

Degrees of Progress

News from the State Regents for Higher Education



OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Improving our future by degrees

Volume 4, Issue 1 | Winter 2019

Legislative Tours Showcase State System FY20 Budget Request

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

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are requesting \$878.2 million for FY20 for the state system of higher education, which reflects an increase of \$101.5 million or 13.1 percent over the FY 2019 appropriation of \$776.7 million. Over the last couple of months, I have shared our pending budget request and legislative priorities for the 2019 regular session with legislators and community leaders across the state in a series of informational events hosted by our public colleges and universities.

Our state system of higher education remains committed to strengthening Oklahoma's economy and workforce despite historic budget cuts exceeding \$274 million since the recession. The additional funds requested for FY20 would begin restoring cuts of more than 26 percent to state appropriations for public higher education over the last decade, which would provide essential support for our colleges and universities in their ongoing efforts to meet Oklahoma's degree completion benchmarks.

As we continue our work to build Oklahoma's economy and workforce by increasing college degree completion, we must focus

on increasing faculty salaries, restoring base operational funding, and fully funding the concurrent enrollment program for high school seniors. We are requesting \$38.7 million to provide a 7.5 percent increase in faculty salaries. The average faculty salary at Oklahoma's public colleges and universities is more than 10 percent below their peers in other states. Low salary levels are straining public college and university faculty retention and recruitment in nursing, business, education, sciences, engineering, and other high demand programs that are essential to meet Oklahoma's workforce needs.

Strengthening Oklahoma's workforce pipeline through the Complete College America degree and certificate completion plan continues to be a top state system priority. We are requesting \$20.4 million to increase the number of faculty and instructor positions and restore course sections. This investment will provide state colleges and universities funding to meet instruction and academic enterprise requirements.

Increased funding for financial aid and scholarship programs will also be a priority. We are seeking \$12.3 million to restore significantly diminished scholarship programs and fully fund the concurrent enrollment program, which provides tuition waivers to high school seniors who enroll in college coursework during their senior year. Concurrent enrollment, which strengthens student preparation, reduces family costs for college, and decreases the time required to complete a degree, is currently funded at approximately 87 percent of the cost to our state system colleges and universities.



Another area of focus in the upcoming legislative session will be to maintain the current law regarding weapons on higher education campuses. Oklahoma higher education supports the second amendment and gun ownership. Under current law, campus presidents have the discretion to permit the carrying of weapons when an exception is warranted. The State Regents and the presidents of all 25 state system institutions strongly believe that the current law is working.

The State Regents will also continue efforts to protect the dedicated funding source for the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship. Recognized by many as America's best college access program, Oklahoma's Promise is considered a national model that combines emphases on academic preparation and financial support for college. More than 80,000 students have earned college tuition scholarships through Oklahoma's Promise since the program's inception in 1992.

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Community College Partnerships Boost Administrative Cost Savings

Gary Davidson, Executive Director
Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges



Oklahoma's public community colleges serve the needs of more than 100,000 students. As centers for educational opportunity, we welcome all who desire to learn regardless of their wealth, heritage, or previous academic experience. Providing quality, affordable, educational opportunities for our students will always remain job one. Streamlining administrative functions and creating cost saving partnerships allows our colleges to maximize our resources in the classroom and focus on our most important stakeholders — our students.

Our state system's community colleges have partnered with our public regional universities to realize significant cost savings and efficiencies through a cooperative insurance consortium. The Oklahoma Higher Education Employee Insurance Group (OKHEEI) consists of six community colleges and five regional universities across the state of Oklahoma. These institutions joined forces to effectively and economically provide competitive benefits for their employees. This cooperative agreement creates a large risk pool for insurance coverage, thereby improving coverage and offering additional

options while reducing administrative costs. A similar model has also been replicated for student athletic insurance and workers' compensation coverage.

For the last 51 years, the Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges (OACC) has provided conferences and seminars to meet the professional development needs of our two-year colleges. OACC's annual conference has hosted nationally renowned speakers that have included the Chief Executive Officer(s) from the American Association of Community Colleges, Phi Theta Kappa International, Higher Learning Commission, Southern Association of Colleges, and Schools Commission on Colleges. Distinguished educators and authors have also highlighted OACC's keynote presentations.

Bringing these subject matter experts to Oklahoma offers opportunities for staff to gain valuable insight into best practice ideas without the expense of out-of-state travel. Administrative cost efficiencies are not the only benefits created by the conferences. These gatherings create social networks which are useful in gaining information that improves productivity and cultivates innovation. Each year, OACC recognizes the top innovative ideas in teaching through our Great Ideas for Teaching (GIFT) Award Program. These ideas are published in OACC's GIFT Anthology with juried winners receiving cash awards and opportunities to present conference breakout sessions on their ideas.

OACC also hosts numerous topical seminars on important issues facing our colleges at no cost to the institutions or attendees. Subjects have included Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Changes, Title IX Compliance, and Grant Writing for the National Science Foundation. These seminars were facilitated

by national experts brought to Oklahoma, thereby saving countless dollars in out-of-state travel costs for our attendees. Our most recent seminar, "Oklahoma Teacher Retirement System Planning" was presented in a format that allowed our attendees to participate on a variety of platforms that included videoconferencing and live streaming. College employees from around the state participated in the seminar from the privacy of their offices, thus creating even greater administrative cost savings. This seminar was also made available to our colleagues in the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO). We will continue to offer these special topic seminars via multi-user formats and make them available to our associates at the university level to expand training and professional development opportunities for Oklahoma campuses.

Strategic partnerships create opportunities, productivity and innovation. There is no end-point, terminus or goal post to this process; this is a journey. Along the way, we must continue to make good choices as we invest our resources, efforts and intellectual capital in collaborative ventures.



2018 Distinguished Service Awards for Higher Education

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education recently honored three individuals with 2018 Distinguished Service Awards for Higher Education.

House Speaker Pro Tempore Harold Wright was recognized Dec. 6 for his support of higher education in his role as Speaker Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma House of Representatives.



Rep. Harold Wright



Rep. Kyle Hilbert



Sen. J.J. Dossett

Rep. Kyle Hilbert was recognized Jan. 23 for his support of funding for higher education, concurrent enrollment and the Oklahoma's Promise program. Hilbert is Vice Chair of the Appropriations and Budget Committee and Chair of the House Rural Caucus.

Sen. J.J. Dossett received the honor Jan. 24 for his steadfast support of the concurrent

enrollment program and his advocacy efforts to ensure higher education remains a top priority in Oklahoma. He serves on the Appropriations, Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural Resources and Regulatory Services, Agriculture and Wildlife, Education and Veterans and Military Affairs committees.

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

State Regents Launch New Adult Degree Completion Program

On November 14, 2018, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education launched Reach Higher: DirectComplete, an expanded adult degree completion program that connects state workforce development needs with degree programs at Oklahoma's colleges and universities. A grant from Lumina Foundation is providing more than \$777,000 over a three-year period to support the program.

Focusing on adult students, Reach Higher: DirectComplete is designed to help adults who have earned some college credit complete a degree linked to a critical occupation as designated by Oklahoma Works' Oklahoma's 100 Critical Occupations list. Partnerships with businesses, tribes, workforce development agencies, nonprofit organizations and foundations, federal and state agencies and other groups will provide scholarships, grants and other support to adult students who pursue degree programs within the Reach Higher: DirectComplete program.

As a foundation, Reach Higher: DirectComplete is building upon the current Reach Higher adult

degree completion program, Reach Higher: FlexFinish, which offers three discrete degree plans for working adults who have earned a minimum number of credit hours and want to complete an associate or bachelor's degree.

The program will target individuals identified by state partners who are within 15 credit hours of completing an associate degree (75 percent of coursework completed) or within 60 credit hours of completing a baccalaureate (50 percent of coursework completed) on the list of degrees desired by the state partner. Each participant must have a 2.0 grade point average in all previous college credits and must have completed all remedial coursework.

Reach Higher: DirectComplete will connect eligible students to tuition and educational assistance through employers, tribal education offices, workforce centers, non-profits and/or other entities. Lumina grant funding will support outreach, mentoring, coaching, and advising services and facilitate adult student access to other key assistance programs, such as child care, tutoring, emergency

funding, book/fee assistance, transportation, nutritional assistance and housing assistance. The program has 12 institutions and 15 organizational partners to date.

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is 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.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



www.facebook.com/reachhigheroklahoma



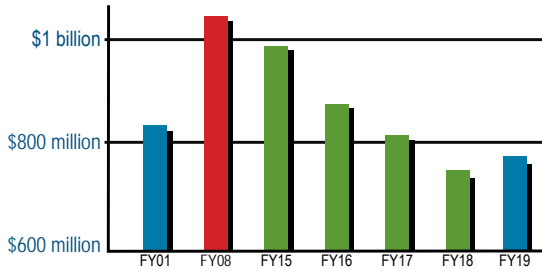
2019 Legislative Agenda

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

RESTORE HISTORIC BUDGET CUTS

State support for Oklahoma's higher education system has been cut more than \$274 million (26%) since the start of the recession.

Appropriation



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. We must begin restoring state funding for public higher education to meet Oklahoma's current and future workforce needs.

REVERSE THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF HISTORIC BUDGET CUTS

The state system proposes a plan to increase higher education appropriations for operations by approximately \$50 million each year for six years to restore cuts exceeding \$274 million (26%) since the start of the recession.

-  restore faculty and staff positions eliminated, unfilled and furloughed
-  restore academic course offerings, including STEM fields
-  restore degree completion initiatives and community support programs to meet workforce needs
-  restore match funding for research and grants
-  restore funding for scholarships and tuition waivers, including the National Guard waiver, Teacher Shortage Employment Incentive Program and Regional University Baccalaureate Scholarship
-  increase faculty salaries to maintain quality instruction and compete effectively in hiring
-  restore funding levels required for college and university accreditation

FY 2020 BUDGET NEED

FY 2019 Appropriation \$776,707,166

FY 2020 Budget Need:

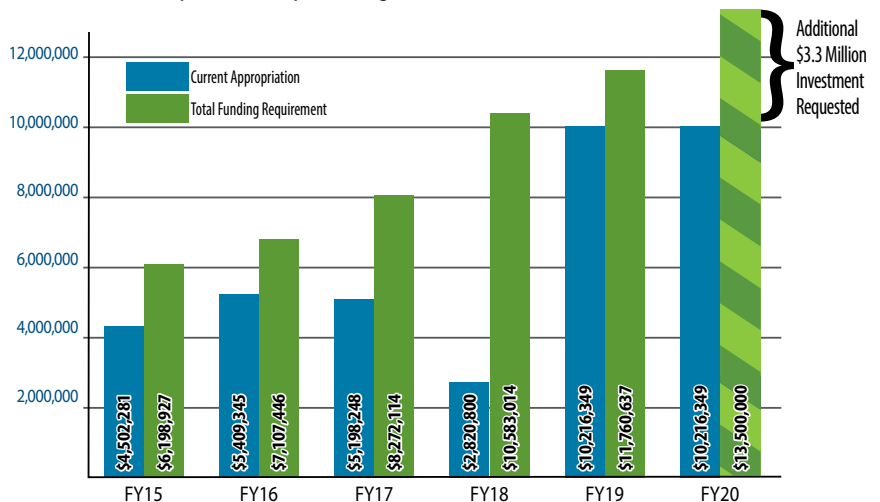
1. Faculty Salary Increases (7.5% increase) \$38,700,000
2. Restoration of Base Operational Funding \$50,500,000
 - a. Increase in number of faculty/instructor positions and restoration of course offerings \$20,400,000
 - b. Fixed cost increases \$24,300,000
 - c. Deferred maintenance for campus infrastructure (Section 13 offset) \$5,800,000
3. Financial Aid and Scholarship Programs \$12,300,000
 - a. Concurrent enrollment program \$3,300,000
 - b. Restoration of Scholarship Programs \$9,000,000

FY 2020 Total Budget Need \$878,207,166

- \$ Difference from FY 2019 State Appropriations \$101,500,000
- % Difference from FY 2019 State Appropriations 13.1%

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

The concurrent enrollment program strengthens student preparation, reduces family college costs, and decreases the time required to complete a degree.



Following the FY 2019 higher education appropriation of \$7.5 million for concurrent enrollment, funding for the program covers approximately 87% of the cost to state system colleges and universities. To fully fund concurrent enrollment would require an additional \$3.3 million investment.

FACULTY SALARIES

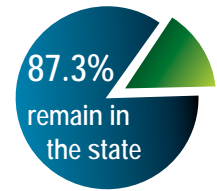
The most recent national rankings from the Southern Regional Education Board list Oklahoma as 44th for four-year institutions and 46th for two-year institutions in average faculty salary. The average salary for all faculty in Oklahoma's colleges and universities is more than 10% below their peers in other states. Additional funding for faculty salary increases is critical to our public institutions' efforts to competitively retain and recruit quality faculty. Low salary levels are straining faculty retention and recruiting in nursing, business, education, sciences, engineering and other high demand programs that are essential to meet Oklahoma's workforce needs.

TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The State Regents' Task Force on the Future of Higher Education conducted a comprehensive assessment of Oklahoma public higher education, including academic models, online education, structural reforms, fiscal services, operational efficiencies, workforce development, and information technology. After 10 months of study and deliberations, the Task Force unanimously issued a set of comprehensive cost saving, innovative strategies to increase degree completion in our state.

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. More than 87% 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: 2018 Employment Outcomes Report

OKLAHOMA'S PROMISE

The state system of higher education strongly supports protecting the dedicated funding source for the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship, which provides college funding for approximately 18,000 students. 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

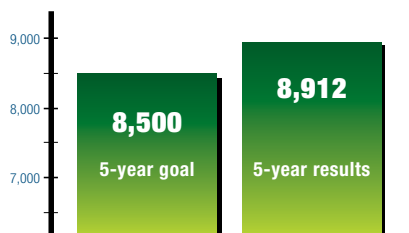
According to the Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce, by 2020, 67% of jobs in Oklahoma will require a college degree or additional postsecondary education and training, and 37% will require an associate degree, bachelor's degree or higher. Oklahoma higher education links academic programs directly to employment needs in the state's wealth-generating ecosystems, and degree and certificate production in critical STEM disciplines has increased 47% over the last seven years.

Our public higher education system supported \$8.2 billion in total economic output in FY 2016. For every dollar of state appropriations invested, the state system of higher education generates \$9.40 in economic output.

COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

Oklahoma's public and private institutions and career technology centers continue working to reach the state's goal of increasing the number of degrees and certificates earned through our Complete College America initiative. Despite successive years of budget cuts to public higher education, in the first five years of the CCA initiative, the number of degrees and certificates earned in Oklahoma increased by 8,912, surpassing the state's benchmark of 8,500.

Additional degrees and certificates earned:



Other states are investing in degree completion, while state support of Oklahoma public higher education has been cut 26% since the start of the recession in 2008. 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.

MAINTAIN CURRENT LAW ON WEAPONS ON CAMPUS

Oklahoma higher education supports the second amendment and 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 11 legislative sessions, bills have been introduced or discussed that would allow weapons 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.

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AFFORDABILITY

U.S. News and World Report ranks Oklahoma tuition and fees as 7th-lowest in the nation and student debt at graduation as 10th-lowest in the nation.

2019 Public Agenda

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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
- Concurrent Enrollment
- Adult Degree Completion
- Complete College America
- OKcollegestart.org
- OneNet
- Oklahoma's Promise
- Mathematics Success Initiative
- Online Education Task Force
- GEAR UP
- Campus Safety and Security Task Force

Spotlight on the Oklahoma College Assistance Program

The Oklahoma College Assistance Program (OCAP) was recently featured as a spotlight member in the National Council of Higher Education Resources' (NCHER) #WeAreNCHER social media campaign. Designed to promote the important services that NCHER members provide to students and families to pay for and complete college, this 15-week campaign spotlighted members and the good work they are doing through targeted Twitter and Facebook posts.

OCAP is a long-standing member of NCHER, the nation's oldest and largest higher education finance trade association. NCHER membership includes state, nonprofit and for-profit higher education service organizations, including lenders, servicers, guaranty agencies, collection agencies, financial literacy providers and schools.

The #WeAreNCHER campaign encouraged the public to view these members as go-to sources for students, and to reach out to them if they have questions or want more information.

Fifteen NCHER members were each highlighted for one week. Daily posts included a fun fact of the day, information that students may not know about the organization, testimonials, and services provided to students and families. Some of OCAP's highlights featured the financial education program Oklahoma Money Matters, default prevention services for Oklahoma campuses, and Oklahoma's College Application Week.

OCAP, an operating division of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, provides college access, aid awareness, financial literacy and student loan management programs and services that benefit students, parents, schools and community partners.



Carl Albert State College Deploys Zoom Technology to Improve Outcomes for Native American Students

More people than ever before are able to attend college through the use of new technologies. Across the nation, more minorities, Native Americans, veterans and older adults now have better access to higher education.

Carl Albert State College (CASC) is one of those colleges employing new strategies to improve access and outcomes for students. CASC's latest improvement is the deployment of Zoom Video Conferencing technology to expand access to courses for both Native American college students and high school students concurrently enrolled in college courses.

over a five-year period. The NASNTI grant is administered by the U.S. Department of Education and provides assistance to nontribal institutions to better serve Native Americans and low-income individuals. At the time of the grant application, CASC had a 30 percent Native American enrollment.

CASC Chief Information Officer Michael Martin outlined four objectives for the grant. The college is working to increase the fall-to-fall retention rate for Native American students utilizing grant services by 12.5 percent and increase Native American students' completion rate by 10.6 percent. CASC is also utilizing the grant to increase access to classes at both the Poteau and Sallisaw campuses and is piloting an evidence-based coaching program.

Zoom technology is helping propel the college to meet all of these objectives. CASC is installing Zoom technology at both its Poteau and Sallisaw campuses in 14 rooms. Additionally, CASC is providing synchronous classes using Zoom, which allows students

from each campus to attend classes from the other campus course sheet, increasing access to courses required for graduation.



"Through the coaching program and expanded course access, the fall-to-fall retention rate for Native American students since piloting this grant service has increased by 15.7 percent, and their college completion rate has increased by 9.4 percent," reported Martin.

The rural high schools near CASC are also benefiting from the NASNTI grant. CASC is providing Zoom technologies to local high schools to give the students a chance to concurrently attend college courses.



Zoom is a video communications software service that combines video conferencing, online meetings, chat and mobile collaboration. CASC is one of many campuses in Oklahoma deploying the software. The college is using grant funds to purchase the equipment necessary to connect students and courses via Zoom.

OneNet has played an integral role in the Zoom technology deployment at CASC and across the state. OneNet has partnered with Zoom to develop a statewide purchasing program that offers significant cost savings on Zoom services to educational institutions at all levels.

In 2015, CASC was awarded the prestigious Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI) grant in the amount of \$1,998,818



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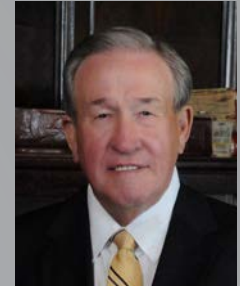
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