

# OKLAHOMA HIGHER EDUCATION STARTS YEAR-LONG PLANNING INITIATIVE

## From State Regents for Higher Education

■(TULSA) Five strategic questions central to the future of Oklahoma higher education will form the core of a statewide planning initiative which begins October 31 and lasts one year, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education said Friday at a meeting in the Tulsa Community College West Campus.

The nine-member higher education board also said it would announce the names of about 30 Oklahomans who will serve on a Citizens Advisory Commission to the State Regents as part of the planning process. Names of the advisory committee will be announced and work on the committee will begin October 31, at a meeting with Barry Munitz, Chancellor of the California State University System.

The commission's work will focus on five questions:

- **Quality:** How can standards and incentives be developed to further improve student preparation? How can Oklahoma's public higher education institutions assure they are educating students qualified to participate in the rapidly changing work, civic and cultural environments of the 21st Century?

- **Access:** How can the higher education system maintain and improve access for qualified students in an era of limited growth in state funding, constrained family budgets and changing geographic population distribution?

- **Efficiency:** What initiatives — including incentives for creative management — should be considered to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the state system and its institutions?

- **Accountability:** What are the mutually developed and accepted goals of the various components of the system and what measures can be used to chart progress toward goals? Where are there gaps between goals and current levels of achievement?

- **Funding:** How can Oklahomans ensure their colleges and universities receive adequate funding from various sources to efficiently provide quality educational services? How can higher education ensure students pay an equitable share of their college costs, while also ensuring higher education remains affordable and accessible to all qualified students.

At the meeting, State Regents' Chairman Anne H. Morgan said the Regents were seeking citizen input in the creation of a long-range plan to guide the decisions and policies of the State Regents, Oklahoma college and university governing boards and the state's colleges and universities over the next several decades.

Morgan stressed the Regents' goal is to achieve an on-going and fluid planning process to serve Oklahoma's higher education system for many years. "What I want to make very clear about this planning-for-the-future effort is that it is not a one-shot approach and that any recommendation or resulting action will not be eternally etched into stone," she said.

Morgan also noted the board wants to see the higher education system operate with maximum flexibility in order to change rapidly to meet student needs.

"That means we must remove rules and impediments and allow institutions to operate creatively and to respond effectively with minimal restrictions," she told fellow board

members. "Our biggest challenge (as Regents) will be to set expectations and then get out of the way," she noted.

"Our message to the citizen group will be to think creatively as they look at issues and possible solutions and not be bound by previous Regents' actions or policies," she continued. "That's very hard for us as State Regents to say because we have an eight-year investment in our current agenda.

But we certainly don't want to be part of the problem, and we will need to be vigilant that our investment does not prejudice us in working with the citizens' group or in acting on their recommendation," Morgan said.

Chancellor Hans Brisch noted the State Regents' mission is to ensure that Oklahoma has a world class higher education system that prepares students to compete. "We want Oklahoma to be known for the quality of our students and for their performance in the academic arena and the world of work," he said.

State Regent Bill W. Burgess of Lawton was named chairman of the Citizens' Advisory Commission, replacing Gene Rainbolt, who resigned due to business and civic commitments. Staff director will be Dr. Larkin Warner, Oklahoma State University professor of economics.

"Higher education touches the lives of every citizen in this state," Brisch said. This plan will be Oklahoma's blueprint for improving the quality of life through the power of education."

All meetings of the Citizens' Advisory Committee are open to the public. Copies of the State Regents' charge to the Citizens' Advisory Commission, including the five strategic questions, may be obtained by calling the State Regents' offices at 405-524-9180.

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## POLLUTION PREVENTION GRANTS AWARDED

### From Environmental Protection Agency

■(WASHINGTON) EPA's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, along with 10 EPA regional offices, has awarded a total of \$6.8 million in pollution prevention grants for fiscal year 1996. Sixty-five state and tribal groups received \$4.9 million under the Pollution Prevention Incentive for States grant program to reduce or eliminate pollution in our air, land and water.

Since 1989, EPA has awarded \$40 million to support state and tribal pollution prevention efforts. Grant recipients are required to match the federal funds by at least 50 percent in dollars, in-kind goods and services or third-party contributions.

As part of the Environmental Justice through Pollution Prevention (EJP2) grant program, 11 non-profit organizations and tribes — one from each of EPA's 10 regions and one national awardee — received a total of \$1.9 million for pollution prevention projects. The 11 organizations were selected from over 200 national applications.

Fiscal year 1996 was the second year for the EJP2 program, which aims to empower communities to find pollution prevention solutions to environmental problems. For more information, contact Lena Ferris at 202-260-2237 or Chen Wen at 202-260-4109.