

**Remarks to the Board of Regents
June 21, 2013**

By Andy Lester

First, let me say what an honor it has been for me to serve as your chairman. This has been an extraordinarily busy year, starting with the work of our Policies & Procedures Review Task Force and continuing with ongoing work regarding the OSU Medical Center and other matters.

Even as we speak, the National Association of College and University Attorneys is holding its annual meeting and, according to this week's *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "at least a dozen sessions at the conference will deal with issues directly or indirectly related to the child-abuse scandal at Penn State, including panels on NCAA penalties, outside investigations, university governance, and 'How to Survive a High-Profile Case.'"

I'm proud to say we have been a leader in this regard.

The work we did through our Policies and Procedures

Review Task Force has made our campuses safer for minors

and others who visit our schools. Our Board has made clear

we will not tolerate illegal, immoral or unethical conduct.

The work is ongoing, but I'm proud of what we have

accomplished.

We made a lot of progress in connection with assuring that our teaching hospital continues to provide the kind of experience our medical students, residents and state deserve.

It has been a pleasure to work with our friends at the

Oklahoma Osteopathic Association to ensure rural and

underserved Oklahomans continue to gain ever better access

to primary care physicians. And we must thank Governor

Fallin and the numerous members of the State Legislature

who, when the chips were down, stepped forward to

appropriate the necessary funds to make this a reality.

One of the great joys I've had chairing this board was visiting our several institutions and campuses and meeting with many of the people we serve. One of my goals was to let people know about the Board of Regents and where we fit within the higher education system. I don't think many people know the long hours our regents spend, without compensation, working for our colleges and universities. In the process, I learned how strongly our faculty, staff, students, alumni and communities feel about our institutions.

One thing did not happen during the past year. We had no presidential vacancies and no presidential searches. Parenthetically, this was the first time since I've been on the board this has been so. There are, I'm sure, a lot of reasons for this, but the most obvious one is that we have excellent

presidents. Hiring a president is probably the single most important thing we do as regents, and with the presidents we have, I know we have done that part of our job well.

To be as busy as we've been has required a lot of our staff. They have unfailingly given the extra effort. We are fortunate to have each one of them.

For me, the best part of being a regent is serving with the other regents. There is a lot of wisdom on this board. And everyone is willing to do extra work – at some point or another this year, I came to each of you asking for something more, and no one ever declined to do so.

Whether it's Lou Watkins' calming demeanor, Doug Burns' lawyerly leadership, Joe Hall's understated, and often humorous, work saving our institutions and the citizens of Oklahoma a lot of money, Calvin Anthony being perhaps the nicest man ever, all the while getting the

impossible done, Jim Reese's common sense, Rick Davis's willingness to take on any task, or Tucker Link's ability to get to the bottom line – Regent Milner, you've joined a wonderful group of people, and we are all looking forward to serving with you.

Tucker Link has been the ideal vice-chairman, and I know he will be a great chairman. We've spent a lot of time together; I've learned a lot from Tucker. And, for me, Tucker's voice will always be associated with the phrase, "you just can't make this stuff up."

Our schools are fortunate to have each of you on our board. Every one of the regents loves our schools, volunteers untold hours to their betterment, and goes way beyond the call of duty. Thank you for entrusting me with the honor being your chairman.