

Community News

Finalists

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At Northern New Mexico College, Guerrero said the provost resigned and he has spent one year in his current position. He said the college has been able to see increases in enrollment, dual credit enrollment, grants and faculty.

“I’ve been working in the president position in a provost capacity,” he said.

Guerrero was asked why he is interested in Fort Scott after working in various other states. He said when he looks at FSCC, he sees a rural area, which provides “more of a family and team atmosphere.”

He said the college’s mission statement also aligns with his values and goals.

“Also, the strategic plan falls in alignment with what I’m looking for,” he said. “It shows quality people.”

Guerrero said professionalism and integrity, and family are the two reasons Fort Scott has appealed to him. He said he has talked with FSCC faculty and staff and also looked at athletic programs, which he said “plays a huge role.”

He said the decision is also personal, as he wanted to be closer to family in Wichita.

“I’m a family guy,” he said.

When asked what his first week at FSCC would look like, Guerrero said he would be “open to listening, visiting and observing” as he engages with faculty, staff, students and community members. He said

he would work to identify the college’s strengths and weaknesses.

“I’m not ready to change anything out of the gates,” he said.

Guerrero said he viewed the city’s architecture and brick streets during a “sneak peek” of Fort Scott prior to his interview with the board.

“We’re dependent upon the community and the community is dependent upon us. It’s reciprocal,” he said.

When asked what the college’s role is in helping Fort Scott to prosper, Guerrero said the goal is to get students to stay in Fort Scott and be successful “on the field and the classroom” as well as the community.

Guerrero was also asked about the college’s financial struggles in recent years, and if he is prepared to make decisions concerning its financial stability.

He said he has not yet seen the college’s financials, but has reviewed an audit report and had a “glimpse” of credit hour figures.

“Once I have access, I will get a lot of info,” he said.

As an example, Guerrero said if a college produced 30,000 credit hours in one year, when building a budget, he would base the budget on 80% of that figure, or 24,000 credit hours, to allow for money left over for cash reserves.

“It’s only business sense,” he said.

Guerrero said he would also need to determine which programs are “bleeding” the college.

“Am I prepared to make hard decisions? Yes, abso-



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo
Dr. Larry Guerrero speaks during a public forum Friday on the campus of Fort Scott Community College.

lutely,” he said.

His plan for increasing enrollment would begin with the onboarding process, which involves greeting students and parents. He said good customer service is important.

“That’s a starting point and it never stops,” he said.

He said the process also involves tracking data to ensure students can earn certificates and degrees quickly to begin jobs. He said there is a focus on agriculture and technical trades programs, and looking at athletic programs that are “not too costly.”

Guerrero said lineman programs offer “high paying” jobs and jobs in the surgical technology field are in “high demand.”

“Health care is not going anywhere anytime soon,” he said.

Guerrero said it is also important to partner and build relationships with local school districts in order to attract students to FSCC. This would involve inviting school officials to campus to talk about the processes for students, and giving students tours of the campus.

Guerrero said a marching band would be in the “top five” of his list of priorities. He said the band and music department could be showcased at community events and the college could collaborate with communities for band programs.

Dr. Anthony (Tony) Kinkel

Kinkel has a bachelor’s degree in social science and a doctorate in higher education administration. He currently serves as the vice president of development at Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children’s Home in Mount Dora, Fla.

Kinkel served in the Minnesota State Senate from 1999-2002 and the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1986-98. He began his career in education as an adjunct professor in Minnesota in 1989 and worked his way up to the positions of dean, chancel-

lor and president at institutions in various states.

Kinkel said his background includes an education at “great public schools” in northern Minnesota and the University of Minnesota. He ran for political office, earned his doctorate, then worked as an instructor and later a dean.

“I fell in love with community colleges,” he said. “I understand greater America.”

Kinkel said his wife is from Satanta and their grandchildren live in Lenexa.

With Kansas Senate Bill 155 concerning career technical education, Kinkel said he has seen 80 high school students grow to about 1,000 students in about a year.

“I think the only real way to grow and prosper, you have to be like this with school districts,” he said, referring to partnerships with school districts.

Kinkel said of the 6,400 employees in Fort Scott, the largest percentage is manufacturing and is one of the largest percentages nationally.

“What an exciting time to be in Fort Scott,” he said.

“The partnerships can improve. I’m confident we can integrate. Employees love this school.”

Kinkel said he has been “impressed” with how the college’s staff have followed its mission.

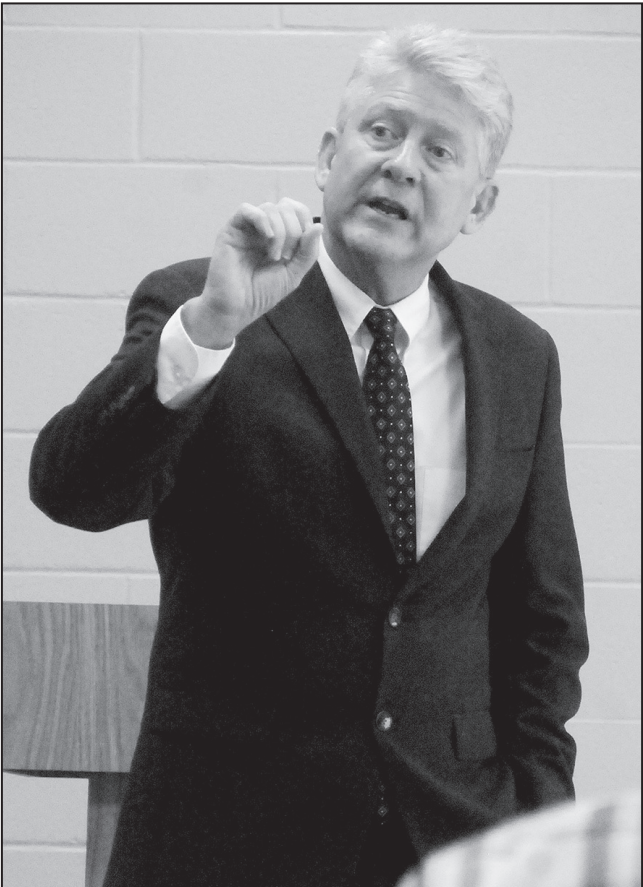
“The college has turned the corner,” he said. “I believe it’s time to grow. We’ve lost enrollment and we need the community’s help. This is a crown jewel.”

He said the decisions made everyday at community colleges are “critical” to student success.

“It’s Fort Scott’s community college,” he said. “I’m here to offer everything I’ve learned in 30-plus years.”

Kinkel said he has become familiar with the Kansas Board of Regents and lawmakers in the Kansas Legislature.

“I think it’s a mistake universities can do associate



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo
Dr. Anthony (Tony) Kinkel speaks during a public forum Friday on the campus of Fort Scott Community College.

degrees now. I don’t agree with that,” he said.

Kinkel said FSCC must be competitive and there are opportunities through its programs such as the John Deere Technician Training Program, Harley-Davidson program, theatre and choir. He said there are more opportunities for health care programs with the arrival of Freeman Health Systems.

When asked how to grow programs by partnering with high schools, Kinkel said “you have to be open to every partnership with K-12.” He said there will be some “tough negotiations” in order to be cost effective.

There are also potential opportunities to join forces with schools in Missouri, including Nevada, Kinkel said.

“People of goodwill are hungry for partnerships in Fort Scott,” he said. “There are jobs in the manufacturing and health care fields.”

Another question focused on Kinkel’s thoughts on making FSCC “stand out” as discussions have taken place in recent years on combining or removing community colleges in Kansas.

Kinkel discussed how artificial intelligence (AI) “has changed the world” and could be used in the education world. He said AI will not replace teachers, but could be used as a type of teacher’s assistant and would design assignments and perform clerical work.

He said AI could also help automate the financial aid process.

Kinkel said more partnerships with other colleges will give students a “better chance to succeed.”

“You need a skilled president who understands politics,” he said, adding he can work with the Legislature on the college’s needs.

Kinkel discussed using his political background to help the college, as one citizen asked what his first effort would be with lawmakers in Topeka. Kinkel said he has talked with friends in Wichita about the needs of Kansas.

“We get some successes here and keep moving forward,” he said. “We don’t

have enough legislative power in rural Kansas.”

There was discussion on students getting a return on their investment and counseling students on where jobs are located. Kinkel was also asked if he has a plan to draw students. He said he has talked with board members and representatives of the Fort Scott Area Chamber of Commerce about a “student referral program.”

He said there are students who could benefit from such a program, which would provide incentives to students who recruit other students to the college.

Kinkel said he sees an “opportunity to build” and grow numbers at FSCC. He said students have been dropping out of school due to “life problems” rather than academic issues.

He said he would like to see more Greyhound billboards promoting the college, which he said has begun to bounce back from recent struggles.

“Things have stabilized a little, it’s time to rock and roll. Let’s go,” he said. “You have to convince faculty to work with industry and inspire faculty on its benefits.”

According to a news release, FSCC received 32 applications for the position and reviewed the resumes and CVs of each candidate. From this group, the board and Greenbush selected seven semifinalists who participated in a one-way interview process, submitting recorded responses to a series of predetermined questions.

The board then evaluated each of these candidates and identified four finalists. Each candidate will meet with the board, cabinet members, faculty and staff during a forum, and participate in a forum open to the community. The forums will be moderated. FSCC requests questions be submitted in advance to ensure each candidate is asked the same questions.

Further details on each candidate’s schedule will be posted on the FSCC website and social media as they are finalized.

Anne Frank exhibit



Marti Wells-Smith/Special to the Tribune

The international traveling exhibit entitled “Anne Frank: A History for Today” is now on display through June 26 at the Lowell Milken Center. It’s presented in partnership with the Anne Frank Center, the official U.S. and Canadian partner of the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. The exhibit is an opportunity to learn more about Anne Frank, her family and the courageous individuals who helped them during one of history’s darkest chapters. It features historical photographs, personal stories and visuals, through the efforts of Megan Helberg, a 2021 Lowell Milken Center Fellow and the current program coordinator for the Anne Frank Center. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays, located at 1 S. Main St. in Fort Scott. Admission is free.

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TRIBUNE

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A Rust Communications MOKS LLC publication
6 N. Main, Fort Scott, KS • 620-223-2110
The Fort Scott Tribune is published, Wednesday and Saturday mornings, except certain holidays.

If you have news of general interest, please phone The Fort Scott Tribune at (620) 223-2110. Display and classified advertisements can be placed between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday by calling (620) 223-2110.

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