



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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News Release

DECEMBER 5, 2022 : BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Board ends year with new sports, calendar, and pancakes

The Seward County Community College Board of Trustees met Dec. 5, wrapping up a slim agenda before heading to the Saints Cafeteria to serve pancakes, bacon, and eggs to students preparing for final exams. Executive team members Louie Lemert and Celeste Donovan adjusted the agenda to present their items early, donned aprons, and switched to cooking mode at 8 p.m.

Athletic Director Dan Artamenko introduced the Saints Volleyball Team, whose members attended the opening of the meeting and received congratulations from all in attendance.

“They finished 11th in the nation, and we’re so proud of them,” said Artamenko. Head coach Geno Frugolli said goodbye to the board, thanking the community for its support. He has accepted a job at Western New Mexico University, and noted that “what makes Liberal special is the community. Thank you.”

Chief Development Officer Kyle Woodrow reported on progress at the Champions Center, and noted the Foundation opted to postpone its traditional donor dinner until spring. Longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures make the prospect of an evening out more appealing to older donors, he said.

Chief Information Officer Louie Lemert brought a report on campus cybersecurity to the board, along with what he described as “the million dollar request.” The discussion centered on how to decrease risks on campus within the existing computer network, which increases in cost annually as the current vendor changes its operation mode. The big question, he said, was whether to move SCCC data to a cloud-storage model, and if so, when.

“At some point when we are forced to do it, they are in charge of everything and they take the risk for cybersecurity. Our risk decreases. I think it is worth that. I have a feeling in 4-5 years we are going to have to move anyway.”

Vice President of Academic Affairs Luke Dowell added that moving to the cloud storage mode offers benefits.

“That will provide some of the software that we are struggling to automate and improve. That’s one benefit for accreditation purposes,” he said.

Lemert told the board he wanted to introduce the potential cloud storage change, and the need for stronger firewalls and network security, as a discussion point and will provide more information as he works through the research process.

In her report, Vice President of Student Services Celeste Donovan described the college’s approach to keeping the dorms open through the holiday break.

“This will be the first year we’re officially staying open for our students who have no other place to go,” she said. “Great Western Dining has done a great job of working with us to feed those students, especially the basketball teams. We have about six students who are not in their athletic season, and our team has come together to make sure they get meals over the break.”

Board votes to pursue addition of soccer and eSports programs

All seven trustees voted in favor of adding men’s and women’s soccer programs to the Saints athletic lineup, and to establish an e-sports team. Kay Burtzloff made the motion with Keeley Moree seconding. “Soccer ties in with our community and delivers what a lot of people are asking for,” said SCCC President Brad Bennett. He outlined strategies to cover the start-up costs, partner with existing entities in the local community, and boost in-state enrollment. The college aims to begin offering soccer in the fall 2023 semester.

The decision follows information gathered as SCCC created its new strategic plan with input from more than 200 participants on campus and across the community.

In other action, the board:

- Previewed the plan to offer short-term, full-credit courses over the holiday break. Vice President of Academic Affairs Luke Dowell noted the college is “very, very committed to ensuring the quality of the courses, that’s one of the reasons we are starting small.” Artamenko added that “from the athletics side, there are a huge number of players who need classes during this time frame.”
- Approved the academic calendar for 2023-24. Start of semester was moved back a few days, noted Bennett, due to difficulties with two separate move-in dates for the dorm residents this year. “It was just a nightmare for housing staff, and they asked if we could move it back,” he said.
- Approved reviews and updates to board policies, including continuation of the college’s early retirement policy.
- Waived the bid policy for welding supplies that had exceeded the \$10,000 limit. Vice President of Finance & Business Operations Madalen Day noted that “it’s the exact same order they placed last year, so they did get quotes from a couple companies, We have three bids, and the supplier they want to go with is still lower, We wanted you to be aware. They weren’t prepared for it to go from \$6,000 to \$13,000.”



From left (back), President Brad Bennett, CIO Louie Lemert, VP Academic Affairs Luke Dowell, (front) VP Student Services Celeste Donovan, VP Finance & Operations Madalen Day.

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