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- Special to the Daily Leader

The Seward County Community College/Area Technical School Board of Trustees met Monday to discuss budget reductions and requirements for the 2009-10 school year.

The Kansas Association of Community College Trustees and Presidents will be on the SCCC/ATS campus June 19-20 for a meeting.

Representatives from the 19 community colleges including administrators and trustees will convene to discuss policies, procedures and student learning success. As part of the session, Gov.

Mark Parkinson will participate in the meetings via interactive video.

Marvin Chance Jr., SCCC/ATS board member and chair of the KACCT, said he is optimistic that the group will come together as a unified voice as community colleges across Kansas face continued budget cuts and challenges.

“It’s time we look at things in a different perspective,” he said.

Dr. Duane Dunn, SCCC/ATS president, presented a list from the Kansas Board of Regents outlining the status of the state budget for postsecondary education for the 2009-10 school year, including many reductions. Many of these reductions have a direct affect on SCCC/ATS and the other 18 Kansas community colleges. Already, the college has returned more than \$170,000 to the state as part of the budget rescission. It is anticipated that FY2010 reductions could result in

close to 20 percent reduction in state aid at SCCC/ATS as the funding distribution formula is applied to all community colleges.

As the college builds its 2009-10 budget, it is faced with a number of potential reductions in operating costs or anticipated increases.

These include:

- o Anticipated reduction in the state's community college operating grant of \$400,000,
- o Anticipated reduction in post-secondary aid for the area technical school of \$186,000,
- o Reduction in technology grant and vocational capital outlay (ATS) grant of \$14,000,
- o Faculty salary increase of 3.75 percent or approximately \$113,000 based on the two-year negotiated agreement established in 2008,
- o Health insurance increase of 21 percent for an estimated total employee benefit cost of approximately \$2.5 million.

The administration presented the board with a list of items the college could potentially cut from its budget to help offset the reduction in state aid and other expenditures. The college will consider changes in the well pay policy, professional development grants, travel, incidental expenses, supplemental contracts, hiring freeze, reduction in overload pay and adjunct contracts, reassignment of positions, reduction in capital equipment purchases and capital improvement projects.

The board also approved a 3.75 percent salary increase for all exempt employees (non-faculty). In addition, the board approved a 30-cent per hour increase for non-exempt employees.

In an effort to reduce current and future high-cost investments in computer hardware, the board accepted a proposal from Nex-Tech of Hays in the amount of \$87,360 and the Microsoft Virtual Environment Licensing from the Saints Bookstore in the amount of \$5,000 to create virtual computer applications. Citrix is a virtual application that consists of hardware and software that would extend the life of hardware and allow software upgrades to be made at the server level versus the individual machine level. All applications can be run via the Citrix hardware/software and then distributed to the desktops that need the application software.

Mark Merrihew, director of information technology, told the board that the life of a computer could be extended for an additional six years. This summer, the IT department will begin the virtual process on 48 computers in four labs. Merrihew also indicated the utilization of the virtual environment should result in a reduction of utility usage and cost, stating “this is a green concept as well as cost savings for equipment purchasing.”

As the budget planning process continues to be a challenge, the college will take a closer look at programs on campus that have consistently had low enrollment. Over the next three months, the college will look at enrollment numbers, students who complete the program, students who are placed in jobs and students who transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Among the options are offering courses less often, offering more courses online, changing the time or day a class is offered, expanding marketing of these programs or changing the direction of the program.

The board accepted the program reviews for both the surgical technology and accounting programs with the next review for each scheduled for five years.

Over the past five years, the surgical technology program has transformed from “face-to-face” to an online format to decrease student travel and expenses. Lab and clinical experiences continue to be taught at the state-of-the-art skills lab at the Epworth Allied Health Education Center and at multiple clinical facilities in Southwest Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle.

The greatest challenge is recruiting and retaining qualified students. The change in curriculum delivery has helped boost enrollment in not only the surgical technology program, but the medical laboratory technician and the respiratory therapy programs, as well.

With the addition of a two-year associate in applied science degree, the accounting program offers a variety of degree options to meet the changing student population. In addition, the program is working closely with four-year universities to ensure curriculum alignment to ease the transition from SCCC/ATS a transfer university.

The college continues to move forward on developing its strategic plan, and Dunn reported that the college would focus on five areas, including technology, employee development, diversity, awareness and student learning. Dunn indicated the information obtained from the public focus

group discussion indicate these are the five primary areas of which SCCC/ATS needs to focus resources and planning initiatives.

Ed Poley, director of the area technical school, told the board that the SWKTS Foundation would suspend all operations and donate its assets to the SCCC Development Foundation.

Ron Oliver, who was absent from the last meeting, was sworn in as a member of the board of trustees after being re-elected to the board.

In other action, the board:

o Hired Alison Chambers as the new Drama/Communications instructor; and Norman “Buddy” Smithson as the director of area technical school and division chair of industrial education; o Accepted the resignation of Molly Belt and Jessica Murphy, admissions coordinators; o Repealed Board Policy No. 516 regarding the Athletics Agents Act that no longer applies to Kansas Community Colleges; o Accepted the bid from Earles Engineering of Liberal in the amount of \$16,481 to provide engineering services to rebuild the south and east parking lots at the area technical school; and o Reviewed a new policy No. 427 for later approval regarding Missing Student Notification.

The next special board meeting will be at 7:30 p.m., Monday, June 22, in the boardroom.

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