

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Julia Lynn at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 27, 2015, 548-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Susan Wagle – Excused

Committee staff present:

Reed Holwegner, Legislative Research Department

Debbie Bartuccio, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Edward Penner, Legislative Research Department

Chuck Reimer, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Dr. Joseph Sopcich, President, Johnson County Community College

Mike Jensen, Vice President, Marketing and External Affairs, Olathe Health Systems

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Possible bill introductions

Chairperson Lynn asked if there were any bill introductions.

Representative Frownfelter requested the introduction of a bill concerning dealing with blighted and dilapidated properties. There was no objection to the introduction of the bill.

Senator Holland requested the introduction of a bill concerning surface owner property rights. There was no objection to the introduction of the bill.

Presentation on:

Chairperson Lynn recognized Dr. Joseph Sopcich, President, Johnson County Community College (JCCC), who made a presentation concerning Today's Community College in Workforce Development. [\(Attachment 1\)](#) Dr. Sopcich said the mission of the community college is simple, to serve the needs of its respective community. All 19 community colleges across the State work hard to accomplish this mission. The colleges provide opportunities to facilitate students' degree aspirations as well as their career and technical pursuits. While community colleges have always worked closely with the business community to facilitate workforce development, this important component of the mission appears to be getting more and more attention as community colleges are expected to play an even bigger role in economic development.

Dr. Sopcich indicated Kansas community colleges served 131,868 students in credit courses this last year and had 8,208 students participate in technical education. Community college students earned 6,370 certificates as well as 8,476 associate degrees and 3,317 of the students transferred to state universities.

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He said the purpose of the testimony is to present insights to the Committee regarding how community colleges promote economic development by working with businesses to help develop their workforce. The following topics were covered:

- How "Hot" Jobs are identified around which to develop training programs
- The different approaches utilized by JCCC to work with local area businesses
- JCCC's approach to expanding the workforce through its GED program

Dr. Sopcich indicated JCCC works very closely with the business community to ensure that the traditional (credit) and continuing education offerings meet the needs of the workplace. Close relationships are developed with area businesses to facilitate internship and training opportunities for students. In order to keep up with the changing demands of the workplace, as well as the rapid evolution of technology in the workplace, Dr. Sopcich reported all of their traditional (credit) and career and technical programs have Advisory Committees that meet twice a year to review the curriculum and goals. The forty-two volunteer Advisory Committees are comparable to built-in focus groups. With input from the Advisory Committees, the faculty updates the curricula and incorporates their own input based on the current research in the field. Additionally, the faculty cultivate professional relationships with industry and invite representative businesses to give presentations to inform students of what the marketplace expects. The traditional (credit) and continuing education branches communicate with each other to make sure custom, on-demand, and "credit-earning" training is available. The goal is to put the client or student's need first. Finally, he said the college works closely with universities to develop affordable, efficient, and seamless degree programs in growing fields.

He reported their Continuing Education program is significant. Last year, JCCC had 19,302 people who took one course or more, resulting in gross revenue over \$4.1 million. JCCC programmed 1,705 open enrollment classes, 585 online, and negotiated 222 contract training courses. The latter is directly related to serving the business community. He said the Continuing Education operation has several very active workforce development programs in the following areas: Computer Technology/IT, Business Skills (Leadership, Finance, Communication, and Assessment Center), Trades, Healthcare, Transportation, Supply Chain and Logistics, and Process Improvement. Some programs aim to get students a job; others aim to help students succeed in their current jobs.

Dr. Sopcich stated there are programs which target professionals who need continuing education hours to keep their license or certification current and allow them to work in their profession. Many of the programs lead to certificates (granted by JCCC) or certifications (granted by a recognized association). The Continuing Education team is very active with the business community. Their contract training programs provide the team with yet another avenue to communicate with businesses. He stated Johnson County Adult Education (JCAE) serves about 2,000 students annually, with about half of those (1,000)

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ABE/GED students and the other half ESL students. For the upcoming year, the goal of JCCC is to enroll 33% of GED graduates into postsecondary programs.

In conclusion, Dr. Sopcich stated workforce development is a critical part of the community college mission. Across the state all community colleges are working hard to develop programs that can meet the needs of our employers, get good jobs for our students, and in the process, make our communities, and the state of Kansas, stronger.

The following appendices were included:

Appendix A: "Hot" Jobs in the Kansas City Metro Region

Appendix B: Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Division - 2014

Appendix C: "Hot" Jobs "Live" through Continuing Education

Appendix D: Continuing Education Certificate Completers 2013-2014

Appendix E: 2014-15 Advisory Committees

Appendix F: JCCC Continuing Education Certificates and Certifications

Appendix G: ROI on Kansas' Community Colleges

Dr. Sopcich introduced Mike Jensen, Vice President, Marketing and External Affairs of Olathe Health Systems who shared some examples of their collaboration and great relationship with JCCC. He stated Olathe Health is proud to be a community partner with JCCC in the development of the workforce.

Senator Faust-Goudeau asked how long Dr. Sopcich had been the President of Johnson Community College and if he was originally from the state of Kansas. Dr. Sopcich replied he had worked for JCCC since 1992, and has been President for a little over a year. He said he grew up in Missouri. Senator Faust-Goudeau then referred to JCCC's partnership with DCF (Department for Children and Families), and asked for additional information concerning how the partnership with DCF worked. She also inquired about the GED program and asked if the program was being extended to the Workforce Program in Wichita. Dr. Sopcich replied he would need to do some research concerning these questions. Chairperson Lynn expressed her appreciation for the programs that work with the disabled and individuals with challenges to assist them toward their goal of finding work. Senator Faust-Goudeau commented she was really interested in having these programs work for the constituents in her district.

Senator Longbine commented one of the frustrations in acquiring staff for his company has been the

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lack of training on soft skills. He questioned what the colleges are doing to address the soft skill issue, and how can soft skill training be incorporated into the curriculum and workforce development. Dr. Sopcich replied there are noncredit courses available for soft skills. Another option would be for an employer to request assistance from the Continuing Education Department to develop specific programs for the employer.

Senator Holland complimented Dr. Sopcich on the quality of courses and the state-of-the-art technology available to students at Johnson County Community College. He asked Dr. Sopcich how the Senate Commerce Committee could be of assistance to community colleges. Dr. Sopcich responded that placing the spotlight on community colleges through opportunities to speak to Legislative Committees is of benefit to the colleges. He said the challenge has always been how the community colleges can work efficiently, effectively and quickly to generate the programs required to meet the needs of the workforce. He indicated community colleges would appreciate anything that can be done to facilitate the process for students to obtain their certificates or degrees, and for community colleges to receive the funds required to provide the technology and programs.

Senator Melcher asked, in follow up to the subject of accelerating the development of new course work in the fields of technology, if there was anything the Commerce Committee could do to help remove some of the obstacles that prevent new classes from being developed more rapidly. Dr. Sopcich responded there are processes to be completed when establishing curriculum which can at times be laborious. When the Committee reviews legislation, it would be helpful if the Committee could be attentive to the need for community colleges to respond in a timely manner to meet workforce requirements.

Chairperson Lynn expressed her appreciation to Dr. Sopcich for providing the presentation to the Committee. She commended JCCC's efforts to partner with businesses to utilize continuing education programs to provide targeted courses in a timely manner.

Chairperson Lynn adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2015.