



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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Trustees improve price increase for tuition, dorms, meals *SCCC/ATS cost remains lowest in region*

At its regular meeting Monday night, the Seward County Community College/Area Technical School Board of Trustees approved a slight increase to the college's tuition and fees for the 2015-16 school year. The \$5 increase brings the price of one credit hour at the college to \$84, still below neighboring colleges, whose prices per credit hour can be as high as \$98.

Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander said the increase is consistent with peer institutions.

"All the colleges are doing this," he said, noting that reduced state finances play a partial role in the situation. Another reason for the fee increase involves the ever-growing use of Internet technology.

"There's an increase in bandwidth use, as we see more and more students bringing their tablets, laptops and smart-phones on campus, and using all of it more than they used to. It's growing faster now than in the last five years," he said. "They are definitely using it, so we will include it in our fee."

In a unanimous vote, the board approved the tuition increase. Even so, noted college president, Dr. Duane Dunn, "the new rates continue to allow our credit hour tuition/fee to remain among the lowest for our area colleges."

Board members also unanimously approved a 2.19 percent increase in housing and meal rates for students who live on campus. Again, noted Sander, the rising price was consistent with neighboring institutions, which, like SCCC/ATS, must adjust for higher costs for food and operating expenses. The price to live in the Student Living Center, Mansions, or Hale Court apartments, whether single- or double-occupancy, was increased by \$19 per semester. Meal prices will increase by \$31 per semester.

Sander reported that the administration has determined the increase, while minor, is sufficient to keep operations in both the dorms and the cafeteria running smoothly.

The board welcomed four representatives from the Student Government Association to the meeting. Blake Stout, Christian Symons, Natasha Gooden and Lexi Delzeit introduced themselves to trustees and observed the meeting. Dunn also introduced new sustainable agriculture instructor David Coltrain, who presented a quick overview of his plans for the developing program.

"I think sustainable agriculture can be summed up in three words: profit, people and [the] planet," he said. "I've wondered why Kansas farmers don't grow more vegetables, and this program is a great opportunity to make that happen." Coltrain, who said he has "never NOT been able to grow produce," introduced a schedule for the college's fields and greenhouses, including a calendar that charted plans to offer crops directly to the public, "free of charge, pick your own," he said. "I'm looking forward to a bumper crop of tomatoes."

Longtime farmer, trustee Ron Oliver, thanked Coltrain for the information.

“It sounds exciting,” he said.

In other business, the board:

- Voted unanimously to update employee benefits connected to use of the Wellness Center by changing the course listing .
- Voted unanimously to accept an insurance policy presented at a previous meeting by Al Shank Insurance. The policy, which covers the college property — buildings and contents, not liability — will move coverage to a new carrier, MHEC.
- Accepted by unanimous vote the audit report from Linda Billings of Byron Bird & Associates. Billings noted the college’s information was in order, with no red flags that required corrective recommendations.
- Heard a report from Director Steve Wiens on the Federal Title V Grant, which will begin its fifth and final year of implementation. Wiens brought the board a copy of his narrative, recently submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. Wiens highlighted the enrollment increase in corrosion technology classes; formalization of associate degree for natural gas compression technology, as well as development of curriculum for that program; expanded options for hybrid and online delivery of courses; increased matching funds given through the endowment; and plans and bids completed for the Compressed Natural Gas training station on campus.
- Approved a bid for campus computers, as presented by Director of Information Technology Mark Merrihew and Computer User Support Specialist Sandon Hilditch. The college will purchase 96 Thin Client computers, five mini-tower computers, and six high-performance work stations, as part of the normal rotation schedule. Cost for the computers is \$106,022.30 in total, from three suppliers: The Book PC of Sunrise, Fla., Sterling Computers Corp. of Norfolk, Neb., and Insight of Tempe, Ariz.
- Approved purchase of two metal lathes for a price of \$18,496 combined, and two universal vertical knee mills a combined cost of \$21,504. The new machines, from Kansas-Oklahoma Machine Tool of Wichita, will place the college in a position to continue to be a leader in machine trades education, noted Industrial Technology division chair Larry McLemore.

Dean of Academic Affairs Cynthia Rapp provided a summary of the recent trip to St. Charles, Ill., where the SCCC/ATS AQIP accreditation team participated in activities and strategic planning. Trustee Rich Brenneman attended, along with instructor Gary Damron, Division Chairs Kim Zant and Larry McLemore, incoming Dean of Academic Affairs Todd Carter, and Dr. Dunn.

“Those were intense, long, days of hard work,” Rapp said, “and we came out with a good feeling of having worked hard. We really appreciated Rick Brenneman for coming to participate. He did a lot more than simply observe.”

Rapp also noted upcoming events at the college: the science fair, set for Saturday, Spring Break beginning the week of March 15, midterms, and the opening of summer and fall enrollment.

Dean of Career and Technical Services Janese Thatcher said a meeting with area community colleges may result in greater collaboration between institutions through distance learning.

“Students could take their gen-eds at their own community college, but enroll in online courses that are unique,” she said. “It would allow us to offer more without having to add new programs.”

Thatcher said the college received money from the Kansas Board of Regents and will use it to fund a language-training program, Rosetta Stone, on campus. The college will offer access to the resource to faculty as well as students.

Dean of Student Services Celeste Donovan listed a full roster of activities planned for the coming weeks. These included a rescheduled session of College Goal Sunday, which was moved back because of bad weather. The financial-aid event is set for 2-4 p.m. this Sunday at the Liberal High School library. An on-campus Career Day is set for Tuesday, and will bring employers on campus to interview students for potential jobs. All Saints Day events for incoming students are nearing, starting with a special event planned for concurrent high school/college students in April. Also around the corner is the annual Phon-a-Thon, which will utilize student volunteers to raise scholarship money.

Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander confirmed details with the board about construction of the new Food Science and Safety lab in the Hobble Academic Building. The project has been delayed because of bond issues, but Sander said he expects the contractor, French Construction, to meet the original completion date. The board approved an addendum to the contract to specify an extension and new deadline for the start date of the work.

Dr. Dunn brought a legislative update to the board, focusing on bills that could affect the college. Among them are SB193, which would require additional paperwork from college that offer degrees or programs of study. Dunn said the bill would

require a full-time staff person to comply.

HB2266 would require colleges and universities to adopt a far-reaching policy on sexual assault and domestic violence, date violence, and stalking, in order to address off-campus events. HB2190 would change the concealed weapons policy and allow colleges to extend the exemption to the security requirement of the act.

HB2228 would guarantee in-state tuition for military veterans. HB2139 would eliminate in-state tuition for undocumented students, forcing them to pay the higher international-student rate. Dunn said Sen. Garrett Love, Rep. John Doll and Rep. Shannon Frances have been willing to hear the college's concerns about these issues.

Comparative Cost of In-State Tuition & Fees per credit hour:

These tuition hour prices are for the 2014-15 year.

Barton County Community College: \$91

Dodge City Community College: \$80

Garden City Community College: \$85

Pratt Community College: \$95

Colby Community College: \$98

Fort Hays State University: \$148.95

OPSU (across state line, so out of state rate): \$247.88