

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
Research Park, Oklahoma City

MINUTES OF THE
STATE REGENTS TASK FORCE ON THE
FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Thursday, May 25, 2017

1. **Announcement of Filing of Meeting Notice and Posting of the Agenda in Accordance with the Open Meeting Act.** The Task Force on the Future of Higher Education met at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 25, 2017, in the Regents Conference Room at the State Regents' offices in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Notice of the meeting was filed with the Secretary of State on **October 13, 2016**. A copy of the agenda had been posted as required by the Open Meeting Act.

2. **Call to Order.** Participating in the meeting were: Dr. Ann Ackerman, Regent Phil Albert, Governor Bill Anoatubby, Regent Calvin Anthony, Chief Bill John Baker, Chief Gary Batton, Regent Bruce Benbrook, President Don Betz, President Randy Beutler, President Sean Burrage, Mr. John Carey, Regent Lake Carpenter, Regent Sam Combs, Mr. Leonard Court, Regent Rick Davis, Ms. Lee Denney, Regent Jeff Dunn, President Cheryl Evans, President Tim Faltyn, Mr. John Ford, Mr. Robert Gardner, President Leigh Goodson, Mr. Jeff Greenlee, President Burns Hargis, Ms. Karen Keith, Mr. Dan Little, Regent Bert Mackie, Regent John McArthur, Dr. Thomas K. McKeon, Mr. Fred Morgan, Dr. Terry Mosley, Mr. Mike Neal, Mr. Dennis Neill, Mr. Tyler Norvell, Ms. Cathy O'Connor, Dr. Marion Paden, Regent Gary Parker, Mr. Ken Parker, Regent Carl Renfro, Mr. Dee Replogle, Mr. Bob Ross, Regent Richard Ruhl, Dr. Jason Sanders, Secretary Natalie Shirley, Dr. Dennis Shockley, President Jerry Steward, Justice Steven Taylor, and Ms. Avilla Williams.

State Regents attending were: Toney Stricklin, Ron White, Jay Helm, Jody Parker, Ann Holloway, Andy Lester, Jeff Hickman, Mike Turpen, and John Massey.

Consultants present from the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) were Dr. William Kirwan, Mr. Ken Knueven, and Dr. Sally Mason.

Chairman White called the meeting to order and presided.

3. **Welcome and Introductions.** The State Regents, AGB consultants and all members present introduced themselves. Chancellor Glen D. Johnson stated that the last endeavor of this magnitude was initiated over 30 years ago and concluded with the implementation of the Brain Gain program. He also informed the Task Force that their notebooks will be a useful tool with several publications and information that will assist them during the process.

4. **History and Overview of Oklahoma's State System of Higher Education.** Chancellor Johnson reviewed the history of Oklahoma higher education. In 1890, the Oklahoma Legislature passed legislation to create the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma. During the 1920's there was tremendous presidential turnover and most institutions were not accredited. In 1926, it was recommended that a central coordinating board be established, but it wasn't until 1939, that Governor Leon C. Phillips named board members and the constitutional board was formed.

Currently, the State Regents is the coordinating board for the Oklahoma public higher education institutions and they have several functions including: 1) determine functions and courses of study; 2) prescribe standards of education; 3) granting of degrees; 4) recommending the budget allocation to the State Legislature; 5) allocate funds to institutions; and 6) have the tuition setting

authority. Each institution has their own governing board that hires the president, determines management policy, handles personnel items, general academic policy and student life. The University Center at Ponca City and the University Center of Southern Oklahoma Board of Trustees act as the administrative agencies for the centers.

Chancellor Johnson stated that the top priorities of the State System is to increase the number of college degrees, enhance access and improve the quality of public higher education, and better prepare students to meet the challenge of a global economy. A survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that those with a bachelor's degree or higher have significantly higher earnings than those with less educational attainment, earning \$1.1 million more in a lifetime than a high school graduate. Governor Mary Fallin recognized this gap and implemented Oklahoma Works and Launch Oklahoma to increase educational attainment and align education outcomes with workforce needs.

Chancellor Johnson stated that there are several challenges for the Task Force to tackle including:

- 53 percent of the 100 Oklahoma Works critical occupations require a college degree, however, only 24.6 percent of adults 25 and older in Oklahoma have a bachelor's degree or higher;
- 67 percent of jobs in Oklahoma by 2020 will require some college, a certificate or a college degree;
- States with a higher percentage of college degree holders have a higher per capita income and Oklahoma is not one of those states;
- The United States has declined in degree completion from first in the world to 19th over the last twenty years; and
- The OSRHE has not been able to use the performance funding formula in four years due to the lack of funding.

Chancellor Johnson also discussed online education in Oklahoma. In the 2015-2016 academic year, there were 108,322 students enrolled in online courses and approximately 52 percent of all students took at least one online course. Additionally, Oklahoma is the fifth highest state among the southern states in their percentage of undergraduate instruction through online learning. Oklahoma is also very affordable, only increasing tuition and mandatory fees an average of 4.9 percent in eight years and ranking fifth in the nation for college affordability by the 2015 Enterprising States Report. Oklahoma also has low student debt with 52 percent of students graduating without any debt.

Chancellor Johnson finished by stating that Oklahoma's state appropriations for higher education are now at the same level as 2001 and the higher education share of the total state appropriations has declined from 18.6 percent in 1980 to 12.9 percent in 2017. With the current budget situation, Oklahoma higher education institutions are doing much more with less and have eliminated faculty and staff positions, consolidated or eliminated programs, reduced scholarships and closed athletic programs and facilities.

5. **Higher Education in the National Context.** Dr. William Kirwan, Chancellor Emeritus, University System of Maryland and Senior Fellow at AGB, gave a brief presentation on higher education in a national context. He began by stating that the Task Force on the Future of Higher Education is a very timely initiative and believes states need new strategies to increase college participation. The low percentage of college educated workers and high workforce demands in America is alarming. Dr. Kirwan also stated that income and unemployment rates go hand in hand with those with higher educational attainment earning more and having a substantially low unemployment rate compared to those with some or no college. Oklahoma is behind the nation in the percentage of adults with a college degree; 31.3 percent of adults in Oklahoma have a two-

year degree compared with 40.43 percent nationally and 24.1 percent of adults have a four-year degree compared with 30.6 percent nationally. Dr. Kirwan stated that despite the value of higher education the funding model is broken. State appropriates are decreasing, tuition is rising and student debt is high. Oklahoma's decline in appropriations since FY2011 is 27.6 percent and institutions are serving more students with less money. He stated that higher education has never been more critical for economic growth and is the surest path for students to have a successful career and high quality of life.

Dr. Kirwan addressed strategies for Oklahoma to consider in overcoming these challenges:

- a. Academic Program Innovations. Dr. Kirwan stated that using Math pathways and co-requisite developmental education will help students earn their degree on time and save money for them and the system. Additionally, Oklahoma needs to continue focusing on online degrees and online education.
- b. Higher Education System Restructuring. Consolidating campuses and centralizing services are a few ways the State System could be restructured to be more effective and streamlined as well as strategic partnerships between two-and four-year institutions.
- c. Leveraging Technology. Data analytics for academic and business processes are essential for understanding why students drop out and how to increase student success.

In closing, Dr. Kirwan stated that the Task Force creation is very timely, will address the correct issues and has the opportunity to be a national model.

6. **Discussion of Task Force Charge.** Chancellor Johnson discussed the charge for the Task Force and also for the four subcommittees and announced the subcommittee chairs.
7. **Announcement of Subcommittee Assignments.** Chancellor Johnson announced the membership for each of the four subcommittees.
8. **Adjournment.** With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.