



## SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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### **New president, employees welcomed to SCCC** *Wellness Center director plans to educate community members*

At its regular Monday meeting Sept. 14, the Seward County Community College/Area Technical School Board of Trustees welcomed new employees, from the president to instructors in various divisions. Trustee Ron Oliver spoke to college president Dr. Ken Trzaska, expressing optimism about the future.

“We’re tickled to death to have you on board,” he said. “Welcome to Seward County.”

Deans and division chairs then introduced a group of new instructors:

**Luis Vela**, automotive technology instructor, who retired from the United States Air Force, has been known to comment that “we’re teaching students how to be men, and maybe fix some automobiles along the way,” said Industrial Technology Division Chair Larry McLemore.

**James Russom**, diesel instructor, joined his son, Chris, who also works in the division as an instructor. A longtime business owner of Hi Plains Engines & Auto Supply in Sublette, his arrival on campus brings real-life value to the division, McLemore said.

**Dalton Brooks**, automotive technology instructor, also hails from Sublette. His arrival in the division served as part of a reorganization following the retirement of longtime auto instructor George McNitt.

**Maria Fe Laguitan** joined the Colvin Adult Center as an Adult Basic Education instructor, said Colvin Center Director Travis Combs. Laguitan holds a doctorate-level credential from her home country of the Philippines, and has worked in various healthcare and educational settings in California and Liberal.

**Merreta Campbell** is one of two new healthcare occupations instructors in the Allied Health division.

**Lu Volden**, longtime Liberal resident, also began work as a new healthcare occupations instructor.

**Ed Hall** moved from his former position as a distance learning coordinator to classroom instructor in the CIS division of the Agriculture, Business and Personal Services Division.

**Amanda Schwab**, who has worked as a professional cosmetologist for several decades, was introduced as one of the cosmetology division’s new instructors.

**Nicholas Noterman** came on board as the animal science instructor in the Agriculture department. Noterman told the group he’d moved to Southwest Kansas when his wife got a job as a K-State Extension agent. He holds a bachelor of science in Agriculture and Animal Science from Fort Hays State University.

**Alex Musgrove** moved from her job as TRiO program coordinator to the position of career and academic advisor. Musgrove completed a master’s degree from Fort Hays State University in June, and said she’s thrilled to move from coordinating to counseling students in the program.

**Travis Boyd** also moved from an old TRiO position, that of Education Specialist, to the full-time program coordinator job. Boyd said he will continue to offer students help with their academic work, but enjoys keeping the TRiO office organized and welcoming.

Trustee Rick Brenneman thanked the college for its support during the Kaiser Carlile funeral in August. The owner of

Brenneman Funeral Home, which handled the service, he said the high-profile memorial service went much more smoothly than any he's organized.

"It's amazing how much the college helped out to make sure everything was done right," he said. "It's amazing, the level of assistance and organization we had from the college."

TRiO student support services director Gayla Myers presented a five-minute report about her program's grant renewal and overall progress.

"Competition was pretty stiff this year, and I was working with grantwriters heavily for half a year," she said. "We did receive funding, so we're here for another five years."

Myers presented statistics about the 160 students currently served by the program. Two thirds of them are the first in their families to attend college, and a similar number come from the low-income economic bracket. TRiO keeps track of the students' persistence rate in completing associate degrees or transfer credits, "and we're raising standards, making it a little stiffer," Myers said.

Andy Highfill, director of the SCCC/ATS Wellness Center, brought a report.

On a daily basis, Highfill said, around 4,000 clients come through the doors. In addition to students, faculty and staff, community groups use the Wellness Center for swim team practice, scuba diving classes and personal fitness.

"It's actually pretty great," he said. "The Baby Boomers are coming out and using the fitness center."

The addition of an evening floor manager has improved efficiency, Highfill said. Future plans include another year of the K-State partnership program, "Commit to Be Fit," increased use of the college's Challenge Course for business team-building and student recruiting, and more civic club appearances by Highfill.

"I'll talk to the Lions Club this week about developing healthy habits, and I hope to do more of that," he said. "It's all about teaching people to live well."

Highfill said one long-term goal is to improve the healthy options of on-campus vending. He'd also like to further streamline the use of electronic registration at the Wellness Center itself.

In Dean's reports, Dean of Academic Affairs Todd Carter said Outreach Coordinator Mike Bailey "has been doing some good work," adding 20 different classes to five outreach sites.

On the SCCC/ATS campus itself, he said, "this is goal time, with our assessment committee setting the direction. The emphasis this year is on critical reading, and embedding academic skills."

Dean of Student Services Celeste Donovan said the academic year had gotten off to a smooth start, with classes filling up and students adjusting to college life.

"Right now it looks like our enrollment is up six percent," she said. The increase in number is partly due to more high school student concurrent enrollment, which increased by 24 percent.

With representatives from USD 480, Donovan attended a leadership summit in Garden City, where regional leaders expressed admiration for the college's participation.

"We were the only college represented there," she said. "They asked me how the group from Seward County got the college to participate and I told them it was expected by our Board of Trustees that we work to be part of our community. They were a little jealous of that."

Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander said the Food Science & Safety addition is scheduled to be complete by the end of September.

"The architect was here last week, and it's looking good," he said. "They should be having class in the lab soon."

President Ken Trzaska updated the board about the college's first All-Staff meeting, which aimed to give employees a sense of teamwork and optimism Trzaska wants to encourage.

"We set the tone by introducing a new tradition," he said. To honor and encourage employees who have done a wonderful job, Trzaska introduced Hamlet, a cast-iron pig custom-painted by art instructor Dustin Farmer. When Hamlet appears at a team member's work station, it means another team member recognized that person's positive contributions.

Trzaska presented Hamlet to his own administrative assistant, Lois Magner, "who started helping me before I even got to work," he said. The pig will relocate weekly, when the host team member identifies another worthy recipient. At the end of

the year, Trzaska intends to draw from the names of all Hamlet's hosts to award one team member a prize.

On a more serious note, Trzaska shared several goals with the trustees:

- Establishment of a staff development plan that could reinforce training, retention and promotion.
- Improved advising models to help students use a guided pathway for their current and future educational plans.
- Refined program evaluation.
- Options to improve the college's web page, perhaps in conjunction with other EduKan consortium colleges that share a need for web page upgrades.

"It has been an exceptional first month," Trzaska said, adding that "I am every day thankful and humbled for the opportunity."