



NEBRASKA'S
COORDINATING COMMISSION
FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

P.O. Box 95005 • Lincoln, NE 68509-5005
140 N. 8th St. • Suite 300 • Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: 402-471-2847 • ccpe.nebraska.gov
Mike Baumgartner, Ph.D., Executive Director

June 1, 2020

Bob Morgan
Campus Director
Southeast Community College
4771 West Scott Road
Beatrice, NE 68310

Dear Bob:

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education has received the materials you submitted in support of your proposal for an Off-Campus Center with a Long-Term Commitment: *Learning Center at Hebron*. If the materials provide sufficient information for Commission review, I will schedule your proposal for action by the full Commission at its June 25, 2020 meeting.

Should you have any questions regarding the review and recommendation process, please don't hesitate to contact me by phone at (402) 471-0030 or by email at kathleen.fimple@nebraska.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathleen L. Fimple, Ph.D.
Academic Programs Officer

klf/hp

cc: Shawna Herwick, Admin Director of Planning & Accreditation
Jill Wightman, Institutional Research Analyst

Commissioners

Dr. Deborah Frison, Chair
Omaha

Dr. John Bernthal, Vice Chair
Lincoln

Colleen A. Adam
Hastings

Gwenn Aspen
Omaha

Timothy Daniels
Omaha

Charles Garman
Omaha

Mary Lauritzen
West Point

Dr. Paul Von Behren
Fremont

W. Scott Wilson
Plattsmouth

PROPOSAL FOR AN OFF-CAMPUS CENTER WITH A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Institution: Southeast Community College

Facility: **Learning Center at Hebron**
610 Jefferson Avenue
Hebron, NE 68370

Under its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan Southeast Community College (SCC) prioritized the goal of closing the educational gap that existed in the 12 of 15 counties in its service area that do not have a campus location. Between 2016 and 2019 SCC opened six new learning centers in Falls City, Hebron, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, Wahoo, and York. SCC now has an HLC-approved college location within a 35-mile radius of all service area constituents. SCC built a new facility in Falls City and has been leasing facilities year-to-year in the other five learning center locations.

The Learning Center at Hebron was opened in July 2017 in a short-term lease arrangement with Thayer County Public Schools. The building was originally an elementary school and was no longer needed after the school built new facilities. SCC renovated the building to convert the outdated school into a modern postsecondary learning center designed for both on-site and distance learning. The Hebron Learning Center has been approved by the Higher Learning Center as an additional location, which allows students to complete a degree through the Hebron Learning Center even if the student takes less than 50 percent of the courses that lead to a degree program at the learning center.

Thayer County Public Schools no longer wishes to own the building and has opted to sell the building and land to Southeast Community College for the sum of \$65,000. Since this sale makes the learning center a long-term arrangement SCC is seeking approval by the Coordination Commission for Postsecondary Education to operate this location as a long-term facility.

A. Demonstrated Need and Demand for the Facility

In 2015 an in-depth study was conducted by the Office of Institutional Research to assess the need for additional locations (see Appendix). After careful study of demographic and population statistics, it was determined that Learning Centers should be located to ensure SCC meets the needs of as many individuals as possible within its 15-county service area; that those service areas should be within or near the largest cities, excluding the cities where SCC already has a campus; that the location of Learning Centers should be geographically distributed across the service area to maximize the number of individuals living within a 35-mile radius from the center; and that programming offered at each center depend on industry and community needs.

In 2016, Coordinators were hired and Advisory Committees were established to help the College identify educational and training needs, as well as prioritize areas that may have the greatest impact on the region. The Learning Center Advisory Committees have broad-based representation (industry, education, and local government officials) with a strong desire for programming to meet regional needs. During the Advisory Committee's initial exploration of opportunities in 2016, trades/industry, small/ag

business, general education, and health care were identified as the top needs. SCC has developed a process for how to systematically use this information and has identified smaller task forces within the Advisory Committee. The Learning Center Coordinator and Dean use the information generated by the task forces to identify skills gap(s), compare task force findings with the College’s Institutional Research data, determine whether credit/non-credit offerings meet community needs, and share findings/recommendations with the task force.

In 2016-2017 only non-credit courses were offered in Hebron. With the opening of the Learning Center at the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year credit courses were offered via distance learning for the first time. Recently, SCC has added new learning spaces to offer Nursing Assistant and other health-related courses on site, meeting a need for the local communities. The Learning Center will also begin offering courses for dual-credit students this summer.

Classes offered at Hebron Learning Center

	Year	Sections	Enrollment
Continuing Education	2016-2017	3	39
	2017-2018	37	196
	2018-2019	40	295
Undergraduate	2017-2018	12	15
	2018-2019	18	32

B. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

The purpose of establishing the Learning Center at Hebron was to provide access to underserved communities in our service area. Hebron is located 48 miles from the nearest SCC campus location in Beatrice and 95 miles from the Lincoln campus. As part of its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, SCC determined that a learning centers should be located within a 35-mile radius of all residents of its 15-county service area. Through a data-driven process (see Appendix), SCC determined that Hebron was the best choice to serve the southwest corner of the service area. Additionally, the vast majority of the credit courses offered through the Hebron location involve students connecting through distance learning technologies to courses taught on one of the three campuses. This expands access to already occurring courses rather than duplicating services.

C. Adequacy of Resources for Instruction

Physical Facilities and Instructional Equipment

The Hebron Learning Center is located in the former Thayer Central primary school, which was thoroughly renovated prior to opening in 2017. There are four renovated classrooms which vary in capacity (from 20-50 students). One classroom is set up with beds and equipment to serve as an interactive teaching space for Nursing Assistant and other health-care classes. Other classrooms are designed to be flexible spaces and are equipped with a white/smart board, tables and chairs, and a media cart. Each media cart includes a computer, projector, and overhead camera. One classroom has an Icon 800 Lifesize unit to enable two-way broadcast of distance learning courses. Additionally, the Hebron Learning Center has a portable Lifesize unit that can be moved to any room in the building to easily convert the other classrooms to distance delivery rooms. The Learning Center Coordinator has a furnished office and the reception area includes a meeting space for students.

Library, Information Resources, Student Support Services

Students at the Learning Center have access to all College online resources including Library resources. SCC operates an online portal called “The Hub” for many student services, including library services, the IT help desk, SmartThinking live online tutoring services, admissions, financial aid, course registration, placement services, and the business office. In addition, personnel for all student services are available by phone, email, and videoconference.

Faculty and Staff

Southeast Community College has a full-time Learning Center Coordinator to coordinate courses, connect students to student services on the campuses, proctor exams, and assist students with enrollment, technology, and other issues. SCC also employs a part-time administrative assistant at the center. The Milford Campus provides campus operational oversight to the Hebron Learning Center through student affairs, use of technology and technological support, safety and security, and custodial and maintenance support.

Some non-credit courses are taught on-site by adjunct faculty, who are hired as local enrollment demand merits, while others are taught via distance learning. The majority of credits offered through the Learning Center at Hebron are delivered via distance learning technologies from one of SCC’s three campuses. Students are able to connect from the Learning Center to on-campus courses using Lifesize, Zoom, or iPad-based robot doubles. Adjunct instructors will be hired in the future if there is sufficient on-site enrollment demand.

D. Consistency of proposal with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan*

Southeast Community College’s proposal to purchase the Learning Center at Hebron is consistent with Nebraska’s Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education. Nebraska’s community colleges are by statute open access and have the lowest tuition rates among public postsecondary institutions. Ensuring affordable postsecondary education is available within a 35-mile radius of every resident in its 15-county service area is a crucial part of SCC’s Strategic Plan.

One of the major statewide goals of the Comprehensive Statewide Plan is “to increase participation and success in higher education and to ensure that access to higher education institutions’ programs and services is not restricted by factors such as geographic location, economic status, age, culture, disability, color, national origin, or gender” (pg. 2-1). SCC’s long-term commitment to the Hebron Learning Center aims to ensure local access to postsecondary educational opportunities to a part of its service area that is situated roughly 50 miles from the closest SCC campus.

Appendix: Learning Centers Initiative

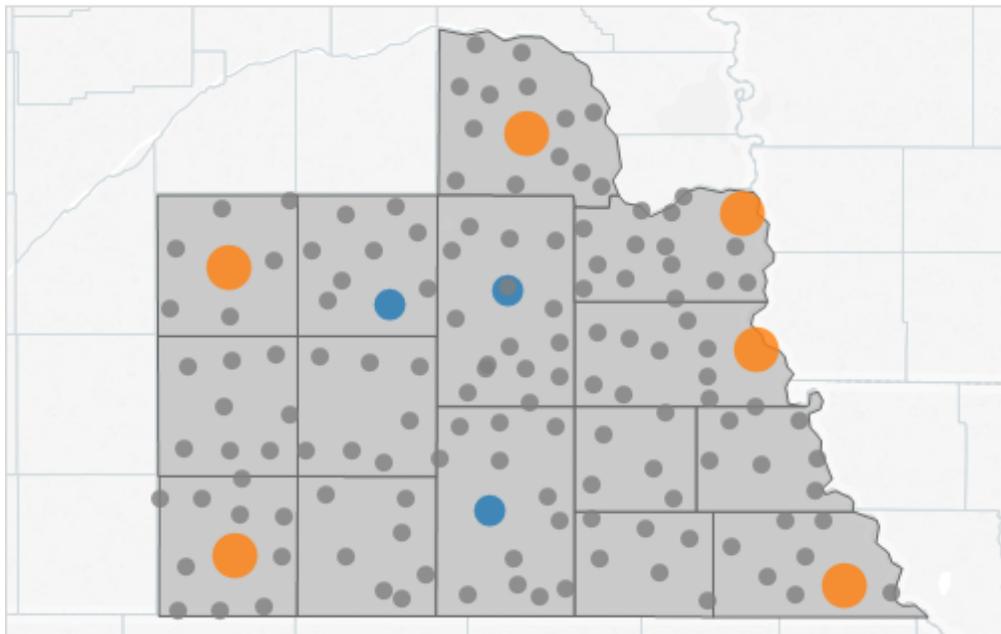
As part of its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, SCC determined that learning centers should be developed to ensure SCC meets the needs of as many individuals as possible within its 15-county service area. Since 2016, SCC has established six learning centers in Falls City, Hebron, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, Wahoo, and York.

The following assumptions were used in identifying potential locations for these centers:

1. Learning centers should be located to ensure SCC meets the needs of as many individuals as possible within its 15-county service area.
2. Service areas should be within or near the largest cities excluding the cities where SCC already has a campus.
3. The location of learning centers should be geographically distributed across the service area to maximize the number of individuals living within a 30 mile radius from the center.
4. The programming offered at each center will depend on industry and community needs. Programming decisions will be made in collaboration with local communities and employers based on their educational/training needs.

Figure 1: Blue dots indicate SCC campuses and orange dots indicate learning centers.

SCC Service Area | With campus and city locations



The following was the rationale for the six proposed learning centers:

1. The most populated cities in the service area without an SCC presence are York, Nebraska City, Crete, Plattsmouth, Falls City, Wahoo, and Fairbury. Using population as the first criterion, these were the first locations considered.

Considered: York, Nebraska City, Crete, Plattsmouth, Falls City, Wahoo, and Fairbury.

2. Crete was removed from consideration because it is near the current SCC campus in Milford and it is home to Doane College. The other cities being considered as possible locations for learning centers were distributed across the service area and at least 20 miles away from a current SCC campus.

Considered: York, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, Falls City, Wahoo, and Fairbury.

3. Though Fairbury has more population on its own, nearby Hebron would be more easily accessible to other locations via the Highway 81 corridor.

Proposed: York, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, Falls City, Wahoo, and Hebron.

Figure 1 above shows the location of SCC's primary campuses and learning centers. The figures below show the populations encompassed by drawing a 35-mile radius around all campuses and learning centers (Figure 2); the top cities by population in SCC's 15-county service district that are not located in the same county as a campus (

Figure 3); and the communities within a 35-mile radius of Hebron (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Figure 2 Locations within 35 miles of SCC campuses and learning centers. Blue dots represent campuses and orange dots represent learning centers.

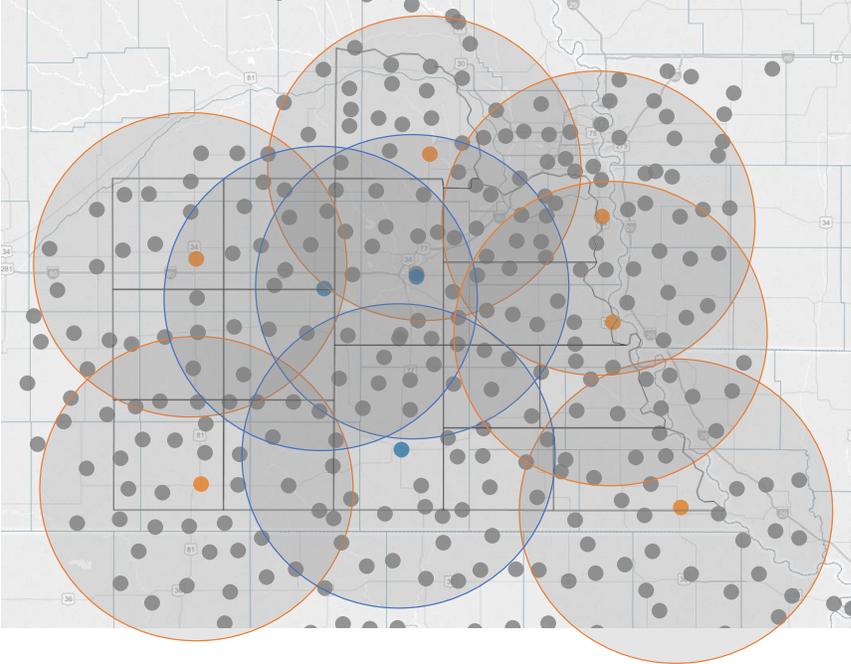


Figure 3: The largest cities in SCC's service area that not located in the same county as an SCC campus.

Top cities in counties without SCC campus

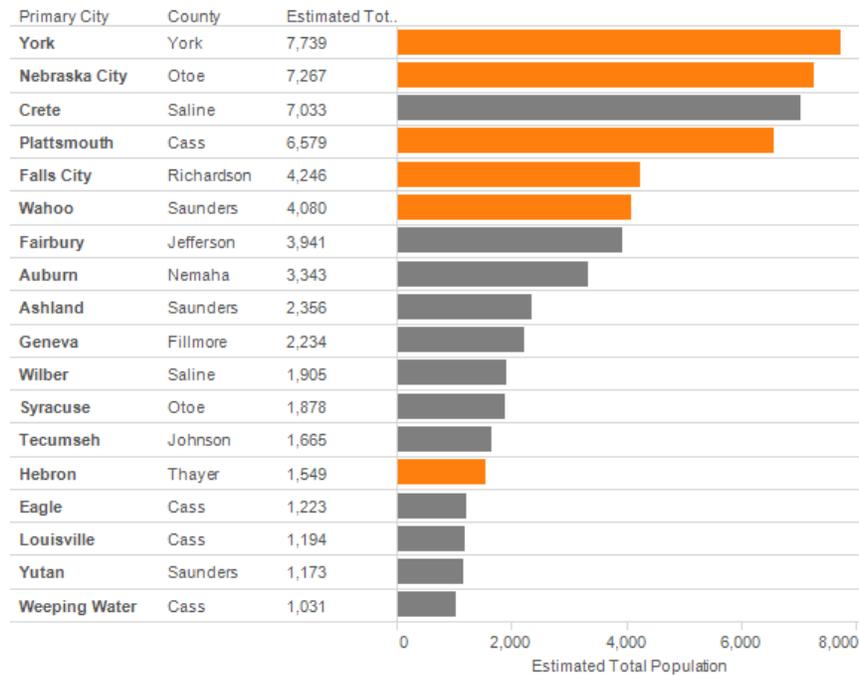


Figure 4: The population within 35 miles of Hebron is approximately 34,000.

