

# Higher Education Chancellor Presents Legislative Agenda on SWOSU Campus

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Chancellor Glen D. Johnson (right) was recently on the Southwestern Oklahoma State University campus to present the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's FY 2014 legislative agenda to an audience of lawmakers, community leaders, regents and educators from SWOSU, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Panhandle State University and Northern Oklahoma College. After the presentation, Johnson toured the construction site of the new events center on the SWOSU campus. With him is State Regent Jimmy Harrel (left).

With the demand for employees who have certificates and degrees increasing, college completion has never been a higher priority in the state of Oklahoma than it is now.

That was the message delivered by Chancellor Glen D. Johnson as he presented the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's FY 2014 legislative agenda to an audience of lawmakers, community leaders and educators at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford on Monday, January 7.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education recently voted to request \$90.4 million in new state appropriations during the upcoming legislative session. The total budget request for FY 2014 is 9.47 percent higher than the current year's appropriation.

To aid state colleges and universities in producing more college graduates, the State Regents are requesting \$55 million for Complete College America performance funding needs. This will provide funding for additional course sections, full-time faculty

and financial aid. This will also fund increased needs for information technology equipment, library resources and other operational needs to support near-record student enrollment.

Oklahoma's public colleges and universities continue to take steps to cut operational costs. A total of \$411 million in actual and projected cost savings has been identified from 2010-14 in technology and energy consumption, as well as in personnel costs and supplies. "Oklahoma's system of higher education remains committed to producing a quality, educated workforce in order to prepare our students to compete globally," Johnson said. "We believe that our budget request makes a very persuasive case for our policy leaders to further invest in higher education. These funds would assist our institutions in achieving our Complete College America degree completion goals and will help to ensure student access and success in college."

College completion continues to be higher education's No. 1 priority. The State Regents are seeking \$2.5 million for online education and degree completion technology. This will increase students' ability to enroll in additional course sections and improve evaluation and transparency through software development and training.

The State Regents are also requesting \$7.5 million to fund a grant program that will enhance higher education institutions' efforts to provide students guidance in completion of their degrees. Funding would be directed to special services in career counseling, advisement, financial aid and efficiency in degree attainment.

Increased financial aid funding will also be a priority for the State Regents in the upcoming legislative session in order to reduce the financial barriers that prevent students from attending college. The State Regents seek to increase funding by \$2.5 million for the concurrent enrollment program, which allows high school juniors and seniors to take credit-earning college courses.

The State Regents are also requesting an additional \$540,000 for the Summer Academies program, \$1.3 million for the Oklahoma Tuition Aid and Oklahoma Tuition Equalization grants, \$200,000 for the Academic Scholars program and \$250,000 for an adult degree completion community scholarship match.

The total appropriation request for FY 2014 is \$1.05 billion.