President Schears shares his insight about technical education and Northwest Tech.

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Your impact can change lives. Find out how.
Mr. Benjamin Schears became the 5th president of Northwest Kansas Technical College on July 1, 2016. Mr. Schears is a native Kansan with many years of experience at the two-year college level. He received a certificate from Flint Hills Technical College and an Associate of Arts degree from Cowley County Community College. He received both his Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees from Emporia State University. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Baker University.
Western Kansas wind can be remarkable! On a day jam-packed with meetings and appointments, I slipped out of the office and took a walk around campus to stretch my legs and visit with our students. The wind was pretty fierce as it rolled through campus, shifting the myriad rainbow of autumn leaves around the college grounds. And that got me to thinking…

winds of change are blowing.

For well over five decades, there has been a significant social push for high school students to graduate and pursue a 4-year bachelors degree. For years, the sermon preached in living rooms and counseling offices has been that the only path to a successful life rests on the road to the university.

This past semester, a report on state enrollment in Kansas revealed that community colleges and universities in the state are experiencing declining enrollments. Technical colleges, however, posted double-digit growth and climbed up a whopping 12% for the Fall 2017 semester. Northwest Tech alone posted over a 10% growth this year.

As I look around at the social landscape in the nation, I am encouraged by the shift I’m seeing toward technical education and the reality that not every student needs to earn a bachelors degree to live a good life. Instead, much like the various colors of leaves that were blowing across our campus, it is critical for our workforce to have a diverse array of skilled workers to grow. We need plumbers, contractors, electricians, and cosmetologists just as badly as we need doctors, lawyers, and teachers.

Our nation is currently hurting for skilled laborers in the technical trades. Technical students not only pay less in college tuition and fees, they also have lower student loan debt and generally make more money out of the gate than most bachelor’s degree graduates. This means they can make a more immediate and lasting impact on their local economy, spend money at a local car dealership, buy a home, and even start a family because they aren’t strapped with the burden of massive student loans. There is significant value in technical education that reaches far beyond the incredible salary and high job placement our students achieve - it goes much deeper than that.

Far beyond mere dollars and cents, there is something to be said for being able to work and learn with your hands. During my walk around campus, I stopped in and talked with some of our diesel students. I watched as a student explained to me how he took an old Ford diesel tractor that had been sitting in the corner of a field for several years and was rebuilding the entire engine. He taught me about the process he and his classmates went through to tear the engine down, problem solve the issues and identify which parts could be cleaned and reused and which needed replacing.

What struck me most was not the explanation he gave, but the smile and pride visible on this young man’s face. It was a smile that spoke of the satisfaction of solving a problem, of working with his hands, and of bringing new life to a piece of equipment long since discarded.

The winds of change are blowing, and young entrepreneurs are entering the classrooms of Northwest Tech bent on learning a trade, building a business, and becoming productive members of their communities. It’s our role to educate them, equip them, and send them out onto whatever mission life has in store for them.
Since the college was founded in 1964, over 12,000 students have been affiliated with Northwest Kansas Technical College. Our alumni have gone on to establish very successful careers in academia and industry. We would like to share the successes and accomplishments of our alumni and provide a system for re-establishing contacts with old friends and colleagues. **We invite you to contact us to let us know your achievements** and also recommend you to visit our website where you will find links to a variety of newsletters, events, and endowment opportunities.

We love to hear from Northwest Tech alumni. Please do not hesitate to contact our Endowment Director, Kelly James, at Kelly.James@nwktc.edu, or call 785-890-1529

We send an email or print newsletter filled with college news bi-annually. This is your opportunity to keep up to date with the latest announcements from Northwest Tech!
The Electrical Technology program at Northwest Tech is home to two NT alumni, Robert Loftin and Logan Dobbs. They decided to return to their alma mater and become instructors after spending some time working in industry.

Loftin began the Electric Technology program in 1982. The instructor for the program was Glen Chase. Loftin graduated in 1984 and moved back to Weskan, Kansas and started his own business, “Loftin Electric”.

Dobbs began the Electric Technology program in 2004. After two years he graduated with his Electrical Technology certificate and associates degree. The instructors for the program during that time were Gary Kickler and Wes Gerrans. Dobbs went on to earn his journeyman’s license in Colorado. In 2011, Dobbs earned his Master Electrician’s license.

When they returned to Northwest Tech to become instructors (Loftin 2010, Dobbs 2011), they were surprised at how much the program had transformed. The Electric Technology program changes and adapts annually to meet industry standards. Each of Northwest Tech’s programs have an advisory board structure that requires a minimum of two meetings annually. The advisory board members assist Northwest Tech in continually improving the Electrical Technology program. The industry representatives help guide the curriculum to keep the program viable by producing graduates with the skills needed to succeed in industry.
Program Spotlight:

**Precision Agriculture**

Precision Agriculture Technology is Northwest Tech’s newest program that is now on its second year.
Precision Ag is a comprehensive program that provides a solid background in the high-tech practices, equipment, and software being utilized in production agriculture today. A combination of classroom, shop, and field environments are used to expose students to real-life settings.

This program will prepare students for a wide range of employment options, including: high-tech crop producer, tractor guidance specialist, agronomy technician, crop consultant, GIS/Imagery technician, UAV operator, VRI irrigation specialist, geospatial technician, EM/EC soils surveyor, precision equipment sales and support, AG business technician, custom applicator, and integrated solutions consultant.

Recently, the program has developed ties with the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4 and the Kansas Water Office to develop a Water Technology Mobile Classroom. This mobile laboratory will assist in teaching students and area growers mapping, installation, and support for efficient irrigation equipment. The Water Technology Mobile Classroom project will promote environmental sustainability for water conservation in northwest Kansas and surrounding areas. The project is an ongoing joint effort between Northwest Tech, the State of Kansas Water Office, Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, and the area agricultural community. Area students, FFA participants, and local farmers will learn how to evaluate, install, and maintain water efficient technology on local farmland thus benefiting all parties. The project was originally established to assist the area growers with meeting the statutory responsibilities of groundwater conservation regulated by Intensive Groundwater Use Control Areas (IGUCAs), Local Enhanced Management Areas (LEMAS), and Water Conservation Areas (WCAs).

Weston McCary is a Precision Ag instructor at Northwest Tech. He graduated from Aims Community College with an A.A.S. degree in Engineering Technology. He later completed a B.S. degree from Metropolitan State University in Denver with a B.S. degree in Aerospace Science and a minor in Geospatial Technology. He has spent most his professional career in civil engineering, surveying and aerial mapping; including operations in navigation technologies and precision agriculture.
Every gift is appreciated at Northwest Kansas Technical College whether the gift is one dollar or one million. Since our founding in 1964, gifts from alumni and friends have helped shape Northwest Tech into one of the top technical institutions in Kansas. We use donated funds to support our students, faculty, facilities, academic programs, NJCAA athletic programs, and much more. There are many ways to support Northwest Tech and it is easy to find something that best suits you. Explore our “Ways to Give” section to find our areas of support and how you can help.

The next page features a current student who has benefited from a Northwest Tech scholarship.

Thanks to the support of alumni and friends, Northwest Kansas Technical College can continue to pursue its mission to “prepare individuals for gainful employment in technical and professional careers, productive personal lives, and lifelong learning.” Help Northwest Tech deliver on the promise of education by giving today.
Limon, Colorado native, Baxter Bellefeville, chose Northwest Tech for its location and small class sizes. Baxter had visited a number of other tech colleges, but decided on Northwest Tech because of the hands-on live work that the Diesel Tech department offered. Baxter received the Ryan Lieberknecht Memorial scholarship, which helped him pay for his tools. "Coming from a single parent household, every bit helps. I worked throughout high school and saved up. When I found out I got the Ryan Lieberknecht Memorial scholarship, I was thankful and it helped me purchase the tools that I will eventually use in industry". Baxter also commented that Northwest Tech feels like a family away from home to him. Baxter is an exceptional young man and a credit to the college. We wish him continued success in his studies.
Endowment Fundraiser:

March 10, 2018

The Endowment Association at Northwest Tech advances the college’s mission of technical education by managing private dollars for scholarships, new facilities, and academic programs. Gifts from the community and alumni have enabled Northwest Tech to open the doors of opportunity to more than 9,000 graduates since 1964. Northwest Tech donors are directly responsible for many students’ educational opportunities. This year’s Endowment Fundraiser will be held on March 10, 2018.

Enter to win a trip for two to Ireland!

Saturday, March 10th at 4:30 P.M. at the Goodland Elks Lodge.

Ireland trip for two:

- round trip mid-week airfare from Denver to Dublin or London
- 7 nights hotel lodging at 4 star hotel
- car rental while in Ireland if needed
- select tours

Purchase tickets from Kelly James by calling 785-890-1529
Maverick Accomplishments:

Our students, faculty, and staff work hard each day to make a difference at Northwest Tech. We are proud of the progress that is achieved to make our campus, student body, and community better! Here are a few things that have been accomplished this year so far:

**Community Day**

Our Day of Service is a community service event that all students, faculty, & staff participate in each year. Services this year included painting the dorms on campus, trash clean up around town, landscaping, and helping community members and business owners with various projects.

**Grants**

Northwest Tech seeks grants that will improve classroom learning for students by providing them with advanced tools that pertain to their program. Recently, the Crime Scene Investigation program received $5,499 from the Kansas Board of Regents to purchase a thermal imaging camera for their drone. The Precision Agriculture program received $30k from The Dane G. Hansen Foundation to purchase a mobile classroom that will be used when they are out in the field conducting research. The Precision Ag program also received $14,480 from the Kansas Board of Regents to purchase a new drone that will help them perform more intricate research and record complex data.

**Campus Food Pantry**

The Northwest Tech Campus Food Pantry is a newly established service consisting of campus-based programs focused on alleviating food insecurity among college students that attend Northwest Tech. The Northwest Tech Campus Food Pantry aims to provide support and resources primarily for students who live off-campus that need a little help getting by.

See What’s NEW!

VISIT NWKTC.EDU for upcoming events!
Northwest Tech Athletics is committed to educating champions in academics, sport, and life. We target excellence in 8 SPORTS; we achieve it as ONE TEAM. Northwest Tech is equipped to help student-athletes achieve their best. Our college is the fastest growing higher education institution in the state of Kansas with enrollment nearly doubling in the past three years. We aim to transform technical education while preparing student-athletes for life after graduation.

Kieran Harrison Business Tech

Kieran Harrison is a second year student, majoring in Business Technology. He is an international student from Stoke-On-Trent, England. Kieran has been an enthusiastic student, embracing the American culture and making many new friends, while at the same time, advancing his soccer career. Kieran chose NT for its great coaching staff and small class sizes. “This was influential in my decision to come here as I needed a home away from home and with that I have found another family here. Not just on the soccer team but also the staff and faculty, I never thought that I could come from another country and fit in so well” Kieran stated as he talked about his time in Kansas so far. He continued, “My favorite thing about NT is the Soccer Program and having the responsibility to be captain and lead the team out every game is an honor!”
No matter the size or form of your investment, Northwest Tech Foundation staff will help you to make the greatest possible impact with your gift. There are many different types of charitable giving tools to make your gift have a lasting impact!

How to set up an Endowed Scholarship

An Endowed Scholarship is a great way to make a gift to the college while honoring a loved one, business, or yourself. What sets endowed scholarships apart from other scholarships is that the capital in the endowed scholarship gift is preserved, so the gift will last indefinitely.

An amount of $10,000 or greater is required to set up an endowed scholarship. The money will then be invested. The college will never withdraw on any of the principle; only the interest earned from the donation is used to fund scholarships. Many donors name their endowed scholarships in memory of a loved one or their own name. Because the scholarship is permanent, it can be used as a way for the donor to keep their loved ones name tied to the college or program that was important to them. For more information on setting up an endowed scholarship contact Kelly James at (785) 890-1529.

Gifts can be made using:

- **Cash**: a one-time investment via check or cash.
- **Recurring bank transfers**: a scheduled contribution directly from your savings or checking account.
- **Credit cards**: a simple way to give by phone, mail, or online
- **Securities and mutual funds**: whether these funds are offered via paper or electronic transfer, any depreciated securities should be sold before gifting to realize the loss for tax purposes.
- **Estate Gifts**: Trusts, annuities.

Please remember to update your contact information on our website to ensure you will be contacted with upcoming events, alumni news, and endowment opportunities! Visit NWKTC.EDU
Endowment:

- Auto Body Repair
- Automotive Technology
- Business Technology
- Carpentry
- Computer Graphics Technology
- Cosmetology
- Crime Scene Investigation
- Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology
- Electrical Technology
- Engineering Technology
- Medical Assistant
- Mobile Application & Gaming
- Network Technology
- Precision Agriculture Technology
- Respiratory Therapy
- Welding
The Northwest Tech Alumni Association is a supporting organization of Northwest Kansas Technical College focused on building lifelong relationships with NT alumni, prospective students, industry partners, and friends.

**OUR MISSION:**

The mission of Northwest Kansas Technical College, as an institution of higher learning, is to prepare individuals for gainful employment in technical and professional careers, productive personal lives, and lifelong learning.

**OUR VISION:**

The vision of Northwest Kansas Technical College as a forward thinking, premier leader in career and technical education is to maximize learning through progressive technology and facilities, collaborations, and professional experiences that foster

**OUR GOALS:**

- Enrollment Growth
- Teaching & Learning
- Student Success
- Alliance & Partnerships

**OUR VALUES:**

- Commitment to Learning
- Commitment to Quality
- Commitment to Integrity
- Commitment to Service
- Commitment to Diversity