

SWOSU Leadership Program Endorses Pickens Plan

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University's President's Leadership Class program in Weatherford has endorsed the Pickens Plan, a blueprint to reduce foreign oil dependence by harnessing domestic energy alternatives and give the United States time to develop new energy technologies. Among the students involved in the program include (front from left): SWOSU President John Hays; Joice Jose, Oklahoma City; Morgan Smith, Mooreland; Alyssa Holt, Sentinel; Lindsey Liebscher, Hydro; Lauren Kehl, Cordell; Brenna Cary, Hollis; Kaleb Fischer, Weatherford; Jordan Stewart, Fairview; Whitney Hamar, Fairview; and SWOSU PLC Advisor Randy Beutler. Back from left-Bryan Wilkes, Oklahoma city; Ryan McCallay, Hammon; Caleb Koos, El Reno; Neal Kennedy, Calumet; Jacob Fuller, Blanchard; Evan Brooks, Elk City; Allen Deak, Mustang; Clint Dismore, Miami; Keenan Haught, Elk City; Zeke Zoschke, Thomas; Justin Simpson, Antlers; and Trevor Brownen, Minco.

The Southwestern Oklahoma State University's President's Leadership Classes have officially endorsed and plans to work with the Pickens Plan as an energy policy leadership project for the classes.

The PLC is a four-year leadership program for top students at SWOSU in Weatherford. The program was founded in 2006 by SWOSU President John Hays and is primarily supported by private donations.

The Pickens Plan is considered a bridge to the future — a blueprint to reduce foreign oil dependence by harnessing domestic energy alternatives, and give the United States time to develop new energy technologies.

The classes have determined that besides the Pickens Plan formulating a viable energy policy for the U.S., this direction will also have a dramatic, positive impact on western Oklahoma due to its emphasis on wind energy and use of compressed natural gas (CNG).

Weatherford is home to a major wind energy farm that was established by Florida Power and Light in 2005 and produces up to 147 megawatts of electricity for American Electric Power/Public Service of Oklahoma. The city is also home to Chesapeake Energy's field office which is a major natural gas exploration company and leader in the drive to use CNG for transportation.

"This is one of the most important decisions this country is going to face in the history of the United States of America," said Justin Simpson, SWOSU freshman from Antlers. "It is going to affect every single person."

According to Randy Beutler, director of the SWOSU program, the PLC classes have been divided up into several committees that will analyze all aspects of the plan and its effect on Oklahoma and future generations. The students will also be contacting elected officials in regards to the plan and speaking to civic groups around the area.

“The plan is sure to catalyze our nation’s progress toward becoming more self-sustained and energy efficient,” said Allen Deak of Mustang, who is a sophomore member of the PLC. “I’m excited to see the implications this will have on our environment and economy, and I’m privileged to be involved with these new developments in our country.”

Another PLC member, junior Sarah Sullins King of Granite, said “We believe it is imperative that our country develop a logical, energy policy for our future economic well-being. A part of that policy should include wind power and automotive and fleet use of CNG.”

Any organizations or clubs that are interested in having members of the PLC speak should contact Beutler at 580.774.7193 or randy.beutler@swosu.edu.

Each year 15 of SWOSU’s top entering freshmen are selected to be PLC Scholars. Each scholar is awarded a \$1,000 scholarship and receives four years of leadership training that fosters both intellectual and personal growth. Beutler said the PLC develops leaders who will have a profound understanding of leadership and its responsible application within organizations, communities and their state.