

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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Restore State Support for Higher Education

Chancellor Glen D. Johnson, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

While the State Regents' Task Force on the Future of Higher Education works to strengthen higher education tomorrow, our public institutions strive to serve students today with state appropriations reduced below 2001 levels. Appropriations to public higher education were cut more than \$157 million in 2016 and another \$36.4 million in 2017. Cuts to higher education from FY14 to FY17 represented more than 53 percent of all state agency budget reductions. In total, state system appropriations have been cut 22 percent over the past three fiscal years.

We must acknowledge the adverse impacts of these cuts on each college and university's ability to continue meeting Oklahoma's college degree completion goals and workforce needs. Campuses face further reduction of academic course offerings, including in critical STEM fields like engineering, nursing and manufacturing. Lt. Gen. Lee Levy, commander of the Air Force Sustainment Center at Tinker Air Force Base, indicated that underfunding Oklahoma higher education is a national

security issue, noting he could hire every engineer that the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University produce.

Successive budget reductions also impair our institutions' ability to match research and grant funding opportunities from funders such as the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and NASA. Continuation of tuition waiver programs like concurrent enrollment, Academic Scholars, the National Guard program, and the Regional University Baccalaureate Scholarship is threatened. Institutional accreditation and authorization to administer federal financial aid are jeopardized by campus reserve funds below established requirements.

Despite this exceptionally challenging fiscal environment, our state system of higher education continues to keep tuition affordable. Critics make statements about "skyrocketing" tuition, but in truth, tuition at Oklahoma public higher education institutions is ranked among the lowest in the United States. While tuition costs have increased dramatically in many other states, Oklahoma's public colleges and universities have increased tuition and fees an average of only 5 percent since the start of the recession in FY09. Oklahoma ranks among the 10 states with the lowest student debt level, and half of our students graduate from state system institutions with no loan debt.

Unless state support is restored, a college degree could become financially out of reach for more families when



Chancellor Glen D. Johnson

increasing college degree completion is more important than it has ever been. Our state system of higher education continues to implement significant cost-cutting measures, including sharing faculty and administrators between institutions; developing innovative, low-cost academic degree programs; reducing travel; offering early retirement options; and consolidating administrative functions, as referenced in Gov. Mary Fallin's recent executive order.

It is imperative that our public higher education system receive sufficient resources to produce the workforce of college degree-holders that Oklahoma business and industry requires. We remain optimistic that the state economic climate will improve, but it is vitally important that we continue to make the case that there is no better investment to ensure a stronger and more diversified state economy than the investment our policy leaders can make in higher education.

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Guest Commentary: Graduates Produce a Sustainable State Economy

Bruce Benbrook, President and Chairman, Stock Exchange Bank, Woodward and Chairman of the Board, Oklahoma Tomorrow



Bruce Benbrook

I grew up in a rural Oklahoma banking family. I learned that building a successful future requires sacrifice, long-term focus, and careful attention to the bottom line. These lessons apply to our state government, as well.

While legislators struggle with difficult budget challenges, it is critical they take into consideration a major negative impact on Oklahoma's bottom line: we are not producing enough college graduates to fill today's jobs, much less Oklahoma's future workforce needs.

Bottom line damage includes potential loss of work at Tinker Air Force Base, because Oklahoma is not graduating enough engineers, information technology specialists, and other critical professions. Healthcare providers statewide are devastated by a critical nursing shortage made worse because every college and university in Oklahoma has to turn away qualified potential nurses every semester due to budget cuts. There are over 18,000 job openings in Oklahoma unable to be

filled for one reason only — not enough college graduates.

Slashing funding to Oklahoma's colleges and universities has damaged rural areas like my hometown of Woodward. Just as we recover from the oil downturn, we are hit with a slowing pipeline of graduates from schools like Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma Panhandle State University and Northern Oklahoma College. Many graduates return to rural communities to fill our prescriptions, make our mortgages, do our taxes, and run our schools. How will we grow without a workforce educated for today's economy?

Bankers look for balanced, sustainable approaches to stability and growth. But 53 cents of every dollar of state budget cuts in Oklahoma in the last three years has been taken from our higher education system. There is nothing balanced or sustainable about that. In fact, the disproportionate targeting of our ability to educate our workforce sentences another generation of Oklahomans to being ranked 49th on all the good economic and quality of life lists.

Fewer graduates mean less economic growth to fund common education, healthcare, public safety, transportation and other critical functions. We are eating our seed corn; raiding our future growth to pay for the latest crisis. Who gets hurt the worst? Rural communities and struggling neighborhoods robbed of economy-growing talent, and working poor and middle-class students who neither qualify for financial aid nor inherit a trust fund.

Private sector and tribal business leaders statewide formed Oklahoma Tomorrow, a nonprofit organization advocating for decisions that lead to more graduates for our economy and communities. We must commit to growing our economy for future challenges and opportunities.

This issue is about students — recent high school graduates and returning adults — who will be Oklahoma's leaders soon. To stabilize our economy and communities, these students need state leaders to make decisions to unite Oklahomans and expand opportunities.

We cannot afford to ignore the consequences of defunding higher education. Encourage your legislators to work together to make better decisions today in order to secure a better Oklahoma tomorrow.

Quick Fact

More than 87% of OK resident students who earn a bachelor's degree remain/are employed in our state one year after graduation.

2017 Distinguished Service Awards

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education honored two individuals with Distinguished Service Awards for Higher Education during December 2017.

On Dec. 7, Senator Jason Smalley was honored during the State Regents' meeting for his support of higher education in his role as a member of the Oklahoma State Senate and as chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education; for his efforts to restore funding to higher education and minimize budget cuts to higher education during the 2017 regular session; and for his ongoing support of the Oklahoma's Promise program,

including serving as principal author of SB 529, historic reform legislation passed during the 2017 regular session.

On Dec. 15, State Representative Tammy West was honored during the Northwest Oklahoma City Chamber Community Coffee event in Bethany for her support of higher education in her role as Vice Chair of the House Higher Education and Career Tech Committee; for her efforts as Vice Chair of the Majority Caucus as an effective advocate for Oklahoma's colleges and universities and in her role on the House Appropriations & Budget Subcommittee to minimize budget cuts to higher education during the 2017 regular session; for her strong support

of campus safety and her support for maintaining local control and the current law regarding weapons on higher education campuses; and for her ongoing support of the Oklahoma's Promise college access scholarship.

The Distinguished Service Awards for Higher Education program was established to recognize individuals who demonstrate distinguished leadership and support of higher education in Oklahoma during the legislative session.

OSRHE, OCAP Launch the Oklahoma FAFSA Data Portal

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) and the Oklahoma College Assistance Program (OCAP) are now offering a free online tool to help counselors better assist their high school seniors to successfully complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The Oklahoma FAFSA Data Portal (OK FDP) allows counselors, principals and mentors to provide more targeted assistance to their students, which is instrumental in increasing FAFSA completion rates — especially among first generation students pursuing postsecondary education.

Through the OK FDP, authorized individuals from participating schools and districts have access to student level information on the FAFSA completion status of seniors in their school or district. By submitting

specific demographic data on high school seniors, users are able to view each student's name, date of birth, FAFSA status, date the FAFSA was submitted and a verification indicator as permitted by the Federal Student Aid office. This allows users to track their students' progress and identify students who may need additional assistance or encouragement to complete their application.

"The FAFSA is instrumental in opening the doors to postsecondary education options, and some students have questions or face challenges while completing the application," said Kelli Kelnar, OCAP's Outreach Services Manager. "The OK FDP helps educators identify those students and focus their FAFSA education efforts where they are needed most."

OCAP, an operating division of OSRHE, provides college access, aid awareness,

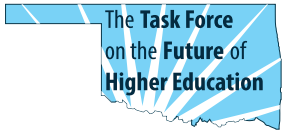
financial literacy and student loan management programs and services that benefit students, parents, schools and community partners. OCAP offers numerous FAFSA resources for educators and students through StartWithFAFSA.org, UCanGo2.org and OKcollegestart.org. To learn more about the OK FDP or to find out how your school or district can participate, visit okhighered.org/ok-fdp.



2018 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

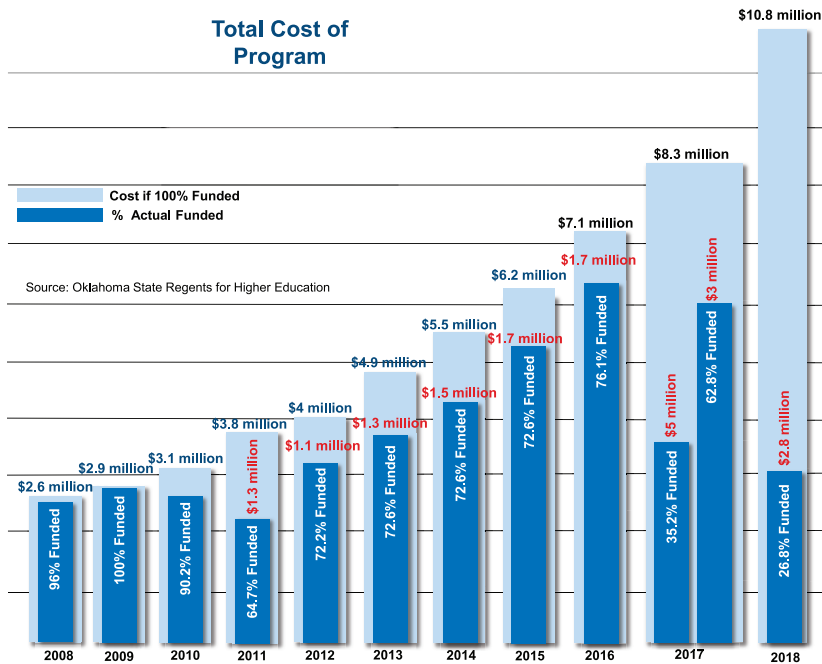
Task Force on the Future of Higher Education

The Task Force on the Future of Higher Education is charged to consider ways to improve degree completion and increase productivity by focusing on modernization, efficiencies and innovation. The task force is examining every aspect of system operations, including academic models, online education, structure, fiscal services and operational efficiencies, workforce development, and information technology to ensure they are properly aligned and defined to best serve our students and state.



Concurrent Enrollment

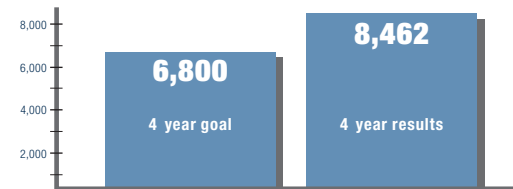
The concurrent enrollment program allows outstanding juniors and seniors to earn college credit while still in high school. In the last academic year, there were nearly 12,000 students enrolled in concurrent courses, generating more than 102,000 credit hours.



COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

Work continues to reach Oklahoma's goal of increasing the number of degrees and certificates earned by 67 percent by 2023.

Additional degrees and certificates earned:



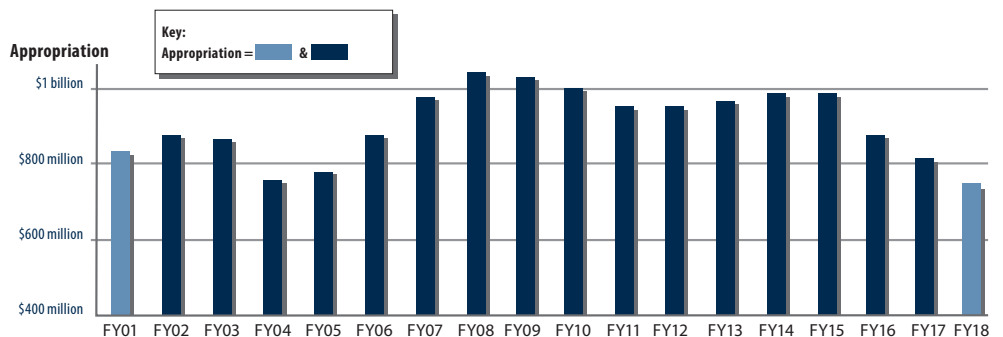
Other states are investing in degree completion. Data from the State Higher Education Executive Officers association show that Oklahoma ranks last among the 33 participating CCA states in the percentage change in state funding support since the initiative's inception in 2011.

With successive years of budget cuts, the concurrent enrollment program is now funded at only 26.8 percent of the cost to state system colleges and universities. To fully fund concurrent enrollment would require a \$10.8 million appropriation.

Historic Budget Cuts

State support for Oklahoma's higher education system has been set back a full generation. The \$773.6 million appropriation to public higher education for FY 2018 is \$41.2 million less than the amount appropriated in FY 2001.

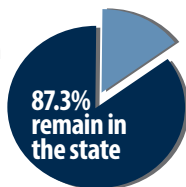
An Illinois State University study ranks Oklahoma last of the 50 states in the percentage change in state support for higher education from FY 2012 to FY 2017.



Students Who Learn Here Earn Here

A student with a college degree will earn \$1.1 million more in a lifetime than a high school graduate. Eighty-seven percent of Oklahoma residents who graduate with a bachelor's degree remain in the state and are employed in the state one year after graduation.

Source: 2017 Employment Outcomes Report



Oklahoma's Promise

The state system of higher education strongly supports keeping the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship, which provides college funding for approximately 18,000 students, intact as an access program. Over 80,000 Oklahoma students have met the eligibility requirements and earned the scholarship since the program's inception.



Workforce & Economic Impact of Public Higher Education

Governor Mary Fallin's Oklahoma Works and Launch Oklahoma initiatives are designed to bridge the skills gap between our current workforce and workforce needs. By 2020, 67 percent of jobs in Oklahoma will require a college degree or additional postsecondary education and training, and 37 percent will require an associate degree, bachelor's degree or higher. Oklahoma higher education links academic programs directly to employment needs in the state's wealth-generating ecosystems, and degree and certificate production in critical STEM disciplines has increased 32 percent over the last six years.



Our public higher education system generates more than \$9.2 billion in economic impacts. For every dollar of state appropriations invested in higher education, \$4.72 is returned to Oklahoma's economy.

FY 2019 Budget Need

FY 2018 Appropriation \$773,597,659

FY 2019 Budget Need:

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Degree Completion Programs and Initiatives | \$107,000,000 |
| a. Instruction and Academic Enterprise Requirements | \$84,500,000 |
| b. Facility Renovation/Physical Plant Maintenance | \$14,500,000 |
| c. Institutional Scholarships | \$8,000,000 |
| 2. Financial Aid Programs | \$18,400,000 |
| a. Restoration of Scholarship Programs | \$7,600,000 |
| b. Full Funding of Concurrent Enrollment Program | \$10,800,000 |
| 3. Special Programs and Shared Services | \$2,900,000 |
| a. Shared Services | \$1,350,000 |
| b. Grants and Federal Matching Funds | \$830,000 |
| c. Summer Academies and Student Preparation Programs | \$480,000 |
| d. Degree Completion and Teacher Shortage Incentives | \$240,000 |

FY 2019 Total Budget Need \$901,897,659

- \$ Difference from FY 2018 State Appropriations **\$128,300,000**
- % Difference from FY 2018 State Appropriations **16.6%**

Maintain Current Law on Weapons on Campus

Oklahoma higher education does not oppose the second amendment or gun ownership. Under current law, campus presidents have the discretion to grant exceptions to institutional policy when an exception is warranted. The current law is working.

In the past 10 legislative sessions, bills have either been introduced or discussed that would allow guns on campus. Each attempt has been successfully defeated to date, and ensuring similar legislation does not become law will continue to be a state system priority.

Impacts of Successive Years of Budget Cuts to Higher Education

-  faculty and staff positions eliminated, unfilled and furloughed
-  reduced academic course offerings, including STEM fields
-  reduced degree completion initiatives and community support programs
-  match funding for research and grants reduced or eliminated
- reduced funding for scholarships and tuition waivers, including Academic Scholars, the National Guard waiver, and the Regional University Baccalaureate Scholarship
-  threatened college and university accreditation

Nationally Recognized Affordability

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce ranks Oklahoma's system of higher education fifth in the nation in affordability, and the National Center for Education Statistics reports that the average student cost at a four-year public university in Oklahoma is fourth-lowest in the nation. *U.S. News and World Report* ranks Oklahoma tuition and fees as sixth-lowest in the nation and student debt at graduation as seventh-lowest in the nation.

2018 PUBLIC AGENDA

Goals

- Increase the number of college graduates.
- Enhance access and improve the quality of public higher education for all Oklahomans.
- Better prepare students to meet the challenges of a global economy.

Objectives

- Implement Complete College America initiatives to increase the number of degrees and certificates earned in Oklahoma by 67 percent by 2023.
- Enhance capacity to successfully enroll, retain and graduate students.
- Increase systemwide efficiencies and cost savings.
- Strengthen financial support for Oklahoma college students.
- Improve instructional quality.
- Utilize performance funding to enhance student success and academic quality.
- Broaden economic development activities.
- Advance access to and quality of technologies to support systemwide programs and services.

Key Initiatives

- Task Force on the Future of Higher Education
- Complete College America
- Oklahoma's Promise
- Concurrent Enrollment
- OKcollegestart.org
- Mathematics Success Initiative
- GEAR UP
- Reach Higher – FlexFinish
- Reach Higher – DirectComplete
- OneNet
- Online Education Task Force
- Campus Safety and Security Task Force

GEAR UP Awarded Grant

We are excited to announce that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education was recently awarded its fourth, consecutive GEAR UP grant. GEAR UP IV will partner with 10 school districts and five regional higher education campuses across the state to prepare approximately 12,000 seventh through 12th graders for college success.

Students will receive direct support services, including college campus tours, ACT prep and testing, college exploration and preparation courses, summer

intervention programs and one on one guidance from school specialists and college liaisons.

GEAR UP will offer college access and financial aid information to students and families through awareness activities and services, including Oklahoma's Promise and FAFSA completion assistance. GEAR UP will also provide collaboration and leadership opportunities for partner schools and work with them to implement and enhance professional learning communities.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



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OneNet's Connection to Pacific Wave Enhances Scientific Collaborations for Oklahoma's Research Institutions

With support from the National Science Foundation's International Research Network Connections (NSF IRNC) program, OneNet will be directly connected to the Pacific Wave International Exchange and its peering and high-performance, scientific networks. This new connectivity to the Western U.S. and Asia-Pacific region will enhance scientific collaborations for Oklahoma's research institutions.

Research and education projects within the state of Oklahoma, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Weather Center, and the National Severe Storms Laboratory will benefit from OneNet's expansive global connections. Researchers at the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University will be connected to the Pacific Wave through OneNet's 100Gbps high-speed optical network.

"Through this new connection to the Pacific Wave network, many of OneNet's member institutions will benefit from the enhanced connectivity to the Asia-Pacific region and beyond," said Chancellor Glen D. Johnson. "Researchers at Oklahoma's higher education institutions can further leverage existing research in areas like high energy physics, atmospheric science and predictive modeling, hydrology and water resources, machine learning, bioinformatics and genomic research."

OneNet will connect to Pacific Wave via the Western Regional Network (WRN). WRN is an extension of Pacific Wave, created by a collaboration of the Western regional research and education optical networks: Front Range Gigapop (CO and WY), New Mexico Gigapop,

University of Hawaii, Pacific Northwest Gigapop (WA, AK, MT, ND) and CENIC (CA). The Pacific Wave connects most international Asia-Pacific networks, key Western U.S. regional networks and leading national-scale research networks like Internet2 and ESnet. The NSF IRNC program will also connect Texas' Lonestar Education and Research Network (LEARN) to WRN and Pacific Wave.

One organization that will benefit from the new connection is the National Weather Center, a unique confederation of the University of Oklahoma, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and state organizations that work together in partnership to improve understanding of events occurring in Earth's atmosphere. The scientific data collected, analyzed and generated within the programs housed at the National

Weather Center are leveraged extensively globally and will benefit from the new connection to the Pacific Wave. At Oklahoma State University, expanded connections such as the Pacific Wave enhance opportunities for university research scientists.

"OneNet's connection to Pacific Wave will enable Oklahoma's researchers to collaborate globally on a variety of initiatives through international partnerships," said Vonley Royal, OneNet executive director and higher education chief information officer. "The requirements of Oklahoma's research community related to high-performance computing are diverse and demanding. The enhanced connection to the Asia-Pacific region is another way OneNet is leveraging collaborations to meet these requirements."



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