

Strategic Affiliation Monthly Newsletter

August 2024

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC AFFILIATION - Peter Laipson, PH.D.

In my last column, I speculated about the progress AIT chairs were likely to report on at the Affiliation Summit on July 17 in Goodland. In many ways, I got the story right. We heard about multiple course pathways for students to move seamlessly from the technical colleges to a 4-year degree at FHSU. We heard about new initiatives to share facilities and resources among the three affiliates, including specialized training tools in the allied health sciences, learning management, and fundraising technology, as well as a roster of linked extracurricular student activities at all four campuses. And we heard about ways that secondary students contemplating enrollment at one of the technical colleges could complete their general education requirements most efficiently.

But there were a few things we learned about that I hadn't anticipated. One is the incredible speed with which the technical colleges have rebranded themselves as Fort Hays Tech | North Central and Fort Hays Tech | Northwest. Over the last six months, AIT 9 (Recruitment and Marketing), with the invaluable assistance of the international advertising firm Leo Burnett, has guided the process of selecting new logos, fonts, and color palettes. The use of those new designs was embargoed; however, it was not until the Higher Learning Commission, the accrediting agency for all three institutions, formally approved the affiliation in late June. Once we received the green light, the tech campuses sprang into action to embrace their new visual identity: painting walls, changing campus signage, reskinning campus vehicles, and printing new swag. This has been a heroic, all-hands-on-deck effort, and it's amazing what the colleges have managed to accomplish in just six weeks. Equally impressive have been the efforts at the technical colleges to ensure that the electronic resources reflect the new name and brand, from revised websites to email addresses.

The other thing I hadn't anticipated at the Summit was the excitement about the affiliation evident among everyone who attended. The willingness of faculty and staff to work together across institutions has been remarkable, but even eighteen months ago, there was some mystification or even suspicion about the affiliation's purpose and possibilities. Not anymore. Participants at the Summit talked movingly about the ways their work has not only improved opportunities for all students but also provided AIT members with rewarding new collegial relationships. The collective enthusiasm for the affiliation will be on display at the three Launch Events on September 10 (Goodland), September 12 (Hays), and September 14 (Beloit). I hope you'll be able to attend one or more of those evenings.

While the Launch Events will provide the opportunity to celebrate the formal approval of the affiliation and all our progress to date, the work continues. As part of its responsibilities, each AIT created a plan for 6-month, 12-18-month, and 3-5-year initiatives, so even the longest established Implementation Teams still have goals to pursue. In addition, this semester will see the launch of three new AITs – Business, Registrar, and Institutional Research – to continue aligning the practices of the three partners.

At the same time, the leadership has been meeting to sharpen the focus on the next stage of the affiliation. With operational integration among the three partners well underway, there is now an opportunity to contemplate projects where “the whole is more than the sum of its parts,” or where the three affiliates acting together can effect change in ways that they could not individually. I look forward to reporting in future columns the results of the current planning and the initiatives we'll be pursuing.

Three institutions, one goal – to serve the students, businesses, and communities of Rural Kansas

Check out our new look!



Gear UP, Tiger Nation!

Shopfhsu.com is your online destination for the latest Tiger Gear. Coming soon, brand-new Fort Hays Tech | North Central and Fort Hays Tech | Northwest gear.



Tiger Nation United.

Three celebrations. Three locations.

NC
FORT HAYS TECH
NORTH CENTRAL


FORT HAYS STATE
UNIVERSITY

NW
FORT HAYS TECH
NORTHWEST

Help Us Celebrate Our *Affiliation Partnership*



SCAN HERE

For more
information

Goodland

September 10

5:00 pm (MT)

Lutters Field

Southeast Corner of Campus

Hays

September 12

4:30 pm

Downtown Pavilion

Beloit

September 14

5:00 pm

Downtown Beloit

Three institutions, one goal – to serve the students, businesses, and communities of Rural Kansas