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FHSU, Seward County Community College Sign Agreement On Elementary Education Degree  
Prospective elementary school teachers at Seward County Community College, Liberal, will be able to transfer to Fort Hays State University to complete their own education and prepare to seek licensure in Kansas after representatives from the two schools signed a 2-plus-2 agreement May 11 in Liberal.

"We are excited about bringing another opportunity to our students to complete degrees in a very seamless method," said Dr. Duane M. Dunn, president of SCCC-Area Technical School.

"When students can see the way to directly reach the goal of a degree and career, they are more likely to achieve that goal," he said. "We have a very solid relationship with Fort Hays State University, and this agreement is another aspect of that strong relationship. Our students can complete their degrees through FHSU and begin a career in a critical need for our area -- elementary school teachers. I appreciate the work our faculty and administrative team did in working closely with FHSU to insure the agreement meets our students' needs."

"Fort Hays State University and Seward County Community College have forged a partnership that will enable degree-seeking students in the areas of elementary and early childhood education to transfer from the community college to the university in a seamless manner," said Dr. Germaine Taggart, chair of the Department of Teacher Education at FHSU. "This is of particular importance in this time of teacher shortages."

For several years, said Taggart, community college representatives have met with FHSU education faculty and staff to discuss programs and procedures that would assist students as they make the transition from community college to a four-year school. The discussions have yielded 2-plus-2 agreements with Kansas' community colleges. The most recent was a 2-plus-2 with Dodge City Community College.

"The elementary education degree and the early childhood unified degree prepare students to seek licensure in Kansas so that they may become teachers," said Taggart.

"A 2-plus-2 agreement lays out exactly what courses a student would need to graduate with a bachelor's degree," said Dennis King, director of FHSU's Virtual College. "A community college student working toward an associate's degree knows in advance what classes are needed both at the community college and from FHSU to end up with a bachelor's degree. The agreement also lays out points of contact between students and faculty advisors at both FHSU and SCCC."

In this case, the degree programs are elementary education and early childhood unified teaching degrees. Both are offered online, face-to-face or in combination. FHSU enables prospective teachers to take coursework in a manner that suits their busy lives and provides a way for them to engage in field experience in schools that are close to their residences. The use of technology by the students and the faculty has opened new avenues for obtaining a teaching degree.