

# Forward

Annual report for 2024-25 | SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Success stories  
and a refreshed  
vision for excellence

**RENEWAL**

# SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Established: 1967  
 Added SWKan. Vo-Tech: 2008  
 Service Area high schools: 11  
 Mascot: Louie the Saint  
 Colors: Dark Green & White  
 Conference: Kan.Jayhawk CCC  
 Teams: 10  
 Programs: 50  
 Campuses:  
 Liberal - 3



## 2025 GRADUATE STATS

Dual (H.S + AA) degrees		51
Certificates 1-3		150
Assoc. of Applied Science		102
Associate of Arts		33
Associate of Science		166
Assoc. of General Studies		34
Kansas State GED		34
ESL Level 3		5

TOTAL COMPLETIONS: 524

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-29 *College collects faculty, staff input for guiding principles*

In January 2025 the Strategic Planning Committee began meetings to advance the development of SCCC's strategic plan. The team conducted a comprehensive survey of faculty, staff, and students to gather input. Initial data analysis helped the team establish the core values that will guide our institution:

- Student-Centered
- Collaboration
- Competitive
- Commitment

The proposed core values were presented to the Board of Trustees for approval in spring 2025. At the board's recommendation, the first value was adjusted from "Student-Centered" to "Student & Community-Centered," to reflect the College's focus on remaining interwoven with and responsive to its service area and stakeholders. The core values will be implemented fall 2025.



retained, building on the previous plan's achievements. These focus areas are Student Success, Advancement, Communication, and Community. Specific goals for each direction are will be set for the next three-year cycle. To ensure broad engagement and meaningful input, SCCC will conduct additional focus groups and other opportunities for feedback. This ongoing process will refine our strategic priorities and enhance alignment with our institutional mission.

The full strategic plan is on track for completion and will be available for review and final approval by the Board of Trustees in fall 2025.

A subcommittee for each of the strategic directions will then be formed from members of the President's Cabinet. These teams disseminate goals, projects, and processes across campus. In this way, a collaborative approach is implemented

Strategic Directions from the previous plan will be

to achieve the goals set out for the three-year cycle.

### STUDENT SUCCESS

*We define success in terms of students' personal goals and community growth. Support means online and in-person classes taught by carefully recruited faculty. It means quality housing, food, mental & physical health care, sports, clubs, technology, and more.*

### ADVANCEMENT

*Institutional advancement requires troubleshooting and long-range planning for facilities, finance, and tech infrastructure. This goal brings us into collaboration with school districts, all levels of government, business and industry partners and private interests.*

### COMMUNICATION

*Communication is essential to build understanding, solve problems and create opportunities for all. We strengthen this practice through active listening to one another and our community online and in person to change lives, on campus and in our students' futures.*

### COMMUNITY

*Community is our middle name, and we take that seriously. It means active attention to societal needs and issues, and the economy. We intentionally form & nourish partnerships. We show up for our neighbors and invite Saints of all ages to be part of our campus life.*

# Looking to the future with optimism

For years, the north entrance to the Hobble Academic Building was marked by a huge concrete saucer standing guard outside the doors. It overcame the problems of time and space to deliver college courses to people in the SCCC service area. Seward was an early adopter of distance learning, long before cell phones and Internet became part of everyday life.

When the addition to the Hobble Building was completed in 1997, it included Room AA137. College administrators proudly named it the “Virtual Learning Center.” The tiered seating and built-in countertop desks were designed to help students get the best view of the large retractable screen that dominated the front of the classroom. Students could view an instructor, teaching more than 100 miles away. The idea was revolutionary.

Now, our students can accomplish the same thing with a handheld device. The term “smart phone” is even out of date, because these cellphone are just ordinary now. Nobody thinks of them as “smart.”

Now, the giant satellite dish is gone We removed it last year — it was obsolete. We needed to make room for the new things the College has in mind for the next few year. The concept of moving forward to the future, with all the unknowns, is not something that intimidates us.

Leading up to the 1980s, using computers for anything, even basic office work, was a novelty. Eventually, we began to use them to the extent that one employee said, “By 1986, you could not escape computers on campus!” In fact, SCCC helped found the online consortium for distance learning, EduKan. Over the past academic year, we moved to our own online platform. Saints Anywhere is thriving, and has more than doubled our ability to serve students through what the 1997 architect of that now-outdated classroom called “virtual learning.”

When I look to the future, I see a season of renewal. In 2025, public conversation focuses on the challenges and big changes of the future. It can be overwhelming —

until you remember what we have weathered.

We remained fiscally strong throughout the ups and downs of the early 2000s, we kept our doors open through the unprecedented pandemic in 2020, and we intend to continue pursuing excellence in service to our students and community in the years to come.

I fully expect us to draw on our strengths, the lessons learned, and the many high points that make Seward special. It’s there in the renewed surge of Saints Spirit in the Greenhouse — now air-conditioned, and ready to host women’s wrestling, basketball and volleyball.

It’s there in the fresh jolt of energy in our math and science classrooms, which got an update with new paint, carpet, and furnishings over the summer.

You can find it on the east side of our main campus, where the old dorms were renovated to house our Student Health Center for physical and mental health, and Louie’s Lounge, where student can gather, cook, view movies, and study when the Student Union is closed.

It’s there on the West Campus, which drastically expands the truck driving program, with room for other programs. We begin Phase 2 this fall, creating a large conference space and other areas for strategic goals.

And, I see the energy of renewal every day in the One Stop Shop outside my office area. What was once a dense maze of small offices now contains clusters of inviting seating, open space, and bright lighting. Students love to hang out, study, charge their computers and phones, and enjoy a sense of community.

That’s only a short list of the ways the college has renewed its focus on our mission to make education accessible to improve the lives of our students and our community members. We’re looking to the future with big hopes and dreams, and a sense of confidence.

If you know anything about Seward County Community College, its dedicated faculty, staff, and administration, its students, and the community we serve, that faith in renewal makes perfect sense.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
**Brad Bennett**



*Change is not something that intimidates us at SCCC. We view growth as a process of renewal, drawing on our strengths, the lessons learned, and the vision and energy that make this place and its people unique and resilient.*

VICE PRESIDENT of CTE  
**Dr. Amber Jones**



**RENEWAL**

*Throughout our region,  
we know there are great jobs  
waiting for prepared students,  
and CTE is constantly exploring  
ways to connect the two.  
Over the past year, SCCC has  
made big changes to meet the  
workforce needs of our community.*

## **Workforce training via many avenues**

Nationwide, Career and Technical Education is enjoying a moment of high demand as students, parents, and industry ask for workforce development and a return on their investment of time and money.

SCCC's CTE sphere reflected those trends in 2024, as the Industrial Technology and Allied Health divisions continued to provide education and credentialing to an increasing number of students. Working in tandem with those divisions, Adult Education and the Business & Industry departments generated pre- and post-program support for a vibrant workforce pipeline.

This was exemplified in several events during the fall semester. The AMPP Rectifier School on campus in September brought more than 30 members of industry from over five states to the training, where they were joined by 12 students from the SCCC Corrosion. Three scholarships were given to current Corrosion Students and – just as important – connections were strengthened between our students and potential employers.

In October, the CTE Expo brought approximately 500 area high school students and more than 50 business to campus for class sessions and a job fair. By providing high schoolers with a taste of how CTE education merges into gainful employment, the event planted seeds and served industry partners in their continued efforts to develop a strong applicant pool.

### **Industrial Tech prepares to expand**

With work wrapping up on the new West Campus facility, Industrial Technology programs continued to prepare for expansion. Truck driving cohorts increased in size thanks to the addition of the Garden City campus and instructors, and Liberal instructors will be able to move to west campus during the forthcoming academic year.

The new facilities include a truck driving simulator purchased with State of Kansas grant. This equipment will help teach students the fundamentals of driving

while keeping them safe. This will not replace all of the experience on the driving range and out on the roads. Further renovations to the West Campus site will eventually enable Diesel Technology to relocate.

On the Industrial Tech original site, high demand for multiple programs continued. The Heating, Ventilation, Air Condition and Refrigeration, Diesel Technology, and Welding programs operated at capacity, reflecting a high demand for workers in the field.

### **Allied Health builds momentum**

A core resource for healthcare services throughout a 200-mile radius, Allied Health programs did more than maintain a baseline performance during 2024-25 – they flourished. Following a post-pandemic restructure, the nursing program implemented many positive changes. These included adoption of new curriculum, no rounding of grades, faculty-guided exam preparation, professional development for faculty funded in part by the Kansas Nurse Initiative Grant, more robust data collection and evaluation, and personal assistance beyond graduation with student advising and questions. The grant-funded purchase of Apple Virtual Reality goggles expanded the opportunities for hands-on learning and skills development.

Medical Laboratory Technology saw a large increase in students with 14 returning students and 24 first year students. Surgical Technology also increased enrollment while simultaneously meeting all benchmarks for accreditation. Respiratory Care (formerly "Respiratory Therapy") updated its program requirements in keeping with KBOR policies, and held its graduation ceremony in early August, following successful completion of clinicals.

In May, the college signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Seward County Community College (SCCC) and Garden City



Community College (GCCC) for the Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) program agreement. The partnership developed at the request of Southwest Medical Center in Liberal, which struggles to fill RMA positions with qualified applicants. The new certificate, in combination with Certified Nurse Aide, Certified Medication Aide, and Phlebotomy credentials, offers greater employment possibilities for students entering the health care field, often in preparation for applying to the division's four specialty programs.

### ***Bigger scope & area at Adult Ed***

Developing career pathways is not limited to high school and college-age students. Under the leadership of Dr. Katie Reck, the Adult Education department launched an enrollment campaign, "It's Never too Late to Graduate," resulting a strong increase in student numbers over prior years. SCCC's adult education program remains the fifth largest in the state, with students between 25 and 45 years old, 90% Latino.

Dr. Reck reached out to Seaboard Foods and National Beef to work on ways to further support their employees. CTE Recruiter Corey Mein developed new marketing materials for a collaboration with Seaboard.

By June, a new Spanish GED class was offered in Guymon, Okla. in partnership with Seaboard Foods. We plan to continue this collaboration in fall 2025.

A renewed involvement with COABE (Coalition on Adult Basic Education) took Dr. Reck to the national conference in Dallas. SCCC GED student Divan Linenbroker was the only student rep from Kansas.

### ***Apprenticeship options at B & I***

The college's Citizenship study track was audited by Nathan Egli of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) along with two instructors Kathleen Alonso and Alondra Trevizo. Many good things resulted: suggestions for improvements that were implemented in the spring semester.

The creation of an Assistant Director of Apprenticeships and Community Outreach role reflected the continuing appetite for workforce development at all stages of education. In the new position, longtime SCCC employee Sarah Thompson will implement a scaled-down community classes and programs schedule and also emphasize partnering SCCC programs with business and industry partners to add new apprenticeship programs.

**FAR LEFT IN HEADER** SCCC hosted statewide leaders in the Kansas Council of Deans & Directors of Community Education & Community Service in September. Dr. Amber Jones presented adoption of the College's institution-wide Mission-Critical Goal and its impact on enrollment growth.

**ABOVE LEFT** SCCC and Garden City Community College presidents sign an MOU for the RMA program.

**ABOVE RIGHT** With Industrial Technology, SCCC Adult Education applied to add Information Technology and Maintenance Technology to Accelerating Opportunity Kansas (AO-K) pathways that let working adults



earn industry credentials while completing the GED. AO-K offsets certificate costs for students who begin the pathway during GED completion.

**LEFT** Bree Downs, instructor of Automotive Collision & Refinishing Technology, received a NISOD Excellence Award and attended the May conference in Austin, Texas.

Recently appointed chair of the Industrial Technology Division, Downs is recognized for strong program leadership and a sustained focus on student success.

VICE PRESIDENT of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS  
**Luke Dowell**



*The past year brought changes and challenges. Increased student numbers created fresh energy, and faculty and staff continued to provide a positive environment to work and learn. We are thankful to everyone for making it a great year.*

## Enrollment growth, program expansion

Enrollment growth led to exciting changes in the Office of Academic Affairs during the 2024-25 year. For the second consecutive year, SCCC enrolled 16 percent more students than the previous academic year, filling classrooms on campus and in the virtual space of Saints Anywhere, the college's online platform.

Several programs saw significant growth including Truck Driving, Computer Information and Support Specialist, Agriculture, Automotive Collision/Refinishing, Biology, and Cosmetology. Academic Affairs also looked closely at areas that registered fewer students than the previous year and made plans for turning those areas around.

Saints Anywhere enrollment was up 18 percent compared to combined Edukan and Seward Online enrollment in fall 2023. Throughout the year, we worked with SCCC Human Resources to search and hire additional qualified online instructors to allow us to offer more options in different sessions. Deedee Flax, Distance Learning Coordinator and Crystal Pounds, Instructional Designer, worked with the Distance Learning committee, faculty, and division chairs to improve our processes and quality of online courses. They have developed and updated an online faculty handbook that provides guidance and consistency across all our online courses.

High school student enrollment rose 44 percent in head count and 23 percent in credit hours compared to the previous year, in part because of the growing popularity of the Saints Ahead Scholarship. Thanks to Laura Rosales, Director of Outreach and Dr. Amber Jones, VP of CTE for continuing to find opportunities for more classes for high school students.

### ***New pathways for math, English***

Colleges and universities across the state have been preparing for changes to mathematics requirements that will take place in fall 2026, and



**ABOVE** Students enrolled in Saints Anywhere courses can access class materials and submit work any time of day or night. As the SCCC online platform expanded, more than 30 new adjunct instructors joined the faculty.

SCCC too is looking ahead. SCCC already offers the three math pathways courses: College Algebra, Contemporary Math, and Elementary Statistics. Moving forward, developmental classes will not be supported unless they are corequisite, meaning the student takes a developmental class in the same semester as the college level course.

With this structure already in place for College Algebra, SCCC math faculty have developed corequisite courses for Contemporary Math and Elementary Statistics. We are working to determine how to support students who may not be ready for the corequisite courses. KBOR has approved system-wide placement scores to be used for all the Math Pathways courses.

English courses follow the same restriction of no stand-alone developmental courses to prepare for English Composition. While the SCCC English department has been using corequisite support since 2017, more students will require this type of class. The English department has strengthened its use of



corequisite support for students with different types corequisite courses for English Composition I.

## More sessions, course options

Three-week Winter Session courses began December 17, with nine courses offered: Art Appreciation, Medical Terminology, Intro to Business, Intro to Computer Concepts and Applications, Business English, Elementary Statistics, Intermediate Algebra, and two courses that ultimately had no enrollment, OSHA 10 and Digital Image Editing. Even so, student numbers nearly doubled from the prior year's Winter Session; 87 students took advantage of these courses, compared to 45 last year and 13 the year before. With a 92 percent pass rate, Winter Session generated 252 credit hours.

New scheduling for fall and spring semester courses offered students multiple registration dates for a wide variety of classes, both in person and online. Academic affairs created eight and 12-week courses for students unable to begin at the standard

start of the semester.

Within a compressed time frame, these courses provided the same content as a full semester class, so careful advising was necessary to ensure students expected intensity and daily homework. The staggered start dates proved popular and will continue in the next academic year.

## Program additions for 2025-26

The Academic Affairs Council also approved the use of two more systemwide degrees that will be offered starting in the fall 2025 semester. These are programs that received an exception from KBOR to the system-wide general education framework. This means there were specific courses that had to be taken as general education electives to complete the degree.

Offering these degrees ensures students will not have to take extra courses when they transfer in these degrees. The degrees approved are Business Administration and Pre-BSN Nursing, Elementary Education approved last year.



**TOP LEFT** For the first time, graduation took place Friday night, a change prompted by academic schedules at SCCC and USD 480 in Liberal. Graduates broke records, with 50 students earning a certificate or degree while still in high school.

**TOP** Under the direction of Dr. William Bryan, the Math, Science, & HPERD division hosted its 2nd largest science fair in 17 years.

**MIDDLE** Honor society Phi Theta Kappa, inducted more than 100 new members.

**LEFT** Deedee Flax, director of Distance Learning and Chair of the Ag, Business, and Personal Services Division, retired and Business instructor Melissa Hardman, below, moves into the role of ABPS Division Chair.

VICE PRESIDENT of BUSINESS AFFAIRS  
**Maddie Day**



*Growth and challenges pushed our boundaries and taught us to be better versions of ourselves this year. It was exciting to see grace extended throughout campus as others stepped in to help when areas were stretched. People encouraged each other to give their all to make SCCC its best for students.*

## **Successes in real life & in the Cloud**

Business Affairs juggled multiple major projects over the 2024-25 year, from an on-campus intranet overhaul to institutional footprint expansion, and a focus on raising funds through private donations.

Then there was facilities management, from deferred maintenance to project management, and the financial aspects of personnel and programs. All in all, the year was marked by growth and agile responses to challenges.

### **Internet and intranet see changes**

For students, the biggest news might have been the drastic improvement in on-campus internet speed. Mark Bojeun, the CIO for SCCC through OculusIT, the IT service provider contracted by the board, prioritized Wi-Fi and increased the internet speeds, moving sections of campus to different providers to minimize disruptions in the dorms and classrooms.

Under Bojeun's leadership, IT also assisted athletics with Greenhouse audiovisual equipment at athletic events and graduation, established a weekly "Genius Bar" (see photo at right) for students and employees, hosted at the Saints Bookstore.

Cybersecurity at SCCC took a giant leap forward when IT set up multifactor authentication and password resets. Backup information in the system enables users (students and employees) to be able to reset their passwords without a call to IT. But it's not just about ease; the upgrade strengthened security in the virtual realm.

For staff, the theme of the year was conversion, conversion, conversion as the campus computing network for office and academic functions moved from a server-based system to a cloud-based system. Doing

so created a more stable platform for data storage, and recovery from emergencies. The massive project affected nearly every area of campus and required hundreds of hours of training.

Ellucian representatives on the conversion team had a lot of positive things to say about information reporter, Teresa Wehmeier and the entire SCCC team for working hard and being positive. In fact, the exceptional contributions of SCCC staff prompted Ellucian to sponsor a "thank you" lunch on campus. SCCC will serve as a company example of best practices. On campus, everyone heaved sigh of relief when the process was

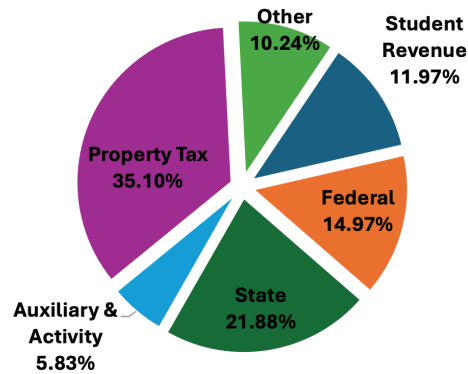


complete in March.

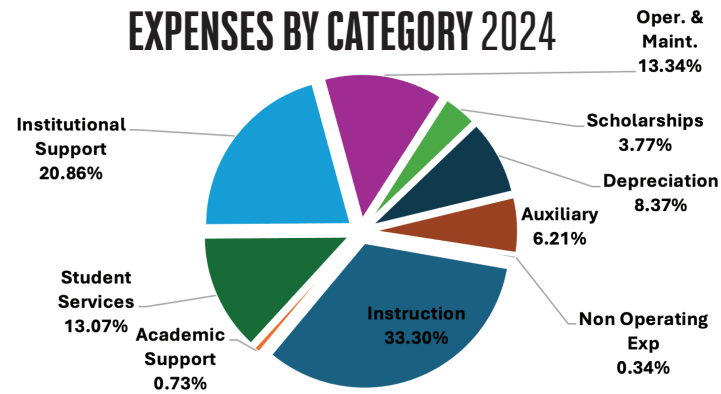
### **Building projects & facilities**

Newly arrived facilities director Josh Tucker hit the ground running and immediately addressed several deferred maintenance projects. Big projects on main campus included the installation of an air conditioning system in the Greenhouse, completion of updated restroom facilities, and a rehab of the north hallway in the Hubble Academic Building to update the appearance

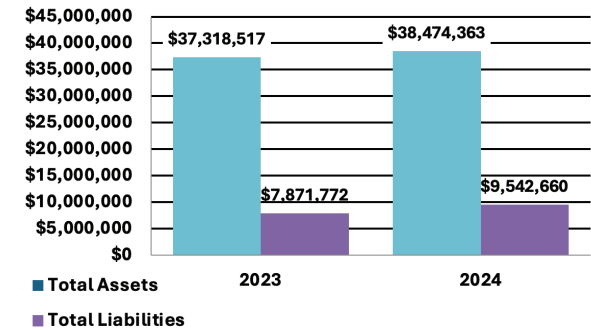
## REVENUE BY SOURCE 2024



## EXPENSES BY CATEGORY 2024



## ASSETS & LIABILITIES



in keeping with the One-Stop Shop upgrades from 2023.

Along with routine seasonal projects and maintenance, facilities crew members navigated several unexpected emergencies sparked by extreme weather changes. They helped with the concrete work on the north side of West campus to meet building inspection requirements and even unloaded more than 10 truckloads of campus furniture over the year. This included nine truckloads of fully assembled furniture for the new classroom and public spaces in the West Campus building, and updated furnishings for the One-Stop Shop in Hobble Hallway.

West campus signage and improvements to the main campus signage were completed during the academic year and provide a platform for marketing and information distribution. Signage for the West Campus will reflect sponsorship donations from Conestoga. Senator Jerry Moran's sponsorship of the project brought significant federal and state funding to SCCC for the project, which completed Phase I and will begin use by the truck driving program during the 2025-26 academic year. Phase II work will begin in the fall semester of 2025.

Dorm housing was expanded by making some of the Student Living Center rooms into triple-residence spaces, as allowed by the local fire inspector. Students snapped up the opportunity to reduce the cost of their housing. Staff worked with maintenance to unload and assemble 50 beds the night before move-in.

Completion of the Student Health Center and Louie's

Lounge for student use was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting in February 2025. The addition of physical and mental health services for students had a positive effect on academic and residence hall trends and was met with excitement by the Saints community on- and off-campus.

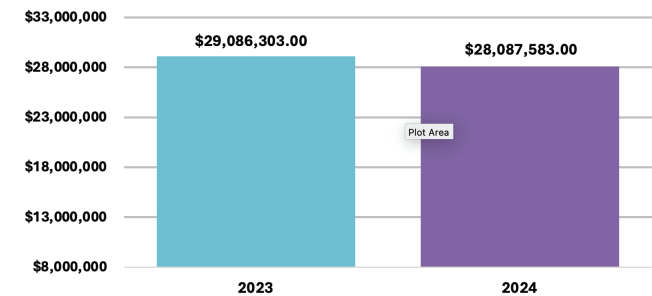
## Finance operations, accountability

Auditors visited campus in October and gave the college a good report that included cleanup from FY24. Business office staff also completed the Perkins Grant report and others required by the Kansas Board of Regents. After 20 years in the Business Department, Jeanne Beer moved to HR. We appreciate all she has done for the College and are glad she has stayed with us!

With many unexpected changes at the federal and state levels, SCCC planned carefully to navigate funding responsibly. Because of focused growth in student enrollment, headcount-based funding cuts did not affect SCCC deeply. As some federal grant programs came into question, the College focused on thrift and calm. Per the board of trustees, the aim was to maintain a steady mill levy and handle taxpayer funds with care.

Budgeting for the forthcoming years relied on conservative actions, with all departments being asked to carefully evaluate needs vs. wants and look for creative ways to reduce costs. The college opted to leave 15 positions unfilled after retirements or resignations, setting up frequent group meetings to evaluate workload

## NET POSITION



and effectiveness. Despite these challenges, the college was able to provide a 3 percent raise for the faculty and staff, being mindful of the rate of inflation.

The Business Office was excited to report \$4.2M in assets were capitalized for FY25, for a combined total of \$12M in assets being added the last two years. Seward Online Tuition increased from \$150,569.80 in FY23 to \$574,777 in FY24 to \$1,072,257 in FY25. This is tremendous growth for the College.

With stricter collection efforts, SCCC opted to allow all students to charge their books from the Bookstore to their student account. They will have to have the balance paid off to be able to register for the next semester, but this should encourage them to use the Saints Bookstore over outside sources. Overall, students were very proactive on getting their payments lined up and discussing options with business office staff.

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT of ATHLETICS  
**Cody Cole**



*We have a lot of passion, a lot of people who want to do well, recruit the right kids, and represent the Saints on the scoreboard. My vision is to get Greenhouse attendance back to what it was in the 1990s and 2000s. Our fans are the greatest.*

## *Vision for athletics draws on history,*

When Cody Cole heads to work as Associate Vice President of Athletics at Seward County Community College, he takes on a complex role that's a combination of camp counselor, CEO, and chief of staff for 11 athletics teams, more than 200 athletes and an ever-growing number of Saints fans in Liberal and the region.

"There's a lot of different hats you wear," Cole said. "I've always enjoyed a lot of different sports. Coaching college wrestling early in my career was fun, and it paid the bills. In this role you get to be more involved in every student athlete's experience, every coach's process, along with being fiscally responsible and giving back to the community, whether that's through volunteer work or wins and losses."

Starting his second full year at the helm of Saints Athletics, Cole has put his MBA to good use.

"My degree is in business, so I gravitate to the questions of how can we stretch dollars, set up vendors and contracts, get the most bang for our buck," he said. In the rapidly changing environment of collegiate sports and higher education, those questions come more frequently and with more urgency than in the past.

While Seward has a long history and stellar reputation in the National Junior College Athletics Association and the Kansas Jayhawk League, Cole noted, "If we aren't open to change, we're gonna get left behind." With the addition of men's and women's soccer and esports during Cole's first year as AD, and the introduction of women's wrestling during the 2025-26 year, SCCC is posed for a season of renewed vigor and fan support.

Cole's own life showed him the power of sports to bring people together and strengthen communities.

Born in Pennsylvania, Cole moved to Colorado with his family when he was four, and "athletics for me was how you kind of became part of things in a small town of 5,000," he recalled. "Everybody played athletics, after school, soccer, flag football, wrestling."

While Cole's father, a college athlete, was a wrestler and his youth coach, "my first love wasn't wrestling. I

enjoyed other sports until high school, when I realized wrestling was something I could do at 5'6" — you don't have to be a 300-pound football player to be competitive. When I figured that out, I fell in love with it."

In his current role, Cole is mindful of the young, ambitious wrestler he was. That perspective helps him connect with Saints athletes and their coaches.

"My role is more supportive than being day-to-day involved with each athlete, though I am at events, my door is open, I can converse with them," he said. That said, he is also focused on the end results for the institution and the individual.

"Overseeing athletics is fine line, because this is the NCAA's creation and it's technically become a business. We have responsibilities to produce good 'products' — in the classroom, through community service and with wins and losses. If you come to us as an athlete, we're gonna help you, and at the end of the day, there's reciprocation."

Changes in recruitment practices and the frequency of student-athlete transfers have created new challenges for coaches and college programs at all levels. Even so, Cole sees the positive, pointing to greater opportunities for the student-athletes themselves in the two-year college arena.

"It's an awesome skill to learn to get more money, get in a different position, choose your own path," he said. "That's in every job, not just athletics. Our students are young enough, with their lives just starting, so it's a privilege for SCCC to be part of that molding process. They come to us before they have a house payment, four kids, decades into adulthood. For them, there's still a chance to reset."

One thing underpins all the options young student athletes consider, Cole said: "Outside statistics and scholarships, they want to know, 'do you care about me?'"

Liberal is well-positioned to answer that question.

"That's one of the main aspects that appealed to [my wife] Nikki and me," he said. "We looked at Liberal and saw a place that takes care of its own, welcomes people

# Saints tradition

with open arms. That's what we wanted for our kids — Easton, Evan, Eli, and Emmett — and when we arrived, we found that to be true.”

Cole values the ability of SCCC to grow that social aspect of life for students and fans.

“I can't say enough good things about our boosters,” he said. “Our fans are the greatest. They stop to say hello to kids at games. They want to support the college, that's important. They care about people as individuals and families — not just the athletes, coaches and staff. too.”

Wrapping up his first year at SCCC, Cole reflected that “it was so fast, It doesn't feel like it's already time to welcome students back to campus for the new year. We've had some turnover, changes, fresh new faces. It's kind of rejuvenating. With younger coaches early in their careers, I'm excited about being able to mentor and guide them through college athletics.”

Cole looks forward to renewed competitiveness.

“We have a lot of passion, a lot of people who want to do well, recruit the right kids, and represent the Saints on the scoreboard,” he said. And he has specific goals: “My vision is to get the Greenhouse back to what it was in terms of attendance ... when you see pictures of the 1990s and 2000s, it's a big contrast. I think it'll change over time. Facilities are important, and the addition of air conditioning in the Greenhouse is a big deal.”

Another addition to the space: women's wrestling, which Cole will coach in academic year 2025-26.

“This is a great opportunity for Western Kansas, if you look around at the area high schools,” he said. “Dodge City, Garden City, and Liberal have a lot of really good athletes, and we can give them a chance to compete at the college level. It's definitely a win for our Kansas kids.”

As is the case with his role, Cole will be portioning his attention and energy to grow women's wrestling, balance the budget, and cheer all his coaches and teams on to improve every day.

“When we get better, that's a win,” he said, “and eventually, it shows up as a win on the scoreboard.”



**LEFT** The cohort of SCCC's first men's soccer team made history at the 2025 commencement ceremony. The proud student-athletes posed for a photo with academic advisors Stephanie Heger and Ruth Rivera.



Under head coach Will Marchino, the SCCC Lady Saints basketball team ended its season in the quarterfinals of the Region VI tournament with a loss to Coffeyville. The Lady Saints finished the season 20-12 overall, the first time Seward reached 20 wins since 2021-22.



Homecoming got an upgrade, with Saints flags on Kansas Ave., and an Athletics Hall of Fame induction and panel discussion hosted by AVPA Cody Cole, far left. Along with the traditional court, students and alumni enjoyed social activities all week.

## DEPARTMENT of STUDENT AFFAIRS SCCC Staff



*With a focus on collaboration and clear communications, Student Affairs department heads and staff teamed up to oversee seamless delivery of student services and support through a year enlivened by new resources and facilities.*



SCCC Board of Trustees chair Ron Oliver, seated at center, is joined by SCCC President Brad Bennett, standing, and multiple trustees, college administrators, and community members at the February opening of the student health center and lounge.

## College cuts ribbon on health center

SCCC students have a new resource for physical and mental health support, thanks to the renovation of the former dorm building just north of the Student Housing Center and Mansions buildings. College trustees, administrators, faculty and staff were joined by Liberal Area Chamber of Commerce members to cut the ribbon on the new facility in February 2025.

The project renewed a building that had become a dusty and unattractive storage space into a gleaming new destination to enhance the student experience.

The east half of the building provides an array of student health services during the academic year. Students can access care via walk-in and scheduled appointments at no cost to them.

The west half of the building, pictured at left, provides a fully functioning kitchen, study rooms, a movie viewing space and restaurant-style booths. This additional space is available at times when the Student Union is closed on holidays, weekends, and after hours.



CONTRACTED HEALTH PROVIDER  
**Linsey Carter, DNP, NP-C**  
*Treatment/testing - minor illness, injury, blood pressure & sugar checks, pregnancy & STI tests, referrals, physicals*



MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR  
**Bethann Volden, LMSW**  
*Anxiety, depression, relationship issues, trauma, interventions, cognitive behavioral therapy, referrals*



DIRECTOR of STUDENT LIFE & LEADERSHIP  
**Wade Lyon**

*"We have Fun Food Fridays because food is a direct way for students to experience feeling cared for."*



DIRECTOR of ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT  
**Erika Espinoza**

*"My experiences as the first in my family to go to college help me connect with prospective students in our community."*



DIRECTOR of FINANCIAL AID  
**Amy Bridenstine**

*"Students don't always know how to pay for college, or what questions to ask. I help them connect the dots."*



DIRECTOR of STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES  
**Liz Hill**

*"As an athletic trainer I learned that student anxiety is real, and that students and athletes can learn to manage it."*



DIRECTOR of STUDENT SUCCESS  
**Stephanie Heger**

*"My goal is to help every student who comes through the door believe that a bright future is within their reach."*



INTERIM DIRECTOR of RESIDENT LIFE & SAFETY  
**Corey Mein**

*"College is the first time many students experience independence. It's a time for them to learn how to exist as an adult."*



**TOP** Students sample waffles at Fun Food Friday in the Student Union. **ABOVE** Motivational speaker and SCCC alumna Sheyvette Dinkens talks with a student after a presentation during Homecoming Week. **LEFT** Exterior lighting upgrades enhanced campus safety. **FAR LEFT** The campus HALO club organized a community expo for celebration vendors as a fundraiser.

# MULTIPLE FACETS of OUR Community



From elementary school children to retirees in a five-state area, SCCC serves a vibrant community.

Our mission: To provide opportunities to enrich and improve each person's life and the advancement of the community and those we serve.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Lady Saints welcome elementary students on the first day of classes; SCCC student Angel Espinoza and TRiO Student Services coordinator Megan Troutner enjoy food at the Taste of Kansas international potluck meal; Saints baseball players report for duty as set-up helpers at the Seward County Fairgrounds; a student at Business & Industry's Kids College 2025 applies face-paint to the teacher; high school students show off prizes at the Admissions Department Junior Day to recruit incoming Saints; one of the Adult Education graduates celebrates earning his GED with family members.



## CONGRATULATIONS

**Amanda Marchino**, SCCC athletic trainer, graduated from the SCCC nursing program in May..

**Brandee Good**, Saints Bookstore manager, graduated from SCCC in May with an associate degree.

**Alex Groves**, math instructor, completed her masters degree from Fort Hays State University.

**Arlette Austin**, respiratory care instructor, completed her master's degree from Wichita State University.

**Sherelle Lee**, assistant financial aid director, and her husband welcomed a new son in July.

**Dr. Chudamani S. Prakash**, biology instructor, and his wife welcomed a new daughter in August.

**Megan Troutner**, TRiO & Student Support Services coordinator, got married this spring.

SCCC graduate **Ainsley Horinek** was Kansas State Champion and advanced to Certiport's 2025 Microsoft Office Specialist U.S Championship.

SCCC graduate **Joseph Haskell** won a Coca Cola Silver Scholarship of \$1,000 through Phi Theta Kappa.

SCCC graduate **Samuel Antwi** represented Ghana in the Davis Cup tennis competition in Angola in June .

## SERVICE AWARDS

40 years | Margaret Thompson

30 years | Bonnie Merrihew

25 years | Michael Davidson  
Edward Hall  
Tuan Phan  
Teresa Wehmeier

20 years | Bree Downs  
Maria Mendoza  
Dr. Magda Silva

15 years | Craig Dusek  
Jamie Williams  
Tara Thompson

10 years | Marreta Campbell  
Charity Horinek  
Luisa Volden

5 years | Oralia Gomez



Academic and Online Advisor **Jamie Francis**, above, received the Staff Member of the Year award at the 2025 Commencement ceremony. Student of the Year award went to **Nubia Rodriguez**, far right. Instructor of the Year award went to **Deedee Flax**, pictured below.



Retiring employees at the end of the 2024-25 academic year pause for a photo at the Service Awards. From left, **Luisa Volden**, **Chris Schroeder**, **Stan Sanko**, **Tuan Phan**, **Deedee Flax**, **Marreta Campbell**.

## FACULTY, STAFF & STUDENT Milestones



As we wrap up our 56th year of serving students at Seward County Community College, we celebrate students, faculty, and staff who accomplished their goals and made a positive difference in the world.

It's Good to be Green!

Go Saints!



# SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1801 N. Kansas Avenue, Liberal, KS 67905



[sccc.edu](http://sccc.edu)



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