

ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY 1966-1991

Electronics engineering technology was one of four programs selected to be offered when the new Schilling Institute opened its doors during the fall of 1966 on the old Schilling Air force Base. The new college had been created by an act of the Kansas Legislature during the 1965 legislative session following the announcement by the department of defense that the airforce base would be closed that year. Under the terms of the enabling legislation, the new college would begin administrative operations effective July 1, 1965 and would offer its first classes beginning with the fall semester of 1966. Henry M. Neely was appointed as the first president of the college and had the responsibility of assembling the faculty and staff necessary to begin operations. The new presidents task was a formidable one. The first years operating budget provided only for limited staffing and equipment; further the Department of Defense did not release buildings to the new institution until after January 1, 1966. Because of these constraints, most of the initial teaching faculty were not hired until after July 1, 1966. As the faculty joined the new institution, instead of a college campus, they found a collection of mostly Korean War vintage military frame office buildings that required conversion to classroom and laboratory facilities. Only a few weeks remained until classes were due to start. Much of the character of the new institution was developed during these weeks as the newly formed faculty organized itself into what became known as "black sack gangs" to help the skeleton physical plant crew knock down old walls and build new ones so that class rooms and laboratories would be available when the students arrived. The work frequently went on through the evening hours with brown bag dinners being the fare of the day. A campus would be created; swords would be hammered into plow shares.

Twenty-two Electronics students were among those forming the student body during the first year of operation. Initially, classes were held in the current General Studies building. Later that year the electronics department joined the aeronautical, civil and mechanical engineering technology departments in occupying a large frame structure that had been designated as the Technology Laboratory or TL building. Later, this building became infested with termites and was commonly referred to as the "Termite Lab". The TL building eventually was torn down and the site is now occupied by the new Technology Center. In January of 1968, with student help, the department moved into the current computer-electronics building, which was known then by the air force designation of "Building 837".

When the college was formed, the initial programs were designed to include a required summer session in addition to the normal four semesters normally found in post secondary education. The original electronics engineering technology curriculum required 72 semester credit hours with certain critical path courses being offered during the summer session. In one sense

the college was ahead of it's time. However, in the mid 1960's most students were not ready to attend school on a year around basis. Many students went home to work for the summer and those that returned were out of sequence and unable to complete the program in the allotted time. For this and other reasons only four of the original twenty-two beginning students were among the ten individuals graduating when the college held it's first commencement in the spring of 1968. Two others graduated with later classes after serving in the military. The first Electronics Engineering Technology graduates were: Danny Drummond, Bruce Keene, Ed Macy and Ken Morgan. A lot was at stake when these graduates left school for jobs in industry. The reputation of the college would ride on the shoulders of these young men. Two were hired by Sandia Laboratories and two by Phillips Oil Company. The validity of the college's curricula was soon shown. Feedback from industry indicated that graduates from all of the colleges programs were doing well. That todays graduates are well accepted by industry is a tribute to the abilities of those graduating during the early years of the college.

Full-time faculty during the early years of the program included John Dollar, Department Head, Chet Rankin and Jerry Hill, along with Robert Tambling, Ranveer Rathore and M.T. Baer as part-time faculty. Later, Chet Rankin would become Department Head with M.T. Baer and Larry Farmer as full-time faculty and Robert Tambling as part-time faculty.

In 1969, name of the college was changed to Kansas Technical Institute and the board of control was switched from the State Education Authority to The State Board of Education. By 1971, it was apparent that the 72 hour curriculum with the required summer semester was not well received by students. Consequently all of the colleges programs were revised to contain a maximum of four semesters and contain no more than 66 Credit hours. The revised programs were well excepted by students and the department began to grow. By the 1973 time frame departmental enrollments stabilized in the 60-70 range. Although funds were short, the college continued to make steady improvements in laboratory equipment and to refine the curriculum. Graduates of the program continued to find ample employment opportunities with companies such as Boeing Airplane Company, NCR, Texas Instruments, Hewlett-Packard, Sandia Laboratories, Phillips Oil Company, King Radio Company and others.

In 1972, Larry Farmer was assigned as department head with M.T. "Buz" Baer and Ardon Birdsong as full-time faculty. Later, Mr. Birdsong would be replaced by Keith Andrews. A major step forward was taken in 1976 when the Computer Science and Civil, Electronics and Mechanical Engineering Technology departments received initial accreditation from the Engineers Council for Professional Development (ECPD). (During the 1980 timeframe, the ECPD became known as the Technology Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology also known as TAC/ABET). In 1980, the college received initial accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Universi-

ties. By the 1979-80 timeframe enrollments in Electronics Engineering technology had grown to 80-90 students. In 1976, control of the college passed to the Kansas Board of Regents. The effect was readily apparent as the college began to develop five year plans to improve faculty salaries and acquire new laboratory equipment. Both were sorely needed. The high rate of inflation that occurred during the 1970's made it difficult to compete with industry for the type of faculty required to staff accredited engineering technology programs. One result of the better funding was the remodeling of "Building 837" into the current computer-electronics facility. This occurred during the 1978-79 school year. In order to accomplish this task, it was necessary to move the department into the old Community Center Building on the south end of the campus for one year. Prior to remodeling, the department was the sole occupant of "837". After remodeling the department shared the facility with the Computer Science Department. Full-time faculty during this time frame included Larry Farmer, Department head, M.T. "Buz" Baer and Ken Stueve. Part-time faculty were Bob Bingham and Joe Ricketts.

During the early 1980's the electronics department experienced a period of rapid growth. Enrollments in Electronics Engineering Technology expanded and the department was assigned administrative responsibility for the new Computer Engineering Technology program developed originally by the computer science department. By the 1983-85 timeframe the combined enrollments for both programs was in the 150-160 range. One benefit of the increased enrollments was additional funding, as a result the department was able to make considerable improvements to the laboratories during this period. Because of the combined programs along with concerns expressed by accreditation agencies, several changes were made in the structure of the curriculum during the 1981-83 period. The changes included adding one credit hour of laboratory to the chemistry course and adding a required computer course to the Electronics Engineering Technology curriculum. The result was the 68 credit hour program currently in place. Faculty during the first half of the 1980's included Larry Farmer, Department Head, M.T. "Buz" Baer, Dr. John Smith, William Krall, Richard Bartleme, David Delker and Lee Gatton. Part time faculty included Phil Renkinmeyer and Don Wiggins.

In 1986, the department acquired it's second accredited curriculum when the Computer Engineering Technology Curriculum received initial accreditation from the Technology Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (TAC/ABET). On the negative side, during the mid 1980's turbulent economic conditions in Kansas along with a less aggressive recruiting posture on the part of the college has resulted in fewer students selecting the electronics field as a career. Enrollments in the electronics programs have dropped to the 60-80 range during the past two to three years. Although enrollments have dropped, placement opportunities for graduates continue to be good. Faculty during recent years has included: Larry Farmer, Department Head, Rod Anderson (Department Head 1989-90), M.T.

"Buz" Baer, Ron Richolson and Mike Wilson. In 1986 the department finally recieved authorization to hire a supporting technician. Rob Kelly and now Scott Jensen have served in this capacity. During 1988, the name of the College was Changed to Kansas College of Technology. However, the most significant change to effect the college came during the 1991 legislative session. The college has been merged to become Kansas State University at Salina, College of Technology. New challenges and opportunities lay ahead, among them the development of a two plus two Baccalaureate level program.

Under the terms of the enabling legislation, the new college would begin administrative operations effective July 1, 1965 and would offer its first classes beginning with the fall semester of 1965. Harold L. Davis was appointed as the first president of the college and had the responsibility of assembling the faculty and the college to begin operations. The new president's task was to develop the first years operating budget and to secure the necessary land and equipment; further the Department of Defense had to release buildings to the new college with little delay. Because of these constraints, most of the initial teaching faculty were not hired until after July 1, 1965. The new faculty joined the new institution instead of a college. They found a collection of World War II and Korean War vintage military frame office buildings that were in conversion to classroom and laboratory facilities. Only a few weeks remained until classes were due to start. Much of the character of the new institution was developed during these weeks as the newly formed faculty organized itself into what became known as "black sack gangs" to help the skeletal physical plant crew knock down old walls and build new ones so that classrooms and laboratories would be available when the students arrived. The work frequently went on through the evening hours of a 12-hour day during the first year of the day. A campus wide collection agency would be organized into plow shares.

Twenty-two Electromechanical Engineers were among those forming the student body during the first year of operation. Initially, classes were held in the former General Studies building. Later that year the electromechanical department joined the mechanical, civil and mechanical engineering technology departments in occupying a large frame structure that had been designated as the Technology Laboratory or TL for short. Later, this building became infested with termites and was commonly referred to as the "Termite Lab". The TL building eventually was torn down and the site is now occupied by the new Technology Center. In January of 1969, with student help, the department moved into the current computer-technology building, which was known then as the air force designation of "Building 537".

When the college was formed, the initial programs were designed to include a required summer session in addition to the normal four semesters usually found in post secondary education. The original electromechanical engineering technology curriculum required 72 semester credit hours with certain advanced level courses being offered during the summer session. The original