

Affiliation of Northwest Kansas Technical College and North Central Kansas Technical College with Fort Hays State University; HB 2290

HB 2290 authorizes the affiliation of Northwest Kansas Technical College and North Central Kansas Technical College with Fort Hays State University (FHSU).

Affiliated Institutions

The affiliated institutions will be designated as FHSU-Northwest Kansas Technical College and FHSU-North Central Kansas Technical College and operate as technical colleges within FHSU. The powers and duties of the governing boards for these technical colleges are transferred to FHSU, subject to the rules and regulations and supervision of the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), and the boards will become industry or regional advisory boards appointed by the President of FHSU.

The bill provides that the affiliated institutions will continue as technical colleges eligible for funding in the same manner as other technical colleges and offer programs approved by FHSU, including credential and degree programs that technical colleges are authorized to award.

Industry and Regional Advisory Boards

The new industry or regional advisory boards are required to:

- Review programs at the affiliated institution with FHSU leadership to ensure alignment with industry and community workforce needs;
- Provide input relating to changes in each advisory board member's industry sector or region that affect academic programs;
- Perform any operational responsibilities or duties specified in the formal affiliation agreement; and
- Perform any other responsibilities as requested by the President of FHSU.

Admissions

The bill provides that admission requirements for each respective institution will not be altered, and FHSU will not admit degree-seeking, first-time freshmen or transfer students to university programs who do not meet the applicable qualified admission standards.

Formal Affiliation Agreement

The bill requires a formal affiliation agreement between the affiliated institutions and FHSU to address the transfer of faculty, employees, and students and, subject to authorization by KBOR, all affiliated institution personnel would become FHSU personnel, with their employment deemed uninterrupted.

The affiliation is effective after approval of the formal agreement by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The bill provides that, should only one technical college choose to participate in the affiliation agreement with FHSU, the provisions of the bill will be effective for the remaining institutions.

Legal Proceedings and Contracts

The bill states that no legal proceeding, including criminal actions, will be eliminated by reason of the affiliation, and any legal proceeding can be allowed to be maintained by the affiliated institutions.

The bill also states the affiliation will not affect any contract, agreement, or assurance in effect on the effective date of the bill (July 1, 2023).

Conforming and Technical Amendments

The bill makes other conforming and technical amendments to law regarding the technical colleges affiliated designation.