



# SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## NEWS RELEASE

APRIL 1, 2024 : BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### **Trustees dine with students, approve academic restructure**

LIBERAL, Kan. — The Seward County Community College Board of Trustees hosted students for dinner before the monthly meeting on Monday, April 1. As is the custom, board members ate family-style with students in order to learn “what’s working and what we can improve,” noted President Brad Bennett as he welcomed the group. Board members rely on student feedback to make decisions, prioritize campus improvements, and keep the students themselves front and center.

In the regular meeting session, the board handled a light agenda, including the annual Title IX report, department updates, and bids related to IT. Resignations in March included help desk technician Pamela Donald, assistant basketball coach Tanesha Daniels, diesel technology instructor Henry Wiebe, and Chief Information Officer Lemert. New employees joining the college are Director Facilities Josh Tucker, Director of Saints Bookstore Brandee Good, and Athletic Trainer Hayato Sekine.

Guests at the meeting included Dr. Amber Jones and Interim Foundation Director Sarah Thompson.

Trustees briefly discussed the student-board meeting, which Chair Ron Oliver described as “one of the best we’ve ever had, with outstanding conversations with some great students.”

Athletic Director Dan Artamenko presented dates for the Student-Athlete Banquet April 19, and the Booster Club Golf Club April 27. Interim Director Sarah Thompson brought the SCCC Foundation report, which noted the May 2 Giving Day.

Vice President of Student Affairs David Hardman and Executive Director of Enrollment Management Erika Espinoza presented the College’s 2022-25 Enrollment Management Plan.

Objectives for the update included the current year, projections for the upcoming year, and 2024-25 enrollment goals and enrollment management objectives. Completed strategies included the addition of soccer and eSports and the revitalized agriculture program, which is currently drawing in a record number of students. Campus wide communication strategies, expanded marketing initiatives, particularly reaching Colorado targets, and implementing a

CRM (customer relationship management) program, and improving the website also affected the enrollment boost.

“We needed to have goals in order to prevent a drop in enrollment,” noted Espinoza. “ We have not only met this year’s goal, we have surpassed next year’s goal. ” Meeting these goals means the 2024-25 goals will be recalculated, she said, with special attention to retaining students who are currently on campus.

Vice President of Student Affairs David Hardman brought a report about the college’s current Title IX policy and status. There has been a pattern of continuous delays from the overseeing board, he noted.

“We have not received the updates we were expecting, but we have added one more investigator to our group, and are looking to add two more instructors from the faculty side of the house,” he said. Online harassment and stalking prevention measures will be bulked up. Because the college utilizes an outside agency — ATIXA — to help implement policy changes, it will be possible to make adjustments quickly once new policies are announced by the overseeing bodies. “ Four of our members will attend summer training from ATIXA,” Hardman said in conclusion. The board voted to approve the updated language in Hardman’s report.

Board members reviewed policies 420, 424, 429 and approved them as presented, with no changes. These policies address Fairness in Women’s Sports, Student IDs and Student Travel.

Board members approved minor changes to the following policies: Student Complaint and Grievance, Record of Student Complaints, Student Records in Accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA Policy), Background Check for Employees and Students Involved in Internship and Clinical , Student Insurance Coverage, Missing Student Notification Policy, and Tuberculosis Prevention Plan .

Vice President of Academic Affairs Luke Dowell presented the annual update from the Allied Health division. As an information-only item, it did not require board approval.

Nursing: The SCCC Nursing faculty were successful in completing a curriculum revision for the nursing program. This revision will further assist the nursing students with the knowledge, skills, and competency needed for professional practice in the nursing profession. The graduating student cohort ADN class of 2023 was the first class to successfully complete the curriculum.

Medical Laboratory Technology: The MLT program faculty continually work to increase/maintain enrollment for the MLT program. For academic year 2023, there were 25 students enrolled for the first year MLT courses and 16 students enrolled for the second year MLT courses. MLT program faculty provide personal academic advising for students. More than 50 clinical sites are managed in an effort to match students with

an approved clinical affiliate in their geographic area. The MLT program faculty continue to receive inquiries about the MLT program and work diligently with transfer students to assist them in completing the required general education courses and securing a clinical affiliate site that meets the educational requirements of the program.

**Surgical Technology:** The surgical technology instructors offered optional biweekly review sessions throughout the spring and summer semester. The 2022-2023 surgical technology students were successful in meeting the benchmark. 73% of students were able to pass the national certification exam on the first attempt. The average exam score also increased nine points from the 2021-2022 program year.

**Respiratory Therapy:** The current cohort that began in January 2023, started with 12 students and there are nine students currently enrolled. Two were dismissed for academic reasons, but both students are returning with the January 2024 cohort. One student left the program for nonacademic reasons within the first few weeks of the program, deciding healthcare wasn't the best career path for them. Therefore, by the program's accrediting body calculations, there have been no students lost that will negatively affect the retention rate. That would make the retention rate for the next three average 77%.

### **Academic administrative restructuring**

President Bennett presented a proposal for a restructure of academic affairs. The administration is proposing the following changes to the academic affairs division. The college has one academic vice president, the Vice President of Academic Affairs (Luke Dowell), two academic deans, and three division chairs. After careful consideration and completing an extensive review across the state. I am proposing a restructuring, including adding a Vice President of Technical Education and cutting the two academic deans.

"We would add two more division chairs for a total of five division chairs," Bennett told the board. "Not only would this be a more economical structure for the college, but it would also save roughly \$113,420 annually. It will lead to an increase in efficiencies in the area of academic administration." This would not require any reduction in the workforce. The two VP academic models are standard in schools with strong technical and workforce programs like ours.

Following unanimous approval by the board, the restructuring will go into effect on July 1, 2024.

### **Proposed Closure of the Machining and Manufacturing Technology Program**

The Machining and Manufacturing Technology Program has had low enrollment for several years. The program went through a realignment Summer of 2022 to bring it into alignment with KBOR and to incorporate more technology and robotics. Fall of 2023 there were 4 students in

the program and Spring 2024 there were three students in the program. Although program enrollment has been low, the instructor of this course has been utilized to teach courses for cross-curricular programs and develop and lead projects such as Biodiesel Lab and the Grain Elevator Operator Lab.

“Instructor Butch Garst plans to retire, and we believe it is in our best interest to teach out the current students in the program with a plan to transition the equipment and space of the program into a Mechatronics or Robotics Technology program that being requested by industry partners and advisory board,” stated Dean of CTE Dr. Amber Jones in the summary. The board approved the recommendation to close the MTT program.

### **Special Board Meeting**

The board agreed to meet at noon April 5, in the board room, to discuss IT outsourcing. Keely Moree/Kelly Hill moved and seconded the date, board approved.

In other business:

- Administration recognized the need for the computer lab of 17 computers and 34 monitors for the Drafting program to be replaced. This project was budgeted in the IT budget to be included with the annual purchases. The computers for drafting need to have high output computers and monitors with extra storage for the software that is used in the program. The Board of Trustees was asked to accept the bid from ByteSpeed for 17 computers and 34 monitors for the Drafting Lab in the amount of \$47,685.00. The motion to approve the purchase passed unanimously.
- Bid for IT contracted services was tabled for the Friday special meeting. Marvin Chance/Keely Moree. Board approved.
- Chief Information Officer: In the absence of a CIO, VP Day and Pres. Bennett provided an update. The eSports lab is connected to new fiber, except for two computers. IT has been in contact with the scoreboard company to get the remotes solely connected to the respective softball and baseball boards. Teresa Wehmeir and Cecil Stoll have been helping troubleshoot.
- Vice President of Student Affairs David Hardman brought a few updates from his report, which is viewable online at BoardDocs. “Something that’s not listed is the workshop for cocurricular assessment,” Hardman said. “This notion is based in the fact that what students learn is not confined to the classroom, but takes place in student activities, athletics, advisor appointments, life skills, every time we interact with students. We should think about : What do we want them to learn?” Simply put, cocurricular learning is the personal and interpersonal skills developed as students participate in non-

academic activities on campus. Hardman noted that his student services team is developing tools to continuously measure and assess cocurricular learning.

- Vice President of Academic Affairs Luke Dowell reported on the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) update, which was recently submitted for review. Improvements in enrollment and certificate/degree completion are on the record, and the HLC campus team will travel to Chicago for the annual meeting in April.
- Vice President of Business Affairs Maddie Day brought the board information about the College's CFI score, a financial tool that measures the institution's fiscal "fitness." With a modest increase from 4.82 to 4.90, SCCC continued to be healthy. Day noted the rise, though small, is impressive in light of the many projects and expenditures over the last few years. At the Saints Bookstore, "Brandee Good started in March as the Director and we look forward to what Brandee and Maddy can do together," Day said. Finally, the Business Department is busy getting things cleaned up and ready for the year end and working with other departments to verify that they are reviewing where they are in their budget. With enrollment opening, students are coming in to make payments on their accounts, so they are able to enroll in the fall semester.
- The architect is about 66 percent finished with the drawing and engineering plans for West Campus with the goal that the project will be ready to bid by the first on May. Administration has continued to make plans for the kitchen remodel and Student Health Center remodel and intends to present these at the May board meeting.
- President Brad Bennett referred to a Kansas Reflector article about enrollment drops in higher education "that applied to everyone else, but not us. It's pretty amazing when you look at it," he said. With warm weather ahead, he plans to begin scheduling campus clean-up days to prepare for graduation in May.

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