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SCCC/ATS Trustees Meet

The Seward County Community College/Area Technical School Board of Trustees met for their regular meeting Monday, October 7, 2013. Academic program review updates were provided for the Fine Arts, English, Journalism, Science, and Health/PE/Recreation/Dance (HPERD) departments.

Dale Doll, humanities division chair, provided information to the Board regarding a new procedure which requires all students to be assessed for writing abilities and subsequent placement in appropriate writing sequence of courses. The placement requirements are designed to assist students in course enrollment in order to address student retention and success in composition courses. A pilot project has been initiated in English Composition courses which include all students writing a letter of application for employment or scholarship. The letters are graded utilizing a common course rubric for all courses as part of the college wide assessment plan.

Mr. Doll also provided information on the Journalism department's utilization of a customer satisfaction survey. The process included all businesses which utilize the student produced newspaper, "The Crusader". The results of the survey indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the advertising, the custom relations provided by the students, and the business transactions utilized by the journalism department.

Luke Dowell, division chair for math, science, and HPERD provided the Board with status of activities within the science and HPERD departments. The science department faculty are participating in a state-wide curriculum alignment process which includes the Kansas public universities. The process is designed to insure that students completing biology courses are provided consistent curriculum in order to assure success in transfer among the different colleges and universities. The science department has initiated a Chemistry in Society course with an emphasis on the utilization of chemistry in typical situations such as forensics, photography, cooking, and dyes.

The HPERD has initiated a broad assessment of critical thinking, healthy lifestyles, and communications. The faculty have established a variety of practices to assess student performance in those areas which are established as academic expectations throughout the college.

The PE department has implemented the Personal Fitness Trainer course this fall. The program is designed to provide individuals with an interest in personal fitness with techniques and strategies for being a personal trainer.

The Board approved naming the campus circle drive "Jo Ann Sharp Drive" as a result of Mrs. Sharp purchasing the naming rights at the recent SCCC/ATS Foundation Auction. The auction was held on Sept. 21 with proceeds used for student scholarships. Trustee Sharon Hobble reported that total proceeds from the auction exceeded $46,000 which will be used directly for student scholarships.

Trustees John Engel and Dustin Ormiston reported on activities in which they participated at the recent Association of Community College Trustees annual congress. They were able to hear Bill Gates discuss the influence of technology on the needed changes in higher education. The discussion included the use of massive online open courses (MOOCs) which have become more readily available and accepted throughout higher education. Those involve recorded lectures using various professors and the faculty member working with students during class on problem solving, discussion, and research. The trustees also attended sessions related to building relations with K-12 systems, effective strategies on addressing decreased state and federal funding, and methods of addressing a national initiative to increase college completion and graduation rates.

Ms. Cynthia Rapp, dean of academic affairs, notified the Board that the college has been notified of funding for a partnership grant with Kansas State University. The grant will emphasize the implementation of a writing resource center to assist students in improving writing techniques.

Dr. Janese Thatcher, dean of career and technical education, provided information on the planned use of the greenhouse for a variety of horticulture and alternative agriculture crop production as part of the agriculture program. The horticulture classes will include a number of different plants which can be used in landscapes and the crop production courses will emphasize various plants which can be used to supplement farm production in our region. Dean Thatcher also notified the Board of the college being selected as a grant recipient to implement a new course in the industrial technology division with a focus on principles of troubleshooting. The course is designed for students and employees in any aspect of industry or manufacturing with techniques on how to identify potential risks or equipment failures.

In other action the Board approved the employment of Ammie Jones, director of outreach, and Macy Millikan, health occupations instructor, and accepted the resignation of Emilyn Jordan, assistant volleyball coach. The Board approved the purchase of microbiology lab equipment from Fisher Scientific in the amount of $146,374 with funds through the US Dept. of Education STEM grant; the purchase of twenty-five iPads in the amount of $14,150 from Apple, Inc., for the business, accounting and marketing classes through Carl Perkins grant funds; and a portable ventilator in the amount of $15,250 for the respiratory therapy program.

The college will host a career fair the evening of October 23 for parents and students who are interested in learning about the career and technical education programs offered at SCCC/ATS. Information will include course descriptions, procedures for applying for admissions, scholarship opportunities, and prospective employment opportunities.

SCCC/ATS will be closed for fall break on Monday, Oct. 14. The annual basketball preview night will be held on Thursday, October 24, and Trick or Treat Street will be held in the student activity center on October 31. The Board will hold a work session related to facility planning at noon Thursday, Oct. 10.

SCCC/ATS Press Release