



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

April 8, 2017

Board members take first look at weapons policy *SCCC will go 'above and beyond' in response to change in state statute*

On July 1, concealed carry by state statute will be allowed on college campuses, and SCCC policy should adjust to protect students, employees, and the public. That was the core of the report Director of Safety and Security Dennis Mulanax presented to the Seward County Community College Board of Trustees at the monthly meeting Thursday evening.

Colleges have had four years of exemption to prepare for this, Mulanax said, but despite talk of more last-minute requests for extension of the exemptions, "I feel it's more likely than not that concealed carry will be allowed, starting on July 1 of this year."

Modeling a policy on one adopted by the state's largest community college — Johnson County — Mulanax and board counsel Kerry McQueen presented a first draft of a weapons policy to the board.

"The biggest concern we have with this change is for our dorms and dorms residents," Mulanax said. While it might be legal for a qualified student of age 21 or older to own and carry a weapon, doing so creates liability issues for the owner and, potentially, SCCC. The policy draft includes the requirement that any weapon "must at all times remain within the exclusive and uninterrupted control of the individual."

On other college campuses, concealed carry owners often lock their weapons in vehicles to prevent meddling or unauthorized access by other people. In a dorm, Mulanax pointed out, this method can be unreliable when a gun owner takes a shower or goes to a laundry room, but must first make a detour to the parking lot to secure a weapon.

One fairly simple solution would be for the college to articulate the responsibilities of the gun owner, and provide handgun storage for students who reside in the Student Living Center.

"Other colleges in Kansas, Garden City Community College being one, are purchasing and renting out gun safes for students, and that is what I am recommending," Mulanax said. "This is a way for us to go a little bit above and beyond for the sake of safety for everyone on our campus."

College president, Dr. Ken Trzaska told the board the policy draft was provided as an information item so that trustees can examine the issue in detail before the May meeting.

"Our Safety Mover group has been working on this issue since August, and there's been really strong leadership from Dennis on this," he said. "Thank you, Dennis."

Highlights of the proposed weapons policy include:

- * Parameters for possession and use of weapons on campus and at off-campus activities.

- * Definition of a weapon including knives more than four inches in length, handguns (pistol or revolver), and any other weapon that expels a projectile by use of an explosive action.

- * Restrictions for concealed carry, including clear definitions of how handguns may be carried and concealed.
- * A recap of the restrictions defined by state law, such as the age restriction (21 years old and older), prohibition of concealed carry in combination with use of alcohol or drugs, or other controlled substances, or by owners with mental health issues or felony convictions.
- * Limitations on where firearms can be used, except for self-defense.
- * Description of how and when location restrictions may be enforced on campus.
- * A complete copy of the draft policy is included in the public record of the board meeting, through the “Board Docs” tab on the Trustees section of the college website, sccc.edu.

“Even the lawful carrying of a concealed Handgun has its own risks,” the policy draft states. “Any report of weapons on the SCCC campus will be addressed by the SCCC Safety and Security Department and/or the local police department in coordination with Safety and Security. The lawful carrying of a concealed handgun should not create concerns on campus.”

Look for more news and information about the April 7 board of trustees meeting in subsequent news releases, and on the college news blog, scccnews.com.