



# SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1801 N. Kansas Avenue, P.O. Box 1137, Liberal, KS 67905 / 620-624-1951

## NEWS RELEASE

APRIL 5, 2024 : BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### **College outsources IT while retaining current staff**

LIBERAL, Kan. — The Seward County Community College trustees held a special meeting at noon April 5 to address two agenda items. With all seven board members present, the board reviewed and approved a contract for Information Technology staffing services provided by Oculus IT. The \$800,000 agreement will augment current staffing and mitigate areas of operational risk in day to day business due to unfilled vacancies in the department.

A key factor in the trustees' discussion was the five employees currently on staff in IT. The agreement with Oculus stipulates that all five employees will continue work; if at some point they leave the college, Oculus will provide replacement staff.

College president Brad Bennett said the change in structure is intended to ease the college's transition to a Cloud-based system, rather than continuing to maintain aging and costly infrastructure on site. The motion to accept the Oculus bid passed unanimously.

The board next discussed the possibility of adjusting the current policy of not allowing alcohol on campus for special events such as fundraising auctions and banquets.

"I have mixed feelings about sending our supporters off campus for things like the Stockman's Banquet coming up," said board member Kelly Hill. "I think it's a little naïve to think we shouldn't have these events on campus, with alcohol served to guests." Hill noted SCCC Foundation President Stephanie Ormiston's support for the shift. Moving the Foundation's key fundraiser, the fall party auction, to campus could save a significant sum of money that in turn could support more scholarships for students.

"Everyone knows my position on this," said SCCC Board Chairman Ron Oliver. "If we want those events on campus, do them without alcohol."

Trustee Keeley Moree said careful regulations were key to gain her support for a new policy. "If it's a student-centric event or one that includes underage people, we ought to say no," she said. "I wouldn't be against a policy change if we have the correct guardrails in place to make case-by-case decisions. Trustee Dustin Ormiston agreed, adding that in the case of events that qualify for alcohol, "We would need to have a process in place to ensure people are not over-served."

In the discussion that followed, board members addressed the issues of liquor licensing, catering services, the college's current contract with Great Western Dining, security requirements for events that serve alcohol, and what parameters would be necessary in terms of the number of guests and the purpose of such events. These scenarios included discussion of groups that rent college space for events that might request alcohol permission.

While no consensus was reached, the board member Casey Mein pointed out that further discussion might help form a viable policy change.

"We would need to have the option to look at events case by case, but if we don't have the policy, we can't even entertain the idea," he said.

Hill made a motion to allow Bennett to develop a policy that could allow alcohol at certain events on campus, with the policy presented at the May regular Board of Trustees meeting.

Vice-chair Marvin Chance added he would like to see the funds spent by the Foundation on facilities rental applied to student scholarships and services. Even so, he said he was "not comfortable with the idea of us hosting with alcohol. I'm not ready to go there."

The motion passed, with Mein, Moree, Ormiston, and Hill in favor, and Oliver, Engel and Chance opposed.

###