

We are having an anniversary party and you are invited! Neosho County Community College is 75 years old this year. We started as Chanute Junior College in 1936 in the “new” high school with 66 students. Since then we have changed our name twice, first to Neosho County Community Junior College, then to NCCC. We have grown from a floor of the high school to the large Chanute campus, opened in 1969, the first Ottawa Campus, opened in 1991 then the new campus in 2011, a separate Online Campus created in 2006, the Lawrence Center, which opened in 2007 and the Independence nursing campus which reopened in 2007. From those few students we have grown to serving over 3,700 students last year alone. WOW!

This Saturday, the 20th, at the Chanute Campus from 5:00pm -9:30pm we have a big party planned. There will be pulled beef sandwiches, face painting, pony rides, free light bulbs from Take Charge Challenge, music, large inflatables, a basketball shootout, a dunk tank (no, I will not be in it – sorry!) and on and on. The night ends with a fireworks show! It is all free and open to the public. It’s our way of saying thank you for all of your support for 75 years. Special thanks go to M&M Ranch who donated the beef and Ash Grove Cement who donated the fireworks.

And the party doesn’t stop there. We have monthly events large and small planned for the rest of this anniversary year. It is going to be great!

Much has changed since 1936. Bread was 8 cents a loaf, Roosevelt was re-elected President with 98% of the Electoral College votes and the Hoover Dam was completed. It was a challenging year then too. War was brewing in Europe with the breaking of the Treaty of Versailles, and the Spanish Civil War was underway. National unemployment was at 16.9% that year, compared with 9.1% now.

That year Chanute Junior College first charged about \$66 for tuition and fees a year. University tuition in 1936 was about \$350-400 a year without books. It is certainly more than that now at University. Their cost is anywhere from \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year depending on public or private university.

NCCC was a low cost alternative then and it still is today. Today, generally, the cost of a credit hour is between \$74 and \$104 depending on where you live and what campus you attend. That means an academic year of classes without books is between \$2,200 and \$3,120. And we rent the books for \$10 a credit hour. Seventy-five years later, community college is still by far the best deal in higher education.

This 75th year looks to be one of our best. As I write this, enrollment for the College is up over 16%! If this lead holds until opening day it will set record dating back 11 years when we began keeping day-to-day enrollment reports. The previous record was a 9.2% increase. This enrollment surge is being led by Ottawa and Online, both up an incredible 32%! Looks like the students are responding well to the new campus. Classes begin on Monday the 22th, so it is not too late to enroll.

Our residence hall is full with 264 students. Monday the 20th is also “Move In Day” for the majority of these students. There will be many new freshmen from across the state and some from outside the state and even outside the United States moving into the halls. There will be many crying moms at the campus as they drop off their son or daughter. (My mom cried all the way from Stillwater, OK to

Collinsville after she dropped me off. It is just a bittersweet part of parenting that I have to look forward to someday as well.)

In order to deal with this wonderful growth at the College, we have added or soon will add personnel to many areas in student services and instruction including housing, financial aid, registration, admissions, a new science instructor, housekeeping/maintenance and athletics.

Just think about the thousands of students Chanute Junior College through Neosho County Community College has helped through the years - all of those people whose lives have been impacted over 75 years thanks to the creation of one college.

Please join us to help celebrate our anniversary and to kick off another 75 years of enriching our communities and our students' lives.

As always I welcome your thoughts and questions at binbody@neosho.edu.