

# ANNUAL REPORT

*of the*

Student Advisory Board

*to the*

Oklahoma State Regents  
for Higher Education

May 2011

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*Purpose.* The purpose of the Student Advisory Board is to communicate to the State Regents the views and interests of all Oklahoma college and university students on issues that relate to the constitutional and statutory responsibilities of the State Regents. In representing students, the Student Advisory Board shall combine the opinions of students with good, sound research to develop the best proposals and recommendations for The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.

*Creation.* The creation of this board is consistent with provisions of House Bill 1801 of the 1988 session of the Oklahoma Legislature. Seven members are elected annually by delegates to the Oklahoma Student Government Association. Members represent public tier and independent colleges, and they serve a one-year term (May through April).

### **MEMBERS**

Jack Test, Chair, Oklahoma Panhandle State University

Matthew Heggy, Vice Chair, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Andrew Bertolasio, Rose State College (elected November, 2010)

Jessica Craig, Oral Roberts University (membership discontinued March, 2011)

Charity Penington, Connors State College (resigned November, 2010)

Thomas Schneider, Oklahoma State University

Myka Sederis, Rose State College (resigned, February, 2011)

Autumn Wiles, University of Oklahoma

## ***Student Advisory Board***

### ***Recommendations and Counsel to the State Regents***

#### **Academic Advising**

#### **Faculty Advisory Council and Student Advisory Board**

#### **Joint Resolution**

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education should encourage all institutions to allocate funds for sending academic advisors to the OACADA (Oklahoma Academic Advising Association) and any of the NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) conferences for the purpose of training and professional development. Furthermore, each institution should evaluate the performance of their advisors. Schools may also develop a performance standard for advisors and advising materials on their campus to be used as an evaluation tool.

#### **Background / Analysis**

While advising issues are mostly different at the institutions, one common denominator for these issues is lack of professional development and knowledge. Students should be emboldened to take charge of their education; however, they are more now than ever relying on the advice and knowledge of their academic advisors to set out their academic calendars to graduate on time. The strenuous pressures of graduating on time, getting good grades, finding a good starter job, and being diverse and marketable have become too much for one student to balance. He or she needs someone who will guide them on their way to a successful college career.

During conversation in our meetings and campus visits, academic advisement has become a topic of lively discussion of our own experiences and those of friends and fellow students. Students are delayed because they were not made aware of a class they needed to take. So, they wait a semester or two to take the class they need as a prerequisite for another, leading our students to not graduating in four years. The amount of experience and knowledge advisors possess varies greatly among institutions and programs. Our students need informed advisors as an educational resource. Accessibility and availability to information regarding classes can be scarce, and then students seek assistance from advisors who themselves don't have adequate knowledge. Another problem that students face is the financial burden incurred by having to commute to another campus to take a class in order to graduate because they did not receive the needed information in a manner adequate to allow for advance planning. Finally, by focusing on how we can help students plan their college career as soon as they step foot on campus, we can give them the motivation and courage they need to continue their education. College isn't for the faintest of hearts, but it certainly

isn't out of reach if we can help pave the way and build a foundation for success using sound academic advisement as our tool to curb our declining retention rates.

**Faculty Advisory Council Chair**  
**Dany Doughan**

**Student Advisory Board Chair**  
**Jack Test**

## **Support for Research**

### **Recommendation**

In the spirit of growing and diversifying Oklahoma's economy through institutions of higher education, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education should continue to fund divisions that facilitate the flow of grant funding into our state. Furthermore, the State Regents should encourage in every way possible the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology, i2E, and the Economic Development Generating Excellence plan in their work to provide the downstream infrastructure that allows technology created within the state to be applied in the marketplace and create wealth for the state.

### **Background and Analysis**

Funding organizations, Oklahoma's universities, and commercialization institutions constitute a vital infrastructure that will move our state forward. Oklahoma's status as a state not previously well regarded for its ability to draw competitive research grants lends itself to a special ability to draw in out-of-state funds through programs like Oklahoma Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). While \$2,699,647 in state funding is designated for projects for FY11, with \$2,133,336 anticipated to be paid by OSRHE and \$192,480 contributed by university participants, Oklahoma's higher education system must remain on the offensive and pursue opportunities to fund scientific research within our state.

Economic development in our state in the next 100 years is most significantly dependent on our ability to innovate and create things of value. More specifically, value creation will depend on our ability to retain the best and brightest, and establish an environment that encourages technical innovation and its commercialization.

The method of accomplishing this should have two funding approaches. On one hand, research must be directly funded at the state level and the university level. Furthermore, the state must fund organizations that bring exponentially more federal research dollars to Oklahoma research institutions.

### **Approval**

Unanimous

## **Textbook Costs**

### **Recommendation**

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education should be aware of students' ongoing concern for the prohibitive costs of college textbooks and of the threat posed to student accessibility to and persistence in higher education, especially for those in the low-income sector. The State Regents should support strategies which ensure that students have more choices for and access to affordable textbooks, including alternative cost saving measures and programs focusing on textbook issues across the state.

### **Background / Analysis**

The increased cost of college textbooks has grown at twice the rate of inflation in the last two decades. Much like the situation for patients in the United States with prescribed medicines today, students are captive consumers. Students recognize that this issue holds a high level of awareness, which is coupled with a great deal of research. The Student Advisory Board would like to commend the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for cosponsoring the event *Textbooks in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Evolution of the Textbook*, with Tulsa Community College in March, 2010, and recommend that serious consideration be given to similar programs in the future. The Student Advisory Board additionally would like to recognize legislative efforts at the state and federal levels, which have culminated in new laws addressing alternative strategies to provide maximum cost savings to students. However, the exorbitant costs of college textbooks continue to pose a barrier to entrance and completion in postsecondary education, and it is incumbent on the State Regents in their leadership role to continue to address this critical issue.

### **Approval**

Unanimous

## **Campus Life and Safety and Security Task Force**

### **Recommendation**

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education should encourage the Oklahoma State Legislature to continue to support, fund, and pursue fulfillment of unrealized recommendations of the Campus Life and Safety and Security (CLASS) Task Force made in its 2008, 2009 and 2010 reports. Governor Fallin should reestablish the CLASS Task Force to continue to create and execute plans and programs for safety on campuses.

Matters involving safety and security were commonly raised by students at Student Advisory Board member campuses and by students at campuses which SAB members visited.

### **Background / Analysis**

The Campus Life and Safety and Security Task Force was established by Executive Order 2007-17 following the Virginia Tech shootings, and extended by Executive Order 2008-8. The purpose of the Task Force was to review and evaluate safety and security plans in place for higher education and career and technology institutions, and to determine what modifications, if any, were necessary to prevent crisis and enhance crisis response on higher education and career and technology campuses. The Task Force was also charged to research methods for recognizing students in need and delivering to them appropriate services, such as counseling, substance abuse, and mental health treatment. The Task Force was directed to work with campus personnel on measures to better protect campuses, improve emergency response, prevent crises, and enhance crisis response. Although many of the Task Force's subsequent recommendations have been implemented, many remain unrealized, often due to a lack of necessary funding.

### **Approval**

Unanimous

## ***2010-2011 Student Advisory Board Activities***

**Monthly Meetings.** Beginning in May, 2010, members of the Board met monthly, with the exception of January and December, to receive orientation, discuss issues, campus visits, and work plans, and prepare and vote on recommendations.

**Tobacco Free Campuses.** Thomas Schneider attended the 2010 Tobacco Free Campus Symposium sponsored by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education at Rose State College.

**State Regents Tuition Hearing.** Vice Chair Matt Heggy attended and participated in the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Tuition Hearing in Oklahoma City on April 20, 2011.

**Higher Education Day at the State Capitol.** Some members of the Board traveled to the State Capitol on February 22, 2011, to work with the state higher education community in representing The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education's concerns to state legislators and Governor Fallon.

**Student Leadership Retreat.** Five members of the Board worked in conjunction with the State Regents Council on Student Affairs and the Oklahoma Student Government Association to host and attend the Tenth Annual Oklahoma Student Leadership Retreat that took place October 7 - 8, 2010 in Tulsa (a sixth member was forestalled by an automobile accident). As Chair of the Board, Jack Test served on the Planning Committee for the 2010 Student Leadership Retreat.

**Oklahoma Student Government Association Conferences.** Members of the Board attended the annual OSGA fall conference at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City, and spring conference at Oklahoma State University - Tulsa.

**Campus Visits.** In addition to representing the students at the institutions in their tier, members of the Student Advisory Board networked with student leaders from other campuses, and visited the following campuses to discuss student concerns on - site:

Langston University  
Seminole State College