

# ANNUAL REPORT

*of the*

Student Advisory Board

*to the*

Oklahoma State Regents  
for Higher Education

May 2013

## ANNUAL REPORT

*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**

Clayton (Eli) Potts, Chair, University of Oklahoma

Robin Ladd, Vice Chair, Oklahoma City University

Krista Beasley, Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology

Audery DePre', Connors State College

Mike Merit, Oklahoma State University (Resigned, January, 2013)

Will Robinson, Southwestern Oklahoma State University

Linda Savinova, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma

## ***Student Advisory Board***

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

#### **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

##### **Recommendation**

The Student Advisory Board supports any initiative that provides services to students struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues. We support the Council of Student Affairs' Campus Survey of Substance Abuse and we recommend that the results from the statewide substance abuse survey be made available to the students. We also recognize and appreciate the efforts being made by Governor Fallin and the State Regents to improve mental health services. We encourage every campus in Oklahoma to adopt or develop substance abuse and mental health awareness programs to assist students who are struggling with these issues.

##### **Background / Analysis**

It was brought to the attention of the Student Advisory Board that substance abuse is a serious problem on Oklahoma's campuses. Upon inquiring, we discovered that COSA is planning to conduct a campus Survey of Substance Abuse services and best practices, and the Student Advisory Board feels that the results of this survey should be made available to all Oklahoma students.

With the recent outbreak of violence in American schools and communities, the nation has started to focus more resources on mental health awareness. Governor Fallin has asked for additional money in the state budget to support mental health awareness and services, and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education have included it as part of the Complete College America initiative. The Student Advisory Board supports these efforts and wishes to thank Governor Fallin for her role.

The Student Advisory Board was also informed about the CLASS Task Force. The Campus Life and Safety and Security Task Force was formed by former Governor Brad Henry. With the recent outbreaks of violence, we encourage the State Regents to continue their support of the CLASS task force's work and we wish to thank Chancellor Glen D. Johnson for his proactive approach to violence on college campuses.

**Approval:** Beasley, DePre, Ladd, Potts, and Robinson

**Absent:** Savinova

## **Concealed Weapons**

### **Recommendation**

The Student Advisory Board recommends that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education actively oppose the carrying of handguns or other similar weapons on public campuses of higher education, concealed or not, with the exception of certified security personnel and campus police officers.

### **Background / Analysis**

College campuses are recognized as high stress environments where binge drinking and illegal drug use is prevalent. Allowing weapons, concealed or not, increases the risk of accidental and intentional misuse of said weapons. Arguments pertaining to the violation of the Second Amendment rights are rendered invalid in the case of dorm rooms and on-campus housing on signing of housing/rental agreements that specifically state that your safety and well-being are put directly into the hands of campus police or security. The amount of training that one individual has does not guarantee that he/ she will not use a weapon, if given the opportunity, with accidental or mal-intent. State statutes have already recognized the necessity of banning firearms from some public and state property, such as the state capitol. The introduction of firearms on college campuses continues to be a risk within the state legislature every year, and is foreseen to be a risk again within future legislative sessions. The presidents of all Oklahoma colleges and universities unanimously oppose the carrying of firearms, concealed or not, on their campuses. It is imperative that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education continue to actively oppose any measures that would grant such privilege. The Student Advisory Board commends the State Regents for their continued support in keeping weapons off campus.

**Approval:** Beasley, DePre, Ladd, Potts, and Robinson

**Absent:** Savinova

## **Student Military Veterans**

### **Recommendation**

The Student Advisory Board strongly supports military veteran students and supports any measures that encourage veterans to continue their education. Veterans have served the United States and deserve our utmost support in their educational endeavors. Individuals who have served in the United States Armed Forces exemplify countless traits that employers search for in all of their employees. The Student Advisory Board believes that every effort should be made to ensure that veterans are able to earn a degree and enter the civilian workforce, and strongly encourages the development of more services to assist veterans.

### **Background / Analysis**

Veterans learn many skills through their military service that are invaluable in the workforce. However, many veterans exit the military lacking an accredited degree from a respectable college or university. Many veterans wish to pursue a formal degree, but are faced with multiple barriers that also affect nontraditional students. Universities in Oklahoma must do everything possible to aid America's veterans in the educational process.

Veterans have the GI Bill, which significantly aids in the process of continuing a veteran's education. The United State Congress recently passed a new GI Bill which is designed to assist veterans even more than before. Such services include:

- Academic counseling
- Counseling services
- The Statewide Conference on Serving Student Veterans
- Streamlined financial aid services
- Workshops

The Student Advisory Board strongly encourages the development of more services to assist veterans, including the consideration of academic credit for prior experiences.

**Approval:** Beasley, DePre, Ladd, Potts, and Robinson

**Absent:** Savinova

## **Complete College America**

### **Recommendation**

The Student Advisory Board commends the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education as well as Governor Fallin for their efforts towards the Complete College America initiative. The members also agree with Chancellor Johnson that Complete College America should remain the top priority for higher education in Oklahoma.

### **Background / Analysis**

With the United States being 16<sup>th</sup> in the world in degree completion, it is imperative that changes be made toward increasing the national graduation rates. Before the national rates can increase, each state must do its own part to increase its own graduation rates, and the Student Advisory Board believes that the goals set forth by Governor Fallin and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education in the Complete College America Oklahoma initiatives are instrumental in the continuation of higher education in Oklahoma.

The main goal for the Oklahoma Complete College America initiative is to increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded by 1,700 each year. This increase will lead to the ultimate goal of 50,900 degrees and certificates by 2023, a 67% increase from the starting year of 2011. Not only have the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education met this yearly goal, they have surpassed it by nearly 12%. By 2020, 59% of the job market will require a career certificate or a college degree, so in order for Oklahoma as a whole to continue to prosper, the state must put a large emphasis on acquiring a college degree or a career certificate.

It is for the betterment of the entire state to have a well-educated workforce, and with the long-term goals set forth by the Complete College America program, put Oklahoma on a path to an even brighter future.

**Approval:** Beasley, DePre, Ladd, Potts, and Robinson

**Absent:** Savinova

## **Higher Education State Funding**

### **Recommendation**

The Student Advisory Board supports the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education request for an increase in funding for higher education, to ensure that all programs and institutions may be able to continue to enrich the lives of the citizens of Oklahoma through economic and social progress. In order to continue to fulfill Complete College America standards, and excel nationally and internationally, the state must increase funds for higher education institutions.

### **Background / Analysis**

The Student Advisory Board feels strongly that programs such as the Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant and the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship program aid students in the state substantially. These scholarships originate in state funds, and help students achieve graduation with less financial burden. Often, students suffer from financial stress that can lead to lower performance and incompleteness of degree requirements. The financial stress of lack of funding is not only felt by students, however. Faculty, staff and university administration must find ways to continue vital university programming with less funding. This leads to a stressful environment for all involved in the higher education process. The Student Advisory Board believes that higher education is among the most important issues facing the state of Oklahoma, and needs an increase of funds in order to continue in the edification of the citizenry. Higher education's minimum budget needs exceed the allocations approved by the governor and legislative leaders, and the Student Advisory Board feels that it is imperative to the livelihood of Oklahoma that students receive all funds necessary to attain a college degree, and that institutions receive an increase in state funding in order to further the goals of Complete College America.

**Approval:** Beasley, DePre, Ladd, Potts, and Robinson

**Absent:** Savinova

## **Oklahoma's Promise**

### **Recommendation**

To ensure the optimal opportunity for learning by students, the Student Advisory Board opposes the lowering of the second income check or any budget cut which would lower student eligibility.

### **Background / Analysis**

Earlier this year there was legislation to lower the second income check from \$100,000 to \$60,000. This bill passed the House of Representatives and is currently "dead" in the Senate. Chancellor Glen D. Johnson and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education support the up keeping of Oklahoma's Promise and oppose restricting access. In the 2011-2012 academic year a projected 20,300 students will complete and receive the help of Oklahoma's Promise.

We encourage the State Regents to continue their support for the continuing need of Oklahoma's Promise.

**Approval:** Beasley, DePre, Ladd, Potts, and Robinson

**Absent:** Savinova



## **Academic Advisement**

### **Recommendation**

The Student Advisory Board holds that academic advising is imperative to a college student's education. The Student Advisory Board believes that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education should encourage institutions to provide clear, concise procedures for academic advising, as well as encourage institutions to engage in national and statewide professional development conferences for academic advisors.

### **Background / Analysis**

The Student Advisory Board feels strongly that correct academic advising aids a student's educational process. Not only will the financial burden of the student decrease, but students benefit from being made cognizant of credits that transfer and different courses necessary for a particular degree choice. Furthermore, a college student's success can be contingent on the level of professionalism received from academic advisors. Failure to achieve proper advising standards can result in students having to retake courses, or remain in school for a longer period of time. This failure also affects four-year graduation rates, and can cause undue financial strain on the student. Because of the important nature of academic advising, the Student Advisory Board believes that each institution should encourage academic advisors to become members of the Oklahoma Academic Advising Association (OACADA), which hosts one conference per academic semester. The OACADA helps academic advisors in professionalism, development and strategic advising, and is a local system that can aid in the sharing of ideas and innovation. The Student Advisory Board believes that the resources available at this conference would substantially benefit academic advisors in aiding students through the educational process, and as a result lead to higher four-year graduation rates, and better student satisfaction.

**Approval:** Beasley, DePre, Ladd, Potts, and Robinson

**Absent:** Savinova

## ***2012-2013 Student Advisory Board Activities***

**Monthly Meetings.** Beginning in May, 2012, members of the Board met monthly, with the exception of June and July, to receive orientation, discuss issues, campus visits, and work plans, and prepare and vote on recommendations.

**State Regents Tuition Hearing.** A member attended the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Tuition Hearing in Oklahoma City on April 18, 2013.

**Higher Education Day at the State Capitol.** Several members of the Board traveled to the State Capitol on February 12, 2013, to work with the state higher education community in representing The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education's concerns to state legislators and Governor Fallin.

**Student Leadership Retreat.** Six 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 Twelfth Annual Oklahoma Student Leadership Retreat that took place October 4 - 5, 2012 in Oklahoma City. As Chair of the Board, Eli Potts served on the Planning Committee for the 2013 Student Leadership Retreat.

**Oklahoma Student Government Association Conferences.** Members of the Board attended the annual Oklahoma Student Government Association Fall Congress at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City, and Spring Congress at Cameron University in Lawton.

**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:

Carl Albert State College  
Langston University  
Northeastern State University  
Oklahoma Baptist University  
Oklahoma Panhandle State University  
Tulsa Community College, Metro Campus  
University of Tulsa