

Letter from the President

To OSU students, faculty and staff,



The Oklahoma legislature is working with a record revenue surplus this year and we had hoped it would help fund higher education at a level that would allow us to address a number of priorities, such as growing our faculty, while holding down any tuition increase for students. But I have serious concerns about developments thus far.

The House passed a higher education bill calling for only \$24 million in new money for higher education; an amount that provides no money to address mandatory costs. A Senate-amended version of the bill was approved this week and is much better, calling for \$87 million in new funding for state universities and colleges. The Senate plan would mean about \$7.7 million in appropriations for OSU and would cover our mandatory cost increases – utilities, health insurance, retirement benefits and other expenses.

The best proposal comes from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, which has requested \$123.1 million in new funding to assure continued quality, access and affordability for college students. This plan provides the funding to increase faculty and staff pay, add faculty positions and address other priorities, while avoiding a potential double digit tuition increase.

Our state is making solid strides, but still trails others in producing college graduates, a key barometer of economic strength. About 22 percent of Oklahomans have a bachelor's degree compared to 26.5 percent nationally. With record dollars available, the state has the opportunity this year to make a real impact on higher education.

This is an urgent matter for all of us. We need adequate funding to add faculty, upgrade technology and enhance the quality of an education at OSU. We need adequate funding to limit any tuition increase for students and their families.

Now is the time for state leaders to hear from us. Students, please encourage your parents to contact their legislators. To staff and faculty, I urge each of you to contact your legislators as well.

We recognize the difficult task our legislators face and appreciate all they have done in recent years for higher education. Oklahoma higher education is at an important crossroads. The future health and success of OSU and our state are at stake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Schmidly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

OSU System CEO and President