



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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College board sits down to dinner with students *Regular meeting includes purchase of portable milling machine*

It wasn't family dinner, but it was the next best thing. In what has become an annual tradition, the Seward County Community College/Area Technical School Trustees sat down for dinner with 30 students before the board's final meeting of the year. With finals just around the corner, students enjoyed the relaxed, family-style event, and the chance to share their point of view about what the college does well, and what it could do better.

"I absolutely love it here," said Kellyn Peters, who arrived as a new student from South Africa at the beginning of the semester. "Coming here was different, but it's been easy to settle in because everybody is so welcoming." Peters was not the only student to voice positive thoughts about the college.

"The instructors here are amazing," said Jose David Martinez. "It's as if they aren't here to get paid, they are doing everything because they want to help you."

Board members said their main purpose at the dinner was to listen to students' thoughts, and get to know them better. Longtime trustee Sharon Hobble insisted that the group of students who shared her meal were the best in the room, "and I'm not biased!" she said with a laugh.

At his table, trustee Marvin Chance joked that the students had approved a measure to double the salaries of the board of trustees, who serve as unpaid volunteers and receive no reimbursement for their time.

SCCC/ATS President Dr. Duane Dunn said he was pleased with the prologue to the board's regular meeting.

"The first couple of years I was here, the students didn't want to say anything," he recalled. "Now, they're opening up. I don't hear them saying they hate anything, but they had some good suggestions, like opening the library more on weekends so students can study, that we can look at."

During its regular meeting, the board worked quickly through a routine agenda. In unanimous votes, the board approved keeping the college's early retirement policy as presented. At this point, Dunn said, only one employee, Dean of Academic Affairs Cynthia Rapp, has declared intention to retire early; the deadline will arrive in January.

The board also adopted the 2015-16 academic calendar, which is much like the calendar for the current academic year.

"That seemed to be the best fit," Rapp said. "We may need to clarify to students about why we hold commencement exercises before the students complete their finals — and that is because so many people leave campus the minute they're done, and then we don't have them there for graduation."

Allied Health Division Chair Veda King presented program review updates prepared by surgical technology instructor Carmen Sumner, respiratory therapy instructor Ed Anderson, medical laboratory technician instructor Dr. Suzanne Campbell, medical assistant instructor Amy Sager and herself as nursing instructor. Because the various certification bodies require annual program reviews, King explained, the Allied Health Division has collected and

reported data differently than other divisions do.

“We’re measured by outcomes from our professional groups,” King said, “but this year, Todd Carter asked us to use the program review update template used by everyone at the college, so that was a little different.” King said her division continues to explore ways to expand online education options that will make the programs accessible to students throughout the region. Additionally, collaboration with area high schools has resulted in more options for high school students.

“They can now take medical terminology, human anatomy and applied nutrition,” King said.

The board approved the Allied Health program review updates unanimously.

Industrial Technology Division Chair Larry McLemore brought a presentation about the Mitey Mill portable milling machine.

“This is similar to the machine we have in the machine tool technology program. The difference is, the one we use on campus is the size of a car, and what we’re looking at would fit on the top of this conference table.” McLemore said the machine could be used as an outreach and recruiting tool.

“Area high schools are teaching drafting and manufacturing skills, but they don’t have access to this kind of stuff,” he said. “They sure would like it. This is a mobile way to work with high schools, and present students with a demonstration of what they could do here at the college after they graduate.”

By a 5-0 vote, the board approved purchase of the Mitey Mill, at a cost of \$9,999 from DEPCO of Pittsburg, Kan. Funds for the new mill come from a Carl Perkins Grant.

Dean Rapp reported the college has completed two new articulation agreements, one with Ottawa University and one with Tabor College. She reviewed the end-of-semester events scheduled for what she said can feel like “the December roller coaster,” adding, “we’re almost finished with this semester, which seems amazing to me. It went fast.”

Dean of Career and Technical Education Dr. Janese Thatcher updated the board about the possible addition of a 10-week program for truck driving education. The longer format of the CDL program could qualify students to receive Pell Grant funding. Currently, truck driving programs are not part of federal financial aid programs that offset the cost. If the college and National Carriers can create additional curriculum requirements, Thatcher said, “this would satisfy everyone, including the insurance companies. It’s a win-win-win possibility.” Thatcher will update the board as more details emerge.

Dean of Student Services Celeste Donovan reported that end-of-semester changes have opened 24 slots in the dorms.

“We do have seven new contracts coming in for spring, but I won’t know until February exactly what our numbers will be,” she said. Dorm manager Kate Mulligan is looking for a weekend dorm supervisor to begin in the spring.

“This might be a good position for a young teacher in the community to find housing and then do some part-time work for us on weekends,” Donovan said.

Donovan said the college has begun its annual round of high school basketball nights from December to February, “where we engage with high school students and let them know there is a college close to home.” She gave an update on the Presidential Scholars program’s promise to pay full tuition for students who might later want to enroll in online classes at additional cost. Finally, she said students from the college will take part in a disaster drill co-sponsored by Southwest Medical Center, Liberal High School and Emergency Medical Services. SCCC/ATS students will role-play the part of parents arriving at the scene of an emergency.

Dean of Finance and Operation Dennis Sander updated the board about specials at the Saints Bookstore.

“They’re going to offer walking tacos Dec. 10, and there are sales going on through December,” he said. Beginning Dec. 15, the Saints Bookstore will have its three-day textbook buyback. Other notable events Sander listed were the community Thanksgiving dinner, which served 634 people, and a Christmas dinner for students, Dec. 9.

President Dr. Dunn presented the board with the Aspen Institute Finalist plaque, which acknowledges the college as ranking among the top 10% of “Best Community Colleges in the Nation.” He attended the inauguration of Fort Hays State University President Dr. Mirta Martin, which brought education community members from Yale University, University of Virginia, and Kansas colleges and universities.

Finally, he expressed appreciation to the board for traveling to Dodge City Dec. 1 to meet with the Dodge City and Garden City Community College boards — and for meeting with students before the local meeting.

“I’m always impressed at the conversations that go on,” he said.

The SCCC/ATS Board of Trustees will meet again on Jan. 5, 2015.