



# DEGREES OF PROGRESS

eNews from the State Regents for Higher Education



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## AI SKILLS KEY TO OKLAHOMA'S FUTURE WORKFORCE

By Chancellor Allison D. Garrett

Remember the android named Data from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*? On the Enterprise, Data helped the crew resolve weekly challenges with alien species using a combination of incredible strength, quick thinking and encyclopedic knowledge (all while learning what it means to be human). For me, the thought of harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) conjures images of robots like Data — a walking, talking machine with limitless capability and a knack for mimicking human expression.

While alien encounters in a faraway galaxy and a hyper-intelligent android delivering clever one-liners are straight out of Hollywood, the reality is this: AI is continually advancing machine learning technology and seamlessly integrating into our everyday lives, streamlining and improving the way we live and work.

AI's importance to the future of work is clear. That is the driving force behind the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's recent approval of the first undergraduate AI degree programs in the state. The University of Oklahoma and Southwestern Oklahoma State University will offer the Bachelor of Science in artificial intelligence and Rose State College will offer an Associate in Science in artificial intelligence and machine learning. All three degrees will be available to learners via both traditional instruction and online delivery.

Oklahoma's was the first higher education system in the nation to establish a statewide committee focused on AI impacts in higher education. Launched in early 2023, our committee is comprised of more than 40



members from public and private campuses across the state, including academic professionals, educational administrators and AI industry practitioners.

These advancements align with Governor Stitt's recent Task Force on Emerging Technologies, which recommended integrating AI education across all levels, from K-12 to higher education, and launching workforce retraining programs to prepare current and future generations for the evolving AI-centric job market.

The influence of AI technologies shows no signs of slowing. Across employment sectors - including health care, finance, manufacturing and aerospace - more than 19,000 Oklahoma jobs currently require AI skills. Those positions have median annual earnings of nearly \$106,000. The number of AI-related positions in our state is expected to increase 21% over the next decade.

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# STRENGTHENING WORKFORCE, PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH INNOVATION, GROWTH AT RSC

By Dr. Jeanie Webb, President, Rose State College

Rose State College is excited to announce several pivotal advancements designed to meet the evolving needs of Oklahoma's workforce and drive economic growth. Our recent initiatives include the Bachelor of Applied Technology in Cybersecurity (BAT) launch, a new associate degree in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI/ML), and the approval of an Aerospace and Cybersecurity Incubator. These programs and facilities strengthen Oklahoma's workforce through strong partnerships.

Our first four-year degree program, the Bachelor of Applied Technology in Cybersecurity is a comprehensive 131-credit hour program equipping students with in-demand skills in computer networking, digital forensics, incident response, and security management. By 2031, information security analyst jobs are projected to grow by 35%, and with the expansion of Tinker Air Force Base, nearly 10,000 new cybersecurity-related positions are expected in Oklahoma over the next five years.

The AI/ML associate degree program prepares students for careers in data science, robotics, and autonomous systems covering both theoretical and practical aspects of AI/ML. As these technologies transform industries worldwide, our program aligns with workforce needs, ensuring our graduates are ready to drive innovation and efficiency across various sectors.

We are thrilled to announce the approval of our Aerospace and Cybersecurity Incubator by the Oklahoma State Department of Commerce. Located within the new Tanenbaum Aerospace and Cybersecurity Center, this incubator serves as a hub for aspiring entrepreneurs and established businesses. Offering state-of-the-art facilities, expert mentorship, and a collaborative environment, the incubator accelerates the development of new technologies and solutions critical to high-demand industries in Oklahoma.

Rose State believes in creating strong pathways and partnerships with technology centers, colleges, and universities to ensure



## ROSE STATE COLLEGE

students meet their academic and career goals. By collaborating with industry and private partners, we provide students with real-world experiences and opportunities to support their growth and success.



Pictured, left to right: Professor and Engineering Coordinator Steven Fowler, Brig. Gen. Brian R. Moore, RSC president Dr. Jeanie Webb, Col. Abigail L. W. Ruscetta, Vice President for Academic Affairs Travis Hurst, and Dean of Workforce Development Whitney Alvis.

## AI SKILLS KEY TO OKLAHOMA'S FUTURE WORKFORCE

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For students and workers of all ages, access to AI resources, degree programs, and upskilling or reskilling opportunities can increase their marketability for job opportunities and help them stand out from the crowd. A recent *Oxford Economic Papers* report showed that job candidates who noted AI studies in their resume or cover letter were more likely to be selected for an interview and more likely to be offered higher wages.

The rapid and extensive adoption of machine learning technology by employers of all sizes across a wide spectrum of industries spurs demand for AI education, operational experience, and technical expertise. The State Regents and our public institutions will continue our work to remain on the leading edge of the AI field and produce the skilled graduates required to meet Oklahoma's workforce needs today, tomorrow and in the future. We know Data would approve.





## OKLAHOMA HIGHER EDUCATION NEWS

- [OU lands \\$80M contract to oversee USPS workforce development training](#)
- [CMS selects OU HSC to participate in dementia care model](#)
- [OSU engineering camp provides opportunities for girls in STEM](#)
- [ECU set to break ground for new nursing building](#)
- [NSU's mechanical engineering program expanding to Broken Arrow campus](#)
- [SWOSU one of 3 colleges in Oklahoma to offer AI degree](#)
- [UCO's LX Studio launches leadership micro-credential workshop](#)
- [Where affordability meets quality education at OPSU](#)
- [USAO announces partnership with OCCC for expanded degrees](#)
- [CASC launches online LPN to RN program](#)
- [RCC summer enrollment increases 15.5%](#)
- [RSC launches innovative Aerospace, Cybersecurity Incubator](#)
- [TCC, OKCU sign articulation agreement to bolster nursing workforce](#)

# INTERNET2, ESNET, CANARIE, GÉANT UNVEIL TRANSOCEANIC CONNECTIVITY FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION

Internet2, in a joint effort with CANARIE, the Energy Sciences Network (ESnet) and GÉANT, announced a major expansion of 400 gigabits per second (Gbps) transoceanic circuit capacity dedicated to transferring research and education (R&E) data. As part of the Advanced North Atlantic (ANA) collaboration, this marks a significant achievement in high-speed connectivity between North America and Europe, supporting data-intensive science globally. Oklahoma researchers have access to this new capacity thanks to OneNet's connection to Internet2, a nonprofit, member-driven advanced technology community.

"As Oklahoma's partner in research and education, OneNet provides access to this high-capacity transoceanic connectivity for our state's institutions through our membership in Internet2," said Brian Burkhart, OneNet's chief technology officer. "These advancements in connectivity enable our state to participate in worldwide research initiatives that ignite scientific discovery at the global level."

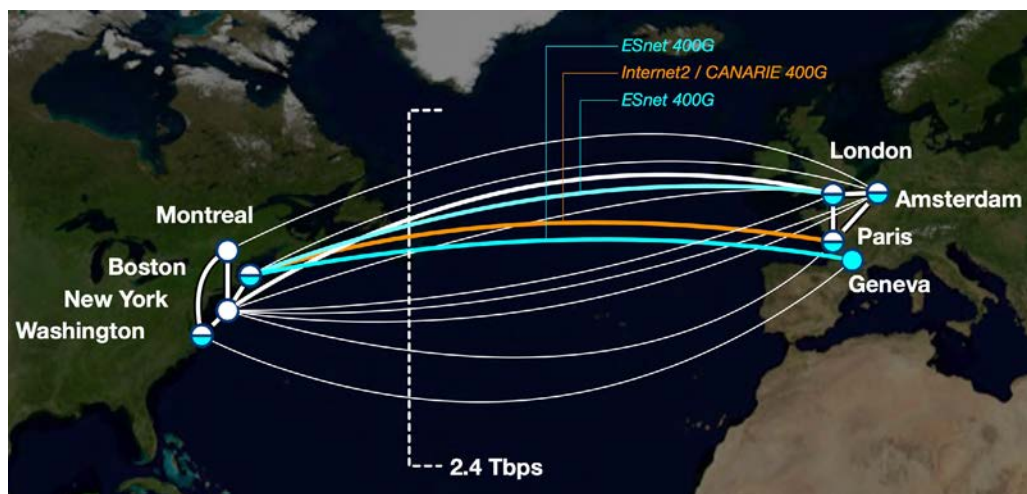
ANA's network expansion supports multinational, data-intensive science collaborations, including the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator, and the Square Kilometer Array, the ongoing effort to build the world's largest radio astronomy observatory. It adds much-needed capacity for transmitting instrument findings to researchers globally, enabling ground-breaking discoveries.

"The University of Oklahoma is an ATLAS Tier2 computing center for the LHC experiment at CERN," OU research scientist Horst Severini, Ph.D., said. "OU is using all four of these networks for ATLAS data transfers from OU to our ATLAS collaborators in Canada and Europe, so we're looking forward to making use of this new bandwidth increase."

The joint effort adds three 400 Gbps spectrum circuits between exchange points in the U.S., U.K. and France. The new connections utilize the record-breaking 400 terabits per second trans-Atlantic Amitié subsea cable system completed in July 2023, which spans 4,215 miles.

The Internet2, ESnet, CANARIE and GÉANT collaboration started in 2020, following an R&E community-driven proposal to modernize and augment intercontinental connectivity to support research. It culminated after a years-long process of technical planning, acquisition and deployment. With the project's completion, Internet2 is among the first R&E networks to operate 400 Gbps global exchange points.

Internet2 delivers a diverse portfolio of technology solutions that leverages, integrates and amplifies the strengths of its members and helps support their educational, research and community service missions. Internet2's core infrastructure components include the largest and fastest research and education network in the U.S. that was built to deliver advanced, customized services that are accessed and secured by the community-developed trust and identity framework.

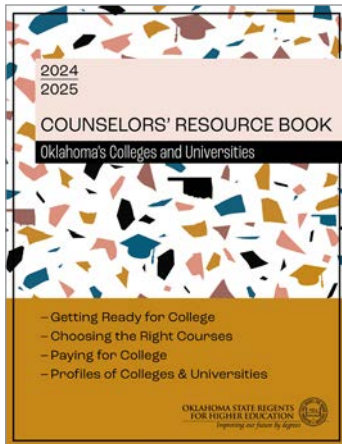


# 2024-25 COLLEGE PLANNING PUBLICATIONS

This fall, the State Regents will offer free online college planning publications for Oklahoma students and counselors.

## YOUR PLAN FOR COLLEGE

These digital brochures for students in grades 8-10 and 11-12 outline the courses they must take in high school to be admitted to an Oklahoma public college or university, as well as financial aid information, estimated college costs, salary expectations for various jobs and information about campus comparison and selection.

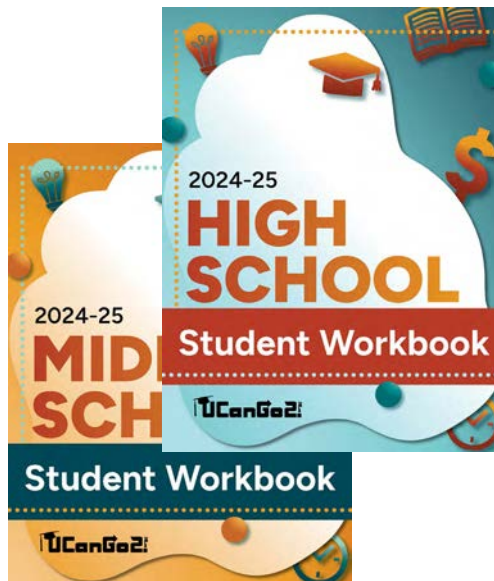


## COUNSELORS' RESOURCE BOOK: OKLAHOMA'S COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

This online publication for high school counselors provides a profile of each college and university in Oklahoma and includes information about preparing for college, college costs and financial aid.

## HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR TOOLKITS

UCanGo2, a college access initiative of the Oklahoma College Assistance Program, offers a digital kit to support educator outreach to students and parents. Each digital toolkit includes an Instructor's Guide, a Plan of Action to help counselors make the most of UCanGo2 materials throughout the year, student tools and FAFSA education resources.



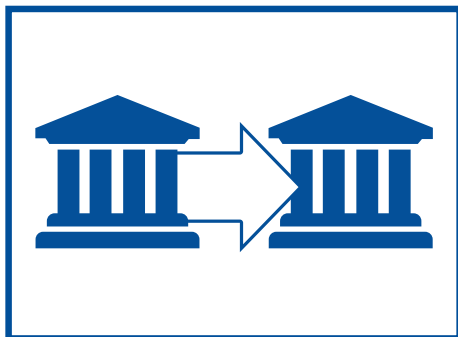
## QUARTERLY NEWS AT A GLANCE

- [Ann Holloway named state regent emeritus](#)
- [Grant-funded project expands Oklahoma's research network to four additional campuses](#)
- [Seamless course transfer through the CEP strengthens Oklahoma's workforce pipeline](#)
- [State Regents allocate funds for Oklahoma colleges, universities](#)
- [Levit sworn in as new state regent](#)
- [State Regents' Council for Online Learning Excellence honors outstanding work of faculty, staff, administrators](#)
- [State Regents approve artificial intelligence degree programs](#)
- [Three outstanding seniors named Chancellor Hans Brisch Scholars](#)
- [State Regents continue to keep tuition affordable](#)
- [New officers elected to lead State Regents](#)
- [Public higher education chancellor announces plans to retire in Jan. 2025](#)

## DID YOU KNOW?



Data from the National Center for Education Statistics show the cost of attendance at Oklahoma universities is **among the lowest in the nation.**



Oklahoma has the **highest transfer-out rate in the nation**, a measure of first-time-entering students attending community colleges who transfer to a four-year institution within six years.



**OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS  
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

*Improving our future by degrees*

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