Dear Friends,

It’s hard to believe another academic year has concluded, and what a year it was! There have been many successes and great things are under way and on the horizon. This letter provides an update.

**RECORD FUNDRAISING**

The highlight this past academic year was the completion of our record-breaking *Branding Success* fundraising campaign at the end of December. We were among the first 40 public universities to set and exceed a $1 billion goal. We finished the initiative with $1.2 billion in gifts and pledges from some 103,000 donors, nearly half first-time givers to OSU. *Branding Success* is providing scholarships for students, creating new endowed faculty positions, funding new facilities and supporting innovative, interdisciplinary programs. I want to once again thank Boone Pickens for his incredible lead gifts and inspiration, and Billie and Ross McKnight for their campaign leadership and generosity. In April, we honored the nearly 300 donors who have given at least $1 million to OSU with the launch of the Proud and Immortal Society. These donors are recognized on a video wall outside the Student Union Theater. Watch a video featuring Boone’s heartfelt remarks and highlights from the event at www.ostate.tv.

Ongoing funding priorities include need-based scholarships. Too many students struggle to pay for college. As a land-grant university, OSU doesn’t want cost to be a deterrent to earning a degree, nor do we want our graduates burdened with crippling debt.

Another important focus is the new Performing Arts Center and home for the Department of Music. The Seretean Center has served OSU well, but our arts programs have outgrown it. The new facility, to be located on University Street south of Bennett Chapel, will enhance music education and free the Seretean Center for our theatre programs. It also will be a venue for traveling events and performances such as Broadway touring companies. To learn more about this exciting project and others, go to www.osugiving.com.

**RECORD GRADUATES**

For 2014-15, OSU conferred a record of nearly 6,000 degrees, an increase of about 5 percent from last year’s record. Undergraduates at our Stillwater commencements were inspired by speakers Joseph Westphal, U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and Oklahoma’s newest U.S. senator, James Lankford. We presented Ambassador Westphal, who received his master’s degree from OSU and served as head of the political science department, an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree. The commencement addresses and ceremonies were streamed live and seen by more than 20,000 viewers. They are available on www.ostate.tv.

**RECORD ENROLLMENT**

Part of our success is being fueled by student growth. Applications and admissions are both up from a year ago and we expect a fall freshman class of more than 4,000. It would be only the third time OSU’s incoming freshman class topped 4,000, all coming in the last four years.

Lindsey Sutton brought her selfie stick to commencement.

Ann and I welcomed Toni and Boone Pickens to our Proud and Immortal launch.

MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT BURNS HARGIS
JUNE 2015
years. While we continue to welcome every Oklahoma student who is willing and able to attend college, we are benefiting from a growing number of out-of-state students. About one third of our students comes from outside Oklahoma, and many are the first in their family to attend OSU. Before they ever take a class, we help incoming students transition to college and connect with Oklahoma State through our popular Camp Cowboy, three days of fun activities that introduce students to our traditions and prepare them for success. We have nine camps scheduled this summer.

Once students begin their OSU education, we have intensified our efforts to keep them on track to a degree. First-year retention has improved to 81.3 percent and we want to improve it even further. We created the University College to support undergraduate student success.

OSU MUSEUM OF ART

When you come to Stillwater, I encourage you to visit the OSU Museum of Art’s Postal Plaza Gallery downtown. We were delighted to showcase work by internationally known American Pop artist James Rosenquist this past year. It was the first exhibition in an ambitious series called the New York Project, which will also feature Richard Tuttle in 2016, Kiki Smith in 2017 and Jasper Johns in 2018. This summer, we will feature exhibitions in the Malinda Berry Fischer Gallery by regional and local artists.

CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

I have often said that facilities don’t transform things, people do. But faculty and students need proper facilities to succeed. Thanks to donors who share that vision, we continue to transform our campuses with much-needed new facilities and upgrades.

Construction has started on a dynamic new building to house the Spears School of Business. Work continues on the College of Human Sciences addition, the new Veterinary Medicine Academic Center, the new 900-bed University Commons residential life facility and a remodel of the Atherton Hotel. We opened the Bert Cooper Engineering Structures Lab in April. We will begin work this fall to replace the campus power plant built in 1948. Athletics hopes to start work on a new baseball stadium and complex this fall, and we are making plans for a new soccer complex at the current location.

We also have plans for a new Engineering Undergrad Lab west of the architecture building, an expansion to Fire Protection Publications, and three agricultural projects: the new Charles and Linda Cline Equine Teaching Center, expansion and renovation of the Dairy Center, and a new Oklahoma Foundation Seed Stocks facility.

Thanks to the fine work of our landscape management team, OSU has one of the nation’s most beautiful campuses, which is another huge draw for students.

DIVERSITY

For the third consecutive year, OSU was recognized nationally for its commitment to diversity and inclusion with the 2014 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award. OSU has experienced a 76 percent increase in the total enrollment of students of color since fall of 2009. And, we have created the Center for Sovereign Nation.
Engagement and Partnerships thanks to a gift from the Chickasaw Nation. We are seeking other tribal partners in this effort to increase retention and graduation of tribal members.

SAVINGS

OSU continues to work hard to hold down costs as it strives to provide a high-quality and affordable education. We have saved more than $33 million in energy costs and reduced energy consumption nearly 20 percent since July 2007, and our wind farm with OG&E provides more than 70 percent of the electricity on the Stillwater campus. Those results earned us the Green Power Leadership Award from the EPA for our use of green power practices and technology. And we expect to save millions through our self-insured health plan.

INTERNATIONAL

Ever since Dr. Henry Bennett’s administration, OSU has been a leader in reaching out to the world. It is even more important in today’s global economy. We connect with other countries through the School of International Studies, located in the Wes Watkins Center, named for the visionary former Congressman and OSU alumnus. Currently, we have students from nearly 120 countries.

Ann and I recently joined a group from campus to Malaysia. In the 1980s, there were more Malaysian students at OSU than from any other foreign country. The Malaysian Alumni Club hosted a reception in Kuala Lumpur with more than 160 alumni in attendance! The Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia is Tan Sri Ali Hamsa. He and his wife, Puan Sri Rohani Abdullah, each have two degrees from OSU. We hope to send students to study there and increase the number of Malaysian students here. We also traveled to China last year to meet with several partner universities. India, China, Saudi Arabia and South Korea rank at the top for number of international students at OSU.

WELLNESS

Wellness is a core mission at OSU, thanks to the vision of the late Bud Seretean. First Cowgirl Ann is helping lead the charge today as we strive to be America’s Healthiest Campus® in name and substance. We were the first U.S. university to name a fully dedicated chief wellness officer, Dr. Suzy Harrington, who oversees all our wellness initiatives. OSU launched the nation’s most comprehensive, full-time, universitywide pet therapy program, Pete’s Pet Posse, last year. It is part of our commitment as America’s Healthiest Campus® and is designed to help students and employees overcome emotional and stressful situations. It’s been a big hit, and First Cowgirl Ann is the group’s No. 1 fan!

OSU CENTER FOR HEALTH SCIENCES

The Center for Health Sciences in Tulsa continues to excel at addressing Oklahoma’s severe physician shortage. Each class is full at 115 students, and this year we had 2,843 applicants! CHS has several efforts to increase the number of physicians in grossly underserved rural Oklahoma. Blue Coat to White Coat encourages FFA members to consider a medical career. Operation Orange is a high-energy medical school summer camp for high school students. CHS also is seeking to increase residency programs in rural Oklahoma since physicians usually practice at the site of their residence. The new A.R. and Marylouise Tandy Medical Academic Building will enhance our efforts.

We are pleased with OSU Medical Center’s year-old partnership with Mercy. We share values and a commitment to make Oklahoma a national model for rural health and access to medical care.

CENTER FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS INNOVATION

We are working to improve rural health care through innovating and implementing new delivery models and extracting value and insights from the nation’s largest relational health care database, which was donated to
OSU by Cerner Corp. OSU alumnus Neal Patterson co-founded Cerner. The center is a joint effort of the Spears School of Business and the OSU Center for Health Sciences. Executive Director William Paiva, Ph.D., discussed the center and its exciting potential at our TEDxOStateU event.

**OSU-TULSA**

Raj Singh, director of Energy Technologies Program and head of the School of Materials Science and Engineering, was named a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors. He is an expert on ceramic materials and has invented several advanced materials used by industries around the world. OSU-Tulsa has recently signed several facilities-use agreements to allow local companies to work with the researchers and the equipment in the Helmerich Research Center.

**OSU-OKLAHOMA CITY**

OSU-Oklahoma City has broken ground for a new Allied Health Building to house its flourishing health sciences programs. The two-story facility will also house a Variety Care Primary Care Clinic for the campus and community. OKC offers nursing, cardiovascular ultrasound, dietetic technology and health care administration.

**OSU INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

OSU Institute of Technology continues to work with industry partners to teach the skills those industries require. OSUIT recognized the first graduates from its Pipeline Integrity Program this spring. OSUIT is meeting employer needs in the fields of natural gas compression, diesel and heavy equipment, watchmaking with industry partner Rolex, automotive training, culinary arts, information technologies and many others.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

- OSU Board of Regent Trudy Milner, D.O., was named Doctor of the Year by the Oklahoma Osteopathic Association. She is a graduate of the OSU-College of Osteopathic Medicine and practices in Tulsa.

- The Journal Record named First Cowgirl Ann Oklahoma’s Woman of the Year last fall. And I agree wholeheartedly with the selection!

- OSU’s Small Trumpet Ensemble and the Meat Animal Evaluation Team each captured national titles for the second consecutive year.

- Maeghan Murie became OSU’s 15th Udall scholar this spring. She is a junior majoring in chemistry, biochemistry and molecular biology.

- Five OSU students — WW. Allen Scholars Peter Storm, Eric Gilbert, Eric Ruhlmann and Philip White, along with CEAT Scholar Kathleen Nelson — are among a select few chosen nationally for the Cambridge Graduate Program.

**AND FINALLY …**

I am pleased to have the NCAA investigation as a result of the Sports Illustrated series resolved. The NCAA found the claims in the series were fundamentally unfounded, and our football program was vindicated. We are ready to move forward and anticipate big things this season.

In the fall, we will begin the celebration of OSU’s 125th anniversary with a number of activities and an online multimedia timeline that looks at our storied past. OSU was established on Christmas day in 1890. Stay tuned for more details.

OStateTV reached a milestone this spring when it topped 1 million views for the academic year. It has been a great way to extend the OSU story and has served as a learning lab for students. You can watch my recent interviews with Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and U.S. Ambassador Joseph Westphal, along with many other videos.

Ann and I are inspired by Oklahoma State University and its people. As America’s Brightest Orange, OSU is focused on bright minds, building brighter futures and the brightest world for all. Thank you for your support. Have a wonderful summer. We’ll see you on campus!

V. Burns Hargis

Stay up to date on all things OSU by visiting okstate.edu or watch videos on OState.TV!