

# Arizona public universities turn to fundraising to close gaps

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[Angela Gonzales](#) Senior Reporter *Phoenix Business Journal*



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Jared Langkilde, Mesa... [more](#)

## Home of the Day

As state funding continues to dwindle for Arizona's public universities and community colleges, they are turning to private and philanthropic fundraising to grow resources — something formerly reserved for private schools.

Today, [Arizona State University](#) kicked off a \$1.5 billion capital campaign, at a time when Mesa Community College is reaching out to its own alumni for the first time to seek donations.



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Rick Shangraw, CEO of the Arizona State University Foundation and CEO of ASU Enterprise...  
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MCC's parent, the Maricopa County Community College District, [lost all of its state funding in 2015](#).

Seeing the writing on the wall about five years ago, the district launched a \$50 million fundraising campaign that so far has raised about \$43 million, said Jared Langkilde, Mesa Community College executive director of development and community relations.

The 10-college district has reached out to its own employees, corporations and philanthropists.

Last year, Mesa Community College started reaching out to alumni, with 173 giving during the fiscal 2015-2016 year, Langkilde said.

What constitutes a community college alumni can be difficult, he said.

"Is it somebody with a degree or certificate? Somebody with three credits and transferred? Somebody who re-careered and got a couple of classes to pass an industry certification?" he said. "What we're finding is that it doesn't matter whether they took one class or fully graduated,

everybody has been incredibly generous. They're all taking our calls and responding to requests for support."

ASU took a different tact in its fundraising efforts, starting out with a quiet campaign that reached out to alumni and friends, said [Rick Shangraw](#), who serves as CEO of ASU Foundation and [ASU Enterprise Partners](#), which oversees the foundation and other revenue-generating entities within the university.

So far, ASU has raised \$1 billion from more than 260,000 alumni and friends during the campaign's pre-launch phase.

Now, the goal is to raise another \$500 million by 2020.

Over the last five years, the ASU Foundation has increased its annual total of new gifts and commitments from \$88 million to \$216 million, Shangraw said. The goal is to raise \$250 million a year by 2025.

But the fundraising doesn't substitute for a lack of state funding or tuition, he said.

"It's not a replacement for those very vital funds," he said, but an add-on to improve the quality of programs.

Most of the time, philanthropists will dictate how their giving will be used, many times restricting it to scholarships, faculty support or specific research programs, he said.

"We really can't expect the donors to replace that money that we get from the state or tuition dollars that allow us to operate," he said. "The best way to put it is the donor is not going to give money to turn on the air conditioning in buildings."

This isn't the first time ASU has conducted capital campaigns.

In 1985, ASU launched Campaign for ASU, which raised \$114 million in three years. Then its ASU Campaign for Leadership raised \$560 million between 1997 and 2002.

This new campaign, called Campaign ASU 2020, is the first one under the leadership of ASU President Michael Crow.

Shangraw said Crow wanted to wait so long because he first wanted to ensure his vision of the New American University had some proof points and could show successful outcomes.

*Angela Gonzales covers health, biotech and education.*