



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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SCCC/ATS board impressed by 2014-15 Presidential Scholars

The Seward County Community College/Area Technical School Board of Trustees met Thursday with the college's 2014-15 academic year off to a positive start.

"I went to the Presidential Scholars Dinner [last week] and I could not have been more impressed with the students," said trustee Sharon Hobbie. "They were so friendly and outgoing."

Board president Ron Oliver agreed.

"That's a good group of students," he said.

Presidential Scholars, nominated by area high schools based on student academic achievement and leadership potential, receive tuition and book scholarships. Those who are selected to work in the SCCC/ATS admissions office as tour guides receive an additional scholarship that covers college fees.

At a dinner meeting Sept. 1 at Baker Arts Center in Liberal, the scholarship recipients met with the board and college administrators, viewed the current exhibit in the galleries, and received Presidential Scholars pins. The evening is a way to honor the students and to encourage them to form a community.

"The students who receive the presidential scholarship have exhibited leadership and academic excellence at their high school. These students then work together and support each other in attaining their goals and becoming involved in campus as well as our community," said SCCC/ATS President Duane Dunn. "We feel the presidential scholars have the potential to become strong community leaders and we hope their experience at Seward helps develop those leadership attributes."

Thursday's trustee meeting introduced new employees at SCCC/ATS: Neal Cann, Corrosion Technology Program instructor; Chandler Kirkhart, Coordinator of Admissions and Marketing; and Joshua "JJ" Widener, Systems Administrator. The board also accepted the resignation of longtime Systems Administrator Cecil Stoll.

Foundation Director Tammy Doll brought the board an update about the upcoming party auction, set for Sept. 20, which funds scholarships and instructional programs. The theme for the event is "Fun & Games," with board- and party-game activities, dinner, drinks, entertainment, and the live and silent auctions.

"Something that always amazes me is how generous our community is," Doll noted as she listed a sampling of auction items. These include a three-night stay in the luxury vacation home, owned by George and Connie Rosel, which Doll described as "a gorgeous home that looks like it should be on HGTV, with fireplaces in every room." Other regular, highly popular items on the auction block include a murder mystery dinner hosted by Drs. Duane and Cindi Dunn, and the naming rights for the SCCC/ATS circular drive.

With the auction just two weeks away, Doll said, donations continue to arrive in her office. Individuals or businesses interested in giving to the auction can do so by calling 620-417-1131.

TRIO student support services director Gayla Myers brought the board a report about the grant-supported pro-

gram for students who struggle with poverty, are the first in their family to attend college, or have disabilities.

“We have a constant stream of students coming in this year, and we are getting close to the 160 we can take,” Myers said.

Trustee Dustin Ormiston expressed concern that students who do not qualify for TRIO services sometimes feel ignored. The subject comes up in discussion during the trustee-student dinners he attends throughout the year, he said: “They’re upset they can’t get these services.”

Dunn said SCCC/ATS administration has responded positively to the situation by using the TRIO program as a template for broader efforts.

“A lot of what TRIO has established, we have implemented across the entire campus,” he said. “We have the Writing Center, and the Math Resource Center, which are available to anyone who walks in. We also have the advising services in the Career Center, and through our individual faculty advisors.

Director of Multimedia Technology Doug Browne brought a report about the college’s plans for backup computer systems in the event of an emergency. The board approved purchase of a refurbished storage system that will be used to continually back up data in a separate location. Cost for the virtual server environment upgrade is \$21,499 with funds provided through the Title V grant.

“It mirrors our regular servers, so for disaster recovery, it’s perfect — exactly what we need,” Browne said.

The board also approved purchase of a new network storage upgrade that will enable SCCC/ATS to expand and support online courses. The \$75,255 system with a five-year warranty will be paid with Title V grant funds.

“It doesn’t make sense to make programs available through a distance-learning environment on a shoestring, because if you have a little glitch, everything goes down,” said Browne. He said he considered buying used equipment but concluded the new system would be better in the long run. He found a final price for the system that reduced the cost by about \$10,000.

Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander presented bids for the Food Science and Safety lab. One of the college’s newer offerings, FSS is funded by a STEM grant and currently takes place in a temporary lab classroom. New lab equipment has been approved, but bids for construction of the lab itself came in higher than the anticipated cost of the project.

The board voted to allow Sander to acknowledge — not accept — the low bid, in order to negotiate with the contractor to determine if the final costs could be reduced through value engineering of the initial design and construction.

The Board briefly discussed and adopted updates to the college’s administrative succession plan, which outlines specific actions if administrative positions open temporarily or permanently due to disability, death or departure. If the organization is faced with an untimely vacancy, the plan provides plans for transition and long-term solutions for leadership positions. Changes to the previous plan, set up in 2011, include removal of the “Dean of Outreach” position, addition of “Dean of Career and Technical Services” position, replacement of the title “Dean of Instruction,” with “Dean of Academic Affairs” and a detailed explanation of the college’s focus on encouraging internal advancement.

Trustees heard reports from college administrators:

Dean of Academic Affairs Cynthia Rapp said an articulation agreement with Ottawa University is nearly complete, and will include a scholarship opportunity for an SCCC/ATS student who transfers.

Dean of Career & Technical Services Janese Thatcher reported that industrial technology instructors are preparing for Manufacturing Day Oct. 3. High school students, business and industry groups and SCCC/ATS staff will interact on campus as part of the national initiative. The college’s truck driving program is full, she said, and was featured in the “Learning Curve” magazine recently. FedEx has donated additional items to help in refurbishing the Liberal Learning Jet into useful classroom space at the Mid-America Air Museum.

Dean of Student Services Celeste Donovan reported that enrollment continues to look strong, with higher numbers of students from Seward County. Another factor has been higher numbers of high school students in surrounding counties who take Concurrent Enrollment classes. On campus, the dorms are full. During Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 17, the college will sponsor special activities.

Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander updated the board about progress in the new office space for the Business & Industry department, which will be moving north to the industrial technology buildings before the end of this semester. He also reported the physics lab in the Hobble Building is nearly ready for use, and should be completely finished with new countertops by October.

The next meeting of the SCCC/ATS Board of Trustees is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Oct. 6.