

REPORT TO FACULTY SENATE

FROM: President Robert Robbins <http://president.arizona.edu/>

DATE: January 31, 2022

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

COVID Updates

- Due to the recent omicron wave, we've seen the largest positivity numbers in our campus testing program ever. I'm so pleased that we can offer free, convenient testing for our campus community. I strongly encourage every employee and student to test weekly using our testing sites or TakeAway testing, especially during this wave.
- We have updated our mask policy on campus to reflect public health recommendations. Cloth masks are no longer accepted, and surgical grade or higher masks are required. Surgical masks are available at building entrances and in all classrooms. Additionally, instructors can receive free KN95 masks by contacting their building manager.
 - To support this increased masking requirement, we have ordered approximately 1 million surgical and KN95 masks for our campus community.
- Additionally, in consultation with the Pima County Health Department and based on current public health conditions, campus housing residents are now required to test weekly.

Family Friendly Initiatives: [Expanded Parental Leave](#) and New [Lactation Space Initiative](#)

- On January 13 I was pleased to announce that we have doubled the paid parental leave benefit for benefits-eligible employees from six weeks to 12 weeks paid leave. This change went into effect on Jan. 1, 2022. Parents may also take up to 12 additional weeks using accrued time off or unpaid leave.
- Other updates to the Parental Leave Policy include: the expansion of eligibility to include foster placement, guardianship placement, surrogacy, and stillbirth; the addition of two weeks paid leave for miscarriage; and parental leave can be taken at any time in the first 12 months after a child joins a family.
- Additionally, a new lactation space initiative was recently launched to identify and fund new lactation spaces on campus. Colleges, departments, or units who would like to create a new lactation space in their buildings can [apply online](#) for funding. The deadline for submissions is March 16, 2022.
- These initiatives will continue to help make us a competitive market for strong talent and I'm proud to support these family-friendly initiatives that promote a healthy workplace climate.

Native Nation and Tribal Outreach Underway

- On January 13, I hosted the Inaugural Tribal Leaders Advisory Council Meeting. This council will meet quarterly, and I had the pleasure of welcoming the following leaders into this partnership this month: Gila River Indian Community Governor Lewis, Hualapai Chairman Dr. Clarke, Navajo Nation President Nez, Pascua Yaqui Chairman Yucupicio, and Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Norris, Jr.
- On December 1, I toured the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and met with President Harvier, the Tribal Education, and Health Departments. I am pleased that we are

working with the Tribal Community Health Department on providing rotations at the newly construction Health Facility that will open later this quarter.

Two UA Grads Chosen as NASA astronaut candidates

- Two of our very own graduates have been chosen as 2021 NASA astronaut candidates. Out of a field of 12,000, only ten applicants were selected.
- Both Christina Birch and Jessica Wittner received degrees from the University of Arizona and will have a chance to go to space following a two-year training. Christina graduated from UA in 2008 with a bachelor's in biochemistry and mathematics and holds a doctorate from MIT in biological engineering. Jessica received a bachelor's in aerospace engineering from UA in 2009 and is a test pilot in the US Navy.
- I am always amazed at the incredible success of our graduates as they make meaningful impacts on our community and beyond. Good luck, Christina and Jessica!

The James Webb Space Telescope Begins its Journey to Space

- Astronomers at UArizona led the design and development of the Near-Infrared Camera onboard the James Webb Space Telescope, which launched on Christmas Day 2021.
- Regents Professors Marcia and George Rieke were instrumental in developing the technology that will launch a new era of space observation. I invite you to [listen to the conversation I had with Marcia and George](#) back in November as we discussed the launch of the new telescope and their work to make this possible.

Year-over-Year Enrollment is up in all Categories, Particularly in First Generation Students

- The year-over-year enrollment numbers are up significantly this year. This is following a significant increase last year, as well. The largest increases are in international enrollments, followed by sizeable increases in domestic out-of-state enrollments as well.
- We continue to see an increase in first generation students year-over-year across the enrollment funnel for main campus, first year applicants. I know our Enrollment Management team works hard to support and encourage first generation students to pursue their education at our university, and we are seeing strong results.

GOALS:

Research, Innovation & Impact Future Growth Goals

- Under the leadership of Betsy Cantwell, RII is holding focused meetings with Deans and ADRs exploring ways to increase research intensity. Our research award numbers are doing well, but there is room for growth in research expenditures to match that same pace consistently among the colleges. RII is working with UITS to improve dashboards that will better track research awards and expenditures for improved decision making in the colleges.
- Additionally, UAccess Research (UAR) has been updated and is now available for proposal routing and other sponsored project modules. This will make the process more streamlined, convenient, and user friendly. We recognize that research is one of our core missions as an institution and are committed to being a leader in research innovation.