

KANSAS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Kansas College of Technology started in 1965 as the Schilling Institute. The college was created by the 1965 Kansas Legislature by the passage of the Schilling Institute Act, which was HB 1101 in the 1965 Kansas Session Laws.

Schilling Institute was controlled by a three member board created specifically to establish and control the college. This board, also created by the 1965 legislature was called the "State Education Authority" (SEA). The SEA consisted of (1) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction who served as Chair, (2) The Dean of Engineering of Kansas State University and (3) A member at large.

The State Constitution was amended in 1968 to eliminate the SEA and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and to provide for the State Board of Education. This change became effective on January 19, 1969. A bill was passed to change the name of the college from Schilling Institute to Kansas Technical Institute and to transfer control of the college from the SEA to the State Board of Education, effective January 19, 1969. This legislation preserved the original mission of the college.

The 1976 Kansas Legislature transferred control of the college from the State Board of Education to the State Board of Regents. The mission remained the same but provision was made to allow the mission of the college to be modified by the Board of Regents.

Institutional Role:

The role of the college was specifically stated in the 1965 HB 1101 and was restated in the 1969 bill that transferred the college to the State Board of Education. That role was accepted by the Board of regents in 1976 and was reaffirmed by the following mission statement adopted by the Board in December, 1976:

Kansas Technical Institute shall be responsible for providing technical education and training in the fields of engineering technology, science technology and related fields. The principal mission of the institute shall be the education of technologists and technicians in the general fields of engineering and sciences. The mission of the institute shall include programs approved by the Board of Regents and special institutes, seminars, short courses and workshops at appropriate locations in Kansas as approved by the Extension Officer of the Board of Regents.

The clarity of the mission of KTI was expressed by the five year Academic Plan which the Board adopted for the institute in 1981. The plan includes this statement:

While other institutions in Kansas offer programs similar to some of the programs at KTI, there is no institution with a mission more clearly defined. The college's mission is unique, statewide in scope, and compatible with the objectives of the enabling legislation and all successive statutes.

The 1988 Legislature passed a bill to change the name of the college from Kansas Technical Institute to Kansas College of Technology. The mission of the college has remained essentially the same as it was originally established by the legislature.

Enrollment And Graduates:

One hundred and thirteen students first enrolled in the college in the fall semester 1966. The enrollment during the early years of the college didn't grow as predicted, thus fueling concern among legislators about the future of the college. This concern caused many potential students to go to other colleges, thus adding to the enrollment problem.

Enrollments at the college never exceeded 225 full time equivalent (FTE) students during the first ten years of classes---1966-1976. When the Board of Regents was assigned control of the college in 1976 public confidence in the college was bolstered and enrollments grew rapidly, increasing from 187 FTE in the fall of 1976 to 517 FTE in the fall of 1984. The fall semester enrollment included a headcount of over 700 students. Legislative confidence in the college had been restored.

The first commencement was in the spring of 1968. There was ten graduates in the first class. The trend in the number of graduates followed the trend of enrollments. From 1976 to 1985 the number of graduates was approximately 110 to 130 per year with Computer enrollments and graduates leading that of other departments..

Four programs were initially offered--Aeronautical Technology, Civil Engineering Technology, Electronics Technology and Mechanical Engineering Technology.

Computer Technology was added as a degree program in September 1967. Six academic departments were established to provide instruction. One department, General Technology, was developed to provide the general studies needed for the degree. The technical specialty courses would be offered by the specific technology departments.

Administration of the College:

Henry Mason Neely was appointed president of Schilling Institute effective July 1, 1965 and served in that capacity until June 30, 1971. His appointment was concurrent with the creation of the college, however, he served as interim president from March 1965 until his official appointment as President on July 1.

James O Thompson was appointed president of Kansas Technical Institute by the Kansas State Board of Education effective October 4, 1971 and served in that capacity until June 30 1976.

Thomas F. Creech was appointed president of Kansas Technical Institute by the Kansas Board of Regents effective August 1, 1976 and continued in that capacity until June 30, 1985.

Anthony L. Tillmans was appointed president of Kansas Technical Institute by the Kansas Board of Regents effective January 1, 1986 and continues to serve in that capacity.

Thomas F. Creech, Professor

Thomas F. Creech served as the first Director of Academic Affairs from August 1, 1965 until June 30, 1975. The office of academic affairs was charged with the responsibility of assembling and managing a faculty and developing all programs of study. Creech also served as interim president from June 1 1971 until October 4, 1971.

Paul Hallet served as Director of Academic Affairs from July 1, 1975 and until May 1976. Charles May served in that capacity from September 1976 until he was succeeded by John Mahan who served from 1977 until 1978. Robert Jensen succeeded Mahan as Academic Dean and served until Nov 1987. Loren Riblett then assumed the role of Academic Dean until August 1988. Jerry Cole was appointed as Vice President for Academic Affairs effective September 1, 1988 and continues to serve in that capacity.

Faculty:

The faculty that initiated the programs at "Schilling Institute" were being assembled as early as the spring 1966. William C. Carter was the first faculty member hired, however, he was soon advanced to the position of Director of Student Services. William Rakestraw was the first faculty member of the college who actually continued as a teaching faculty member. Rakestraw became department head of the Aeronautical department with administrative responsibility. Don Buchwald and Reinhart Schwemmer were next appointed and both served the college well for many years. Professor Buchwald still continues with the distinction of charter faculty status. Other faculty members who started the programs in 1966 were:

Kurt Booe (Civil), John Dollar (Electronics), Ruth Haddock (Computer), Chester Rankin (Electronics), David Michael (General), Arnold Stephans (Civil), William Stiles (Aero), James Tullis (General), and Harry Verhoeve (Mechanical).

Some stayed with the college for a year or two--others remained for many years. Larry Farmer joined the Faculty in January 1977 and continues to serve as administrator and faculty member.

During the first ten years faculty turnover was a serious problem. About 25% of the faculty would resign each year. After 1976, with greater stability of the college, faculty turnover decreased. The present faculty is mature, has proper qualifications and is strongly committed to the specific type of education provided at the college.

Early threats of closing the college were frequent and had a demoralizing effect on students, faculty and administration. When the Board of Regents assumed control of the college in 1976 such threats became rare and campus morale improved. Recent anxiety about merging the college with Kansas State University was stimulated, partly by the early political threats to close the college. The KSU assurances of strong support for continuing the mission of the college in its present setting has done much to alleviate the anxiety of the past two years. Future historians must be the ones to tell the complete story.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas F. Creech; Professor