

November 13, 2006

To the OSU Campus,

Many people have asked me for my thoughts on the impact last week's elections, especially changes in Congressional leadership at the national level, will have on higher education.

With Democratic control of the Senate and House, the focus on access, affordability and accountability will intensify. The Democrats have called for cutting interest rates on student loans and increases in the Pell Grant. Either of those changes would be welcome, but also expensive.

Whatever changes are in store, both Democrats and Republicans will continue to take a hard look at the job our nation's higher education institutions are doing to address rising tuition costs and provide students a quality education.

Oklahoma ranks second in the nation for affordable college, thanks in large part to the financial commitment of state leaders in recent years. We continue to have critical needs and under Gov. Henry's leadership I know higher education will remain a priority because of the importance it plays in driving our economy and improving the lives of the people of our state.

Greater scrutiny by national and state leaders is healthy for higher education. OSU is in the third year of its Achieving Greatness strategic plan, which speaks to the heart of the national debate by addressing four focus areas -- access, affordability, excellence, and student success. Everything we do at OSU must revolve around those pillars...

One of the highlights of an OSU football game is the outstanding work of the Cowboy Marching Band. Led by director Brad Snow, the nearly 300 members of the band are critical to our exciting game-day experience. Our band students and their leaders work long and hard to entertain our fans and I want to commend them and thank them for the job they do...

Saturday's convincing win over Baylor allowed our football team to qualify for a bowl, but I know Mike Gundy and his team are clearly focused on the remaining games on our schedule. Wins over Texas Tech and OU would greatly enhance our post-season destination...

Congratulations to our soccer team for an outstanding season. Though they lost a heartbreaker yesterday and fell short of reaching the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament, the Cowgirls had a memorable season, finishing with a 17-3-3 record...

I mentioned last week that SGA is hosting the Big 12 student government conference, which starts Thursday. If you see visiting students, please make them feel welcome.

David Schmidly