



## 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](mailto:rachel.coleman@sccc.edu)

June 28, 2014

### FY 2014 ends, math makes high marks

As the 2014 fiscal year draws to a close, the Seward County Community College Board of Trustees met to wrap up the year's business and look ahead. In its regular meeting June 23, the board heard a full program review of the college's mathematics department, discussed reports from the college deans and President Duane Dunn, and approved four large purchases — system-wide upgrades to the campus phone system, a new vehicle, a new tractor for the sustainable agriculture program and a complete set of high-tech physics lab equipment.

The board also welcomed City of Liberal Housing Director Karen LaFreniere, who presented information about the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. The program seeks to encourage property owners to improve homes and properties in deteriorating areas by offering tax rebates. The city requested that SCCC/ATS sign an interlocal agreement in support of the plan.

"From my perspective, in the long run it's beneficial to us," said Dunn, who noted that the revitalization plan is consistent with the college's desire to collaborate with local governing bodies and improve the community as a whole. The trustees voted unanimously to sign the agreement with corrections by board attorney Kerry McQueen.

#### *Math department improves algebra pass rates*

Math students at the college are performing at a higher level, thanks to departmental programs developed over the past year and a half. That was the bottom line in a full program review presented by math instructor Bonnie Merrihew and department head Luke Dowell. Math students are now screened more carefully to insure they are enrolled in the appropriate classes, Merrihew told the board.

"I took a look at my students last fall and realized some of them had never met the prerequisite for their College Algebra class," she said. "They were getting through [the enrollment system] somehow, trudging through the class and hoping for a miracle."

Working with the Registrar's office, the math department set up measures to block students from enrolling in College Algebra if they had not passed Intermediate Algebra. The math department also set up pretests administered the first day of class, in every math class. Students who don't perform well on the initial test receive individual attention from the instructor before getting into deeper mathematical waters.

"It's used as an advising tool," Merrihew said. Low pretest scores mean "we're going to sit down and talk about it with the student ... and figure out what class is best."

Another means of improvement was the college's Math Resource Center, which operates in the library during campus hours. Staffed by math instructor Derric Moore, the walk-in center provides a source of tutoring, encouragement and information on demand. "The resource center is being used a lot more," said Dowell. "Students come in to get help. Students go in there to study. Surveys this year said half the students enrolled in math classes used the lab."

Overall, 75 percent of the students who complete a math course on campus at SCCC/ATS pass successfully with an A, B or C. SCCC/ATS students gave their math instructors high marks. In a survey at the end of classes, 96 percent of the students described the math instruction as "outstanding" or "good/above average." The board voted unanimous-

ly to approve the math department's program review.

### ***Sexual misconduct policy updated to federal standards***

A sexual misconduct policy update was presented to the board for a second reading. Originally presented May 5 by Dean of Students Celeste Donovan, policy revisions ensure the college is in compliance with the federal Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (Campus SaVE), which was signed by President Barack Obama in March 2013. The board voted unanimously to adopt the policy, effective July 1.

### ***Board reviews four institutional goals for 2015***

The board reviewed the four major institutional goals set for the upcoming year. These include three continuing goals adopted in Fiscal Year 2014 — improvement of the college's social media presence for marketing, recruiting and public awareness; increased distance education options for all programs; development of a proposal for the next phase of facilities planning — and a new goal, increased enrollment through additional student activities.

### ***Purchase of phone system, vehicle, lab equipment, tractor***

New phone technology means the college's current telephone system will soon reach the end of its useful life, reported Director of Multimedia Technology Doug Browne.

"The college could continue operating on the existing software and hardware, but it would be at the risk of complete system failure, without support to make it operational again," he warned. Browne said it would be wiser to take an active approach, upgrade the software and keep the existing hardware.

In a fashion similar to the current VoIP system, which allows phone messages to be played on computer terminals via email, the new system will enable WebEx video conferencing on half the campus phones. The board approved the low bid of \$81,036.44 submitted by Alexander Open Systems of Wichita.

Physics students will soon study in a state-of-the-art physics lab currently under construction in the Hubble Academic Building. The remodeling process will eliminate a glass wall and enable optics and refracting experiments. New equipment will fill the lab with items like spectrometers, sound, air, motion, light and force sensor devices, electronic balances, various electrical meters and more. Physics instructor Darrin Hook discussed the \$60,532.64 purchase, funded through the STEM grant, with the board. "The list I presented [for bids] is comparable to what you would find at a 4-year-school physics lab," he said. The board approved the purchase from Pasco Scientific of Roseville, Calif.

Buying local was the determining factor for bid acceptance for a new car for the college fleet. The board approved the purchase of a 2015 Chevy Malibu for \$19,975 from Stu Emmert Automotive of Liberal, after the dealership upgraded the offering to the newest model rather than the 2014 model originally submitted. This provided an extra year of warranty and the option of local service rather than repairs through an out-of-town seller.

In a late addition to the agenda, the board also approved the purchase of a new tractor for the sustainable agriculture department. With funding from the STEM grant, the department selected a tractor with front-end loader, harrow, drill/seeder and cultivator. Keating Tractor of Liberal submitted the lower bid of \$41,676 for a John Deere tractor package.

In other business, the board paid bills, approved encumbered funds for purchases remaining in the final weeks of Fiscal Year 2014, accepted an audit contract with Byron Bird & Associates and heard reports:

\* Donovan told the board the enrollment management committee has begun to work with ACT test results to target potential students based on their location, interests and final scores. The dorm reservations have reached the 200 mark, which is 80 percent of the total capacity of 250. She also reported that fewer students received academic suspensions: "I'm pleased to say we had more than 100 who received warnings, and out of that, only 22 were placed on probation, and only 10 were suspended," she said. "We talked to them early and said, 'You need to kick it up a notch and do better.'"

\* Dean of Academic Affairs Cynthia Rapp noted that she will meet with a representative from Tabor College to work out an articulation agreement for students who want to transfer to Tabor after SCCC/ATS.

\* Dean of Career & Technical Education Janese Thatcher updated the board about "Alina" the Learning Jet: "Everyone is excited," she said. "Our HVAC instructor got the training manual for the plane's air cycle and I recruited the fire department to help remove the current flooring" designed by FedEx, which donated the plane, to hold packages in place.

\* Dean of Finance Dennis Sander noted that money "invested" in EduKan is beginning to gain, up by \$72,000.

\* Dunn reported to the board about his recent visit to the Kansas Board of Regents. A reverse transfer agreement signed by 32 colleges and the Board of Regents now allows students to retroactively apply credits earned at four-year institutions to complete an associate degree through SCCC/ATS.