

November 3, 2006

Schmidly Appoints Health Care and Wellness Task Force

To seriously address rising health care costs for all employees, Oklahoma State University System CEO and President David Schmidly has created a broad-based, high-level task force that will explore all alternatives.

"Since the year 2000, the OSU cost of providing health care has nearly doubled," said Schmidly. "We have had to pass some of that cost along to our employees and we've reached a point where the cost of insuring family members is prohibitive for many employees. This is not acceptable."

Schmidly said, "Addressing the cost of insurance and encouraging healthy lifestyles is an urgent, pressing priority. Immediate actions are required to develop a strategy for health care cost containment while providing the highest standard of care possible and improving the health and wellness of OSU employees and their families."

The task force is charged with examining innovative avenues and options, while mapping the future of health care and wellness for the OSU System.

"The task force will develop a plan to help stabilize costs and lead to improved health for the OSU community," Schmidly said. "While there are no simple solutions, we can and will forge ahead to become the Healthiest Campus in America."

Schmidly said, "I am pleased that John Fernandes, president of OSU's Center of Health Science

in Tulsa, has agreed to chair this important initiative. We will draw upon the expertise of a state benefits representative and a national health care and wellness expert as needed."

In addition to Fernandes, task force members include Regent Calvin Anthony; Greg Bell, Huffine Endowed Associate Professor of turfgrass science, OSU Faculty Council; David Bosserman, vice president of Administration and Finance; Kathy Elliott, associate vice president and controller; Laura Hare, OSU-OKC director of Personnel Relations; Jim Hess, OSU Center for Health Sciences vice president for Healthcare Administration; OSU-Okmulgee President Bob Klabenes; Anne Matoy, assistant vice president/Chief Human Resources Officer; Kimberly Peabody, assistant professor of applied health and education psychology; Seretean Wellness Center Director Robin Purdie; OSU-Tulsa President Gary Trennepohl; and Carey Warner, OSU Staff Advisory Council.

OSU pays all monthly health care premiums for employees, which is rare today. However, the cost for other family members will increase significantly next year.

OSU is part of a state-wide health care group that provides coverage for more than 120,000 individuals. The state determines the costs of health care for OSU employees. The OSU cost of health care, what it pays in premiums for employees and their families, was \$11.4 million in 2000 and last year was \$21.6 million.

Nixon honored for 55 years of service to OSU



Dorothy Nixon

The annual Staff Awards and Recognition program Thursday was highlighted by the recognition of a staff member whose employment began when the university was still called Oklahoma A&M College. Dorothy Nixon, an administrative assistant in the School of Journalism and Broadcasting, was honored for an unprecedented five-and-a-half decades of service to OSU.

"What makes Ms. Nixon even more special is not only has she completed 55 years of service, but she has done it all within the same department," said Carey Warner, chairwoman of the OSU Staff Advisory Council.

Nixon began working as a secretary in publications, now the School of Journalism and Broadcasting, on June 1, 1951.

Nixon, who is the only person ever to exceed 50 years of employment with OSU, received a Pistol Pete clock, service pin and a certificate during the recognition program.

"I like my job. I like the people, the staff, the faculty and the students," Nixon said. "OSU has become home to me."

A presentation of the OSU Staff Advisory Council, the staff awards program is held each year to honor staff for completing five-year increments of service to the university as well as those completing ambassadorial and leadership development training programs. Staff Advisory Council scholarships and the Distinguished Service Awards are also presented during the ceremony.

Warner said the Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals who are hard working, dedicated and loyal and who are making a difference not only in their areas but also the university as a whole. Honorees receive a plaque and a one-time, \$750 stipend.

The recipients and the categories they represent included: Administrative/Professional, Suzanne Burks, director of University Counseling Services, and Rick Williamson, manager of Farm, Feed and Services; Classified - Clerical, Glenda Bentley, senior financial assistant, Fire Protection Publications, and Peggy Gregory, unit assistant, Office of Undergraduate Admissions; Classified - Service/Maintenance, Jean LeForce, animal caretaker foreman, Boren Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, and Patrick Wheeler, lead material mover, Physical Plant truck services; Classified - Trades/Tech. Paraprofessional, Janelle Ballard, animal technician II, Center for Veterinary Health Sciences.

Fall "Break"



The return of fall foliage has added even more orange to the campus landscape and, despite cooler temperatures, drawn people outside, including these students relaxing near the library's Beverly Clerico Plaza.

Race and Reproduction series features author, activist

Author and international human rights activist Loretta Ross, a leader of the largest protest march in U.S. history, will visit OSU for the Nov. 10 program of "Race and Reproduction," a series exploring the link between the history of race relations and reproductive politics. Ross, founder and national coordinator of the SisterSong Reproductive Health Collective, will speak about racism and reproductive justice from 2 - 4 p.m. in the Edmon Low Library Browsing Room. The event is free and open to the public.

As coordinator of SisterSong, Ross heads a coalition of 70 women of color organizations throughout the nation. She has testified before Congress, the United Nations and the Food and Drug Administration on women's health and human rights issues.

Ross' involvement in the March for Women's Lives expanded an event initially planned as an abortion rights march into a protest of oppression of women around the world, from human rights abuses and poverty to lack of immigration rights. As a result, 1 million people participated, making the march not only the largest and most diverse women's rights protest in U.S. history, but the largest for any cause.

In addition to presenting a lecture, Ross will sign copies of her book, "Undivided Rights," a collection of narratives that capture the history of how Latina, African American, Native American, and Asian American women have spearheaded the fight for jurisdiction over their own bodies and reproductive destinies.

The Race and Reproduction series is a presentation of the OSU Women's Studies Program and OSU Women's Programs.

OSU-Tulsa 'tops out' Helmerich ATRC



OSU supporters and community leaders created Tulsa history today as they "topped out" OSU-Tulsa's Helmerich Advanced Technology Research Center, a Vision 2025 project.

OSU-Tulsa President Gary Trennepohl said the event celebrated the completion of the highest part of the building, a traditional milestone in the construction process. Construction on the \$45 million research center began last October.

The Helmerich ATRC was funded through Tulsa County's Vision 2025 initiative, the state's higher education bond issue and Walter and Peggy Helmerich of Tulsa. Research in the facility will focus on four areas: advanced materials, bio-based technologies, energy technologies and information and control technologies.

Trennepohl said the center, which is expected to be completed in Nov. 2007, will stimulate economic development for Tulsa and Northeastern Oklahoma, resulting in collaborations with area businesses and the creation of new jobs.

Discuss current OSU priorities and issues at the...

Student Town Hall with the President

4 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 8
Student Union Little Theatre



For all these stories and more, go to: <http://osu.okstate.edu/news>

Student Spotlight: Team Chemistry

Students have designs on winning national chemical engineering competitions.



United Way Chili Cook-off today

For this and other United Way events in November go to <http://www.vpaf.okstate.edu/UnitedWay>.

