

**KANSAS POSTSECONDARY
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**
Technical Program and Curriculum Committee
MINUTES
November 7, 2024

The Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority's Technical Program and Curriculum Committee met virtually via Zoom on November 7, 2024. Proper notice was given according to the law.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Beene, Chair
Cindy Hoover, Vice Chair
Debra Mikulka
Dr. Tiffany Anderson
Ray Frederick, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Natalie Clark
Mark Hess

Chair Beene called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Beene requested a motion and a second to approve the minutes from the meeting held on October 17, 2024. Member Ray Frederick motioned to approve, and Member Cindy Hoover seconded it. The motion passed.

CONSIDERATION OF DISCUSSION AGENDA

ACT ON NEW TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

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**WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY –
MENTAL HEALTH TECHNICIAN (51.1502) TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE B/39 CREDIT
HOURS, AND ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE/60 CREDIT HOURS**

Charmine Chambers, Director for Workforce Development, outlined the proposal, detailing the need for a technical certificate (39 credit hours) and an associate of applied science degree (60 credit hours) to prepare students for licensure as mental health technicians. This initiative stemmed from discussions beginning in 2020 between WSU Tech and the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition (MHSAC) identifying a workforce gap in this area. Since then, Kansas has allocated substantial funding and the South-Central Psychiatric State Hospital is set to open in Wichita by 2026, further underscoring the need for trained mental health technicians.

Students completing this program would be eligible to sit for the Kansas Board of Nursing's Licensed Mental Health Technician exam. Enrollment projections for the program suggest 10 students in its first year, with a target of 20 students annually in subsequent years. WSU Tech identified the program under the mental health technician occupational code. Director Chambers noted a request to reinstate technical funding for this code, which after program review had been reclassified to non-technical status in 2021. Supporting data highlighted a projected 8.3% growth in this field over the next decade, significantly higher than the state average of 3.3% across all occupations. Mental health technicians are also included in Kansas's high-demand occupation listings, with annual job openings estimated at 109.

The median salary for mental health technician roles is just over \$37,000, with most job postings requiring a high school diploma or equivalent. WSU Tech's proposal also aligns with the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, which identified mental health technician training as a local necessity. The program garnered support from various stakeholders, including seven letters from organizations committed to interviewing graduates, hosting internships, and collaborating with instructors.

Director Chambers explained that WSU Tech and Wichita State University collaborated on curriculum development, ensuring both institutions offer complementary mental health technician training pathways. The associate degree program will begin in fall 2025, with estimated start-up costs of \$129,000—primarily for new faculty salaries and instructional materials. Dean Deshawn Linson will oversee the program. No objections were raised after a 10-day public comment period, and WSU Tech representatives were available for additional questions.

Member Dr. Tiffany Anderson moved to approve WSU Tech's program request, to reinstate the program CIP to technical status, and have the item placed on the Consent Agenda for the next TEA meeting. Member Cindy Hoover then seconded the motion. The motion carried.

BARTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE – MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANT (51.0802)
TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE A/28 CREDIT HOURS

Director Charmine Chambers introduced Barton County Community College's request for a Medical Lab Assistant program. This program was initiated in response to employer demand and a request from the college's Advisory Board. It will enable students to earn the Medical Lab Assistant Certification from the American Society for Clinical Pathologists, and it is projected to enroll 10 students each semester.

According to the Kansas Department of Labor, this field is expected to grow by 0.4% annually, with a median wage of \$57,670. The occupation falls under clinical lab technologists and technicians and is considered high-demand and high-wage, with approximately 250 annual job openings. Lightcast job analytics for the past year indicated 4,548 job postings, 1,278 unique, with a yearly median advertised salary of \$43,600. Although a bachelor's degree is typically required, 77% of job postings indicated an associate degree or less as the minimum qualification.

The program was identified in Barton's Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment as a "bright outlook" occupation, addressing a statewide demand. Four letters of support accompanied the proposal, pledging employment opportunities and clinical training sites. Barton's Medical Lab Technician (MLT) program will align with this new assistant program, with overlapping courses that feed into the MLT pathway. The required phlebotomy course for the MLT program also supports the Medical Lab Assistant pathway, and several local school districts expressed support.

Barton County Community College plans to launch the program in fall 2025, with initial costs estimated at under \$10,000. These costs include \$7,290 for part-time faculty, \$1,350 for accreditation, and \$990 for instructional materials. Karen Gunther, the current director of the MLT program, will oversee the program. The program's 10-day public comment period closed without any comments, and representatives from Barton were available for further discussion.

Kathy Kottas, Dean of Workforce Training at Barton Community College, introduced her team and thanked Director Chambers for supporting the proposal. During the Q&A, Member Debra Mikulka asked about the wage and demand data for medical lab technicians and assistants and if the high-wage, high-demand classification accurately applied to assistants. Director Chambers clarified that the Kansas Department of Labor combines data for both roles, which can obscure assistant-specific figures. She

noted the combined median wage is \$57,670, while job postings suggest a closer median salary of \$43,600 for assistant-level roles.

Chair Mike Beene called for a motion to approve Barton Community College's request for a Medical Laboratory Assistant Certificate program and add the program to the Consent Agenda for the next TEA meeting. Member Ray Frederick so moved, and Member Cindy Hoover seconded. The motion carried.

WASHBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY – ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSE (51.3801) ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE/65 CREDIT HOURS

Chair Mike Beene introduced Washburn Tech's proposal for an Associate of Applied Science Nursing degree. Member Debra Mikulka noted that she would abstain from the discussion.

Director Chambers detailed the proposal, highlighting that the new 65-credit Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) was developed in response to industry partner requests from Washburn Tech's Advisory Council. Program graduates would qualify to sit for the NCLEX-RN, and enrollment is expected to reach 30 students per semester. Data projections indicate a slight annual growth rate of 0.5% in the field, with a median wage of \$75,780. This occupation is also classified as high-demand, high-wage in Kansas, with many job postings showing an associate degree as the typical entry requirement.

Director Chambers further noted that the program aligns with the Kansas Perkins Needs Assessment, which identified a gap between job openings and local graduates in the field. Six letters of support from industry partners were included, with commitments to interview graduates, provide clinical sites, and participate in advisory roles. Washburn Tech collaborated with Washburn University's School of Nursing for a seamless pathway to the BSN program and consulted Barton County Community College for curriculum development.

The program's projected start date is spring 2025, and its estimated startup cost is \$651,975, covering faculty salaries, accreditation fees, and supplies. Pam Masters, the Assistant Dean of Health Occupations, will oversee the program. Director Chambers noted no public comments during the review period and invited questions from the committee.

Scott Smathers, Dean of Washburn Tech, added that the ADN program is a natural extension of their successful LPN program, which has maintained a 100% pass rate. This new program will allow LPNs to advance to RNs without committing to a full BSN, addressing the high local demand for RNs from area hospitals. Smathers also mentioned the support of several key staff members involved in program development, who were available for questions.

Member Cindy Hoover inquired about the funding for Washburn Tech's new ADN program, given its high cost. She asked if the expense would be covered solely by their standard budget or if grants were available to help. Dean Scott Smathers clarified that while the primary funding would come from their standard budget, they are also exploring opportunities to use special grants focused on student success to help offset some of the costs.

Member Cindy Hoover moved to approve Washburn Tech's request for an AAS in Nursing (ADN) program and that the item be placed on the Consent Agenda for the next TEA meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Ray Frederick. The motion passed.

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY – ELECTRICAL TECHNOLOGY (46.0302) TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE B/37 CREDIT HOURS, AND ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE/60 CREDIT HOURS

Director Chambers presented WSU Tech’s proposal for an Electrical Technology program designed in response to input from local industries and the Kansas Department of Corrections. The program addresses a key gap for students who begin their electrical training at the Juvenile Detention Center in Topeka but are unable to complete the training program when they return to Wichita. This initiative aims to meet both workforce and educational needs while helping reduce recidivism.

Students will gain OSHA, NCCER, and NC3 certifications and be prepared for the journeyman electrical exam. Anticipated enrollment is 10 students in the first year, with plans to expand to two cohorts of 20 by the second year. According to Kansas Department of Labor data, demand for this occupation is expected to grow by 0.9% annually, with a median wage near \$60,000. The program aligns with high-demand, high-wage occupation listings and regional job projections, which show an annual need for 642 positions.

WSU Tech collaborated with Washburn Tech to align courses and ensure smooth transferability. Initial costs for the program are projected at just over \$100,000, covering faculty and instructional materials, with Jesse Lane, Dean of Applied Technology, overseeing the program. The proposed start date is Fall 2025, with no public comments received during the review period.

Jessi Lane, Dean of Applied Technologies at WSU Tech, announced that they had received a grant from the Patterson Foundation, specifically designated to fund the startup costs for lab and equipment, ensuring a strong foundation for the Electrical Technology program. Chair Mike Beene congratulated her on the grant.

During the discussion, Member Ray Frederick asked about the support from local electrical contractors, noting an absence of direct letters from electrical contractors in the program proposal. Dean Jessi Lane explained that while initial industry partners, such as fiber-optic companies, have expressed interest in the transferable skills provided by the program, the college continues to engage electrical contractors, including upcoming discussions with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). Dean Lane also noted plans to work with the Associated General Contractors (AGC), representing non-union contractors, to expand partnerships.

Member Ray Frederick inquired about the importance of a degree versus a journeyman certificate to potential employers. Dean Lane clarified that obtaining the journeyman certification is the primary objective for employment readiness. In Sedgwick County, technical education can be a substitute for one year of on-the-job training, positioning students to begin their journey toward licensure upon entering the workforce.

Member Debra Mikulka moved to approve the program proposal, requesting that WSU Tech include names of local employers who would serve on support committees and hire program graduates and that the item be on the Consent Agenda for the next TEA meeting. Member Cindy Hoover seconded the motion. The motion passed.

ACT ON EXCEL IN CTE FEES

The Excel in CTE fees listed below were reviewed by KBOR staff and are presented for discussion by the Technical Education Authority’s Technical Program and Curriculum Committee:

BARTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE – MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANT (51.0802)

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY –
MENTAL HEALTH TECHNICIAN (51.1502)

Director Chambers noted Barton Community College's total requested Excel in CTE program fees would amount to \$684, to cover background checks and immunization tracking (\$105) and textbooks (\$579).

Additionally, WSU Tech requested approval of a \$20 fee for a "Management of Aggressive Behavior" textbook. Director Chambers clarified that no additional information was included in the packet, as these programs are unique and have no existing Excel in CTE fees to compare against.

Member Cindy Hoover moved to approve the requested Excel in CTE fees as presented and to include these items on the Consent Agenda for the next TEA meeting. Member Ray Frederick seconded the motion. The motion passed.

ACT ON PROMISE ACT PROGRAMS

The following programs sought approval to become eligible for the Promise Act after being reviewed by KBOR staff. They recommended for approval by the Technical Education Authority's Technical Program and Curriculum Committee:

BARTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE – MEDICAL LABORATORY ASSISTANT (51.0802)

WASHBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY – ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSE
(51.3801)

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY –
ELECTRICAL TECHNOLOGY (46.0302)

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY –
MENTAL HEALTH TECHNICIAN (51.150)

Member Dr. Tiffany Anderson moved to approve the four programs as presented and that these items be placed on the Consent Agenda for the next TEA meeting. Member Ray Frederick seconded the motion. The motion passed.

NEXT MEETING REMINDER

Chair Mike Beene announced that the Program and Committee Meeting would occur on Thursday, December 5, 2024. He also reminded the group that the upcoming TEA meeting, scheduled for November 21st, will be held via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Frederick made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Member Mikulka. Chair Mike Beene adjourned the meeting at 3:39 p.m.