

# ASU med school to serve community through health outcomes, partnerships

**School designed to provide economic, social benefits for all Arizonans, ASU president tells local leaders at event**

By Mary Beth Faller, ASU News  
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Arizona State University is creating a wholly new kind of medical school that will be devoted to improving health outcomes for all Arizonans and act as a hub for regional partnerships, according to ASU President Michael Crow.

“What we’re designing, through the medical school, is to be of the greatest service to the whole community,” Crow said.

On Feb. 26, he addressed the PHX East Valley Partnership, a nonprofit coalition of business, education, government and community leaders that promotes economic development in the East Valley. In his talk, titled “Advancing Innovation for a Better Future,” Crow described the new [John Shufeldt School of Medicine and Medical Engineering](#), as well as other innovations at ASU.

It was part of the annual Thought Leader Forum hosted by Salt River Project at the Rob and Melani Walton Center for Planetary Health on ASU's Tempe campus.

Crow said that traditional university medical schools build big hospitals and compete with other hospitals.

“We don't want to do that. We want to work with all of the health care organizations — Phoenix Children's, Dignity, Banner, Mayo, Vanguard, City of Hope — everybody,” he said.

“We're thinking it's a hub-and-spoke model and we're the hub. We're designing [ASU Health](#) in a way in which we can draw from all aspects of the university, all these technologies, all these people.”

Graduates of the new medical school will have an MD degree as well as a master's degree in engineering, and will be proficient in using technology — including AI.

Crow said that eventually, access will expand to admit undergraduates in [Barrett, The Honors College](#). In addition, the medical school will follow the lead of the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law and offer a [part-time, online degree program](#).

"Eventually, we will build a way where the nurse practitioner working in the Lake Havasu Hospital, who doesn't have the ability to go to medical school but could be a fantastic doctor, to be able to become a doctor through our program," he said.

Crow also updated the PHX East Valley Partnership crowd on recent innovations at ASU, including [The Endless Games and Learning Lab](#), which combines gaming with learning to empower young people who are disengaged from traditional education and employment; [ASU London](#), which will offer electrical engineering and computer science degrees using the three-year model prevalent in the UK; and [Operation Comeback](#), a campaign to re-engage people who started their degrees at ASU but never finished.

He also warned the group that Arizona needs more college graduates to fuel the growing economy.

"We have the 46th lowest college-going rate. If you're a freshman in an Arizona public high school, you have a 19% chance of finishing college — one half the national average," he said.

"How do you work on that? You build colleges big enough to take people on. When I took office, we had about 35,000 students from Arizona attending the university. We now have 70,000 attending the university from Arizona."

ASU has used technology to expand access to college degrees.

"How do we help you to attract and grow companies? How do we help you to make Arizona a place where that technology can be unbelievably successful? We teach in different ways," he said.

"We have full (campus) immersion, digital immersion, immersion on a massive scale. We have new ways of learning. We've had 50,000 students study biology with the new [virtual reality technology](#) that we built in which they have a 40% learning outcome enhancement."

Crow also had a Q&A session with John Shufeldt, who provided a [nine-figure gift](#) — the second largest in university history — to operate the medical school. Shufeldt, who founded the NextCare Inc. network of clinics, continues to practice emergency medicine at St. Joseph's Hospital and will be a professor of practice in his namesake institution.

Crow asked Shufeldt why he offered to invest in ASU's new medical school.

"I want to be involved because not only do we need more physicians in the United States and across the world, but in Arizona as well. But we don't need physicians the way I was trained, because what got us here won't get us there," Shufeldt said.

"What will get us there is training a new sort of physician who can be a great humanistic and compassionate physician who can interact with patients, but who also thinks in systems. And as

anybody who's spent any time trying to find health care (knows), our system's broken.”

Shufeldt has earned three degrees from ASU, including an MBA and a juris doctorate, and is currently pursuing a master’s degree in World War II history.

“Every time I go back to school, I’m always like, 'How have I missed this my whole life?' It's a new pair of glasses, and it gives me a new perspective,” he said.

The first cohort of medical school students will begin in the fall and Shufeldt has been interviewing applicants.

“I've interviewed 12 students so far ... and the students that I'm interviewing, the qualifications I'm seeing, just completely blow me away,” he said.

“The reason I've made this investment to ASU is because I know it will get things done.”

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



ASU President Michael Crow (left) and John Shufeldt talk about ASU's new medical school during the annual Thought Leader Forum hosted by SRP on Feb. 26 at the Rob and Melani Walton Center for Planetary Health on ASU's Tempe campus. Photo by Deanna Dent/Arizona State University

**Text image(s)**





“The reason I've made this investment to ASU is because I know it will get things done,” said John Shufeldt, who provided a nine-figure gift to Arizona State University to operate its new medical school, during the SRP Thought Leader Forum. Photo by Deanna Dent/Arizona State University