

Message from the President

May 21, 2007

To the OSU Campus:

With the spring semester coming to a close, the Oklahoma State University System awarded degrees to more than 3,400 students, including associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctoral and professional degrees. Commencement ceremonies on all campuses were very well attended by our graduates and their families and friends.

I take this opportunity to publicly recognize the efforts and thank the many staff members who plan and orchestrate these ceremonies - from the physical arrangements to preparation of scripts and programs. Your assistance and support are invaluable and very much appreciated. I also want to express my appreciation to the many faculty and administrators who participated, some at several ceremonies across the OSU System. We sometimes forget how important it is to our students to have their faculty advisors, mentors, and teachers at these academic celebrations. Thank you!

The OSU strategic plan identifies the enhancement of research and scholarly activity as one of the institution's highest priorities. A number of our faculty have received national recognition for their scholarship this past year - these numbers increase each year and we are extremely proud of the various scholarly contributions individuals across the campus make toward reaching this priority.

Under the leadership of Vice President Stephen McKeever, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to increase the number and size of proposals in the areas of research and sponsored programs. The third quarter report reflects an almost \$50 million dollar increase over this period in FY06 in the amount of dollars requested in submitted grants and contracts. My appreciation goes to all OSU community members involved in these efforts to enhance the scholarship of Oklahoma State University.

During the summer months construction will begin on several new buildings and remodeling work will continue in others, including upgrades to many university classrooms and installation of state-of-the art multimedia equipment. Several important projects were completed this past year including work in the Concert Hall of the Seretean Performing Arts Center with installation of new stage curtains, reupholstered seats, new carpeting, lights and a new sound system. Similar efforts are under way to upgrade the Gardiner Art Gallery and the Vivian Locke Theater also in the Seretean Center.

The University Assessment and Testing Center was relocated to what was previously the Teletraining Institute, with extensive work completed to provide a more secure testing environment with upgraded technology. Landscape architecture moved to newly renovated space in the former 'print building', and student success centers were completed in the colleges of Human Environmental Sciences, Education, Engineering, and Agriculture. Plans for similar centers have also been developed by Arts and Sciences and the Spears School of Business.

The FY08 budget picture appears to be more positive than what was earlier discussed. The Oklahoma Promise program will receive additional funding, some additional capital project money is anticipated to be forthcoming, and additional dollars for operating expenses coupled with an increase in the bond capacity for endowed chairs should allow several of our chair/professor endowments to be matched and our mandatory costs to be addressed. Units across campus have been asked to begin to plan for a possible merit raise program, the amount yet to be finalized. Our OSU community members are richly deserving of salary increases and the administration is com-