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By ROBERT PIERCE • Leader & Times Having Liberal within driving distance of four other states allows Seward County Community College/Area Technical School to draw students from throughout the area. For some of the students wishing to get in-state tuition, SCCC/ATS President Dr. Duane Dunn said assistance is provided in that area, and one such manner in which this can happen is through the avenue of voter registration as proof of residency.

Numbers from the Seward County Clerk's office show 404 people have registered to vote since 1995 with the address of 1801 N. Kansas Ave., the college's location.

Of those, only 7 percent are still active on the voter roll, with most waiting for the required four-year period to lapse. The records also indicate that virtually none of the students ever voted but did use voter identification as a form of identification that, along with a driver's license, helped them qualify for in-state tuition rates.

Dunn said during the fall 2010 semester, SCCC/ATS had 18 students change from out-of-state residency to in-state through the voter registration process, and he said there may be other students who attended that also changed residency, but may not have informed the school of the registration.

"Of those 18 students, 17 were athletes, and five did not enroll for fall classes, and six did not enroll for spring classes," he said. "So the students were here for spring 2010 classes, but did not attend SCCC/ATS in the fall 2010 and/or spring 2011."

Dunn explained that the process used for a student to move from out of state to in-state residency is that a student fills out a voter registration card, and it is mailed prior to six months of the starting date of the fall semester.

"They have to have been a student, residing in Kansas for six months prior to requesting in-state tuition rates," he said. "The student goes to the driver's license examination office and obtains their Kansas driver's license prior to six months of the starting date of the fall semester."

Dunn added students must reside in Kansas six months prior to making the application for in-state tuition rates. He also said at the Department of Motor Vehicles, some register to vote when they obtain their Kansas license.

"They are asked at the DMV office immediately after getting their driver's license," he said.

Dunn said a student then goes to the college's registrar office and gets an affidavit of in-state residency and fills it out in front of a notary while providing three documents:

- o Copy of voter registration in the state of Kansas dated six months prior to the school term;

- o Copy of driver's license dated at least six months prior to the school term; and
- o Attendance verification at SCCC/ATS commencing six months prior to the first day of classes. Students' transcripts are attached to the affidavit of in-state residency which has their Kansas residency listed as the SCCC/ATS dormitory or other residence of which they have been at since August of the previous fall semester.

Dunn said this is done prior to the sixth month date from the start of the school term. He also said many of the college's out-of-state students do not pursue in-state residency because they plan to transfer to a college or university that is not in Kansas, meaning they don't want to go through another change in residence process.

"In-state Kansas statutes provide that for purposes of community college in-state residency, an individual must reside in the state for at least six months prior to seeking in-state residency," Dunn said. "This applies to any student – full-time, part-time, athlete, non-athlete, commuter, dorm resident, etc."

He said having students apply for in-state residency is really no different than if any business employer hired an individual from another state and having that individual choose to enroll in classes at SCCC/ATS.

"That individual, after residing in Kansas for six months, brings proof of residency to our registrar's office and indicates they have resided in Kansas for six months, then that individual attends at the in-state tuition rate," he said.

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