

Oklahoma Student Government Association
1st Session of the 45th Congress
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OSGA Resolution #FC25-004

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Committee: Elphaba

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution Urging the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Oklahoma State Government to Establish Permanent Therapy Dog Programs at All Public Higher Education Institutions.

WHEREAS, college students across Oklahoma face increasing levels of stress, anxiety, and mental health challenges that negatively impact academic performance, retention, and overall well-being; and

WHEREAS, therapy dogs have been shown through numerous studies to reduce stress, lower blood pressure, improve mood, and foster a sense of community and belonging among students; and

WHEREAS, interactions with therapy dogs have been scientifically linked to measurable physiological benefits, including reductions in cortisol (the stress hormone) and improvements in emotional regulation, thereby directly supporting student mental health; and

WHEREAS, research from Washington State University and other institutions demonstrates that students who regularly engage with therapy dogs report lower depression levels, greater self-compassion, and improved coping skills compared to peers without access; and

WHEREAS, Oklahoma State University's *Pete's Pet Posse*, the nation's most comprehensive university-based pet therapy program, has demonstrated measurable success in improving student well-being, reducing stress, and fostering a supportive campus environment through certified therapy dogs, thereby serving as a proven model for expanding similar programs across all public colleges and universities in Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, temporary therapy dog programs and events have already demonstrated positive outcomes on campuses, but their limited availability restricts access to consistent support; and

WHEREAS, permanent therapy dog programs would provide ongoing, accessible, and equitable mental health support for all students, regardless of background or financial means; and

WHEREAS, Oklahoma colleges and universities already receive designated mental health funding through state and federal programs, which can be strategically allocated to sustain therapy dog initiatives without requiring new or burdensome financial structures; and

WHEREAS, Oklahoma has consistently expanded student mental health and wellness initiatives through legislation and appropriations, recognizing the urgent need for accessible, science-backed interventions that reduce stress, improve academic performance, and foster resilience among college students; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a statewide grant program administered by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education would allow public colleges and universities to apply for dedicated funding to establish and sustain certified therapy dog programs, ensuring equitable access and long-term stability across campuses; and

WHEREAS, the presence of therapy dogs on campus aligns with the Regents' and State Government's commitment to student success, retention, and holistic development, while offering a cost-effective, evidence-based intervention to strengthen campus wellness initiatives.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE OKLAHOMA STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION THAT:

1. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and the Oklahoma State Government shall establish and fund permanent therapy dog programs on every public college and/or university campus in Oklahoma, utilizing existing mental health funds where appropriate, to ensure students have consistent access to certified therapy dogs as part of comprehensive, science-backed mental health and wellness initiatives.
2. A copy of this resolution be sent to the following individuals:
 - Savannah Alldredge, President of Oklahoma Student Government Association
 - Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
 - Oklahoma Governor's Office
 - Oklahoma Legislature (House & Senate Education Committees)
 - Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
 - All Public Oklahoma Colleges and Universities
 - All Public Oklahoma Student Government Associations
 - Lindel Fields, Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction

Reviewing Committee(s):

ELPHABA

Committee Recommendation:

NO RECOMMENDATION

Action Taken by Congress:

PASSED



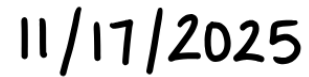
Mason Alldredge, Chair of Congress



Date



Savannah Alldredge, State President



Date