimonthly federal funding meetings with a campus advisory group that includes Associate Deans for Research and Finance and Faculty Senate representatives.
  - Monthly research administration forum open to both staff and researchers
- **State budget:** \$1.3 million in one-time funding for our Yuma Center for Excellence in Desert Agriculture (YCEDA) in FY 2026, in addition to the ongoing appropriation. \$850,000 for our modular extractive metallurgy facility.

The FY 27 budget request has been submitted by ABOR to the state that includes support for AZ Healthy Tomorrow, water preparedness (water, forestry and wildfire management), and water efficiency (on-farm irrigation innovation).

- **University space and real estate:** Richard Cate, Josh Wright, and the Facilities Management team are beginning an evaluation of all university space and real estate on campus and throughout the state to inform decisions that will result in more efficient use and expense savings, as well as provide opportunities for program expansions and new initiatives as appropriate.
- **Academic performance of student-athletes remained high in the spring semester,** surpassing the record-setting fall average GPA with a cumulative 3.389 across all sports and 376 student-athletes earning Academic Champion honors (posting a 3.0 or higher in Fall, Spring and Summer).
- **Athletics partnerships across campus continue to grow:**
  - The Guest Coaches Program invites faculty and staff to football games and to see firsthand the academic support provided to student-athletes. The first group that was included was Enrollment Management.
  - Athletics and CALES are working together to develop a minor in branding, leadership, and financial literacy, with a goal of launching by Spring 2026.
- **Public Safety's** first [Conflict Resolution and De-escalation Skills Symposium](#), held on July 30th, was a success. Nearly 200 faculty and staff were in attendance, and comments were overwhelmingly positive. More sessions will be planned due to interest.
- **The SafeCats app officially launched on August 11th,** the first step in a comprehensive communication strategy led by Marketing and Communications in collaboration with the Office of Public Safety.
- **Student experience – meal plans simplified:** the university has launched Dining Dollars Plus, which offers a greater variety of dining options, and includes a weekly swipe allocation that ensures that students are using the plan consistently throughout the semester.
- **Mobile CatCard** roll out has gone smoothly – 15,000+ users have adopted it, with a drastic reduction in wait times and issues for new students and faculty/staff needing to access the campus and meal plans.
- **Construction of AZPM's new home,** the [Paul & Alice Baker Center for Public Media](#) is on schedule to meet its Substantial Completion target of September 10, after which broadcast and production equipment will be installed in the new spaces during the remainder of the calendar year.