

To the OSU Campus,

The Oklahoma legislature opens today and higher education will once again be a major focus as leaders consider funding for one of the state's most important economic drivers.

Bolstered by an expanding state economy, Oklahoma leaders have provided excellent support for higher education the last several years and it is important we maintain the momentum.

While affordability and access for students are two of the most pressing issues state leaders will consider, it is critical that state appropriations address the need to reward and grow faculty, expand research and technology, and fund rising health care costs.

Despite increases the last few years, tuition at OSU remains the lowest in the Big 12 Conference. OSU tuition and mandatory fees for in-state undergraduates is 81 percent of the Big 12 average. We will continue to work hard to hold down the cost of tuition.

We look forward to working with state leaders on this vital issue for our state and for each one of us at OSU. I will keep you informed as we proceed...

At the federal level, many students across the nation should benefit after the Bush Administration and Congress both proposed significant increases in the Pell Grant Program. Pell Grants range from \$400 to \$4,050 a year and OSU currently has nearly 4,700 Pell recipients...

Steve McKeever, VP of research, and his team are lining up another strong Research Week, which begins February 19. Two of the headliners are Dr. Frank Wilczek, 2004 Noble Laureate in Physics, and Dr. Abel Gonzales, former program director at the International Atomic Energy Agency and instrumental in the organization being awarded the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. View the complete schedule of events at <http://researchweek.okstate.edu> <<http://researchweek.okstate.edu>> ...

We also have an impressive lineup of speakers on our campus this week, all appearing at the Wes Watkins Center. Tonight former Colorado Lt. Gov. Joe Rogers will present his Dream Alive dedication to Martin Luther King Jr. at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Michael Ruse, one of the country's leading authorities on the history and philosophy of evolutionary theory, will speak at 7 p.m. Thursday, former Black Panther leader Bobby Seale will speak about the group's history at 7 p.m...

I want to add my congratulations to Dr. Earl Mitchell, who retired last week. Dr. Mitchell, professor and interim head of biochemistry and molecular biology, became the first black faculty member at OSU in 1967. We wish Earl all the best and thank him for his leadership and dedicated service to OSU...

David Schmidly