



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1801 N. Kansas Ave., P.O. Box 1137, Liberal, KS 67905-1137 ☎ 620-624-1951 or 1-800-373-9951

News Release For more information, contact Rachel Coleman, Executive Director of Marketing & Public Information, 620-417-1125, rachel.coleman@sccc.edu

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New science lab, virtual campus tour

Three more faculty to retire in June

Seward County Community College/Area Technical School will continue to fill open positions as the 2014-15 academic year comes to a close. During the regular board meeting Monday, trustees accepted retirements from nursing instructor Nancy Bansemer, art instructor Susan Copas and journalism instructor Anita Reed.

Administration recommended approval for the early retirement requests, with appreciation “for the many years of service they provided to our college, students and the public.”

College president, Dr. Duane Dunn, also reported to the board that the search for a new Dean of Academic Affairs should finish shortly.

Surgical Technology program update

Surgical Technology instructor Carmen Sumner brought a program review to the board, presenting data from the past five years.

“We have some areas with real strengths,” Sumner said, noting 100 percent satisfaction ratings from graduates and employers.

The ST program continues to explore ways to make the field accessible to students in the region.

“We are the only Surgical Technology west of Hutchinson and Wichita, and we are challenged to be able to meet the needs of students in such a large service area,” Sumner said. Through hybrid classes that combine online lectures and real-life labs on select days, the ST program aims to make it possible for students to attend once-a-week sessions for hands-on practice.

Because most of the students tend to learn best through physical practice, Sumner said it can be difficult to blend distance learning with classroom experiences. However, given the vast distance some students must travel, “the Internet is our friend,” she said. The program will continue to explore partnerships with Colby Community College, Garden City Community College and healthcare facilities in Hays in order to expand the options for students.

STEM program to add FSS lab, engineering summer academy

Dr. Suzanne Campbell, STEM Project Director, updated the board about the grant-funded projects designed to strengthen Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education at the college. Sonia Hernandez, a longtime employee of the Colvin Adult Learning Center, continues to provide extra help to Spanish language learners who struggle with math and science terminology, said Campbell.

David Coltrain has begun work as the Sustainable Agricultural Resources instructor, and already scheduled a High Value Crops workshop. Campbell said he has provided insight into how costs for the program’s third greenhouse can

be simplified and trimmed.

The STEM program hopes to add a third high-school academy to its summer line-up this year, with an engineering camp. Like the academies for Food Science & Safety and Sustainable Agriculture, the camp would feature instruction by visiting professors, on-campus living and dining for students, and an introduction to the possibilities of engineering for high school students from the area.

After a two-year process to design curriculum and get approval from the Kansas Board of Regents, the Food Science and Safety program has gained a foothold. The next step, Campbell said, is to complete a proper lab.

The board reviewed new bids for the lab addition, slated to be built as an addition on the west side of the Hobble Academic Building. Despite attempts to restructure reduce the expense of the project, the cost of \$442,946 still exceeded the original estimate in the budget. Campbell said the difference of \$102,290 could be absorbed by carryover amounts from the previous two years, as well as lower-than-expected expenditures for instructors.

“We’re not using all the funding that is built into the budget, especially for fringe benefits, supplies and equipment,” she said. “That will fill some of the gap.”

Though the board voiced reluctance to go over the original cost, the five members voted to award the job to French Construction of Liberal, the only company to bid on the job, contingent on approval by the federal grant supervisor.

“I don’t like it, but I don’t think we’ve got a choice,” said trustee Dustin Ormiston.

Course fees reviewed for actual benefit to students

The board discussed at length the annual review of course fees provided by the academic division.

“What are these fees actually for?” asked trustee Sharon Hobble. “Why is there a fee for algebra? When I was a student, you bought your book, you came to class, you sat down and learned.”

Dunn explained that fees in math courses offset the cost of computer paper and lab expenses. In some cases, the fee helps pay for a calculator the student must use.

“This year, we asked the instructors to really go through and look at the fees, and tell us what it was actually used for, why it was there, what benefit the student gets,” said Dunn. For some courses of study, such as cosmetology and auto technology, the students must have the required tools to complete their studies, and, after graduation, practice the trade. In others, such as Allied Health programs, the fees help cover the cost of background checks and professional exams.

“Last year, we actually refunded an item for drug-testing that we thought would be required for nurses who worked at Wesley Hospital in Wichita,” said Allied Health Director Veda King. “It turned out they didn’t actually require that test, so we took the amount off our students’ bills.”

The course fee review was an information item only and required no action by the board.

Admissions Office will add virtual tour to college’s website, social media

As part of its efforts to increase student recruiting the Admissions office requested board approval for the creation of a virtual college tour that will allow potential students and their families to experience the feeling of being on campus.

“The first thing I was told when I came here to work was that if we can get people on campus to visit, it’s easy for them to decide to come here to college,” said Admissions & Marketing Coordinator Chandler Kirkhart. “This tour will make it possible for people who can’t make the trip to virtually travel across the campus, including inside the buildings and classrooms.”

Cost for the project is \$11,960, which includes film sessions, upgrades, translation to Spanish, and placement on various social media and Internet sites, as well as Google Oculus virtual reality headsets that can be used at college fairs and visits.

The project will be funded in part by a gift from the SCCC/ATS Foundation.

After a lively discussion, the board opted to approve the purchase.

“I’d rather see money put into these kinds of things rather than paper catalogues,” said Ormiston. “We’ve got to promote the college in ways that get the attention of potential students.”

Deans report about activities, budget strategies

In deans' reports, Dean of Career and Technical Education Dr. Janese Thatcher reported that she attended the Kansas Council on Workforce Evaluation. The horticulture students' cyclamen plant sales will begin in February, in time for Valentine's Day. With Business & Industry, USD 480 and the state of Kansas, the college will host a Distracted Driving workshop in February, in three locations — Liberal Memorial Library, Liberal High School, and the SCCC/ATS Library.

Dean of Academic Affairs Cynthia Rapp reported on the college's progress in AQIP accreditation. After a "Conversation Day" that collected information from employees across campus, the committee will travel to Chicago for a three-day work session to set goals for the next three years.

Dean of Student Services Celeste Donovan told the board about a workshop for coaches on avoiding harassment and liability issues. Attorney Shirla McQueen provided clarity and information "about what to tolerate and what not to," said Donovan, noting that "I want to publicly thank her." McQueen will return to provide similar information for students. The college hosted a Superbowl snack supper for students in the dorm Sunday night, which students appreciated, Donovan said. Upcoming events include Career Days for high school juniors and seniors, homecoming festivities, and a ceremony for Phi Theta Kappa members.

Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander provided an overview to the upcoming budget process, which includes a new "rating" component for expenditures. Sander has asked supervisors to list items in three categories, with the first being crucial to the operations, the second being desirable but not necessary in the short-term, and the third being expenditures that, while helpful in long-range plans, could be delayed or eliminated if necessary.

With the possibility of a rescission of state funding, Sander said, "I wanted to give you an idea of what we're doing this year, and how we're approaching the budget," Sander said.

President Dr. Duane Dunn thanked trustee Ron Oliver for inviting him to attend the Satanta Chamber of Commerce banquet. He also expressed appreciation to current trustees Rick Brenneman, John Engel and Marvin Chance Jr. for filing for the upcoming election. He reminded the board of the Sunday Brunch set for this weekend, Feb. 8.

Summer meeting dates changed

The board voted to reschedule two meetings at the end of the fiscal year. June's meeting will take place June 22, and July's will be on July 20.