



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Graduating class at SCCC/ATS tops 400 *Board approves plan for Presidential search*

The graduating class of 2015 at Seward County Community College/Area Technical School is one of the largest in the college's history, Registrar Alaina Rice announced at the regular SCCC/ATS Board of Trustees meeting Monday.

"It's a big number," she said. "We had 406 students apply to graduate, and 452 awards total because many of them earned more than one certificate or degree. It might be a record."

Commencement exercises are set for 10 a.m. Saturday in the Green House gymnasium, and 370 students plan to walk in the ceremony. Additionally, the Kansas High School Diploma (GED) graduation ceremonies will be held at 3 p.m. on Saturday. In a separate graduation ceremony, the college's Allied Health division will conduct Nursing Capping and Pinning exercises at 7:30 p.m. Friday, also in the Green House gymnasium.

Presidential Search tops list of employee changes

The board moved quickly through a full agenda, focusing on the search for a new president following President Dr. Duane Dunn's last day on the job, set for June 11.

"We have three community members who have agreed to review applicants," said Board Chair Ron Oliver. "They are Mike Riney, Kent Colvin and Jo Ann Sharp."

In addition, current college deans, academic division chairs, and trustees will review applications.

Oliver presented his fellow board members with a score sheet that can be used to evaluate applicants consistently.

"Dr. Dunn and Dean [of Academic Affairs] Rapp helped us put this together, in order to give you guidelines for this. We tried to list the things the board identified at the presidential search work session the other night," Oliver said.

"This is the same initial review process we use for all applications through campus," Dunn noted. Trustee Dustin Ormiston said he felt strongly that all trustees should be involved in the Presidential Search process. As the CPA on the board, Ormiston noted, he felt it particularly important to weigh in on potential presidents.

"We're already under some financial stress, and getting someone with the skills to address that is going to be premium," he said.

The board unanimously approved the evaluation sheet, with Trustee Marvin Chance absent.

A personnel report listed a roster of open positions, including seven retirements and resignations filed since April.

These included Dr. Janese Thatcher, Dean of Career and Technical Education; Lucinda Hennes and Macy Millikan, both healthcare occupations instructors; Clemente Torres, truck driving instructor; Greg Unger, diesel technology instructor; Carmen Sumner, surgical technology instructor; and Lauren Mahrous, Student Support Services Academic/Career Advisor.

The college is currently accepting applications for the President's position, as well as instructors in agriculture, automotive technology, healthcare occupations, and nursing; division chair/director of nursing; STEM program specialist in Food Science and Safety; sustainable agriculture technician; and custodian.

The board accepted the personnel report unanimously, with Chance absent.

Behavioral Science, Business Programs bring annual reviews

Behavioral Science instructors Katy Redd and Debbie Stafford presented a full academic program review to the board, with special emphasis on the department's action projects. One such project involved more focused work with adjunct instructors, in order to ensure consistency in Outreach and night classes.

"We introduced a standard final exam," said Stafford, "and the expectation is that instructors will have covered the same chapters so the students can complete the final. We felt it would really address the fact that we'd like things to be the same across the board."

Stafford also described service projects she requires of her students.

"I'm a strong believer that the students should be involved in the community," she said. "They've done some awesome projects, for recycling, recognition of firemen, policemen and other service people in our community, and work at the animal shelter."

Redd described her strategy to make childhood development relevant by bringing young children to the classroom.

"I teach theory," she said, "so it's good to bring those little children in, for my students who aren't familiar with them, and wonder, 'What does this look like in real life?'"

Business instructors Tanya Dowell, who coordinates accounting, and Mindy Holder, computer information systems (CIS), reported on their programs, with a special focus on the evaluation provided by the accrediting body ACBSP. After the evaluators had visited the college during the fall semester, "they told us, 'this is the most satisfied group of students we have evaluated,'" Holder said.

With such a positive report, Dowell said, "we asked ourselves, 'What do we need to do?' Goals and outcomes, I've found personally, you can meet and then say, 'Yeah, we did that.' Sometimes you become complacent and don't think to ask, 'Now that I've met this goal, is it still the goal I want?'"

"We want to make sure we are continually improving," Holder added. To that end, the programs have worked on sharing information and practices more effectively so that, when staff turnover might occur, basic procedures and content will be accessible.

Widener to step in as interim director of IT

After more than 35 years of service, Director of Information Technology Mark Merrihew will retire this spring, and the college will have difficulties finding a replacement, Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander told the board.

"Mark is a high value person, and we found that out when we went looking for someone to replace him," Sander said. Systems administrator J.J. Widener has been appointed to serve as interim director of IT. Sander also recommended the college enter a five-year contract with the software provider Ellucian, the company that already powers the college's internal computer integrated database system for everything from enrollment to financial matters.

In a unanimous vote, the board opted to sign a five-year agreement starting in mid-May, at a cost of roughly \$10,000 per month, with the price decreasing to \$8,000 a month over a five-year period.

Reports cover construction, credentials, bouncy houses

Drafting and design instructor Steve Merz showed the board blueprints of the outdoor shelter building the college will construct for the Natural Gas Compression study area.

"It will be enclosed and secure," for the purpose of property protection, he explained, without luxuries or frills in order to acquaint students with actual working conditions in the field.

Dean of Career and Technical Services Janese Thatcher reported on a new joint program with Mid American Air Museum and Liberal High School, "Project Lead the Way." The program will offer high school students a chance to explore STEM

and engineering career options through work on a refurbished jet located at MAAM.

Dean of Student Services Celeste Donovan reported on work to bring CLEP testing to the college.

“I’m really excited about it,” she said. “This works to test students on knowledge they have, and if they score high enough, they can be awarded college credit.” Donovan told the board about a student scheduled to graduate this weekend.

“She lacked some credits, but I took her to Garden City’s CLEP center, and she scored so high for her Spanish language abilities, she received five credits equivalent to Spanish 1 and 2. She can graduate Saturday, and she’ll be the first person in her family to do so.”

Donovan said the annual dorm-resident celebration, Dormapalooza, moved into the Green House because of recent rainy weather, and students had enjoyed free food, inflatable “bouncy houses” and other games.

Dean Dennis Sander reported on the installation of graduation tiles on campus, the culmination of several years of effort. Other activity on the college grounds includes progress in the construction of the Food Science and Safety program lab and routine maintenance of the gymnasium floor, installation of a new sound system in the Green House gym, and repainting parking lot stripes.

The next regular Board of Trustees meeting is set for June 22.