A guide to the history, organization and operation of the State System
Front row, left to right:
Assistant Secretary Gen. Toney Stricklin, Lawton; Vice Chair Mike C. Turpen, Oklahoma City; Chairman James D. “Jimmy” Harrel, Leedey; Chancellor Glen D. Johnson; Secretary John Massey, Durant

Back row, left to right:
Ronald H. White, M.D., Oklahoma City; Marlin “Ike” Glass Jr., Newkirk; Joseph L. Parker Jr., Tulsa; Jay Helm, Tulsa; Ann Holloway, Ardmore.
The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education is the state’s legal structure for providing public education at the collegiate level. It is a coordinated system of colleges and universities located throughout the state. The State System is comprised of 25 colleges and universities – including two research universities, 10 regional universities, one public liberal arts university and 12 community colleges – and 11 constituent agencies and two university centers. The State System is coordinated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and each institution is governed by a board of regents.

**RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES**
- Oklahoma State University
- University of Oklahoma

**REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES**
- Cameron University
- East Central University
- Langston University
- Northeastern State University
- Northwestern Oklahoma State University
- Oklahoma Panhandle State University
- Rogers State University
- Southeastern Oklahoma State University
- Southwestern Oklahoma State University
- University of Central Oklahoma

**PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY**
- University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma

**COMMUNITY COLLEGES**
- Carl Albert State College
- Connors State College
- Eastern Oklahoma State College
- Murray State College
- Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College
- Northern Oklahoma College
- Oklahoma City Community College
- Redlands Community College
- Rose State College
- Seminole State College
- Tulsa Community College
- Western Oklahoma State College

**CONSTITUENT AGENCIES**
- OSU Agricultural Experiment Station
- OSU Center for Health Sciences
- OSU College of Veterinary Medicine
- OSU Cooperative Extension Service
- OSU Institute of Technology, Okmulgee
- OSU-Oklahoma City
- OSU-Tulsa
- OU Geological Survey
- OU Health Sciences Center
- OU Law Center
- OU-Tulsa

**HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS/SITES**
- Langston University, Oklahoma City
- Northern Oklahoma College, Stillwater
- OKC Downtown College
- University Center at Ponca City
- University Center of Southern Oklahoma
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE SYSTEM

The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education was established on March 11, 1941, when the people of the state adopted an amendment to the constitution, Article XIII-A, creating the State System. The amendment provides, “All institutions of higher education supported wholly or in part by direct legislative appropriations shall be integral parts of a unified system to be known as The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.”

HIGHER EDUCATION DEFINED

Higher education, as the term is used in Section I of Article XIII-A, Constitution of Oklahoma, and House Bill No. 810, Chapter 396, Section 102, Session Laws 1965, is defined “…to include all education of any kind beyond or in addition to the twelfth grade or its equivalent as that grade is now generally understood and accepted in the public schools of the State of Oklahoma; provided, however, that this shall not exclude as a constituent institution any institution of higher learning which now offers as a part of its curriculum courses of high school study.”

COORDINATION OF PRIVATE, DENOMINATIONAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

“Private, denominational, and other institutions of higher learning may become coordinated with the State System of Higher Education under regulations set forth by The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.” (Oklahoma Constitution, Article XIII A, Section 4)
UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE LANDS – CONTROL OF INSTITUTIONS – DIVERSION OF FUNDS

“Section thirteen in every portion of the state, which has been granted to the State, shall be preserved for the use and benefit of the University of Oklahoma and the University Preparatory School, one third; of the normal schools now established, or hereafter to be established, one third; and of the Agricultural and Mechanical College and Colored Agricultural and Normal University, one third. The said lands or the proceeds thereof as above apportioned to be divided between the institutions as the Legislature may prescribe: Provided, that the said lands so reserved, or the proceeds of the sale thereof, or of any indemnity lands granted in lieu of section thirteen shall be safely kept or invested and preserved by the State as a trust, which shall never be diminished, but may be added to, and the income thereof, interest, rentals, or otherwise, only shall be used exclusively for the benefit of said educational institutions. Such educational institutions shall remain under the exclusive control of the State and no part of the proceeds arising from the sale and disposal of any lands granted for educational purposes, or the income or rentals thereof, shall be used for the support of any religious or sectarian school, college, or university, and no portion of the funds arising from the sale of sections thirteen or any indemnity lands selected in lieu thereof, either principal or interest, shall ever be diverted, either temporarily or permanently, from the purpose for which said lands were granted to the State.” (Oklahoma Constitution, Article XI, Section 5)

STATE REGENTS – INTERNAL ORGANIZATION – STAFF

The state Legislature in 1941 vitalized Article XIII-A of the Constitution, providing for the internal organization of the agency. There is a chairman, vice chairman, secretary and assistant secretary, all of whom are elected annually by the membership of the State Regents. The law also provides for office staff and for the furnishing of suitable permanent quarters for the State Regents.

STATE REGENTS’ OFFICE

The work of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education is defined by constitutional provision, state statute or State Regents’ policy delineating coordinating responsibility for the State System of Higher Education, including the areas of institutional functions, programs of study, standards of education and finances.

THE CHANCELLOR

The Chancellor is the chief executive officer for the State Regents and provides leadership for the State System. The work of the office serves the following functions: academic affairs; administration; board relations; budget and finance; legislative; economic development; student affairs; grants and scholarships; and the Oklahoma College Assistance Program.

GOVERNING BOARDS OF REGENTS

While the State Regents have responsibility for determining the functions and courses of study of each institution, setting standards of education and allocating funds to carry out institutional functions, the governing boards assume responsibility for the operation of the institutions, including:

• Determining management policy.
• Employing personnel, fixing their salaries and assigning their duties.
• Contracting for other services needed.
• Having custody of records.
• Acquiring and holding title to property.
Among specific areas of administration control for which the governing board assumes responsibility in operating an institution are:

- General academic policy and administration.
- Student life.
- Budget administration.
- Planning and construction of buildings.
- Purchasing.
- Auxiliary activities budgeting and administration, including the issuance of revenue bonds and administration of self-liquidating properties.

The governing board, through its chief executive officer, the president of the institution, makes recommendations to the coordinating board, the State Regents, regarding the institutions’ functions and programs of study, standards of education, and the budgetary needs of the institution for both general operations and for capital improvements.

**Institutional Governing Boards**

There are currently three constitutional governing boards and 12 statutory boards. The constitutional boards are the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, the Regional University System of Oklahoma and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma.

**Entities Governed by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges**

Oklahoma State University, Stillwater
OSU Agricultural Experiment Station
OSU Center for Health Sciences
OSU College of Veterinary Medicine

**University of Oklahoma**

OSU Cooperative Extension Service
OSU Institute of Technology, Okmulgee
OSU-Oklahoma City
OSU-Tulsa
Connor State College, Warner and Muskogee
Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma City and Tulsa
Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, Miami
Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Goodwell

**Entities Governed by the Regional University System of Oklahoma**

East Central University, Ada
Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Broken Arrow and Muskogee
Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Enid and Woodward
Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant and Idabel
Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford and Sayre
University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond

**Entities Governed by the Regents of the University of Oklahoma**

University of Oklahoma, Norman
OU Geological Survey, Norman
OU Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City
OU Law Center, Norman
OU-Tulsa
Cameron University, Lawton and Duncan
Rogers State University, Claremore, Bartlesville and Pryor
STATUTORY GOVERNING BOARDS

Board of Regents of Carl Albert State College
Board of Regents of Eastern Oklahoma State College
Board of Regents of Murray State College
Board of Regents of Northern Oklahoma College
Board of Regents of Oklahoma City Community College
Board of Regents of Redlands Community College
Board of Regents of Rose State College
Board of Regents of Seminole State College
Board of Regents of Tulsa Community College
Board of Regents of Western Oklahoma State College
Board of Regents of the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma
Board of Trustees for the Quartz Mountain Arts and Conference Center and Nature Park

UNIVERSITY CENTER BOARDS OF TRUSTEES

The boards of trustees for the University Center at Ponca City and the University Center of Southern Oklahoma act as the administrative agencies for the centers. Their powers include negotiating agreements with institutions for courses and programs, selecting a chief executive officer, budgeting and expending funds allocated to the center, acquiring and taking title to property and entering contracts.

ADVISORY COUNCILS AND BOARDS

The State Regents recognize the value of a formal structure for input from a wide variety of campus personnel. These key advisors represent each institution and assist the Regents, chancellor, Regents’ staff and others regarding issues and policies. There are nine advisory councils and boards.

- Communicators Council
- Council of Business Officers
- Council on Information Technology
- Council on Instruction
- Council of Presidents
- Council on Student Affairs
- Economic Development Council
- Faculty Advisory Council
- Student Advisory Board
THE OKLAHOMA STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Coordinating Board of Control

1. Determine functions and courses of study.
2. Prescribe standards of education.
3. Grant degrees and other forms of academic recognition.
4. Recommend to state Legislature budget allocation.
5. Allocate funds appropriated by state Legislature.
6. Tuition-setting authority.
7. Allocate revolving funds.
8. Determine student fees.
10. OneNet.
11. Oklahoma College Assistance Program.

Board of Regents for the
Oklahoma A&M Colleges

Board of Regents Regional University System of Oklahoma

of the
University
of Oklahoma

Board of Regents of
University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma

Board of Regents of
Carl Albert State College

Board of Regents of
Eastern Oklahoma State College

Board of Regents of
Murray State College

Board of Regents of
Northern Oklahoma College

Board of Regents of
Oklahoma City Community College

Board of Regents of
Redlands Community College

Board of Regents of
Rose State College

Board of Regents of
Seminole State College

Board of Regents of
Tulsa Community College

Board of Regents of
Western Oklahoma State College

Governing Boards

1. Determine management policy.
2. Employee personnel. Fix salaries and assign duties.
3. Contract for other services.
4. Custody of records.
5. Acquire and hold title to property.
6. Academic administration.
7. Student life.
8. Budget administration.
11. Auxiliary enterprises.
   a. Issuance of bonds.
   b. Administration of self-liquidating properties
12. General responsibility for government of the institutions.
THE BEGINNINGS – 1890
The first Oklahoma Territorial Legislature passed legislation creating three institutions of higher education in 1890 in order to fulfill a requirement of the Organic Act of Congress establishing the territory. Congress required the territory to establish three types of public higher education: liberal arts and professional education, agriculture and mechanical arts education to fulfill the land grant college provisions of the Morrill Act of 1862, and teacher training.

Territorial Gov. George Washington Steele signed the bill creating the University of Oklahoma, the institution designated to provide the liberal arts and professional education, on Dec. 19, 1890.

Six days later, on Christmas Day, 1890, Gov. Steele signed the bills creating the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College at Stillwater, the land grant institution, and the Oklahoma Normal School for Teachers at Edmond to provide training for public school teachers in the new territory. These two institutions are known today as Oklahoma State University and University of Central Oklahoma, respectively.

The first of these three institutions to open for classes was the Normal School for Teachers, which held its first classes on Nov. 1, 1891. Later that same year, on Dec. 14, the first classes were held at the A&M College in Stillwater, with 45 students attending.

The University of Oklahoma opened in a rented building on Main Street in Norman in 1892 with 119 students and four faculty members, including the university’s first president, Dr. David Ross Boyd.

MORE TERRITORIAL INSTITUTIONS
Later, the territorial government established four other institutions: the Colored Agricultural and Normal University at Langston (now Langston University) and the Normal School for Teachers at Alva (now Northwestern Oklahoma State University) both in 1897; the Normal School for Teachers at Weatherford (now Southwestern Oklahoma State University) and the Oklahoma University Preparatory School at Tonkawa (now Northern Oklahoma College), both in 1901.

THE MOVE TOWARD STATEHOOD
When it became apparent that the U.S. government would not allow the Oklahoma Territory and the Indian Territory to enter the union as separate states, negotiations began among the political leaders of both territories for the unification of the two into a single entity.

One of the key issues in these negotiations was the provision of public higher education. The leaders of the Indian Territory cited the fact that the Oklahoma Territory already had seven established institutions of higher education, while there were no public colleges or universities in the Indian Territory.

Leaders agreed that immediately upon the granting of statehood to the united territories, the institutions of higher education in Oklahoma Territory would be duplicated in the Indian Territory, thus spreading geographical access to public higher education throughout the new state.

The first Oklahoma Legislature, meeting shortly after statehood, created two collegiate-level schools: the Industrial Institute and College for Girls at Chickasha (now the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma) and the School of Mines and Metallurgy at Wilburton (now Eastern Oklahoma State College). The school at Wilburton was intended to become the eastern duplicate of the university at Norman.
The same Legislature also created six secondary agricultural schools, in each of the five Supreme Court judicial districts and the sixth in the Panhandle. These were the Connors State School of Agriculture at Warner (now Connors State College), Murray State School of Agriculture at Tishomingo (now Murray State College), Cameron State School of Agriculture at Lawton (now Cameron University), Haskell State School of Agriculture at Broken Arrow, Connell State School of Agriculture at Helena and Panhandle State School of Agriculture at Goodwell (now Oklahoma Panhandle State University).

The 1909 Legislature created three normal schools in eastern Oklahoma, to balance those operated in the west, and a preparatory school in the east, to offset the one at Tonkawa. These new institutions were Northeastern Normal School at Tahlequah (now Northeastern State University), East Central Normal School at Ada (now East Central University), Southeastern Normal School at Durant (now Southeastern Oklahoma State University) and the Eastern Oklahoma University Preparatory School at Claremore (now Rogers State University).

INSTITUTIONS CLOSED IN 1917

In 1917, several institutions were closed, two of them permanently. The Legislature, by separate action, closed the agricultural schools at Broken Arrow and Helena. Gov. Robert L. Williams, by veto of the institutions’ biennial appropriations, shut down the schools at Claremore, Wilburton and Tonkawa.

When the Legislature reconvened in 1919 with a new governor in office, the vetoed institutions were given appropriations and reopened. The Legislature then created another institution, the Miami School of Mines (now Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College).

Although no more state institutions were created for nearly 50 years, hardly a biennium went by without changes in the names, functions or governing structures of the public colleges and universities.

THE PUBLIC DISTRICT JUNIOR COLLEGES

The 1920s and 1930s saw the development of a new type of public institution of higher education in Oklahoma, the public district junior college. In 1921 there was only one such institution, Muskogee Junior College, operated by the local school board, with an enrollment of 10 students.

By 1939 there were 20 such institutions with a total enrollment of less than 1,600. These were located at Altus, Bartlesville, Bristow, Capitol Hill (Oklahoma City), Duncan, El Reno, Kiowa County (Hobart), Muskogee, Okmulgee, Poteau, Sapulpa, Seminole, Sayre, Tillman County (Frederick), Wetumka and Woodward – all two-year colleges – and Carnegie, Holdenville, Okemah and Shidler – all one-year colleges.

EARLY EFFORTS AT COORDINATION

The proliferation of institutions and the corresponding competition each biennium for legislative appropriations, coupled with a considerable amount of political activity concerning institutional operations, led to calls for a coordinated state system of public higher education.

As early as 1913 Gov. Lee Cruce was pleading with the Legislature for consolidation of institutional functions and the abolition of some of the smaller schools. Gov. Williams’ single-handed approach to the latter problem and its ultimate outcome have already been noted.

The first published study of the problem of coordination of higher education in Oklahoma was the doctoral dissertation of Henry G. Bennett in 1926. He recommended that a central coordinating agency be established and a state system formed under the aegis of the State Board of Education.
In 1929 Gov. William J. Holloway recommended to the Legislature a reduction in the number of governing boards and the creation of a central coordinating agency. The Legislature passed a bill providing for a board to consist of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, two members to be appointed by the governor, and the presidents of five state institutions. The two gubernatorial appointees were never named and the ex-officio members never met.

Early in 1933 Gov. William H. Murray, by executive order, created a committee of nine to coordinate public higher education. In reaction, in the legislative session of that year, a bill was introduced to create a statutory coordinating board. This bill was passed, and the coordinating board was established, with 15 members to be appointed by the governor.

Although the law passed and the members of the board were appointed, the legislative appropriation for the operation of the board was killed on the final day of the session. Nevertheless, the board met and adopted a set of guiding principles for the coordinating work of the board and its internal operations.

When Gov. Murray left office, the terms of all the board members, as provided in the law creating the board, lapsed. Gov. Marland, his successor, failed to make any new appointments during his term of office.

**STATE SYSTEM FORMED IN 1941, ARTICLE XIII-A**

In 1939 Gov. Leon C. Phillips named new members and the coordinating board began operation again. The rejuvenated board recommended that a constitutional board be established, and the 1941 Oklahoma Legislature proposed Article XIII-A of the Oklahoma Constitution.

Following legislative approval of the proposed amendment, the Legislature adjourned and a special election was held on March 11, 1941, at which the amendment was adopted, creating the State System and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The Legislature then reconvened and passed the necessary vitalizing legislation, thus creating the present structure of higher education in the state.

With the establishment of the State System, the 1942 Report of the State Coordinating Board noted, “Oklahoma now has the greatest opportunity in its history to chart an intelligent course for higher education on a statewide basis, and to assume a greater leadership throughout the nation than has ever before been possible.”

**MORE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

No new state colleges were created from 1919 until 1968, when Tulsa Junior College (now Tulsa Community College) was established. In the years from 1939 until 1967 most of the public district junior colleges ceased to exist as a result of lack of students and financial support. One of these institutions, Altus Junior College, was converted into a state college by act of the Legislature in 1969 and became Western Oklahoma State College.

Subsequently, two new community junior colleges were formed – first, Oscar Rose Junior College at Midwest City (now Rose State College) and later, South Oklahoma City Junior College (now Oklahoma City Community College). These two new colleges, along with three of the four surviving district junior colleges, became full-fledged members of the State System by act of the Legislature in 1973. The 1987 Oklahoma Legislature merged the last remaining community junior college, Sayre Junior College, with Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Another state institution, the Oklahoma College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery (now Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences), was authorized in 1972 by the Oklahoma Legislature and began its first classes in fall 1974. In 1988 that institution was merged as a constituent agency under the operation of Oklahoma State University. In 2000 Rogers State College became a four-year university, Rogers State University.

In the school year 1939-40, just prior to the creation of the State System, Oklahoma had a total of 38 public institutions of higher education, including 18 state-supported institutions and 20 public district junior colleges, with a total enrollment of less than 27,000 students. For the academic year 2013, the number of public institutions was 25, with an enrollment of 186,000.
In addition to the responsibilities of the State Regents set forth in the Constitution, the Oklahoma Legislature has assigned the following to the coordinating board of control:

**Federal Funds/Gifts/Scholarships.** Accept federal funds/grants, accept and disburse grants, gifts and other money (foundations, individuals), and disburse scholarship funds and rewards for merit.

**Allocation of Non-State Funds.** Allocate revolving and other non-state appropriated E&G funds.

**Property Transfer.** Transfer from one institution to another any property belonging to such institutions when no longer needed by it and when needed by another institution to accomplish its functions.

**Annual Report/Studies/Surveys.** Conduct and publish reports, gather information about needs of state institutions and make additional reports and recommendations as necessary to the governor and Legislature.

**Exercise All Powers** necessary or convenient to accomplish the purpose and objectives of Article XIII-A of the Constitution.

**Issue Bonds.** Issue obligations on behalf of the institutions within the State System, except for the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University, for the purpose of funding capital projects at those institutions.

In addition to the above general responsibilities, the Legislature has assigned administration or directives for the following to the State Regents. This list is not all-inclusive but highlights major responsibilities.

- Accreditation of private colleges and universities (1965)
- State guaranty agency – Oklahoma Guaranteed Student Loan Program [now the Oklahoma College Assistance Program] (1965)
- Examination of Revenue Bond Statement of Essential Facts (1970)
- Establishment and maintenance of state’s Televised Instruction System (1970)
- Tuition Aid Grant Program (1971)
- Study of employee benefit program (1974)
- Study of salary and other remunerative benefits, workloads (1974)
- Ardmore Higher Education Center [now the University Center of Southern Oklahoma] (1975)
- State Plan for Civil Rights (1979)
- Uniform course number system (1979)
- Procedures and reporting on Faculty English Proficiency (1982)
- Development and administration of Professional Training Institutes, EESA (1985)
- Administration of the regional education program for the Southern Regional Education Board (1985)
- Management and control of the William P. Willis Trust and Scholarship Funds (1986)
- Management of the Endowment Fund Program (1988)
- Management of the Academic Scholars Program (1988)
- Summer Academies in Math and Science (1989)
- Regents Education Program (1990)
- OneNet (1992)
- Master Lease Program (1999)
- Quartz Mountain Arts and Conference Center (2002)
- Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Program (2003)
- Approval and coordination of student fees and tuition at State System institutions, within legislative limits (2003)
The following are some of the major programs currently administered by the State Regents.

**STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

**Academic Scholars Program**
The Academic Scholars Program was created and funded by the Oklahoma Legislature and is administered by the State Regents as a scholarship incentive for students of high academic ability to attend both public and private higher education institutions in Oklahoma.

**Brad Henry International Scholars Program**
The Brad Henry International Scholars Program, established by the State Regents in June 2008, provides a $10,000 stipend for students at Oklahoma public regional universities to participate in semester-long study or research programs affiliated with Swansea University in Wales. Academic credit for these programs will be awarded by the students’ universities.

**Chancellor Hans Brisch Scholarship Program**
The Chancellor Hans Brisch Scholarship Program serves entering freshmen in college who have high academic achievement in high school, outstanding leadership characteristics and a commitment to the enhancement of the community. While the controlling criteria for this award shall be as stated above, the program will include students with a diversity of geographic, ethnic and economic background and who plan to pursue a variety of programs of study in institutions across the state.

**Future Teachers Scholarship Program**
The 1985 Oklahoma Legislature authorized the State Regents to establish and maintain an incentive scholarship program to encourage the preparation of teachers in critical shortage areas for the public schools at one or more of the Oklahoma public or private higher education institutions. Prospective teachers, whether planning to pursue an undergraduate teacher education program or to become qualified to teach after earning a bachelor’s degree in a critical shortage area, shall be considered if they have graduated from high school with a GPA ranking them in the top 15 percent of their graduating class. To the extent that funds are available, scholarships of $1,500 per year, renewable for up to three additional years, shall be awarded to cover costs of general enrollment fees, other fees, books, materials and services provided by the institution, including room and board [70:698.1].

**Heroes Promise**
The scholarship is available to Oklahoma residents who are the children of any person killed after Jan. 1, 2000, in the line of duty in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces or who died after Jan. 1, 2000, as a result of an injury sustained while in the line of duty in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. An eligible student qualifies for an award equivalent to resident public college tuition paid through the Oklahoma’s Promise program (see below).

**Oklahoma College Assistance Program**
OCAP, an operating division of the State Regents and formerly known as the Oklahoma Guaranteed Student Loan Program (OGSLP), was founded by the state Legislature in 1965. OCAP provides innovative college access, aid awareness, financial literacy and student loan management programs and services for students, parents, schools and community partners. As OGSLP, the agency served as Oklahoma’s designated guarantor for the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) for more than 45 years, and OCAP remains a guarantor for FFELP loans issued prior to July 1, 2010.

**Oklahoma’s Promise (Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program)**
The Oklahoma’s Promise scholarship program, created by the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Act in 1992, allows eighth-, ninth- and 10th-grade students who enroll in the program to receive scholarships that will
pay their Oklahoma public college tuition if they meet income and other requirements. To qualify, students must take certain required courses and make good grades overall. Students must also stay out of trouble outside the classroom to remain eligible. Oklahoma’s Promise is recognized by many as America’s best college access program and is considered a model that combines emphases on academic preparation and financial support for college.

**OKLAHOMA TUITION AID GRANT PROGRAM**

OTAG was established in 1971 to assist Oklahoma college students with demonstrated financial need to meet the cost of attendance at postsecondary institutions in Oklahoma.

**OKLAHOMA TUITION EQUALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM**

The OTEG program was established by the Oklahoma Legislature in 2003 to assist Oklahoma college students in meeting the cost of attendance at non-public postsecondary institutions in Oklahoma. To qualify, a student must be an Oklahoma resident; be a full-time undergraduate; attend a qualified Oklahoma not-for-profit, private or independent institution of higher education located in Oklahoma; have a family income of $50,000 or less; and meet their institution’s policy on satisfactory academic progress for financial aid recipients. Recipients can receive awards for up to five years, not to exceed the requirements for completion of a baccalaureate program.

**REGIONAL UNIVERSITY BACCALAUREATE SCHOLARSHIPS**

Established by the State Regents in 1995, this program enables public regional universities to provide scholarships to academically promising undergraduate students. Each regional university may nominate up to 15 freshman awardees per year.

**TULSA RECONCILIATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The 2002 Oklahoma Legislature established the Tulsa Reconciliation Scholarship Program in an effort to preserve awareness of the history and meaning of the civil unrest that occurred during the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. Each year, two seniors from each of Tulsa’s 10 public high schools will receive $1,000, one-time scholarships.

**WILLIAM P. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The 1986 Oklahoma Legislature authorized the State Regents to establish and maintain a scholarship program for the purpose of providing scholarships to low-income, full-time undergraduates attending institutions in the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.

**TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

**OKLAHOMA TEACHER CONNECTION**

OTC was created for the purpose of recruiting, retaining and placing teachers in the public schools of the state of Oklahoma. OTC pre-collegiate programs include the ACE, LEAP and FEA programs for middle and high schools, and collegiate partnership grants are awarded to institutions of higher education for recruitment and retention activities.

**ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY GRANTS (ITQ)**

ESEA ITQ competitive grants are authorized by federal legislation for professional development for Oklahoma’s P-12 teachers to promote changes in educational practice or teachers’ content knowledge to ultimately improve student outcomes in the classroom. Additionally, the intent is to influence the implementation of research-based curriculum in undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs and to strengthen collaboration among higher education institution faculty and other partners in the program.
**Oklahoma Teacher Enhancement Program**

OTEP links K-12 student learning to teacher preparation through various statewide professional development conferences.

**Oklahoma Teacher Shortage Employment Incentive Program**

TSEIP is a program that reimburses eligible student loan expenses or pays an equivalent cash benefit to individuals who graduate from an Oklahoma-accredited teacher education program in mathematics or science, receive teaching certification and complete a commitment to teach math or science in an Oklahoma public secondary school for at least five consecutive years.

**Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Program**

The only program of its kind in the country, the goal of this collaboration with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services is to increase the quality of child care by enhancing the knowledge and professionalism of its workers. Eligible child care professionals are offered a scholarship and provided an opportunity to attend a community college while earning credentials, certificates and degrees in child development.

**Student Programs**

**Concurrent Enrollment**

Since its inception in 2005, the Concurrent Enrollment program has allowed outstanding juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school. Seniors may also be eligible for a tuition waiver of up to six credit hours per semester for their concurrent courses. In 2014-15, there were more than 12,900 student enrollments in concurrent enrollment courses generating more than 110,000 credit hours.

**Cooperative Alliances**

Twenty-nine technology centers across the state have partnered with 18 higher education institutions and branch campuses in cooperative alliance agreements. In the past year, Oklahoma students who took courses at technology centers earned more than 68,000 credit hours toward an Associate in Applied Science degree offered by a State System college or university.

**Course Equivalency Project**

The CEP was implemented in 1996 and allows college students to view the transferability of more than 8,000 college courses in Oklahoma at OKcoursetransfer.org. Currently, all public institutions of higher education, as well as several private colleges and universities, participate in the CEP. The course equivalency matrix reinforces student access to the multi-tiered higher education system and helps shorten the time it takes students to obtain a degree. The CEP received the Governor’s Commendation Award in 1999 for demonstrating innovation and efficiency.

**GEAR UP**

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federally funded program designed to better prepare middle and high school students for college through academic preparation programs and scholarships for students, professional development activities for educators, leadership development for parents, and college access information for students and parents. Since 1999, Oklahoma GEAR UP has targeted resources and services to priority students through partnerships among the State Regents; Oklahoma colleges and universities; public schools; faith-based, tribal and community-based organizations; and businesses. Oklahoma GEAR UP is built on two broad college access components: scholarship funding through Oklahoma’s Promise and early intervention strategies.

**Oklahoma Campus Compact**

OkCC is an organization of Oklahoma college and university presidents who have committed to articulating the importance of civic responsibility as an outcome of higher education. It was established in October 2000 and represents 35 public and independent institutions in Oklahoma. OkCC provides leadership, networking
and technical assistance to campuses and communities in the areas of service learning, civic engagement and community service.

**Oklahoma Educational Planning and Assessment System (OK EPAS)**

The EPAS program provides assistance to Oklahoma’s middle school and high school students to be better prepared for college. School districts volunteer to participate in the program that includes three assessments, EXPLORE, PLAN and the ACT. EPAS serves nearly 500 school districts and more than 90 private schools that include 89,000 eighth- and 10th-graders. Improvements in many major areas have been documented, including ACT scores, college-going rates and remediation.

**Oklahoma Money Matters**

OKMM, the financial literacy initiative of the State Regents and the Oklahoma College Assistance Program, supports personal finance education through targeted outreach and strategic partnerships to help youth and adults successfully manage personal finances, understand consumer credit and navigate the financial aid process. OKMM works collaboratively with educators, campuses and community organizations to develop customized financial education programs and services, including training workshops, publications, and Web, text, and multimedia tools. OKMM’s website, OklahomaMoneyMatters.org, features self-paced curricular modules, an interactive budgeting tool, podcasts and a Web-based resource clearinghouse, and OKMM publishes a bimonthly statewide newsletter, Your Bottom Line.

**Plan4College Centers**

Plan4College Centers offer students and families a local, one-stop shop for their college information needs. The sites host a computer dedicated solely to college planning. Visitors are just one click away from learning about courses to take and grades to make, exploring colleges, finding a career, filling out college applications and applying for financial aid. Information is available at each center so that students and families can get answers to their college planning questions as well as help them determine the steps they need to take to create personalized plans for college. There are more than 40 Plan4College Centers located throughout the state and funded by GEAR UP.

**Reach Higher – Oklahoma’s Adult Degree Completion Program**

With Reach Higher, students can choose from associate degrees and a bachelor’s degree designed for working adults who have already earned college credit and want to finish a degree. With a degree through Reach Higher, students will have the leadership training, communication skills and business knowledge needed to get ahead and add value to their current employer.

**Summer Academies in Math and Science**

Summer Academies are designed to enhance eighth- through 12th-grade students’ knowledge of math and science by introducing them to new and exciting fields and concepts through hands-on learning experiences. Academies last from one to two weeks on college and university campuses across the state. Depending on the academy format, students either stay on campus or commute from home.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs**

Designed for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, these programs offer vocational training, life skills, résumé preparation and more. Offered at most Oklahoma community colleges and both Oklahoma State University technical branches, the programs provide employment and training skills to TANF recipients so they may ultimately become members of the workforce and attain self-sufficiency.

www.OKcollegestart.org

This comprehensive, Web-based information system is a “one-stop” destination for students and parents who want to get ready for college. The site lets students create a customized profile, learn about paying for college, prepare for the ACT, explore careers and find a college that is right for them. Click, compare, choose at OKcollegestart.org.

**Centers**

**Quartz Mountain Arts and Conference Center and Nature Park**

Located in southwestern Oklahoma near Altus, the center includes a 120-room lodge, an arts conference center, performance complexes, an 18-hole golf course and a nature park. The State Regents have had responsibility for the center since January 2002. The mission of the
Cameron University center is to develop, sustain and protect a world-renowned educational destination as a cultural conference center, arts park and natural preserve with recreational experiences compatible with that environment. The facilities have annually hosted the Summer Arts Institute, an institute for gifted and talented fine arts high school students, since 1978.

Univereity Center at Ponca City

The State Regents established the University Learning Center of Northern Oklahoma in March 1999 with a mission to serve the needs of adults seeking higher education opportunities in northern Oklahoma. In 2006, the name was changed to the University Center at Ponca City, and the center has served more than 6,000 students since inception. Eighteen degree programs through ITV format and 48 online degree options are provided through Cameron University, Northeastern State University, Northern Oklahoma College and Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

University Center of Southern Oklahoma

The Ardmore Higher Education Center was created by the 1974 Oklahoma Legislature and was renamed the University Center of Southern Oklahoma in 2012. Instruction of students enrolled through the higher education program in Ardmore is provided by East Central University, Murray State College and Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Students at the University Center of Southern Oklahoma receive resident credit from the institution offering the course work.

System Initiatives

Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count

Achieving the Dream is a national initiative to help more community college students succeed by completing college courses and earning certificates and/or degrees. The initiative is particularly focused on student groups that have faced the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color. Achieving the Dream focuses colleges and others on understanding and making better use of data. It acts on multiple fronts, including efforts at community colleges and in research, public engagement and public policy.

Complete College America

Oklahoma is a national leader in an ongoing effort to dramatically increase the number of residents with a college degree or credential, to set degree goals and to develop and implement aggressive action plans to meet those goals. Established in 2009, Complete College America provides Oklahoma with tangible and practical support to help implement a range of strategies that will bring needed changes in the culture and practices of its public postsecondary institutions. Oklahoma receives in-depth technical support from America’s leading experts on improving college success, including assistance in building consensus for reform and developing policy action plans; guidance on applying for and effectively using federal funding to produce more degrees; and annual networking opportunities. Five national foundations are providing multi-year support to Complete College America, including the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education. In April 2012, the State Regents adopted a performance-based funding formula that expanded on the Brain Gain plan first adopted in 1999. The performance-based funding formula applies to additional funding for higher education appropriated by the state Legislature. The performance factors are: a campus degree completion plan that adheres to CCA goals, retention rates, Pell Grant retention rates, 24-credit-hour completion rate, graduation rate, CCA degree target achievement, number of certificates/degrees conferred and program accreditation.

Endowment Fund Program

The Endowment Fund Program was started in 1988 to attract and retain faculty by establishing professorships, chairs and related activities to improve the quality of instruction and research at state colleges and universities.

EPScOR Matching Fund Program

The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPScOR) is a federal initiative targeting states that have historically received a low amount of federal research funds. The State Regents is the fiscal agent for providing matching funds for initiatives to develop advanced research capabilities.

Master Lease Purchase Program

The State System Master Lease Purchase Program offers a method of financing the acquisition of major personal and real property that will provide cost efficiencies in
finance and administration. Authorized institutions must enter into lease agreements for values of $50,000 to $10 million for personal property projects. The lease terms will vary by the useful life of the equipment purchased, but the useful life must not exceed 20 years for personal property and 30 years on real property projects.

**Oklahoma College Savings Plan**

This plan allows anyone – parents, grandparents, friends, etc. – to open a tax-advantaged account for a child through payroll deduction or direct contribution. Funds can be used for college expenses at nearly all colleges and universities in the United States. The earnings on the investments are free from federal and Oklahoma taxes if used for eligible college expenses. Annual contributions of up to $10,000 per taxpayer are deductible from Oklahoma taxable income.

**OneNet**

OneNet operates Oklahoma’s most advanced technology network designed to provide the infrastructure to support high-speed broadband services with an equitable rate structure. Through leading-edge technology and a dedicated team, it currently provides high-speed Internet services and other networking solutions to meet the mission-critical needs of a variety of Oklahoma entities, including colleges and universities; K-12 and career technology schools; public libraries; local, tribal, state and federal governments; court systems; rural health care delivery systems; nonprofit organizations; and programs engaged in research. OneNet also operates the newly completed Oklahoma Community Anchor Network, which provides high-speed connectivity to rural communities in 35 Oklahoma counties. OneNet is also a member of the two leading research and education networks in the country: Internet2 (I2) and the National Lambda Rail (NLR). I2 and NLR are part of an exceptional community of U.S. and international leaders in research, academia, industry and government who create and collaborate via innovative technologies. OneNet’s membership helps to accelerate research discovery, advance national and global education, and improve the delivery of public services. Using OneNet’s existing network for in-state distribution, Oklahoma is substantially more competitive than other states for research projects.

**Online College of Oklahoma**

In response to increased demand for anytime, anywhere learning, OCO was established as a pilot project in spring 2000. OCO builds on existing distance education resources to provide Oklahomans with convenient access to high-quality educational courses, programs and resources offered by state colleges and universities. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) currently serves as the linkage to OCO and provides administrative support to participating Oklahoma colleges and universities.

**Regents Education Program**

The purpose of the REP 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 and understandings that will allow regents and trustees to perform their public responsibilities and to govern successfully in the face of greater calls for wider programs and services, mandates for greater accountability, changing clientele and demands, and resource scarcity.

**SMART: Single Mothers Academic Resource Team**

SMART identifies and advocates for pathways so that nearly 30,000 single-parent students can complete their higher education goals. SMART is collaboratively funded by the Women’s Foundation of Oklahoma, the State Regents and GEAR UP.