

President's Updates

May 5, 2025 Faculty Senate

- **University of Arizona success stories continued strong in April.** We are proud of the selection of Ojas Sanghi as a 2025 Truman Scholar, the commitment of 10 Flinn Scholars to attend the U of A in the fall, our students' victory at ABOR's Regents Cup competition, and our men's wheelchair basketball team's national championship win.

These student achievements came alongside confirmation of three new Regents Professors, Dr. Sairam Parthasarathy's testimony to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs on improving veterans' health through biomedical innovation and AI, the announcement of David Ebert as the university's inaugural chief AI and data science officer, and some exciting research stories on the possibility of life on Saturn's moon Titan, how grandparents and grandkids are connecting through screen time, and new treatment approaches for mental health issues and language disorders.

- **Strategic Imperatives:** We received over 600 responses to the campus community survey on the draft of *Delivering on Our Promise*. Comments are being reviewed and the feedback incorporated into the document. A final version will be shared with our campus and broader communities soon, after which this foundational document will inform and help guide more detailed strategic planning, led by the colleges and departments in collaboration with Provost Prelock and our academic leadership team.
- **Fusion Energy Op-Ed:** President Garimella and SVP Tomas Diaz de la Rubia placed an editorial in *The Hill* – "[Fusion must be a national priority for the future of US energy security](#)," in support of the role of universities in advancing this important work.
- **University Marketing** has selected a partner to refresh the university's brand strategy, and the discovery process is underway. Campus listening sessions took place April 29-May 1 with groups of faculty, staff and students. Additional workshops for those who wish to engage more deeply are set for the week of May 19. We expect to have a finalized strategy in early fall 2025.

Preparing for Commencement

- **Presidential Events & University Ceremonies** is finalizing production details for the U of A's 161st Commencement, scheduled for Friday, May 16th at Arizona Stadium. Around 9,000 bachelor's, master's, doctoral and professional degrees will be conferred. We expect over 30,000 guests to attend the celebration this year. The approximately 90-minute ceremony will begin at 7:30 p.m. at Arizona Stadium and will be streamed live on YouTube. Erik Weißenmayer, a world-renowned adventurer best known for becoming the first blind person to summit Mount Everest, will deliver the University of Arizona's Commencement address. More information can be found at: www.commencement.arizona.edu
- **University Communications** is working with partners across campus to identify graduating seniors with exceptional stories to tell and will share those stories with the media.

Human Resources

- **Modernized university talent acquisition model:** HR is preparing a mindful rollout of a new recruitment support model later this year, with pacing of changes based on the needs of each college and division. Dedicated HR recruiters will be assigned to each college and division to provide guidance directly to search committees. The new model will simplify and expedite the recruitment process, enhance candidate experience, and is intended to result in improved candidate pools while providing consistency throughout

the university. HR is also launching an RFP for a new Applicant Tracking System to further enhance this important work.

- **Workflow improvements:** HR is working with UITS to reduce rework and speed up processing times on UAccess transactions by removing unnecessary touchpoints, establishing cross coverage, and ensuring quality of initial submissions into the system while maintaining data integrity and ensuring financial and business officers have the information they need.
- **Leave of absence requests:** As of April 7, employees now submit leave of absence requests through a new tile launched in UAccess Employee, simplifying the process of requesting leave for personal health or family reasons and ensuring compliance with federal, state and university guidelines and policies.

Federal Engagement:

- **Mining:** Government and Community Relations hosted industry leaders and congressional staff from around the country at the San Xavier teaching mine in partnership with Mining and Geological Engineering. They also worked together to host [the inaugural U.S. Mining Summit](#) and rallied academic and business leaders around surging minerals demand amid unprecedented domestic challenges.
- **Advocacy in D.C.:** Supported by GCR, SVPR Tomás Díaz de la Rubia and Chief of Staff Kim Patten met with Members and staff of Arizona's congressional delegation, advocating for the University's priorities and for the importance of continued support for fundamental and applied research at the University of Arizona, including through federal agencies like the National Institutes of Health, Department of Energy, National Science Foundation, and National Endowment for the Humanities.
- The **GCR team also supported meetings with Hispanic Association of Colleges** and Members and staff of the congressional delegation in D.C. to discuss the University's priorities and, in Tucson, supported a **visit to campus by Secretary of the Veterans Administration Doug Collins'** visit to campus to talk with student veterans.

Local and State Engagement

- **Southern Arizona Legislator Breakfast:** President Garimella and Provost Marx hosted a group of southern Arizona state legislators for breakfast in April. The gathering provided an opportunity to connect on university priorities and strategies for the coming year.
- **Fostering support for U of A Priorities:** State Relations continues to engage lawmakers in support of U of A key state priorities, including expanded bonding capacity and reinstating state budget dollars that were reduced last year. University senior leaders also have engaged directly with lawmakers.
- **Yuma Outreach:** On two trips in February and April to Yuma, Tomás Díaz de la Rubia met with U of A faculty and staff, local businesses, agricultural stakeholders and military leaders at Yuma Proving Ground. The visit highlighted the U of A's regional initiatives and served as a platform to explore expanded partnerships in agricultural innovation, workforce development, and increased access to education in rural Arizona.
- GCR preparing for a **tour of Yavapai County** on June 5 - 6 to engage with local elected officials and community stakeholders.
- **Scottsdale Center local engagement workshops:** The Center introduced CATalyst Chats, showcasing U of A faculty expertise and research with Maricopa County-area alumni, industry and community members. The Center also held an open house for Maricopa County-area alumni March 11, attended by approximately 120 local alums.

Native American Advancement and Tribal Engagement

- On April 11, **Pascua Yaqui Tribal Councilmembers/Co-Chairs of the Pascua Yaqui Education Committee**, Andrea Gonzales and Jose-Enrique Saldana met with their students who are attending the U of A.

- As part of the [Native languages of Arizona initiative](#) on campus, NAATE hosted an unveiling ceremony for a new sign at the CCP on March 19th with the Chemehuevi Tribe.

Athletics

- **Academic Honors:** 58 of our winter sport student-athletes received a nomination for Big 12 Academic Awards, recognizing a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher.
- We are proud to **welcome Becky Burke as the 10th head coach of Arizona Women's Basketball**. In her short time in Tucson, Coach Burke has brought energy and momentum, assembling a strong staff, and signed nine new players alongside one returning Wildcat.
- **Community Engagement:** The Bear Down Takeover Tour has completed 7 of 20 scheduled stops, receiving outstanding feedback from fans across the state. Athletics recently hosted the Spring Football Showcase, welcoming nearly 3,000 fans to Arizona Stadium.
- **Budget:** As of the end of the third quarter, Athletics expenses are 8% (\$6.8M) lower than at the same time last year, and revenue is up more than 84% (\$22M) year-over-year.
- **Competitive Success:**
 - Under first-year head coach Giovana Maymon, **Women's Golf won the Big 12 Championship** in an exciting three-team playoff — the program's first conference title since 2015. The team secured an automatic bid to the NCAA Regional, extending its postseason streak to 32 straight seasons.
 - Men's **Tennis** Head coach Clancy Shields has the team ranked No. 10 nationally following a **Big 12 Tournament title** win over No. 18 UCF, the program's second-ever conference tournament title.
 - **Gymnastics Arizona advanced to the NCAA Sweet 16** for the first time in program history after upsetting No. 10 Georgia at the Seattle Regional. **Head coach John Court was named Big 12 Coach of the Year**, and all three of his assistants were honored as Regional Assistant Coaches of the Year.
- **Professional Advancement:** We are proud that Tetairoa McMillan, a standout wide receiver for Arizona Football, was selected 8th overall by the Carolina Panthers in the 2025 NFL draft, becoming the highest-drafted Arizona player since 1990.

UITs

- **IT Restructuring:**
 - On Friday, April 11, Elliott Cheu sent an [IT Restructure Update email](#) to all faculty and staff, and on Monday, April 14, the division implemented the [next phase of the university's IT restructuring process](#). New specialized service teams will manage unique IT needs of colleges and divisions specific to their instructional, research and service missions. These changes conclude the interim reporting structure that has been in place over the past year.
 - Campus engagement around this effort has included presentations to the Council of Academic Business Officers (CABO), Undergraduate College Academic Administrators Council (U-CAAC) and College of Science Department Heads. UITs also hosted [IT Restructure Advisory Council](#) meetings on April 8 and 21.
 - The division launched the first annual [IT Customer Satisfaction Survey](#) for faculty and staff on Monday, April 28.
- **Supporting Teaching, Learning, and Research**
 - UITs has completed Phase 1 of the plan to rebrand D2L to Brightspace in partnership with the Office of University Center for Assessment, Teaching and Technology and began communications awareness campaign for the [summer 2025 transition of student email](#) from Gmail to Outlook in Office 365.

- [Degree Search](#), an online tool that helps students explore undergraduate and graduate degree programs attracted 13.7K new users for a total of 46.8K users completing 72.2K total sessions. 23,582 students registered for 103,141 fall 2025 classes (does not include first and second-year students, who had not yet registered when this data was collected.)
- **UITS completed contract lifecycle management (CLM) vendor evaluation** and narrowed the list to five finalists. Demos were held with participation from university contracting, compliance, and campus offices.

RII

- **Chief AI and Data Science Officer:** On April 22, we [announced](#) that **David Ebert**, an internationally recognized expert in artificial intelligence and data science, will join the U of A to lead an integrated, interdisciplinary program building on our current strengths and expand capacity in the responsible application of AI and machine learning. These include our research priority in AI and health, as well as environmental resilience, national security, space, and the arts.
- **Federal grants update:** As of May 2, the university has 67 federal awards that have received Termination or Stop Work-Payment Freeze orders, with a total unspent funding value as of notice date of ~\$60M.

Public Safety

- **Community Engagement Run:** On April 2nd, Office of Public Safety hosted the [2nd Annual Wildcats Roar Against Sexual Violence 5K Run/Walk/Roll](#) event. There were nearly 150 runners with opening ceremony speakers including local elected leaders and victim advocacy groups.
- **UAPD Community Academy:** On April 16, 18 members of our university community graduated from the Academy, Class 25-01, in a graduation ceremony held at the police station.
- **Crisis Negotiation Communication Device Patent:** A UAPD sergeant, in partnership with the College of Engineering's Interdisciplinary Capstone Project, successfully filed and received an international invention patent for their field-ready prototype of a state-of-the-art "throw phone" communication device designed to be used in crisis negotiations.
- **University Safety Survey Results and Progress:** In spring 2024, the Office of Public Safety, in collaboration with University Initiatives and Policy, administered its first University Safety Survey. This week OPS published a one-year update highlighting the work done as a result of the survey findings. A [Lo Que Pasa article](#) announced the release of the progress, and the [OPS webpage houses the progress summary](#).

Business Affairs

- **2025 – 2026 Budget:** The All Funds process is nearing completion, and CFO John Arnold and Provost Marx will share college and division budgets with deans and VPs in the near future, with a campuswide communication to follow.