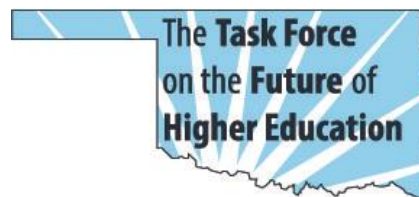


# STATE REGENTS TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



## Academic Program Innovations and Online Education Subcommittee

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### A. 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.
2. The State Regents should provide a statewide framework for institutions to develop microdegrees/microcredentials to meet workforce demand in real time.
  - a. Workforce focused microcredentials 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 credential at low costs.
  - c. Microcredentials should be based on centers of existing expertise and excellence from state institutions.
  - d. Microcredentials 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 microcredentials.
3. The State Regents should develop a system-wide 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.
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 system-wide 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.

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.
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.
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 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 revised program to ensure continuation of a fully funded program for all concurrent students statewide.
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.

The State Regents should develop a system-wide 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.

## **B. Online Education**

**December 6, 2017**

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.
2. The State Regents should invest in and promote statewide professional development for faculty and staff to improve online instruction and student success.
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.
4. The State Regents should request funding from the Legislature to develop a system-wide delivery model for online education, with the goals of increasing access, value, quality, and growing a highly educated workforce and citizenry.