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Phoenix Mayor Headlines National College Access Network Conference
Leaders Convene to Increase College Enrollment and Completion for
First-Generation, Low-Income and Minority Students

PHOENIX (September 16, 2014)— Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton addressed hundreds of local and national leaders in business, philanthropy and higher education at this week's 2014 National College Access Network Conference, highlighting the need to increase access to higher education and graduation rates among disadvantaged students.

“Today, more than ever, the most powerful instrument of economic mobility for Arizonans, particularly low-income residents, is a college degree,” said Mayor Stanton. “When I talk to CEOs around town and around the state, they tell me that one of their top concerns is the lack of skilled labor and the inability to retain talent in Arizona....[College Success Arizona](#) estimates that adding just 1,000 college graduates to the Arizona workforce would increase state tax revenue by more than \$2.2 million every year.”

By 2020, 64% percent of all jobs in Arizona will require an education beyond high school. And yet, only 35% of adults statewide currently hold a postsecondary degree, leaving the state behind California, Utah and Colorado in college attainment. The college completion rate for Hispanic adults, who represent 30% of the state population, is even lower at 16.9 percent.

“Arizona is making progress toward increasing college graduation rates, but there is still much work to be done,” said Rich Nickel of College Success Arizona. “We look forward to sharing what we’ve learned so far and exploring which strategies have worked best for low-income and minority students nationwide.”

Mayor Stanton called for the alignment of K-12 improvement efforts and the college completion agenda, increasing college access and success for Latino students and improvements to statewide financial aid programs. “To see the significant increases in college graduation rates that we want, we have to talk about universal financial aid, especially for low-income students qualified to attend college,” he said. “A majority of states have programs targeted at expanding access to college for low-income students. It’s time that Arizona does too.”

The National College Access Network Conference is being held at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix on September 15th, 16th and 17th.

About College Success Arizona

College Success Arizona is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization working to significantly increase the post-secondary attainment rate of students in Arizona, particularly for those who otherwise would not be able to attend or graduate. Since its inception as the Arizona College Scholarship Foundation in 2005, the organization has helped more than 700 low-income, high-potential students gain access to college and persist to earn their college degrees. For more information about College Success Arizona and its partners, visit www.collegesuccessarizona.org.

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