The University of Arizona: An Archipelago of Innovation

Reflections by George H. Davis

The Charge Delivered and Accepted

The University of Arizona (UA) academic deans asked me to try to capture the essence of the special character and history of our institution, particularly in ways that might help explain why this land-grant public university has risen to such exceptional heights as a student-centered research-extensive public university.

In plain language, what makes this institution so good? How has UA achieved so much, especially given what appear to have been barriers: a State constitution mandate for “instruction … as nearly free as possible;” higher-education State appropriations ranked as low as 37th nationally; and a location which some might regard as “out-of-the-way?”

Anyone can guess, correctly, the answers center on the faculty, faculty leadership, invaluable staff and professionals, stunning programs and their particular history, and on the ways in which people and programs have impacted students, society, and the discovery of ideas. But what’s behind all of this? And what lies ahead?

I want to be clear at the outset that UA has achieved a very high standing as a student-centered research university. UA is among 62 Association of American Universities (AAU) research universities, both public and private: these universities are considered to be the best research universities in the United States and Canada. UA treasures, but does not take for granted, the broad “macro” indicators of the successes of UA faculty and programs whose proposals for new discovery and understanding have been rigorously reviewed to meet highest standards of excellence.

Location, Location, Location

There are certain advantages that come from being a relatively young university located in the West. You can see a long way in this land. Guided by the intentional planning of past presidents and their leadership teams, the trajectory for the University’s success has been remarkable: we have been able to dream and think big.

Of course, there is something beyond just being located in the West that makes the UA different. I believe it is possible to demonstrate that the nature of Tucson’s physical and cultural environment may have imparted onto our University its fundamental, distinctive character.
If I go too far in this premise, and I believe I will, please bear with me, because I can confidently retreat to the conclusion that the physical, cultural, and ecological characteristics of the region within which Tucson lies present an analogue for many of the productive and innovative characteristics of the University itself.

The Sky Island Archipelago which Embraces Tucson

Tucson lies within the so-called “Madrean Archipelago” — unique on the planet and consisting of some 27 mountains ranges in southern Arizona and northern Mexico. The ranges are tall and forested, yet relatively isolated from one another due to the combination of tectonic change and climatic change over time. The “sea” within which the archipelago lies consists of the desert grasslands and scrub in the valleys and basins between the islands. A key characteristic is the juxtaposition of different habitats in relatively small patches – islands within islands within islands. Vertical relief permits climate zones of tremendous variety to be stacked and interleaved at the margins.

Diverse habitat patches create diverse vegetation, which feed into the animal diversity. Valleys and basins can act as barriers or bridges to colonization by new species that attempt to cross. The mountains act as quasi-isolated cradles of evolution. What is derived from this is maximum evolutionary potential.

Tony Burgess, Professor of Practice at the Institute for Environmental Studies at Texas Christian University, UA alumnus, and extraordinary natural scientist and teacher, explained it to me in this way: “The geographic context of the Madrean Archipelago fosters enormous diversity. Depending on climatic shifts over time, it is colonized from two high massifs with distinctive biota. Each change leaves some legacy on the sky island. Sierra Madre Oriental species have moved in from the south, from Mexico. Rocky Mountain-Colorado
Plateau species have moved from the north. So, the upper elevations of sky islands contain different mixes of northern and southern species. Furthermore, there are additional influences from the two centers of warm-desert species in North America. One is associated with the northern Gulf of California up into the rain-shadowed basin in the lee of the Sierra Nevada. The other is the area between the Sierra Madre Occidental and Oriental of Mexico.”

Furthermore, as Dr. Burgess goes on to explain: “Tucson’s history itself is an expression of these north-south and east-west exchanges. Texas open-range ranchers collided with the Mormon oasis farmers colonizing from Utah. Earlier, the O’odham desert tribes were impacted by Apaches moving in from the north. The east-west railroads integrated the subsistence economy of Tucson into a continental economy of commodities. And of course the north-south exchange has cultivated that wonderful mix of Mexican and Anglo-American culture that makes Tucson so special. Within the archipelago today is a rich mixture of indigenous peoples and recent arrivals, including ‘snowbirds’ from the north and east, creating the present extraordinary mix of diversity.

The University Archipelago

The sky island archipelago metaphor is apt because when we are at our best, UA’s colleges, departments, centers, and institutes are in right relationship with one another. For example, all of our faculty recruitment planning involves engagement across colleges so that mutual needs and opportunities in discovery and innovation can be achieved through joint or affiliated appointments. This in turn harnesses intellectual synergies and facilitates resource sharing more fully. Everything we do in the Office of the Provost attempts to eliminate any possibility that a given college might “be apart,” whether we are talking about the College of Medicine, the Eller College of Management, or any one of the colleges. In the competitive national environment where we “play,” UA must approach advancement through partnerships. Barriers must be continuously
reconfigured to bridges. UA has a solid tradition in doing this.

In archipelago terms, the greatest threat to maximizing evolutionary productivity is cutting off corridors of exchange between sky islands!

UA has excelled in corridor construction. Departmental sky islands are sources of core disciplinary and sub-disciplinary foundations, nested in synergistic ways, and never completely isolated. In this regard UA is like most other research-extensive universities. Yet for decades here at UA the cross-departmental, cross-college linkages expressed in interdisciplinary programs, interdisciplinary scholars, and interdisciplinary centers have maximized evolutionary potential and have powered selectivity.

“Grassroots” wisdom and entrepreneurship emanating from the faculty drive university responses, with a general understanding that our central administration, operating within a distributed environment, promotes cross-college partnership to support all aspects of our academic mission: notably, the broad core foundations for curriculum and undergraduate education; the highly nationally acclaimed programs; the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty; and interdisciplinarity in areas of institutional priority. In particular, the impact of top programs brings prestige and reputational strength to all programs, helping the university to continuously as a whole attract outstanding faculty, professionals, staff, and students.

**U.S. News & World Report Top Ten Graduate Rankings (from 1997 through 2006: rotating ranking schedule accounts for variant years)**

- Analytical Chemistry – 6
- Astrophysics – 6
- Audiology – 8
- Management and Information Systems – 4
- Creative Writing – 9
- Geology – 7
- Hydrogeology – 1
- Pharmacy – 4
- Photography – 9
- Sedimentology Stratigraphy - 4
- Social Psychology – 5
- Speech/Language Pathology – 6
- Tectonics/Structural Geology - 4

**UA’s Corridor Construction: Promoting Partnerships**

Arizona Research Laboratories was established in 1979, designed to support and promote interdisciplinary collaborations which initiate new research and educational programs of high priority to the scientific community. This cross-fertilization between disciplines has resulted in new projects, new collaborations, and new educational opportunities (e.g., establishment of the Center for Insect Science, Neural Systems, Memory and Aging, and Institute for the Study of Planet Earth). The very success of these and other programs within ARL is a direct result of providing opportunities for research active faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and students (undergraduate and graduate) to develop intellectual and scientific growth which has inspired tremendous scholarly excitement and promise within the University.

UA founded a university-wide, interdisciplinary honors program in 1962 to offer advising, honors colloquia and independent study. 75 outstanding students who showed “promise of developing into superior scholars” were accepted into the first group. Community building has been an essential feature of UA’s Honors experience since the earliest days. Working in partnership with the academic colleges, student organizations, and Residence Life, Honors students strive to meet the goal of developing the courage to address uncommon challenges and the commitment to promote social responsibility throughout their lives. The Honors College, with 4,020 students, is the largest such college of any university. One measure of Honors College’s high attraction to outstanding high student seniors: in 2005, 104 new National Merit Scholars chose to come to UA and to engage in the Honors College experience, the largest number of National Merit Scholars welcomed on campus!

**Programs within the Archipelago**

There are many programs whose strength is enhanced by the strategic qualities and characteristics of our specific environment. I will dare list some of these as illustrations: astronomy; anthropology; archaeology; American Indian Studies; dendrochronology; ecology and evolutionary biology; geosciences; hydrology; geography and regional development; Latin American Area Studies; Mexican American Studies; lunar and planetary sciences; arid lands studies;
natural resources; optical sciences; plant sciences; and the Arizona Respiratory Center.

Yet, we have equally as many prestigious programs for which our location may present challenges. This group has emerged “the old fashioned way” – through sustained attention to faculty and student recruitment of the highest quality, adherence to rigorous promotion-and-tenure processes, and strategic programmatic vision. Out of this has emerged exceptional strength in fields such as philosophy; MIS; sociology; linguistics; cognitive sciences; women’s studies; chemical and environmental engineering; material sciences; applied math; neurosciences; higher education; insect sciences; language, reading, and culture; psychology; classics; dance; second language acquisition and teaching; nursing; pharmacology; and the Arizona Cancer Center.

Moreover, from within individual colleges, entrepreneurial vision and exceptional leadership have forged highly nationally-ranked programs in a variety of departmental and sub-disciplinary areas, such as programs in entrepreneurship, creative writing, rhetoric and composition, tectonics, intellectual property law, theatre production, and indigenous peoples law and policy.

The examples above only begin to demonstrate that together in their fullness, our programs and faculty make the UA truly an outstanding university, not separate or isolated islands of research.

A critical part of the evolutionary story of UA is our interdisciplinary programs, which really took off in the early 1970s, well ahead of the much more recent national advocacy for the merits of interdisciplinary. UA’s Graduate Interdisciplinary Programs (GIDPs) are not only expressions of commitment to formalized interdisciplinary research and learning, but the establishment of the GIDPs is itself emblematic of innovation.
UA’s late President Richard Harvill had a capacity to attract stellar senior scholars and academic leaders, who in the 1960s would serve in part as advisors in transforming UA from a regional to national university. President Harvill brought to UA scholars of the magnificence of George Gaylord Simpson, foremost evolutionary biologist of the time, who when not with graduate students (the “red fireballs”) wrote books about “the history of life on earth;” and Lawrence McKinley Gould, who was Second-in-Command of the Byrd Expedition to Antarctica, served for 15 years as President of Carleton College, and over the course of his career received 32 honorary doctoral degrees. His mantra: “Good is the enemy of excellence.”

Yet another profound leader was Professor Emeritus Herbert E. Carter, who retired as Dean of Arts and Sciences from The University of Illinois, and came here in 1971. Carter, in close alliance with faculty leadership, created a paradigm shift: namely, the establishment of an ethos of interdisciplinarity. As Carter saw it, what lies in between disciplines — the area of interdisciplinarity — is where future developments, novel discoveries, and newly invigorated training programs would flourish.

Successive UA presidents have each made their mark. President John Schaefer’s establishment of the Center for Creative Photography (CCP) in 1975 epitomized maximum evolutionary potential: he anticipated that photography would replace letters as primary source material documenting everyday human experiences. He was right. Today, the CCP is the nation’s pre-eminent archive, museum, and research center dedicated to photography as an art form and cultural record. President Schaefer also moved the University from the Western Athletic Conference to the Pac-10, a profound shift in thinking that UA was ready to play at the next level.

Through President Henry Koffler’s leadership, UA gained entry into the prestigious AAU, propelling the institution even further toward higher standards of accomplishment and success. President Manuel Pacheco championed the student-centeredness of our student-centered research university identity. President Peter Likins saw to it that the University could meet audacious goals, including leading the institution successfully through its $1.2 billion capital campaign. UA stands among only ten other public universities who have achieved such fund-raising success!
What’s at the Heart of UA?

What happens when a university is situated physically in a configuration that promotes maximum evolutionary potential? How does a tradition of strong and intentional planning foster corridor construction? The answer lies in innovation – defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as “the alteration of what is established by the introduction of new elements or forms.”

At the heart of UA is the capacity to innovate. Embedded in the University’s strategic plan, innovation is a core value. It is most meaningful when discoveries of new knowledge, methods, and concepts, are combined with discerning and imaginative syntheses across the general body of knowledge, so that the advances gained transform the ways we address issues and opportunities in society, locally to globally.

Two examples of this faculty-driven quality illustrate the point: Regents Professor (Astronomy) and National Academy of Science member Roger Angel created the technology for the world (through UA’s Steward Observatory) to build truly giant telescopes, based upon his entirely new paradigm for casting mirrors. In September 2005, Regents Professor (Plant Sciences) and National Academy of Science member Vicki Chandler received the National Institutes of Health Director’s Award, one of 13 selected from a field of 840. As a result of her fundamental advances in plant genomics, and her “break-through” proposals to apply fundamental principles learned to translational research on human diseases, Dr. Chandler will be receiving “seed money” of $4 million.

For UA, a student-centered, public land-grant research-extensive university, innovation connects fundamental knowledge to societal advancement. Innovation has no departmental boundaries; it crosses all departments, colleges, institutes, and centers; it bridges the disciplines, as desired and required; and it harnesses the full spectrum of faculty and student approaches to discovery, whether called “research,” “scholarship,” or “creative endeavor.” There is no doubt that innovation is embedded in UA’s mission to discover, educate, serve, and inspire. Innovation is a secret to UA’s success.

Innovation as a Driver for Future Success

The University’s top strategic priority is to build a world-class and diverse academic community at the forefront of discovery. In this time of transition of UA presidential leadership, UA’s “innovation capacity” should be viewed as a powerfully important...
characteristic, particularly as we think about the needs, challenges, and opportunities of both Arizona and America. We anticipate new leadership will want to preserve and support the institutional behaviors and structures that have advanced our “innovation capacity” and “give it room.”

May I say that the new millennium has not started out well? Thus it is not surprising that the AAU, through its President, Nils Hasselmo (a former UA provost), is underscoring the national and international strategic importance that must be placed on the capacities of research universities to innovate on several fronts: increasing the economic growth of the nation within the newly altered global economy; protecting national security at a time of palpable vulnerability; and enriching quality of life ...everywhere.

America’s competitiveness will depend even more importantly on the ability and capacity of universities such as UA to foster innovation, including the ways in which faculty and graduates accelerate the timeline of innovation, the timeline to implementing new ideas to the immediate benefit of people and society. This responsibility includes graduating students who have the knowledge-based skills and wisdom to bridge from fundamentals to innovative application.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries the United States led in the age of invention, where innovation meant building new tools and machines that would create wealth, would save time and work, and would generally improve quality of life.

What we recognize at this university is the importance of creating for UA students a special advantage in preparing for a new kind of market where the U.S. must excel. We imagine the applications of innovation to include policies and practices of implementation that support fair, equitable, safe, and supportive environments for all people; and we imagine ways in which the culture of contribution is in perfect balance, acknowledging that individual faculty contribute in different ways along a spectrum that runs from fundamental basic scholarship to innovative transformations of core knowledge to the good of the world.

I need only mention a single example of UA’s demonstrable capacity to innovate as an institution, while at the same time honestly acknowledging that UA’s work has hardly begun: Let’s think for a moment about WATER. While Louisiana universities, with corporate, federal, state, and private partners, should be addressing doggedly the sustainability of the Gulf Coast, perhaps through a whole new paradigm centered on “Coastal Engineering” (R. Dokka, pers. comm, September, 2005), The University of Arizona must tirelessly and innovatively address the sustainability of cities, municipalities, communities, peoples, and individuals within the semi-arid regions of Arizona. The core academic programs
necessary for this are ones we possess. They cut a wide swath, encompassing understanding of water sources, water quantity, water quality, water law, water economics, water policy, and – yes – the conservation of this precious resource. When Mihai Ducea (Associate Professor, Geosciences) was a candidate for his faculty position here at UA, he “cut to the chase” and simply talked about “issues of thirst.”

In this basic example, we find that it is really not so very hard (for departments, colleges, and the university as a whole) to identify where demonstrable excellence for innovation coincides with greatest need. At UA, we have a preeminence in “water” across multiple disciplines: As a land-grant institution we have a special mandate to assist Arizona in dealing with water-related issues, and we know that “working on water” will never be parochial, given the pressing survival needs globally, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

Again, this is just one illustration where UA’s formidable expertise and the world’s needs meet. The consequences of not succeeding in this realm will dwarf the Katrina disaster by orders of magnitude. Drought is the inverse of the flooding, but it presents similarly drastic outcomes. Poor and oppressed people and families will continue to suffer the most, for they won’t be able to get out if the water dries up.

Changing Directions and Focused Excellence

In 2002 the Arizona Board of Regents, through Changing Directions, presented to each of the Arizona university presidents the opportunity to fashion an institution-specific roadmap of expectations and approaches. President Likins, as a result, launched Focused Excellence: the notion that since UA cannot do everything that we have been doing and still meet the quality standards we expect of ourselves, we must reduce the number of things attempted and thereby increase the quality and excellence of everything we choose to do.

Focused Excellence is playing out at the overall university level, at the college level, and at the departmental level, with the long view and determination to steadily reallocate time, money, and energy toward strategic objectives, while all the time working hard to maintain the necessary comprehensive quality in order to meet our fundamental mission responsibilities. Achieving this balance, through optimizing the investment of resources, will be part of the challenge of the next UA president.

Changing Directions and Focused Excellence were borne of hard times, where deep local (Arizona) cuts to higher education were sharply felt within a backdrop of conspicuous national climate of steadily reduced state-government support to public institutions of higher learning. Focused Excellence emphasizes

**Focused Excellence Study Teams**

In 2003, President Likins and Provost Davis convened blue-ribbon interdisciplinary study teams to explore opportunities for innovation and cross-university partnership in the following four areas: life sciences; cognitive sciences and neurosciences; cultural, ethnic, gender, and area studies; and earth sciences and environmental programs. The charge was not one of creating proposals for reorganization but rather to explore ways in which these four areas – so important to UA’s future yet broadly distributed across colleges – could become strengthened by more coordinated and effective cross-college structures and partnerships.
reevaluation of what we are doing, how we are doing it, and how we are paying for it. Focused Excellence demands innovation, and there is no one model. Focused Excellence means having programs of consistently high academic distinction. We must focus on fewer things and do those things well.

A few illustrations will suffice. Astronomy was a natural, given southern Arizona’s tall mountains and clear skies. The region beckoned partnerships, including those with federal agencies, with the Vatican, and with prestigious universities from around the world. Astronomy required the very best in optical sciences, paving the way for our College of Optical Sciences, which is best in the world, and whose range still includes optical engineering but also quantum optics, photonics, and biomedical imaging.

How could UA not invest deeply in anthropology, given our cultural setting and location, and given the fact that humans have inhabited this region for thousands of years? In present-day Tucson on the banks of the Santa Cruz River, archeologists have concluded that sites found there represent the oldest, continuously inhabited area in the United States. Preservations in the semi-arid Southwest provide an enormously rich record.

Other “naturals” include geology, (now Geosciences), hydrology, and Atmospheric Sciences. Hydrology is best in the world. Geosciences is dominant in fields like tectonics, where principles and concepts (developed first, in many cases, locally and regionally) are being used innovatively by UA students and faculty in mountain belts and high plateaus throughout the world.

Nestled between astronomy and geosciences is Lunar and Planetary Sciences (LPL). The accomplishments of LPL are staggering, including their winning $360 million from NASA for the Phoenix Mission. The quality of Atmospheric Sciences, especially in the fundamental research on the development of Global Positioning System geodesy on the analysis of atmospheres, is heralded by the leadership of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association.

A college example is Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), which grew as the most important expression of the land-grant mission, within a state whose needs for technical expertise in best practices in production agriculture, rangeland management, and arid lands studies were and are critically important for sustainability. CALS keeps pace especially today using the best of genomics research in application to the needs of farmers and ranchers; and using GIS technologies in rangeland management. The legacy of Arid Lands Studies is legendary, with early years marked by profound contributions by USAID into the African nations. Academic program reviewers recently were quite simply “dazzled” by the Ph.D. students in this program, who come to it as non-traditional students from a variety of core disciplines.
What’s Ahead: A University in Transition

Societal issues are of such a magnitude of complexity, research problems are commonly so intractable, and investment requirements are so large, that there has been a general evolution here and elsewhere at peer institutions from single investigator, to team investigations, to programmatic collaborations, and this is not just in technical areas. We see this in UA’s history, where, for decades, the individual, independent teacher-scholar held sway. Added to that, but never diminishing it, came the robust emphasis on interdisciplinary research and GIDPs involving collaborations of individual scholars. Now we see where, without diminishing the first and second, there is emerging attention paid to interdisciplinary research and outreach involving collaborations of individual programs. What appears to be recognized is that innovations that will rise to the challenges today cross so many disciplinary and programmatic boundaries that solutions can be found in reasonable time frames only by programmatic, including college, collaborations.

We notice that sponsor agencies and external funders are also emphasizing formalized collaborations in interdisciplinary programs, to the development of more massive organizational constructs, expressed by centers and institutes that galvanize cross-disciplinary activity between departments, divisions, and colleges.

Universities who dare move in this direction recognize from the start that innovative, entrepreneurial leadership must draw from all revenue sources (private, philanthropic, federal, state, tuition) new resources to achieve sustainability. The investments required exceed what state governments can reasonably achieve, and indeed surpass what can be reasonably expected in traditional independent “principal investigator” models.

Who Benefits?

It is within such a fertile, collaborative, innovative environment that we can carry out our most important mission: to educate the next generations of undergraduate,
graduate, and professional students in environments of engagement that are learner-centered and fed by the energy and fruits of new discovery and innovation.

Indeed, when we ask top high school scholars why they are interested in UA, they respond time and time again — because of the opportunities for interdisciplinary study, and because of the opportunities to do independent research, even as a freshman.

Integral to the innovative and collaborative environment we cultivate is the University’s adherence to value diversity and inclusiveness. Our own determined mission and vision for diversity at The University of Arizona find roots from the legacy and heritage of this region, and our diversity goals emphasize the environments which we must establish, ones that are diverse, fair, and hospitable.

Achieving and sustaining these goals requires work at every level, from individual programs within departments, to UA’s Office of the President, and the Arizona Board of Regents. Diversity is central to our productivity and excellence. Our diversity should be yet another strong expression of our cultural environment, our history, our broad geographic location, with greater success in the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students, both women and men, who are Native Americans, Hispanic/Latino/a, Asian/Pacific Islanders, as well as citizens from other nations. Our African American populations are small in southern Arizona, and yet it is critically important for UA to work continuously with our community to have UA be a place that is diverse, fair, and hospitable in attracting and retaining faculty, staff, and students from all underrepresented groups.

We have a concentrated wealth of knowledge beyond precedent that is available within the region as primary sources, not archived at some distant metropolitan center. To borrow a phrase from writer/naturalist Janice Emily Bowers, the University of Arizona both stewards and celebrates a sense of place.

Our heritage is a foundation for resilient adaptations and creative opportunities, and thus the University forms the core of an enduring society. In providing for our students a learning environment that celebrates discovery and innovation and that honors and respects the many backgrounds we all come from, we foster in all who call the University their “academic community” the capacity to be great thinkers, learners, leaders, and responsible citizens prepared to serve their communities.
Shared Governance in Doing Business and Enhancing Innovation

UA continuously strives for the perfect balance in our efforts to recruit and retain outstanding faculty, professionals and staff, to serve students and society to the finest degree possible, and as a consequence to advance within the ranks of AAU institutions nationally. As is evident from this essay, UA’s greatest strength resides in its faculty and staff, whose direct insights, vision, and decisions express the distributed entrepreneurship which continuously leverages UA’s advancement.

Central control is utterly essential for stewardship in areas of budget, expenditures, recruitment planning, compliance, fairness and equity, compensation, and overall accountability to itself and to the Arizona Board of Regents. Distributed responsibility and entrepreneurship are absolutely essential for wiser decision making, locally, within this multi-faceted complex university. The glue that connects central control and distributed responsibility is shared governance, such that major decisions related to fundamental mission policy and protocol require mutual engagement by central administrators, department and college leaders, and faculty and staff leaders. Over the long haul, this results, in better decisions.

The innovative capacity of UA is fostered by a woven arrangement not unlike a magnificent Tohono O’odham basket in which the academic “line” structure of the university composed of 19 colleges and more than 120 departments is crisscrossed by 15 interdisciplinary programs and numerous centers and institutes and additionally cross-linked by a weave of shared governance councils comprised of faculty, staff, and student leaders whose voices participate in the framing and changing of policy.

Furthermore, because of innovative grassroots leadership, UA has gained extraordinary insight on matters of gender and diversity. One emblematic example: The GRACE Project (Generating Respect for All in a Climate of academic Excellence) was a study of the causes of disparity between male and female faculty in the College of Medicine in track assignment, promotion to higher ranks, and leadership positions, with the ultimate goal of identifying and implementing solutions to documented barriers. The ongoing efforts of the GRACE Project were recognized in 2004 through a Progress in Equity Award from American Association of University Women Legal Advocacy Fund.

Though far from where we ultimately wish to be, our innovative shared governance leadership is equipping UA with the transformations required for recruiting and retaining faculty and students in a way that is competitive within the challenging national market place.

Our mantra is to do all of this in ways that maintain the trust of the people through being stewards of knowledge, stewards of resources, and stewards of Arizona’s sons and daughters, helping them to be change agents in a world requiring innovation.
Full Participation and Full Engagement

The finest private corporate organizations have long recognized that fully engaging the human resources within an organization moves that organization successfully toward meeting and then exceeding objectives. At UA we see this in an analogous manner in the classroom, where fully engaging students in “learner-centered” environments produces results far exceeding “straight lecture.” UA, with its extraordinary faculty and academic programs functioning in a “changing directions” environment, leads in ways that interlink central control and distributed entrepreneurship.

I close by going back to my sky island archipelago reference. The University of Arizona has been a natural laboratory and repository for the heritage of this region almost since its inception. The record of this institution demonstrates that the cultural, physical, and intellectual landscape supports academic environments of high evolutionary potential – what I could call high innovation capacity – and engenders programs of extraordinary reputational height. Where else would you want to be?
