The Task Force
on the **Future** of
Higher Education

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
Improving our future by degrees

The Task Force on the Future of Higher Education

PROGRESS REPORT | SEPTEMBER 2023

Photos courtesy of Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College (page 7), Tulsa Community College (page 10), Oklahoma State University-Tulsa (page 18), Rogers State University (page 22), Western Oklahoma State University (page 29), Southwestern Oklahoma State University (page 30) and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (page 33).

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education established the Task Force on the Future of Higher Education in March 2017 to:

► conduct a systematic review of higher education;

► examine existing initiatives and best practices; and

► report findings and recommendations on strategies that best support improving quality, access, affordability, and efficiency in the Oklahoma state system of higher education.

The Task Force was comprised of a broad group of stakeholders from across the state, including State Regents, private citizens, representatives from Oklahoma's public colleges and universities, and the designees of Governor Mary Fallin, Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives Charles McCall, and Oklahoma State Senate President Pro Tempore Mike Schulz. Citizen members of the Task Force were well-respected Oklahomans from a variety of professional and educational backgrounds and represented different geographic regions within the state.

The Task Force convened in May 2017, with the work of the Task Force conducted primarily through four subcommittees — College Degree Completion and Workforce Development Initiatives; Academic Program Innovations and Online Education; System Structure; and Fiscal Solutions, Efficiencies, Affordability, and Technology. Members met regularly from June through November 2017. The Task Force unanimously voted to approve the subcommittee recommendations at its meeting on December 6, 2017.

An update on progress on the initiatives identified in the Future of Higher Education Task Force Report was provided to the Task Force members in April of 2020. Subsequently, the COVID-19 pandemic slowed progress on some initiatives as State Regents' staff members turned their attention to the challenges of the pandemic.

This document provides an update on progress on the initiatives recommended by the Task Force on the Future of Higher Education. In total, the Task Force recommended 61 initiatives, of which:

► 17 have been completed,

► 42 are ongoing, and

► 2 are being explored.

This report is designed to provide closure on the Task Force recommendations. Portions of the Task Force on the Future of Higher Education Report have been incorporated into the State Regents' new strategic plan *Blueprint 2030*, which was adopted in February 2023. For more information about *Blueprint 2030*, go to **https://okhighered.org/state-system/strategic-plan/**.

Task Force recommendations are in bold text throughout this document, while the progress report sections follow each recommendation.

COLLEGE DEGREE COMPLETION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

DATA ANALYTICS

1. **The State Regents should include funding for the implementation of predictive analytics on a systemwide basis in its annual funding request to the Legislature. The funding request should include a timeframe for implementation, the expected return on investment, and a plan for reporting results on the benefits gained from implementing the use of data analytics systemwide.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In 2022, the State Regents voted to invest in the SAS analytics platform. The State Regents recently completed Phase 1 of an ongoing engagement with SAS to transition the Unitized Data System (UDS) to a new data warehouse and will began Phase 2 in September 2023.

   ► Phase I of the SAS data warehouse project established a foundation for all future data analytics and modernized the UDS intake, data validation, and critical reporting requirements, such as IPEDS.

   ► Phase II of the SAS data warehouse builds upon this foundation and incorporates additional data sources related to scholarship programs, financial aid, and workforce. This broadens our reporting capacity to include the fundamental aspect of student funding via scholarships and other forms of financial aid. In addition, we expect that part of the Phase II work will include establishing an important data governance program to manage/sustain our data related efforts. The completion timeline for Phase 2 is 18 to 24 months.

2. **The State Regents should direct institutions to develop comprehensive plans on the use of data analytics to streamline administrative processes, generate revenue through increased enrollment and improved retention rates, and improve student success through enhanced proactive advisement and individualized support services.**

   Status: Complete

   ► Information regarding use of data analytics in each of these areas has been embedded in annual institutional plan submissions.

   ► In 2022, the State Regents invested in the infrastructure costs related to a new program being developed within a collaboration among Cameron University, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and Western Oklahoma State College in partnership with the State Regents and the OU K-20 Center.

3. **The State Regents should empower and provide a charge to the Councils on Information Technology, Instruction and Student Affairs to recommend specific implementation strategies that would maximize the effectiveness of data analytics on a statewide basis.**

   Status: Exploration

   When the new SAS data warehouse is implemented, the various councils can provide recommendations to the state system institutions regarding use of the data. Institutions will have access to self-serve data dashboards that can assist in data-driven decision making.

4. **The State Regents should facilitate the development of a consortium of institutions with like missions to use data analytics to solve institutional problems.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In 2022, the State Regents allocated funding to support infrastructure costs associated with the Southwest Student Research and Success Shared Service Center, a collaboration among Cameron University, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Western Oklahoma State College, the OU K-20 Center and the State Regents. Redlands Community College joined the Center in the summer of 2023. The shared service center will lead to data informed decision-making tools and intervention capacity using predictive modeling, dashboards and sharing of institutional research variables required for such purposes. Funds will be used for personnel costs, data-analytic software licensing fees and training to create and use the predictive models and dashboards.

   ► To reflect the efficiency and effectiveness of the Regional University System of Oklahoma's six institutions, RUSO created a dashboard. A work group with a nucleus of six senior administrators from three institutions worked on the project with dozens of their colleagues across RUSO universities for nearly a year. The project was led by Mark Kinders, University of Central Oklahoma Vice-President for Public Affairs.

      ▷ The RUSO team adopted 27 benchmarks to measure university performance. Some of the initial findings included:
         ● RUSO institutions are "ladders" for social mobility and exceed the national average in helping students migrate from being among the most financially insecure college students to among the wealthiest American professionals. When compared to equally financially challenged students at hundreds of similar universities across the nation, 38% more RUSO graduates will rise to the highest income category.
         ● Fewer than half of RUSO graduates have accumulated debt, which averages around $11,000.
         ● RUSO students report a 90% satisfaction rate with their college experience in national surveys.

      ▷ The benchmarks for the RUSO dashboard were drawn from numerous sources, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation study "Answering the Call: Institutions and States Lead the Way Toward Better Measures of Postsecondary Performance," the U.S. Department of Education's "Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System," the State Regents' Unitized Data System, and customized institutional data sources provided by campus senior administrators.

   ► The University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University also have dashboards: OU (**https://www.ou.edu/research-norman/research-services/statistics/dashboards**) and OSU (**https://ira.okstate.edu/cdr/**).

5. **The State Regents should continue to work with the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) to develop a robust, comprehensive data pipeline. The ability to link student level K-12 and postsecondary data would greatly enhance the ability to determine factors that predict student success.**

   Status: Exploration

   ► As the new SAS platform is implemented, this recommendation will be explored further.

   ► As SDE determines the scope of its project and the timeline for implementation, we will engage with SDE to work on this.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1. **The State Regents should work with the Council of Presidents and chambers of commerce to develop a statewide strategy to engage business and industry in actively working with Oklahoma colleges and universities to better align academic programs to meet current and projected workforce needs.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► To meet the needs of the business community, the State Regents assure that all new academic program requests include labor market demand analyses.

   ► The State Regents approved policy delegating authority to the Chancellor to approve certificates of 15 or fewer credit hours to better meet business needs in real-time.

   ► In 2022, the State Regents launched the UpskillOK micro-credential initiative (**UpskillOK.org**) to help businesses tap into a skills-verified hiring pool and retain talent by upskilling existing employees through partnerships with local colleges and universities.

   > Since January 2022, the State Regents have committed **$5.4 million** in funding to support the development of micro-credentials with industry partners, which as of March 2023 has resulted in:
   >
   > ► **250+** new micro-credentials programs
   > ► **23** participating campuses
   > ► **90+** industry partnerships

2. **The State Regents should require that any new degree program request:**
   a. **provides evidence that the program will produce graduates related to the 100 critical occupations identified by the Governor's Oklahoma Works and Launch Oklahoma initiatives; or**
   b. **provides evidence that the program will produce graduates related to one of the five key wealth generating ecosystems (aerospace and defense, energy, agriculture and biosciences, information and financial services, transportation and logistics).**

   Status: Complete

   ► The State Regents recognized the importance of graduating students with the skills needed to supplement Oklahoma's workforce. To that end, the new program request procedure was modified to require information on sufficient employer demand for the proposed program, especially in the workforce ecosystems identified by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. This includes workforce projections, employer demand, and student demand for the program.

   ► Regional, state and local labor market data are generated through Lightcast. Lightcast is a comprehensive data warehouse that provides information on occupations, skills in demand, career pathways, labor market insights, and educational pipelines. Disparate data sources from the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Labor, and U.S. Department of Education are used to compile a detailed labor market report, which is available by country, state, MSA, county, or zip code. Using Lightcast, we compile historical data, as well as projections for up to 10 years.

3. **The State Regents should develop policies and procedures to accelerate time to approve new workforce-oriented programs needed by business, including micro-credentials.**
   a. **Micro-credentials should be developed in partnership with business.**
   b. **Micro-credentials should be designed to be stackable.**

   Status: Complete

   ► Micro-credentials are alternative learning pathways directly aligned with Oklahoma's most critical occupations. In partnership with businesses and public colleges and universities, the State Regents identified more than 100 programs and occupations where there is a vital need for micro-credentialing.

   ► State Regents' staff recommend removing the approval process for offering existing degree programs online.

- ► Certificates of 15 or fewer credit hours are reviewed by State Regents' staff, approved by the Chancellor and ratified by the Regents. The Letter of Intent process has been eliminated. State Regents' staff has recommended that all embedded certificates no longer need to follow the approval process, but are added to the official degree inventory.

- ► The State Regents' micro-credential policy was approved on October 21, 2021. The policy delegates authority to the Chancellor to review and approve micro-credentials to expedite the approval process.

- ► The UpskillOK initiative (**UpskillOK.org**) was launched in December 2021 with funding provided to institutions to create partnerships with local businesses and industry, as well as funds to provide scholarships for students pursuing new micro-credentials developed with business.

- ► The State Regents support zero-cost digital badges for institutions and students on an opt-in basis. To date, 12 institutions host badges through the State Regents, which have issued at least 530 badges since May 2022.

Since January 2022, the State Regents have committed **$5.4 million** in funding to support the development of micro-credentials with industry partners, which as of March 2023 has resulted in:

- ► **250+** new micro-credentials programs
- ► **23** participating campuses
- ► **90+** industry partnerships

4. **Institutions should promote partnerships with business to offer internship and apprenticeship opportunities to students.**

Status: Ongoing

- ► In conjunction with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and to promote partnerships and encourage more internships, information on apprenticeships has been shared with the Council of Presidents, the Council on Instruction and others.

- ► The State Regents' newly created Digital Toolkit for Employers features many services for businesses, including a searchable database of campus-based employer services, a directory of business support services by institution workforce projection data for Oklahoma's critical occupations, the ability to post and materials you can share in the workforce.

- ► Many agencies, organizations and businesses across Oklahoma provide tuition assistance benefits to help their employees pay for higher education.

- ► Types of education benefits for employees vary, and may include:
  - ▷ Tuition payment assistance or reimbursement;
  - ▷ Payment/reimbursement for licensing courses and exams;
  - ▷ Matched contributions to employer-sponsored 529 college savings plan; or
  - ▷ Student loan repayment.

- ► There are currently 108 employer listings on our Employer Tuition Assistance for Higher Education webpage, **https://www.okhighered.org/adult-students/tuition-assistance.shtml**. This information is shared across the state through trainings and resources for students, educators, counselors, and community partners; workshops for students and parents; and social media messaging.

5. **The State Regents should continue to fund and promote adult degree completion strategies through the Reach Higher program and the Adult Promise grant from the Lumina Foundation.**

Status: Ongoing

► Although Lumina Foundation grant funding ended in 2021, the State Regents continue to allocate funding to support adult degree completion efforts. Since implementation of the Reach Higher program in 2007, more than 10,000 degrees have been awarded. Additionally, each semester, the Reach Higher program coordinates week-long RECONNECT activities to recruit adults into one of the Reach Higher degree programs.

► The State Regents FY23 budget included an Adult Degree Completion and Workforce Re-entry Scholarship, which will be deployed to the institutions based on the percentage of Pell-eligible students and percentage of adult students served.

► In FY23, 435 scholarships were awarded totaling $689,924.

6. **The State Regents should develop enhanced marketing strategies for www.OKcollegestart.org as a resource for traditional and adult students' college preparation, college degree planning, college financial planning, career development, and other services**

Status: Ongoing

► The **OKcollegestart.org** team continues to expand outreach activities across the state.

► Extensive collaboration with the Oklahoma State Department of Education and education administrator groups has resulted in **OKcollegestart.org** being used by 60% of public high schools to fulfill and track Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP) graduation requirements. Staff have also identified various community and tribal entities who use the website.

► The **OKcollegestart.org** website was updated in 2021 with a wider content display, simpler navigation, and new resources, including interactive career cluster tools.

► Since the launch of **OKcollegestart.org**, there have been 840,969 student accounts established, with over 126,000 accounts active in the last year.

DEGREE COMPLETION

1. **The State Regents should develop and present to the Governor and State Legislature a budget request that fully funds Oklahoma's college completion efforts.**

   ### Status: Ongoing

   ► The State Regents' FY23 budget included new funding of $1.15 million for an Adult Degree Completion and Workforce Re-entry Scholarship component, which is deployed to the institutions based on percentage of Pell-eligible students and percentage of adult students served.

   ► A request has been made for additional funding for the program.

   ► The FY24 Budget Need Request of $26.3 million included Nursing ($10 million); Physician Residency ($10 million); STEM related degree fields ($5,750,000) and Adult Degree Completion Student Initiatives ($575,000)

   ► If funded, these requests would have addressed the critical workforce demands facing our state, support student success and degree completion initiatives, and meet operating budget obligations to support an efficient, effective and quality system for higher education.

2. **The State Regents should endorse and support the full implementation of Oklahoma's statewide Guided Pathways plan as developed by the Oklahoma State Team for Complete College America. The following areas will be emphasized:**
   a. **Implementation of meta-majors statewide**
   b. **Development of student on-boarding that provides informed choice for degree programs prior to enrolling (career opportunities and outcomes)**
   c. **Develop term-by-term on-time degree maps**
   d. **Provide critical course path guarantee**
   e. **Implement proactive advising protocols that track student progression and provide alerts**
   f. **Communicate results and outcomes about the above strategies/policies**

   ### Status: Ongoing

   ► The State Regents continue to emphasize Complete College America (CCA) Momentum Year strategies at institutions, with webinars held on the following topics:

   ▷ Math Pathways

   ▷ Co-Requisites

   ▷ Academic Focus Areas

   ▷ 15 To Finish

   ▷ Proactive Advising

   ► Oklahoma's CCA team attended the CCA Policy and Action Summit in Kentucky in June 2022 to learn best practices on national completion initiatives.

   ► In September 2022, Oklahoma's PEP cohort met in person to launch the PEP Initiative. The focus of the PEP Initiative is to build and elevate cohorts within and across colleges and universities to focus on scaling change around college completion efforts for all students. Campuses are working with a college coach to develop project and action plans at sites to advance key policies and practices. They are implementing evidence-based strategies connected to CCA's Purpose First and Dual Enrollment strategies. At the state level, Oklahoma is adopting the Postsecondary Data Partnership to identify and prioritize performance indicators for student completion goals by tracking key metrics for success to monitor progress, which informs continuous improvement. CCA is also conducting a policy audit to provide recommendations to enable long-term sustainability of student-centered efforts.

   ► In April 2023, the State Regents and Complete College America hosted the "Better Data for Better Decisions" Conference at Rose State College.

3. **The State Regents should work with institutions to facilitate and implement reverse transfer agreements between community colleges and four-year institutions.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In August 2019, the State Regents received a non-monetary grant of technical assistance for degree reclamation from the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) to participate in the "Degrees When Due" initiative.

   ► Eight Oklahoma colleges and universities participated in "Degrees When Due" with the goal of assisting students with some college credit to complete their degrees.

   ► The institutions participated in best practices in degree reclamation and provided targeted support while re-engaging students who have paused or stopped out of their studies.

   ► Oklahoma was one of 20 states participating in the nationwide initiative. In 2023, the State Regents established a transfer task force focusing on reverse transfer best practices.

   ► The Tulsa Higher Education Consortium, a State Regents partner, is committed to advancing student learning, improving student success and degree completion, achieving equity in outcomes, and meeting workforce needs by working collaboratively to increase higher education opportunities in the region. Members of the consortium encourage students to set ambitious academic and career goals and, in partnership, provide pathways to facilitate the achievement of those goals.

4. **Institutions should continue to scale and strengthen co-requisite education offerings.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► The Student Assessment and Remediation policy is in the process of being updated to remove remedial and developmental education and require institutions to focus on offering co-requisite or supplemental instruction.

   ► The State Regents' efforts to scale co-requisite remediation across state system institutions has resulted in a decline in the percent of first-time, degree seeking freshmen students being placed in 0-level courses from 40.5% in fall 2016 to 20.2% in fall 2021.

   ► Since implementing co-requisite courses, traditional remediation enrollment continues to decline. Since 2013-14, enrollment in remediation has decreased by 76.12%.

   ► Students with remedial needs are increasingly being placed in credit-bearing courses with co-requisite support, such as tutoring or supplemental instruction, in lieu of traditional remediation. Since implementing co-requisite support courses for the four general education mathematics courses, pass rates have increased to 74.6% — a 3 percentage point increase over eight years.

5. **The State Regents should work with institutions and appropriate councils to expand opportunities for students to earn college credit through competency-based prior learning assessments.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► The State Regents launched the Show What You Know website (**ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org**), which empowers students to determine how previously earned college credit, licenses, certifications, military training, advanced standing scores, and knowledge gained through other learning experiences can be applied toward a degree program, in April 2020.

   To date, **ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org** features:
   ► Over 8,000 transfer courses in 48 disciplines
   ► 92 cooperative agreements between colleges and technology centers
   ► 1,729 testing opportunities
   ► 390 industry credentials for credit
   ► 125 technical courses for transfer
   ► 666 military study and training credit

6. **The State Regents should make the Course Equivalency Project more accessible and user-friendly.**
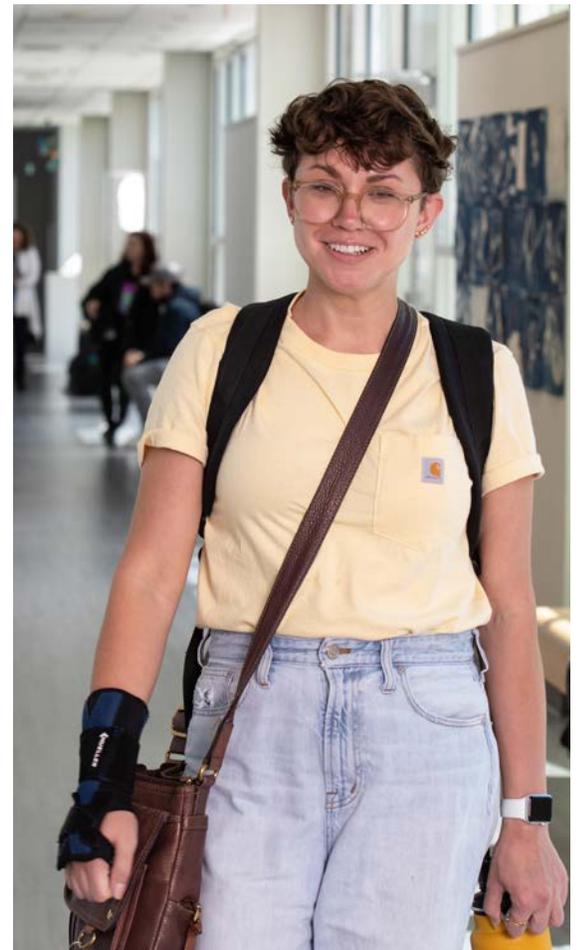
   Status: Complete

   ► The Course Equivalency Project (CEP) is a postsecondary education resource service that provides course equivalency information to facilitate student transfer within the Oklahoma state system of higher education. The CEP database contains faculty-generated course equivalency information for hundreds of courses offered at public institutions in Oklahoma. The matrix is organized by discipline and currently hosts over 8,000 courses in 48 disciplines.

   ► In an effort to make the Course Equivalency Project more user-friendly and assessible, the Show What You Know website was designed specifically to promote student success. A new transfer module developed for comprehensive searching of the Course Equivalency Project database has given the site more interactive capability.

7. **The State Regents should continue to work with colleges and universities through the work of the Math Success Group to develop multiple math pathways.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► Lack of student success in mathematics has been identified as a significant barrier to increasing persistence and ultimately, degree completion. To improve retention and graduation rates of all students, the State Regents focused attention on mathematics success by addressing the following goals:

   ▷ Goal 1: Improve mathematics preparation of students entering college.

   ▷ Goal 2: Reform mathematics remediation to be more effective.

   ▷ Goal 3: Strengthen mathematics preparation for all majors.

   ► In 2022, the State Regents applied for and received a grant to participate in the Launch Years Initiative (LYI) from the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The LYI supports the scaling of mathematics pathways from high school through postsecondary education and into the workplace, aligned to students' goals and aspirations. Twenty states have joined to work along with national organizations and leaders in mathematics education and educational equity. Over the next three years, the Oklahoma LYI team, along with national organizations and leaders in mathematics education will be working to improve contextualization of math to programs of study, workforce, and careers.

   ► This is not Oklahoma's first experience working with the Charles A. Dana Center on pathways work. From 2015-17, Oklahoma assembled a Math Pathways Task Force across higher education to reform mathematics opportunities across Oklahoma's two-year and four-year institutions. More information about that work, and their final report and recommendations, is available on the Oklahoma Math Pathways pages of the Dana Center website (**https://dcmathpathways.org/resources/task-force-report-oklahoma-math-pathways-task-force-recommendations**).
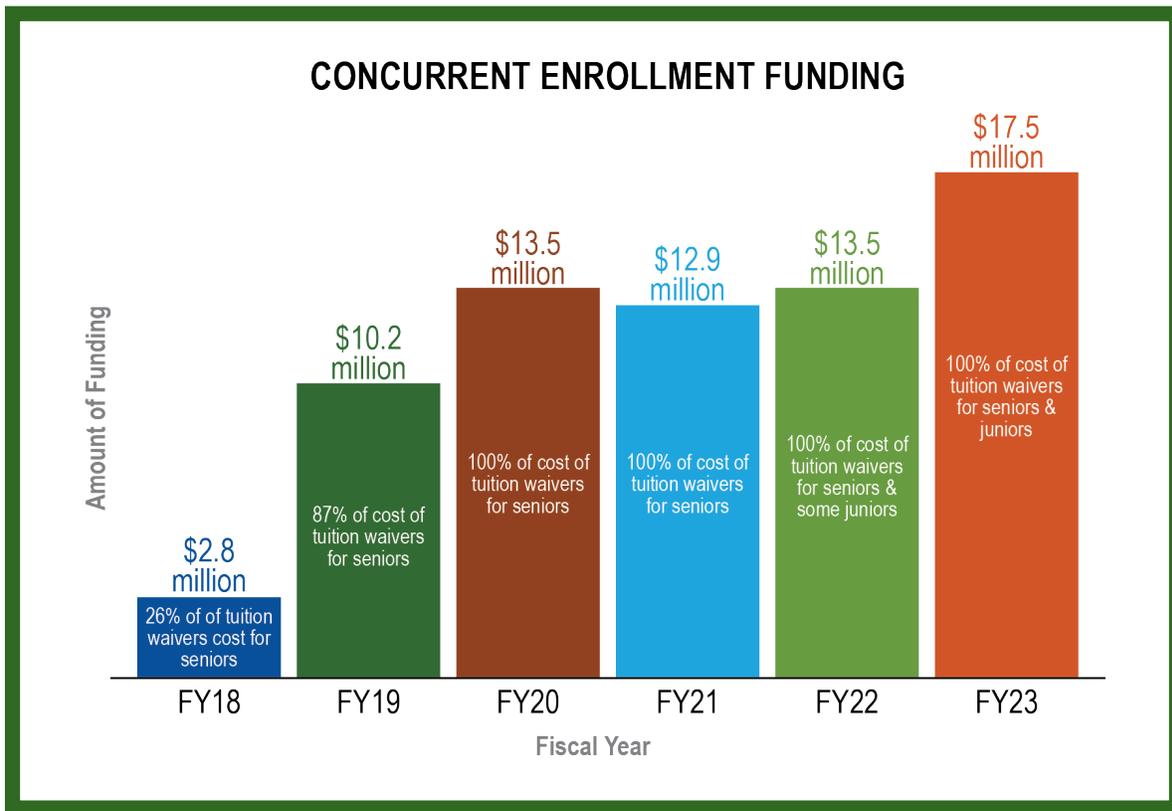
CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

1. **The State Regents should continue to request full funding of the concurrent enrollment tuition waiver program for high school seniors by the Legislature.**

   Status: Complete

   ► The Concurrent Enrollment program allows students who are in 11th or 12th grade and have made good grades throughout school or scored well on the ACT or SAT to take credit-earning college courses while still in high school.

   ► High school seniors who meet the eligibility requirements are entitled to receive tuition waivers for up to 18 credit hours and high school juniors can receive tuition waivers up to 9 credit hours, subject to available funding.

   ► Since 2017, the State Regents have received increased funding to support concurrent enrollment.

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT FUNDING

Amount of Funding / Fiscal Year

- FY18: $2.8 million — 26% of of tuition waivers cost for seniors
- FY19: $10.2 million — 87% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors
- FY20: $13.5 million — 100% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors
- FY21: $12.9 million — 100% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors
- FY22: $13.5 million — 100% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors & some juniors
- FY23: $17.5 million — 100% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors & juniors

2. **The State Regents and the Legislature should expand the concurrent enrollment tuition waiver program to high school juniors, contingent upon additional funding from the Legislature.**

   a. **Develop metrics to document the success of concurrent enrollment and its return on investment for the State and provide this to the Governor and Legislature.**

   Status: Complete

   ► In 2018, legislation was passed expanding concurrent enrollment tuition waivers to high school juniors (up to 9 credit hours), subject to the availability of funding.

   ► In FY22, funding covered 11% of the cost of waivers for high school juniors.

   ► In FY23, the State Regents received an additional $4.0 million for the concurrent enrollment program, reimbursing institutions 100% of the cost for eligible waivers provided to both juniors and seniors.

► The FY24 budget request includes an additional $2.0 million to address the anticipated participation of high school juniors during the 2022-2023 academic year.

► As of 2022, participation in the state system of higher education's concurrent enrollment program nearly doubled in the last decade. In the last academic year, more than 14,600 students from Oklahoma high schools enrolled in concurrent courses, generating over 141,300 student credit hours.

3. **The State Regents should initiate a study of alternative funding models for the concurrent enrollment tuition waiver program.**

    Status: Ongoing

    ► In 2021, the Oklahoma Legislature passed SB 292, which created the Concurrent Enrollment Task Force to study concurrent enrollment delivery in Oklahoma and make recommendations to improve it.

    ► Funding models were studied by the task force and recommendations were made, including:

        ▷ The Legislature should recommend that the State Regents standardize the reimbursement rate for concurrent enrollment courses to provide better predictability in budget planning for school districts and institutions of higher education.

        ▷ The Legislature should also request that the State Regents consider changes to its "service area" policy and how it calculates tuition waiver reimbursement amounts.

    ► The State Regents created a concurrent enrollment working group to further study implementation of recommendations for the Concurrent Enrollment Task Force. The working group began its meetings in September 2023.

BACKGROUND:

► The tuition waiver reimbursement amount for concurrent enrollment courses is largely determined by the geographic service area in which a concurrent enrollment student is located.

► State Regents' policy states that in a shared geographic service area, if a two-year institution is closer geographically to a school district but the district prefers services from a four-year institution, the district can choose to receive concurrent enrollment services from the four-year institution. However, the four-year institution will only receive a tuition waiver reimbursement amount equal to that of the two-year institution.

► A standard tuition waiver reimbursement rate, regardless of the institution type and location, would provide flexibility while keeping costs down. Exceptions could be made in areas of the state where access to concurrent enrollment is limited.

SCHOLARSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID

1. **The State Regents should coordinate the creation of a statewide financial aid/scholarship matching tool for students to identify potential financial aid/scholarship opportunities, with the goal of maximizing the disbursement of available scholarship funds to students each year.**

   Status: Complete

   ► The **OKcollegestart.org** platform contains several financial aid resources, including a searchable database that allows students to find and save scholarships that match their unique profiles.

   ► Information about scholarships and financial aid is shared across the state through trainings and resources for educators, counselors, and community partners; workshops and instructional tools for students and parents; GEAR UP activities in participating districts; and social media messaging.

2. **The State Regents should strongly encourage colleges and universities to develop partnerships with local communities and businesses to provide scholarships for adult degree completion through the Reach Higher initiative and include state matching funds for these scholarships in the annual systemwide budget request.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► Reach Higher: DirectComplete was launched in November 2018, adding more options for adult degree completion to the already successful Reach Higher infrastructure.

   ► DirectComplete allows adult students the opportunity to complete their degree in one of Oklahoma's critical occupation industries. The State Regents, in cooperation with workforce boards, businesses, tribal agencies, nonprofits and higher education institution partners, leverage financial support and other services to help adult students complete their degrees with minimal personal cost.

   ► In June 2017, the State Regents received a three-year $777,000 Adult Promise grant from the Lumina Foundation focusing on returning adults in fields aligned with Oklahoma's 100 critical occupations.

   ► The State Regents received a technical assistance grant from the Institute for Higher Education Policy in 2019 to implement best practices in degree reclamation while re-engaging students who have paused or stopped out.

   ► In FY23, State Regents allocated over $1 million to implement a new adult scholarship program ("Finish Line"), to be allocated to Reach Higher institutions for Adult Degree Completion and Workforce Re-entry Scholarships.

   ► In FY22 and FY23, funding was requested for micro-credentials that allows businesses to match scholarship funds.

3. **The State Regents should encourage institutions to create and/or expand a seed fund to provide emergency aid for students in need to prevent dropout.**

   Status: Complete

   ► The State Regents hosted webinars for Reach Higher Coordinators from all 25 public colleges and universities to discuss the requesting and distribution of emergency funds and how to collaborate with external partners for these purposes.

   ► In addition, the Reach Higher website hosts a community resource directory (**https://reachhigherok.org/community-resource-directory/**) to direct students to a variety of local support services. Institutions also stock food pantries and clothing closets to provide necessary items to students in need.

     ▷ Food insecurity refers to the lack of access to enough food or limited and uncertain availability or nutritionally adequate food. One of every three college students reports experiencing food insecurity.

▷ All 25 state system colleges and universities have a food pantry for students and staff.

▷ The Hunger-Free Campus Act (HB 34117), passed during the 2022 legislative session, provided funding to support a joint pilot program between the State Regents and the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma to support expansion of existing campus food pantries. In April 2023, six institutions — Oklahoma City Community College, Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology, Redlands Community College, Rose State College, Southwestern Oklahoma State University and Tulsa community College — were selected to receive the Hunger-Free Campus Act pilot program grants. Each campus will receive an annual grant award of $26,667 for up to five years.

4. **The State Regents should initiate a study to determine the capacity of institutions to increase fundraising efforts for need-based financial aid. Institutions should place greater emphasis on need-based financial aid in fundraising.**

Status: Complete

► An initial review of the most current valuations of our state system institutional foundations was conducted by survey in August 2022. The valuations were then compared to peer institutional foundations by tier. The results of the review showed that, for the most part, the institutional foundations' valuations are at the mid-point of their peer comparisons.

► Work continues with potential third-party donors in development of new scholarship opportunities for students throughout our state system.

5. **The State Regents should initiate a study to examine the role of unmet financial need for students nearing the end of their college career.**

Status: Complete

► In 2021, the State Regents recommended legislation to amend the statutes for the Oklahoma Tuition Aid Grant (OTAG) to allow institutions to focus the aid on students with the most unmet financial need. The legislation was approved and specifically identified additional priorities, including awarding aid to students nearest to the completion of a degree or certificate. The new funding structure and award process for OTAG went into effect in fall 2022.

► The State Regents FY23 budget included an Adult Degree Completion and Workforce Re-entry Scholarship, which will be deployed to the institutions based on percentage of Pell-eligible students and percentage of adult students served. In fall 2022, 125 scholarships were awarded for a total amount disbursed of $204,074.

6. **The State Regents should initiate a study to determine the impact of micro-credential and competency-based education programs on financial aid eligibility.**

Status: Complete

► Many businesses, organizations and agencies across Oklahoma provide financial benefits to help employees pay for higher education. The benefit may include tuition assistance or reimbursement, payment or reimbursement for licensing courses and exams, matched contributions to employer-sponsored 529 college savings plans, and/or student loan repayment assistance. To add a business to the listing, employers can complete a brief survey (**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MG37HQB**) to outline their higher education benefits for employees.

► The list of businesses that have completed the Employer Tuition Assistance for Higher Education survey is available to students and families at **https://www.okhighered.org/adult-students/tuition-assistance.shtml**. Information provided includes the types of higher education benefits available to employees and a contact for each company.

► The State Regents' online listing of companies that offer a tuition assistance benefit is shared with K-12 counselors, college and university financial aid officers, and community partners across the state.

ADULT DEGREE COMPLETION

1. **The State Regents should continue to support adult degree completion through the Reach Higher initiatives, which includes the Adult Promise grant from the Lumina Foundation.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In June 2017, the State Regents received a three-year $777,000 Adult Promise grant from the Lumina Foundation focusing on returning adults in fields aligned with Oklahoma's 100 critical occupations.

   ► This grant ended in 2020, but has been integrated into FY21, FY22, and FY23 State Regents budgets to sustain the activities. The Adult Degree Completion and Workforce Re-entry Scholarship has allocated over $1 million to develop a scholarship program targeted to adult learners. This scholarship provides funds for 22 state colleges and universities participating in the Reach Higher adult degree completion programs to target scholarships for adult students nearing degree completion or needing industry recognized micro-credentials or certificates to increase employment opportunities.

   ► There have been 10,481 Reach Higher degrees awarded through 2021-22.

   ► The Reach Higher program offers two paths to meet both student and workforce needs: Reach Higher FlexFinish and Reach Higher DirectComplete. Students choose among several degree paths, including the Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree programs, or a Bachelor of Science in organizational leadership.

   ► Partnerships with businesses, tribes, workforce development agencies, nonprofit organizations and foundations, federal and state agencies and other groups help provide scholarships, grants and other support to adult students who pursue degree options within the program.

2. **The State Regents should work with institutions to develop a systemwide strategy for identification and outreach to students who have dropped-out but have a significant number of college credit hours.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In August 2019, the State Regents received a non-monetary grant of technical assistance for degree reclamation from the Institute for Higher Education Policy to participate in the "Degrees When Due" initiative, which focused on implementing best practices in degree reclamation while re-engaging students who have paused or stopped out. Through this grant, five colleges and four universities were selected to receive technical assistance in the areas of degree reclamation and reverse transfer.

   ► In FY23, the State Regents allocated over $1 million to implement a new adult scholarship program ("Finish Line"). The first scholarships were awarded in fall 2022.

   ► In the State Regents' new strategic plan, *Blueprint 2030: Innovating and Elevating Oklahoma Higher Education for Tomorrow's Workforce*, improving flexibility for adult learners through increased access to online degree program offerings, the development of competency-based programs, and the Reach Higher initiative is a priority.

3. **Institutions should partner with local businesses to develop programs that provide scholarships or tuition reimbursement to encourage employee degree completion or skill acquisition that meets business needs.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In addition to institutional efforts, in summer 2022, the State Regents launched a tuition assistance benefit survey (**https://www.okhighered.org/adult-students/tuition-assistance.shtml**) to identify and feature employers across the state that offer a higher education assistance benefit to employees.

► Many agencies, organizations and businesses across Oklahoma provide tuition assistance benefits to help their employees pay for higher education. Types of education benefits for employees vary, and may include:

  ▷ Tuition payment assistance or reimbursement.

  ▷ Payment/reimbursement for licensing courses and exams.

  ▷ Matched contributions to employer-sponsored 529 college savings plan.

  ▷ Student loan repayment.

► Some employers that offer educational benefit options require a minimum waiting period for eligibility, some set a maximum benefit amount, and some may extend educational benefits to employee dependents.

► There are currently 109 employer listings on our Employer Tuition Assistance for Higher Education webpage, **https://www. okhighered.org/adult-students/tuition-assistance.shtml**. This information is shared across the state through trainings and resources for students, educators, counselors, and community partners; workshops for students and parents; and social media messaging.

4. **The State Regents should expand online education opportunities for adult students as recommended by the Academic Program Innovations and Online Education Subcommittee.**

    ### Status: Ongoing

    ► The Council for Online Learning Excellence (COLE) is committed to empowering excellence in online and hybrid learning experiences through a framework that grows knowledge networks and advances collaborative initiatives that enhance student, faculty and institutional success in Oklahoma.

    ► COLE has over 100 volunteers working on online teaching and learning. Recommended actions from this steering group are executed by the Online Consortium of Oklahoma to implement strategies and high impact practices.

    > Oklahoma's state system colleges and universities currently offer over 300 fully online associate's and bachelor's degree programs (**https://www.okhighered.org/state-system/degree-programs/online-degree-programs/**)

5. **The State Regents should explore the development of potential models for competency- based degrees in conjunction with recommendations from the Academic Program Innovations and Online Education Subcommittee.**

    ### Status: Ongoing

    ► The State Regents are currently working with micro-credentials and with assessments, industry credentials and technical courses featured on the Show What You Know website to explore the development of potential modes for competency.

    ► **ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org**, which empowers students to determine how previously earned college credit, licenses, certifications, military training, advanced standing scores, and knowledge gained through other learning experiences can be applied toward a degree program, was launched in April 2020.

    > To date, **ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org** features:
    >
    > ► Over 8,000 transfer courses in 48 disciplines
    > ► 92 cooperative agreements between colleges and technology centers
    > ► 1,729 testing opportunities
    > ► 390 industry credentials for credit
    > ► 125 technical courses for transfer
    > ► 666 military study and training credit

MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

1. **The State Regents and institutions should develop a state-wide outreach strategy for assisting military-connected students and their families to earn a college degree.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► The State Regents and state system institutions are committed to supporting the unique needs of student veterans and their families as they work toward their college degrees, and encourage all active and retired service members to take full advantage of the educational benefits available through Oklahoma institutions.

   ► Following state law, active military, their spouses and children who are stationed in Oklahoma for at least 30 days, or whose home of record is Oklahoma regardless of where they reside, are eligible to receive in state status for enrollment. Further, any veteran who is receiving educational benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, military reservists and their dependents, regardless of the amount of time elapsed since separation from service and where they reside, are eligible to enroll under in-state status.

   ► The Oklahoma National Guard Tuition Waiver was established as an incentive for qualified young men and women to join the Oklahoma National Guard and as a means to retain skilled, productive citizens within the state.

     ▷ During the 2022 Legislative Session, Senate Bill 1418 was passed and codified into statutes with an effective date of July 1, 2022. The bill established the Oklahoma National Guard Educational Assistance Program to provide a full waiver of resident tuition and mandatory and academic fees for eligible members of the National Guard enrolled in Oklahoma public colleges and universities for up to 18 credit hours each semester. The National Guard will use this program as a recruitment incentive to expand their command and be competitive with surrounding states that offer similar educational assistance programs.

     ▷ Although the bill created the program, no funding was provided for FY23. A supplemental appropriation for the 2023 fiscal year was received in April 2023 to provide sufficient funding to reimburse our institutions costs incurred during the 2022-23 academic year. The annualized cost was also included in the FY24 appropriations from the Legislature.

     ▷ In addition to a maximum of 120 credit hours of undergraduate coursework, the bill authorizes benefits for eligible guard members for up to 40 credit hours of graduate coursework toward a master's degree. For FY24, an additional $3.5 million in funding has been requested to provide payment to our colleges and universities.

     ▷ The Oklahoma National Guard is working with the State Regents on on the administration of the program.

   ► The State Regents' Show What You Know website empowers students to determine how previously earned college credit, licenses, certifications, military training, advanced standing scores, and knowledge gained through other learning experiences apply toward a degree program.

     ▷ Military personnel and veterans can receive college credit hours at many Oklahoma colleges and universities for U.S. Armed Forces training, occupations and educational experiences. The Show What You Know website features an Oklahoma Military Transfer Inventory, which allows individuals to see how military training or study will apply toward a degree program.

2. **To facilitate degree completion for veteran students, the State Regents should develop a matrix of course equivalencies for students with military service experience.**

   Status: Complete

   ► **ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org**, which empowers students to determine how previously earned college credit, licenses, certifications, military training, advanced standing scores, and knowledge gained through other learning experiences can be applied toward a degree program, was launched in April 2020.

► To assist veteran students, the State Regents facilitated development of a military course equivalency matrix. Through the Military Transfer Project, qualified faculty members were nominated to evaluate military course work for inclusion in the systemwide matrix, which provides transparency for students and in many cases, showcases what institutions are already awarding. The matrix is located on the military tab on the Show What You Know website.

► Many Oklahoma colleges and universities award credit for prior learning for military experience. Students can search the Oklahoma Military Transfer Inventory (**https://showwhatyouknowok.org/armed-services-military-college-credit/**) to see how training or study will apply toward a degree program. Veterans may also earn credit for knowledge gained through work and life experiences, non-degree granting institutions and military or other training environments, making them closer to degree completion while in-state eligibility status helps reduce the cost of a degree.

► In March 2021, the State Regents hosted the first Military Transfer Project Faculty meeting.

To date, **ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org** features:
- ► Over **8,000** transfer courses in **48** disciplines
- ► **92** cooperative agreements between colleges and technology centers
- ► **1,729** testing opportunities
- ► **390** industry credentials for credit
- ► **125** technical courses for transfer
- ► **666** military study and training credit
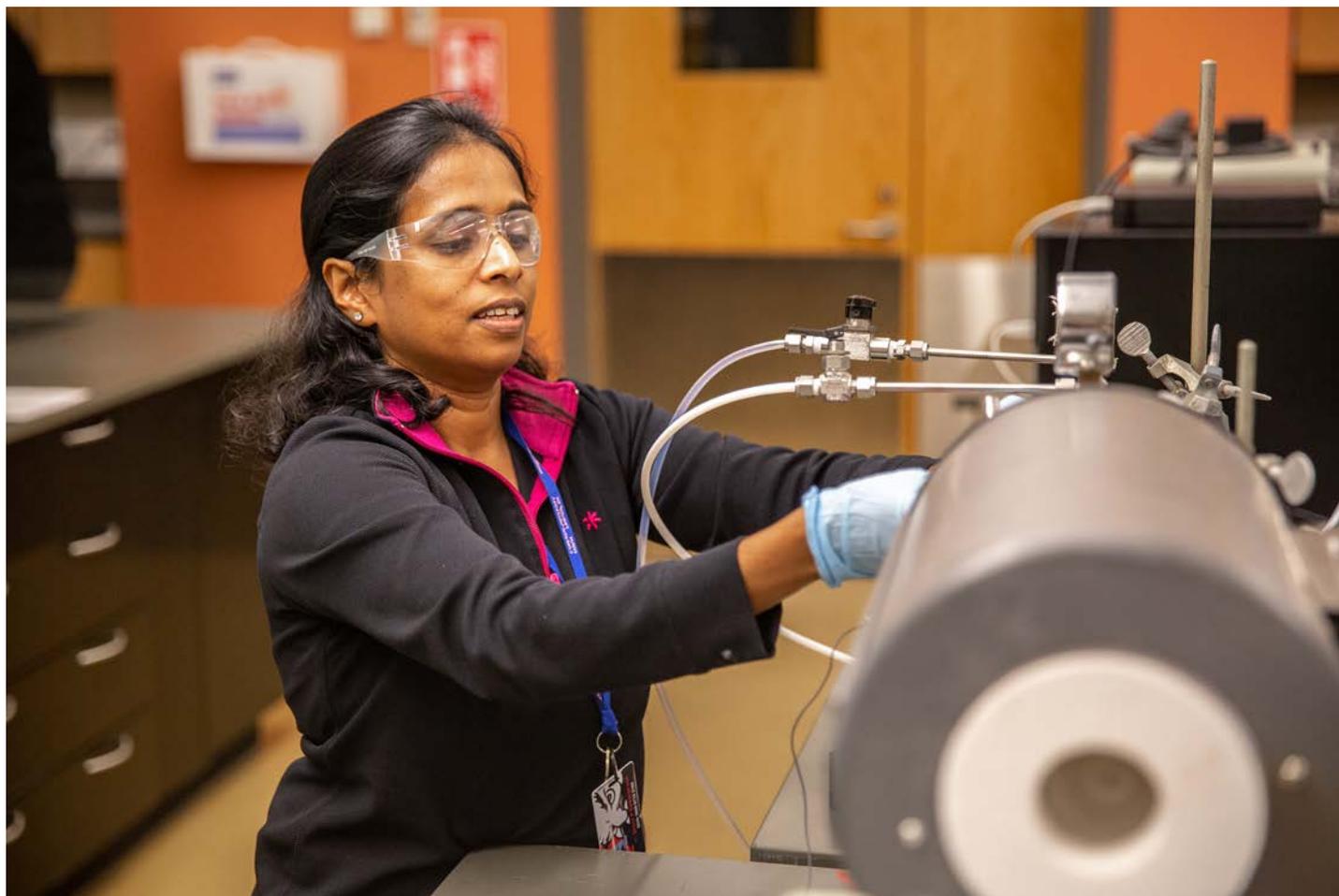
ACADEMIC PROGRAM INNOVATIONS & ONLINE EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

1. **The State Regents should provide leadership and resources to accelerate the development and expansion of joint degree programs and statewide seamless transfer articulation agreements between and among institutions.**

   ### Status: Ongoing

   ► A new effort began in spring 2023 on a statewide articulation agreement for nursing and computer science between colleges and career technology centers.

   ► The State Regents have created the Oklahoma Statewide Nursing Pathways Advisory Group to discuss LPN to RN to BSN pathways. The group is comprised of representatives from both public and private higher education and career technology centers.

   ► The State Regents' Course Equivalency Project (CEP) facilitates student transfer within the state system of higher education. The CEP database contains faculty-generated course equivalency information for over 8,000 thousand courses offered at public and private institutions, with courses organized by discipline. Equivalency groups within each discipline contain a collection of courses from sponsoring institutions; credit for a course listed in a CEP group can be transferred to any state system institution that sponsors a similar course in that group. Students are able to access search course equivalencies through **ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org**.

2. **The State Regents should provide a statewide framework and policies for institutions to develop microdegrees/micro-credentials to meet workforce demand in real time.**

   a. **Workforce focused micro-credentials should be offered primarily through online delivery channels.**
   b. **Open/flexible course and program start dates should be explored to allow for rapid completion of credentials at low costs.**
   c. **Micro-credentials should be based on centers of existing expertise and excellence from state institutions.**
   d. **Micro-credentials will be developed, as appropriate, in coordination with the career technology centers and local industry to maximize career opportunities, limit course duplication, and enhance cost efficiencies.**
   e. **The State Regents should consider the development of a centralized platform to manage micro-credentials.**

   ### Status: Complete

   ► In 2022, the State Regents launched the UpskillOK initiative to provide a statewide framework for the development of micro-credentials.

   ► UpskillOK brings together three stakeholders through career-ready micro-credential and certificate programs: employers, who need to find, grow and keep talent; learners, who need to develop and demonstrate job-relevant skills; and our institutions, which create pathways to connect them.

   ► The State Regents also support zero-cost digital badges for institutions and students on an opt-in basis through the Credly platform. To date, 23 institutions offer micro-credentials through UpskillOK with 16 institutions using the State Regents' Credly portal to issue over 12,000 badges since May 2022. More information is available on **https://upskillok.org/**.

   > Since January 2022, the State Regents have committed **$5.4 million** in funding to support the development of micro-credentials with industry partners, which as of March 2023 has resulted in:
   >   ► **250+** new micro-credentials programs
   >   ► **23** participating campuses
   >   ► **90+** industry partnerships

3. **The State Regents should develop a systemwide strategy for building state-of-the-art data analytics capacity at all state system institutions and secure the resources necessary for its implementation so that colleges and universities can make systematic and data-informed decisions on improving student success, enrollment growth, financial** sustainability, and institutional advancement.

Status: Ongoing

► In August 2023, the State Regents completed Phase I of migrating data from the old, inflexible Unitized Data System (UDS) to a new data warehouse using the SAS platform.

► Phase II of the SAS data analytics upgrade is scheduled to begin in September 2023 with estimated completion in 2025.

▷ The major areas of work in Phase II include:

● Incorporation of new data sources related to State Regents' managed scholarship programs (Oklahoma's Promise, OTAG, and Academic Scholars), financial aid information, submissions from the institutions, workforce information, and data from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission.

● Enhanced data governance supporting a more sustainable data warehouse and efficient management of data sources, especially as new data sources are added and existing sources are updated.

● Targeted use of SAS consulting resources to accelerate dashboard and reporting capabilities early in Phase II.

● Use of SAS consulting resources to assist with critical technical support needs, such as sizing and tuning of the data warehouse systems.

● Adjustments to warehouse mechanisms to handle needed changes related to IPEDS and data intake from institutions.

▷ Sequencing of Phase II:

● Initial work during Phase II (September 2023) will focus on producing priority dashboards and reporting, supporting the State Regents' technical needs, establishing a formal data governance structure/mechanism, and laying groundwork for adjustments needed to handle time sensitive changes related to IPEDS.

● Once a data governance framework is in place (Fall 2023), the governance processes will be employed in all work related to new data sources and any modifications related to IPEDS and the intake of information from the institutions.

● At present, scholarship-related data sources will be added to the data warehouse first, with financial aid and workforce data following.

► The State Regents provided one-time funding to Western Oklahoma State College, Cameron University, and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma to support an institutional research consortium designed to improve institutional use of data analytics.

4. **The State Regents should collaborate with the Council on Instruction, the Council on Student Affairs, and the Economic Development Council to advance the development and assessment of 21st century workforce-ready skills. This strategic systemwide effort would support the development of "out-of-classroom" skills, such as critical thinking, leadership, teamwork, and civic engagement. To the extent possible, secondary schools should be included to create a seamless transition of these skills from high school to postsecondary education. In addition, this strategic initiative should provide a mechanism for students to communicate these workforce-ready skills to employers.**

Status: Ongoing

► Employers and recruiters are looking for applicants who can demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings. In fact, nearly all employers in a Hart Research survey (95%) indicated they gave hiring preference to college graduates with beyond-major skills that will enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace.

► Employers agree that having both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge is the most important combination for long-term success. Micro-credentials quickly establish that individuals have marketable skills, competencies and experiences.

► The UpskillOK initiative includes credit and non-credit activities that are tied to workforce development needs.

► The State Regents use the Credley badging system for a searchable talent directory based on skill tags.

5. **The State Regents, in collaboration with the Council of Presidents and the Council on Instruction, should research the design and implementation of competency-based education within the State System of Higher Education.**
   a. **The State Regents should undertake a comprehensive study of existing competency-based education programs, such as the University of Wisconsin model, and the potential implications for Title IV funding.**
   b. **The State Regents should define and implement incentives, as funding allows, to identify and support select programs and institutions for competency-based education expansion.**
   c. **Ideal programs would likely be workforce-focused and provide a pathway for career advancement for students.**
   d. **A program of this nature may include collaborations between higher education institutions and be delivered primarily through online channels. In addition, collaborations with technology centers should be explored as appropriate.**

Status: Ongoing

► There is no study or work on a totally competency-based degree program; however, there is greater understanding and acceptance of competency-based learning through the **ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org** website for industry certifications and technology center work. The site, which empowers students to determine how previously earned college credit, licenses, certifications, military training, advanced standing scores, and knowledge gained through other learning experiences can be applied toward a degree program, was launched in April 2020.

To date, **ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org** features:
- ► Over 8,000 transfer courses in 48 disciplines
- ► 92 cooperative agreements between colleges and technology centers
- ► 1,729 testing opportunities
- ► 390 industry credentials for credit
- ► 125 technical courses for transfer
- ► 666 military study and training credit

6. **The State Regents should coordinate the establishment of an organization with the mission of identifying, creating, growing, and sharing emerging academic innovations. This structure would mitigate risk for state institutions, while allowing institutional leaders to benefit from the latest thinking, research, and academic innovation options available for adoption. Such a structure could be a collaborative effort of the Council on Instruction, Council on Student Affairs, and the Council for Online Learning Excellence.**
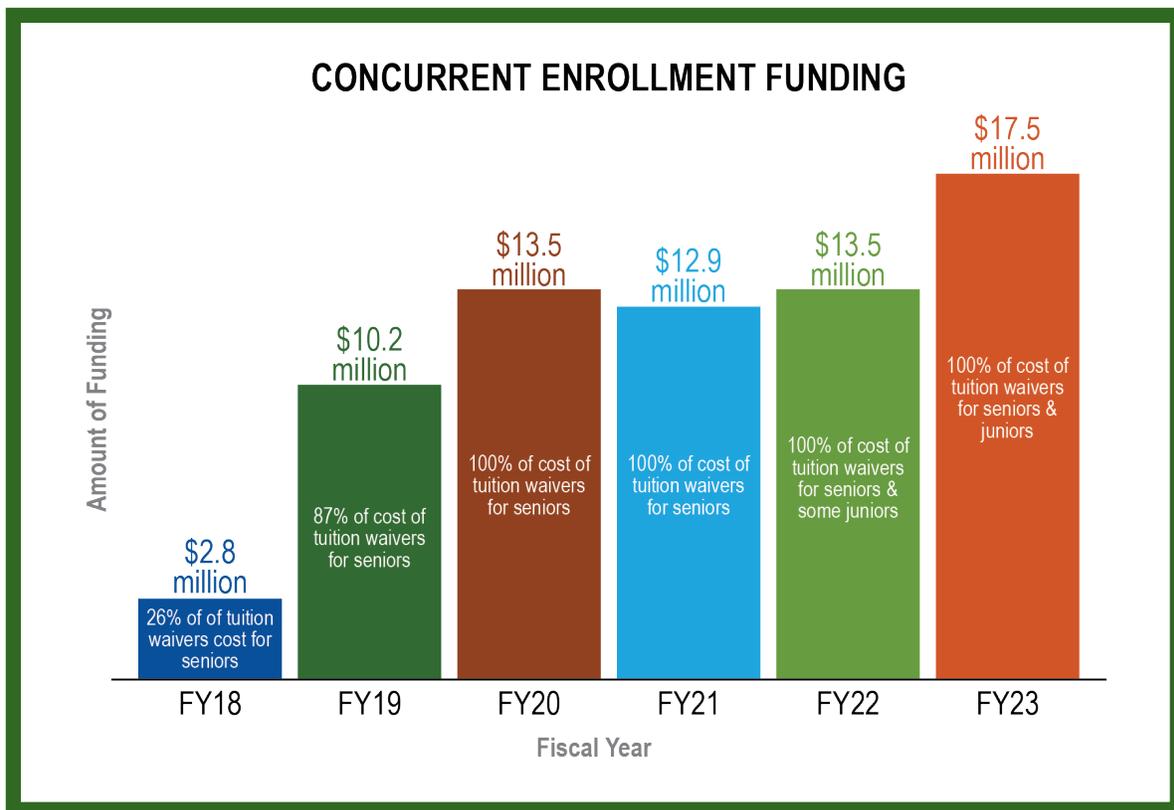
Status: Complete

► The State Regents administer the Online Consortium of Oklahoma (OCO) (**https://www.ocolearnok.org/**), a membership-based organization established in 2018 that provides a wide variety of services for institutions, such as shared contracts for proctoring, grants for Open Educational Resource (OER) development, Quality Matters training for reduced costs, academic integrity safeguard information, policy development, and digital badging.

► In 2019, the OCO Learning Portal was established with support from OneNet to provide homegrown professional development to faculty and staff throughout the system at no cost.

► In 2020, projects were undertaken to support institutions and faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic, including dedicated professional development for STEM faculty and grants to support online proctoring for remote courses.

► In 2021, OCO funded a cohort of nine institution representatives to develop a statewide strategic plan for OER during the first-ever year-long AAC&U Institute on OER, followed by funding a request from the Council for Online Learning Excellence (COLE) for acquisition of the OPEN OCO Pressbooks network, which allows faculty teaching at all OCO institutions to create, clone, and share zero-cost textbooks. OCO also facilitated the acquisition of the State Regents' Credly platform, now used for UpskillOK and to provide credentials for faculty and staff development.

► In 2022, OCO established multiple pilot program projects and grants, including offering faculty OER textbook adoption grants to those teaching with zero-cost textbooks, and issuing technology pilot grants to member institutions, which helped campuses explore emerging tools to engage online learners.

► Beginning with the 2023-24 academic year, OCO will fund a series of Student Advocate Scholarships, which aim to support students through mentorships, professional development and networking with the member professionals of COLE. The scholarships will be facilitated by COLE and offered to incentivize student advocacy and development of professional skills related to online teaching and learning. A total fund of $7,000 will be available each year and scholarships will be awarded to students affiliated with public colleges and universities across Oklahoma, including an opportunity to earn a micro-credential to recognize the work completed throughout the program.

7. **The State Regents should support the continued expansion of the concurrent enrollment waiver program by developing a three-year plan to:**
   a. Secure resources to fully fund existing concurrent enrollment activities.
   b. **Review data from expanded concurrent pilot programs around the state to find best practices in student success in these programs and collaborate with the Council on Instruction to revise State Regents' policies to incorporate successful strategies for statewide implementation.**
   c. **Provide data to the state Legislature regarding the success of the current program and the expanded program to ensure continuation of a fully funded program for all concurrent students statewide.**

Status: Complete

► If students are in 11th or 12th grade and have made good grades throughout school or scored well on the ACT or SAT, students could be eligible to take credit-earning college courses while still in high school through Oklahoma's concurrent enrollment program.

► High school seniors who meet the eligibility requirements are entitled to receive tuition waivers for up to 18 credit hours, and high school juniors can receive tuition waivers for up to 9 credit hours, subject to available funding.

► In the Summer 2023, the State Regents created a concurrent enrollment working group to further study implementation of recommendations for the Concurrent Enrollment Task Force. The Task Force will begin meetings in August 2023.

► Since 2017, the State Regents have received increased funding to support concurrent enrollment.

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT FUNDING

Fiscal Year	Amount of Funding	Notes
FY18	$2.8 million	26% of of tuition waivers cost for seniors
FY19	$10.2 million	87% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors
FY20	$13.5 million	100% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors
FY21	$12.9 million	100% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors
FY22	$13.5 million	100% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors & some juniors
FY23	$17.5 million	100% of cost of tuition waivers for seniors & juniors

► During the 2021 legislative session, SB292 created the Concurrent Enrollment Task Force to study concurrent enrollment delivery in the state (funding and capacity) and best practices for student success. The task force report was submitted on November 1, 2022.

► The State Regents created a concurrent enrollment working group to further study implementation of recommendations for the Concurrent Enrollment Task Force. The working group began its meetings in September 2023.

8. **The State Regents should continue collaboration with the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education for traditional students and returning adults to provide the most appropriate pathway for career growth and cost-**effective credential completion.

Status: Ongoing

► There is ongoing collaboration on applied courses and programs with the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education, including a shared Associate in Applied Technology in Applied Technology at 11 colleges across the state.

► Additionally, the Show What You Know website features:

  ▷ Over 8,000 transfer courses in 48 disciplines,

  ▷ 92 cooperative agreements between colleges and technology centers,

  ▷ 1,729 testing opportunities,

  ▷ 390 industry credentials for credit,

  ▷ 125 technical courses for transfer, and

  ▷ 666 military study and training credit.

9. **The State Regents should develop a systemwide strategy for institutions to provide both academic and non-academic supports to students. This strategy should:**

   a. **Recognize the changing demographics of traditional and adult students, and direct resources to programs that serve these students' needs, encouraging flexible policy and procedures to be developed in collaboration with the Council on Instruction and the Council on Student Affairs.**
   b. **Assist institutions in creating public-private partnerships to address non- academic needs of adult students. Examples include programs to eliminate stresses for returning adults by providing financial supports, textbook assistance, comprehensive and personalized advising, and career development services.**
   c. **Assist institutions in demonstrating the value in creating public-private partnerships to address academic needs of adult students by providing cohort programs, small classes, accelerated course offerings, online course offerings,** etc. to facilitate better learning outcomes for returning adults.
   d. **Provide research related to outcomes from these supports found in other states as emerging programs and the** demonstrated return on investment.

Status: Ongoing

► Through Reach Higher and Complete College America (CCA), the State Regents offer academic and non-academic support to students.

► CCA Momentum Year offered webinars addressing math pathways, co-requisites, academic focus areas, 15 to Finish, and pro-active advising from January through May 2020.

► Reach Higher offers coaching, summits, convenings, and a lunch-and-learn series on cultural responsiveness and inclusion issues for adult students. RECONNECT events across the state engage adults and their children in "return to college" activities each semester (spring, summer, fall).

► In the FY23 budget, the State Regents included an Adult Degree Completion and Workforce Re-entry Scholarship deployed to the institutions based on percentage of Pell-eligible students and percentage of adult students served.

ONLINE EDUCATION

1. **The State Regents should request funding from the Legislature and private sources to devote resources to expand the effective use of Open Educational Resources (OER) to reduce textbook costs and improve student success.**

   ### Status: Complete

   ► Open educational resources (OER) equip the state system of higher education and Oklahoma institutions to create opportunities for diverse, equal and collaborative knowledge creation and dissemination for students through no-cost, openly-licensed materials. OER continues to become a standard across Oklahoma public higher education, with stakeholders understanding the positive impact of OER on students and working together to cultivate OER development and advocacy locally, nationally, and globally.

   ► The State Regents' FY23 and FY24 budget appropriations included $300,000 for both years earmarked for OER development and training. This has sustained the costs of OPEN OCO Pressbooks (**https://open.ocolearnok.org**) while providing the following:

      ▷ In FY23, $235,000 in funding was made available to institutions which resulted in 63 total OER grants issued to 40 participating faculty teaching at 13 state system institutions. 95 faculty and staff were issued awards for completion of basic-level OER training.

      ▷ In FY24, the State Regents will conduct a request for proposals to procure a statewide OER commons hub to facilitate creation and sharing of resources among Oklahoma faculty while renewing the faculty OER grant program with $150,000 total funding available to institutions.

      ▷ The Council for Online Learning Excellence (COLE) now hosts the annual Oklahoma OER Summit each fall, which had over 100 participating faculty and staff in 2022.

      Remaining funds have been used to provide professional services to the system and to launch resources such as the OPEN OCO Pressbooks (**https://open.ocolearnok.org**) platform, which is available to institutional faculty to freely adopt, create, or share OER textbooks.

   ► Investments in OER quickly realize benefits, as seen by Oklahoma City Community College, which saved learners $2.1 million between fall 2021 and fall 2022 by converting four general education courses to OER, including U.S. History I and II and English Composition I and II.

2. **The State Regents should invest in and promote statewide professional development for faculty and staff to improve** online instruction and student success.

   ### Status: Complete

   ► The State Regents' FY23 budget included training and professional development for faculty, including ongoing funding for a system subscription to Quality Matters (QM), which has now grown to 27 public and private participating institutions. State Regents staff manage dedicated QM-licensed workshops, which are facilitated by Oklahoma faculty and offered multiple times each year at a substantial discount to member institutions. From April 2022-April 2023, 239 participants registered and saved a total of $20,325. The State Regents will also be able to provide support to institutions for the cost of recertification of workshop facilitators due to the release of the QM Higher Education Rubric, 7th Edition in July 2023.

   ► The Online Consortium of Oklahoma (OCO) provides training and professional development opportunities in support of quality online teaching and learning. OCO membership dues funded the summer 2020 STEM Virtual Academy, which helped 60 STEM faculty from 20 institutions to pivot to remote instruction at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. OCO also launched a digital badging pilot through Credly for faculty and staff professional development and recognition, including free and open-access trainings like Online Educational Resources (OER) 101 and the Oklahoma Online Excellence Awards.

   ► The State Regents have invested in additional tools to support existing projects of the Council for Online Learning Excellence (COLE), including acquiring the Zoom Events conference platform launched in 2022, now used to offer virtual options for the annual Oklahoma Learning Innovations Summit each April and OER Summit each October.

3. **The State Regents should work with participating institutions to develop common online platforms and facilitate user groups for existing platforms. Adopting a common online platform should be a long-term goal.**

Status: Complete

- ► The Online Consortium of Oklahoma (OCO) and the Council for Online Learning Excellence (COLE) developed user-groups based on online platforms for economies of scale and informational resources for each platform.

- ► OCO has offered multiple grant funding opportunities to its member institutions, including $32,000 to pilot new remote proctoring solutions in 2020 and $76,000 to pilot technology engagement tools in 2023, using reporting submitted by participating institutions to inform collaborative investments and efforts to seek system-level managed contracts.

- ► In 2022, COLE established a new Learning Management Systems (LMS) and Tools committee, which meets monthly to discuss best practices for administrators and faculty across the system and serves as a training conduit for emerging online learning professionals. COLE also facilitates monthly faculty and staff user groups for each LMS used across the system, which as of 2023 includes Canvas, Blackboard, and Brightspace.

4. **The State Regents should request funding from the Legislature to develop a systemwide delivery model for online education, with the goals of increasing access, value, quality, and growing a highly educated workforce and citizenry.**

Status: Ongoing

- ► Since FY22, the State Regents' budget for workforce micro-credentialing has supported investment in a systemwide agreement with Coursera, which offers over 5,000 courses and specializations curated from leading providers across the globe. During FY23, 13 institutions participated in the Coursera initiative, offering upskilling opportunities to their own faculty and staff, as well as using the platform to provide micro-credential programs and fill gaps in curricular areas for learners.

- ► Institutions have begun to explore opportunities for course sharing, including Langston University's participation as of 2022 in the HBCU-MSI consortium facilitated by the Southern Regional Educational Board with provider Acadeum.

- ► The Online Educational Resources (OER) initiative was funded in FY23 and will identify high-enrollment sections that could use high quality, free digital instruction materials for students. The Online Consortium of Oklahoma website will be used to index OER adopted by Oklahoma faculty to encourage shared adoption of instructional materials for transferable courses.

Oklahoma's state system colleges and universities currently offer over 300 fully online associate's and bachelor's degree programs (**https://www.okhighered.org/state-system/ degree-programs/online-degree-programs/**)

SYSTEM STRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE

SYSTEM STRUCTURE

1. **The State Regents and Chancellor should encourage governing boards to explore more cooperation on academic programs and administration in order to better streamline initiatives across the system and to ensure best practices** are scaled across multiple institutions.

   It should be acknowledged that the recommendation to reduce the number of governing boards will not result in significant savings in and of itself. The potential for combining similar institutions under the same governing board presents the opportunity for more easily streamlining the administration, Human Resources (HR), payroll, finance, and Information Technology (IT) functions of these institutions, which is anticipated to result in cost savings and better, more efficient business processes.

   ### Status: Ongoing

   ► The State Regents and the Chancellor encouraged all institutions within the state system to explore collaborations that will streamline savings to impact their bottom line.

   ► The state system achieves approximately $6.3 million in annual savings for state agencies through the Statewide-OneNet Partnership, which brings together the State Regents, the Office of Management and Enterprise Services and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation in a cohesive approach to achieve cost savings and create a cooperative framework to address information technology projects.

   ► State system institutions have reported FY23 collective savings of $57.8 million from cost reductions and/or cost avoidance withing their institutions. These savings have been reallocated in a variety of ways to support operations, personnel, mandatory cost increases, programs, information technology, facilities, scholarships and building reserves.

   ► Additionally, the State Regents have formed several programs and initiatives, both operational and academic, that are used to help our system institutions achieve savings and efficiencies.

   ▷ **Master Lease Program** — The Master Lease Program is administered through the State Regents on behalf of the state system institutions. State Regents' participation enhances the state system's ability to achieve savings by:

   ● acting as a credit enhancement due to the State Regents' ability to control the allocation process for each institution, which helps in obtaining better ratings and bonds being sold with smaller risk to buyers, thus making them more attractive to the bond market;

   ● pooling of lease agreements limits the up-front financing and administrative costs; and

   ● providing a mechanism for review for refunding opportunities at the respective call dates to maximize savings to our institutions.

   During 2020, 27 eligible projects were refinanced to capture historically low interest rates and generated approximately $10.9 million in savings for our institutions over the remaining term of the bonds outstanding.

   ▷ **Statewide Purchasing Contracts and Consortiums** — The State Regents and our system institutions actively negotiate contracts at the best rates possible for use for all system entities. Institutions are also members of regional purchasing consortiums that provide savings and discounts from collective purchasing power.

   ▷ **Energy Management Contracts- Guaranteed Utility Savings** — Institutions have utilized energy management contracts that provide upgrades to campus utility infrastructures that are paid from guaranteed savings achieved through upgrades, such as the installation of more efficient HVAC, lighting, and plumbing fixtures.

- ▷ **IT Shared Services/OneNet Network Savings** — Examples of the use of shared services include the following recent institutional partnerships:

  - Joint contract by three regional universities (Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University and Southwestern Oklahoma State University) for new technology for enterprise resource planning (ERP), student information, finance, human resources and talent management solutions;

  - Shared software as a service (SaaS) consortium was formed using Blackboard Learn technology platform (Northeastern State University, Carl Albert State College, Murray State College and Redlands Community College); and

  - Adobe contract agreement for more than 20 applications developed through a joint consortium providing 28.4% savings to the rate charged each of the participants.

- ▷ **Oklahoma Higher Education Employee Interlocal Consortium (OKHEEI)** — The OKHEEI consists of 12 colleges and universities across Oklahoma, as well as the administrative office of the Regional University System of Oklahoma. These institutions joined forces to more effectively and economically provide competitive benefits for their employees.

- ▷ Online Education Task Force — The Online Education Task Force was developed to review online capabilities within the system, share best practices, and develop a comprehensive online education platform to maximize instructional opportunities for Oklahoma students. In the 2017-2018 academic year, approximately 60% of all students took at least one online course from Oklahoma colleges and universities (the national average is 33%). In 2017-2018, 45 degree programs were approved for online delivery, for a total of 431 or 22% of all degree programs offered.

- ▷ **Academic Planning/Resource Allocation (APRA)** — APRA requires each institution in the state system to prepare and submit an academic plan. The institutional academic plans, including their mission statements, are used by the State Regents in regular reviews of existing programs and in handling requests for new programs. The APRA process also assures that the institutions are engaged in their own internal academic review and planning activities, and results in eliminating unnecessary duplication of academic programs and promoting academic cooperation throughout the state system.

- ► Below are examples of ongoing efforts at the campus level.

  - ▷ In 2021, Carl Albert State College, Connors State College, and Eastern Oklahoma State College formed the CACE Consortium to better meet student needs in rural Oklahoma by offering a wider variety of general education and major courses to students through faculty and course sharing.

  - ▷ In 2022, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma partnered to offer a collaborative nursing degree program to meet workforce needs. Under the program, freshmen in the pre-professional nursing program at Science & Arts can apply to the OU College of Nursing after completing two years of designated academic courses. Qualified students will receive guaranteed spots to complete their clinical training in Duncan, Lawton or at the OU Health Sciences Center. Students who choose to complete their bachelor's degree at Science & Arts can apply for the accelerated Bachelor of Science in nursing program at OU.

  - ▷ In 2021, Tulsa Community College and Oklahoma State University partnered to create College Park to provide a public four-year university experience in one location in downtown Tulsa. Through this partnership, College Park students will complete their four-year university experience in a single location, surrounded by OSU-Tulsa and TCC support and resources. Eligible students can use Tulsa Achieves with additional scholarship support toward the costs of the junior and senior years at OSU-Tulsa.

  - ▷ In 2022, the State Regents allocated funding to support infrastructure costs associated with the Southwest Student Research and Success Shared Service Center, a collaboration among Cameron University, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, Western Oklahoma State College, the OU K-20 Center and the State Regents. Redlands Community College joined the Center in the summer of 2023. The shared service center will lead to data informed decision-making tools and intervention capacity using predictive modeling, dashboards and sharing of institutional research variables required for such purposes. Funds will be used for personnel costs, data-analytic software licensing fees and training to create and use the predictive models and dashboards.

▷ In 2022, Rose State College and Southwestern Oklahoma State University partnered to streamline the transfer experience for RSC students completing their four-year degrees at SWOSU. Through this partnership, RSC and SWOSU will increase the number of transfer agreements between the two institutions and develop academic pathways for these programs.

▷ In 2022, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and Redlands Community College entered into a partnership to create administrative efficiencies. Through this partnership, the two institutions will share some administrative positions, including vice president for academic affairs, associate vice president for enrollment management, network security specialist, and director of printing services.

2. **The Legislature should create and fund a seed fund to provide financial incentives to encourage voluntary mergers of institutions. Institutional mergers should be undertaken with the following objectives: improve student success; maintain access; and maximize cost savings.**

Status: Ongoing

► The State Regents have collaborated with the Legislature to explore possible mergers within the state system of higher education. The State Regents' FY24 budget request included $5 million to create a "consolidation and collaboration" fund to provide financial incentives and support for institutions seeking to collaborate or merge. While funding for this request was not received for FY24, the State Regents continue to explore opportunities to financially support institutions with costs associated with mergers or collaborations.

3. **The State Regents and Chancellor should encourage and facilitate discussions on voluntary mergers or the implementation of partnerships between institutions.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► The Chancellor actively engages in discussions with institutions regarding partnerships and collaborations. To support innovative partnerships and collaborations, the State Regents will:

     ▷ Seek funding to establish a consolidation and collaboration fund to support institutional partnerships, consolidations, collaborations and shared services that increase efficiencies, decrease costs or improve student outcomes.

     ▷ Establish a shared services center to reduce institutional administrative costs and maximize efficiencies (e.g., back office functions, accounting, human resources, graphic design, grant writing).

     ▷ Maximize economies of scale through expanded opportunities for joint purchasing and contracting among institutions and other partners (e.g., consulting, fleet management, IT software and hardware).

4. **The State Regents and Chancellor should encourage and facilitate the development of service centers serving multiple institutions regionally.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In FY23, the State Regents provided one-time funding in the amount of $502,887 to Western Oklahoma State College, Cameron University, and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma to implement a shared institutional research function.

   ► In FY23, the State Regents provided one-time funding in the amount of $750,000 to the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and Redlands Community College to support the transition to the same enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform.

   ► Institutions under the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents and OSU A&M Board of Regents benefit from shared services.

   ► The State Regents are also working to create a shared services center at the agency office.

5. **Governing boards with authority for a single institution should be given a period until June 30, 2019, to enter into voluntary mergers/partnerships with the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents, the Oklahoma A&M Board of Regents, or the Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents. After June 30, 2019, the State Regents will recommend that remaining institutions be governed by or merged with the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents, the Oklahoma A&M Board of Regents, or the Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents, with the exception of any two-year community college that is a land-grant institution (Northern Oklahoma College) or receives local ad valorem funding (Oklahoma City Community College, Rose State College, and Tulsa Community College), which would retain their own respective governing boards. Two-year community colleges or governing boards with a single institution should be governed by or merged with the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents, the Oklahoma A&M Board of Regents, or the Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents. Following the merger, regents and trustees currently serving on the governing boards for single institutions will be converted to advisory board positions with gubernatorial appointments.**

   ### Status: Ongoing

   ► In FY23, the State Regents provided one-time funding to Western Oklahoma State College, Cameron University, and the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma to implement a shared institutional research function.

   ► In FY23, the State Regents provided one-time funding to the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and Redlands Community College to support the transition to the same enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform.

   ► The State Regents are working to create a shared services center at the agency office.

6. **Encourage collaboration and formation of partnerships between large urban two-year institutions, such as Oklahoma City Community College, Rose State College and OSU-OKC.**

   ### Status: Ongoing

   ► In 2018, Rose State College and Oklahoma City Community College announced a partnership for campus food services and joint bidding on various goods and supplies to allow for volume discounts that create cost savings. Under the agreement, RSC and OCCC also established an exchange partnership to offer French and Russian language courses for students at both campuses without the need to transfer colleges.

   ► In 2021, Tulsa Community College and Oklahoma State University partnered to create College Park to provide a public four-year university experience in one location in downtown Tulsa. Through this partnership, College Park students will complete their four-year university experience in a single location, surrounded by OSU-Tulsa and TCC support and resources. Eligible students can use Tulsa Achieves with additional scholarship support toward the costs of the junior and senior years at OSU-Tulsa.

   ► In 2022, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma partnered to offer a collaborative nursing degree program to meet workforce needs. Under the program, freshmen in the pre-professional nursing program at Science & Arts can apply to the OU College of Nursing after completing two years of designated academic courses. Qualified students will receive guaranteed spots to complete their clinical training in Duncan, Lawton or at the OU Health Sciences Center. Students who choose to complete their bachelor's degree at Science & Arts can apply for the accelerated Bachelor of Science in nursing program at OU.

   ► In 2022, Rose State College and Southwestern Oklahoma State University partnered to streamline the transfer experience for RSC students completing their four-year degrees at SWOSU. Through this partnership, RSC and SWOSU will increase the number of transfer agreements between the two institutions and develop academic pathways for these programs.

   ► In 2022, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and Redlands Community College entered into a partnership to create administrative efficiencies. Through this partnership, the two institutions will share some administrative positions, including vice president for academic affairs, associate vice president for enrollment management, network security specialist, and director of printing services.

FISCAL SOLUTIONS, EFFICIENCIES, AFFORDABILITY & TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE

SYSTEM STRUCTURE

1. **The State Regents and Chancellor should facilitate the establishment of multi- institutional partnerships to scale-up back office function consolidation in administrative function areas (for example: Information Technology, human resources, purchasing, finance and accounting, and academic learning management systems, etc.).**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In response to changing higher education models and to support long-term institutional viability, the State Regents established a System Innovation and Efficiency fund to incentivize new partnerships within the state system that lead to streamlined operations and innovation focused on improving institutional sustainability and systemwide performance. In FY22, the State Regents allocated funding in the amount of $1,784,863 to the System Innovation and Efficiency Fund, with the first institutional grant approved in FY23. In FY23, the State Regents allocated an additional $250,000 to the fund for a total of $2,034,863.

   ► In May 2022, the State Regents allocated one-time funding from the System Innovation and Efficiency Fund to support the development of the Southwest Student Research and Success Shared Service Center, which is a collaborative effort for shared institutional research functions among Western Oklahoma State College, Cameron University, and the University of Sciences and Arts of Oklahoma. The shared service center will lead to data informed decision-making tools, such as predictive modeling and dashboards.

   ► In December 2022, the State Regents allocated one-time funding from the System Innovation and Efficiency Fund in support of a joint operations collaboration between the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and Redlands Community College. The initiative focuses on a phased approach to align administrative systems, technology and shared academic programs that will result in long-term efficiencies and improved services to students at these institutions.

   ► Planning continues at the institutional level to further explore shared functional opportunities. The State Regents included several recommendations concerning shared services and institutional collaborations in the new strategic plan, *Blueprint 2030: Innovating and Elevating Oklahoma Higher Education for Tomorrow's Workforce,* which was approved in February 2023.

3D: Explore the feasibility of delivering career services as a shared system service.

12D: Evaluate system-level agreements for student-facing software-as-a-service platforms (e.g., learning management systems, early alert systems, student support services such as tutoring); instructional design staffing and professional services to facilitate the transition of existing face-to-face courses to online and hybrid templates; and course sharing.

13A: Establish a consolidation and collaboration fund to support institutional partnerships, consolidations, collaborations and shared services that increase efficiencies, decrease costs or improve student outcomes.

13B: Establish a shared services center to reduce institutional administrative costs and maximize efficiencies (e.g., back office functions, accounting, human resources, graphic design, grant writing).

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2. **Any cost savings achieved through implementation of efficiencies should be reinvested in initiatives related to enrollment, retention, student success, faculty quality, etc. that result in improving degree completion outcomes and generating increased revenue.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► In FY22 and FY23, new state dollars have been focused on workforce development.

   ► Student retention efforts and outcomes were diminished during FY21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This topic will remain a focus as operations normalize post-pandemic.

   ► As campus collaborations and consortiums are still in initial implementation phases, ongoing cost savings cannot yet be quantified, but are anticipated over the next several years.

3. **The State Regents should require that every institution use a predictive analytics data program to aid in enrollment strategies and improve student retention and graduation rates. Information regarding the use of predictive analytics should be embedded in the institution's annual academic plan that is submitted to the State Regents.**

   Institutions are strongly encouraged to participate in a contract for predictive analytics through the State Regents or initiate their own contract.

   Status: Ongoing

   ► The State Regents have invested in the development of the SAS platform at the coordinating board level and expect this tool will provide a more robust data system for data analytics in public higher education. The current implementation schedule covers a 10-month period for the first phase, with plans for a data-warehouse to follow.

   ► In January 2023, State Regents' staff participated in a professional development session to discuss the processes for developing a strong data governance structure. The two-day training session was designed to analyze the importance of establishing a foundation for data governance and to review the requirements that should be maintained for a strong data management framework.

   ► The data management components include business drivers needed for the anticipated outcomes and use of data; data governance; data stewardship; data management; solutions for data input; and methods for data collection. The session highlighted the steps needed to be taken internally to develop policies and procedures for building a robust and reliable data service unit.

   ► Work will continue in this vital aspect of the implementation and re-development of the SAS data analytics project over the next several months.

4. **The State Regents should implement a financial fiscal review and long-term (at least every five years) viability assessment of each institution to be conducted on a rotating basis with at least five institutions assessed every year.**

    As part of the financial review and viability assessment, institutions would be required to submit partnership plans identifying current and potential strategic partnerships with other institutions, governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, private sector businesses, etc., that promote continued institutional viability.

    ### Status: Complete

    ► The State Regents commissioned financial viability reviews of all 25 main campuses and the two health sciences centers from a third-party reviewer, Huron. These were conducted at the state level to provide a base line for our institutions and covered fiscal years 2014 - 2018. Several key performance measures were identified that our institutions can continue to use as viability benchmarks.

    ► Huron studied the partnerships between many of our institutions and catalogued many collaborations for the first pilot cohort of institutions before the State Regents redirected these efforts in 2021.

    ► Our institutions continue to update their composite financial index scores.

5. **Governing boards should undertake a review of their respective institutions to determine if branch campuses/campus sites function as cost centers, are self-sustaining, or contribute to the financial stability of the institution.**

    ### Status: Ongoing

    ► In a historic move, the University Center of Southern Oklahoma in Ardmore has become Murray State College Ardmore. The merger was approved by both chambers of the state Legislature before being signed into law by Governor Kevin Stitt on May 18, 2021.

    ▷ The UCSO began in 1974 as the Ardmore Higher Education Center. The original building, owned by Ardmore City Schools, served as a shared facility allowing faculty and administration from Murray State College, Southeastern Oklahoma State University and East Central University to offer classes. The current location, which was built in 2017 at 2901 Mt. Washington Rd., is on 103 acres within city limits on the north side of Ardmore.

    ▷ In addition to offering associate degrees, the focus of Murray State College Ardmore will be bringing bachelor's and master's degree programs, most of which will be in electronic format, to Ardmore and surrounding communities. This will be accomplished through existing two-plus-two agreements and partnerships with various universities throughout the state. This merger resulted in a higher education access point remaining open in Ardmore with a consolidated administration through Murray State College.

    ► Southwestern Oklahoma State University is making changes to ensure that its Sayre location will continue to meet the higher education needs of western Oklahomans.

    ▷ SWOSU has operated its remote location in Sayre since 1987, when Sayre Junior College was merged with SWOSU. Since the merger, SWOSU's remote location at Sayre has been an integral part of SWOSU's overall operation and approach to meeting the needs of students. However, technological advancements have created new platforms such as Zoom that allow students to take an active role in their education from anywhere. SWOSU Sayre has experienced multi-year enrollment declines that drove SWOSU to impanel a task force to study this issue. The SWOSU Sayre task force consulted widely with stakeholders on the issue before drafting recommendations.

    ▷ SWOSU will begin consolidating the operations of its remote location in Sayre into one facility. The additional buildings at the Sayre location will be transferred to a new owner who can better utilize and maintain those valuable properties.

6. **The State Regents should eliminate line-item allocation funding for special programs and branch campuses.**

   Consolidating institutional allocations would incentivize governing boards to consolidate purchasing contracts and improve back-office and administrative efficiencies and provide governing boards more flexibility in setting their institutional priorities.

   Status: Complete

   ► This recommendation was implemented with the FY19 allocations.

   ► Prior to 2019, many institutional allocations included line-item allocations for specific programs administered within the institution. The task force recommended changing these separate allocation line-items to a consolidated format; therefore, line-item allocations for specific programs and branch campus allocations were consolidated into an institutional allocation to allow institutional flexibility in funding specific programs on their campuses.

7. **The State Regents' Council on Information Technology will lead an initiative to coordinate the purchase of common computer-related applications and technology across the higher education system. Leveraging the purchasing power of several institutions allows the State Regents to procure IT materials and services at a lower cost, providing for an increased level of efficiencies, cost savings and an overall improved academic experience. In addition, increased buying power will allow smaller institutions to invest in technologies they may have been previously unable to afford, ensuring all students, faculty and staff across our higher education system have access to the same technologies.**

   Status: Ongoing

   ► OneNet has facilitated many collaborations among our institutions that provided savings and efficiencies for technology related purchases.

   ► OneNet sponsors higher education-specific contracts and discounts, which are shared among state institutions. This significantly reduces the cost of technology, such as videoconferencing, online learning, cybersecurity services, and classroom technologies, for colleges and universities.

      ▷ Examples include the systemwide contract for Zoom licensing that became crucial for our system during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Coursera contract that provided a significant savings on licensing for our institutions utilizing this platform for the micro-credentialing and badging initiative.

   ► Various institutional collaborations have been used for the purchase of licensing for enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems and technology upgrades that have also achieved savings and efficiencies.

8. **State system colleges and universities should support the State Regents and Chancellor in striving to maintain OneNet under the State Regents to ensure that all higher education institutions and other OneNet clients benefit from the cost savings provided through OneNet contracts and services.**

   OneNet should explore revenue enhancements and/or other strategies designed to further improve economic development, job creation, and quality of life, with a particular emphasis on benefitting rural communities.

   Status: Ongoing

   ► OneNet sponsors higher education-specific contracts and discounts, which are shared among state institutions. This significantly reduces the cost of technology, such as videoconferencing, online learning, cybersecurity services, and classroom technologies, for colleges and universities.

OneNet
Oklahoma's Research & Education Network

► OneNet manages the Oklahoma Community Anchor Network (OCAN), a 10Gbps optical ring around the state that impacts 35 Oklahoma counties. The network connects 93 community anchor institutions, including colleges and universities, libraries, hospitals, technology centers, K-12 schools, public safety and government agencies.

  ▷ OneNet operates OCAN with the goal of improving bandwidth options for community anchor institutions in Oklahoma's rural communities and enhancing economic growth by partnering with telecommunications providers to extend services to the private sector in the 35 counties OCAN serves.

► OneNet participates in meetings with the Oklahoma Broadband Office and facilitates information as needed to assist in the mission of the Broadband Office. OneNet also participates in meetings with the Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council that focus on broadband mapping, digital inclusion, and broadband policy.

  ▷ OneNet is collaborating with the Oklahoma Broadband Office in the development of the state's Digital Equity Plan. This plan will enable the state to identify gaps in broadband access, broadband adoption rates, as well as the devices and training needed to access the internet. OneNet will also assist in providing proposals for solutions to these gaps.

► The National Science Foundation has awarded $1.5 million to OneNet to expand the OneOklahoma Friction Free Network, a dedicated research network that utilizes OneNet's network infrastructure. OFFN seeks to enhance research capabilities statewide by offering access to computing resource regardless of location or geography. The funding expands research computing to small colleges and universities across Oklahoma.

► OneNet's participation in the E-Rate and Oklahoma Universal Service Fund programs helps provide affordable internet services for rural K-12 schools, career technology centers and libraries. OneNet's participation in the Healthcare Connect Fund Program provides affordable broadband connectivity to eligible healthcare providers.

► OneNet's high-speed bandwidth supports telemedicine for Oklahoma's rural citizens, ensuring even remote areas have access to physicians, specialists and therapists through telehealth visits.

► OneNet's new strategic plan, completed in 2023, focuses on OneNet's role as Oklahoma's research and education network. The leadership team updated OneNet's logo, tagline and mission to reflect this focus. The team also identified four key success areas that will create the most value for OneNet over the next few years:

  ▷ Subscriber Engagement – Develop a strategic approach to growing and serving subscribers and increasing utilization of above-the-net services.

  ▷ Partnerships – Engage partners at the national, state and local levels to improve service delivery and broadband access across the state.

  ▷ People – Establish a talent pipeline to serve OneNet's mission and advance OneNet's strategic focus.

  ▷ Technology – Create a strategic direction for technology and innovation and ongoing process improvement.

The **Task Force**
on the **Future** of
Higher Education

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