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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA



Executive Office of the President

Dear Students and Colleagues,

From its founding in Tucson in 1885, the central mission of the University of Arizona has been to provide broad access to an excellent university education. Consistent with this mission, I am pleased to announce that the University of Arizona has taken steps to substantially expand our online reach through the formation of a new nonprofit corporation, **University of Arizona Global Campus**, which will be operated in affiliation with the University of Arizona. The mission of Global Campus will be to expand access to high-quality education to students everywhere in the world.

University of Arizona Global Campus will begin by acquiring the assets of Ashford University, which is currently a for-profit university located in San Diego, accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), and owned by Zovio, an educational technology company based in Chandler, Arizona. The transaction is expected to close in December, subject to approval by Ashford's accrediting body. At the time of closing, approximately 35,000 students will continue their degree programs with Global Campus. Global Campus will provide numerous benefits for the University of Arizona:

- **Diversity:** Global Campus will serve a diverse body of students, in accord with the growing diversity of our campus and of the United States. Ashford's current student body is predominantly located in the southern United States. About 32% of Ashford students are African American, 56% are Pell Grant recipients (nearly twice the number at the University of Arizona), 88% are over the age of 25, and 25% are veterans or members of the military. The opportunity to serve these students and to bring them into the Wildcat family is a huge positive for our institution in its mission to extend quality educational opportunities as expansively as possible.
- **Access:** Global Campus positions us as a significant player in online education for years to come for working adults seeking highly flexible education in support of life and career objectives. Institutions such as the University of Maryland Global Campus, Purdue Global, Western Governors University, Arizona State University and Southern New Hampshire University are collectively serving hundreds of thousands of students who want to take courses outside of traditional models. Global Campus similarly will serve these growing student populations, while delivering on the promise of land-grant access and quality education.
- **Financial:** The acquisition itself will cost Global Campus only \$1. Zovio also has agreed to guarantee Global Campus a substantial income stream of \$225 million over the next 15 years, including an upfront payment of

\$37.5 million. Global Campus will enter into an affiliation agreement with the University of Arizona, with upfront and ongoing payments to the University of Arizona that will have both immediate and long-term positive impacts on our University's fiscal health. Notably, we anticipate using initial revenues once the transaction closes in December to help alleviate the financial burden that we currently are facing. We look forward to a discussion as to how best to allocate this new revenue.

- **Synergy:** Arizona Online and Ashford University collectively offer 140 online degrees, with approximately 125 unique degrees between the two universities. Over time, we will work to further minimize overlap and to maintain complementary programs. We also will develop robust transfer pathways from Global Campus to Arizona Online, which will continue to grow and offer premier online degrees.

We are aware that Ashford University, like many online for-profit universities, has been subject to controversy, including criticism for its past recruitment practices. Ashford has worked to address those concerns and to ensure that it adheres to best practices in recruitment, enrollment and all areas of engagement with its current and potential students. The transition to a non-profit university, managed according to the principles of a public land-grant university, is a positive move that will benefit the thousands of students who will become Global Campus students. We are committed to ensuring that Global Campus is operated in accord with our moral obligation to ethically recruit students and to provide high-quality advising and instruction — in line with our land-grant mission of access and service. We also are committed to increasing retention, graduation and persistence rates to best-among-peer levels within five years.

Ashford offers much to build upon as an academic institution. More than 50% of Ashford's current faculty members hold a terminal degree, and the university repeatedly ranks among the top online institutions in terms of student satisfaction. Ashford is the leader in courses certified by Quality Matters, the same benchmark for online courses followed by Arizona Online, and we already accept Ashford courses as transfer credits at the University of Arizona. According to the National Survey of Student Engagement, Ashford provides an academic challenge that ranks with the top 10% of four-year colleges in the U.S. Last year, it received a favorable re-accreditation report by WSCUC, which is the accreditor of the California and California State University systems.

The creation of Global Campus will have little impact on daily life at the University of Arizona. Global Campus will operate as an independent entity, and our main campus faculty will not be teaching or administering former Ashford degree programs unless there is both mutual interest and opportunity. All current University of Arizona programs offered through our more than 150 University of Arizona Global locations will continue to be offered as University of Arizona programs by Arizona faculty. Arizona Online also will continue unchanged in offering and growing our premium online offerings.

The decision to acquire Ashford University through University of Arizona Global Campus was reached after a robust and extensive discussion in which the advantages and disadvantages were weighed with varied input from more than 200 faculty members, staff and others across our campus, as well as through discussions with the Arizona Board of Regents. Further information about the

University of Arizona Global Campus will be shared in town halls over the next couple of months. We also have answered additional questions in an **FAQs document**.

This is a transformational moment for universities nationwide. The University of Arizona is seizing every opportunity to emerge stronger and more resilient. Global Campus is one giant step toward that better future.

Stay safe and Bear Down,

Robert C. Robbins, M.D.

President
The University of Arizona

This email was sent to: current students and all faculty, staff and DCCs.

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