

Degrees of Progress

News from the State Regents for Higher Education



OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Improving our future by degrees

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Concurrent Enrollment Is a Worthy Investment

Chancellor Glen D. Johnson

We know that an educated workforce is essential to Oklahoma's economic future. While approximately 31 percent of American adults over age 25 hold a bachelor's degree or higher, that number is just 25 percent in Oklahoma. This benchmark is particularly troubling in light of Oklahoma's forecasted employment needs. The Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce reports that by 2020, 67 percent of Oklahoma job vacancies will require an associate degree or additional postsecondary education and training, and 37 percent will require an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or higher. Concurrent enrollment is critical to Oklahoma's degree completion efforts and an important component of our nationally recognized Complete College America strategic plan.

Since 2005, the concurrent enrollment program has allowed outstanding high school juniors and seniors who meet admission and course placement requirements to earn college credit

at Oklahoma colleges and universities while still in high school. Concurrent enrollment courses are delivered via traditional instruction or online on a college or high school campus by qualified faculty providing a collegiate experience for the student.

Eligible high school seniors receive a tuition waiver of up to 18 credit hours per academic year for concurrent courses. Because concurrent enrollment drives student success, some colleges and universities have elected to provide tuition waivers for eligible juniors, as well.

A campus program vital to student success, concurrent enrollment strengthens student preparation, lowers family costs, and reduces the time required to complete a degree.

Recognizing the program's value, the State Regents included concurrent enrollment as a top funding priority in the state system of higher education's FY19 budget request. Additionally, the State Regents' Task Force on the Future of Higher Education unanimously recommended increased funding for sustainability and expansion of concurrent enrollment opportunities for Oklahoma students and families.

Oklahoma's state system of higher education greatly appreciates the Governor and Legislature's decision to appropriate an additional \$7.5 million to the concurrent enrollment program as part of their current FY19 appropriation. Prior to this allocation in support of concurrent enrollment, the program was funded at less than 27 percent of the cost – which means our public colleges and universities absorbed most of the cost for program delivery.



The current FY19 appropriation to public higher education for concurrent enrollment, which brings funding for the program to nearly 87 percent of the cost to our campuses, is an investment that benefits Oklahoma's students, their parents, and employers. Participation in concurrent enrollment has nearly doubled in the last 10 years, and in the last academic year, more than 12,000 students from Oklahoma high schools enrolled in concurrent courses generating over 108,000 student credit hours.

Moving forward, we know that restoring state appropriations for public higher education and expanding access to the concurrent enrollment program are essential to meeting Oklahoma's current and future workforce needs. Higher education remains the best investment our Governor and Legislature can make to ensure higher incomes for our citizens and a stronger and more diversified economy for our state.

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Embracing Community Stewardship

President Steve Turner, Northeastern State University



All too often, discussion about higher education institutions gets bogged down in statistics and dollar signs. Yes - enrollment trends, tuition rates, construction projects and budgets are all vital indicators of success, but the mission of our colleges and universities extends far beyond these measures.

Earlier this year, Northeastern State University hosted David Grann, author of "Killers of the Flower Moon," as speaker at the annual Larry Adair Lectureship. Approximately 800 guests joined us as we learned about what took place in Osage County, Oklahoma, at the very beginning of the FBI.

Through this lectureship series, we have also learned about Hotel Rwanda from its former manager Paul Rusesabagina; the Ebola outbreak from Richard Preston, author of *The Hot Zone*; and the Boston Marathon bombing from former Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis.

These opportunities for our community to gain inspiration from historical events demonstrate a key element of our overall mission: community stewardship.

Each year, at all three of our campuses, we fulfill our commitment to community stewardship by hosting numerous educational, informational, community service, and entertainment events and meetings like the ones described above. Each of these events adds to the quality of life and deepens the understanding of the world for the citizens of our region.

NSU attracts hundreds of guests and prospective students to our campuses and communities through a variety of events. These include chorale contests, sporting events, student and faculty recitals, summer camps, the six performances through the Sequoyah Institute Performing Arts Series (formerly *Galaxy of Stars*), jazz events, art exhibits, and, of course, the River City Players.

A few months ago, we fulfilled our community stewardship role in a more serious way by hosting an Oklahoma gubernatorial forum with eight of the 12 candidates in attendance. Approximately 250 citizens joined us in this important event sponsored by The Oklahoma Academy. And, through the American Democracy Project, NSU continues to receive accolades for encouraging voter registration and civic engagement of our students.

NSU's faculty and staff further our community stewardship role by serving on various boards, important committees, and countless nonprofit organizations. They volunteer their time and expertise by providing tax assistance, tutoring, singing in church choirs, and just being "good neighbors."

It is important to note that NSU's many community service activities often provide powerful immersive learning opportunities for our students.

It is important to note that NSU's many community service activities often provide powerful immersive learning opportunities for our students. With the guidance and supervision of our expert faculty, our students participate in clinical rotations, internships, practicums, job shadowing, and other activities. All of these real world experiences add value to the community and help prepare our graduates to enter the professional career arena.

As our colleges and universities prepare for the beginning of another school year, I hope all Oklahomans share my sense of pride in our education institutions at all levels. The depth of dedication to providing exceptional educational opportunities inside and outside the classroom is impressive, and it will help define our state's future.



Chancellor to Serve as SREB Vice Chair, SHEEO Chair

Chancellor Glen D. Johnson was recently elected vice chair of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and chair of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) Executive Committee.

SREB

This will be Johnson's fifth term to serve as SREB vice chair. Johnson will serve alongside Louisiana Gov. Jon Bel Edwards, who was elected chair of the board.

As vice chair of SREB's 80-member board, Johnson works with governors, legislators and state education leaders to improve public education and student achievement across the region from pre-K through the postsecondary level.

In addition to prior service on the board, Johnson previously chaired SREB's Commission on College Affordability. Oklahoma's state system of higher education is a national leader in affordability, recognized by both the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the National Center for Education Statistics as one of the most affordable systems in the nation.

SREB works with member states to improve public education at every level, from early childhood through doctoral education. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Atlanta, SREB was created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislatures to advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region. Member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

SHEEO

Last year, Johnson was elected to serve as SHEEO chair-elect during 2017-18 and as chair during 2018-19. Due to a vacancy in the position of chair, he has assumed the chair role ahead of schedule.

Prior to serving as chair-elect, Johnson served the SHEEO Executive Committee as treasurer during 2016-17. He was previously elected to the Executive Committee in 2014 and 2015, and also served consecutive two-year terms in 2008 and 2010.

The Executive Committee is responsible for shaping SHEEO's federal priorities and strategies and for leading its communications with Congress, the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies.

SHEEO, the national association of the chief executives of statewide governing boards and coordinating boards for postsecondary education, works to assist its members and states in developing and sustaining excellent systems of higher education.

Johnson was named chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education in January 2007 following a national search. Before assuming the role of chancellor, he served as the 16th president of Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant for 10 years. He was also director of public policy and adjunct professor of law at the University of Oklahoma College of Law. Prior to his work at OU, he served in the Oklahoma House of Representatives from 1982 to 1996 and was speaker of the House from 1990 to 1996. At the time of his election as speaker, he was the youngest sitting speaker in the United

States. He is an honors graduate of OU with an undergraduate degree in political science and a juris doctorate from the OU College of Law, and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 2006 and the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame in 2016.

QUICK FACT

Concurrently enrolled students generated over 108,000 credit hours in the last academic year.

Chancellor Hans Brisch Scholars

Two Oklahoma high school seniors have been named Chancellor Hans Brisch Scholars for outstanding leadership, civic involvement and academic talent.

Katherine Cockreham, Woodward High School, and Nathan Lindsey, Healdton High School, will each receive a \$2,000 award through the Chancellor Hans Brisch Scholarship program.



The Chancellor's Scholars Program was created in 1990 with private funds. The program was renamed in 2006 to honor Brisch, who served as chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education for 15 years. Brisch retired in 2003 and passed away in February 2006.

The 2018 Chancellor Hans Brisch Scholars were selected from nominations made by high school principals statewide.

Both students distinguish themselves academically and through their active involvement in their local communities. Cockreham and Hopper will both be graduating with 4.0 grade point averages and plan to attend Oklahoma State University in the fall.

Brisch Scholars are academically talented high school seniors with outstanding leadership ability and a commitment to the enhancement of their communities as demonstrated through their involvement in high school and/or community programs or projects that have resulted in an improvement of the learning environment of the school or the social betterment of the community.

In the 28 years since its inception, the Chancellor's Scholars program has provided scholarships for 99 deserving students. Private gifts, including professional honoraria from the current and past chancellors, support the program, which honors not only Brisch but the office of the chancellor and all individuals who serve Oklahoma in that position.

Newman Civic Fellows

Determined to find solutions for the challenges communities face throughout the country, 12 inspirational students from Oklahoma's colleges and universities were recently recognized as 2018 Newman Civic Fellows.

Matthew Staples, Connors State College; Raegan Mach, Northern Oklahoma College; Riley Pearce, Northwestern Oklahoma State University; Turner Smith, Oklahoma Christian University; Katie Hardin, Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology; Quinn McCormick, Rogers State University; Alexis Harris, Rose State College; Tiler Rose, Southwestern Oklahoma State University; Matthew McClure, University of Oklahoma; Joseph Mason, Tulsa Community College; Kalen Russell, University of Central Oklahoma; and Sabine Brown, University of Oklahoma-Tulsa, are among 268 students from 40 states, Washington, D.C., Mexico and Greece, who comprise this year's Newman Civic Fellows.

The Newman Civic Fellows program was established by Campus Compact in honor of co-founder Frank Newman, who dedicated

his life to creating opportunities for student civic learning and engagement. The award is designed to recognize college students who have demonstrated an investment in finding solutions for the challenges faced by communities across the nation through service, research and advocacy.

Each of Oklahoma's fellows will receive a \$500 scholarship from Oklahoma Campus Compact. Students are nominated by their college or university president.



Reach Higher Recognition Ceremony

Approximately 150 Reach Higher students and their families, faculty, and representatives from participating institutions recently gathered at the Oklahoma History Center to honor current participants, 2018 graduates, faculty and other educational partners.

Speakers included Chancellor Glen D. Johnson and former Oklahoma Secretary of State Dave Lopez, who inspired students to complete their degrees in order to build Oklahoma's workforce. Additionally, three Reach Higher students and graduates talked about their experiences returning to college as adult students.

Reach Higher, Oklahoma's adult degree completion program, was initiated in 2007. The program was recently renamed Reach Higher: *FlexFinish* to reflect the addition

of a new adult degree completion option, Reach Higher: *DirectComplete*.

Reach Higher: *FlexFinish* offers a Bachelor of Science in organizational leadership at eight regional universities, as well as an Associate in Arts and Associate in Science in enterprise development (general studies or business administration).

The new Reach Higher: *DirectComplete* program, supported by a grant from the Lumina Foundation, is designed to provide opportunities for adults to complete degree programs with funding and support from partnerships developed to ensure student success. The program will target individuals identified by state partners who are within 15 credit hours (75 percent) of completing an associate degree or within 60 credit hours

(50 percent) of completing a baccalaureate on the list of degrees connected with workforce development needs that align with Oklahoma's 100 Critical Occupations List. Participants must have a 2.0 GPA in all previous college credits and must have completed all remedial coursework.

The Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. Lumina envisions a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results and meets the nation's need for talent through a broad range of credentials. The Foundation's goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and for success in a global economy.

For more information about the Reach Higher programs, visit www.reachhigheroklahoma.org.

COLE Awards

The Council for Online Learning Excellence (COLE), an initiative of the State Regents' Online Education Task Force, recently recognized three faculty members and a university team for their outstanding work.

Dr. Stacy Southerland, professor of Spanish and faculty liaison for the Center for eLearning and Connected Environments at the University of Central Oklahoma, was honored with the Oklahoma Online Excellence Award for Teaching. The Oklahoma Online Excellence Award for Innovation was presented to Randy Dominguez, director of online learning at Tulsa Community College. Gary Dotterer, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Rogers State University, received the Oklahoma Online Excellence Award for Individual Leadership, and the University of Oklahoma's information technology division was presented with the Oklahoma Online Excellence Award for Team Leadership.

The State Regents created the Online Education Task Force in 2012 to review the delivery of online education throughout the state system and to determine the

extent to which the delivery of online education is accessible, efficient and effective. COLE, formed by the task force in 2016, is comprised of faculty, staff and administrators representing each tier of Oklahoma's public and private colleges and universities, as well as other entities connected to online learning technologies.

The 2018 Oklahoma Online Excellence Awards nominations were submitted by peers and judged by a committee of COLE members. Nominees were scored using a standard rubric based on the metrics of leadership, innovation, collaboration and results.

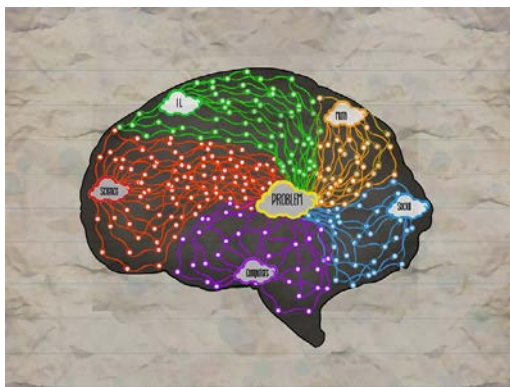


OneNet Helps K20 Center Provide Interactive Learning Materials to Students Across Oklahoma

Technology has become an integral part of how we communicate, learn and enjoy our free time. While many digital tools seem to only have recreational value, leaders at the University of Oklahoma's K20 Center are leveraging video game platforms to engage students in difficult education topics, and OneNet's statewide network is bringing these resources to schools across the state.

The K20 Center is a statewide education research and development center that adapts instructional technology to improve student learning and help Oklahoma schools become high-achieving, interactive learning communities.

Leaders at the K20 Center see video games as an avenue for students to engage with educational content that promotes higher-order problem solving, and in turn allows students to have a richer learning experience. However, in examining examples of other educational video games, Dr. Scott Wilson, director of innovative learning, found that the interface wasn't as engaging or exciting as he would have liked.



"The role of early educational games seems to be more of a 'drill and kill' mentality that assists students in memorizing facts and/or practicing skills," Wilson said.

Instead, the K20 Center aims to design games that create meaningful learning experiences in a familiar and engaging way.



K20CENTER THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Currently, one of the most popular games developed by the K20 Center is called "Mind Your Own Budget," which teaches financial literacy and meets all of Oklahoma's curriculum requirements. So far, over 6,000 high school students have played the game. The center has also developed games covering subjects like evolution, calculus and scientific data collection and interpretation.

"Game-based learning inherently provides learners with structured opportunities to take conceptual understanding and apply it to a real-world problem, with just-in-time supports to ensure success," said Wilson.

Although the K20 Center had successfully designed games that were helping to engage students, they still faced difficulties in distributing the content to schools. Many of the game development efforts were supported through research grants, and while these grants helped support the creation of the content, they did not fully cover costs associated with distribution.

To help the K20 Center ensure students across Oklahoma had access to their materials, OneNet partnered with the organization to host a virtual server in OneNet's data center. The server hosts the gaming software and provides students across the state with access to the games. Without the partnership, the K20 Center would have to dedicate staffing resources to ensure proper maintenance of the server, while also paying substantially more to host the games on their personal server.

"Our partnership with the K20 Center demonstrates OneNet's commitment to expanding educational opportunities across Oklahoma," said Von Royal, OneNet executive director. "Our aim is to help organizations like the K20 Center advance STEM initiatives."

With a mission of cultivating a collaborative network that creates and sustains innovation, the K20 Center is changing how children in Oklahoma interact with educational material. By partnering with OneNet, their innovative products are becoming more accessible than ever before.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



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OCAP Awarded FAFSA Completion Challenge Grant

The Oklahoma College Assistance Program (OCAP) is one of 25 organizations selected to receive a 2018-19 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Completion Challenge Grant of up to \$40,000 from the National College Access Network (NCAN). Through this project, which focuses on areas with current FAFSA completion rates below the national average, NCAN challenges each of the grant recipients to increase their city's FAFSA completion rates by at least 5 percent for the graduating high school class of 2019.

The 2016-17 FAFSA Completion Challenge demonstrated that cities could achieve significant progress in just one school year by working collaboratively across sectors to give students the FAFSA completion support

they need, enabling students to tap into huge amounts of government resources that often go unclaimed. Across the board, the cities of participating organizations logged an average increase of 4.43 percentage points, helping to reverse a four-year decline in nationwide FAFSA completions. Completion of the FAFSA helps predict a student's success in higher education. Ninety percent of high school seniors who complete the FAFSA attend college directly after high school, compared to just 55 percent of FAFSA non-completers.

"We were very honored to be chosen as one of the 2018-19 FAFSA Completion Challenge Grant recipients," said OCAP's Outreach Manager Kelli Kelnar. "Our Outreach team is currently putting together a comprehensive

plan of action to work with Oklahoma City Public Schools' students and parents to share the benefits of obtaining a college education, along with providing assistance and resources to help these students complete the FAFSA and successfully reach their future goals."

OCAP, an operating division of the State Regents, provides college access, aid awareness, financial literacy and student loan management programs and services that benefit students, parents, schools and community partners. OCAP offers numerous FAFSA resources for educators and students through StartWithFAFSA.org, UCanGo2.org and OKcollegestart.org. To learn more about OCAP, visit OCAP.org.

2018-19 College Planning Publications

This fall, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education will distribute thousands of publications to help Oklahoma students plan and prepare for a college education. Counselors will also receive publications to assist with students' college planning.



What's Your Plan for College?

These brochures for eighth- through 10th-grade and 11th- through 12th-grade students outline the courses they must take in high school to be admitted to an Oklahoma public college or university, as well as financial aid information, estimated college costs, salary expectations for various jobs, and information about campus comparison and selection.

Counselors' Resource Book: Oklahoma's Colleges and Universities

This online publication for high school counselors provides a profile of each college and university in Oklahoma and includes information about preparing for college, college costs and financial aid.



High School Counselor Toolkit

UCanGo2, a college access initiative of the Oklahoma College Assistance Program, produces these kits to support educators' outreach to students and parents. Each kit includes an Instructor's Guide, a Plan of Action to help counselors make the most of UCanGo2 materials throughout the year, student tools and FAFSA education resources.

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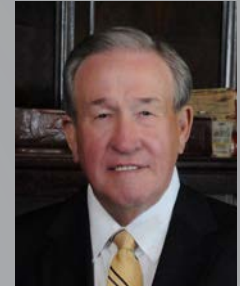
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