



# DEGREES OF PROGRESS

eNews from the State Regents for Higher Education



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## INVESTING TODAY IN TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

By Chancellor Allison D. Garrett

When I think about the future, I think about my lively, one-year old granddaughter, a seventh-generation Oklahoman, and what she may grow to be someday. Will she become an engineer who redesigns Oklahoma infrastructure? She loves animals; will she become a veterinarian who powers our state's farming and agriculture industry? While I can't know today what she will become, I know for sure that the higher education resources she needs to learn, grow and thrive will be waiting for her when she begins a career path, thanks to the investments we are making today.

I'm grateful for the Oklahoma Legislature's appropriation of \$873.4 million to support our state system of higher education in FY23. It is clear our legislative leaders recognize the critical role our public colleges and universities play in meeting Oklahoma's current and future workforce needs.

The State Regents earmarked \$11.5 million to incentivize Oklahoma's public colleges and universities to produce more graduates in STEM-related fields among our state's 100 critical occupations. Funding was allocated to state system institutions for three academic years based on credit hour production and degrees conferred in key STEM disciplines, including engineering, computer science, data analytics, nursing and other high-demand fields. At the end of the three-year period, funds may be reallocated based on a review of performance metrics. These workforce development initiatives will produce **talented, financially secure workers who remain in and bring value to our state after graduation.**

In addition, \$17.4 million of the allocation will fund scholarships for future teachers and employment incentives for new teachers to address our current teacher shortage. Students in an approved teacher education program at our public universities could receive up to \$5,500 in scholarships to earn their



degree, and new teachers may be eligible to receive a \$4,000 retention stipend upon completion of each of the first five years of an employment contract with an Oklahoma public K-12 school district. We're developing a policy framework to administer this investment in Oklahoma teachers.

States with a higher percentage of college degree-holders have higher per capita incomes and stronger, more diversified economies. These investments will help ensure the economic security of our friends and families. By 2028, 66 of Oklahoma's 100 critical occupations will require an associate degree or higher, and 47 of the top 50 highest paying critical occupations in Oklahoma – and all of the top 10 highest paying critical occupations - will require a college degree. An educated workforce has the capacity to address employer needs and demonstrate the advantages of these careers, inspiring Oklahomans to pursue paths that help our communities grow and individuals meet their greatest potential.

The Legislature's foresight to invest in public higher education will change Oklahoma's future. I'm excited to contribute to this important work to advance Oklahoma and proud to help create a thriving state for all our children and grandchildren — whatever they may grow to be.

## KEEP IN TOUCH WITH OSRHE

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Oklahoma State Regents

# NEO BUILDS NURSING PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTHEAST TECHNOLOGY CENTER

By Dr. Kyle Stafford, President, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College

Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College is committed to the workforce needs of the state of Oklahoma. As an example, we have formed a partnership with Northeast Technology Center to provide a seamless transition for its Licensed Practical Nurse students to pursue the applied associate degree for Registered Nurses from NEO on the Northeast Tech Kansas campus. Classes will begin in January 2023.

This partnership demonstrates that NEO and Northeast Tech are committed to addressing the nursing shortage in northeastern Oklahoma. It also allows us to utilize our individual areas of expertise to educate Oklahoma students and enhance our own institutions at the same time.

More than 60% of RNs in Oklahoma are Associate Degree Nurses, double the national average, and there are more than 16,000 LPNs in the state who could transition to RNs using a career mobility nursing program.

NEO's nursing program dates back to 1975, and offers a traditional nursing program and fast track option at the Miami campus. The Northeast Tech partnership creates a second fast track program and expands our program to the Northeast Tech Kansas campus.

The fast track program at Northeast Tech is supported by one new full-time nursing faculty and one new adjunct faculty position. These faculty members teach classes,

supervise clinicals, advise students, and coordinate program activities under the direction and supervision of the NEO Nursing department chair, Kathleen Norman.

As a matter of convenience, the expansion allows LPNs and paramedics living near the Northeast Tech campus to earn an associate degree in nursing without having to drive to the NEO campus in Miami. Students will be able to have the same fast track program experience at a different location.

Launching this program at Northeast Tech provides its students with the ability to continue their studies at a location they are already familiar with and in a geographic location that eliminates barriers for them to pursue their nursing degree. Ultimately, our goal is to get them into the workforce sooner.

*"This partnership stems from a true desire to meet the needs of the district. One of the things we do at Northeast Tech is find a workforce need and figure out a way to meet it. We look forward to working with NEO to close the gap on the nurse shortage in Oklahoma." - Roger Crutchfield, superintendent of Northeast Tech*

The Northeast Tech Practical Nursing program prepares students for a career as an LPN through a variety of hands-on and in-class learning experiences. As LPNs, graduates have opportunities in numerous fields, including long-term care, hospital nursing, and home health, among others.



The NEO Nursing Fast Track program provides opportunities for LPNs and Licensed Paramedics to receive advanced standing in the completion of an Associate in Applied Science in Nursing. The expansion of the fast track program provides many benefits for both institutions and relief for the healthcare system as it continues to recover from the pandemic.





## QUARTERLY NEWS AT A GLANCE

- [Jay Helm named State Regent Emeritus](#)
- [State Regents' Council for Online Learning Excellence honors outstanding work of faculty, staff, administrators](#)
- [Four Oklahoma college and university students named Newman Civic Fellows](#)
- [State Regents allocate funds for Oklahoma colleges, universities with incentives for critical workforce graduates](#)
- [Outstanding senior named Chancellor Hans Brisch Scholar](#)
- [New officers elected to lead State Regents](#)
- [State Regents continue to keep tuition affordable](#)
- [Hilliary sworn in as new State Regent](#)
- [Oklahoma Legislators receive Higher Education Distinguished Service Awards](#)
- [College degrees produced by Oklahoma public higher education continue to increase](#)

## ONENET AWARDED NSF GRANT

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) and OneNet a \$942,263 Campus Cyberinfrastructure (CC\*) grant to connect additional campuses to the OneOklahoma Friction Free Network (OFFN). This marks the third award to OSRHE and OneNet to expand the OFFN network.

Administered by NSF's Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure, the CC\* grant program invests in campus-level cyberinfrastructure improvements for science applications and research projects. Previous NSF awards connected 19 Oklahoma research and regional universities to OFFN. This new award specifically targets smaller institutions and will expand the network into rural areas of the state.

Under the terms of this two-year grant cycle, Murray State College (MSC) and College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN) will be connected to the OFFN network. Two other schools, Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OSUIT) and Rogers State University (RSU), will receive upgrades to enhance connectivity.

"The State Regents are pleased to expand the OFFN network to additional campuses across the state," said Chancellor Allison D. Garrett. "These campus connections create new research and education opportunities for faculty and students. A diverse student population, including Native American and first-generation students, will have broader access to resources that develop 21st century workforce skills."

OFFN is a 10 and 100 Gbps research network that provides higher education institutions with a dedicated route to internet and research networks that is much faster than traditional internet highways. This alternate pathway allows researchers to transmit data at higher speeds.

The project will make advanced cyberinfrastructure tools and services available to the campuses to support distance learning and a wide range of scientific disciplines, including cybersecurity, natural resources and agriculture. The grant award also will fund optical fiber builds to three campuses, providing CMN, OSUIT and RSU with 10 Gbps connections to OneNet and the OFFN network. MSC's connectivity will also increase to 10 Gbps.

The award will be managed by OneNet, the state system of higher education's comprehensive digital communications entity. Brian Burkhart, OneNet's senior director of network systems, will serve as principal investigator. Mekko Tyner of CMN will lead



research and education application adoption. Sky Pettett of OneNet will manage network technology implementation and training, and April Goode of OneNet will provide planning, communications and coordination services for grant implementation.

"As Oklahoma's partner in research and education, OneNet used NSF CC\* funding to provide research-grade connectivity to our state's higher education campuses," said Burkhart. "Our goal is to engage faculty and students in scientific discovery and innovation through OFFN's high-speed connections and data transfer capabilities to supercomputing resources, instruments and datasets. These investments not only foster new discoveries, but enhance economic growth for our state."

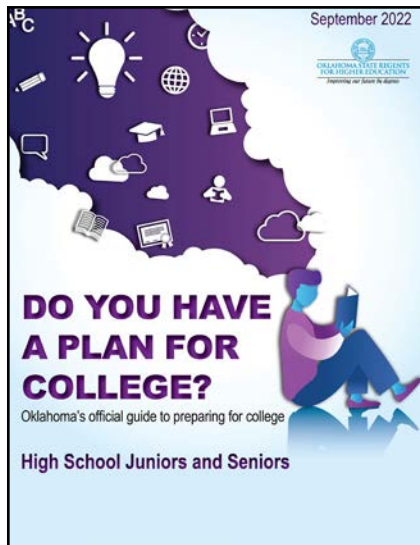
### Keep in touch with OneNet

[OneNet.net](http://OneNet.net)



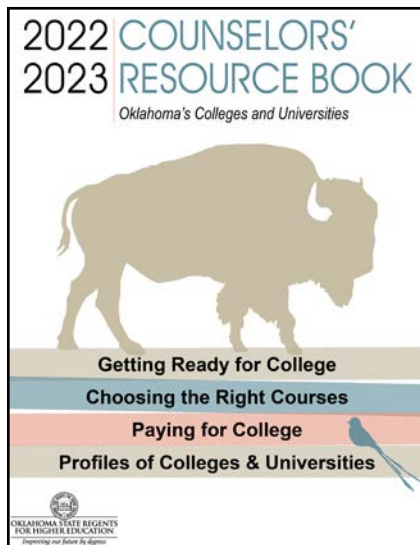
# 2022-23 COLLEGE PLANNING PUBLICATIONS

This fall, the State Regents will offer free online college planning publications for Oklahoma counselors and students.



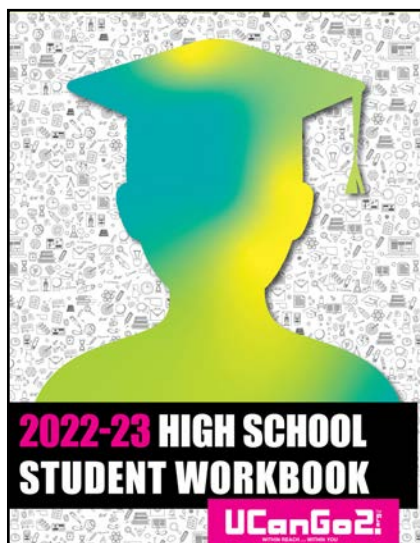
## DO YOU HAVE A PLAN FOR COLLEGE?

These digital brochures for eighth- through 10<sup>th</sup>-grade and 11<sup>th</sup>- through 12<sup>th</sup>-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, is producing a digital kit to support educator outreach to students and parents. Each digital toolkit 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.



## OKLAHOMA HIGHER EDUCATION NEWS

- [New OU program to address mental health care need](#)
- [OSU researchers partner with University of Arizona to address national opioid epidemic](#)
- [NSU preparing future educators with tech skills to thrive in digital learning environments](#)
- [Teachers, students to benefit from grant awarded to UCO professor](#)
- [NOC Foundation establishes new nursing scholarship](#)
- [OSCC forgives \\$4 million in student debt](#)
- [RSC offers hands-on cybersecurity training program](#)
- [TCC, partners, unveil new cyberskills initiative targeting underserved job seekers](#)

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ReadySetRepay



UCanGo2



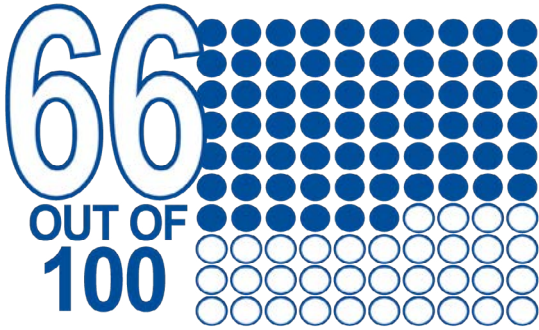
OKcollegestart



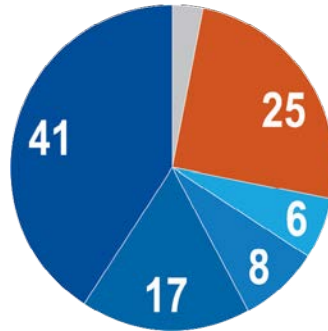
OKCollegeAssistance

# DID YOU KNOW?

## OKLAHOMA'S 100 CRITICAL OCCUPATIONS (2018-28)

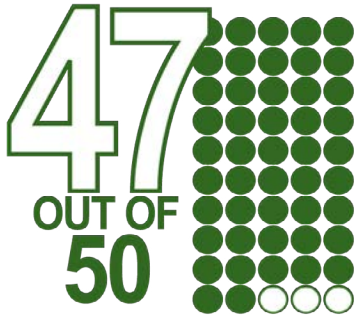


66 of the top 100 critical occupations require an associate degree or higher.



Of the 100 critical occupations:

- ▶ 41 require a bachelor's degree
- ▶ 17 require an associate degree
- ▶ 8 require a master's or doctoral degree
- ▶ 6 require a technical certificate or some college coursework
- ▶ 25 require a high school diploma or equivalent



47 of the top 50 highest-paying jobs require an associate degree or higher.



9 of the top 10 fastest-growing jobs require postsecondary education beyond high school.



7 of the top 10 fastest-growing jobs require an associate degree or higher.

Source: Oklahoma Works



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*Improving our future by degrees*

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