

The Arizona Commission for Post

The state of Arizona LEAP administration is decentralized; therefore, the Commission delegates certain functions to participating institutions. The ACPE establishes eligibility and determines a proportional distribution of f

Approximately 1,000 students have benefited from the PFAP program since the program inception. The current program graduation rate is 90.7%, and the current percentage of students from whom repayment is sought is 9.3%. The students from whom repayment is sought received the grant, but did not complete a bachelors degree.

Annual performance measures collected through anonymous surveys from postsecondary institution administrators of the PFAP program have consistently indicated 95% or greater satisfaction with administration of this program by the ACPE.

1.3 Student Financial Assistance Repayment Programs

The Commission administers repayment programs for the Private Postsecondary Education Student Financial Assistance Program (PFAP), the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship (PDTs), and the Arizona Teacher Incentive Program (ATIP). All former financial assistance program participants are provided three opportunities to comply with the repayment demands placed on them by federal or state guidelines. The Office of the Attorney General is used for collections only as a last resort when all other efforts have been exhausted. A brief summary of each of these repayment programs follows.

There have been 1,034 students awarded the PFAP grant. Of those, 618 recipients have fulfilled their obligation by receiving their bachelor's degree in the three year allotted time frame. There are currently 63 former recipients in repayment status. Of those, 28 are actively making payments to the Commission; 34 have been referred to the Office of the Attorney General, and 1 loan was forgiven. All others are presently enrolled and are pursuing their bachelors degree.

Of the 245 former PDTs recipients, 17 are currently in repayment, 2 are in deferment, and 3 are making payments through the Office of the Attorney General. All others have completed their obligation by fulfilling the teaching requirements of the program, or by repaying their loan in full. Of the 101 former ATIP recipients, 2 are currently in repayment, and 1 has been referred to the Office of the Attorney General. All others have completed their obligation by fulfilling the teaching requirements of the program, or by repaying their loan in full.

All funds recouped for the PDTs program are forwarded to the U.S. Department of Education in June of each year, and any monies received for the ATIP program are deposited into the State general fund. PFAP repayment funds received are put back into the PFAP grant fund. Any funds recouped by the Arizona Office of the Attorney General are returned to the Commission less their 35% recovery fee.

1.4 Arizona Oversight of State Student Loan Guarantor

Through the US Department of Education financial institutions are named and then approved by the Governor to be designated as the state student loan guarantor. In 2004, USA Funds was re-designated to serve as the Arizona State Student Loan Guarantor. The Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education is named through statute to provide oversight of the designated entity.

As the Arizona State Guarantor for student loans, USA Funds guaranteed \$632 million in new educational loans granted to 68,000 students and 4,900 parents in FY 2003. Due to the increasing costs of postsecondary education, loans are becoming a

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(Pending Appointment)

Current financial providers for the AFCSP were selected through the State Procurement Office Request for Proposals (RFP) process in 2003, using a Selection Committee comprised of Oversight Committee members. Both the AFCSP Oversight Committee and the ACPE approved these selections. The five providers named in the fall of 2003 RFP are listed below.

Goal 2: Implement strategies to help students and families plan, enroll, and succeed in postsecondary education

The Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education endeavors to expand access and success in postsecondary education for Arizona families. Providing information for decision-making, initiating programs to assist students and families access financial assistance, and supporting similar efforts are strategies used to assist Arizona families, adults and K-12 students. Almost every parent holds the dream of college attendance for their child. The ACPE enters into programs and partnerships to assist parents and students as they plan for their dream. It is realistic planning with appropriate and accurate information that will assure the child is academically ready, the family financially prepared, and the student expectations are in line with the realities of postsecondary education. Adult and returning students are included in program planning as well.

2.1 Arizona College and Career Guide (ACCG)

The Arizona College & Career Guide (ACCG) lists all Arizona public and private postsecondary institutions including proprietary, vocational, and career schools. Each school listing includes course offerings, length of study, costs to attend, and financial aid programs available. This document is the single source of this information for the state and is widely used by K-12 counselors, high school students, higher education institutions, and the information seeking public. The ACPE has compiled and disseminated the publication since 1975.

This year 10,000 copies of the ACCG were printed for free distribution to public schools, libraries, state agencies, prisons, and higher education institutions. In addition, the ACCG is available online at the ACPE Web site, www.azhighered.org. Publication and distribution cost of the ACCG (\$21,390) are financed through paid advertising in the publication and per individual book fees (\$5 each or \$3 for ten copies or more).

2.2 Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education (ACPE) Website

The ACPE website serves as a resource for links to information about educational agencies and institutions, financial aid, savings programs, and a myriad of local and national resources for parents, students, and the public-at-large seeking resources regarding higher education. The ACPE web site can be viewed at www.azhighered.org. The ACPE Web Site received 34,409 hits in 2004, exceeding the ACPE goal of 28,000.

2.3

general education awareness and information campaign for students and their parents titled *Think College* has been developed to emphasize the importance of staying in school, raising expectations, and creating a positive attitude among students and their parents about postsecondary education possibilities. Three publications were developed with two financial partners: (1) USA Funds sponsors *Measuring Your Child's Progress: Preparing Your Child for Higher Education* for middle school through high school parents and (2) Ed Funds sponsors *Carlton Q. Cat: Cool Cats Stay in School* for third and fourth grade students and *Future 5: The Power of Your Mind* for seventh and eighth grade students. Thanks to the generosity of these partners, these publications are provided to the schools free of charge.

In 2000/2001 copies of the 3rd

Both components of the *Stay in School Initiative* have received funding from private sector sources. The ACPE will continue to participate in collaborations to increase graduation rates in Arizona

2.7 Pathways to Education Conference

In 2004 the former Best Practices in Education Conference Task Force revised its focus to more closely align the Conference with the expanding access and increasing success in postsecondary education mission of the ACPE. The Conference was renamed the Pathways to Education Conference and the mission revised *to showcase and recognize outstanding efforts to guide and support youth into higher education*. The purpose of the 2004 Conference was to *foster and encourage efforts to transition students to high school and into higher education*.

The October 2nd 2004 conference was held at the Phoenix Preparatory Academy. Conference attendees had the opportunity to participate in two morning sessions of workshops focused on successful college preparatory approaches such as:

Innovative Approaches from High School to

More than 150 participants attended and benefited from the workshops, networking, and first-hand knowledge of outstanding Arizona practices focused on supporting youth in their transitions into higher education.

Goal 3: Problem solving across all sectors of postsecondary Education

The Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education provides a unique statewide forum for senior level representatives from universities, community colleges, independent colleges, and private training and career colleges to identify mutual opportunities and problems in postsecondary education. In addition, two superintendents of large districts and a CEO of a charter school provide insight about transition into, preparation for, and awareness of postsecondary education opportunities from the K-12 perspective.

Issues arise from discussion among Commissioners that need further investigation and policy analysis. In addition, Commissioners have established a standing Postsecondary Needs Committee that is called upon to identify opportunities for collaborative action. Issues that have been identified as important through these processes include: access to and success in postsecondary education of minority populations and low-income families, low high school completion rate, student advancement through the segments of Arizona's higher education system toward a baccalaureate degree, and reduction or elimination of the financial barrier experienced by low income students and their families to postsecondary education.

Two strategies have been identified to meet Goal 3. The first is to raise awareness and develop a knowledge base for solutions through policy analysis and commissioned research studies. And the second strategy is to establish collaborative action groups or task forces, informed by research, to plan strategies to seize opportunities or solve problems identified by the Commission.

3.1 Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center (AMEPAC)

The mission of the Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center (AMEPAC) is to stimulate through studies, statewide discussion, and debate constructive improvement of Arizona minority students' early awareness, access and achievement throughout all sectors of education. AMEPAC is funded through donations from postsecondary institutions committed to its mission. Since 1996, AMEPAC has addressed numerous issues effecting minority access to and achievement in higher education. Results of this policy analysis are both published research papers and the initiation of forums or roundtable discussions on pressing issues related to the mission.

A recent and important policy analysis study was the 2002 publication titled Dropping Out of Arizona's Schools: The Scope, the Costs, and Successful Strategies to Address the Crisis. AMEPAC commissioned this study to the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) and it contributed significantly to the current statewide focus on improving graduation rates.

To disseminate this information and encourage local efforts to increase high school graduation rates a series of forums were initiated by AMEPAC. In early 2003 AMEPAC developed the *Stem the Tide Campaign* to disseminate research study findings, heighten the awareness of the local dropout problem, and encourage local action. Six Stem the Tide Workshops were held in 2003/2004.

In addition to the aforementioned dropout study, AMEPAC commissioned a new report titled Arizona Minority Student Success Report and authored in 2003 by Tonya M. Drake and Christine A. Forester. An updated report will be available in March of 2005. This research serves as an important benchmark for progress in postsecondary access for Arizona by compiling existing data into a comprehensive resource guide.

Finally, this year AMEPAC has commissioned a study from the University of Arizona's Latina/o Policy Research Initiative. This study is to be completed in early 2005 and focuses on the policy implications of experiences of minority students as they transition into higher education.

3. 2 Postsecondary Articulation/Transfer Initiative

Charged with identifying potential areas for articulation and encouraging articulation possibilities among postsecondary institutions this Task Force underwent a transformation in 2004. The individual members of this ACPE Task Force attest to creating a minimum of ten new articulation agreements in the year 2003. This work was the major focus of the Task Force.

A new agenda was developed in 2004 for the Postsecondary Articulation/Transfer Task Force through a revised mission of *ensuring access to the baccalaureate at all Arizona institutions*. The work of the group was determined to best focus on policy issues. To achieve this goal the membership is being augmented and connections are being established with existing state articulation efforts. It was further agreed, that the

publications, the Arizona College and Career Guide, and Countdown to College Sunday insert, and the ACPE website.

Finally, the forum provided by the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education promotes dialogue and identification of common issues among all sectors of higher education. The ACPE is then able to initiate collaborative groups comprised of all stakeholders that can investigate these opportunities and problems. Three papers will be published this year contributing to the knowledge base of access to higher education in Arizona. In addition, the ACPE is currently leading efforts to (1) raise awareness and seek solutions that will provide more financial assistance to students and (2) identify and promote policies that will assist students in moving toward a baccalaureate degree, certificate, or other postsecondary training.

The Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education through a planning process has identified a mission for the next four years of *expanding access and increasing success in postsecondary education for Arizona citizens*. The ACPE continues to seek avenues for partnerships and/or collaboration that contribute to its mission. The goals are in place and the Commissioners and staff will continue to measure all activity against the identified goals and mission.