

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Sloan at 12:00 P.M. on April 26, 2006 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Bill Otto- excused
Representative David Huff- excused
Representative Deena Horst- excused

Committee staff present:

Mary Galligan, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Deb Hollon, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Art Griggs, Office of the Revisor
Haley DaVee, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association
Richard Hoffman, Kansas Association of Technical Schools and Colleges
Mary Ellen Conlee, Wichita Area Technical College
Reginald Robinson, President and CEO, Kansas Board of Regents

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Sloan opened the hearing on **SB 588 - Establishing the Kansas technical college and vocational education school commission** and welcomed Mark Desetti, Kansas National Education Association, to testify as a proponent. (Attachment 1). Richard Hoffman, Kansas Association of Technical Schools and Colleges, and Mary Ellen Conlee, Wichita Area Technical College, also testified as proponents of **SB 588**. Reginald Robinson, President and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents, presented testimony in support of **SB 588**. (Attachment 2).

Questions were asked by Representatives Krehbiel, Kelsey, Kuether, Storm, Craft, Phelps, Sloan, and Sharp. Chairman Sloan closed the hearing on **SB 588** and because of time constraints, asked the committee to work **SB 588** during this committee meeting.

Representative Kuether moved that the bill be amended include performance as an area of study for the commission and to require that the commission's report be sent to the House Higher Education Committee, the Senate Education Committee, the Legislative Education Planning Committee, the Governor's office, and the Kansas Board of Regents. Her amendment also would clarify that the Commission's recommendations should include legislative proposals. Representative Menghini seconded the motion.

Comments were made by Representatives Johnson, Winn, Storm, Kelsey, and Hill.

The motion carried.

Representative Hill moved an amendment to shift primary responsibility for staffing the Commission from legislative agencies to the Kansas Board of Regents. Representative Kuether seconded the motion.

Comments were made by Representatives Storm, Craft, Kuether, and Winn.

The motion carried.

Representative Sharp moved to strike lines 41-43. Representative Krehbiel seconded the motion.

Representatives Kuether, Carlin, Krehbiel, and Hill offered questions and comments on the motion.

The motion failed.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Higher Education Committee at 12:00 P.M. on April 26, 2006 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

Representative Sharp moved an amendment requesting the proposed Commission consider consolidation of technical colleges with community colleges and universities. Representative Krehbiel seconded the motion.

The motion failed.

Representative Craft moved to amend lines 29-31 to clarify that all appointees to the commission be selected from persons representing businesses, industry, and instructional staff of such schools and colleges. Representative Sharp seconded the motion.

Comments were offered by Representatives Hill, Krehbiel, Kuether, and Carlin.

The motion failed.

Representative Sloan moved to amend line 43 to shift financing of Commission expenses from the legislative budget to the Kansas Board of Regents budget. Representative Krehbiel seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Representative Sloan moved an amendment requiring the commission to review and consider the recommendations made by the Kansas Board of Regents. Representative Menghini seconded the motion.

The motion carried.

Representative Kuether moved that **SB 588** be passed as amended. Representative Storm seconded the motion.

The motion carried. Chairman Sloan requested that Representative Hill carry the bill.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.



**Mark Desetti, Testimony
House Higher Education Committee
April 26, 2006**

Senate Bill 588

Mister Chairman, members of the committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to share our thoughts on **Senate Bill 588**.

Technical schools and colleges have been in a kind of limbo since the passage of Senate Bill 345 and then Senate Bill 7. They seem sometimes to be neither fish nor foul – sometimes post-secondary and sometimes secondary. There are many issues that these institutions must contend with and solutions to these issues are often not clear.

KNEA represents instructors in these schools and colleges. This year in particular, these professionals have been concerned about their status and the status of the institutions themselves. Rumors abound of mergers and takeovers; the possibility of returning to Technical School status is the subject on one bill in this year's legislative session.

What we can tell you is that there has been a serious lack of communication among all the stakeholder groups and the one group most left in the dark has been the instructional staff.

We believe that the establishment of a Kansas technical college and vocational education school commission is a good idea. Our concern is that there is no guarantee that the employees – the instructors – will be represented on this Commission. What we can tell you is that they have not been involved in many discussions that have been taking place up to this point and that has created serious concerns about their long term employment status.

The legislature can go a long way in dealing with the many challenges facing technical schools and colleges if there is a concerted effort to guarantee that the employees are "at the table." We believe that the Senate committee amendment will help in bringing a representative of the instructional staff to serve on this Commission.

If we want to provide for an excellent vocational and technical program in Kansas – one that delivers a well-trained workforce to Kansas businesses – we have to ensure that these programs are well-planned and appropriately supported by the state. The instructional staff wants to be part of the solution.

House Higher Education Committee
4-26-06
Attachment 1



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

1000 SW JACKSON • SUITE 520 • TOPEKA, KS 66612-1368

TELEPHONE – 785-296-3421
FAX – 785-296-0983
www.kansasregents.org

April 26, 2006

Representative Tom Sloan
Chairman
House Higher Education Committee
Statehouse, Room 446-N
Topeka, KS 66612

Representative Sydney Carlin
Ranking Member
House Higher Education Committee
Statehouse, Room 521-S
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairman Sloan and Ranking Member Carlin:

Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I am pleased to be with you today on behalf of the Board of Regents to offer our views regarding Senate Bill 588, legislation that would establish a seven-member Kansas Technical College and Vocational Education School Commission. Because this Commission would provide an important opportunity for the Board of Regents to advance its effort to produce meaningful reforms to the state's postsecondary technical education sector, we are pleased to support this proposal.

As many Members of this Committee know, the Board of Regents is currently in the middle of its own study and assessment of the how the delivery of technical education in Kansas is structured and funded. The Board has been particularly interested in technical education issues for a number of years. But during its August 2005 retreat, the Board placed review of the technical education sector among its top priorities for the current fiscal year.

After a series of initial conversations with technical education leaders that began a couple of years ago, the Board's staff produced a "Working Paper" that chronicles the development of the state's technical education sector and proposes a variety of suggestions for reform. The distribution of the Working Paper has triggered a remarkably vigorous and healthy set of discussions around the state regarding the future of the technical education sector in particular, and the delivery of technical education generally. My sense is that these discussions have been inclusive, productive and long overdue.

I say the discussions are overdue because one of the things that becomes clear to anyone who takes the time to review how our technical education sector came to be structured as it is currently structured, reveals that the current structure is more the product of a series of ad hoc decisions, and not at all reflective of any deliberate or comprehensive determination to put in place a coherent or fully rational design. It is important to note, in this regard, that during the state's last comprehensive consideration of postsecondary education issues (the consideration and enactment of the Higher Education Coordination Act of 1999 – Senate Bill 345) the

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technical education sector was not woven into that consideration in the same way that other sectors were. Given all of that history, the time has come to produce a rational design for the state's technical education sector, and the Board is pleased to be working currently with technical education leaders and other critical stakeholders to achieve that result.

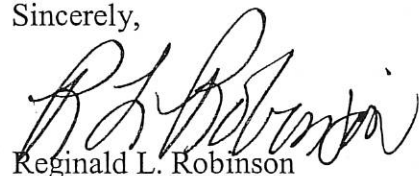
If the Board believed that the creation of the Commission proposed by this legislation would disrupt the process it currently has underway, then this proposal would certainly give us pause. We believe instead, however, that this Commission creates a meaningful opportunity for the Board to advance and subject to important review the recommendations that it will adopt in this area. My hope is that by the time the Commission convenes, the Board of Regents could have for the Commission's consideration, a set of recommendations that could serve as the starting point for the Commission's work.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to offer a couple of thoughts. First, I think the proposal for a seven-member Commission is a good one, size-wise. A seven-member group is large enough to ensure that key stakeholders are represented, yet small enough to constitute a serious working group that will be able to get its work done without getting bogged down in unproductive process issues. I would hope, however, that the appointing authorities would engage in some collaboration as they make their appointments to ensure that key stakeholders are indeed represented. Second, I would hope that this Committee, and ultimately the Legislature, would, if it adopts this measure, appropriate the funds necessary for the Commission to function effectively.

High quality technical education is critically important to the people of Kansas as they prepare for success in the global economy of the 21st Century. We support Senate Bill 588 because we believe the Commission it would create will help to move our state in a positive direction on these important education issues.

Thank you very much for your attention to this testimony.

Sincerely,



Reginald L. Robinson
President & CEO