

Degrees of Progress

News from the State Regents for Higher Education



OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Improving our future by degrees

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STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION'S ASSESSMENT, COURSE DELIVERY REFORMS MOVING THE NEEDLE TO DECREASE REMEDIATION RATES

By Chancellor Glen D. Johnson

Assessment and course placement reforms in Oklahoma public higher education are moving the needle to decrease remediation rates in our state. Of the fall 2018 first-time freshmen, 34.6% enrolled in one or more developmental courses, a 2.5 percentage point decrease from the previous year and a 7.9 percentage point decrease from 2011-12.

Since joining the Complete College America initiative in 2011, the State Regents and our public colleges and universities have collaborated to implement various strategies to improve developmental education, and recent changes to system-level policies and institutional practices have contributed to improving students' learning and academic success. Remediation rates in all individual subject areas have decreased from the previous year, with a 1.5 percentage point drop in math, 2.9 in English, .8 in reading, and .3 in science.

Assessing students' college readiness and placing students with skills below the college level into sequential developmental reading, writing, and math courses has been standard practice at broad access two-year colleges and four-year universities for decades. Since 2015, Oklahoma's colleges and universities have incorporated additional college readiness measures, such as students' high school grade point average (GPA) and secondary placement testing, rather than depending solely on standardized test scores.

Students with developmental needs can now enroll directly in college-level courses with supplemental supports instead of taking multiple semesters of prerequisite remedial courses. Co-requisite course interventions place students directly into a gateway college-level course with additional academic support. Additionally, some colleges have created co-requisite English courses or integrated reading and writing courses that combine two traditionally separate courses into one.

In addition to revising assessment and placement policies and practices, Oklahoma's public colleges and universities have created gateway college-level mathematics courses that align to specific degrees of study. In November 2015, the Charles A. Dana Center of the University of Texas invited Oklahoma to join five other states to receive support and consultation in pursuing math pathways for the state system through the Math Pathways to Completion grant project. With a designated Dana Center liaison and structured assistance, the Oklahoma Math Pathways Task Force reviewed state data, trends and opportunities related to math pathways.

These diversified math pathways in Oklahoma public higher education are aligned with students' intended majors - a student's



Chancellor Glen D. Johnson

major or career field is considered in course placement decisions. Students are placed into different college-level mathematics courses based upon what is required or used in their future careers. Gateway college-level courses include Quantitative Reasoning, Functions and Modeling, Statistics, and College Algebra for STEM.

Oklahoma completed the Dana Center project in November 2018 with the development of the four gateway mathematics courses, co-requisite course models, reformation of assessment and placement policies, and initial steps toward the development of coherent mathematics pathways across postsecondary institutions. This important work continues across the state system as we remain focused on reducing student remediation rates and improving student outcomes in higher education.

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OSU-OKC, AMAZON COLLABORATE IN THE CLOUD

By Brad Williams, President, OSU-OKC

When Amazon workforce recruiters came to Oklahoma City in the summer of 2018, Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City (OSU-OKC) rolled out the welcome mat. What transpired since has far exceeded expectations.

OSU-OKC's leadership has experience in economic and workforce development programming and anticipated that the Amazon team would need support to recruit and onboard applicants for the thousands of jobs at its 640,000-square-foot fulfillment center and other metro facilities. OSU-OKC leaders listened to Amazon officials as they described their set of challenges: finding an accessible and consistent location in a community that is new to the company. Moreover, the need for a partner to support the logistics of processing a large volume of job candidates. OSU-OKC responded with solutions.

OSU-OKC served as the employment hub for the company from August 2018 through December 2019. The partnership brought more than 15,000 job applicants to the campus' Community Impact Center. More than 10,000 were hired by Amazon.

While the applicants were on campus, OSU-OKC's recruiters presented information about campus academic programs. These presentations were the foundation for Amazon recognizing OSU-OKC as its designated Career Choice Partner in Oklahoma. The Career Choice program prepays 95% of tuition for Amazon employees who take courses related to high-demand fields.

Throughout 2019, OSU-OKC hosted a range of Amazon technology experts from Seattle who presented a series of forums in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. OSU-OKC's leadership engaged in strategy meetings in Washington, D.C., and Seattle. This led to Amazon Web Services' announcement of OSU-OKC as its Amazon Web Services (AWS) Academy, eligible to deliver the AWS platform of cloud computing curriculum designed to prepare individuals to pursue industry-recognized certifications for in-demand cloud computing jobs.

Given the nature of the two-way relationship, OSU-OKC turned to the AWS team for help integrating technologies capable of enhancing



President Brad Williams



OKLAHOMA CITY

communication with students in a way that mirrored the success of OSU-OKC's newly launched virtual advising platform, which was implemented prior to the COVID-19 shutdown. The collaboration inspired a series of tech-based integrations involving automation and management of OSU-OKC's telephone switchboard, and the integration of a Q-and-A chatbot. The AWS team recognized OSU-OKC's innovative approach to higher education and the student experience with an invitation for campus leadership to present its work in a webinar attended by higher education leaders from across the world.

OSU-OKC is thrilled to work with Amazon and AWS in multiple areas and values the opportunity to present content in the cutting-edge cloud technologies that are shaping the way the world does business. While Amazon is a trillion-dollar company, OSU-OKC takes the same innovative approach to respond to the needs of local businesses.



TONY STRICKLIN NAMED STATE REGENT EMERITUS

State Regent retired Gen. Toney Stricklin was recognized as a state regent emeritus during the State Regents' April meeting. Stricklin was appointed by Gov. Mary Fallin to serve a nine-year term on the board, which he completed in May.

Stricklin earned his Bachelor of Science in business administration from Cameron University and Master of Arts in international relations from Newport College in Rhode Island. He served for more than 32 years as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army, which included a variety of command and staff positions throughout the United States, Germany, Korea, and Vietnam.

Stricklin held positions of increasing responsibility and leadership in the U.S. Army, including serving as deputy commanding general of the Army Field Artillery Center and Fort Sill and commanding general of Fort Sill. He served a two-year term as civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army

for Oklahoma. He also served on the State Board for Career and Technology Education, as chair of the Information Technology Panel for the Oklahoma Economic Development Generating Enterprise initiative, and as a member of the Oklahoma congressional delegation that testified before the regional BRAC commission regarding the relocation of the Air Defense Artillery School from Fort Bliss to Fort Sill. Stricklin also served on the board of directors for i2E, as president of the Southwest Oklahoma Advanced Technology Association, as vice chairman of military and government relations for the Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce, as chair of the Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce Industry and as chairman of the Military Liaison Committee for the State Chamber of Oklahoma, and as chair of the Lawton Airport Authority.

Recognition for his dedicated public service includes the Distinguished Service Award from Cameron University, Cameron University's



State Regent Emeritus Gen. Toney Stricklin

School of Business Distinguished Alumnus Award, and induction as an honorary member of the Delta Mu Delta national business honor society. Stricklin is a Cameron University Distinguished Alumnus and a member of Leadership Oklahoma's Class XVI, serving as chair of Leadership Oklahoma from 2012-13.

CHANCELLOR JOHNSON APPOINTS OKLAHOMA REPRESENTATIVES TO SREB COVID-19 POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION RECOVERY TASK FORCE

In his capacity as co-chair of the 16-state Postsecondary Education Recovery Task Force recently formed by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in response to COVID-19, Chancellor Glen D. Johnson has appointed four college and university presidents to represent Oklahoma on the task force. The task force is charged with addressing the challenges facing colleges, universities and students from the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

SREB invited state higher education chancellors to appoint representatives from both two- and four-year institutions to serve on the task force, along with experts from the national State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO). Chancellor Johnson appointed the following individuals to represent Oklahoma on the task force: President Burns Hargis, Oklahoma State University; President Joe Harroz, University of Oklahoma; President John McArthur,

Cameron University; and President Jeanie Webb, Rose State College.

The task force will encourage institutions to work together to ensure a fully systemic approach to higher education recovery in response to COVID-19, and will collaborate with SREB's new K-12 Education Recovery Task Force, bringing together leaders from all levels of education. Some of the central issues the task force will consider include:

- **Funding and costs:** How states' colleges and universities will find the resources to endure and provide quality teaching and support for each student.
- **Safety and health:** How institutions will re-open and maintain clean and safe campuses.
- **Distance learning, technology, innovation:** How institutions can improve online teaching, and make broadband and technology more available to faculty, staff and students.

- **Student and faculty/staff support:** How institutions will provide financial, academic, and personal support for students dealing with the crisis.

SREB works with member states to improve public education at every level, from early childhood through doctoral education. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Atlanta, SREB was created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislatures to advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region. Member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

STATE REGENTS' COUNCIL FOR ONLINE LEARNING EXCELLENCE HONORS OUTSTANDING WORK OF FACULTY, STAFF, ADMINISTRATORS

The Council for Online Learning Excellence (COLE), an initiative of the State Regents' Online Education Task Force, recently recognized a faculty member, an administrator and a university team for their outstanding work. Kristi Karber, professor of mathematics at the University of Central Oklahoma, was honored with the Oklahoma Online Excellence Award for Teaching. The Oklahoma Online Excellence Award for Innovation was presented to the liberal arts division at Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City. Tim Boatmun, vice president for enrollment management at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, was presented with the Oklahoma Online Excellence Award for Individual Leadership.

Karber is in her 15th year of teaching courses ranging from introductory math for general education to calculus, and developed and has taught two courses entirely online for the first time. She received the 2019 Oklahoma-

Arkansas Mathematical Association of America Section Award for Distinguished University Teaching of Mathematics.

The liberal arts division at OSU-OKC fosters engagement among online students and the liberal arts. Collaborative innovation is demonstrated in the efforts to offer team-taught courses within the honors college. The interdisciplinary courses create intersections of faculty expertise focused on a single subject area, allowing students to gain the diverse perspectives necessary to gain a fuller understanding of global society.

Boatmun was recognized for serving as a champion of high-quality online education in a variety of impactful capacities for the past 20 years at Southeastern. Most recently he led the redesign of the Master of Business Administration to better fit the needs of fully online students, resulting in a three-year growth

of the program from 70 to 800 students. He also has been instrumental in the formation of the Online Consortium of Oklahoma established by the State Regents in 2018.

The State Regents created the Online Education Task Force in 2012 to review the delivery of online education throughout the state system and to determine the extent to which the delivery of online education was accessible, efficient and effective. COLE, formed by the task force in 2016, is comprised of faculty, staff and administrators representing each tier of Oklahoma's public and private colleges and universities, as well as other entities connected to online learning technologies.

The 2020 Oklahoma Online Excellence Awards nominations were submitted by peers and judged by a committee of COLE members. Nominees were scored on the metrics of leadership, innovation, collaboration and results.

STATE REGENTS LAUNCH NEW WEBSITE TO HELP STUDENTS EARN COLLEGE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

The State Regents recently launched a new website, ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org, targeting students who would like to earn college credit for knowledge gained through work and life experiences, non-degree-granting institutions, military training or other learning environments.



The new site consolidates the multiple options available to students and provides simple site navigation, a fresh visual look and feel, and a responsive design that is flexible between workstations and mobile devices.

"Oklahoma continues to be a leader in engaging students to return to college to complete their higher education degrees," said Chancellor Johnson. This new website provides options for any person looking for the opportunity to turn prior learning into college credit, including those with industry experience, students who took AP courses in high school, those who have completed training at an Oklahoma career technology center, and members or former members of the armed services.

The site outlines options for adults who have earned previous college credits and are interested in completing a degree program, those who have attended a career technology center or hold industry-recognized credentials, members or veterans of the armed services who have completed military study and training, and high school graduates looking to use advanced standing scores for college

credit. The site also connects users to comprehensive information about financial aid and the State Regents' degree completion initiative for adult learners, Reach Higher.

The new website is supported by a grant from Lumina Foundation, an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. Lumina envisions a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation's need for talent through a broad range of credentials. The Foundation's goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and for success in a global economy.

ONENET, TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROVIDERS MEET OKLAHOMANS' INTERNET REQUIREMENTS DURING PANDEMIC

During the current global health crisis, it is critical that all Oklahomans have access to adequate and affordable internet services. Schools throughout the state have transitioned to online coursework to complete the academic year. Health care facilities rely heavily on their telehealth programs to help ease the burden of patient care. Businesses are depending more on ecommerce to reach current and new customers. An unprecedented percentage of Oklahoma citizens in the workforce depend on the ability to telework for the foreseeable future.



As the world moves to telework, distance learning and virtual meetings, internet connectivity is more vital than ever. Internet access is also critical to economic sustainability during a health crisis as commerce transitions online and as businesses must find new ways to connect with consumers. In response to these needs, OneNet is partnering with telecommunications providers in communities throughout the state to promote broadband availability during the current health emergency.

Oklahomans' broadband needs have increased dramatically during this time, and OneNet's telecommunications partners are offering solutions. Some of these solutions include reduced internet service prices, expedited bandwidth upgrades and more. When the state began transitioning to telework and distance learning, Sonja Wall, director of OCAN and OneNet Services and the state broadband coordinator, hosted a call with 75 telecommunications representatives to

coordinate services and discuss how providers can best meet customers' new needs.

As Oklahoma's state broadband coordinator, Wall brings together a variety of public and private organizations to create a strategy for addressing broadband needs in communities throughout the state. This role is more important than ever as Oklahoma citizens need to connect not only within their own communities, but across the state and around the globe.

Public and private organizations are coming together in communities to meet citizens' needs. Libraries are offering public Wi-Fi in their parking lots. Rural community electric co-ops are broadening their services to offer internet in their communities. OneNet is partnering with the State Department of Education to develop a toolkit to help students obtain internet access. OneNet is also helping families and students who reach out to us by connecting them to low-cost internet options from their local telecommunications providers.

While OneNet has been working with community partners to ensure all Oklahomans are equipped with internet access, our customers are always our priority. OneNet has reached out to our customers to offer bandwidth increases to meet their new needs with telework, distance learning and virtual meetings. OneNet has also expedited setting up Zoom video conferencing licenses for customers. Organizations utilizing OneNet Zoom services include state agencies, municipalities, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, higher education boards and the governor's office. OneNet now manages 26,000 Zoom licenses and has assisted with setting up several large virtual public meetings to ensure the state can provide continuity of services to citizens.

The challenges of the current health crisis have also brought to the forefront the need for the development of a statewide network that supports telework, telehealth and distance

learning. The State Regents, OneNet and several partnering agencies recently published the Oklahomans Virtually Everywhere report. This report was developed in response to the Oklahomans Virtually Everywhere Act of 2019 (House Bill 1921), which created a statewide initiative to make Oklahoma a leader in telepresence and virtual presence by allowing Oklahomans to provide their expertise, knowledge and instruction throughout the world without leaving their communities.

"The Virtually Everywhere Act helps to foster a robust technological structure that promotes a statewide telepresence and virtual presence network, which is particularly vital right now," says OneNet Executive Director Vonley Royal. "Developing this statewide network allows key staff to work from home through telepresence and virtual presence, thus keeping everyone safe while still delivering state and local services to citizens."

OneNet believes that now, more than ever, its mission to further technology across the state of Oklahoma is essential. We will continue to work with community partners to meet the state's ever-evolving needs.

QuickFact

Since the pandemic began, OneNet has issued 18,000 Zoom licenses to state agencies, municipalities, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and higher education boards.

OKCOLLEGESTART.ORG PROVIDES NEW VIRTUAL CAMPUS TOUR FEATURE

While many in-person campus tours are on hold, Oklahoma colleges and universities are inviting students to visit their campuses virtually. OKcollegestart.org, the State Regents' student portal for college planning, has gathered links to these tours in one location for easy access. Users do not have to log in to their OKcollegestart.org account to access the information.

"OKcollegestart.org intends to maintain the list of virtual campus tours for as long as it is useful to those exploring postsecondary education," said Theresa Shaklee, student portal coordinator for the Oklahoma College Assistance Program. "We know nothing can completely replace the experience of visiting a campus in person, but colleges and universities across the state have found creative and engaging ways to give students and families the opportunity to explore what life on campus really looks like." Visit the OKcollegestart.org [virtual tour list here](#).

for Oklahoma educators to use in conjunction with OKcollegestart.org, allows counselors to send transcripts from high school to high school and from high school to college, track student activities on OKcollegestart.org and customize academic plans for students.



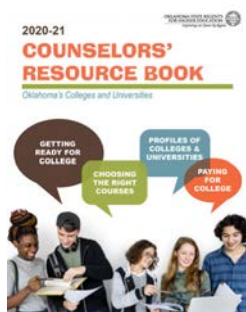
OKcollegestart.org provides free resources to help students and parents plan, prepare and pay for education and training beyond high school. The dynamic *Professional Center*, a website

2020-21 COLLEGE PLANNING PUBLICATIONS

This fall, the State Regents will offer free online publications to help Oklahoma students plan and prepare for a college education. These publications will be made available to counselors in a digital format that will allow them to assist with students' college planning whether the student is in a traditional or online classroom.

What's Your Plan for College?

These digital brochures for eighth- through 10th-grade and 11th- through 12th-grade students 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 and 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 Counselor Toolkit

UCanGo2, a college access initiative of the Oklahoma College Assistance Program, is producing an electronic kit to support educator outreach to students and parents. Each e-kit 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.



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