OKLAHOMA CITY – More than 90 percent of all Oklahoma regional university graduates stay in the state after receiving their diploma, a number greater than the Oklahoma higher education average.

The Regional University System of Oklahoma recently reported this and other 2013 results at its annual legislative briefing. The event was to inform legislators and higher education officials of the cumulative efforts and impact of the state’s largest four-year system.

The Regional University System of Oklahoma is made up of six regional universities: East Central University, Northeastern State University, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, University of Central Oklahoma and 10 satellite locations.

Richard Ogden, chairman of the Board of Regents, Regional University System of Oklahoma, said the institutions fill an educational gap not provided by Oklahoma research universities or community colleges. The universities are designed to provide access to students who need to stay near their home communities or cannot attend farther away due to job, family or financial circumstances.

“Regional universities provide opportunities to the widest range of students to earn high-quality accredited four-year degrees through classroom and online instruction,” said Ogden.

“Our students become our state’s teachers and nurses, NASA engineers, rock stars, pharmacists and optometrists.”

As a member of the Regional University System of Oklahoma, Southeastern president Larry Minks believes his school has a lot to offer its students.

“We pride ourselves on offering a quality education at an affordable cost,” he said. “Our students also experience one-on-one instruction from their professors. We have a number of innovative programs in place to meet the needs of our students, including a new agreement with American Eagle Airlines to assist our aviation students. And with several programs already implemented to aid our Native American students, we have become a national leader in producing Native American graduates.”

Southeastern holds a number of specialty accreditations, including The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (John Massey School of Business) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs.

Nearly 40 percent of all Oklahoma college graduates graduate from a regional institution. Last year the Regional University System of Oklahoma graduate total was 7,058, up 644 graduates from the previous year.

In the briefing Ogden pointed to the fact that regional institutions performed significantly better than the national average in most cost categories. In 2013, the average annual cost of attendance at an Oklahoma regional
English professor pursues interest in Virginia Woolf

When Lisa Coleman joined the faculty at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1994, her primary areas of expertise included rhetoric and composition. Now, 20 years later, Dr. Coleman can add “Virginia Woolf Scholar” to her list of credentials.

Woolf (1882-1941) was an English writer and one of the most important modernists of the twentieth century. She was a significant figure in London literary society. Among her most famous works are the novels “Mrs. Dalloway” (1925), “To the Lighthouse” (1927), and “Orlando” (1928), along with the essay, “A Room of One’s Own” (1929).

A motion picture (“The Hours”) about the effect the Mrs. Dalloway novel had on three women was made in 2002 and starred, among others, Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman.

“Woolf’s work is hard to read – she had high expectations of her readers,” Coleman said. “You have to read it and study it – some of it is very experimental. It’s not what you read on the beach.”

In addition to her duties as a Professor of English, Coleman serves as the Director of the Honors Program at Southeastern. She has received numerous teaching awards and other recognition during her career.

As part of her studies, Coleman has attended 11 Woolf-related conferences in England, Scotland, Canada, and the United States, serving as presenter/panelist. In addition, she’s had three conference papers published as well as two book chapters on the subject.

“Woolf was a very disciplined writer,” Coleman said. “She wrote novels and short stories, but no poetry. And like a lot of famous writers, she lived an interesting and some-times troubled life (committing suicide at age 59).”

Coleman admits that she had not read Woolf until her Ph.D. studies led her to an essay about women and writing. That sparked an interest that has led her to her dissertation – “(Re)Reading Woolf and Writing: Implications for a Postmodern Composition Pedagogy.”

Coleman earned a Ph.D. in Humanities Rhetoric/Composition/Critical Theory at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) in 1997. She also holds master’s and bachelor’s degrees from UTA.

In addition to Woolf, Coleman says her other great passion is “social justice.”

To that end, she has co-edited two monographs on diversity for the National Collegiate Honors Council – “Setting the Table for Diversity (2010) and “Occupy Honors Education” (forthcoming).

Chancellor Johnson presents legislative agenda

With the demand for employees who have certificates and degrees continually increasing, college completion remains the top priority in the state of Oklahoma. That was the message delivered by Chancellor Glen D. Johnson as he presented the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education’s FY 2015 legislative agenda to an audience of lawmakers, community leaders and educators Jan. 23 in Krebs.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education recently voted to request $76.3 million in new state appropriations during the upcoming legislative session. The total budget request for FY 2015 is 7.7 percent higher than the current year’s appropriation.

“Oklahoma’s system of higher education is the state’s road to jobs and prosperity,” said Johnson. “No entity in state government can help Oklahoma reach its goals of educational excellence and workforce development faster or more comprehensively than public higher education. Our budget request would support our institutions’ ongoing commitment to produce more college graduates, which increases our state’s per capita income and strengthens our state’s economy.”

Among those in attendance were Sen. Josh Brecheen, State Regent John Massey, and Regional University System of Oklahoma regents Terry Matlock and Connie Reilly. Southeastern Oklahoma State University was well represented with president Larry Minks and a number of University staff members present.
The State Regents are requesting $55.1 million for Complete College America performance-funding needs. This investment will provide state colleges and universities funding for additional course sections, full-time faculty and financial aid. These dollars will also fund information technology equipment, library resources and other operational needs that will provide continued support for student success.

The State Regents are also seeking $2.5 million for online education and degree completion technology. This will enable students to enroll in additional course sections and will provide for improved software development and training.

The State Regents are requesting $10 million to fund a competitive grant program that will enhance higher education institutions’ efforts to expand specialized student services, including focused advisement, career counseling and job placement, veterans’ programs, and financial education.

Increased financial aid funding will also be a priority for the State Regents in the upcoming legislative session. The State Regents seek to increase funding for the concurrent enrollment program, which allows high school juniors and seniors to take credit-earning college courses, by $3 million, and are requesting $1.5 million for the Oklahoma Tuition Aid and Oklahoma Tuition Equalization grants and $250,000 for an adult degree completion community scholarship match.

The State Regents are also requesting an additional $250,000 for the Summer Academies program, which provides interactive learning opportunities for Oklahoma eighth- through 10th-grade students in high-demand science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

The total appropriation request for FY 2015 is $1.06 billion.
University honors MLK with Day of Service
Southeastern Oklahoma State University celebrated its 16th annual Martin Luther King Day of Service on Monday, January 20.
Dr. Camille Wilson, Dean of Students, said 85 students participated in the Day of Service. The University collected food, which was then distributed to local food pantries.
Southeastern students worked at St. Catherine’s Food Bank, Families Feeding Families and Victory Life Food Bank.

Gold & Blue alumni event set for March 1
Southeastern Oklahoma State University has scheduled the Alumni Gold and Blue Scholarship Gala and Auction for 7 p.m. March 1.

The event – “Denim and Diamonds” – will be held in the Visual and Performing Arts Center.

The Gold and Blue Gala is sponsored by the Southeastern Alumni Association and all proceeds will benefit student scholarships.
Tickets are priced at $75 per person for a full evening of casino games, live and silent auctions, dancing and heavy hors d’oeuvres. Live music will be provided by Party On of Dallas. Denim casual is the dress of the evening.

Mark your calendars for Homecoming 2014
Southeastern Oklahoma State University has announced that homecoming activities will be held on Oct. 24-25, 2014.
A full schedule of events will be posted on the alumni website (alumni.SE.edu) at a later date.

SE Live, Native American event held
Southeastern Oklahoma State University hosted SE Live Open House and Native American Visitation Day Feb. 5 with prospective students, their families and high school teachers on the Durant campus.

There was something for everyone on the agenda. Students had the opportunity to explore the campus, attend class and learn more about how to access the resources they need to become successful in higher education.

The day started with a welcome session in Montgomery Auditorium.
The students then joined rotating sessions with small groups. Sessions included “Breaking Out of Your Comfort Zone,” “Money Matters,” and a “College Success Class.”