

Neosho County Community College continues to be one of the fastest growing community colleges in Kansas. In 2001-2002 we produced about 27,000 credit hours. This year (2011-2012) we are projecting over 50,000 credit hours. In ten years we will have nearly doubled the size of the enrollment.

There are a lot of reasons for these results – expansion of programs, growth at the Ottawa campus, and the addition of the online campus are just a few of them. Much of this growth has occurred in something we call out-district enrollment, or courses taken by those who live outside of Neosho County. For those folks who live in other counties of Kansas we charge an extra fee, the aptly named Out of District Fee. Why? Well, these folks do not pay property tax to the College. We save our lowest rates for the people who have supported us for 75 years.

Along with this growth in out-district credit hours, the revenue created by this fee has grown as well. So much so now that it is providing enough to revitalize the Chanute campus.

A few years ago the College went through a visioning process where architects and engineers worked with members of the community, students, and College leadership to shape the future appearance of the Chanute campus. We knew that the growth would continue and that our facility was rapidly aging. Many, if not most areas of campus, had never been significantly renovated since the buildings were built in 1968. Students from over 44 years ago would recognize the same classrooms, science labs, heating/cooling units, and restrooms. We are charged with being good stewards of this facility and it is time to improve it in a systematic way.

Also important to this visioning process was recruitment of new students. One study showed that students on a campus visit make their minds up about whether or not to hear more information within the first three minutes of being on campus. Three minutes. That's all the time we have to make an impression. The researcher said that your chief recruiters are not the admissions employees, coaches, or a dean, it's the people in charge of buildings and grounds. I think we can make a better impression in those three minutes than we are now.

When they do chose to attend NCCC we have an obligation to do everything we can to help them stay in college and complete their educational goals. We need facilities that make this an easy choice to do, that add to the educational experience of the student and maximize student retention and success.

Armed with that visioning process and with revenue from the out of district fee, some grants, and gifts, the College Board of Trustees is moving forward a 10-year plan to revitalize the campus. The plan is called *Our Time*.

Some of the plan you may have already heard. In year one, beginning March 1, 2012 we will be building a new softball field and youth soccer complex as well as a new road from Allen to 10<sup>th</sup> Street with new parking for the complex and improved parking for the library.

Later in March we will turn our attention to the gym and Student Union adding a new sprinkler system, renovated locker rooms and restrooms, new bleachers, and a new gym floor.

Later years of the plan call for renovation of Stoltz and Sanders Halls, our main classroom buildings, complete with new science labs. An expansion and renovation of our performing arts facilities and Student Union is in the works as is a new Student Services Building, and a new Student Activity Center with a second gym floor and student exercise equipment. There are many new architectural features planned as well to make that strong first impression. Improved landscaping, statues, and even a clock tower are part of the vision for the next ten years.

You can find a full account of the *Our Time* plan on the [www.neosho.edu](http://www.neosho.edu) website. Just scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the very handsome photo you find there. On the President's page you'll find the plan.

The total cost of *Our Time* is about \$18 million. Thanks to the out-district fee, we will have much of these funds coming in over the ten-year period. If there is a gap in funding, it'll be my job to raise the revenue to fill that gap with gifts, grants, even larger enrollments, and general fund dollars. The College will NOT be going before the taxpayers to pass a bond issue to increase the mill levy for this plan. We will use available funds. So, *Our Time* will have all the effect of passing a bond issue with none of the increase in taxes.

NCCC has the vision to be the premier community college in Kansas. I believe the quality of the education found here meets this high standard. It is time our Chanute facilities caught up.

As always I welcome your thoughts and questions at [binbody@neosho.edu](mailto:binbody@neosho.edu).