

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Student Advisory Board

to the

Oklahoma State Regents
for Higher Education

May 2018

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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

Kimberley Bishop, Chair, University of Oklahoma

Kailey Kelpine, Vice Chair, Rose State College

Traeton Dansby, Northeastern State University

Brayden Farrell, Oklahoma State University

Zachary Austin Pearson, Oklahoma State University – Oklahoma City

Colleen Yoder, University of Tulsa

Vacant – Four-Year Institution

Student Advisory Board

Recommendations and Counsel to the State Regents

Adverse Content

Recommendation

The State of Oklahoma should implement a statewide policy which requires all public higher education institutions to include an adverse content advisory on the syllabi of any course which covers content relating to the depiction of rape, sexual assault, abuse, self-harm, suicide, graphic violence, kidnapping and graphic depictions of gore. The Student Advisory Board recognizes that up to 17%¹ of college students have experienced traumatic events related to the aforementioned subjects, many of which do not register with Student Disability Services, yet would benefit academically and mentally by having the opportunity to be informed of content which may adversely affect their mental health. Further, the Student Advisory Board celebrates and appreciates the protections of academic freedom, but also recognizes that the implementation of an adverse content advisory would not infringe upon a professor's right to teach the aforementioned subjects but instead inform the student of upcoming content which might affect their ability to perform academically. Moreover, the Student Advisory Board believes that the implementation of said policy would aid in the destigmatization of mental health among college aged students, creating a positive change in our society for years and generations to come.

Background / Analysis

Adverse content advisories are potentially lifesaving for people who have dealt with traumas like sexual assault, hate crimes, or violence. A recent study by the VISN 19 Eastern Colorado Healthcare System reports that up to 17% of college students suffer from PTSD.¹ More, research from the National Alliance on Mental Illness shows that more than 60 percent of students who dropped out of college did so because of mental health issues, which can include cases of PTSD and trauma.² Adverse content advisories would aid in the promotion of positive mental health at very little cost to the Institutions, thereby decreasing dropout rates and increasing the success of students who deal with mental health issues.

In 2017, the Oklahoma Student Government Association overwhelmingly supported a resolution to implement an adverse content advisory. Similarly, some University faculty

across the state of Oklahoma have also expressed support and interest in said policy. In a report to the American Psychological Association in 2014, Elena Newman, University of Tulsa psychology professor and research director of Columbia University's Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma reports that it is "ethically responsible to share with your students your course content so they can be prepared, given the high rates of sexual assault among college students."³ Donna Agee, Coordinator of Student Disability Services at Northeastern State University endorsed a similar resolution passed by NSU's SGA "This resolution is thoughtful and potentially quite helpful to a vulnerable campus population. The resolution would assist them with the management of symptoms that could impact them far beyond a particular lecture."

Approve: Bishop, Dansby, Farrell, Kelpine, and Pearson

Absent: Yoder

¹ https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/docs/presentations/Overview_PTSD_College_Setting.pdf

² <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/March-2018/Mental-Health-Conditions-are-Legitimate-Health-Con>

Criminal Record Admissions

Recommendation

The State of Oklahoma should prohibit all public higher education institutions from making any inquiry into or considering information about a potential student's past criminal record or convictions at any time during the application and admissions decision-making process, if said convictions are not related to stalking, rape, sexual assault, assault and battery, or murder. These institutions may consider information relative to their criminal conviction history for the following purposes: 1) offering supportive counseling and services; and 2) making decisions relative to a student's participation in campus life and determining if the institution will limit such participation. The Student Advisory Board believes after a student has been granted admission, institutions may consider information relative to the student's criminal conviction history for the purpose of offering supportive counseling services, but shall not rescind based on such history, an offer of admission. The Student Advisory Board believes that if institutions elect to consider an admitted student's criminal record for the purpose of assessing a student's participation in campus life and determining if the institution shall limit such participation, they shall consider the following: 1) the nature and gravity of the criminal conduct and whether it bears a direct relationship to a particular aspect of a student's participation in campus life, including but not limited to, campus residency; 2) the time that has elapsed since the occurrence of the criminal conduct; 3) the age of the student at the time of the conduct underlying the criminal conviction; and 4) any evidence of rehabilitation produced by the student.

Background / Analysis

Higher education plays a critical role in developing good citizenship, creating economic and social opportunities, and enhancing public safety by reducing the recidivism of individuals with criminal records. It is the public policy of this State to promote the admission of individuals previously convicted of one or more criminal offenses to higher education institutions to allow such individuals to fully participate in all aspects of higher education. In May of 2016, the U.S. Department of Education urged all higher education institutions to voluntarily remove criminal history questions from their applications.¹ The New York State Bar Association called for the removing of criminal history questions on college applications, citing the lack of evidence for its value in predicting illegal conduct on campuses and the burden of providing supplementary materials.² Questions about criminal history can act as a form of race-based discrimination, since people of color are disproportionately impacted by these policies.² Crimes committed on campuses of higher education institutions are often committed by students with no prior criminal history.² A gut reaction exists that claims people with criminal history records would be a greater risk, but research does not support this opinion.³ Research suggests the practice of inquiring into applicants' criminal background, school judicial background, and military discharge information are not effective in mitigating campus crime.³ One in 12 Oklahomans is a convicted felon, and more than 55,000 people are currently in prison or under the supervision of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, a majority of which are nonviolent offenders.⁴ In February of 2016, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin signed an executive order requiring state agencies to eliminate questions about felony convictions from employment applications.⁴ The national prison recidivism rate is 76 percent, but reduces to 5.6 percent for people who obtain a bachelor's degree.⁵ Access to higher education will decrease reliance on public assistance, increase employment rates, improve physical and mental

health, elevate the quality of life for children, and strengthen communities within the State of Oklahoma.

Approve: Bishop, Dansby, Farrell, Kelpine, and Pearson

Absent: Yoder

1 <https://www.ed.gov/category/keyword/criminal-history>

2 <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/04/ban-the-box-comes-to-campus/480195/>

3 <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304764792>

4 <http://newsok.com/article/5480920>

5 <https://biomedicalodyssey.blogs.hopkinsmedicine.org/2017/10/ban-the-box-on-college-applications/>

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Students

Recommendation

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education should work with colleges and universities across the state to ensure the safety of their DACA students.

Background / Analysis

The students of Oklahoma universities believe in the dignity and potential of every student. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) federal program provides an opportunity for undocumented individuals to pursue an education and is at risk of being eliminated. The removal of DACA would place its recipients under immediate risk of deportation, thus ending their educational path. There are nearly 6,900 DACA recipients in Oklahoma, many of whom are students at universities and colleges across Oklahoma, and if it is eliminated their future is uncertain. The public universities and colleges of Oklahoma strive to serve¹ all students, every day. Dreamers are respected and accepted as integral members of Oklahoma's higher education community. DACA students should be allowed to continue their education, whether it be at public universities and colleges in Oklahoma or elsewhere in the United States of America.

Approve: Bishop, Dansby, Farrell, Kelpine, and Pearson

Absent: Yoder

¹ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Number of Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, by Fiscal Year, Quarter, Intake, Biometrics and Case Status Fiscal Year 2012-2017 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017).

Developmental Courses

Recommendation

The Student Advisory Board recommends that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education revise their policy as stated in the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Policy and Procedures Manual – Chapter 3 – Academic Affairs, regarding developmental courses, and reform developmental courses into a co-requisite model.

Background / Analysis

Currently, developmental courses are pre-requisites that are zero-credit hours. Students required to take these courses incur the same tuition cost for developmental courses as traditional for-credit courses. According to a report published by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the percentage of public high school graduates enrolled in developmental courses has remained fairly consistent. There are many traditional and non-traditional students who are enrolled in the traditional 16-week developmental courses. Jobs for the Future found these students are put at a disadvantage since they are required to take these courses that extend over an entire semester. Many students have also reported that after a brief period in a developmental course they remember the information that the course is charged with teaching. According to a study done by the New America of the various potential models for developmental courses, the co-requisite model had the greatest degree of success comparatively. Therefore, the Student Advisory Board recommends that a co-requisite model be instituted for developmental courses to encourage degree attainment from students required to enroll in developmental courses.

Approve: Bishop, Dansby, Farrell, Kelpine, and Pearson

Absent: Yoder

Firearms on Campus

Recommendation

The Student Advisory Board recommends that the current state policy in place, in regard to firearms on campus, should not be modified in any way.

Background / Analysis

Currently, firearms are not permitted on campus, unless the president of that university or college allows for an exception. The presidents of our universities in Oklahoma have submitted their recommendation for the law to remain as is. While we appreciate the legislators for having campus safety in mind, we recommend that these legislators should investigate procedures from campuses that exhibit low crime rates. We recommend that said legislators then write legislation concerning other methods of safety on our college and university campuses. The Student Advisory Board feels that the current state law in place is adequate. Therefore, we do not believe that Oklahoma should modify the firearm state law.

Approve: Bishop, Dansby, Farrell, Kelpine, and Pearson

Absent: Yoder

Oklahoma's Promise

Recommendation

The Student Advisory Board recommends that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education work with the State Legislature to fund Oklahoma's Promise at the level of \$76.8 million requested for Fiscal Year 2019 by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education currently project that 18,000 students will qualify to receive Oklahoma's Promise awards in the 2018-2019 academic year.

Background / Analysis

The Student Advisory Board recognizes the importance of keeping funding and participation at requested levels to ensure the integrity of the program in its mission to create an educated workforce for Oklahoma. Oklahoma's Promise is Oklahoma's largest state student financial aid program, and the state allocation for Oklahoma's Promise constitutes its single funding source. Oklahoma's Promise provides a crucial incentive for Oklahoma high school students with financial need, who meet high academic and conduct standards, to attain post-secondary education.

Approve: Bishop, Dansby, Farrell, Kelpine, and Pearson

Absent: Yoder

Student Health Care

Recommendation

The Student Advisory Board recommends that all colleges and universities in Oklahoma continue seeking to provide access to affordable, timely, and comprehensive healthcare options for their students. The Student Advisory Board recommends that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education encourage all institutions to regularly reconsider the existing healthcare options for students and work to provide the most well-rounded health care options they can for their students. The Student Advisory Board further recommends that institutions consider providing an affordable health insurance option for their students.

Background / Analysis

The Student Advisory Board agrees that all Oklahoma colleges and universities should work to provide access to adequate and affordable healthcare options for all of its students. Though many students maintain insurance via their parents' insurance plans, some do not. Most universities do provide health care options for their students, but they may not always be very good plans or very affordable. The Student Advisory Board recommends that all colleges and universities should continue working to decrease the costs of these plans and increase their comprehensiveness. This will lighten the burden of students who do not have access to health insurance and make their academic experience easier.

Approve: Bishop, Dansby, Farrell, Kelpine, and Pearson

Absent: Yoder

Title IX

Recommendation

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education should work with institutions to ensure that higher education students are protected by encouraging them to maintain the previous “preponderance of evidence” standard outlined in the Dear Colleague Letter from 2011. The State Regents should also urge institutions to make their student body aware of the resources students and victims of sexual assault have on their campus.

Background / Analysis

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 makes school legally responsible for responding to and remedying hostile education environments.¹ The former Title IX regulations strengthened protections for victims of sexual assault on college campuses. The Dear Colleague Letter in 2011 provided guidance to schools regarding how to better handle sexual misconduct including, but not limited to: 1) how to expand education for students on consent and sexual violence, 2) how to increase transparency regarding sexual assault policies, and 3) how to investigate instances of sexual violence in an equitable and fair manner. Recent actions taken by the Department of Education rollback these guidelines, leave the requirements for schools ambiguous, and weaken protections for sexual assault victims. Higher education institutions now have the ability to choose their standard of evidence in cases of sexual assault; they may choose the minimal standard present in the Dear Colleague Letter from 2011, called the “preponderance of evidence” standard, or a higher standard called the “clear and convincing evidence” threshold.² The guidance provided by the Department of Education in September 2017 may be detrimental to victims of sexual assault from reporting sexual violence by leaving the standard of evidence ambiguous.

Approve: Bishop, Dansby, Farrell, Kelpine, and Pearson

Absent: Yoder

1 Dear Colleague Letter, 2011.

2 Katherine Mangan, “What You Need to Know About the New Guidance on Title IX,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* .

2017-2018 Student Advisory Board Activities

Monthly Meetings. Beginning in May, 2017, members of the Student Advisory Board met monthly, with the exception of June and July, to receive orientation, discuss issues, make campus visits and work plans, and prepare and vote on recommendations.

Student Leadership Retreat. Three members, Kim Bishop, Traeton Dansby, and Kailey Kelpine, worked in conjunction with the State Regents Council on Student Affairs and the Oklahoma Student Government Association to host and participate in the Seventeenth Annual Oklahoma Student Leadership Retreat that took place October 6, 2017 at Rose State College.

Oklahoma Student Government Association Conferences. Four members, Kim Bishop, Traeton Dansby, Kailey Kelpine, and Colleen Yoder participated in the annual Oklahoma Student Government Association Spring Congress, which was hosted at Langston University.

Higher Education Day at the State Capitol. Several members traveled to the State Capitol on February 13, 2018, 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.

Oklahoma's Promise Day at the State Capitol. Kailey Kelpine and Zachary Pearson traveled to the State Capitol on April 16, 2018 with students, faculty, and supporters of Oklahoma's public colleges and universities to show appreciation for the Governor and Legislature's ongoing support of the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship program, and to encourage legislators to continue to protect the program's funding and eligibility.

State Regents Tuition Hearing. Student Advisory Board Member Traeton Dansby vocalized student concerns along with other students at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Tuition Hearing in Oklahoma City on April 26, 2018.

Campus Visits. In addition to representing the students in their home institutions, members of the Student Advisory Board networked with student leaders from other campuses at the events listed above and visited with student leaders from the following institutions:

Carl Albert State College
Connors State College
Eastern Oklahoma State College
East Central University
Murray State College
Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College
Northeastern State University
Northern Oklahoma College
Northwestern Oklahoma State University
Oklahoma Baptist University
Oklahoma Christian University

Oklahoma State University
Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City
Redlands Community College
Seminole State College
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Tulsa Community College
University of Central Oklahoma
University of Oklahoma
Western Oklahoma State College