

*A Tribute to  
Governor Brad Henry*

**Higher Education's  
Tribute to Governor Brad Henry**

Presented by Chancellor Glen D. Johnson  
on January 12, 2010 at the Oklahoma Heritage Association

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We are here today to honor an individual who has been more responsible for the positive accomplishments in higher education than any other person in our state. That person is Governor Brad Henry.

As we begin this New Year, it is important to take a look back at the past year and review the important role Higher Education plays not only in our state, but in the nation as well.

Last February, President Obama in his speech to a joint session of congress said, "The answers to our problems don't lie beyond our reach. They exist in our laboratories and universities; in our fields and our factories; in the imaginations of our entrepreneurs and the pride of the hardest-working people on Earth. Those qualities that have made America the greatest force of progress and prosperity in human history we still possess in ample measure. What is required now is for this country to pull together, confront boldly the challenges we face, and take responsibility for our future once more."

It is not coincidental that the President placed laboratories and universities first in his list, because he knows as we do, that Higher Education is the engine that drives our economy.



Governor Henry knows this as well and has spent his two terms in office as one of the best friends Higher Education has ever had in the Governor's office.

In January 2003 in his first Inaugural speech, as the state faced another financial crisis, Governor Henry said, "When we invest in education and research it pays us back many times over. Even with inadequate revenues, we can achieve much." He went on to say, "Now more than ever, we must invest in education. Our future completely depends upon it."

In the years that followed, Governor Henry worked to fulfill that vision. Today you can't discuss the State of Higher Education without recognizing the progress we've accomplished during "*The Henry Years.*"

Today, we want to take a look back at the past eight years and to document Governor Henry's Higher Education legacy.

# Governor Brad Henry's Higher Education Legacy

## The Year 2003

In 2003, as he settled into the Governor's office, the authority to set tuition at our colleges and universities remained firmly rooted with the legislature.

In Governor Henry's 2003 State-of-State address he brought to the forefront the need to improve the tuition setting process when he said, "It's time to deregulate and depoliticize the process of setting tuition at our colleges and universities."

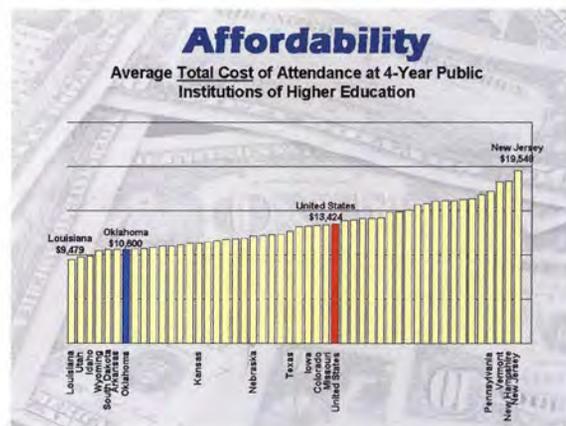
Governor Henry expressed his support for legislation that would give the State Regents the authority to set tuition and on March 28, 2003, signed into law HB 1748 which allowed Oklahoma to join the majority of other states across the nation which allows their State Regents the authority to set tuition.

And his analysis was correct. Those who are closest to the issue are in a much better position to make these critical decisions based on objective data and need based analysis.

As a result the State Regents' efforts in establishing tuition rates have helped our institutions consistently stay within the tuition limits prescribed by the legislature in 2003.

The State Regents took it a step further and have made affordability a major priority on our agenda. This slide shows just how affordable Oklahoma's public colleges and universities are compared to the rest of the nation.

While the cost of a college education has increased throughout the country, Oklahoma ranks as the 7<sup>th</sup> most affordable State in the nation in terms of college tuition and well below the national average in the terms of total cost. (Oklahoma's total cost is \$10,600, the national average is \$13,424.)



Governor Henry, thank you for your support in making this critical decision on behalf of Oklahoma's students.

Also in 2003, Governor Henry challenged Higher Education to harness the energies of the exceptional faculty and students in our colleges and universities to become a force for economic development.

The Governor publicly stated that, "Our institutions of higher learning should provide more leadership in coordinating research in support of both new and existing businesses and industry."

And the Higher Education community responded in many ways – especially through the federally funded EPSCoR program – (Oklahoma Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research), whose central goal is to increase the state’s research competitiveness through collaborations, and integrated education and research programs.

In the past eight years, our institutions research efforts have focused on many areas including:

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| a. Cancer         | f. Infectious diseases |
| b. Diabetes       | g. Sensor Technology   |
| c. Biofuels       | h. Plant biodiversity  |
| d. Wind Power     | i. Meteorology         |
| e. Nanotechnology |                        |

And since 2002, our research budgets have increase 43 percent from external sources with a total funding for our Oklahoma research projects reaching over \$1.6 billion.



Thank you Governor for the challenge and for having the confidence in us to know that we would work to not only meet the research challenge, but to exceed it!



## **The Year 2004**

In 2004 your focus continued to be on economic growth and the expansion and diversification of opportunities through technology-based research and development, commercialization of technology and entrepreneurial business efforts to create more high-paying jobs.

To assist in this effort Governor Henry created EDGE, (Economic Development Generating Excellence), and in 2004 your action plan included a recommendation for the creation of the EDGE Endowment as a catalyst to transform Oklahoma into the “*Research Capital of the Plains.*”



Higher Education, working with Commerce Secretary Kathy Taylor, who is also here today, and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, played a large part in the efforts to formulate the plan which called for investments from the endowment to be used to support applied research and hi-tech commercialization which would lead to more technology-based jobs in Oklahoma.

The Endowment received \$150 million in 2006 and EDGE grants are now awarded annually on a competitive basis.

Governor, thank you for enhancing our research capacities through the EDGE endowment.

## The Year 2005

Governor Henry's 2005 State-of-the-State address reminded us that there is no better investment which yields a higher return than the investment we make in Higher Education.

The Governor also said, "An educated workforce is the foundation of every community and the future of every economy."

He recognized the fact that with record enrollments, Oklahoma's College and Universities were quickly running out of classroom and laboratory space for our students.

Our institutions had seen such rapid growth in enrollment, and combined with several years of budgetary cuts, our colleges and universities had facilities which were overcrowded, classrooms which were outdated, obsolete equipment and deteriorating research labs.

In his State-of-the-State address, the Governor urged the legislature to join him in approving the \$475 million capital bond issue for Higher Education.

On Thursday, March 31, 2005, he signed into law the largest Higher Education capital bond issue in the history of the State of Oklahoma.

Since 2005, the funds have been used to expand and update labs, classrooms and to retrofit buildings with more energy efficient heating and cooling systems.

We are here today to report that the 140 construction projects were submitted by our 25 campuses and most of those projects are completed or nearing completion. The 2005 Higher Education Bond Issue would not have happened without the Governor's leadership.

Thank you for providing that leadership.



Also in 2005, the Governor made a commitment to the Achieving Classroom Excellence initiative or ACE. This significant initiative has helped match high school curriculum with college entrance requirements to promote a more seamless and successful transition from high school to college.

Specifically, the Governor was an advocate for paying the tuition of those high school students participating in concurrent enrollment.

As we know, this innovative program provides high school juniors and seniors with the opportunity to earn college credit while still in High School.

As you can see from this chart, since its inception in the fall of 2005 the program has really taken off.

As of 2009, over 50,068 credit hours have been earned.

This includes over 6,997 unduplicated students earning college credits and over 24,000 students cumulative since its inception.

The benefits to our students are significant:

- many student have 30 hours before they set foot on a college campus;
- it gets students in the pipeline for a college degree; and
- it shortens the time for college degree completion.



Governor, thank you for your efforts in making concurrent enrollment a great success story in Oklahoma!

## The Year 2006

In 2006, the Governor's economic efforts were showing significant progress. He had balanced the budget and for the most part had shielded education from crippling budget cuts.

However, the Higher Education budget was still struggling after back-to-back-to-back years of flat budgets.

In 2006, the Governor held firm in his support of Higher Education throughout the long budget negotiations that extended into late June. He showed his willingness to take the legislature into a special session to fund Higher Education.

In June he signed a budget agreement which included \$131 million of new money for Higher Education, the largest budget Higher Education had ever received!

These new monies allowed Higher Education to fund many new projects and to better match our programs with the needs of business including:

- Our successful "Programs of Excellence" initiative which enabled our colleges and universities to build new and innovative programs that meet the highest standards, and which helps attract and graduate students who contribute to the state's prosperity.

- Increased funding by \$4.6 million for the statewide nursing and allied health initiative. Through this initiative, colleges and universities have helped to boost the number of nurses and allied health professionals employed in our state and gave us the opportunity to link our academic programs more closely with the stated needs of business.
- We were able to fund our performance funding initiative, which is designed to provide incentives to our institutions to increase retention and graduation rates.

Thank you Governor, for the record appropriation for Higher Education in 2006.

## The Year 2007

In his 2007 State-of-the-State address he told us that we needed to capitalize on that momentum of the past 100 years and then he proposed helping one of the country's signature college access programs, Oklahoma's Promise by providing a permanent and dedicated funding source.

He knew that if we could get more students into this scholarship program we would produce more college graduates in Oklahoma.



- For 8th, 9th and 10th-grade students
- Family's income not in excess of \$50,000
- Students take college prep courses
- Stay out of trouble
- Maintain 2.5 GPA

OHLAP, or as we call it today, Oklahoma's Promise was a successful program that pledged free tuition to eligible students.

We all know the criteria:

- if you take a college prep curriculum,
- make good grades; and
- stay out of trouble, the State of Oklahoma will pay for your college education.

We have also seen that, students who participate in Oklahoma's Promise are:

- more likely to graduate from high school; and
- go to college; and
- they are less likely to need remediation; and
- are more likely to earn a college degree.

At the end of the 2007 legislative session a significant milestone for the funding of Oklahoma's Promise program was reached. In addition to providing \$48 million for the costs of Oklahoma's Promise scholarships during the 2007-08 year, Governor Henry worked with the legislature to approve the permanent, dedicated funding source for the program.

Beginning in 2008-09, Oklahoma's Promise funding comes "off the top" from the state's General Revenue Fund. This change ensured that the program would be fully funded each year from a stable source of revenue.

This slide shows the progress made by the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship program since 2001.

- In 1999-00 the program had fewer than 1,300 students.
- It grew in 2001-02, to a little over 2,000 recipients.
- Last year it had over 18,000 recipients and we project that by 2010 that number will top 19,000.

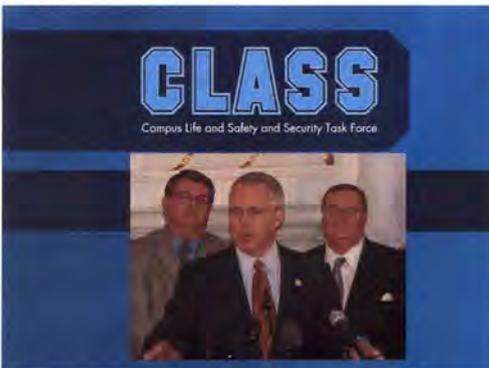


Also in 2007, following the tragic slayings at Virginia Tech University, Governor Henry set about to create the CLASS Task Force to enhance campus security and safety at our college and CareerTech campuses.

As he told me when he called to ask me to serve as chairman of the Task Force, “It is imperative that our college campuses provide a safe environment for our students to learn and to live.”

Since that time, Oklahoma's Higher Education and career technology institutions have made great strides to ensure the safety and welfare of students, faculty and staff.

Within weeks of the tragedy, the University of Central Oklahoma, under the leadership of President Roger Webb, held the first national seminar on campus safety after the Virginia Tech tragedy, featuring the top experts in the field.



Last July, the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services held the first mental health train-the-trainer classes for Higher Education.

Notification systems have been implemented on our campuses providing students, faculty and staff many methods of notification including voice messaging, email alerts and public address systems.

In the area of rapid response – Our campuses, with cooperation of law enforcement, have put into action various rapid response plans which employ the use of crisis management teams and other emergency response agencies.

And, the task force has set Dec. 1, 2010 as the date for full compliance with National Incident Management System. This system is considered the “gold standard” for security and safety for public institutions.

And the Governor has been steadfast in his opposition to any legislation permitting the carrying of concealed weapons on our college and university campuses.

Governor, thank you for making campus safety and security a top priority during your administration.

## The Year 2008

As we looked toward 2008, few realized the economic crisis that would be looming in the fall. In the Spring we were still filled with optimism about the future.

In the Spring of 2008, Governor Henry supported our efforts to fund a bond issue to clear the endowed chairs program \$260 million backlog.

We all know that Oklahoma's endowed chairs program is one of the most successful public/private partnerships in the country.

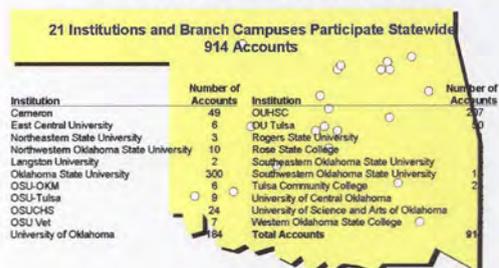
Since the start of Governor Henry's administration in 2003, 150 endowed chairs and lectureships have been fully funded; to date the endowed chair program has 914 accounts at 21 of our system campuses.

In 2008, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education initiated the Brad Henry International Scholars program, named in honor of the Governor Henry whose vision it was to provide a unique experience to Oklahoma students who wanted to study abroad.

This International study and internship program has provided talented students from Oklahoma's regional universities the opportunity to spend a semester at Swansea University in Wales.

The State Regents provides a \$10,000 stipend for students selected to participate in this semester-long study or research program.

### Endowed Chair Bond Issue



Academic credit for these programs will be awarded by Oklahoma regional universities.

Few other experiences in life will provide such a positive and sustainable impact as this life-changing experience.

Governor, thank you for your leadership in providing this unique international study program to our students.

## **System Successes**

We've had many other successes in Higher Education throughout the Governor's term in office.

### **Economic Impact**

We have said many times over the past several years that Higher Education is the engine that drives the economy. This point is even more evident following an analysis conducted last year by the Regional Economic Models Inc. which shows that the investment the state has made in Higher Education has had a tremendous return.

- For every state appropriated dollar spent on Higher Education in Oklahoma an additional \$5.15 is pumped into the Oklahoma economy.
- In 2008 Oklahoma's system of Higher Education will produce over \$3.2 billion in growth in the state's gross domestic product;
- In 2008 Higher Education's capital and construction spending are expected to add 23,750 jobs to the Oklahoma economy;
- By the end of the next decade, Oklahoma's gross state product (GSP) will increase by \$26.292 billion through Higher Education's continued contribution to the economy.

This clearly demonstrates that Higher Education is the engine that drives the economy in Oklahoma, and that funding Higher Education should not be viewed as an expense, but should be viewed as the best investment the State can make in the future.

### **Preliminary Enrollment**

It's obvious that the investment made in Higher Education will further enable us to build on our current success including enrollment.

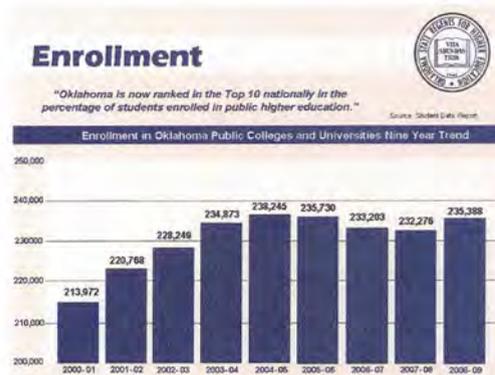
We recently announced that Oklahoma's public colleges and universities are experiencing an increase in the number of students enrolled this fall.

- The Fall 2009 Preliminary Enrollment Report shows that the total headcount is up 10,291 more students than the fall of 2008, up 5.8 percent.
- The preliminary enrollment report reveals that the state's community colleges experienced the largest percentage increase among the three tiers at 10 percent, or 6,961 students.
- Oklahoma's regional universities experienced an overall increase of 5 percent in total headcount.
- The state's research universities saw an overall increase of 1.1 percent in total headcount.
- Oklahoma's public colleges and universities have also seen the number of first-time freshmen increase across the state system, by 12.3 percent.
- The state's regional universities and community colleges saw average increases of 9.1 and 19.7 percent, respectively, in first time freshmen.
- The research universities saw a 0.5 percent increase in first-time freshman.

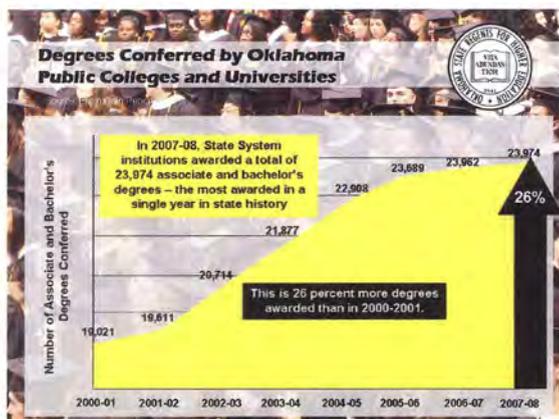
## Enrollment

We have also seen record increases in enrollment throughout the past several years.

- From 1995 to 2009 our system has experienced a nearly 10 percent increase in enrollment.
- Most of that growth occurred during the early 2000's.
- Our current projections are that we will see a leveling out of these numbers leaving us at or near our record levels of the next few years.
- Oklahoma is now ranked in the Top 10 nationally in the percentage of student enrolled in public Higher Education. We've moved from 14<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> since 2001.



## Degrees Conferred



One of our most important indicators of our success is reflected in the number of degrees conferred, which has increased since 2001 at the associate and bachelor's degree level. A total of 4,953 additional degrees have been awarded across the State System, awarding a total of 23,974 associate and bachelor's degrees in 2007-08, the most awarded in a single year in state history.

- Up a total of more than 26 percent.
- Oklahoma is only one of 12 states nationally to increase the percent of adults with bachelors degrees.
- By the end of your two terms in office, over 180,000 students will have received their associates and bachelors degrees.

This is truly a living legacy of the "Henry Years."

## The Year 2009

Last year before the legislative session started, before the economic downturn became apparent, the State Regents and the Council of Presidents recognized the approaching economic storm clouds and agreed that the most important contribution we could make to Oklahoma students was to make ever effort to hold tuition costs down with a tuition freeze, if adequate appropriations were made to Higher Education.

With significant help from Governor and the Legislature all 25 college and universities, we were able to fulfill the promise for a tuition freeze.

In 2009, Higher Education, with help of the stimulus funding, received a 3 percent increase in funding when every other entity in State government took a 7 percent cut.

This 3 percent funding increase for Higher Education would not have happened without Governor Brad Henry's decisiveness.

The Governor made Higher Education's participation in the federal stimulus package a top priority.

- In fact, Oklahoma received 31 percent of the Education Stabilization Funds;
- The national average was 20.7 percent;
- Eleven states received a higher percentage than Oklahoma;
- Four of those used all their funds in FY'09 or FY'10 and have no funds left for FY'11
- The remaining 7 states have significant funds left.

And of course this decision laid the ground work for our 3 percent budget increase last year and the subsequent tuition freeze.



Governor, thank you for underscoring the role Higher Education plays through the stimulus bill in creating jobs and retaining jobs in the State of Oklahoma.

In closing I want to say that Gubernatorial terms are often measured in terms of a lasting legacy.

We would submit that after reviewing today's information, future observers can rightly view these last eight years as the "golden years for Higher Education."

And I can also make a case that there will be many achievements in a variety of areas attributed to the Governor Brad Henry's two terms as Governor, but at the centerpiece of his legacy will be his enduring commitment to the betterment of Higher Education and to the futures of thousands of our students in the State of Oklahoma.

And now, we are here to honor Governor Brad Henry for his distinguished service in support of Higher Education throughout the last legislative session, but in essence we are here to honor him for all he has done during his career in public service.

Governor, would you, Chairman Price and President McKeon join me on stage.

Therefore, Governor Henry, on behalf of the State Regents, the Council of Presidents, it is an honor to present you with the 2009 Distinguished Service Award.

Governor Henry, we want to again thank you for your support of Higher Education and we look forward to the 2010 legislative session and your continued support as we face the many challenges ahead.

Please join me again in thanking Governor Brad Henry!



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