



DEGREES OF PROGRESS

eNews from the State Regents for Higher Education



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BLUEPRINT 2030: A STRATEGIC PLAN TO BUILD TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

By Chancellor Allison D. Garrett

Public higher education plays a vital role in meeting Oklahoma's workforce development goals. The majority of our state's critical occupations require a college degree, yet our level of educational attainment remains well below the national average.

This puts Oklahoma at a disadvantage in attracting new businesses and helping our existing employers grow. To compete nationally, we need more residents with a college degree.



CareerTech, regents, and college and university representatives — *Blueprint 2030* provides a framework to increase educational attainment in our state, align higher education programs with workforce needs and maximize system resources.

Blueprint 2030 embraces four fundamental goals: produce workforce-ready graduates, grow the student pipeline, focus on student success, and improve system efficiency and effectiveness.

How do we graduate more students who are ready for tomorrow's workforce? We align higher education programs even more closely with employer demand, with a goal of producing 100,000 degrees and other credentials in STEM and critical occupations by 2030.

We will expand STEM programs in nursing, engineering and computer science; recruit and retain students in other high-need areas, such as teaching; and incentivize our graduates not only to learn here but to stay and earn here, too.

To address this workforce challenge, Oklahoma needs a solid roadmap — a comprehensive plan within which objectives are forged, strengths and challenges are studied, strategies are identified and performance benchmarks are set.

That's why the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education recently approved a new strategic plan to guide the state system of higher education over the next several years. *Blueprint 2030: Innovating and Elevating Oklahoma Higher Education for Tomorrow's Workforce* looks ahead to our state's bright future, which requires a responsive, forward-thinking, data-driven public higher education system.

Developed in partnership with a wide cross-section of stakeholders — including businesses, legislators and policymakers, community organizations, K-12,

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WOSC, SWTC PARTNER TO STRENGTHEN OKLAHOMA'S WORKFORCE

By Chad Wiginton, President, Western Oklahoma State College

As neighbors with the same goal, Western Oklahoma State College (WOSC) and Southwest Technology Center (SWTC) have cultivated a 10-year partnership to prepare students for Oklahoma's workforce.

One example is our Project Lead the Way biomedical sciences program. Through this collaboration, students utilize both campuses to prepare for study in the medical or life science fields at the university level. The program combines four courses required by Project Lead the Way and four WOSC courses in math and science: college algebra, statistics, biology, and chemistry. The agreement between WOSC and SWTC provides all college tuition, books, and fees at no cost to those enrolled in the program.

Beth Braddock completed WOSC and SWTC's joint biomedical sciences program in 2014. She said the program provided the excellent preparation and foundation she needed to push onward, complete her degree and land her dream job as a physician assistant.

This academic partnership provides students with hands-on experiences in the biomedical sciences field, and the ability to receive college credit positions students to be ahead of schedule once they graduate from high school and begin their college career. That was the case for Beth, who earned her degree in only three years — largely because she had already completed 30 hours concurrently at WOSC



while in high school and participated in the joint biomedical sciences program. She says the concurrent classes improved her readiness for university-level courses.

The sustainability of rural Oklahoma hinges on quality healthcare. WOSC and SWTC are working together to expose students to various fields in the industry and, ultimately, preparing these highly motivated individuals to fulfill critical workforce needs.



Blueprint 2030

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We will engage Oklahoma employers to meet their evolving needs in real time and connect them with our students through internships and other engaged learning opportunities.

To elevate Oklahoma's share of college-educated citizens, we must have a larger student pipeline. To increase college enrollment 10% by 2030, we seek to strengthen Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion among high school seniors. Today, Oklahomans leave more than \$60 million on the table annually by not completing the FAFSA. We will also simplify the college admission process and provide more grants, scholarships and tuition waivers.

As a system, how do we ensure that every student we serve has the best chance for success? Data analytics will allow us to identify students most in need of support while there's still time to intervene and assist them. Recognizing that adult learners have unique needs, we will help adult students connect to over 300 fully online associate and bachelor's degrees currently offered by our institutions and further increase flexibility by developing more competency-based programs and stackable micro-credentials.

Moving forward to implement *Blueprint 2030*, we will continue to be good stewards of state resources by continuously improving our efficiency and effectiveness as a system. With those objectives top of mind, we will help fund innovative collaborations and consolidations, reduce administrative costs through a shared services center, and incentivize excellence by developing a new performance funding formula for our public colleges and universities.

Sharing our strategic plan is just the beginning. Later this year, our website will feature interactive dashboards to illustrate our progress as we execute the bold strategies outlined in *Blueprint 2030*. Your state system of higher education is committed to translating individual student success into the educated workforce we need to grow our state's economy.



QUARTERLY NEWS AT A GLANCE

- [State Regents Approve Bold Strategic Plan for Public Higher Education](#)
- [Eight Oklahoma High Schools Named Scholarship Champs](#)
- [Students, Higher Education Representatives Gather at State Capitol for Higher Education Day](#)
- [Applications Now Accepted for Free STEM Summer Academies on College Campuses](#)
- [Students, Supporters Gather at State Capitol for Oklahoma's Promise Day](#)

ONENET FAST FACTS

- Division of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
- Oklahoma's research and education network
- Enhances economic growth by meeting the mission-critical needs of the state's education, research, health care and public service communities
- Operates a 24/7/365 service desk to provide the highest possible level of service to subscribers
- Operates and maintains the Oklahoma Community Anchor Network, a 10Gbps optical connection spanning more than 1,100 miles across the state

SUBSCRIBERS SERVED



Data as of 1/23

SERVICES PROVIDED



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Data Storage



Colocation



Web & Email Hosting



Managed Firewall



Virtual Machines



Cybersecurity



Video Conferencing



MPLS Network Virtualization



Quality of Service

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BY THE NUMBERS

- Uses over **2,800 miles** of high-speed fiber
- More than **800 Gbps** to the rest of the world
- **500+ million gigabytes** of data transported annually
- **2+ petabytes** of archive storage in data center
- **1,450+ connections** spanning the state
- Helped Oklahoma scientists and researchers secure nearly **\$54 million in grants**

2023 STATE REGENTS BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Twenty-seven business and higher education partnerships throughout the state were recently recognized for innovative collaboration that furthers the education of Oklahoma's workforce.



The State Regents' Business Partnership Excellence Award is designed to highlight successful partnerships between higher education institutions, businesses, and the community to further cultivate the higher learning environment through State Regents' Economic Development Grants.

Institutions involved in these partnerships provide \$500 for tuition waivers to employees of the partnering businesses; internships that enable current students to work at the partnering businesses; faculty externships with the partnering businesses; and/or enhancement of the partnerships with additional equipment, materials or supplies. The State Regents provide a \$500 match to the waivers.

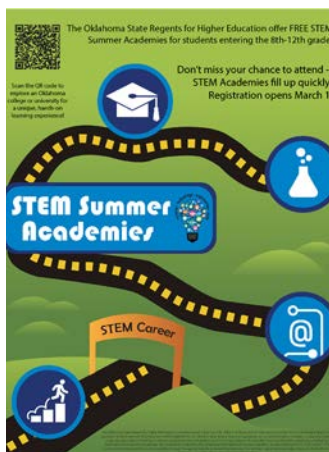
Learn about each partnership recognized with a 2023 Regents Business Partnership Excellence Award at okhighered.org/econ-dev/RBPEA/partner-excellence.

2023 STEM SUMMER ACADEMIES

This summer, middle and high school students will be able to experience life on a college campus while exploring exciting and varied fields of study at the free 2023 Summer Academies in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

The State Regents' STEM Summer Academies are open to upcoming eighth- through 12th-graders. Each academy explores the latest trends in science, technology, engineering and math

through fun, hands-on activities and innovative software as students experiment both in the classroom and outdoors.



The 2023 academies will be offered at several of Oklahoma's college and university campus locations in May, June, July and August, and will last from five days to two weeks. Some academies require students to live in the campus residence halls, while others require that students travel to and from campus each day.

Academies are designed to give all students an opportunity to increase their interest and confidence in STEM fields and, ultimately, expand their career and educational aspirations after high school.

The full list of 2023 STEM Summer Academies is available on the OKcollegestart website.



OKLAHOMA HIGHER EDUCATION NEWS

- [University 'microcredential' programs offer variety of options](#)
- [New program to support OU, OSU, TU virtual health care innovations](#)
- [OU College of Nursing enters new partnerships](#)
- [Engineering open house draws hundreds of students to OU](#)
- [OSU, Tinker Air Force Base to cooperate on R&D](#)
- [OSU opens nursing bachelor's degree program](#)
- [Grant to fund creation of teacher centers at NSU, help expand workforce](#)
- [Saint Francis, RSU to partner on new hospital-based extended campus for nursing students](#)
- ['Makerspace' at UCO enhances engineering training, student opportunities](#)
- [CU, WOSC agreement expands degree option for Southwest OK early childhood education majors](#)
- [OPSU tackles statewide teacher shortage with incentive programs](#)
- [Workforce development a key goal of TCC, national program to improve post-graduation outcomes](#)
- [TCC offering free six-month cybersecurity training program](#)

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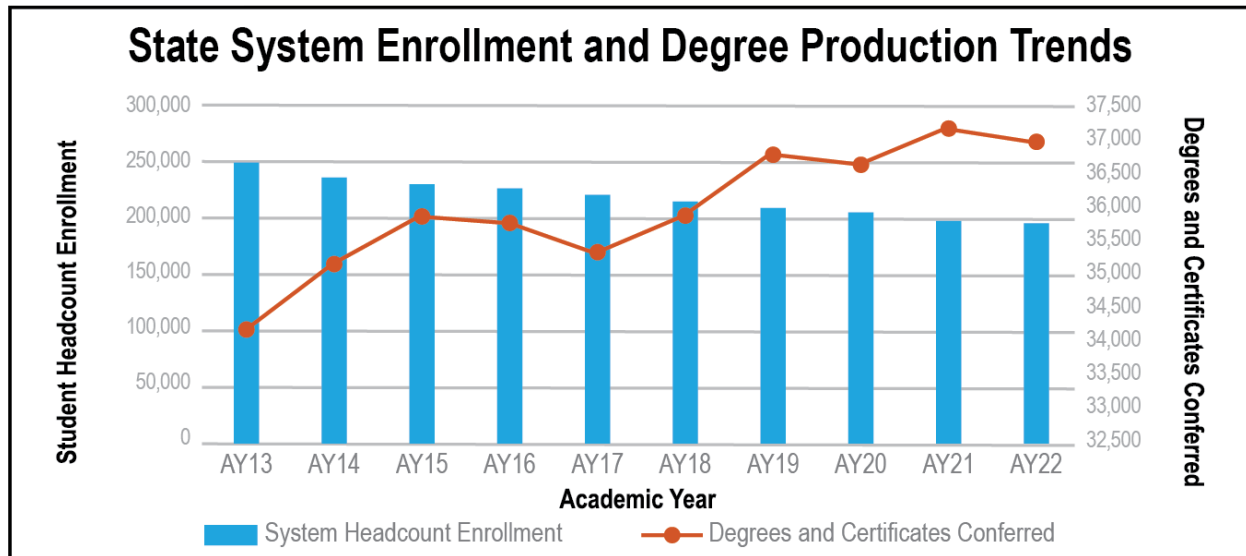
OKcollegestart



OKCollegeAssistance

DID YOU KNOW?

Despite an enrollment decline over the last decade, annual degree and certificate production at state system colleges and universities increased more than 8% in that time period. Additionally, fall 2022 preliminary enrollment figures for first-time entering freshmen at our public colleges and universities show an enrollment increase of 3% over fall 2021.



State system degree production in nursing increased more than 26% over the last 10 years.

State system degree production in computer and information sciences increased more than 19% over the last five years.



OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Improving our future by degrees

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