

WASHBURN UNIVERSITY AND KAW AREA TECHNICAL SCHOOL

1. What change is being proposed?

State the specific change that is proposed.

Washburn University is requesting approval of a merger with the Kaw Area Technical School of Topeka. Pending approval by the Kansas Board of Regents, Kaw Area Technical School (KATS) will change its governance reporting structure from the Topeka Public Schools Board of Education to the Washburn University Board of Regents. Kaw Area Technical School is an operational department of Topeka Public Schools and, as such, is a public institution accredited by the Council of Occupational Education (COE), offering certificates in 25 technical programs to both high school and postsecondary students. Kaw Area Technical School and Washburn University have created articulation agreements for students to complete associate degrees in conjunction with a variety of certificate programs at the technical school. This proposal represents an evolutionary step in the long-standing partnership between these two institutions dating back to August 1985.

State the expected outcomes of this proposed change (for example, enrollment growth, enhanced services, financial growth).

The change in governance will strengthen the existing collaborative partnership between Washburn University and Kaw Area Technical School. Each institution will continue with existing cooperative efforts. In the future, the two institutions may develop increased opportunities to accommodate student learning. This governance change will not modify the current relationship between the two institutions or the services provided to the students who are now being served. The intent is for Kaw Area Technical School to remain a semi-autonomous operational unit. Implicit in this governance change is the expectation that the combination of strengths between Washburn and Kaw Area Technical School will result in enhanced options for workforce development for the greater Topeka and northeast Kansas region.

Both institutions will continue to focus on what they do best. Kaw Area Technical School will offer students technical training, and Washburn University will provide the general education component needed to complete the associate degree. In addition, Washburn has developed degree options to allow students to have a seamless path to obtain a baccalaureate degree.

Kaw Area Technical School students will continue to pay reduced tuition for university courses while they are pursuing certificate programs at the technical school. Kaw Area Technical School students jointly enrolled at Washburn University will continue to have access to university facilities such as Mabee Library and the Student Recreation and Wellness Center. If additional degree options develop, Washburn University will coordinate the academic advising for Kaw Area Technical School students to ensure they are knowledgeable of all available opportunities.

Project the impact of this proposed change on the organization's current mission, the numbers and types of students to be served, and the breadth of educational offerings.

The current academic mission of Kaw Area Technical School is "to offer educational opportunities to high school, business and industry, and adult students by providing quality technical training to meet individual and labor market needs."

The current mission of Washburn University is "to prepare qualified individuals for careers, further study, and lifelong learning through excellence in teaching and scholarly work. Washburn University shall make a special effort to help individuals reach their full academic potential."

The missions of both institutions will not change; they complement each other by providing alternative ways of preparing students for careers or further study.

Kaw Area Technical School began as the Topeka Trade School in 1941. A new facility opened on 57 acres at 5742 Huntoon in 1968. The current campus consists of nine buildings and has been governed by Topeka Public

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Schools, but it serves the vocational technical program needs of 17 area school districts.

Kaw Area Technical School was accredited by the Council on Occupational Education in 2004. Kaw Area Technical School enrollment in the 25 certified programs for 2007-08 totaled 303 secondary and 299 postsecondary students. The current Kaw Area Technical School enrollment data is available online.

The relationship between Kaw Area Technical School and Washburn University was established in 1985 with the development of an articulation agreement in electronic technology. Currently, six collaborative programs have been established between the two institutions, serving approximately 150 students. Some students jointly enroll in Washburn and Kaw Area Technical School courses. This gives Kaw Area Technical School students access to multiple course section options to fit their lifestyles or work schedules. The majority of these students attend on a part-time basis. The articulation agreement has been reviewed and updated approximately every five years, with the most recent renewal agreement signed in October 2005. It is possible additional joint programs will be created to provide associate and baccalaureate degree opportunities for students pursuing technical certificates.

Identify from this list the Commission's policy/policies relevant to this change: change in mission or structure; change in educational offering; change in educational sites; change in relationship with the Commission.

The proposed merger represents an institutional change of structure as well as a change in the relationship with the Commission since the HLC reaccreditation will encompass Kaw Area Technical School as an entity governed by the Washburn Board of Regents.

2. What factors lead the organization to undertake the proposed change?

Describe the relationship between the proposed change and ongoing planning.

Both Washburn University and Topeka Public Schools/Kaw Area Technical School evaluated the alternatives and determined affiliation with Washburn University was consistent with strategic planning initiatives, supported by the missions of the institutions, and provided the opportunity for enhanced services to the citizens of northeast Kansas. Kaw Area Technical School will retain separate administrative and budgetary structures and planning processes similar to those currently in place for the school as an operating division of Topeka Public Schools. However, the intent is to integrate Kaw Area Technical School academic programming into Washburn's academic administrative structure to ensure continued seamlessness.

Describe the needs analysis related to this proposed change.

The primary factor leading Topeka Public Schools to undertake the proposed change was a Kansas Board of Regents change in policy for technical schools offering postsecondary education. Pursuant to Chapter 199 of the 2007 Session Laws of Kansas, Kaw Area Technical School is to submit a final plan to the Kansas Board of Regents not later than July 1, 2008, for the merger or affiliation with a four-year postsecondary education institution in the state of Kansas or to become an accredited technical college with an independent governing board. K.S.A. 206 supp. 72-4470 et seq. provides for the technical college transition procedure and grants approval authority to the Kansas Board of Regents.

The unified school districts participating in the Vocational Education Agreement for Kaw Area Technical School have endorsed the merger with Washburn University since it will best meet the interests of the secondary and postsecondary education students it serves, will ensure seamless education of its students in achieving academic success, and will provide additional opportunities for workforce development in the

community. There are existing articulation agreements for Kaw Area Technical School students to achieve either an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree utilizing vocational education training; Washburn University will continue to assist these students in earning a college degree. The effective date of the merger of Kaw Area Technical School into Washburn University will be July 1, 2008.

The transfer of governance of Kaw Area Technical School will be accomplished pursuant to existing Kansas law by agreement of Topeka Public Schools and Washburn University, assigning supervision and control of Kaw Area Technical School under a Vocational Education Agreement pursuant to K.S.A. 72-4411 for Kaw Area Technical School from the Board of Education of the Topeka Public Schools to the Board of Regents of Washburn University and amending such Vocational Education Agreement.

Describe the involvement of the various constituencies.

The six founding Topeka area school districts, along with eleven additional area school districts, comprise a consortium which advises Kaw Area Technical School. Topeka Public Schools is the operating partner responsible for direct administration of Kaw Area Technical School. The consortium has been involved in the decision to execute this transition and each participating school district's board is to accede by resolution to the plan. The Topeka Public Schools Board of Education and the Washburn University Board of Regents have approved a formal transition plan which was submitted prior to December 31, 2007, to the Kansas Board of Regents for their approval under authority of the Kansas Legislature.

Both the faculty and staff of Kaw Area Technical School and Washburn University have received information relative to the conceptual elements of the plan. As details of the transition develop, faculty and administration of both entities will become involved in working groups and task forces to facilitate the smooth transition. After the transition, the consortium

of school district superintendents whose secondary students are clients of Kaw Area Technical School will continue to be involved as an advisory body.

3. What necessary approvals have been obtained to implement the proposed change?

Internal

Topeka Public Schools Board of Education and the Washburn Board of Regents, at their respective September 2007 meetings, each approved resolutions supporting the concept of transferring governance of Kaw Area Technical School to Washburn University. Both the Topeka Public Schools Board of Education and the Washburn University Board of Regents approved the preliminary transition plan and by joint resolution forwarded it to the Kansas Board of Regents by the December 31, 2007, deadline.

External

The transition plan approved by Washburn and Topeka Public Schools was submitted in December 2007 to the Kansas Board of Regents. The Kansas Board of Regents must act on or before July 1, 2008.

4. What impact might the proposed change have on challenges identified by the Commission as part of or subsequent to the last comprehensive visit?

Identify challenges directly related to the proposed change.

The only two major challenges identified in the last comprehensive visit to Washburn University were the level of support of the university library and the assessment of student learning. These two challenges are being addressed by the institution, and the proposed change in governance structure of Kaw Area Technical School does not have a significant impact on either of these challenges.

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Describe how the organization has addressed the challenge(s).

Not applicable.

5. What are the organization's plans to implement and sustain the proposed change?

Describe the involvement of credentialed faculty and experienced staff necessary to accomplish the proposed change (curriculum development and oversight, evaluation of instruction, and assessment of learning outcomes).

The Topeka Public Schools and Washburn University each appointed three members to a joint team to develop the transition plan for approval by the Kansas Board of Regents. A part of this plan will transfer governance of Kaw Area Technical School to the Washburn Board of Regents and, therefore, subject to the administration of the university. The transition plan was a brief, high-level document providing a road map for a change in governance structure. A detailed contract and operational plan for the transition will follow. Beginning in February 2008, transition teams were formed to address the operational issues. Work will continue through the transition date of July 1, 2008, and remain active as necessary.

The operational plan will address: 1) human resource issues such as payroll processing, health benefits, and retirement plans; 2) coordination of the transfer of student records; 3) academic issues including faculty and course offerings; and 4) administrative issues including facility management, technology coordination, risk management, and security. Existing faculty and staff at Kaw Area Technical School will continue to oversee and develop curricula, evaluate classroom instruction, and assess student learning outcomes. Kaw Area Technical School will be supervised by the vice president for academic affairs at Washburn University.

Describe the administrative structure (accountability processes, leadership roles) necessary to support this proposed change.

The current administrators and staff at Kaw Area Technical School will continue to supervise day-to-day operations. The director of Kaw Area Technical School will report to the Washburn University vice president for academic affairs, establishing a reporting structure which mirrors the existing Washburn academic reporting structure. The vice president for administration and treasurer will have responsibility to ensure appropriate financial and administrative structures are in place to implement the change and will work closely with her counterparts at Kaw Area Technical School. No curricular changes are being proposed at this time.

Describe how the organization will make learning resources and support services available to students (student support services, library resources, academic advising, and financial aid counseling).

Kaw Area Technical School students have appropriate support structures including library materials, student support services, academic advising, and financial aid counseling. Additionally, Kaw Area Technical School students currently enrolled in Washburn classes have access to all university services. Appropriate services will continue to be available.

Provide financial data that document the organization's capacity to implement and sustain the proposed change (projected budgets, recent audit reports, revenue streams, cost of facilities, and projected facility and equipment costs).

Currently, the Topeka Public Schools has the responsibility of providing oversight of all financial operations and external audits. Under the merger, Washburn University will assume responsibility for financial operations.

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The current income sources of Kaw Area Technical School are sufficient to fund all operational expenses associated with the merger. Kaw Area Technical School has multiple stable income sources to provide funding for the operations of the school which will not change. The contractual agreement of participating school districts funds the enrollment of secondary students. Local funding from participating districts is based on fixed annual amounts that entitle each district to a maximum number of secondary enrollments.

The state of Kansas provides the foundation of funding for postsecondary students, and postsecondary tuition contributes the balance of funding for their program cost. Business and industry training programs at Kaw Area Technical School operate self-sufficiently by attaining needed funds through fees and other sources. Grants, the state of Kansas commitments for capital outlay, and other special income sources provide funds for targeted purposes.

Topeka Public Schools self-insures the Kaw Area Technical School nine buildings at a value of \$2,742,880. Equipment costs are determined annually based on the state of Kansas capital outlay formula.

Through the evidence presented in the self-study Washburn University has demonstrated its sound fiscal position. The institution has a budget process which allows for the implementation and ongoing support of new initiatives. Any additional expenses associated with the merger will be handled through this budget process.

The most recent annual report, income sources, and the Kaw Area Technical School budget for FY08 are available online.

Once implemented, the number of Kaw Area Technical School students completing Washburn associate degrees should remain the same or increase. Students will have a seamless process for matriculating from Kaw Area Technical School programs to university degree programs.

Describe how the assessment of student learning is incorporated into the assessment program.

Assessment is not affected by the proposed change. Existing joint Washburn and Kaw Area Technical School programs include the assessment of student learning outcomes through the individual departmental assessment plans. Kaw Area Technical School will continue its annual program review process which evaluates curriculum, enrollment, equipment, follow-up (placement and/or continued education), and industry skill and knowledge requirements for entry-level positions. The curriculum outcomes are measured through competencies identified within each program. A few programs utilize national criteria to determine the program competencies which students must achieve to become qualified or certified. At the end of the program curriculum, each student is evaluated on the attainment and completion of competencies within a program. Kaw Area Technical School students also complete written and performance assessments throughout their programs which are documented on competency profiles. The competencies are based on industry standards and comply with the core curricula coordinated by the Kansas Board of Regents.

Timeline Used to Implement the Proposed Change

December 2007	Transition plan to Kansas Board of Regents
January-February 2008	Approval of transition plan by Kansas Board of Regents
Spring 2008	Approval of contract for change in governance by Topeka Public Schools Board of Education and Washburn Board of Regents
July 1, 2008	Effective date of transition of governance of Kaw Area Technical School from Topeka Public Schools Board of Education to Washburn University Board of Regents

