

INTRODUCTION

Enrolled House Bill 2145 of the 2nd Session of the 49th Oklahoma Legislature (2004) created the Advancement of Hispanic Students in Higher Education Task Force. The two-fold purpose of the Task force is to (1) monitor the implementation and administration of the state policy affecting the eligibility of undocumented students¹ for enrollment, resident tuition and financial aid in postsecondary education; and, (2) study issues related to the recruitment, retention and completion of higher education by Hispanic students in Oklahoma. A copy of House Bill 2145 is included in the appendices of this report (see Appendix A, pages 15-18).

Pursuant to the House Bill 2145 legislation, eighteen persons serve as members of the Task Force. A list of the names of the Task Force members is included on page 3 of the report. As specified in the legislation and in his appointment letter, State Representative Shane Jett, District 27 was appointed Chair of the Task Force effective April 25, 2006. As specified in the legislation and in her appointment letter, State Senator Debbe Leftwich, District 44 was appointed Vice-Chair of the Task Force.

Since its inception, the Task Force has met thirty times at various locations throughout the State. Meeting agendas were posted in advance at the meeting places and filed with the Secretary of State. Minutes of meetings (September 29, 2004 – April 11, 2008) were included in previous reports from the Task Force. Minutes of the meetings since December 2008 are included in the appendices of this report (Appendix C, pages 21-29).

As directed by Enrolled House Bill 2145, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the State Department of Education, and the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation staffed the Task Force. However, several organizations have provided information and support for the Task Force including the twenty-eight Oklahoma public higher education institutions that provided data about undocumented students on their campuses. The Task Force also benefited from the interest, comments, and suggestions of representatives of numerous other community organizations and individuals interested in the educational advancement of Hispanic students.

As allowed by enrolled House Bill 1804 of the First Regular Session of the 51st Legislature, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education adopted a policy consistent with Section 3242 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes. A copy of the relevant policy (Paragraph 3.17.6 of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Policies and Procedures Manual) is included in the appendices of this report (Appendix B, pages 19-20). The policy became effective November 1, 2007. The bulk of the work of the Task Force has been related to monitoring of the implementation and administration and of this policy.

The Advancement of Hispanic Students in Higher Education Task Force is directed in Enrolled House Bill 2145 to provide an annual report. Reports have been produced in 2005, 2007 and 2008. This document represents the fourth and final Annual Report. The reader of this report may contact the Chair of the Task Force, Representative Shane Jett, State Representative District 27, Oklahoma House of Representatives, State Capitol Building, Oklahoma City, OK (telephone: 405-557-7349); or Vice-Chair of the Task Force, Senator Debbe Leftwich, Oklahoma State Senate, State Capitol Building, Oklahoma City (telephone: 405-521-5557) for additional information about the contents of this report.

¹ In accordance with Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes, Section 3242 (2007) an undocumented student is an individual who cannot present to a state higher education institution “valid documentation of United States nationality or an immigration status permitting study at a postsecondary institution, but who has graduated from a public or private high school in Oklahoma”.