



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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College to offer new Associate degree in Health Information Technology *Smaller hospitals need access and employees, instructor notes*

After a sit-down dinner with representatives from the student body, the Seward County Community College Board of Trustees handled a full agenda at their regular meeting Nov. 2. The evening's highlight was conversation with the students, noted board chair Ron Oliver.

"This is a great bunch of students, and our dinner went very well," he said. "It was pretty positive."

The board-student dinner, held once each semester, was established to give trustees and students a direct connection. "We ask them if there's anything they have complaints about, or anything that needs attention," said trustee John Engel. "This year, they were pretty happy about everything."

That was the case with international student Patrick Blanc, who told the board his educational experiences in his home country of Haiti had been very different.

"It's a great privilege to be here," he said. "In my old school, when students struggle, teachers didn't care." By contrast, he's seen instructors at SCCC/ATS go out of their way to encourage students to stay engaged with difficult course material.

Several concurrent students from Liberal High School attended the dinner and expressed similar views.

"I think it's great that someone like me will be graduating high school in May with an Associate degree at the same time," said Trever Thomas, who attends LHS, works at Dillons, and is on track to earn his degree from SCCC/ATS this spring.

Following the dinner, the board toured the college's newest science facility, the recently-completed lab for the Food Science & Safety program.

Program instructor Chris Guyer met the group to explain special features of the lab, which was added to the west side of the Hobble Academic Building by local contractors French Construction.

"I'm excited," Guyer said. After doubling up with other science instructors to share lab space for the past two years, he said, his students will enjoy having their own space.

The college's Health Information Technology program got a thumbs-up from the board, with unanimous approval of the HIT request to transition from a certificate program to one that will offer an Associate of Applied Science.

"Changes in national policy and regional needs prompted us to propose this," said instructor Sherry Ferrell. Although three other colleges in Kansas offer the AAS for HIT, SCCC/ATS' location offers an advantage.

"In Oklahoma, the closest program for students is in Tulsa, and in Texas, it's Houston," Ferrell said. Students from the surrounding region may be more likely to choose SCCC/ATS than faraway Neosho, Hutchinson Community College,

or private Washburn University, to earn the credential.

“And we’ve got all these little hospitals around here that need access, and need employees,” she said.

Following the board’s vote to proceed, the HIT proposal will go to the Kansas Board of Regents for official approval.

Other action items for the evening included a unanimous vote to relocate the second planting plot to be used for the Sustainable Agriculture program. As Dean of Academic Affairs Dr. Todd Carter explained that property just south of U.S. Hwy. 54 will not be suitable for cultivation, as originally planned.

“We’ve found buried cement and other things that would make it a problem for the agricultural program,” he said. Carter asked the board to approve use of a plot on the main campus property, just north of the agriculture program’s instruction building.

The cosmetology program will install six new pedicure/spa chairs in the salon area of the program, after unanimous approval by the board.

“The program has outdated and worn chairs that [do not] offer our students the opportunity to develop advanced skills in professional pedicuring,” noted Dean of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander in his report. “The current chairs ... give clients an average pedicure experience at best.”

The new chair units will raise the standard of excellence by ensuring water stays hot enough, and, with disposable liners for each client, a more sanitary experience.

The low bid for the chairs was provided by Contego of Westminster, Calif., at a price of \$15,100.

Sander, Carter and College President Dr. Ken Trzaska, presented reports to the board. Trzaska noted that plans are in place to update the College’s security procedures.

“We’ll introduce a four-phase training program for safety on campus at our next all-team meeting,” he said. “We recognize that the first step is the train our team members about awareness, policy, and process and procedure. . We will have a thoughtful discussion on those situations, the simplest to most extreme, and how to respond and address each. We want to make the right kind of changes that are thoughtful and practical.”

Trzaska noted that campus Director of Security Dennis Mulanax, with experience in law enforcement and concealed carry instruction and law, “is exceptional. He has great ideas, and he has agreed to lead the way as we prepare for our campus waiver on carrying firearms expires.”

In other business, the board:

- Met new employees from the Allied Health Division. Ashley Davis of Ulysses teaches surgical technology. Tracy Compaan of Liberal works as the division’s part-time secretary.
- Accepted, “with regrets,” a request for early retirement from Director of Human Resources Deb Weilert.
- Heard and accepted program review updates. Division Chair Dale Doll presented an update on the Humanities Division, which has focused attention on keeping outreach and concurrent coursework consistent with on-campus classes, and developing effective promotion methods. Division Chair Luke Dowell presented the update for Math, Science and HPERD, where an in-depth review of the science program is on schedule to be presented by spring.
- Recognized employees who are members of PEA (Professional Employees Association) and accepted notification of officers Darrin Hook, Myron Perry, Cristy Mulanax and Harold Fick.
- Heard in a report from Carter that Accounting instructor Tanya Dowell was recognized as one of six Kansas “Women to Watch” for 2015, by the state’s professional accounting association.