

Earning a bachelor's or four-year degree can open the door to many more career opportunities, higher earning potential, and increased economic gains. By 2018, almost two-thirds of jobs in Arizona will require some post-secondary education or training.

Focusing on creating a bright future for our students, Arizona Ready has implemented measurable goals that hold our students, teachers, administrators, and schools accountable to higher standards in order to achieve improved results. As part of Arizona's education reform plan, the state has set a goal of increasing the number of students receiving bachelor's degrees to 36,000 by 2020. The state has specified that 30,000 of the 36,000 bachelor's degrees come from Arizona's public universities and the remaining 6,000 come from private institutions in Arizona. This report focuses on outcomes related to Arizona's public universities.

### BACHELOR'S DEGREES AWARDED (FIGURE 5.1)

Arizona's Progress Towards its Public University Bachelor's Degree Goal

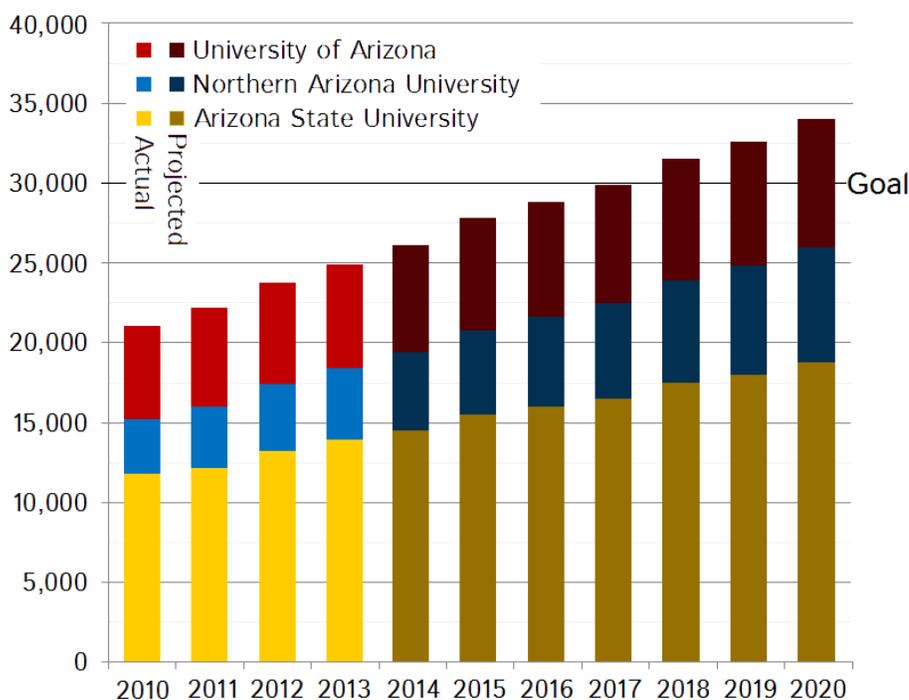


Figure 5.1

Statewide, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded by public universities per year has increased by 18% from 2010 to 2013. Arizona State University has seen an 18% increase in Bachelor's degrees awarded from 2010 to 2013. Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona have seen 33% and 11% increases respectively. Assuming a linear rate of progress, Arizona is on track to exceed the state goal of 30,000 baccalaureate degrees awarded by public universities in 2020. These increases have been driven primarily by increasing enrollment at Arizona's public universities.

**6-YEAR GRADUATION RATES AT ARIZONA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES (FIGURE 5.2)**

The statewide average 6-year graduation rate at Arizona's public universities has remained close to 56% over the last four years. The University of Arizona is the only public university in Arizona that increased its graduation rate from 2011 to 2014.

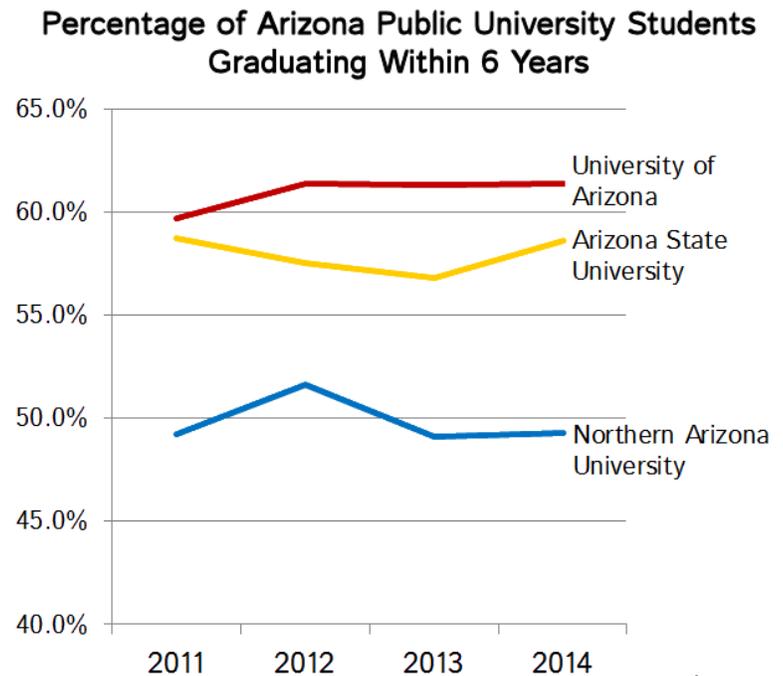


Figure 5.2

**RETENTION RATES AT ARIZONA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES (FIGURE 5.3)**

The average freshman retention rate at Arizona's public universities has increased by just one percentage point over the past four years, from 78% in 2011 to 79% in 2014. In 2014, Arizona State University and the University of Arizona had the highest retention rates, retaining 84% and 82% of freshman students respectively. The University of Arizona increased its freshman retention rates from 77% in 2011 to 82% in 2014.

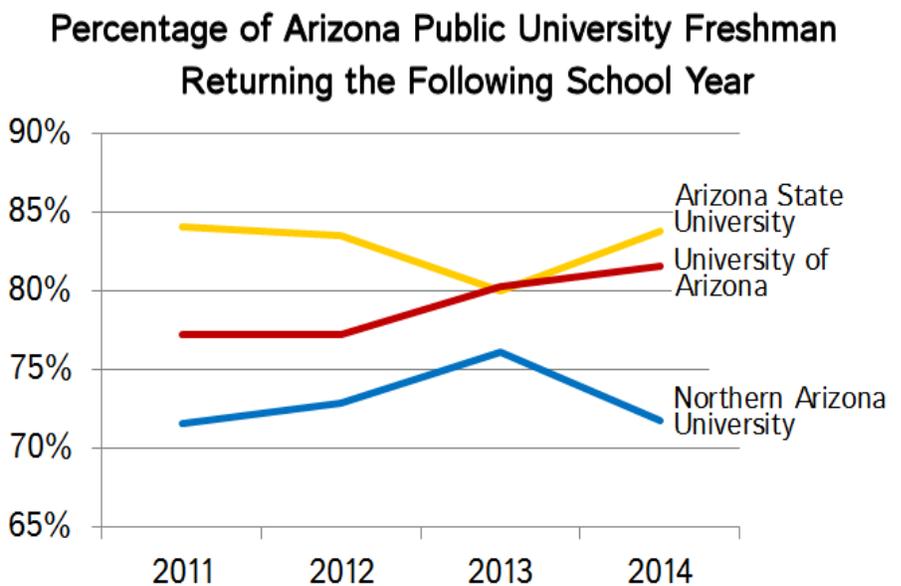


Figure 5.3

**ENROLLMENT AT ARIZONA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES (FIGURE 5.4)**

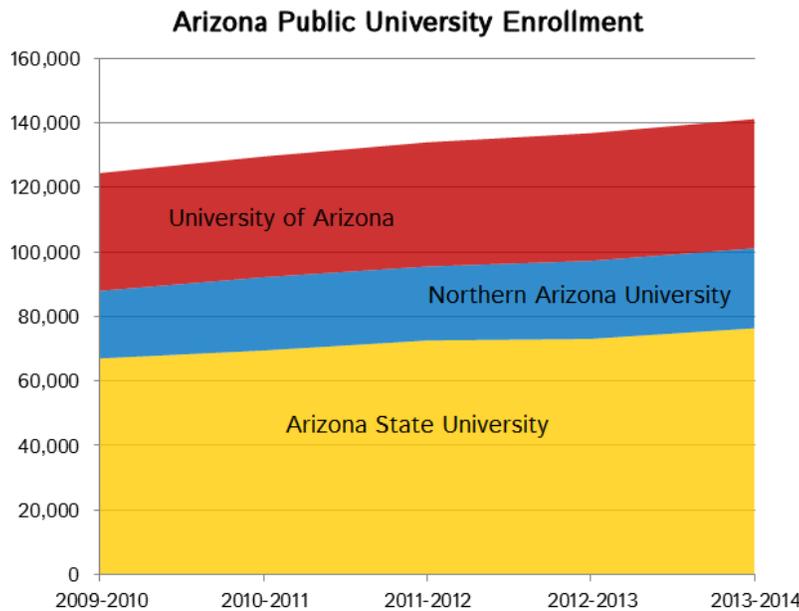


Figure 5.4

Full-time student or equivalent (FTE) enrollment at public universities in Arizona has increased by nearly 14% over the past five years. Currently, 141,265 FTE are enrolled at a public university in Arizona. Northern Arizona University had the largest rate of growth, with enrollment increasing by 18% since 2010. The University of Arizona showed the slowest enrollment growth at 9%.

**HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH POST-SECONDARY OUTCOMES (FIGURE 5.5)**

To get a sense of the proportion of Arizona's high school students moving on to post-secondary educational success, it is helpful to look at a cohort of high school students over time. A decade after entering high school, only 17% of the 2002 high school freshman class in Arizona had earned a post-secondary degree by 2012 — 13% earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and 4% earned an associate's degree. Thirty percent of students who entered high school in 2002 did not graduate on time and 30% earned a high school diploma but did not seek any post-secondary education. Twenty-three percent went on to post-secondary education but did not earn a degree.

**High School to Post-Secondary Achievement**

Out of **100** students who started High School in 2002...

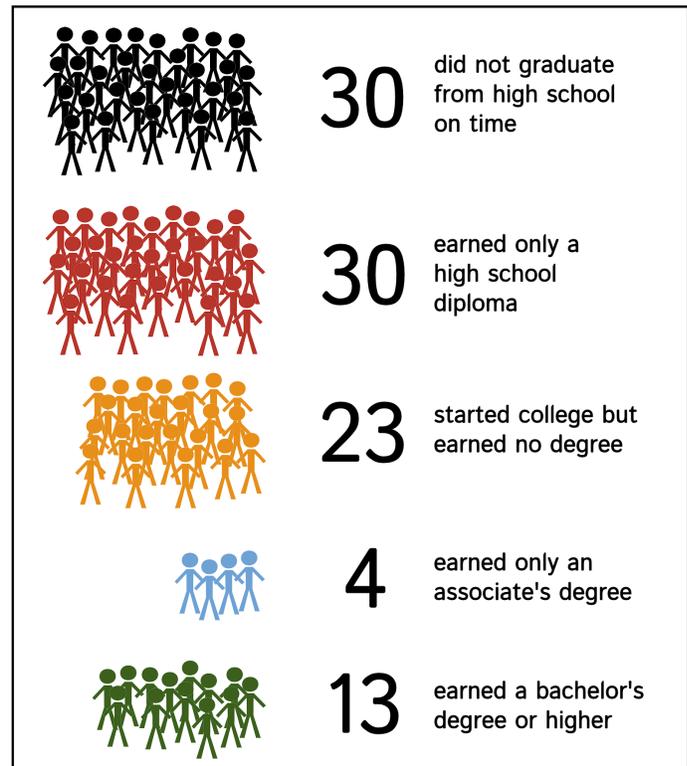


Figure 5.5

### **ACTIONS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL**

In 2009, Governor Brewer challenged Arizona's institutions of higher education to pursue paths of accountability, affordability, and accessibility to ensure that Arizonans continue to have access to post-secondary education at a reasonable price. Arizona's public universities responded by adopting a focused, ambitious plan with clear metrics and goals in order to increase outcomes while maintaining quality.

Since then, Arizona's public universities have dramatically increased partnership programs with Arizona's community colleges, enabling students to transfer seamlessly between them without the loss of credit or time. In addition, Arizona's universities have created innovative four-year programs throughout rural Arizona, such as ASU Colleges in Lake Havasu City and the NAU Yavapai Campus.

Finally, in order to ensure that Arizona K-12 students are prepared to succeed beyond high school, the Arizona State Board of Education adopted Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards in 2010 in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The goal of these standards is to ensure that students graduating from high school do not need remediation in order to take entry-level classes in higher education. Starting in 2014, new assessments will indicate student readiness for entry-level courses in higher education.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIONS TO CONSIDER**

In order to enable continued growth of public university degrees awarded, Arizona can focus improvement efforts on the following fronts: recruitment, remediation, retention, and re-entry. Recruitment efforts can focus on increasing the number of students completing financial aid applications, applying to higher education institutions, and taking the ACT or SAT examinations. These improvements will break down many of the psychological barriers students face when considering post-secondary education. To improve remediation and retention rates, Arizona's public universities can consider changing student requirements to lessen the barriers students encounter when looking to take college-credit bearing courses. Finally, the state can increase re-entry rates by incentivizing and rewarding public universities in Arizona who have a proven track record of successful student outcomes, especially among adults who have some college education but do not yet have a degree or credential.

#### Sources

Figure 5.1: Arizona Board of Regents - Degrees Awarded

Figure 5.2: Arizona Board of Regents - Academic and Student Affairs Enterprise Metrics Project Report (April 2, 2014)

Figure 5.3: Arizona Board of Regents - Academic and Student Affairs Enterprise Metrics Project Report (April 2, 2014)

Figure 5.4: Arizona Board of Regents - Enrollment History

Figure 5.5: Arizona Department of Education - 4 Year Graduation Rate (2006); and

Arizona Board of Regents - Post-Secondary Outcomes after 6 Years (2005, 2006)