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SE Community College Seeking Input

(KLZA)-- Southeast Community College serves a 15-county area and had a fall 2013 enrollment of 9,715. Of those students, 900 attended classes in Beatrice and 750 at Milford, the rest at Lincoln.

SECC President Dr. Paul Illich and other representatives conducted public meetings in Falls City and Auburn last week seeking community input on the future of the college. The college wants to hear what communities in the 15—county service area believe the needs for higher education are locally.

A small group gathered at Falls City High School for the meeting. Mentioned were specific needs locally for training of welders, manufacturing technologists and health workers. Another concern raised was the kids that do leave for college, don't come back.

There were suggestions of bringing satellite campuses closer to the area, which Dr. Illich said was something he was interested in taking a look at as SECC continues through the strategic planning process for the future.

During the presentation it was noted that 75-percent of the SECC student work at least part-time while attending classes.

Enrollment at Southeast Community College has declined by approximately 2,500 students in the past three years. Those numbers match a nationwide trend. Dr. Illich pointed out it is not that high school graduates are not going on to college. The decline in students has hit community colleges and on-line for-profit, private colleges hardest in recent years. Dr. Illich said with the economic problems that occurred, that particular student demographic that enrolls in college for further education or to polish up a resume for a promotion has cut back on college attendance. The drop in attendance is not in 18-year old first-time students.

If you were unable to attend one of the listening sessions in your area, SECC officials said they would be sending out survey's to the public so they can receive more input than what they will hear at the meetings.

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