

## **Iowa Community Colleges 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book**

### **Southeastern Community College**

#### **Strong Local Support Shapes SCC**

Merged Area XVI comprises two predecessor post-secondary institutions – Iowa’s second oldest junior college, Burlington Junior College (est. 1920), and the last junior college to be developed in the state, Keokuk Community College (est. 1953). Passage of Senate File 550 joined these two institutions in 1966, creating what is known today as Southeastern Community College (Rickert, 2014).

Beginning with the first school house in Iowa - Galland School built in 1830 by the Nashville settlement, nine miles north of Keokuk in Lee County – and continuing through present day Southeastern Community College, residents of southeast Iowa have expressed their desire and support for basic and higher education through public/private partnerships and their votes (Keokuk History, n.d). As early as 1838, local residents began to offer post-secondary opportunities through colleges, universities and academies (Hudson, 1979). When a national economic downturn caused the Burlington Baptist University to close its doors in 1903, its land was transferred to the city to become the site of Burlington High School in 1910 and the first home of Burlington Junior College in 1920 (Hudson, 1979) (See figure 1).

Adopting the recommendation of Ray Herman Bracewell, named Burlington High School principal in 1919, the Burlington Board of Education added a two-year college program in 1920 (Meuler, 1970). Bracewell then held a dual role until his retirement in 1954, which included serving as district superintendent and president of Burlington Junior College (BJC). For his foresight and



**Figure 1 - Apollo High School, first home of BJC (1920-1961)**

efforts, Mr. Bracewell came to be known locally as the "Father" of Burlington Junior College (Meuler, 1970).

The Apollo Building housed the high school and BJC from 1920 to 1961, sharing faculty, staff and facilities. After enrolling its inaugural class of 44 in 1920, BJC was officially approved by the Intercollegiate Standing Committee (ISC) on May 6, 1921 (Hudson, 1979). Twelve students graduated from the first class in 1922, including some who later became teachers at the Burlington Schools. The curriculum offered instruction in chemistry, math/physics, English, French, speech, history, economics, and physical education. The combined high school/college building was expanded to twice its original size in 1925 to accommodate growing enrollments. By that year most of the seven BJC faculty held Master's Degrees (Meuler, 1970) and tuition was \$100 per year (Celebrating 85 years of junior college in Burlington, The HawkEye newspaper, 2006). Curriculum offerings expanded during the World War II period, 1939-1945, which prompted the inauguration of many vocational and technical programs as well as retraining programs such as trade apprentice and nursing. Adult education in the general interest areas also became popular, prompting numerous evening and Saturday classes (Meuler, 1970).

### **The evolution of leadership and administrative structure**

The early role of the Dean at the BJC was filled from 1920 to 1940 by the high school principal who also served as the high school French teacher, Miss Esther Jacobs. Mr. Virgil S. Fogdall was named dean in 1940 and served until 1946 during which enrollment surpassed 200.

Mr. Doyle D. Stonehocker was named dean in 1946 and served until 1968. It was with his encouragement that school leaders began to seek new facilities for the college with the philosophy that "a college is not a high school and should not be operated as one. A high school is not a college and should not be operated as one" (Hudson, 1979, p. 19).



**Figure 2 - Keokuk Campus 1953 - 1974, housed at Keokuk High School**

While changes were occurring with BJC, visionary leaders in Keokuk established Keokuk Community College (KCC) in 1953 as part of the Keokuk Public School system (See figure 2). Jim McKinstry was named KCC Dean, with an inaugural class of 53

students enrolled in liberal arts courses. After joining Merged Area XVI in 1966, KCC became the South Campus and continued to operate in the same facilities, rented from the public school district. Carlton “Cal” Callison was named dean in 1966 and is credited with adding career education programs to the predominantly liberal arts and pre-professional programs. When Callison was named Superintendent of Merged Area XVI in 1968, the Burlington and Keokuk campuses continued to operate with deans assigned to manage day to day operations (Meuler, 1970).

## **College Facilities and Locations Continue to Change**

### **The West Burlington Campus Develops**



**Figure 3 - Saunderson School, home of BJC 1961-1972**

As early as the 1940s BJC had utilized the Saunderson Elementary School to house the College’s engineering drawing lab and gym facilities. Built in 1892 and in need of significant renovation, Saunderson School was refurbished in 1961 with a single gift from Mr. John H. Witte, Jr. of \$100,000. The building became the new home of BJC in the summer of 1961 (See figure 3) (Hotze, 2014). (Note that, unless otherwise noted, our history from this point forward comes from

a chronology maintained by Angela Hotze, retired SCC librarian who continues to volunteer as our library archivist.)

The College changed its name to Burlington Community College in 1961 and in the fall of 1962, one of the first vocational/technical career programs, electronic technology, was established. As vocational and technical programs were added, they were housed in a structure on US Highway 34 in West Burlington. Six mobile trailer units were later placed east of the Saunderson building to accommodate an increase of classes resulting from greater enrollments, which had grown from 419 in 1960 to 1,000 in 1967.

In 1965, more than a 70 percent passage rate to fund the expansion of a new campus approved a \$3.7 million dollar bond issue. A location of 160 acres at the intersection of Highway 406 and Gear Avenue in West Burlington was leased then purchased in 1968 from Lloyd F. Johnson. This location provided much opportunity for the growth and expansion that was anticipated to occur following the merger to a comprehensive community college. In 1972, the College, now named Southeastern Community College, opened its first building on the new West Burlington campus site.

After several years, construction continued on the West Burlington campus. In 1984, a new building eliminated six mobile classroom units and was used to house the auto body shop, art studio, and classrooms. Building 100 was renamed in 1986 to Callison Hall for retiring President, Cal Callison. SCC conducted a capital campaign led by local business people in 1989 to raise funds for residence halls on the campus, resulting in the Witte House (named for the John H. Witte, Jr. Trust) and the Winegard House (named for the Winegard Family Foundation). The residence halls were owned and operated by the SCC Foundation until 1991, when they were sold to the College. In 1990, following passage of the first of two bond issues and the implementation of a massive decade-long facilities improvement plan, construction was begun on the Trustee Hall. Dedicated on October 13, 1991, it houses arts and sciences classrooms,

offices, and support services. In 1993, a new cafeteria/kitchen and student lounge with a commons addition were added at the West Burlington campus, and Gehrmann Drive was named in honor of retiring vice president of administrative services, William H. Gehrmann.

SCC changed its West Burlington's front door address to 1500 W. Agency Road in 2001 in response to changing traffic patterns (See figure 4). In 2007, a construction trades building was built on the West Burlington campus, funded by state



Figure 4 - West Burlington Campus & District Offices

Accelerated Career Education (ACE) grant dollars. Local construction businesses helped design and build the facility to ensure that the program met their training needs. One year later, a welding technology building was constructed and connected to the new construction trades building.

In a 2007 partnership, SCC developed a 40-year lease on five acres of its property with the Community Health Center (CHC) of Southeast Iowa. The new building included space dedicated to SCC health careers occupations programming. The CHC later purchased SCC's health careers classroom space as part of its own 2014 expansion.

The only two-year animation program in the state was introduced in 2011 with an addition to Building 200; the curriculum was developed with the involvement of local experts who were experiencing a shortage of workers with their specific sets of skills. The graphics communication program was also expanded in the new addition.

### **Growth and Expansion in Keokuk**

Also in 1972, a new addition was built onto the Keokuk High School to accommodate vocational programming for SCC's South Campus. Just two years later, in the fall of 1974, SCC Board member Larry Daggs of Keokuk led the purchase of 18.5 acres of land in Keokuk for the

construction of a new campus (see figure 5). Six pre-fabricated buildings were constructed, meant to serve as temporary facilities until funds were available for higher quality buildings. It was not until 1990 that the first of five permanent facilities was finally erected.

Between 1990 and 1991, three new buildings funded by bond levy proceeds were constructed on the Keokuk Campus. Adkins Hall, named for retired dean John Adkins, houses administrative offices, faculty offices, and the bookstore. Barr-Wittenmyer Hall, named for two prominent female Keokuk residents (Civil War relief worker and reformer Annie Turner-Wittenmeyer,



Figure 5 - Keokuk Campus

and academic Nann Clark Barr who earned a rare doctorate in 1914), houses the food service and cafeteria area, the library, and a former child care facility - now the SuCCess Center. Gardner Hall, named for then-president Dr. R. Gene Gardner, houses classrooms, an art lab, a music lab, a learning center, and faculty offices. In conjunction with this construction, the vocational building, Bowles Hall (named for former dean Jim Bowles), was remodeled to provide updated computer and science labs, as well as faculty offices and the college's maintenance shops. The completion of these projects allowed SCC to remove five of the pre-fabricated structures placed in 1974. In fall 1992, Union Electric Company provided a landscaping plan, and the materials and plants to landscape the entire Keokuk campus. In the spring of 1996, the last remaining Keokuk Campus modular structure was demolished and construction began on Emeritus Hall; completed in spring 1997, it houses classrooms and faculty offices.

### **An Agricultural Partnership**

In 1977, the College formed a partnership with Des Moines County and the Des Moines County Fair Association to create the College County Fair Services Agency (CCFSA) (Gehrmann, 1994). The CCFSA built three structures in 1978 on ten acres deeded to the agency

in West Burlington: the Agri-Stock Arena, a pen building, and the Agri-Sports Arena which serves as a gymnasium for SCC and an exhibitor hall for the Fair Association. In 1981, SCC built an addition to the Agri-Sports Arena to house a dining hall, lounge/bookstore, classrooms and a small theater. Two new pole buildings were later erected in 1994 and named for the late Glenn Fritz, former secretary/manager of the Des Moines County Fair. Before the end of 2007, a new hoop building was erected, made possible by funds donated by Tim and Sue Campbell, and the CCFSA.

### **Satellite Centers Provide Outreach**

The establishment of the Fort Madison Center in 1998 expanded SCC outreach and served as the alternative school for the Fort Madison High School. In 2003, enrollment growth spurred the Center's relocation to a larger structure, a former church on Avenue F. In 2014, the Fort Madison Community School District donated seven acres near its new middle school to provide space to consolidate the SCC Fort Madison Center classrooms and offices, and the new Regional Emergency Response Training Center.

The Mount Pleasant Center opened in 1999 and, like the Fort Madison Center, began offering arts and sciences courses, adult basic education, and high school diploma equivalency programming. SCC and the City of Mount Pleasant entered into a unique agreement in 2005 to trade the SCC Mount Pleasant Center building for the larger city Carnegie Library (see figure 6).



Figure 6 - SCC Mt. Pleasant Center

In 2004, SCC purchased parts of the first and second floors of River Park Place (the former Burlington Medical Center) to establish the SCC Center for Business & Industry Services (later rebranded as CBIZ). After extensive remodeling of the space, CBIZ moved in on March 14, 2005. CBIZ provides more than 8,500 non-credit instruction enrollments and over 266,000

contact hours of open enrollment and customized business and industry training each year (Ellyson, 2013).

### **The Evolution and Development of Career & Technical and Arts & Sciences Programs**

Vocational courses at the college began in the 1940s primarily as evening offerings (Hudson, 1979), with a general focus on advanced training for apprentices. The first formalized vocational program began in 1962 with electronic technology; by 1978-79, over 25 vocational preparatory programs were offered (SCC College Catalog, 1978-89). Today SCC offers more than 35 career and technical programs.

SCC began to provide outreach and vocational instruction in the 1970s to inmates housed at the Iowa State Penitentiary (ISP). Although State funding for inmate vocational programming was curtailed in the late 1990s, SCC still provides adult basic education, literacy instruction, and high school diplomacy equivalency testing at ISP and the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility.

The majority of SCC's career and technical enrollments have been in health occupation programs – nearly 30% (Ellyson, 2013). Local employment opportunities and the need to provide for more clinical training sites led SCC to begin offering an evening and weekend format for the nursing program in the mid-2000's - an effort strongly supported by the local medical community. In 2008, the college began a unique hybrid format for an industrial maintenance technology program, with online lecture paired with face-to-face applied instruction in an extensive lab at the Keokuk campus. With outspoken support from local industry and bond levy dollars for base funding, the program will be moved into a much larger new facility in fall 2015.

### **Accomplishments in Athletics**

Sports have always been integral to SCC, beginning at BJC in 1920 with men's basketball and women's athletics in 1926. Football arrived in 1930, was discontinued during WWII, and resumed in 1946 until the local Board of Education abolished it at the end of the



1960 season, citing “the cost, crowded facilities, the difficulty in making a schedule without taking very long trips, and the charge that college football was taking an undue portion of the activity fund” (Meuler, 1970, p. 7). Men’s baseball continued at both campuses, but was eliminated at Keokuk Campus in the 1970s. It remains a successful program at the West Burlington campus today; with coach Justin Schulte named NJCAA Coach of the Year in 2014.

KCC offered baseball and golf until the mid-1970s. Women’s basketball was established in the mid-1990s with significant and ongoing support from Keokuk residents. Women’s volleyball and swimming were offered early on at BJC, as was co-ed golf and tennis, but only women’s volleyball was maintained at the West Burlington campus after the 1966 merger. Women’s softball was added in the mid-1990s at the West Burlington campus and remains a strong program today with Coach Melissa Flores named NJCAA Coach of the Year in 2014.

BJC won four state titles between 1929 and 1948; SCC, under coach Joe O’Brien, won the NJCAA national championship titles three times in five years: in 2000, 2003 and 2004.

O’Brien was then only the third coach to win the national championship three times (Brandt & Geren, 2004). (See figure 7). SCC is proud to be

able to boast the winningest men’s basketball program in NJCAA history by “having the most wins in NJCAA history” (Brandt & Geren, 2003, p. #204). SCC continues to lead by 12 wins more than the college with the next

highest wins, Hutchison Community College (NJCAA Record Book, Stats, 2014).

The men’s basketball teams involved numerous players who went on to gain national attention. SCC men’s basketball players and their coaches had a better chance of success from the constant and significant financial and personal support by members of the local booster club,



**Figure 7 - Three-time NJCAA championship coach Joe O’Brien receives a celebratory hug from Terry Walker after winning his first national title for SCC.**

started in 1965 by Dick Shadley and continued by Loren Walker, who actively served as president from 1969 to 2000. Walker passed away on March 12, 2000 as the team was on its way to Hutchinson, Kansas to vie for, and ultimately inspiring them to win, the college's first national title. The college renamed its gymnasium the Loren Walker Arena in his honor.

### **The College Thrives with Local Support**



**Figure 8 - Clifford Lloyd Yohe, 1923 BJC, 1998 Distinguished Alumnus**

Regional recognition of the college's value is strong, as evidenced by the passage of six of eight voted levy efforts, with all four of the supermajority bond levy pass rates exceeding the required 60 percent rate by 10 to 17 percentage points. Support continues to grow from donors and other funding sources. Besides the college's successful efforts to attract numerous state and federal grants, the SCC Foundation, established in

1982 to attract and disburse gifts in support of the college, received a gift of \$1 million in 1990 from 1923 BJC graduate Clifford Lloyd Yohe, the founder of K-Mart (see figure 8). That self-sustaining endowed fund has provided nearly \$1 million to more than 1,700 student scholarship recipients.

The SCC Foundation's assets have grown from \$5,560 in 1982 to over \$7 million in 2014 (Southeastern Community College Foundation, June 2014).

Once known for its frugality in an effort to survive in a region known for high unemployment and other socio-economic challenges, the college has become more inclusive in the past several decades, overtly embracing continuous process improvement by becoming an AQIP school in 2006, striving to be more student-centered, seeking unique on-site partnerships with entities like Iowa State University Extension's Des Moines County office, supporting a substantial marketing budget since the mid-1990's and demonstrating transparency with its two

bargaining units. College news is shared with its constituents via regular news releases, a newly renovated website, and a semi-annual magazine for alumni and friends, *Vision*, that is mailed to over 60,000 area residents. Since the early 1980's the College has provided fiscal oversight of all state job training and Small Business Development Center programs in the region.

Continuous process improvement teams investigate ways to make positive change, including how to enhance collegiality, mentor faculty members, value employees, hire adjuncts, and make college facilities more secure. Problem solving is now considered everyone's right and responsibility at SCC, and is effective in illustrating the College's efforts to increase accountability.

### **SCC Alumni Association**

The College established an alumni association in 1991 at the suggestion of 1978 SCC alumna Cindy Murphy, then executive assistant to the president and board secretary (see figure 9).

Murphy went on to earn bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees, and retired in 2014 as



Figure 9 - Dr. Cindy Murphy, 2008 SCC Distinguished Alumna

program coordinator and faculty member in the college's Business program. In

1995, the SCCAA hosted its first annual golf outing fundraiser, another of Murphy's ideas. The event now supports SCC and transfer scholarships, mini-grants and the Distinguished Alumni award program which was launched in

1997. Through May 2014, SCC has honored thirty-six individuals, including

Dr. Murphy, by hosting special annual receptions and inviting them to provide

the keynote at that year's college graduations.

### **SCC Today**

In a region of just over 100,000 residents, SCC provided credit programming in fall 2013 to a total of 3,225 unduplicated full-time enrollment (FTE) students and provided 31,755 credit

hours of instruction. Approximately half of all enrollments are part-time, more than 60% are female, the average age is 24, 34% are non-traditional age, over 27% are still in high school (i.e., concurrently enrolled at SCC), more than 70% are seeking Arts & Sciences transfer degrees, nearly 33% have attended another postsecondary institution, just over 36% are first time attendees, the majority or 84.3% are white non-Hispanic, and more than 83% are from Iowa (Ellyson, 2013).

SCC makes a difference in the region by creating an estimated \$1.35 for every \$1 expended (Southeastern Community College Economic Impact Report, 2011). An estimated \$18.8 million in total personal income across the region and 419 jobs are created from spending by the community college. Approximately \$6 million in total personal income across the region and 255 jobs are created from spending by students. Sectors of the regional economy where community college operations have the greatest economic impact include retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate, and arts, entertainment and recreation. Overall, spending by SCC and its students adds an estimated \$50 million in economic output to the region, 674 jobs and increased tax revenues of \$2.9 million.

### **SCC Continues to Plan for Future Challenges with Community Support**

The fall 2013 semester was the first time since the enrollment spike in 2009 that head count and credit hours increased over the previous fall term. It came at a time when college enrollments across the nation were declining at both two- and four-year schools and in every region in the country. Although SCC experienced an increase in enrollment in fall 2013, it is the second lowest in the previous ten fall terms (Ellyson, 2013).

An improving economy and a related higher employment rate is cited as the driver of falling community college



**Figure 10 - Plans for a new Health/Sciences Complex at West Burlington Campus, complete in 2015**

enrollments across the state (Lederman, 2013). Merged Area XVI's regional July 2013 unemployment rate was 6.2, compared to 6.9 the previous July. Enrollments of working-aged ("regular") students, as a percent of total enrollments, have declined every fall semester since 2009 (Ellyson, 2013). Decreasing high school enrollments will continue to impact enrollments at SCC for at least another four years, when there is a projected short-term uptick.

SCC has undertaken numerous initiatives to increase market share of concurrent and graduating high school students, online students, and the existing workforce. A concerted effort to educate and engage future STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) students has resulted in raising awareness, securing grant funding, and providing educational STEM programs for students as young as grade school (e.g., KidTekU program established summer 2014) and up through adult learners.

The future is bright and exciting, especially as SCC embraces its new facilities master plan, with construction on the first two buildings beginning in 2015. These two new facilities include the Industrial Technology Building at Keokuk and the Health/Science Complex at West Burlington Campus (see figures 10 & 11). Historically SCC has made an impact in the state of Iowa, and with solid regional support will continue to grow and expand to better serve our communities.



Figure 11 - Plans for new Industrial Technology building at Keokuk Campus, due for completion in 2015

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