

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 51st Legislature (2008)

3 HOUSE BILL 2600

By: Wesselhoft

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to higher education; creating the  
8 Higher Education Sunshine Act; directing the State  
9 Regents for Higher Education to require certain  
10 institutions to make annual reports on intellectual  
11 diversity; specifying contents of reports; listing  
12 certain content; requiring distribution of report to  
13 the Oklahoma Legislature; requiring reports to be  
14 posted on institution web sites; defining term;  
15 providing for codification; and declaring an  
16 emergency.

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

18 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
19 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4315 of Title 70, unless there  
20 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

21 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Higher  
22 Education Sunshine Act".

23 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
24 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 4316 of Title 70, unless there  
is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
require each institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher

1 Education to issue an annual report detailing the steps the  
2 institution is taking to ensure intellectual diversity and the free  
3 exchange of ideas.

4 B. The report required in this section shall address the  
5 specific measures taken by the institution to ensure and promote  
6 intellectual diversity and academic freedom. The report may include  
7 steps taken by the institution to:

8 1. Conduct a study to assess the current state of intellectual  
9 diversity on its campus;

10 2. Incorporate intellectual diversity into institution  
11 statements, grievance procedures, and activities on diversity;

12 3. Encourage a diverse variety of campuswide panels and  
13 speakers and annually publish the names of panelists and speakers;

14 4. Establish clear campus policies that are intended to ensure  
15 that hecklers or threats of violence do not prevent speakers from  
16 speaking;

17 5. Include intellectual diversity concerns in the guidelines on  
18 teaching and program development adopted by the institution;

19 6. Include intellectual diversity issues in student course  
20 evaluations;

21 7. Develop hiring, tenure, and promotion policies that protect  
22 individuals against viewpoint discrimination and track any reported  
23 grievances in that regard;

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1 8. Establish clear campus policies to ensure freedom of the  
2 press for students and report any incidents of student newspaper  
3 thefts or destruction;

4 9. Establish clear campus policies to prohibit viewpoint  
5 discrimination in the distribution of student fee funds;

6 10. Eliminate any speech codes that unduly restrict the freedom  
7 of speech; or

8 11. Create an institutional ombudsman on intellectual  
9 diversity, or specifically charge an existing ombudsman with  
10 monitoring the state of intellectual diversity.

11 C. The report required in this section shall be distributed to  
12 the members of the Oklahoma Legislature no later than December 31 of  
13 each year.

14 D. The report required in this section shall be posted each  
15 year on the web site of the institution.

16 E. As used in this section, "intellectual diversity" shall mean  
17 the foundation of a learning environment that exposes students to a  
18 variety of political, ideological, religious, and other  
19 perspectives, when the perspectives relate to the subject matter  
20 being taught or issues being discussed.

21 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
22 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby  
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1 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
2 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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