



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Rapp retires, board considers additional sport *New activities could increase enrollment*

After two decades overseeing coursework and educational policy at Seward County Community College/Area Technical School, Dean of Academic Affairs Cynthia Rapp announced she plans to retire at the end of the 2014-15 academic year. The SCCC/ATS board of trustees voted unanimously to accept her resignation letter at Monday night's regular meeting.

In presenting Rapp's request for early retirement to the board, President Duane Dunn expressed personal and professional appreciation.

"It's been a pleasure to work with her and I appreciate her service to our students and our community," Dunn said.

Business instructor Lisa Kennedy thanked the board for a professional development grant that enabled her to complete her master's degree from Fort Hays State University. Kennedy also reported on a community outreach project sponsored by ENACTUS, the student business and entrepreneurship group that she supervises.

"We're calling it E-Closet, because it will empower, embrace and educate disadvantaged women who are transitioning to the workforce," Kennedy said. The service will include a career closet with gently used, donated business clothing, resumé help, interview practice and personal makeover services provided through the SCCC/ATS cosmetology department.

"We're excited to step up and make a difference in the community," she said.

Director of adult education Travis Combs presented an overview of the Colvin Adult Learning Center's programs, budget and strategies.

"Kansas leads the nation in adult education students who are enrolled in technical education credential programs," Combs said, and as the second-largest program in the state (second only to Kansas City), the Colvin Center is a significant contributor to the numbers. Even so, Combs said, there's always room to improve.

"Every year when we submit our grant requests, we have to aim higher," he said. "We can never go below the levels of the previous year."

In a flurry of program reports, the board of trustees heard from representatives from the humanities division and the math, science and physical education division. Instructors Anita Reed (journalism), Magda Silva (vocal music and fine arts) and Janice Northern (English) presented data to track how their programs have followed through on "action project" goals.

Division chair Dale Doll noted that he'd asked the three to report, "because they know their projects better than I do, and I wanted them to bring that passion to the board."

Chairman Ron Oliver thanked the instructors for going through the details and providing written reports, which

ranged from data analysis of student exit interviews to score comparisons in key subjects.

“I think it’s neat that this new strategy is being used,” he said. “You do a lot of work, but sometimes it seems no one’s paying attention.” By updating the goals for the board, he noted, the action plans are transformed into a dynamic, working document.

Math chair Luke Dowell presented information about his department, as well as science and physical education. While the first two areas are easier to track and measure, he noted, finding a way to evaluate physical education instruction presented a challenge.

“We kind of brainstormed with the coaches and adjuncts who teach those courses, and came up with some great ways to define what we expect,” he said. One notable new course is the upcoming “Concepts of Health and Wellness,” which includes content on nutrition, exercise, relationships, drinking and other topics “that we’ve seen, across the nation, college students weren’t getting educated to manage.”

Dowell said the science division has worked to align its standard course offerings and names with those commonly used at four-year institutions, so that student who plan to transfer can do so smoothly.

As part of a quarterly report about SCCC/ATS institutional goals, Dean of Student Services Celeste Donovan outlined efforts to increase student recruitment through the use of social media.

“In the admissions department, we’ve put together a plan to create more awareness of the college, engage our current and future students, and increase enrollment,” she said. “We have some new, younger staff members in admissions and they’ve brought some fresh ideas.”

Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander reported further on the social media marketing plan and the many Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages that list SCCC/ATS in their name. Sander has compiled baseline numbers in order to track “likes,” “tweets” and “followers,” in order to determine how virtual visitors to the college can best be reached.

In a written report, Athletic Director Galen McSpadden presented information to the trustees about the possibility of adding another athletic program as part of the institutional goals to increase enrollment.

“If we want to add a new sport, we will have to make that decision in November,” Dunn said. Trustees will review the information about potential additions to the Saints’ athletic activities including scholarship requirements, travel, insurance, and salaries as well as potential interest of students from the region.

Looking ahead to the holiday schedule, the board discussed the protocol used last year in determining how to handle employee time off between semesters. The campus will be closed at noon, Dec. 23 (a Tuesday) and reopen Jan. 5, 2015 (a Monday).

In her report to the board, Rapp outlined the soon-to-change guidelines for faculty qualifications. New requirements from the college’s regional accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission will raise the bar, requiring faculty teaching in undergraduate programs to hold a degree at least one level above that which they are teaching.

For SCCC/ATS, that will mean instructors may be required to hold Master’s level degrees, or at least 18 credit hours of Master’s-level work.

“I’ll be meeting with division chairs to set up a full credential review and work with faculty that need to become fully credentialed according to the new guidelines,” Rapp said. “It will impact us greatly.”

Dean of Career and Technical Education Janese Thatcher reported on the Manufacturing Day held Oct. 3, “which was very well attended, especially by industry people who are excited about our programs,” she said. The business division recently received an accreditation review, and it went well, Thatcher said.

Dean Donovan shared final numbers about fall enrollment, which indicates an increase over last fall in both number of students and credit hours enrolled. The most growth came from students younger than 18, many of them enrolled in concurrent or career program high school coursework. Additionally, students from Seward County increased this academic year by six percent.

On-campus activities have begun to intensify, with the formation of a new Industrial Technology club, a horticulture club, and increased participation in student events. The Hispanic Heritage Month jalapeno-eating contest brought a crowd of more than 100 people to watch the 15 participants. International students claimed the top honors, with a student from Russia in first place and a student from Nigeria in second. Other activities include a transfer fair, depression awareness and screening, and a trip by Crusader newspaper students to a national conference in Philadelphia.

Dean Sander announced the appointment of Saints Bookstore manager Jerri Lynn Lyddon to a position on the nation-

al board of trustees for the College Bookstores Association.

“It’s an honor and we’re very proud of her,” Sander said.

In his report, President Dunn encouraged the trustees to attend the upcoming ilyAIMU concert at 7 p.m. Oct. 16, featuring an acoustic band traveling cross-country to various state universities. Basketball preview night is set for 6 p.m. Oct. 23. A legislative breakfast will take place at 8 a.m. Oct. 29.

The board voted to attend a joint board of trustees meeting with officials from Dodge City Community College and Garden City Community College Dec. 1 in Dodge City. Because that meeting overlaps with a regular SCCC/ATS trustee meeting, the board rescheduled that month’s meeting for Dec. 3 (a Wednesday).