



# 2025 REGENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025

Presbyterian Health Foundation Conference Center — Colloquium Room

# OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



Chair  
Courtney Warmington  
Edmond



Vice Chair  
Dustin Hilliary  
Lawton



Secretary  
Justice Steven W. Taylor  
McAlester



Assistant Secretary  
P. Mitchell "Mitch" Adwon  
Tulsa



Dennis Casey  
Morrison



Jeffrey W. Hickman  
Fairview



Ken Levit  
Tulsa



Jack Sherry  
Holdenville



Michael C. Turpen  
Oklahoma City



Chancellor  
Sean Burrage  
Oklahoma City

# ABOUT THE REP

American higher education has thrived under the unique concept of lay governance. If that tradition is to continue, qualified men and women must be selected to serve as regents, and they must also be educated to govern in situations of increased complexity and accelerating change.

A series of legislation was passed in Oklahoma during the late 1980s to improve Oklahoma higher education and increase its accountability. That activity was capped by the passage of bills in 1990 calling for a regents' education program. The purpose of the program is to educate Oklahoma regents and trustees about the nature of their responsibilities and the seriousness with which they should be undertaken. More specifically, the program is to provide information that will allow regents and trustees to perform their public responsibilities and to govern successfully.

Under 70 O.S. § 3228, each appointed or reappointed regent/trustee, must complete 15 hours of continuing education within two years of the date on which the regent/trustee takes office. Two of the 15 hours must be in ethics, as required by law.

## REP AGENDA

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| <b>8:30 a.m.</b>             | <b>Registration and Breakfast</b>  |
| <b>9:00 a.m.</b><br>.5 hour  | <b>Welcome</b><br>Regent Courtney K. Warmington, Chair, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  |
|                              | <b>State System Update</b><br>Chancellor Sean Burrage, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education   |
| <b>9:30 a.m.</b><br>1 hour   | <b>Consequential Board Governance: Fundamental Duties and Responsibilities</b><br>Dr. Carlton Brown, Senior Fellow, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges   |
| <b>10:30 a.m.</b><br>.5 hour | <b>Strengthening the Board-President Relationship</b><br>Dr. Carlton Brown, Senior Fellow, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges  |
| <b>11 a.m.</b><br>1 hour     | <b>Financial Oversight and Accountability: Best Practices for Financial Stewardship</b><br>Stewart Berkinshaw, Senior Vice President for Strategy and Finance, The University of Oklahoma<br>Chris Kuwitzky, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial/Administrative Officer, Oklahoma State University |
| <b>12 p.m.</b><br>1 hour     | <b>Luncheon Keynote: 2026 Legislative Policy Priorities</b><br>Chancellor Sean Burrage (moderator)<br>The Honorable Kyle Hilbert, Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives<br>The Honorable Chuck Hall, Senate Appropriations Committee Chair (invited)  |
| <b>1 p.m.</b><br>.5 hour     | <b>K-12 Priorities and Pathways to College and Career Readiness</b><br>Lindel Fields, State Superintendent of Public Instruction   |
| <b>1:30 p.m.</b><br>.5 hour  | <b>Degrees of Separation: Aligning Higher Education with Industry in the New Market for Credentials</b><br>Dr. Samuel Kurtz, Economist – Talent and Economic Development Programs, George Kaiser Family Foundation   |
| <b>2 p.m.</b><br>1 hour      | <b>Open Meeting Act and Open Records Act</b><br>Niki Batt, Deputy Attorney General, Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General<br>Thomas Schneider, Deputy General Counsel, Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General   |
| <b>3 p.m.</b><br>1 hour      | <b>The Ins and Outs of Oklahoma Ethics Rules</b><br>Margaret Kerr, General Counsel, Oklahoma Ethics Commission   |
| <b>4 p.m.</b>                | <b>Adjournment</b>   |

# REP FEATURED SPEAKERS



## **Courtney K. Warmington**

### **Chair, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education**

Courtney K. Warmington was appointed to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education by Governor Kevin Stitt in 2021 and currently serves as Chair of the State Regents. She is a nationally recognized labor and employment attorney, certified mediator, and former Administrative Law Judge with more than 25 years of experience advancing fair, effective, and lawful workplace practices. She has represented employers in complex litigation before state and federal courts, mediated high-stakes disputes to resolution, and held leadership roles shaping workplace policy in Oklahoma. In addition to her service as Chair of the State Regents, she is past president of the Oklahoma County Bar Association. She holds an AV Preeminent Peer Review Rating from Martindale-Hubbell and has been recognized by Chambers USA, Best Lawyers in America, and Super Lawyers (Top 25 Women, Top 50 Attorneys in Oklahoma).



## **Sean Burrage**

### **Chancellor, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education**

Chancellor Sean Burrage currently serves as the chief executive officer for the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, overseeing 25 colleges and universities, 10 agencies, and statewide initiatives, including OneNet and the Oklahoma College Assistance Program. He leads efforts on academic standards, strategic planning, budget allocations, tuition, and scholarship programs, including Oklahoma's Promise. Previously, Burrage was vice president for executive affairs and chief of staff at the University of Oklahoma, where he was responsible for leading and directing strategic projects. He also served as president of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, where he streamlined operations, increased enrollment, and enhanced fundraising. A former managing partner at Taylor Burrage Law Firm, Burrage represented Rogers and Mayes counties for two terms in the Oklahoma Senate, serving as minority floor leader from 2011-14 and authoring over 50 enacted bills. Born in Durant and raised in Antlers, Burrage is a member of the Choctaw Nation and holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and a juris doctorate from OU.



## **Dr. Carlton Brown**

### **Senior Fellow, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**

Dr. Carlton Brown is a senior fellow and consultant with the Association of Governing Boards, specializing in governance, strategic planning, and innovation in higher education. He also serves as a senior executive search consultant for AGB Search, focusing on presidential and other senior leadership roles at small and mid-sized institutions. Dr. Brown previously served as president of both Savannah State University and Clark Atlanta University, where his leadership was marked by strategic growth, improved student outcomes, and strengthened institutional partnerships. Earlier in his career, he held academic and administrative leadership roles at Hampton University, including vice president for planning and dean of the Graduate College. He currently chairs the Board of Directors at San Francisco Bay University and continues to advise institutions nationwide on governance, organizational transformation, and innovation. Dr. Brown earned his BA and EdD from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.



## **Stewart Berkinshaw**

### **Senior Vice President for Strategy and Finance, The University of Oklahoma**

Stewart Berkinshaw serves as the University of Oklahoma's Senior Vice President for Strategy and Finance and Chief Financial Officer, overseeing financial operations and strategies across all three campuses. Before assuming his current role, Stewart held several key positions at OU, including Associate Provost for Academic Finance (2014-2018), Chief Budget Officer (2018-2020), and Associate Vice President for Budget and Finance (2020-2025) for the Norman campus. Prior to joining OU, Stewart was a Senior Manager at KPMG in Dallas, where he worked with clients in higher education, health care, and government sectors. An alumnus of OU's Price College of Business, he holds a BBA in Finance and Accounting, a Master of Accountancy, and is a certified public accountant.

# REP FEATURED SPEAKERS



## **Chris Kuwitzky**

### **Senior Vice President and Chief Financial/Administrative Officer, Oklahoma State University**

Chris Kuwitzky serves as Senior Vice President and Chief Financial/Administrative Officer for the Oklahoma State University System, overseeing finance, budgeting, facilities, human resources, and public safety operations. Before joining OSU, he was Vice President for Fiscal and Administrative Affairs at Langston University and spent more than 30 years at the University of Oklahoma, where he advanced to Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer. He also served as Vice President of Administration and Treasurer at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. An Oklahoma native and certified public accountant, Chris holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Oklahoma.



## **The Honorable Kyle Hilbert**

### **Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives**

Kyle Hilbert serves as the 45th Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives and represents House District 29, which includes parts of Creek and Tulsa counties. Elected Speaker in 2025, he is the youngest in Oklahoma's history and only the second Republican speaker age 30 or younger in any state since 1873. During his eight years in the House, Hilbert has authored more than 40 bills signed into law, including the DRIVE Act to modernize transportation funding, reforms to the state's ad valorem tax reimbursement system, and the Redbud School Funding Act to support school districts with below-average property tax revenues. Before becoming Speaker, he served three sessions as Speaker Pro Tempore and three years as Vice Chair of the Appropriations and Budget Committee, where he helped strengthen and modernize the state's budget process. A native of Bristow, Hilbert earned a bachelor's degree in agribusiness and an MBA from Oklahoma State University, where he also served as Student Government Association President. He and his wife live in Bristow with their two young daughters.



## **The Honorable Chuck Hall**

### **Senate Appropriations Committee Chair**

Senator Chuck Hall was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate in 2018 and represents Pawnee, Noble, Logan, Payne, and Kingfisher counties. He currently serves as Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. A lifelong resident of Perry and fourth-generation Oklahoman, Hall is the third generation of a family banking legacy that spans more than 160 years. He has spent over three decades with Exchange Bank, where he serves as CEO and Chairman of the Board. Before his banking career, he was Director of Government Relations for the Oklahoma Bankers Association. Deeply committed to public service, Hall has served as City Treasurer, City Councilman, and two-term Mayor of Perry, and has chaired multiple local boards including the Perry Memorial Hospital Trust Authority and Perry Economic Development Authority. He has also served on the Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank Branch Board and is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma Class XIII. Hall and his wife, Amy, have three adult daughters and five grandchildren.



## **Lindel Fields**

### **State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

Lindel Fields serves as Oklahoma's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, leading statewide efforts to improve reading proficiency, strengthen teacher recruitment and retention, and expand career pathways for students. A nationally recognized leader in education, organizational culture, and leadership development, Fields brings more than 30 years of experience transforming schools, agencies, and businesses. Before his appointment as superintendent, he served as CEO and Superintendent of Tri County Technology Center in Bartlesville, where his leadership earned the 2018 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and multiple rankings on Fortune's "Great Places to Work" list. A lifelong educator, Fields began his career as a horticulture instructor and later founded Your Culture Coach, a consulting firm dedicated to helping organizations build trust, strengthen communication, and create thriving workplace cultures. He believes that strong leadership and healthy culture are the foundation for organizational excellence and community success.

# REP FEATURED SPEAKERS



## **Dr. Samuel Kurtz**

### **Economist – Talent and Economic Development Programs, George Kaiser Family Foundation**

Dr. Samuel Kurtz is the economist for the talent and economic development programs under the stewardship of the George Kaiser Family Foundation. He provides economic and strategic advising to programs in their most nascent and mature phases, playing a meaningful role in the acquisition and deployment of hundreds of millions in investments towards reversing the cycle of poverty. Current areas of focus include leading the research for Tulsa's Labor Market Observatory, Tulsa's Tech Hub, and other national partnerships. Outside of work, Dr. Kurtz researches government-nonprofit contracting networks with UI Chicago's Networks and Governance Lab, advises programming at the City Lights Foundation of Oklahoma to enable housing access for Tulsans experiencing homelessness, and is producing emergent insights on Tulsa's campaign finance landscape. Multiple award-winning social organizer, Dr. Kurtz is a passionate participant in the space of civic and communal life.



## **Margaret Kerr**

### **General Counsel, Oklahoma Ethics Commission**

Margaret Kerr has served as General Counsel for the Oklahoma Ethics Commission since May 2024. She was previously a partner at Frailey, Chaffin, Cordell, et al. in Chickasha, where she practiced for 15 years. Her practice has included contract law, real property law, civil litigation, oil and gas, and municipal law. After private practice, she worked as a full-time Professor at Rose State College in the legal studies department. Ms. Kerr is also a certified arbitrator with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) and has taught Ethics in Continuing Legal Education for over 10 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Central Florida and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Oklahoma.



## **Niki Batt**

### **Deputy Attorney General, Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General**

Niki Batt serves as Deputy Attorney General and Director of the Legal Counsel Division for the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General, where she oversees legal matters and provides guidance on a wide range of issues affecting state government. Before joining the Attorney General's Office, she practiced law for more than six years with a focus on insurance defense and medical malpractice defense litigation. Batt is a member of the Oklahoma Bar Association and is admitted to practice before the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern, Northern, and Western Districts of Oklahoma, as well as the Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas. She earned her bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University and her Juris Doctor from the University of Oklahoma College of Law.



## **Thomas Schneider**

### **Deputy General Counsel, Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General**

Thomas Schneider serves as Deputy General Counsel for the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General. In this role, he helps manage the office's Open Records review and production process, co-manages the Attorney General opinion process, advises on employment matters, reviews qualifying board actions for antitrust implications, and serves as counsel to state public bodies on opioid response efforts. Before joining the Attorney General's Office in 2017, Schneider worked in Washington, D.C. for Representative Tom Cole and interned with the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. He earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Oklahoma State University, his juris doctor from Oklahoma City University School of Law, and his LL.M. from The George Washington University Law School.

# NOTES



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*Improving our future by degrees*