Q: What is your perspective on the importance of talent and workforce development as a key economic driver?

A: The knowledge-based economy we face today is considerably different than the economy of the past where skills could be quickly acquired and utilized in a specific trade. Companies are attracted to potential employees who are able to learn new skills and drive the inevitable changes in disciplines and technology through innovative and synergistic approaches to the challenges of the 21st century.

Q: Why does The University of Arizona invest in and support economic development initiatives?

A: The UA is committed to developing Arizona into a dynamic leader in the global economy. We already have world-class industry and businesses in biosciences and healthcare, astronomy, aerospace and other fields. With economic growth and innovation, the people of Arizona can build on this foundation to create job security, adequate and affordable healthcare, a thriving culture and community, top-quality education and a fulfilling life.

We must work together to break with conventional business models and diversify sources of revenue for higher education and government. Building economic partnerships will ensure that Arizona is a viable destination for industries to prosper and to benefit from each other’s successes.

Q: Regarding the TREO Blueprint Update, why is the committee you serve on in this strategic planning initiative important to you?

A: For the UA to be successful in reinventing our land grant mission for the 21st and 22nd centuries, it is critical that we work with our partners to ensure our teaching and research target the real-world problems faced by Southern Arizona’s residents, families, businesses and leaders. I see TREO’s Blueprint as instrumental in ensuring synergy between the UA’s strategic priorities and those of the Tucson and Southern Arizona region to build on existing strengths and create new areas of economic development.

Q: What is the outlook for UA and higher education in 2014?

A: Higher education faces many challenges. However, by generating a supportive environment where students and faculty can develop creative solutions to real-world problems, the UA will be on the forefront of educating a new, integrative workforce equipped with a global mindset. Our faculty will continue leading the way in innovative research and creative inquiry. The UA’s strategic vision of engagement, innovation, partnership and synergy models Arizona’s path to meeting the challenges of the 21st century, and with our new academic strategic plan – Never Settle – 2014 promises to be an outstanding year.