

Arizona State University West campus

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Mission and identity: Arizona State University is seeking to give each of its campuses a unique mission and identity that would enable each campus to attract students not just from the surrounding communities but rather from around the valley and state and from across the country. The West campus now combines the best of two academic models. It has a quality arts and science college located within in a comprehensive research university.

Subject to the approval of the Arizona Board of Regents and with the advice of the University Senate, the West campus will focus on undergraduate education, as do all of the nation's top colleges. The degrees offered will be in ASU's three most popular major areas – arts and sciences, business and education. The arts and sciences are the foundation of higher education; they prepare students for careers and to enter graduate and professional school. Degrees in business and education are also in high demand in the West Valley.

Arizona State University's West campus aspires to become a national leader in undergraduate education, providing student-centered, engaged learning in the arts and sciences, education, and business. The core college of the West campus—the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences—prepares an expanding and increasingly diverse student body to understand and address the significant challenges facing us in the 21st century not only to prepare students to succeed in a globalized, diverse economy by educating them through interdisciplinary curricula and faculty-directed independent research, but also to build for the West Valley, the state, and the nation a competitive workforce to contribute to our economic and civic well being.

Because the business world and our society is ever changing, colleges and universities must adopt curricular policies that provide the foundation necessary for students to succeed in business, not just perform in business, to contribute to civic life, not just consume the fruits of our communities. To succeed in business and enrich our communities, students must be able to take on new responsibilities, learn to work with new technologies, work collaboratively, and be able to solve problems quickly and effectively. ASU's West campus will insure that the

curriculum fosters these skills in students through studies in history, culture, psychology, science, and literature while expanding their strengths in communications and critical thinking.

National Models: New College of Florida, SUNY Geneseo and Truman State in Missouri all provide models of successful colleges that focus on undergraduate education in the arts and sciences. They do not have the advantage that ASU's West campus does of being integrated into a major research university, with its opportunities and resources, nor do they all include business and education, which will give ASU's West campus a competitive advantage.

Degrees: ASU's West campus will offer undergraduate degrees in arts and sciences, business and education and will also include master's degrees in arts and sciences that closely connect to the undergraduate program with many accelerated 3-2 and 4-1 programs. Arts and sciences master's degrees will allow these students to join those professionals who are recognized by employers as able to take on new responsibilities and expectations with ease. (Herman, November 2000) ASU's West campus currently hosts master's degrees in interdisciplinary studies, and communication studies and long-term plans call for a master's in psychology, to prepare students at a more advanced level for our health care professions, and pastoral ethics and care, to prepare students to meet the needs of our aging population in the West Valley. Master's degrees in education will continue to be offered in the West Valley.

Enrollment: Strengthening the identity of the West campus will enhance access and help to build enrollments, with the goal of increasing from 9,500 to 15,000 students by 2020. The most popular majors of business, education and arts and sciences will continue to be offered within the new elite identity.

Rationale: No one can pretend to know everything that students now entering college will be called on to understand in the decades ahead. No training in fixed methods, no specific knowledge now at hand can solve problems we have yet to encounter. The most practical knowledge is the flexibility, creativity, and core abilities produced by education in the liberal arts. ASU's West campus offers a curriculum in the arts and sciences, business and education that teaches students the skills and competencies to master the complexity and diversity of the world.

Although career-based curriculum policies seem to satisfy the demands of the customer, or students and parents in most cases, these students may soon find themselves less marketable in the business world. In fact, a survey conducted by Hobart and William Smiths Colleges found that only 37 percent of the chief executive officers (CEOs) questioned in the survey stated they believe "the purpose of a diploma is to acquire work skills" (*Fortune*, 1997). The same study found that 90 percent of these CEOs believe that critical thinking is derived from an education with a core humanities curriculum and the ability to solve problems is derived from an education specializing in liberal arts studies. (*Fortune*, 1997) Highly successful business professionals—e.g. CEOs Carly Fiorina, Michael Eisner, and Bruce Bodaken—endorse liberal arts training as the best preparation for life and work, emphasizing the scope, rigor, and flexibility of thinking it encourages. In addition, students who are experts in teaching and learning methods and well versed in the core subjects of English, math, science, history become strong PreK-12 teachers, who positively impact the achievement of children.

Education in the arts and sciences has higher payoffs in the long run. Forces of change and innovation in our society demand a workforce educated and motivated to learn and develop new skills and new competencies as new opportunities arise. Applied majors do better a few years out of college, but max-out on their earnings potential fairly quickly. They shortchange their long-term prospects because they miss a form of education that sharpens the skills and qualities of mind that promote upward social mobility and the ability to think creatively and to innovate.

Movement away from arts and sciences towards applied majors will reduce long-term economic growth and the pool of highly educated, adaptive workers that are critical to economic competitiveness and recovery.¹

Opportunity: Integrate Living and Learning

ASU's West campus will provide co-curricular opportunities for students that are highly integrated with academic disciplines in the arts and sciences. Residential colleges will be central

¹ Goyette, K. A. & Mullen, A. L. (2006). Who studies the arts and sciences? Social background and the choice of consequences of undergraduate field of study. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(3), 497-538.

to the learning experience for students. Undergraduates may choose to live among those with a common academic interest or study in groups organized around an intellectual theme. Student organizations, student activities, leadership opportunities and student governance will provide personal development and skill building opportunities that incorporate an interdisciplinary approach well matched to the curriculum. Sustainability, for example, may be an emerging area of academic interest for students while also shaping the culture and environment of the campus. Likewise, community service may play a dominant role in the co-curricular experience for some students while others are engaged in developing a campus ethos of intellectual inquiry. At its core, ASU's West campus will be defined by its academic rigor and student engagement where meaningful interaction between faculty and students will enrich the learning environment and shape the undergraduate experience.