

LUMINA FOUNDATION

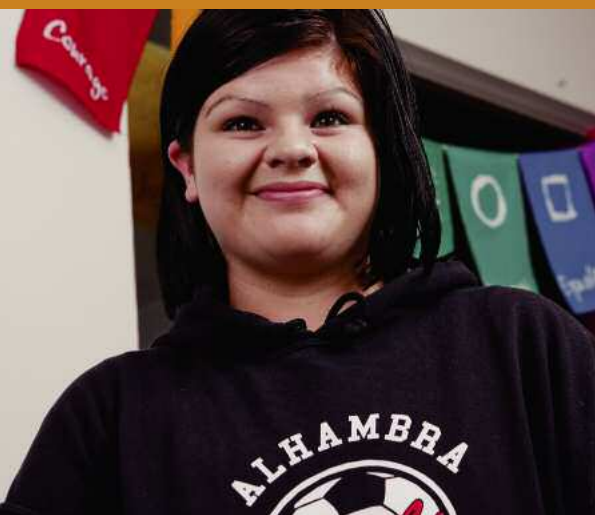
FOCUS™

Summer 2010

The productivity push

System-wide reform
allows Arizona to
serve more students





Goalie has a new goal: Page 2



"2+2" adds up to savings: Page 10



Single dad sets an example: Page 16

On the cover: Single mom Angie Vega, 23, is a junior studying education at UA-Santa Cruz in the border town of Nogales, Ariz. The "campus" is actually in a high school building's basement, but Vega calls it "a privilege" to attend.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Global economic forecasts and domestic workforce trends show that our nation's future success requires many more people to be college-educated. In fact, by 2018, nearly two-thirds of U.S. jobs will require some kind of postsecondary education. That percentage has more than doubled since the mid-1970s, when high-paying manufacturing jobs were plentiful.

During the 20th century, the nation found the means to expand higher education to serve broader segments of the population. But today, given higher education's current cost structure, there is simply not enough money available to boost education attainment to the level we need.

How do we pay for graduating more students when we know there's little, if any, new money on the horizon?

We can begin by seeking to get a higher return for the money we invest. Today, the United States spends about twice as much on higher education as the average developed nation, but many other countries are doing a better job of graduating more students at substantially lower expense.

To provide more high-quality degrees and credentials at lower cost, colleges and universities must become high-performing institutions. They must contain costs and reallocate their resources to programs that help more students succeed.

This is not about "doing more with less" or any of those old and unworkable paradigms. In a more efficient higher education system, we should be rewarding institutions that focus on students completing quality programs, not just attempting them. We should be rewarding students for completing courses and degree or certificate programs. We should be expanding and strengthening lower-cost, nontraditional education options through modified regulations. And we should be investing in institutions that demonstrate the results of adopting good business practices.



Arizona — the subject of this issue of *Lumina Foundation Focus* magazine — is one of seven states seeking to get back on track. It is using a four-year, \$1.5 million Lumina grant to scale up the state's range of "no-frills" bachelor's degrees to meet local and student needs, including joint community college/university programs, university centers and baccalaureate campuses in high-demand areas.

The state is also designing and implementing a new student-level funding model that rewards campuses for student progress and degree completion. In addition, Arizona is making its higher education system more student-centered through improved advising and career planning, development of more seamless pathways to two- and four-year postsecondary opportunities, and better tracking of student success.

In short, the Arizona experience offers important lessons — lessons that this issue of *Focus* is meant to share.

Six other states — Indiana, Maryland, Montana, Ohio, Tennessee and Texas — also have received multiyear grants from Lumina to build national momentum for enhancing productivity in higher education. These states are working to change policy and institutional practice to help the system of higher education effectively meet the nation's burgeoning needs for well-educated citizens and workers.

Public higher education systems can do more to bolster productivity, and states like Arizona are leading the way. These state partnerships will move us toward a deeper understanding of how we can implement policies and practices that increase the return on our shared investment in higher education.

We believe that, through these and related efforts, higher education can become more productive, as have other industries and sectors. What's more, we're convinced that greater productivity can be accomplished without sacrificing the quality and learning that a two- or four-year degree must represent to meet the needs of employers, individuals and our democratic society as a whole.

Jamie P. Merisotis
President and CEO
Lumina Foundation for Education

Cecilia Duarte, 16, a junior at Alhambra High School in Phoenix, has always expected to go to college. Now, thanks to guidance counselor Carey Burnand (right), she has a real plan: the "2+2" program offered jointly by Maricopa Community College and Arizona State University.





A grand plan in the land of the Grand Canyon

Arizona's sweeping effort aims to assist 21st century students

By Steve Giegerich

The prospect of a life-altering conversation wasn't exactly what Cecilia Duarte had in mind the March afternoon she popped into the office of guidance counselor Carey Burnand. Cecilia, an Alhambra High School junior, figured she'd duck in, find out if an unmet language requirement jeopardized her chance of graduating on time, and then rush off to her next class.

She hadn't expected to encounter a guidance counselor who refuses to allow a student to leave without at least one pointed question about goals and objectives. Burnand asked her, point-blank: Have you given any thought to college?

The answer was yes, sort of.

Over the course of several lunches, Cecilia had befriended the “cute” military recruiters who camped out daily in the cafeteria of the school, located in a working neighborhood of low-slung homes seven miles north of downtown Phoenix. The recruiters responded by enticing Cecilia with promises of a government-subsidized college education in exchange for service in a regular or National Guard military unit. Cecilia admitted that the blandishments were difficult to resist.

Burnand took a quick personal and scholastic inventory of the young woman seated before her. Alhambra is a big school. With an enrollment of 2,800, it was impossible to know every student. Until the tentative knock on the door a few moments before, Burnand couldn’t remember ever seeing Cecilia Duarte.

A snapshot of the 16-year-old soon emerged. The middle of three children born to Mexican immigrants, Cecilia lived in a Spanish-speaking household. Her father, employed at an aeronautical parts plant, was the family’s only source of income. He never completed high school; nor had Cecilia’s mother, though she later earned a GED.

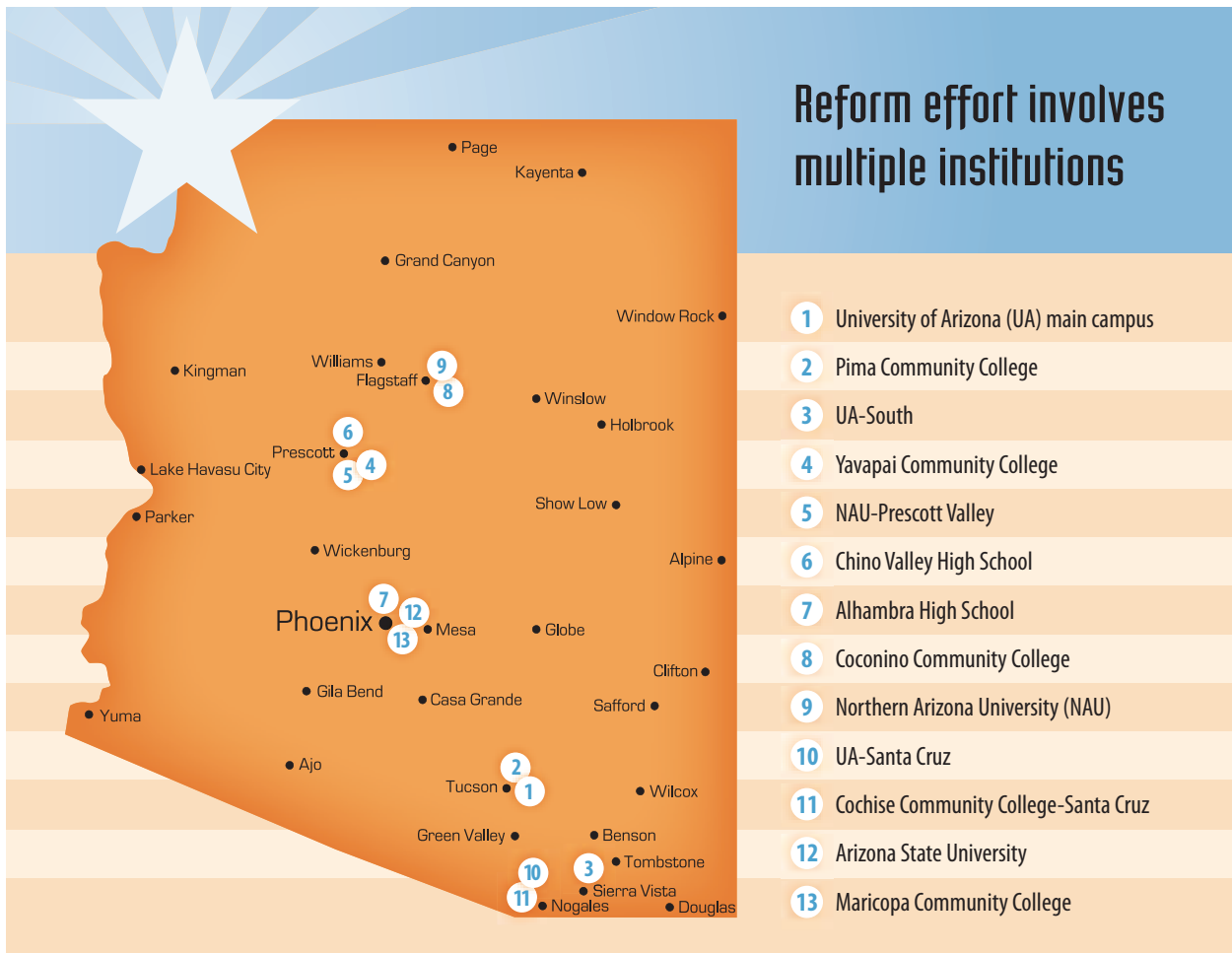
Burnand worried that the parents might discourage their daughter from extending her education beyond

high school. It was not uncommon, she knew, for Hispanic parents to view college as something of a threat to the strong bonds of family and faith they value so highly. Burnand gently asked Cecilia where her parents stood and was relieved at the response: “They want better for their kids,” Cecilia told her. “They want good careers for them that end well.”

A goalkeeper on the Alhambra soccer team, Cecilia carried a 2.6 grade point average into the final semester of her junior year, a score far short of putting her in the top 25 percent of the Class of 2011. Like most Alhambra students, Cecilia often recited the mantra drilled into every American kid from kindergarten: Of course she was going to college. But she had no real clue what was required to get there.

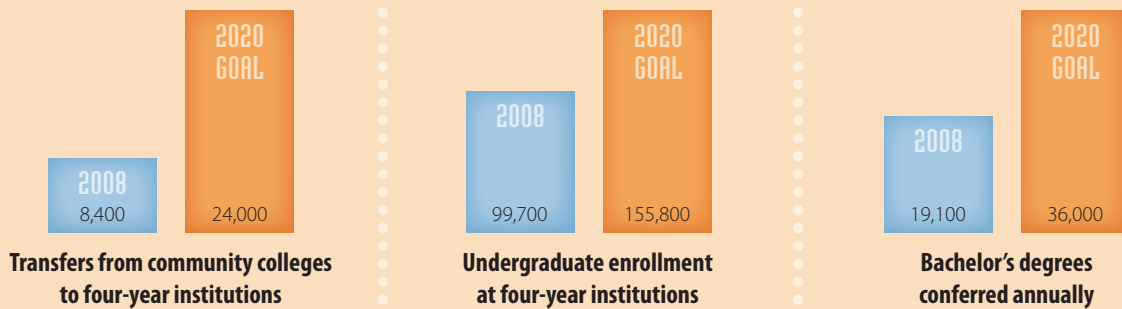
“Our kids have grandiose ideas about college,” says Rory Ruelas, Burnand’s colleague in the Alhambra guidance office. “But unless you start asking them specific questions for which they don’t have answers — and unless you then point them toward the answers, the chances are they won’t go.” Not only did Cecilia lack answers, she’d only rarely considered the questions. That was about to change.

“You are going to college,” Burnand announced. “You have no choice.” And then she showed the student the way.



Arizona's "2020 vision"

The Arizona Board of Regents' long-term strategic plan sets specific and ambitious goals for increasing college enrollment and attainment among residents of the state. One key to the achievement of those goals is cooperative effort among institutions that have traditionally operated independently.



System-wide change

Cecilia Duarte had no way of knowing it, but the visit to Burnand's office that afternoon made her part of a huge change effort: a near-total transformation of a higher education system that began in the 1880s, a quarter-century before Arizona became a state. Arizona is among a growing number of states that are expanding their capacity to graduate more students (see map, Pages 8 and 9). They're doing this by spending money differently and by delivering education in new ways and in new places.

The plan Burnand shared with Cecilia that day — a joint initiative of the Maricopa Community College District and Arizona State University that jump-starts productivity even before a student sets foot in a college classroom — is but one piece of the statewide reform effort.

Once competitors for student minds — and public dollars — the schools in the state community college system and Arizona's three four-year universities are now full-fledged partners. They're working together to streamline transfer policies, expand student opportunity at "no-frills" regional educational centers, and keep costs down for both institutions and students — all in an effort to improve the system's productivity and create new paths to learning.

The driving force behind this change is the 12-member Arizona Board of Regents, the panel that governs the state's three research universities from its headquarters just a few miles from Alhambra High School. In a blunt comprehensive strategic plan released in 2008, the board called out Arizona for failing to keep pace with other states in the effort to recruit and retain low-income, first-generation and other 21st century students. The plan points out that Arizona already falls short in the percentage of residents holding bachelor's degrees (25 percent compared to the national average of

27.5 percent, according to the most recent U.S. Census data). Without fundamental reform of the basic architecture supporting the state higher education system, the regents warned, Arizona will be even further behind by 2020.

The objectives spelled out in the board's cleverly titled comprehensive overhaul, "2020 Vision," challenge the state's higher ed system, without spending more, to:

- Nearly triple the number of students transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions (from 8,400 to 24,000).
- Increase cumulative undergraduate enrollment at Arizona's four-year institutions from fewer than 100,000 to nearly 156,000.
- Increase the number of bachelor's degrees conferred annually from 19,100 to 36,000.

Restructuring an entrenched system is difficult enough; doing so in the midst of a crippling recession makes the challenge all the more formidable. Evidence of the fallout from the collapse of the state's formerly white-hot housing market is everywhere. Travelers see it on the orange "Closed" banners draped over rest area signs along Arizona's highways. Arizonans read about it every morning in newspaper stories of contractors, building supply stores and real estate developments gone belly up. It's also evident in the red ink dripping from the state budget — one that, among all states, carries the largest deficit as a percentage of total spending.

In May, Arizona voters responded to the revenue crisis by approving Proposition 100, which imposes a 1 percent sales tax on all purchases through mid-2013. Funds generated by the tax will be used to offset the more than \$240 million that has been slashed from the state's higher education budget since 2008. The new tax revenue from Prop 100 releases some of the pressure that has been building to scale back the ambitious reform agenda.



Northern Arizona University (NAU) President John Haeger and Leah Bornstein, president of Coconino Community College, say the combined programs at their schools — and also those involving Yavapai Community College — are run with the needs of the “2+2” students uppermost in officials’ minds. “The minute they walk through the door (at Coconino), they are technically NAU students,” Bornstein says.

Revenue from the sales tax also is expected to ease some of the financial burden that has fallen on the state’s college students and their families. But not much. In the upcoming academic year (2010-11), students at Arizona’s public higher education institutions face tuition increases of between 16 percent and 31 percent.

No institution has been spared. The Yavapai Community College district, in the center of the state, is operating at its 2005 budget level, even though its enrollment has practically doubled to nearly 8,000 students over the past five years, mostly spillover of graduating seniors who can no longer afford the cost of four-year schools. Yavapai has responded by reducing staff, increasing class sizes and tightening the financial belt on all six campuses.

“Only the dead have done enough,” quips Jim Horton, the school’s longtime president. Sometimes even that doesn’t seem to be enough.

John Haeger, president of Northern Arizona University, recalls telling a legislative panel at the onset of the recession that a proposed \$1 million reduction in state aid to NAU “would be the ruin of the institution.” He looks back on that conversation with wry resignation, saying: “Now I’m down \$30 million.” To accommodate the cuts, Haeger reduced university staff by 200, left 43 faculty positions unfilled and streamlined the curriculum.

Fittingly, in a state whose capital city is named for a mythical bird that rose from the ashes, the regents and college administrators see this as an opportune moment to recast Arizona’s approach to higher education. “A time of crisis is probably as good a time as any to make the changes that need to be made,” says Robert McClendon, secretary of the board of regents.

Justin Dutram, coordinator of academic outreach for the University of Arizona-Santa Cruz, says the downturn

should serve as a reminder of Arizona's obligation to prepare its citizens to compete in the global marketplace. "If there is going to be any kind of recovery, we're going to need educated people to get out there and work," he says.

No one involved in this system-wide reform effort believes for a moment that it will be easy, especially with virtually no chance of additional public funding to meet increasing demand for postsecondary education. Higher education leaders acknowledge that the task demands unparalleled cooperation among all institutions. "I hate to use the word 'synergy,' but that's exactly the way we need to look at it from a statewide approach," says Stephanie Jacobson, associate executive director of the board of regents.

Thus, from the ruins of the economy, Arizona is taking the first faltering steps toward an unprecedented integration of financial and scholastic resources.

"A lot of this is philosophical," acknowledges Michael Proctor, a vice provost at the University of Arizona. "But philosophy dictates outcome." The key to a positive outcome, Proctor acknowledges, is forging an alliance that unites the productivity goals of every institution in the state, from the smallest community college to the world-renowned universities in Phoenix and Tucson. In that effort, it is the system's other baccalaureate-granting institution, lesser-known Northern Arizona University (NAU), that may be best suited to show the way.

At least it's doing so for pre-med student Justin Reynolds.

Reynolds, a 33-year-old Nebraska native now attending the Flagstaff campus of Coconino Community College, was certainly no academic rookie when he arrived in Arizona last year from Portland, Ore. He had attended three community colleges in as many states, supporting himself and his education with employment in the information technology sector in the Pacific Northwest. Arriving in Flagstaff re-invented and "degree-focused," Reynolds found a niche at Coconino and immediately started taking advantage of what the college has to offer: the library, food services and other amenities ... all about a mile away on the NAU campus. "It's just like I'm a student there," Reynolds says.

Baccalaureate-type benefits

He benefits from the partnerships that bind NAU to the region's two community college districts, Yavapai and Coconino. Those partnerships, particularly the one with Yavapai that dates back to the 1980s, are what inspired the board of regents' vision for all of Arizona.

The model adapted by NAU and its partnering community colleges — a concept now embraced with slight iterations in every region of Arizona and in several other states as well — is as simple as "2+2." In "2+2," the state agrees to lock in the prevailing cost of tuition

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Mike Proctor, vice provost for outreach and global initiatives at the University of Arizona's main campus in Tucson, is widely credited with helping forge a positive alliance among faculty on various campuses to work toward improving system-wide productivity. At one time, Proctor characterized some cross-campus faculty relationships as "toxic."

Sowing the s

Arizona is a prime example of efforts under way to increase productivity in higher education, but it's not the only state that is pursuing such work. Aided by grants from Lumina Foundation for Education, six other states are seeking to deliver higher education in new ways and at lower expense to students and taxpayers.

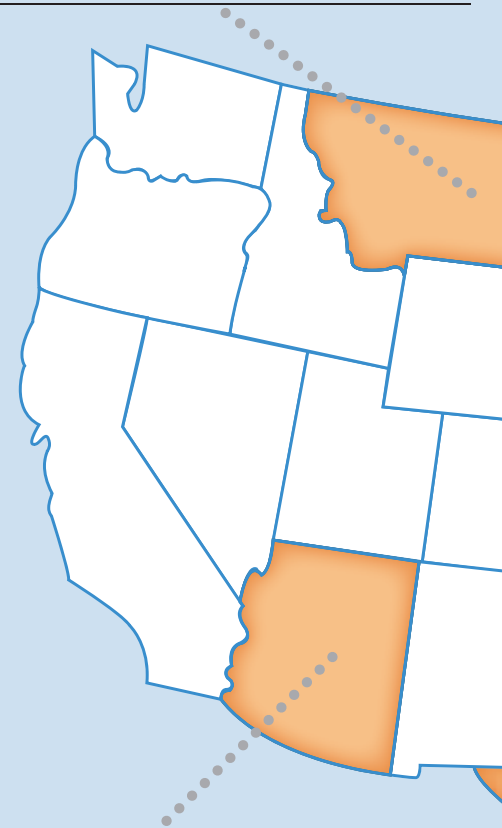
The grants — which will total as much as \$9.1 million over the next four years — aim to help these states educate many more students at current levels of quality without expending additional resources.

Each of the states has developed its own broad-based productivity agenda, and all are summarized here.

For more information on Lumina's productivity grants and what states are doing, visit collegeproductivity.org or follow the initiative on Twitter: [@collegeprdtvty](https://twitter.com/collegeprdtvty).

Montana

Taking bold steps to reach students where they are — academically and geographically. The state will implement a virtual community college that packages degree programs and workforce training from campuses and delivers them online throughout the state. Montana also will revise its funding formula to reward institutions for student progress and for raising the overall percentage of state residents who are college graduates or have postsecondary credentials.



Arizona

Embracing system-wide change that involves the state's community colleges and all three state universities. By streamlining transfer policies, opening "no-frills" regional education centers and working diligently to control costs, the Arizona Board of Regents hopes, by 2020, to nearly triple the number of two-year-to-four-year transfers and almost double the number of bachelor's degrees conferred annually in the state.

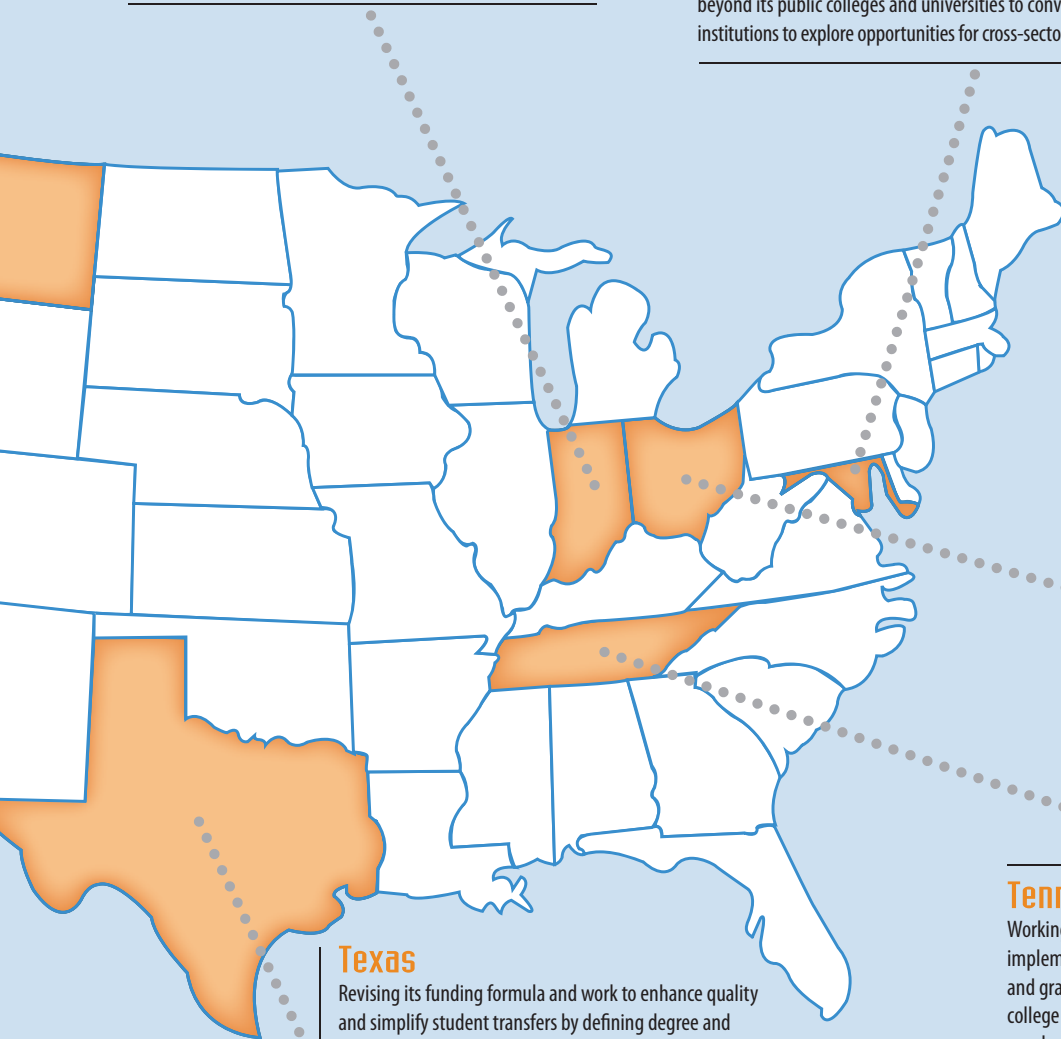
Seeds of productivity

Indiana

Focusing on a four-year plan to educate and engage legislators, trustees and local chambers of commerce in an effort to sustain the nation's most extensive performance-funding model, which was adopted earlier this year. Indiana also is beginning to do the analytical and policy groundwork for streamlining the academic operations of regional four-year campuses.

Maryland

Working with faculty across the state to redesign entry-level, large-lecture or "bottleneck" courses in public and private colleges and universities. The goal: to serve more students at less expense, improve the quality of the learning experience and free resources to redesign additional courses. Maryland also is building on the state's highly successful Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) initiative (<http://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/EEWorkGroup/eeproject/>). The state will reach beyond its public colleges and universities to convene leaders from public and private institutions to explore opportunities for cross-sector collaboration to improve productivity.



Ohio

Aggressively consolidating "back-office" operations across campuses in an effort to realize hundreds of millions in savings that can be directed to graduating more students and holding tuition increases in check.

Texas

Revising its funding formula and work to enhance quality and simplify student transfers by defining degree and course-level learning outcomes in specific degree programs. This work is intended to demonstrate that colleges and universities can save money and be rewarded for increasing cost-effectiveness while boosting quality.

Tennessee

Working with its colleges and universities to implement model programs for re-enrolling and graduating adult students who left college without degrees but with sizable numbers of credits. Tennessee also is revising its funding model and incentive program for public institutions.

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at a public research university for first-year community college students in exchange for a commitment to transfer to one of the four-year institutions. Students pay the community college tuition in the first two years yet, as Coconino President Leah Bornstein puts it: "The minute they walk through the door, they are technically NAU students." From a financial standpoint, the 2+2 model has the potential to graduate three times the number of students each year for the same amount of funding required to get an undergraduate through the four-year curriculum at the University of Arizona.

Clearly, this cost-saving model is enormously attractive to students and families, particularly first-generation students from low-income households. Still, it requires a level of cooperation among institutions that is, frankly, unheard of in many areas. A former dean at Central Michigan University, NAU President John Haeger moved to Arizona from a state with 13 public universities and 28 community colleges, so he is well-versed in difficulties that arise when two- and four-year institutions seek to align academically and administratively.

"Arizona is a very different place in that we only have three universities, so we can move relatively quickly," Haeger says. "In states like Michigan and Illinois, you can spend years fighting the bureaucracy."

Spared from such red tape, Justin Reynolds was accepted at both NAU and Coconino after coming from Oregon to join family in Flagstaff. Financially, taking the "2+2" route, called "ccc2nau," was a no-brainer. "I couldn't justify going (to NAU) first," he explains. The program gives Reynolds the tuition guarantee along with access to the library and other amenities on the NAU campus. If he sticks with the program through graduation from NAU, Reynolds will save nearly \$10,000, 40 percent off the \$25,000 in tuition costs for a full four years at NAU.

And money's not the only benefit. In fact, the aspect of the program Reynolds finds most valuable is his interaction with Jennifer Riddle. A "ccc2nau" counselor on Coconino's Flagstaff campus, Riddle guided Reynolds through the course catalog, ensuring his classes will transfer when he moves to NAU in the fall. For Reynolds, "ccc2nau" and especially Riddle's role in the process represent a distinct departure from previous stops along the scholastic trail. At other community colleges, Reynolds sensed "we were getting a lesser education somehow." The "stigma," he says, extended to counseling offices that offered little advice about which credits a four-year institution might accept or reject.

"There wasn't much talk about transferring," he recalls, a pattern broken by "ccc2nau." "I'd be struggling

to find out which classes will transfer and wasting my money," he says. Because of the program, "I could look at the classes, take them to Jennifer and see which will transfer. It's like butter; it's a good way to do it."

Bornstein and others say Haeger deserves all the credit for the way Justin Reynolds and other students are able to move so easily from Coconino and Yavapai. The unassuming NAU president inherited the Yavapai partnership when he was promoted from provost to the top job in 2001. That relationship grew and prospered under his leadership. In 2008, Haeger helped bring Coconino into the fold. It was a marriage of necessity for many residents of Coconino County.

At 18,600 square miles, Coconino County is a huge and mountainous expanse, the nation's second-largest county. With a 19 percent poverty rate, it's also among the poorest. Bornstein, the Coconino Community College president, ticks off some of the county's distinguishing characteristics: A largely uneducated popula-

tion beyond the employees of Flagstaff's government and research sites, limited high-speed Internet access, a "grossly underfunded" property tax structure and a "huge hole in the middle" (also known as the Grand Canyon).

The recession has hit both the county and the college particularly hard. "There's no mincing words; we're struggling," says Bornstein. Fearing that budget cuts may soon force Coconino to close some of its campuses, she wonders where the school would be had it not merged resources with NAU. It's no accident, for example, that Justin Reynolds has benefited from the guidance of

Jennifer Riddle; Riddle's salary comes out of NAU's budget. Coconino also benefits from NAU-developed programs that help at-risk students tackle the courses that often result in early withdrawal from college — including the aptly named "Math 9-1-1" program. The relationship also has freed Bornstein to focus the school's dwindling resources on the students who need it most: This academic year, Coconino rolled out "Fast Fridays," an accelerated learning program that allows working adults, with the blessing of their employers, to cram four to five classes into a single day.

Bornstein, Haeger and Yavapai's Horton emphasize that none of the combined programs would work without an uncommon degree of cooperation. The three presidents are in almost constant contact, and no decision — large or small — is made without consensus. In resolving the usual battles over curricula and academic rigor, faculty members at the respective schools have shown an admirable willingness to work together and put students' needs first, Haeger says.

Clearly, this cost-saving model is enormously attractive to students and families, particularly first-generation students from low-income households.



As a student in the “ccc2nau” program — a “2+2” model involving Coconino Community College and Northern Arizona University — Justin Reynolds, 33, can save nearly \$10,000 in tuition costs. What’s more, Reynolds says he benefits immensely from access to his ccc2nau counselor, who has made the course-selection process “like butter.”

'Break through silos'

The effort in the mountainous north hasn't gone unnoticed in the desert valley that serves as the seat of power in Arizona's state government. "(NAU, Yavapai and Coconino) have shown it can be done, and that you can come out whole," says Fred DuVal, vice president of the board of regents. "This is not a success just of systems, but of personalities. The collaboration, the willingness to break through silos and putting institutions before self has been phenomenal."

Now, as if it weren't enough to juggle the needs of three schools (including satellite campuses outside Phoenix and in Yuma, on the western edge of the state), Haeger has added a fourth: a back-to-basics undergraduate institution dedicated solely to learning. When NAU-Yavapai opened for business in May, it signaled Arizona's commitment to an aspect of higher education that is spreading across the nation — so-called "no-frills" institutions that focus on a college's core mission.

Such institutions deliver education without offering amenities such as athletic facilities, full-service dining areas, residence halls and fitness centers. The settings may lack perks, but they have great appeal for cost-conscious students who want to pursue a four-year degree close to home. The model also fits hand in glove with the seamless transition offered by 2+2 programs.

The no-frills NAU-Yavapai campus in Prescott Valley — a community of 38,000 about 90 miles south of Flagstaff, roughly midway between that city and Phoenix — can be traced to a casual conversation between Jim Horton, president of Yavapai Community College, and Town Manager Larry Tarkowsky. As Horton recalls it, he and Tarkowsky met up one day at the construction site of the community's new municipal complex, called the Civic Center.

"We sort of stood out there and said, 'Hell, that looks like a university,'" remembers Horton. And Tarkowsky knew exactly where the university would fit: an annex in the library wing easily adaptable for classroom use. Their conversation tapped into a widespread belief that a four-year institution was crucial if Prescott Valley hoped to grow from a semi-rural outpost to a destination community.

"(A university) gives us an opportunity to educate our children regionally, and that will help us develop our economic base," says Harold Wise, a town council member. "If we don't take the steps to encourage education,

then we haven't done our part to help our people reach the next phase of their lives."

Things moved quickly once the state signed off on the decision to open the NAU satellite campus at Prescott Valley. Drawing on past experience, Haeger and Horton established academic standards and administrative oversight. Haeger says the process of starting from scratch is easier than inheriting an established campus. "You can control the start-up costs with a new university in a way you could never do it with a 104-year-old institution (NAU)," he says. "It's a wholly different course model."

It's different in that the new school will stick to the basic core classes, offering fewer of the electives and student services available in Flagstaff. In keeping with "2020 Vision," students are encouraged to take the 2+2

path to NAU-Yavapai — with Yavapai Community College serving as the feeder institution. Also, students enrolled in an accelerated 12-month regimen will be able to complete their degree requirements — at lower cost — in just three years.

"We all know the primary cost of higher education is not tuition; it's the cost of living while going to school," says Frederick Hurst, vice president for extended campuses at NAU. "This speeds it up and puts them in the workforce faster so they can start earning money and contributing to the economy."

DuVal, vice president of the board of regents, points to this model as proof that many Arizona residents will embrace a no-frills form of postsecondary learning. "Being home to the University of Phoenix yelled out to us loud and clear that people are looking for different types of universi-

ties," he says, invoking the name of the nation's largest for-profit postsecondary institution — one specifically geared to serve employed adults.

NAU-Yavapai may lack the amenities of larger campuses, including athletic facilities, but it has plenty of cheerleaders.

As the first day of classes neared, town councilwoman Patty Lasker could be found promoting the school to a "young widow" who was wondering how she'd ever afford to send her teenage daughter to college. Lasker also asked a local hairdresser to pass along word of the new university to her husband, a carpenter who had been sidelined by the housing crisis. And on a sunny Wednesday morning in late March, Lasker — as had become her habit — again departed the Civic Center



Frederick Hurst, vice president at the new NAU-Yavapai campus in Prescott Valley, is a strong advocate of no-frills institutions. "There are a lot of kids on college campuses who never go to a football game or live in a dorm or attend a campus party," he says.

with an armful of NAU-Yavapai pamphlets, this batch destined for her favorite coffee shop. The satellite campus “gives people encouragement to learn,” Lasker says. “And it’s not miles away. It’s right around the corner.”

NAU-Yavapai is not quite that close to Chino Valley High School, where Yvette Bruner completed her senior year in May. But at 16 miles, it’s within striking distance.

Like many young people approaching a crossroads, 17-year-old Yvette was conflicted as her high school days drew to an end. Part of her wanted nothing more than to “get out” of her hometown, a middle-class, semi-rural bedroom community 25 minutes from the nearest shopping mall or movie theater.

The recession has exacted a heavy toll on Chino Valley, a place that lacked a stoplight until the late 1990s. It got so bad, in fact, that the school district last year instituted a four-day class schedule in an effort to trim utility and transportation costs. Though she sensed a long-term future in Chino Valley held little potential, Yvette knew she wasn’t quite ready to leave. She also knew she wanted to earn a college degree, a topic that Yvette and her mother had discussed often and at length. Following through with those discussions,

Yvette, the second of three girls, decided she would be the first in her family to attend classes on a college campus (her older sister takes classes online). The big question — aside from whether she’d work toward a career as a pharmacist or a physical therapist — was where she’d enroll.

The cost of college posed an obstacle for the family, as did Yvette’s reluctance to leave Chino Valley. On that score, the teenager was brutally honest. “I want to stay close to home in case I do something stupid and I need my mom,” she explained. The solution, obvious and affordable, materialized in 2010 just miles from the Bruner home. And as high school commencement edged closer, Yvette identified her path to a bachelor’s degree: two years at Yavapai Community College followed by two years at NAU-Yavapai.

David Young, senior vice president for academic affairs at Arizona State University, says it is imperative that the reconfigured statewide system take note of the increasing numbers of students who, like Yvette, “buck the trend” and stay close to home.

“What you hear from communities is: ‘We need a place that provides a four-year degree because these



David Young, senior vice president for academic affairs at Arizona State University in Tempe, with Stephanie Jacobson, associate executive director for academic and student affairs at the Arizona Board of Regents. Young is the main architect of the Maricopa to ASU Pathways Program (MAPP), an effort that aims to increase college success among Arizona’s low-income and first-generation students.



Yvette Bruner chats with John Scholl, assistant principal at Chino Valley High School. Bruner, 17, graduated in May and is about to begin college classes by taking an increasingly popular route among cost-conscious students: two years at community college (Yavapai, in Yvette's case) followed by two years at a four-year institution (NAU-Yavapai in Prescott Valley).

kids aren't leaving here," Young says.

To Hurst, that place is a back-to-basics campus — one built without residence halls, oversized classrooms, research labs or sports venues. In his mind's eye, the campus of the future looks like NAU-Yavapai.

"There are a lot of kids on college campuses who never go to a football game or live in a dorm or attend a campus party," says the NAU vice president. "They are there only to take classes."

Kids like 17-year-old Yvette Bruner. And Nick Munoz, 27.

Seeking to break a cycle

After high school, Munoz kicked around his hometown of Tucson for the better part of three years, landing (and losing) odd jobs serving fast food, stocking shelves and answering call-center telephones. Munoz, a diabetic, also endured periodic hospital stays that sapped his sense of purpose and added to his aimlessness. Still, despite his lack of direction, Munoz knew he had the intelligence to succeed — and that his brainpower and waywardness both came naturally.

His grandmother acknowledged as much in a brutally honest conversation she had with him when he was 21. She drove home the truth: Neither Munoz' father (a call center employee) nor his mother (a graphic designer) had ever tapped their full potential.

"I didn't want that to happen to me," Munoz says.

The discussion spurred Munoz to enroll at the East Campus of Pima Community College. He came to Pima knowing precisely where his education would take him, thanks to a middle school teacher who had nurtured his love of the written word — a passion undiminished during Munoz' period of aimlessness. Years earlier, that teacher had unearthed Munoz's capacity to learn and then convinced the middle school student to embrace and trust his intelligence. She also convinced him that he should follow her example and become a teacher.

Once at Pima, Munoz pursued that objective with abandon, completing the core curriculum in two years. It seemed logical that a kid from Tucson would gravitate to the main campus of the University of Arizona to finish his baccalaureate program. But by then, Munoz was no longer a kid — or a typical college junior. He was pushing 25. Having married while studying at Pima, he was also a husband and a father-to-be. He was, in the traditional jargon of higher education, a "nontraditional student" — though that term is less and less relevant when one considers the diverse nature of the 21st century student population.

"I felt like I wouldn't fit in with the main campus crowd, living in the dorms, hanging around the coffee shops," Munoz recalls. "I was already pretty far along with my life." The alternative was the University of Arizona-South (UA-South), a public university with a campus and administration offices on the southern fringes of sprawling metropolitan Tucson. It was an institution Munoz knew only vaguely and one that many Tucson residents are still unaware of.

J.C. Mutchler, a colorful assistant professor of history and ranch owner whose classroom garb consists of Wranglers and cowboy boots, quips that UA-South is for "all the 45-year-old women out there who found out they are sharp for the first time in their lives."

Mutchler's a bit off chronologically, but he's in the ballpark. The average student at UA-South is a 28- to 32-year-old Latina and the first in her family to attend college. Established about 20 years ago, UA-South has classrooms on four campuses in the Pima Community College district and also offers courses in the offices of the business complex that serves as the college's headquarters.

Faculty and staff members boast that there's an inspiring story behind every student. One in particular stands

out: The mother of nine who enrolled as an education major over the vehement objections of her abusive husband. In an effort to avoid conflict, she created alibis to account for time spent in class and studied only when her husband wasn't home. When he was home, she hid her books under a trash can. Somehow, the student persevered, earning her degree.

"As soon as she graduated, she dumped him," exulted Albert Gonzalez, field studies coordinator at UA-South.

An institution without pretense, UA-South shares the goals and the approach of NAU-Yavapai: providing high-quality, low-cost, no-frills education. "You don't come here unless you care about teaching," says Mutchler, whose faculty colleagues are, in many ways, just as "nontraditional" as their students.

There's Ruth Claros-Kartchner, an associate professor of Spanish who came to the school in 1997. Eight years before, while employed on UA's main campus, Claros-Kartchner adapted an obscure academic network known as the Internet as a tool to teach Spanish and Portugese to deaf students. Today, she is a recognized

expert in the field of interactive online instruction for the deaf, particularly those living in Central America.

There's Assistant Professor of Education Flory Simon, a passionate former elementary school teacher who enjoys nothing more than to tweak the region's better-known four-year campus. She says students at UA-South "know our faces; they know the classes. They know they can walk through my door anytime they want to have a conversation. It's a much more nurturing environment here."

And there's Mutchler, a Texas kid who headed to work as a ranch

hand straight out of high school. He eventually left the range, taking an academic journey that earned him a Ph.D. from Yale and a teaching position at Princeton. On any given day, Mutchler might arrive for class from any number of locations: a restoration site he's overseeing at an old military fort on the Mexican border, regular meetings of the University of Arizona Faculty Council, even appearances before the Arizona Board of Regents.

Many see Mutchler's presence in Phoenix and Tucson as evidence of new-found respect for UA-South in the higher ed community. It hasn't always been this way, Claros-Kartchner politely points out. From the outset, UA-South in Sierra Vista and the main campus in Tucson were part of the same university system. UA-South faculty members always joined their Tucson counterparts in curriculum planning and other policy discussions. Still, Claros-Kartchner confesses, "we didn't interact that much."

(Students at UA-South)
"know our faces;
they know the classes.
They know they can
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door anytime."

Assistant Professor Flory Simon

Nick Munoz of Tucson with 2-year-old daughter Kathryn. Munoz, 27, attended Pima Community College and then UA-South, where he expects to graduate in December with a bachelor's degree in education. Next step: master's-level coursework at UA-South. "I want to set an example for her," says Munoz, a single father.



That dynamic started to shift two years ago, and it began with Mike Proctor, an incisive seventh-generation Arizonan and the vice provost for outreach and global initiatives on the Tucson campus. Proctor is not as circumspect as Claros-Kartchner. In fact, he characterized past relationships among the main campus, UA-South and Pima Community College as “toxic.” Proctor was the man UA officials tapped to mend the rift and, by all appearances, he’s been equal to the task. To chart a course consistent with the University of Arizona’s core values and mission as land grant university, Proctor says, it is vital for UA to reach out in new ways to the low-income, primarily Hispanic and Native American populations in rural southern Arizona. He views the task as nothing less than “an issue of academic freedom.”

It seemed only logical that, as was the case at NAU, faculty should take the lead in the effort now known as the “Pathways Initiative.” The goals were easy to articulate: a tighter alignment of courses on the main and branch campuses and a smoother path for students transferring to UA from the community college district. But reaching those goals was challenging.

Proctor says he convened many a meeting to persuade “research-focused” faculty members on the main campus that academic alignment with Pima Community College, UA-South and other satellites was a worthy goal. Sometimes the sessions took place over coffee, sometimes not. “It’s a much easier discussion over beer,” Proctor admits with a laugh.

The conversations unfolded the same way that nearly every policy discussion in Arizona has unfolded the past few years: with the looming revenue crisis as subtext. The University of Arizona did what it had to do. It cut staff, decentralized hiring and, in keeping with the 2020 Vision’s push to increase enrollment, it emphasized variations in library science, computer science and engineering courses that aren’t offered at the state’s two other public institutions. Through it all, Proctor managed to keep the Pathways Initiative on track, though he cautions: “We still have a long way to go in a lot of ways.”

Claros-Kartchner doesn’t disagree, but she says the relationship between the main campus and its satellite has evolved in ways that were unimaginable just three years ago. To Claros-Kartchner, Proctor deserves all the credit. “He played a huge role,” she says. “Now we’re welcomed there; we really participate in the meetings.” And that has helped produce the most important result. “It makes it easier to teach, so it benefits the students,” says Claros-Kartchner.

One of those students, junior Nick Munoz, can be forgiven for being unaware that something called the Pathways Initiative was developing as he worked his way from Pima Community College to UA-South. True, faculty and staff at the satellite campus helped Munoz keep his education on a steady, upward trajectory, and the 14 percent discount over the tuition he might have paid at the main campus helped reduce the cost of that education. But other aspects of his life weren’t progressing quite so



Associate Professor of Spanish Ruth Claros-Kartchner and Assistant Professor of History J.C. Mutchler are instructors at UA-South. Mutchler says the campus is built to empower “all the 45-year-old women out there who found out they are sharp for the first time in their lives.”

well. His marriage faltered, Munoz and his wife separated, and he gained custody of their daughter, Kathryn.

Suddenly, more than six years after that fateful conversation with his grandmother, Munoz had another reason for earning a degree and becoming a teacher. “I want to set an example for her,” he says of 2-year-old Kathryn. “There are too many people in my family wasting their potential. I don’t want to be like that.”

Munoz is on schedule to receive his bachelor’s degree in December 2010. With Arizona’s economy continuing to struggle, he plans to enroll immediately in the UA-South graduate program, beginning master’s-level course work next January. In other words, his juggling act will continue.

And make no mistake, Nick Munoz keeps several balls in the air. After dropping Kathryn off at the home of a relative each morning, he heads for his shift at the local Jack in the Box, putting in 30 to 35 hours a week. From there, it’s usually off to class — and, for Munoz, a course schedule that accommodates working parents by offering afternoon classes is another huge benefit of attending UA-South. A comforting routine unfolds once Munoz and Kathryn return to their Tucson apartment. The father pulls his daughter onto his lap, grabs a handful of tattered books and passes along his love of the written word.



Sue Neilsen, director of Cochise Community College-Santa Cruz County Programs, has been a fixture for 37 years among educators in Nogales, the border community she calls the “Ellis Island of the Southwest.”

Forging affordable options

It wasn't so long ago that would-be college students in the Mexican border town of Nogales lacked access to a scholastic option like UA-South or NAU-Yavapai. Arizona education officials say that is one reason the state has fallen behind in the number of residents holding bachelor's degrees. Proctor contends Vision 2020 will fall far short of its goals unless the system becomes more accessible and productive for residents who are “time bound and place bound” — Arizonans like single mothers Angie Vega and Edith Sarmiento.

Like Nick Munoz, Vega and Sarmiento are also working toward degrees in education at a four-year institution supported by the taxpayers of Arizona. Nearly every day the two women, both juniors at the University of Arizona-Santa Cruz, take notes during lectures and struggle over assignments and exams. It's a routine that most college students take for granted. Not these two. “To us, it's a privilege,” says Vega, 23.

It's a privilege still in its infancy. Until 2008, time- and place-bound students in Nogales had only two

options if they wanted to pursue a bachelor's degree: online learning or a commute to Tucson, 70 miles away. It was really no choice for those who must balance college with the demands of parenthood, a job or both.

“There was a time when I thought our universities made people jump through hoops just to go to college,” says Bob McClendon, secretary of the board of regents. Not so much anymore. Two years ago, when UA-Santa Cruz opened for business, total enrollment could be counted on one hand. Two fingers, actually. The second semester saw attendance grow by 600 percent — to 14 students. Today, with the UA-Santa Cruz “campus” ensconced in the basement of an alternative high school barely a mile from the border, enrollment stands at 44, nearly all first-generation students.

Sue Neilsen, director of Cochise Community College-Santa Cruz County Programs, uses a travel analogy to explain what's happening for students in Nogales. “The jumbo jet will get you to London,” she says, “but you have to get to New York first on the commuter plane.”

Sarmiento, 21, started to take flight while attending Nogales High School, knowing even then that she wanted to go into teaching. The plan nearly derailed when, at 16, she became a single mother. With that, her odds of finishing high school (one out of three single teen mothers drop out) or earning a college degree (only 1.3 percent graduate by age 30) dropped precipitously. Other demographic factors also weighed against Sarmiento. Neither of her parents had attended school past the fifth grade, and her two older brothers also left high school well before graduation. To top it off, a relative predicted openly and loudly that Sarmiento was destined to become the fifth member of her immediate family to fall short of a high school diploma. “You will never amount to anything,” she told the young mother.

The prediction couldn't have been more wrong. Not only did Edith Sarmiento complete high school, she graduated 18 months ahead of her class. “They said I couldn't do it,” Sarmiento recalls defiantly. “I had to prove I could.” Had things happened differently, Sarmiento has no doubt she'd now be a student on the main campus of the University of Arizona in Tucson. But, by the time she had completed the first half of a “2+2” program at Cochise Community College, Sarmiento had a steady job as a receptionist with the Nogales Unified School District, a support system to help care for her son, and a place to continue her education: UA-Santa Cruz.

That last item — establishment of the Santa Cruz campus — was due in large part to the efforts of long-time area educators Justin Dutram and Sue Neilsen. Neilsen has been a fixture on the Nogales education scene for 37 years, 20 of them spent with the city's unified school district. She has worn many hats in this border town she calls the “Ellis Island of the Southwest,” including that of town manager.

The largest U.S. entry point in Arizona, Nogales also serves as a major distribution point for produce on its

way north from Mexico. The community's burgeoning economic engine can't keep running without a well-educated population, Neilsen says. Nogales took a huge step in that direction in 2003 when Neilsen welcomed the first 175 students to Cochise Community College's Santa Cruz Center, essentially the Nogales campus of the Cochise Community College district. Six years later, along with Dutram, she helped that border town take another big step with the opening of UA-Santa Cruz. Dutram, an educator in Nogales for 10 years, serves as director of the UA-Santa Cruz campus, which is administered jointly by the University of Arizona and UA-South.

The recession was not kind to the start-up educational efforts in Nogales. UA-Santa Cruz was barely off the ground when, as Neilsen puts it, "everything started falling apart." Moreover, the state has slashed the budget for Cochise's Santa Cruz Center, now serving 1,200

students, by 35 percent. "It's a lot tougher," Neilsen admits. "But it also gave us the chance to back out of some things that weren't working and do other things in a different way."

Neilsen applies the pick-yourself-up-and-keep-going attitude to her students as well. She nodded her head knowingly as Angie Vega described a schedule of full-time employment, school and child care that often pushes her study time to the wee hours of the morning. "The more you struggle, the more you want to succeed," says Vega. No one understands that better than Neilsen, a single mother herself during her college days at the University of Arizona.

"You always hear commencement speakers telling graduates what to expect in the real world," Neilsen says. "Well, they (Vega and Sarmiento) have been in the real world since high school. Their real world and college are all mixed in together."



Edith Sarmiento, a 21-year-old junior studying education at UA-Santa Cruz, holds a portrait of her son. Even as a student at Nogales High School, Sarmiento knew she wanted to be a teacher. But at age 16, single motherhood complicated her quest. "They said I couldn't do it," she said. "I had to prove I could."

Right plan, right time

The world occupied by Cecilia Duarte during her first three years at Alhambra High School lacked the drama that life presents to many teenagers. She caused her parents and teachers little trouble, distinguished herself athletically as the goalkeeper on the Alhambra Lions girls' soccer team and managed to earn adequate, if not exceptional, grades. What Cecilia lacked — that is, until she stumbled into Burnand's office — was a plan, a course of action that would move her world beyond the corridors of Alhambra and the nearby neighborhood where she shared a home with her parents and siblings.

She didn't know it then, but her timing was impeccable. And, as students in Arizona's revamped higher education system are discovering, timing really *is* everything. Itinerant student Justin Reynolds pulled into Flagstaff just as Coconino Community College and Northern Arizona University were launching a joint effort to help ease the process of transferring from one school to the next. Nick Munoz happened to be at Pima Community College and UA-South at the precise moment officials at the Tucson campus were upgrading the system to better serve the needs of 21st century students. Single moms Edith Sarmiento and Angie Vega had a four-year institution in their hometown as soon as they completed two years of community college. Now, if all goes according to the blueprint drawn up by Burnand, timing will work to the advantage of Alhambra High School junior Cecilia Duarte.

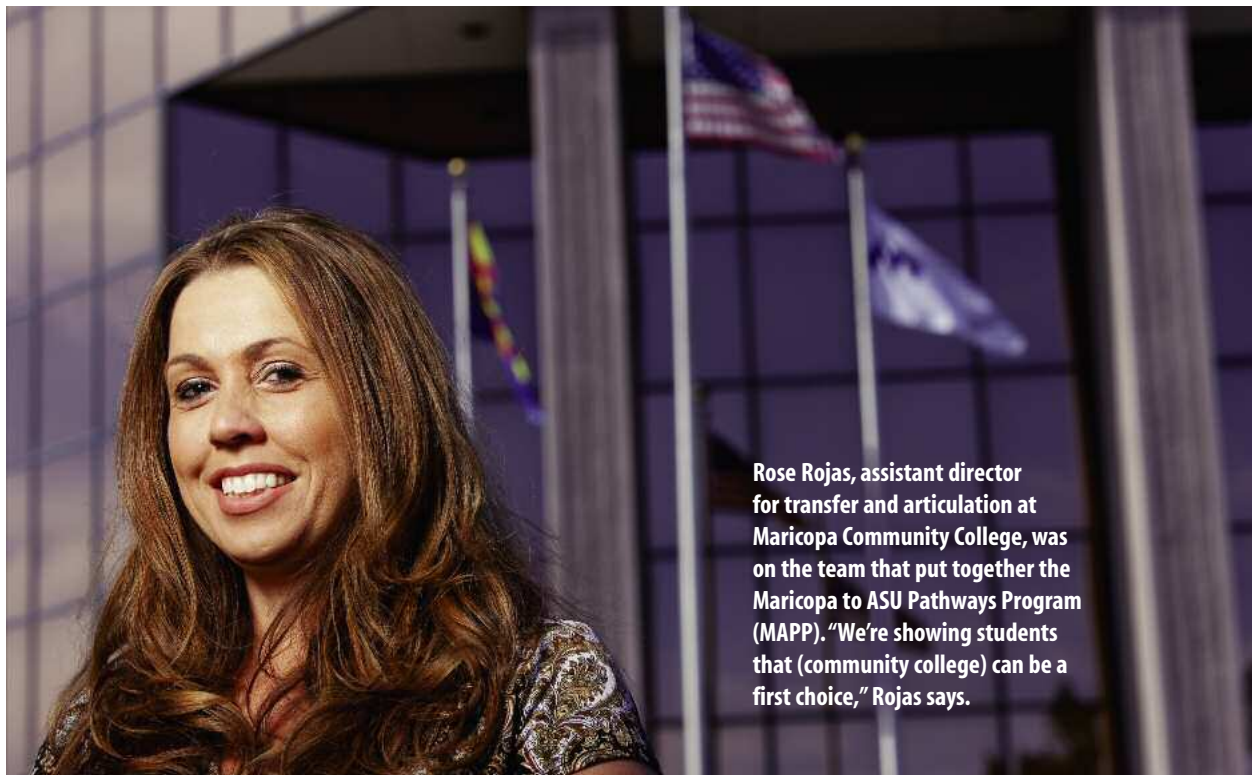
As their conversation continued, Burnand convinced Cecilia to drop the notion of enlisting in the armed services to finance her college education. "Tell them to leave you alone," she said of the recruiters, "or I'll kick their butts."

As an alternative to a military commitment, Burnand encouraged Cecilia to enroll in the 2+2 program offered by the Maricopa Community College district and nearby Arizona State University. "It's called MAPP," Burnand explained. "And it's just what it says; it's a map that can help you go to a community college and, from there, to ASU."

Like similar initiatives that have emerged in Flagstaff, Tucson and Nogales, the Maricopa to ASU Pathways Program (MAPP) grew out of the recognition that more needed to be done to help low-income, first-generation and other underserved students transfer from two-year to four-year institutions. In this case, the transfers would be from the 10-college Maricopa Community College district to neighboring Arizona State.

Andrea Buehman, director of transfer and articulation for the community college system, notes the two institutions are no strangers to collaboration. "There is already a major pipeline," she says, pointing out that 75 percent of Maricopa students who transfer choose ASU as their destination. The history of cooperation notwithstanding, Maricopa and ASU officials acknowledge that low-income students who transferred were not doing as well as they'd hoped.

"As we looked at community college partnerships statewide, we found they did a good job of articulation



Rose Rojas, assistant director for transfer and articulation at Maricopa Community College, was on the team that put together the Maricopa to ASU Pathways Program (MAPP). "We're showing students that (community college) can be a first choice," Rojas says.

and transfer. At the same time, though, we had too many students veering off course on their way to a degree," says David Young, senior vice president of academic affairs at ASU and architect of the MAPP initiative. The main problem, Young contends, was that too many such partnerships wait too long to reach out to at-risk students. For MAPP to succeed, he says, the new system had to find a way to kick-start the process much, much earlier.

"If the pipeline is going to increase (productivity), we need to engage the high schools," Young says, pausing for emphasis. "Now."

In that effort, he has an ally in Alhambra High School's Carey Burnand. She recalls that in 1996, her first year at Alhambra, barely 10 percent of the school's graduates headed for college. Today, about half of the senior class is college-bound. Or at least they say they are, Burnand says; there's no reliable way of knowing how many actually follow through. "We can talk to these kids until we're blue in the face about going to college, and 100 percent of them will tell us they're going," says Burnand. "Despite all the campus field trips, all the discussions and the counseling, they just don't go. Why can't they make that leap?"

The question is largely rhetorical. The No. 1 reason, as Burnand knows, is cost. Recognizing this barrier, the MAPP development committee tackled it head-on. Taking a page from the ccc2nau playbook, they made sure that MAPP students, from the moment they sign on, are locked into the prevailing ASU tuition rate.

"Community college used to be the second option," says Rose Rojas, assistant director for transfer and articulation at Maricopa and a member of the MAPP development team. "We're showing students that it can be a first choice that can save money and still provide them with a four-year college experience."

Next, the MAPP team tackled the commitment issue, insisting that guaranteed, discounted tuition at a four-year university not be a one-way street. Once accepted into the program, each MAPP student must identify and commit to a primary field of study. That's a risky proposition for an age group not known for making and sticking with decisions. Still, citing studies that show higher completion rates among students who declare their majors as first- or second-year students, Young insists it's a necessary risk. "The longer students stay undecided, the better the chance they'll drop out," he says. "When you choose a major, you've found a home." An added bonus: Early identification and concentration on core courses can accelerate the process and allow some students to graduate in just three years — obviously, at substantial savings on tuition, fees and other costs.

ASU and Maricopa rolled out MAPP on a limited basis during the 2009-10 academic year. Seventy students attending classes in the community college district accepted the offer, including Jackie Clark, a sophomore education major at Maricopa's Chandler-Gilbert Community College. Anticipating a transfer to ASU for



Jackie Clark, a sophomore education major at Chandler-Gilbert Community College (part of the Maricopa Community College district), will attend ASU this fall at 20 percent reduced tuition, thanks to the MAPP program.

her junior and senior years, Clark was researching the grants to help finance the next phase of her education when she learned of MAPP. As a declared major, Clark met a key requirement of the program. The promise of locking into the 2009-10 tuition sealed the deal — particularly when a 20 percent tuition hike was announced for incoming ASU students in 2010-11. "I thought I'd better sign up for it," Clark says.

There's a very good chance Cecilia Duarte will too. Once the seed was planted, Cecilia could barely contain all the questions that suddenly popped into her head: How much would her education cost? Which campus should she select? Could she play soccer? The answers, delivered with equal enthusiasm by Burnand, always returned to MAPP. Cecilia left for class having all but declared a major: forensic science.

Something once ephemeral was now within her grasp. The mantra repeated since kindergarten suddenly seemed very real. And that day and into the next, Cecilia couldn't say it enough:

"I'm going to college." ■

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