Agenda Item: Alexandria Technical College Change in Mission (Second Reading)

Cite policy requirement, or explain why item is on the Board agenda:
Board policy 3.24 requires Board approval of institution missions and changes in authority to confer an academic award. This mission change request is a second reading for the Board to act on the recommended motion.

Scheduled Presenter(s):
Kevin Kopischke, President, Alexandria Technical College

Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:
Alexandria Technical College is requesting Board approval to change its mission from a technical college to a comprehensive community and technical college authorized to offer the Associate in Arts degree. Alexandria Technical College has met all the requirements of the mission change policy and procedure. An executive summary of the mission change proposal was shared with the Leadership Council at its May 4, 2010 meeting.

As required by the recently approved changes to Board policy 3.24, mission approvals leading to a change in authority to confer an academic award require a first and second reading of the Board of Trustees. This is a second reading of the mission change by the Board of Trustees and a request for action on the recommended motion. Alexandria Technical College will also propose a name change to the Board of Trustees Advancement Committee, and pursue final program approval for its Associate in Arts degree program.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alexandria Technical College is requesting approval to change its mission from that of a technical college to a comprehensive two-year college offering the Associate in Arts (AA) degree in addition to Associate of Science (AS) and Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees. The college does not intend to diminish its role in career and technical education but rather to expand its offerings to meet the needs of students and employers in the region. The following information is provided to the Board of Trustees in consideration of the motion provided at the end of this document for Alexandria Technical College to change its mission.

Proposed Mission Change

New Mission: Alexandria Technical and Community College creates opportunity for individuals and businesses through education, innovation, and leadership. The college’s high-quality technical and transfer programs and services meet their needs, interests, and abilities and strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of Minnesota’s communities.

Current Mission Statement: Alexandria Technical College provides access to learning – for careers and for life!

The name change proposed in the new mission statement will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees Advancement Committee.

Primary Reasons for the Mission Change

The primary reasons for mission change are:

1. To respond to student interest and community requests for additional access to lower division transfer education.

   a. There are over 600 students currently at the college who are enrolled in the Individualized Professional Studies (INPS) and Associate in Arts (AA) degree through Bemidji State University or are taking liberal arts courses outside a technical program. Most of these students are ineligible to receive financial aid because they are not enrolled in an approved AA degree program.

   b. A high percentage of students enrolling in college are undecided about their final career objective. They are committed to college but have not had the experience or advising to make a commitment to a long term career. The AA degree meets
this need by allowing students to progress in lower division work without loss of 
credit for transfer.

2. To increase awareness of technical degrees and related career opportunities.
   a. Students who take the AA degree at Alexandria Technical College will be 
      required to demonstrate career awareness. Courses in basic manufacturing, health 
      care, computer occupations, or business will increase awareness of technical 
      career opportunities for those who did not have the option of high school 
      technical courses.
   b. AA students will be exposed to fellow students majoring in technical programs 
      which will increase their awareness of these opportunities. The interaction 
      between AA and technical program students will enhance the educational 
      experience of both.

3. To meet the strategic objectives of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities in the 
   competitive environment of higher education with today’s market realities.

Alexandria Technical College currently offers technical career education supported by a strong 
core of general education courses taught by credentialed faculty. The college offers 75 approved 
transfer courses that allow students to complete the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum at the 
college, to complete any one of five separate AS degrees, or to complete other AAS degrees, 
diplomas and certificates. General education courses account for 24% of credits at the college.

The college has worked towards creation of a comprehensive higher education environment for 
over 30 years. While its historic focus has been on technical and career education, it has been 
long recognized that employers seek graduates who have a broad education that complements 
technical skills. To that end, the college has developed a strong general education curriculum in 
the arts, humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. Consistent with the 
position of the American Association of Community Colleges, the college’s current practices and 
continued intent is to provide students with a foundation in general education courses that enable 
the student to understand and appreciate culture; to develop personal values based on accepted 
ethics; and to attain competencies in analysis, communication, qualitative and quantitative 
methods, synthesis, and teamwork to grow as a productive member of society for both the 
individual and public good.

Expansion of the college mission to include the AA` degree has been driven by student interest 
and community input. Surveys of regional high school students have indicated a high demand for 
local access to lower division transfer curriculum. Community interests have indicated an 
overwhelming support for creating increased access to the AA degree. The college has 
unanimous endorsement for the expanded mission from all technical program advisory 
committees, from the college Futures team, from community surveys, and from direct visits with 
local businesses. Internal surveys have indicated broad support from current faculty and staff at 
the college.
Alexandria Technical College was accepted as a candidate for North Central Accreditation in 1974 and was fully accredited in 1980 at the associate degree level. At the time of mission delineation in 1986, Minnesota legislation required technical colleges to move general education to community colleges, creating merged colleges to provide broad access to technical and liberal arts education for students. The single exception to this was Alexandria Technical College. The college was authorized to continue offering its own accredited general education courses due to its geographical isolation from other two and four-year colleges. The authorization, however, restricted the authority to offer the AA degree. Continuing to comply with regional accreditation standards, the college created a stand-alone general education division in 1990. The college was reaccredited in 1994 at the associate degree level limited to the AAS and AS degrees based on the limited authority granted to the institution by the State of Minnesota. The college was admitted to AQIP by the Higher Learning Commission on September 14, 2000. In 2008, ATC was approved for Reaffirmation of Accreditation and is scheduled for its next Higher Learning Commission reaffirmation in 2014-2015.

A mission change will require approval of the Higher Learning Commission. Following Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board approval, the college will request Higher Learning Commission staff action to approve a mission change. An action project to track implementation of the degree will be required. A site visit for college change in status is not anticipated.

No other program accreditation processes are anticipated for the Associate in Arts program.

BACKGROUND AND MISSION CHANGE INFORMATION

Listed below is the information required for a college to change its mission leading to a change in institutional type. Alexandria Technical College has met all mission change requirements.

The proposed mission clarifies the responsibility of the college to serve both individual learners and businesses as learning organizations. The college exists to provide opportunity not only through teaching of technical and transfer curriculum, but also through using resources to provide leadership and innovation in economic and community development. The outcome is stronger communities across Minnesota.

Current Vision:
To be the premier institution of career preparation and comprehensive lifelong learning by:

- Continuing our heritage of caring
- Engaging learners as full partners in their educational experiences
- Valuing our highly trained, professional staff, relevant programs and state-of-the-art technology
- Implementing instructional innovation
- Inspiring learners through an exemplary learning environment
Integrating our collaborative learning alliances and partnerships within and beyond Alexandria Technical College

Modeling a diverse culture of empowerment, creativity, and innovation as partners in a powerful learning organization

Proposed Vision: No change is proposed

The proposed mission change does not alter the vision of Alexandria Technical College. The vision for the college is to be “THE” college of West Central Minnesota, recognized across Minnesota and the nation. To accomplish that, the proposed mission change will provide increased ability to respond to the demonstrated expectations of learners and the community. Focused on engagement with learners, collaboration to leverage public and private resources, and support for a culture of excellence implemented by faculty and staff, the college will pursue its vision of being a premier institution.

Proposed Alexandria Technical College Purpose Statements:

1. To prepare students for career and personal success through demonstrated competency in general and transferable skills, technical or focused discipline knowledge, information literacy, and interactive engagement with community.

2. To actively and openly engage community and students in the responsibility for learning outcomes that lead to personal and community benefit.

3. To enhance awareness and integration of general education learning with the changing requirements of the world of work.

4. To manage college programs and services for long term sustainability that ensures continued value for students’ investment in Alexandria Technical and Community College.

Market Analysis and Demand

Alexandria Technical College Enrollment Trends:
Continued growth in the Bemidji State University AA degree, INPS, and undeclared majors has not diminished student demand for technical programs; eight technical programs are filled to capacity and cannot accept additional students. College enrollment in its technical programs has been stable with growth in the health, manufacturing, transportation, and law enforcement divisions. Soft enrollment in construction-related occupations and computer occupations reflect the current economic situation.

The growth in liberal arts and general education demonstrates increasing demand from students seeking transfer credits or early entry into college courses (see Table 3). Currently, 31.5% (696) of students attending ATC, approximately 12% of the college FYE, are taking general education courses (including PSEO students). Access to financial aid, increased course offerings, and the universal transfer benefits of the AA degree would potentially not only encourage more students
to enroll at ATC, but facilitate current students to take more credits per semester. Table 3 shows the increasing number of students falling into this category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10th Day Fall</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>Undc/AA/INPS</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>PSEO/OCHS</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2,205</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2,209</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2,132</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2,001</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,954</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2,002</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

**High school occupational survey:**
The 2009 occupational interest survey of high school juniors was conducted in the seven high schools in the area immediately surrounding the college. A total of 598 students returned the survey (a 90% return rate). Students identified 125 potential occupations of primary interest. Sixty-eight of these occupations require a baccalaureate or higher degree. Two hundred eighty-eight students chose one of these 68 occupations, meaning that approximately 48% of high school juniors in the Alexandria service area identified an occupation incompatible with degree options currently offered at Alexandria Technical College. This does not account for those who are undecided and would choose to enter college to complete general transfer courses while determining their occupational choice.

This survey has been done annually since 2007, and it consistently shows that a large percentage of high school students are interested in career options requiring a baccalaureate degree or higher. The survey also shows a declining interest in specific technical programs at the college.

**Jefferson high school program preference:**
The strong interest in a transfer degree is clearly evidenced by a review of the programs selected by Jefferson High School (Alexandria School District) students when they come to the college. Of the 732 Jefferson students who have been students at the college since 2007, 20% (150 students) have been undeclared majors rather than electing to become a student in one of the college’s technical programs (see attachment 3). If a college AA degree had been available here, some of these students plus others who did not come here at all for lack of a transfer degree and financial aid would have enrolled. Evidence from students themselves has indicated that the AA degree has the potential to attract students to ATC who now are required to move to another community or who are restricted from access to college transfer credits due to cost or personal circumstances.

**Comparative enrollment data for comparable institutions:**
Evidence supports substantial growth potential from AA degree enrollment based on student enrollment at comparable institutions. The following table compares MnSCU campus enrollment for liberal studies, undeclared or unassigned students, and general studies majors. Alexandria
Technical College would expect to gain at least 10% in enrollment based on comparison to comparable comprehensive institutions in 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPARISON OF MNSCU CAMPUS ENROLLMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria Technical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northland College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgewater College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnesota State</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculated from MnSCU Management website fall 2009

Additionally, the low percentage of female students enrolled at the college has been identified by external reviewers and the college itself. The MnSCU system average is 55% female and 44% male in fall 2009 compares to the Alexandria Technical College mix of 45% female students and 55% male. This represents an increase in the percentage of women enrolled from the 40% female enrollment recorded in 2004. Program mix impacts gender balance. The increasing enrollment in the undeclared, general studies, and liberal arts programs at ATC is increasing female enrollment at the college. It is believed that women’s enrollment at the college would continue to increase with the availability of the AA degree at Alexandria.

The college has experienced a large and growing demand for non-technical, liberal arts courses taken by students not enrolled in technical majors. In 2004, 270 students or 13.4% of the college’s total headcount were enrolled in non-technical courses. Enrollments in non-traditional courses have grown to 696 students or 31.5%, in the current year. Given this history, the college believes student interest in non-technical education will continue to increase in the coming years, but even if it does not, the current number of students enrolling in non-technical courses will be much better served if a defined AA degree option is available to them.

As documented in the previous section, current high school students continue to have a strong interest in pursuing occupational goals requiring baccalaureate or higher degree. National focus on two year colleges supports increased enrollment in two year colleges as a means to support both workforce development and preparation for higher level college and university education.

**Job skills analysis:**

Current job skill analysis of employer demand matches the growing student interest in baccalaureate-level education. Economic development is not limited to task oriented occupational skills. Strategic Advantage software from Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. indicates that the highest growth demand in areas of knowledge from the workforce of the seven county Alexandria region is in liberal arts education (see Figure 1). Skills that are the focus of the AA degree see the largest projected growth between now and 2014 (see Table 3).
Historical Context
Alexandria AVTI was established in 1961. Despite success as a technical college, the community continued to pursue approval for a community college. Supporting the need for liberal arts education, a 1965 study commissioned by Alexandria District 206 through the University of Minnesota concluded that, “Educational opportunities for the young people of that community (Alexandria) become complete only when a college exists in the locality.” The community’s first effort to establish a community college in Alexandria failed.

In a letter dated March 26, 1986, written to leaders of the Minnesota technical college system, then President Frank Starke argued that the mission delineation agreement would not serve technical colleges in their mission. Alexandria Technical College was ultimately allowed to act as a comprehensive college by creating and accrediting its own general education division. The advantage to the college and the community continues.

From 2000-2009, Alexandria Technical College requested and documented demand and capacity to be considered for expanded mission authority on three separate occasions. For various reasons, the college requests were not considered by the Board of Trustees.
Market Analysis

There are no other competing public or private higher education degree granting institutions in the City of Alexandria or immediately surrounding communities. The community and area are left with no local liberal arts degree granting institution. Yet, a strong demand for the Associate in Arts degree has been documented from the approximately 600 high school seniors graduating yearly from the immediate surrounding high schools (over 300 from the Alexandria high school itself) (see attachment 1). The fact that the Alexandria Technical College has over 600 students (including PSEO) currently attending as undeclared majors or in a program focused on liberal arts learning outcomes clearly demonstrates that other higher education institutions are not meeting their higher educational needs. Distance is certainly one factor. A majority of the students identified as potential AA degree enrollees come from the immediate surrounding area and have demonstrated by their attendance at the college that they prefer a liberal arts option close to home. Alexandria Technical College currently serves these students with the AA degree through Bemidji State University and as undeclared students. Given the history of students enrolled at Alexandria Technical College as AA students, undeclared, or in other programs leading to transfer, authorization of an AA degree at Alexandria is not anticipated to have a significant negative attendance impact on other MnSCU colleges.

Analysis of student and community interests provides evidence that the key customers for the Associate in Arts degree will cross three primary areas.

1. Adults, not directly from high school, who are entering or reentering higher education to complete lower division coursework that will lead to improved career opportunity through completion of a baccalaureate degree or the required additional coursework to advance within a company or industry sector. This includes students returning from military assignment and students who join a friend or significant other while they are attending Alexandria Technical College. The degree is expected to increase enrollment of female students reflecting a more typical ratio of male to female college enrollment for Alexandria Technical College. Currently, 55% of the college’s students are male.

2. High school graduates who are choosing to stay in the region, or are required to be in the region due to economic or personal restrictions, while completing lower division courses leading to a baccalaureate or higher degree.

3. Current high school students seeking options to complete lower division college work through PSEO or dual credit enrollment at the college, which could include summer enrollment.

In addition, the college has identified a trend with non-technical degree students that parallels the profile of students attending technical programs. Many students come here from a significant distance to take general education courses (see Figure 2).
Interviews with some of these students reveal that they are choosing to attend the college because another person of significance in their lives is enrolled here in one of the technical majors. While this segment of students has driven past one or more other colleges to take general education classes here, they are doing so for personal reasons. This category of demand is expected to continue and providing an AA degree would clearly be to their benefit.

Alexandria Technical College anticipates the ability to enroll students in the Associate in Arts degree in the fall of 2010. The college has demonstrated the ability to provide required instruction and support for the program at current enrollment levels with the addition of one FTE of new faculty. Support for existing enrollment for the AA degree and liberal arts courses has provided the necessary base for offering the program locally.

Relationship of New Mission, Vision, and Purposes to the System Mission and Strategic Directions

The primary reasons for mission change are:

1. To respond to student interest and community requests for additional access to lower division transfer education.
   a. There are over 600 students currently enrolled at the college who are undeclared or who are enrolled in the INPS and AA degree through Bemidji State University. As undeclared students, most of these students are ineligible to receive financial aid because they are not enrolled in an approved program (AA degree).
   b. A high percentage of students enrolling in college are undecided about their final career objective. They are committed to college but have not had the experience
or advising to make a long term career commitment. The AA degree allows students to progress in lower division work without loss of credit for transfer.

2. To increase awareness of technical degrees and related career opportunities.

   a. Students who take the AA degree at Alexandria Technical College will need to demonstrate career awareness. Courses in basic manufacturing, health care, computer occupations, or business will increase awareness of technical career opportunities for those who do not have the option of high school technical courses.

   b. AA students will be exposed to fellow students majoring in technical programs which will increase their awareness of these opportunities. The interaction between AA and technical program students will enhance the educational experience of both.

3. To meet the strategic objectives of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities in the competitive environment of higher education. Table 4 provides an overview of the current strategic goals of the Board of Trustees and associated benefits of providing the Associate in Arts degree as an option for students in Alexandria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MNSCU STRATEGIC GOALS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Direction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase access and opportunity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote and measure high-quality learning programs and services</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide programs and services that enhance the economic competitiveness of the state and its regions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovate to meet current and future educational needs</td>
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</table>
In addition to the direct correlation between the strategic goals of the system and the associated outcomes of the AA degree, the following quotations represent both the system’s description of strategic objectives and industry recommendations for future workers. They directly support the expanded mission of Alexandria Technical College.

“Our graduates and their employers face new demands in the 21st century that will call upon solid skills in reading, writing, mathematics and speaking; the ability to learn and think critically; and globally competitive technical and professional expertise. In addition, our students need opportunities to understand and participate in the global community.” *Source: Designing the Future: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012*

“Workers in the future will need even more interpersonal skills and a deeper understanding of budget, finance and technology and MnSCU should focus on producing graduates with this type of broader span of knowledge. Campuses should also do a better job of providing information to business about their offerings and build strong connections to their local business community.” *Source: Workforce of the Future: Leadership Reaches Out to Business Section 5*

“When asked about the skills employers seek in new employees, three themes emerged. Business leaders spoke overwhelmingly of the need for:

- technology skills;
- business-critical “soft” skills; and
- skills that reflect changes resulting from emerging business practices, such as using “green” products and responding to global competition.”

*Source: Workforce of the Future: Leadership Reaches Out to Business Section 4*

The proposed change will increase access to higher education for students in the Alexandria and West Central Minnesota region; strengthen the economic base of the region by attracting, retaining, and developing a more educated workforce; and minimize barriers for students pursuing the AA degree at Alexandria. While the current college partnership with Bemidji State University allows students access to an AA degree, barriers include confusing and cumbersome financial aid processing, higher tuition, restricted course availability, and limited access to academic advising.

Additionally, the college believes that the Associate in Arts degree will strengthen the college by attracting students who have not identified a specific career path but who have both the financial and academic ability to pursue college education. These students will increase the ability of the college to offer curriculum that supports the college’s Associate in Science degrees, the ability to provide additional beneficial partnerships with the state universities, and in some cases influence students to make career choices that will include technical programs.
Comprehensive Planning Process
How the new vision will create the ideal future for the institution

The economic and political environment requires Alexandria Technical College to clearly define its strategic objectives for sustainability. Mission is central to the future of the college and its ability to meet the needs of West Central Minnesota businesses and learners, legislative and stakeholder expectations, and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System’s goals. This request for mission expansion supports the goals of each of these constituent groups.

Strategically, Alexandria Technical College must maintain its focus on its “signature” programs within the technical and occupational education mission. These programs bring students to Alexandria from a broad regional area and support continued enrollment in programs, which will not be viable based on local enrollment only (see Figure 3 below). Additionally, the community has developed industries that specifically align with the college capacity to provide skilled workers. The economic future of the community is linked not only with the ability of the college to offer technical programs, but its ability to create programs that will attract and retain the very highest quality graduates for the Alexandria region. This strategic goal of being the best “technical college” through signature programs supports increased enrollment across the college, long term regional economic viability, and the needs of Minnesota’s workforce.

Equally important to the sustainability of the college is its role as “THE” college of West Central Minnesota. With the emerging skills for the 21st century identified above, a population that is requesting access to liberal arts and transfer credits through an approved program, and a marketplace that is increasingly competitive, Alexandria Technical College must respond by
addressing the comprehensive education needs of learners of all ages in its community. The college will continue to address its partnership with regional high schools, graduates who choose to live at home while beginning their college education, returning adults seeking to begin or continue college, and undecided students.

The college general learning outcomes reflect a commitment to both the current and future goals of the college and the community. The outcomes identified in Figure 4 reflect the need to balance learning that prepares graduates for work and for life. These outcomes are consistent with the historical mission of the college and drive implementation strategies for the future Associate in Arts degree.

Specific objectives for implementation of the AA degree will be supported with educational strategies that have proven to be successful in completing college objectives across all levels.

1. Undecided students will be advised to consider enrollment in cohort learning communities that will initially be organized around a common curriculum that will include career exploration.
2. AA students will be required to demonstrate an understanding of opportunities and implications for personal and social communities of professional and occupational careers as a graduation requirement.
3. Personal academic advising will proactively identify student goals and develop an individualized plan to support student retention and graduation.
4. Scheduling will be designed to create interaction between technical and liberal arts students socially and academically.
5. Academic leadership of the college will be distributed by division to ensure continued balanced representation of all interests of the college.

Figure 4

- Personal skills supporting community & institutional growth & improvement
- Competency in accessing, using, & presenting information in multiple media formats
- College level skills for writing & general math
- College level occupational/professional skills & workplace awareness
- Personal skills supporting community & institutional growth & improvement
- College level skills for writing & general math
Operational benefits supporting the sustainable future for Alexandria Technical College include:

1. **Financial Aid:** Students who are undecided about a specific career can currently attend Alexandria Technical College without declaring a major. However, without declaring a specific major, these students are not eligible for Federal financial aid. Their ineligibility for financial aid restricts the ability of Alexandria Technical College to meet the needs of many local students who would like to take lower division courses while living at home or while working. An AA degree option would allow these students to be eligible for Federal financial aid.

2. **Specialization:** The core competency for Alexandria Technical College continues to be applied learning for high skills technical occupations. This competency leads to two year degrees in computer and manufacturing technology, law enforcement, health occupations, business and marketing, and power systems and transportation. Increasingly, these degrees are pathways to further education before or after entering into the workforce. Strategically, the college will invest in expanding capacity in technical occupations while expanding its commitment to liberal arts and general education that supports its comprehensive mission.

3. **Efficiencies in Course Delivery:** In fall 2009, Alexandria Technical College had a fill rate of 77% leaving 558 open seats in transfer curriculum courses at the college, equivalent to approximately 55 FYE that could be offered with no additional cost to the college. The addition of the AA students will provide potential to create full utilization of existing schedules while providing additional opportunities for those enrolled in existing programs at the college.

4. **Regionalization of Education:** Alexandria Technical College is the single college campus that serves West Central Minnesota between Fergus Falls and St. Cloud (a distance of more than 100 miles). Alexandria is the regional center for continued consolidation of education delivery that reaches from high school to advanced workforce training. Collaboration outlined in this proposal will continue to strengthen the value of the MnSCU system to West Central Minnesota’s high schools, businesses, and students.

As a summary, outcomes of an expanded Alexandria Technical College mission to offer the AA degree are:

- Increased enrollment of students who have not had the opportunity to attend college because they are unable to relocate due to economic or personal circumstances.
- Increased enrollment of regional high school graduates who currently leave the community or who do not enroll in college directly out of high school.
- Lower cost for students completing lower division courses locally.
- Increased PSEO enrollment.
Access to financial aid for those students who have not identified a specific occupational program of study.

Strengthened partnerships with MnSCU universities building on existing relationships of shared degree programs.

Increased liberal arts course offerings that benefit AS and AAS students.

**Role of Associate in Arts in Advancing Institution Mission**

Alexandria Technical College currently offers technical career education that is supported by a strong core of general education courses taught by credentialed faculty. The college offers 75 approved transfer courses that allow students to complete the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum at the college, to complete any one of five separate AS degrees, or to complete other AAS degrees, diplomas and certificates. General education courses account for 24% of credits at the college.

The college has worked towards creation of a comprehensive higher education environment for over 30 years. While its historic focus has been on technical and career education, it has been long recognized that employers seek graduates who have a broad education that complements technical skills. To that end, the college has developed a strong general education curriculum in the arts, humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. Consistent with the position of the American Association of Community Colleges, the college’s current practices and continued intent is to provide students with a foundation in general education courses that enable the student to understand and appreciate culture; to develop personal values based on accepted ethics; and to attain competencies in analysis, communication, qualitative and quantitative methods, synthesis, and teamwork to grow as a productive member of society for both the individual and public good.

Alexandria Technical College was accepted as a candidate for North Central Accreditation in 1974 and was fully accredited in 1980 at the associate degree level. At the time of mission delineation, 1986, Minnesota legislation required technical colleges to move general education to community colleges creating merged colleges to provide broad access to technical and liberal arts education for students. The single exception to this was Alexandria Technical College. The college was authorized to continue offering its own accredited general education courses due to its geographical isolation from other two and four-year colleges. The authorization, however, did not include authority to offer the AA degree. Continuing to comply with regional accreditation standards, the college created a stand-alone general education division in 1990. The college was reaccredited in 1994 at the associate degree level but was restricted to the AAS and AS degrees based on the limited authority granted to the institution by the State of Minnesota. The college was admitted to AQIP by the Higher Learning Commission on September 14, 2000. In 2008, ATC was approved for Reaffirmation of Accreditation and is scheduled for its next Higher Learning Commission reaffirmation in 2014-2015.

A mission change will require approval of the Higher Learning Commission. Following Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board approval, the college will request Higher Learning Commission staff action to approve a mission change. An action project to track implementation of the degree is required. A site visit for change in status is not anticipated. No other program accreditation processes are anticipated for the Associate in Arts program.
**Partnership Efforts**

Alexandria Technical College has developed a strong partnership with Bemidji State University for their approved AA degree program offered on campus. During this time, Alexandria Technical College continued to build its capacity to support liberal arts curriculum, established collaborations for online delivery of AA degree courses, and increased its number of undeclared, Associate in Arts, and Individualized Professional Studies students dramatically (see Table 1).

Attempts to collaborate with peer institutions were initiated to meet the needs of both students and the participating colleges. Results include:

- **2004:** Formal discussion with Fergus Fall Community College failed to complete an agreement for delivery of the AA degree at Alexandria.
- **2005:** Alexandria became a formal partner in Distance Minnesota as an online option for providing and accessing courses that support the AA degree and technical degrees.
- **2005:** Bemidji State University and Alexandria Technical College signed a formal agreement creating a partnership that established Alexandria as a site location for the Bemidji AA degree using shared curriculum from both colleges.
- **2006:** Alexandria Technical College was established as a partner in the Minnesota Center for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence with Minnesota State University Mankato focused on increased transfer credits, including general education.
- **2009:** Alexandria Technical College filed intent for approval of the Associate in Arts degree. No direct opposition to Alexandria’s proposal was posted to the list serve. The subsequent program application includes a proposal to integrate partner courses into the Alexandria AA degree.

The goal and responsibility of the college is to design an AA program that meets the criteria set forth by the Higher Learning Commission for this degree, recognizing that successful completion of the degree may take a path much different than the one many have historically experienced (which was defined by enrolling in courses from one main college and earning a degree in that manner). In compliance with the Board direction for increasing access to online education, Alexandria has designed an AA program that:

1. Provides access to AA coursework delivered through Distance Minnesota partner colleges and universities.
2. Continues a partnership with Bemidji State University in an effort to provide a clear pathway to the baccalaureate degree and expanded access to unique expertise across multiple disciplines.
3. Draws upon liberal arts coursework available through MN Online in an effort to expand AA course offerings.
4. Recognizes (and transfers) liberal arts coursework from accredited colleges and universities from across the United States.
Alexandria Technical College believes that this request to implement an Associate in Arts degree that integrates online curriculum to increase student access and better utilize system resources is not only appropriate, but is leading in innovation and collaboration at the system level.

The college is currently operating with an agreement to share revenue and cost for the delivery of online courses. As described above, Alexandria Technical College students may take online courses through Distance Minnesota. This option provides a broad selection of courses that complement courses offered on campus (courses available for the current academic year are at http://distance.minnesota.edu/marketing/). The growth of Distance Minnesota as reflected below demonstrates the increasing market for online courses and the benefits of collaboration.

![Distance Minnesota History by Full-Year Equivalent Participation FY 1997-98 to FY 2008-09](image)

**Figure 5**

Table 5 demonstrates the capacity of the college for delivery of online curriculum through Distance Minnesota:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATC Transfer Courses Through Distance Minnesota</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distance MN Courses:</strong> (unduplicated courses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2009</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Online College in the High School:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2009 - 10 Academic Year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5**
One of the initiatives the college is pursuing through Distance Minnesota is the seamless offering of a bachelor’s degree through Bemidji State University with discussions leading to participation of additional universities. This plan will allow students who start taking courses online through Online College in the High School (a current program offered through the college and Distance Minnesota) or other PSEO options to progress to an AA degree through the college either online, face to face, or a combination of both and then to complete their baccalaureate education online through the Distance Minnesota option.

The college also continues to partner with other MnSCU institutions through Minnesota Online. The college currently offers the new Energy Technical Specialist AAS degree in a cooperative arrangement with eight other MnSCU colleges and the Human Services Practitioner AAS with South Central College.

Institutional Readiness – Human Resources

Faculty and staff capacity to staff range of disciplines

The college currently has 17 unlimited faculty members and 6 temporary part time/adjunct instructors assigned to liberal arts. All of these faculty members have obtained at least a masters degree and are properly credentialed pursuant to applicable MnSCU policy. They currently teach 73 unduplicated courses in all 10 transfer curriculum content goal areas to students in technical majors pursuing the AAS degree, students with undeclared majors, students pursuing an AA degree through a partnership between the college and Bemidji State University, post secondary enrollment students, AS major students, and students pursuing an individual education plan major.

In addition to the courses offered by the college, students have the option of selecting courses from the Distance Minnesota inventory of dozens of courses offered online every semester from the member colleges (Alexandria Technical College, Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Northland Community and Technical College, and Northwest Technical College).

At this time, the college plans to expand its general education faculty by one additional FTE credentialed to teach art. Additional faculty needs will be based on enrollment.

Role of faculty in curriculum oversight, outcomes assessment, governance structure, and professional development

Faculty at Alexandria Technical College play the dominant role in curriculum development and oversight for all courses offered through the college. Each course at the college is assigned to a properly credentialed faculty member or group of faculty members for initial development. It is then reviewed by other faculty members in the liberal arts division and eventually by the curriculum committee, which is composed of faculty members. Once developed and offered, the course is evaluated on a regular basis by students through the use of an evaluation instrument developed and refined by a joint committee composed of faculty members selected by faculty leadership and the dean or associate dean of academic affairs. Faculty members have also developed and participate in a peer review process whereby they attend and observe delivery of courses, discuss effective delivery techniques, and critique the course in general.
The college has a long tradition of involving faculty from all divisions of the college in decision making. Faculty play a key role in financial decisions made at the college through service on the Finance Team. Faculty also serve on ad hoc committees, which are brought together to address issues as they arise. In addition, faculty members are selected by faculty leadership to serve on hiring teams for faculty, administrative, and key staff hires. Administrators routinely request faculty participation in college initiatives in both advisory and functional capacities. Preparation of the application for the AA degree and this mission change effort are examples of faculty leadership in planning for this change from the beginning.

Faculty from the six academic divisions of the college, of which liberal arts is one, annually selects a division chairperson who has the day to day responsibility of coordinating the activities of the division. The division chairs serve on the Academic Affairs and Standards Council, which is the key organization in the college responsible for the academic integrity of the curriculum. The division chairs also meet to review issues such as faculty sabbaticals requests, faculty internship requests, distribution of faculty development funds, and other issues directly related to the daily operations of the college. This division structure assures representation from all technical and liberal arts areas of the college.

Faculty members are given responsibility individually and at the division level for professional development. Each faculty member is required to create an individual professional development plan. This plan is reviewed annually with an administrator; however, the faculty member is responsible for developing and implementing the plan. Funds for professional development are distributed according to the requirements of the MSCF contract. The college, however, has traditionally established a budget for each college division and then placed the responsibility on the faculty within the division to decide on the appropriate distribution of those funds to accomplish the goals of the division including funding of additional professional development.

Administrators needed to offer the AA degree:
The college will need no new administrators to offer the AA degree. The college has an associate dean of academic affairs currently assigned to the liberal arts division.

Academic leadership team:
Both the dean of academic affairs and the associate dean of academic affairs were previously faculty members at the college teaching in the liberal arts division. They both have academic credentials appropriate to the teaching of liberal arts transfer curriculum courses and are experienced in the development and delivery of transfer curriculum courses. The dean of academic affairs has been an administrator for three years and previously a full time faculty member for 16 years teaching in the area of mathematics and biology. The associate dean of academic affairs has been an administrator in the liberal arts division for three years and previously taught communication in the liberal arts division at the college for 10 years.

Additional student services:
Alexandria Technical College is currently providing student services support for over 600 students who are enrolled in courses leading to transfer or completion of a liberal arts degree. The staff is experienced in handling all aspects of the transfer curriculum and has assigned a
student services employee to manage transfer curriculum issues full time. Future staffing will reflect college needs based on enrollment.

Recruiting and funding of new positions:
The college has hired a new director of admissions. The director has more than 30 years of experience working in student services at universities, which included responsibilities for enrollment management, financial aid, and multicultural services. Funding for this position is from reduction in administrative assignment to the student services division. One additional FTE is anticipated as a result of offering an AA degree. This position will be funded by an anticipated increase in FYE as a result of offering the new AA degree.

Institutional Readiness—Curriculum Development

Academic plan for delivery of the AA curriculum:
The Associates in Arts degree allows students to complete lower division requirements of a baccalaureate degree program in four semesters of study. The liberal arts focus of the curriculum requires students to complete the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum by completing general education courses across all required goal areas and additional courses in at least one technical studies area and/or work exploration. Besides completion of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum requirements, three additional general education courses to meet the college’s general learning outcomes are required. These three areas are information literacy, workplace skills, and physical education. The degree is awarded in the liberal arts and sciences without a named field of study. The AA degree is specifically designed to transfer to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minnesota Transfer Curriculum</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Communications (written)</td>
<td>6 credits</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications (oral)</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>One of these three: Intro to communication Studies or Interpersonal Communication or Public Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Critical Thinking</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>One course from the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Natural Sciences</td>
<td>7 credits (1 lab)</td>
<td>Two courses, one of which must have a lab component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Math/Logical Thinking</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>One course from area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. History/Social Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>9 credits</td>
<td>Three courses from two different disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Humanities/Fine Arts</td>
<td>9 credits</td>
<td>Two or more disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Diversity</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>One course from this area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Global Perspective</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>One course from area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ethics/Civic Responsibility</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>One course from area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. People and the Environment</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
<td>One course from area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students taking the AA degree must satisfy the following transfer curriculum requirements:

- Minnesota Transfer Curriculum: 40 Cr. (as listed in the following table)
- Technical Electives: Up to 16 Credits
- Information Literacy course: 2-3 credits
- Workplace Skills course: 1-2 credits
- Physical Education course: 1-2 credits

To bring total to 60 credits

Plan for curriculum evaluation and development:
Curriculum evaluation is done at the institutional, program, and course level and the results are fed back to the faculty.

The college currently evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of each program area annually on multiple criteria. During the program review, an administrator meets with the program faculty and they discuss data collected during the year bearing on all aspects of the program including budget planning, student numbers, graduation rates, and other similar measurements. This evaluation process includes the liberal arts program. In the future, the college plans to further evaluate each liberal arts content area in a similar way.

To assess student learning in general education outcomes, the college administered the College WorkKeys in 2009 to a sample of graduating students to assess the following areas: Reading for Information, Locating Information, and Applied Mathematics. Results of these assessments were summarized and distributed to program advisors. The college will be administering this assessment to a larger sample of students in 2010. This assessment will provide a benchmark to determine how the college’s graduates are prepared for the workforce. The college also administers the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the Noel Levitz Survey of Student Satisfaction to a randomly selected number of classes. Results of the surveys provide a benchmark of student engagement and satisfaction with the learning and support processes. Results are shared with all personnel and are used as part of the college’s continuous improvement plan. These types of instruments will be administered in the future in order to measure the continued effectiveness of the college learning environment.

Curriculum assessment and program effectiveness at the program level areas completed in a number of different ways. For those programs that have licensure exams: Nursing, Law Enforcement, and Medical Laboratory Technician; annual passing rates are examined to determine if the level of preparation is sufficient for high pass rates greater than 90%. Some programs have industry produced certification exams. Successful passing of these exams assess the level of student learning. ATC is also using the Skills USA Work Force Ready System to assess technical learning in those programs where an assessment has been developed by industry. For the AA degree, the college plans to use the ACT CAAP to assess general education outcomes. Data collected from these assessments will be used during the annual program review process at the college as part of the college’s continuous improvement plan. During the annual program review, an administrator meets with the program faculty to discuss data collected during
the year bearing on all aspects of the program including budget planning, student numbers, graduation rates, and other similar measurements.

Assessment of student learning at the course level is completed by faculty. Each course at the college has course learning outcomes that are assessed by the use of exams, rubrics, portfolios, or demonstration. Faculty regularly provide feedback to students regarding the level of understanding of the course learning outcomes. All transfer curriculum courses have been developed to ensure that they meet the competencies of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

Preparation of students for baccalaureate major:
The college has received formal letters of support from Bemidji State University and Minnesota State University, Moorhead, which were included with the AA application submitted to the Office of the Chancellor in December 2009 (see attachment 2). These universities have stated that they will accept the transfer curriculum from ATC. The college has also communicated with St. Cloud State University and Minnesota State University, Mankato about its intent to offer the AA degree and has received favorable responses. The University of Minnesota at Morris and Crookston have also responded favorably to the college’s intent to offer the AA degree.

Relationship of general education curriculum to the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum:
The entire Minnesota Transfer Curriculum is currently available at the college. The proposed AA degree is designed to provide students with a broad background preparing them for transfer into a bachelor’s degree. The program includes a minimum of 40 credits from the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum distributed among the 10 content goal areas as required by the current transfer curriculum. All transfer curriculum courses at the college have been reviewed and approved by the curriculum committee to ensure that each course meets the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum goals and competencies. The AA degree will require completion of three additional general education courses to meet college’s general learning outcomes. These three areas are information literacy, workplace skills, and physical education.

Institutional Capacity – Financial
Enrollment and revenue to support the AA program will come from two groups of students: those currently enrolled and taking primarily liberal arts courses and new students expected to enroll in the AA program. Increased expenditures will result from additional faculty. Overall, the addition of the AA degree will generate a net increase in revenue to the college.

Currently, the college has approximately 600 students taking liberal arts courses who are not enrolled in a technical program. Of those 600 students, approximately 310 are likely AA students (30 Bemidji AA program, 80 Individualized Professional Studies program, and approximately 200 undeclared majors). The college assumes for purposes of the AA enrollment projections that 80% of the Bemidji AA students, 40% of the INPS students, and 50% of the undeclared students will move to the AA program. The college, therefore, estimates 156 current students representing 84.4 FYE will become students in the AA program. The Bemidji AA students and the INPS students average 24 credits per year and the undeclared students each average 12 credits per year. These students currently generate 168 FYE.
The college expects increased enrollment based upon the experience of other colleges who have added an AA program. The college assumes new enrollment of 30 students in the first year of the AA program and 30 additional entering students each year thereafter, each taking an average of 24 credits per year. These enrollments are expected to generate an additional 24 FYE in the first year and 48 FYE in the second year. Adding these new students to the number of existing students generates a total of 108 FYE in the first year of the program and 133 thereafter. Summer enrollments have not been included in these projections. The college offers a wide selection of transfer curriculum courses during summer sessions and can reasonably expect additional FYE as a result.

Below is a table of projected enrollment in the AA program. The projections are based upon the above analysis and expected retention and graduation rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student headcount</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Year-Equivalent</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of graduates</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even without the AA degree, the college has consistently experienced significant increased enrollment in liberal arts courses. From 2004 to 2008, this enrollment has gone from 381.76 FYE to 465.58 FYE, a 22% increase. The current academic year is on track to experience a similar increase (includes students who are enrolled in liberal arts and technical majors).

Two factors drive expenditures resulting from the addition of the AA degree: increasing number of class sections and decreasing maximum faculty teaching loads from 32 to 30 credits (based on changed college mission and negotiated labor agreements). During fall semester 2009, the fill rate for liberal arts classes was 77% overall resulting in a total of 558 unfilled seats available in courses in all of the ten transfer curriculum goal areas. This fill rate is typical for transfer curriculum courses during all semesters. Current unused capacity means that the college can absorb 55 FYE’s of potential enrollment without adding additional instructional cost.

Based upon the new student enrollment discussed above, the college should fill 44% (30 students x 24 credits/30 = 24 new FYE/ 55 current FYE = 44%) of the available unfilled seats in transfer curriculum courses the first year of the program and 88% of the unfilled seats thereafter. As a result of increased enrollment due to the expanded mission, the revenue increase would more than offset the increase in instructional cost. This increase in enrollment would also lower the overall average instructional cost for the liberal arts classes.

The college has 17 full-time faculty identified whose workloads would change as a result of a mission change. Decreasing maximum teaching loads from 32 to 30 credits results in a potential increase of 34 additional teaching load credits. This obligation represents a potential cost increase of $85,000 at an average cost of $2,500/credit; however, not all of the identified faculty members are fully loaded, resulting in a lower actual cost to the college. The reduction in teaching loads and some instructional redesign results in the need to add one FTE as a result of the AA degree.
The following table summarizes the expected revenue and expense projects of the AA degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Tuition</strong>*</td>
<td>$466,560</td>
<td>$630,420</td>
<td>$662,340</td>
<td>$662,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Fees</strong></td>
<td>$53,654</td>
<td>$66,500</td>
<td>$66,500</td>
<td>$66,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External (Grants, gifts, other)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Allocation</td>
<td>$226,800</td>
<td>$279,300</td>
<td>$279,300</td>
<td>$279,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Reallocation**</td>
<td>$362,880</td>
<td>$402,900</td>
<td>$423,300</td>
<td>$423,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NEW TUITION REVENUE</strong>*</td>
<td>$103,680</td>
<td>$227,520</td>
<td>$239,040</td>
<td>$239,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NEW STATE ALLOCATION REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$50,400</td>
<td>$100,800</td>
<td>$100,800</td>
<td>$100,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NEW FEES REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NEW PROGRAM REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$166,080</td>
<td>$352,320</td>
<td>$363,840</td>
<td>$363,840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*current rate per credit x student FYE x 30 semester credits per year for undergraduate, 20 semester credits for graduate

***The figures in this and the next three rows represent new revenue generated by expected enrollment in the AA program over and above current students expected to transfer to the AA program from the Bemidji AA and INPS programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEW Salary and Fringe</strong>*</td>
<td>$68,000</td>
<td>$69,700</td>
<td>$71,000</td>
<td>$71,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library holdings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel, Purchased Services and Other Expenses</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$520</td>
<td>$530</td>
<td>$530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space related costs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$69,500</td>
<td>$71,320</td>
<td>$72,730</td>
<td>$72,730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fringe benefits: 28%

The net increase in college revenue from the addition of the AA degree is estimated at $96,500 during the first year of the program and $281,000 during the second year. From a business perspective, the decision to offer the AA degree is very beneficial to the college.

**Institutional Capacity-Facilities**

The mission expansion requested by Alexandria Technical College will not result in a request for expanded facilities or significant increase in faculty or staff. As indicated, ATC has been delivering liberal arts coursework for many years and has established both the physical infrastructure and staff to support the proposed mission change. Examples of space at ATC that will support the delivery of an Associate in Arts degree include, but are not limited to:

1. Newly completed state-of-the-art Biology and Chemistry labs within the last two years.
2. Two physical education gymnasiums / large exercise spaces.
3. Two community theatres that have partnered with ATC for many years and continue to support ATC programming.

4. A fully-supported and staffed library and student life space that will be expanded during the next capital bonding cycle (this ATC project is #8 on the system’s prioritization list).

5. State-of-the-art lecture halls, classrooms, and learning spaces throughout the campus to support large and small class sizes.

**Stakeholder Participation Documentation**

In addition to the consultation and market research noted in previous sections, the following activities took place related to stakeholder input.

Since the college has had an ongoing relationship with Bemidji State University in delivering their AA degree at Alexandria, the college requested their input on the AA proposal. They have given their full support to this application for an AA degree (see attachment 2) and agree that while the Bemidji AA degree at Alexandria has been of benefit to students, its delivery has proved cumbersome for both institutions and students. Administration of financial aid has been particularly difficult.

Alexandria Technical College has 28 program advisory committees. In the fall of 2009 and the spring of 2010, information was provided to all advisory committees prior to requesting the discussion of a resolution regarding the application and approval for offering an Associate in Arts degree at Alexandria Technical College. All programs also had an individual vote on a preferred name change for the college that would be required with the approval of an expanded mission. All advisory committees provided a resolution Supporting the application to expand the mission of the college and to offer the Associate in Arts degree through Alexandria Technical College.

In the spring of 2009, the college contracted a third party to conduct a campus climate evaluation. Support for pursuit of the Associate in Arts degree at Alexandria was addressed as a unique item in the survey. More than 70% responded that they supported the pursuit of the AA degree. Twenty-three percent supported the pursuit of the degree with some concerns (specifically the need to support technical programs and to preserve the culture of the college). Some concern was identified reflecting the tension that can be created with the differences between the community college and technical college contract provisions for MnSCU comprehensive colleges.

In October of 2009, more than 150 community members who are enrolled in Senior College at Alexandria Technical College were surveyed on their level of support for offering the AA degree in Alexandria, at the college, and how the college name should be changed. Unanimously, every person responding supported the addition of the degree and a name change for the college.

During the summer of 2009, President Kevin Kopischke and Dean Chad Coauette participated in strategic initiative planning for Alexandria and the surrounding communities (stewardship project). Expanding the mission of Alexandria Technical College to better serve the community needs and the needs of surrounding high schools was identified as a key initiative for the region.
The college met with the Runestone Area Education District superintendents in spring of 2009 and again in September of 2009 to discuss the implications of Alexandria Technical College pursuing its expanded mission to offer the AA degree. Potential for increased student enrollment was confirmed. Of greatest concern is the impact of additional PSEO enrollment at the college on high school enrollments. The college continues to work on options with the RAED schools that will provide benefit to both students and the institutions.

**RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE MOTION**

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the Alexandria Technical College request to change its mission to become a comprehensive two-year college. The new mission is, “Alexandria Technical and Community College creates opportunity for individuals and businesses through education, innovation, and leadership. The college’s high-quality technical and transfer programs and services meet their needs, interests, and abilities and strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of Minnesota’s communities.”

**RECOMMENDED MOTION**

The Board of Trustees approves the request by Alexandria Technical College to change its mission to become a comprehensive two-year college. The new mission is, “Alexandria Technical and Community College creates opportunity for individuals and businesses through education, innovation, and leadership. The college’s high-quality technical and transfer programs and services meet their needs, interests, and abilities and strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of Minnesota’s communities.”
February 10, 2010

Dr. Linda Baer  
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs  
Office of the Chancellor  
Wells Fargo Place, 30 7th Street E, Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN 55101-7804

Dear Senior Vice Chancellor Baer:

I have recently been advised that Alexandria Technical College has submitted an application for new program approval to the Chancellor's office requesting permission to offer an Associate of Arts degree on campus. As you may be aware, Bemidji State University and Alexandria Technical College have, for the past two years, been working together to collaboratively offer students enrolled at Alexandria Technical College the option of pursuing an Associate of Arts degree through Bemidji State University. An articulation agreement was developed between our two institutions whereby Alexandria Technical College students may transfer up to 40 credits directly from the college into Bemidji State's Associate of Arts degree program. Currently, there are approximately 90 students admitted into the collaborative program, which produced its first graduates last spring. Should Alexandria Technical College receive permission to offer the Associate of Arts degree, Bemidji State University agrees to discontinue its current collaborative program.

Please let me know if I may be of any further assistance. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joe E. Quistgaard  
President  
Bemidji State University

218-755-2011 / 218-755-2740 fax / www.bemidjistate.edu  
Enrollment Rd. / 1588 Marketplace Drive NE, #1, Bemidji, MN 56601-2658

A member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, Bemidji State University is an equal opportunity educator and employer.
Jan Doebert  
Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs  
Alexandria Technical College  
1601 Jefferson Street  
Alexandria, MN 56308

January 27, 2010

Dear Jan:

This letter confirms our conversation last month that Minnesota State University Moorhead is very pleased that you asked for our support as part of the approval process that will result in an associate of arts degree being offered on the Alexandria Technical College campus.

Alexandria Technical College is a strong school with fine programs and faculty. I hope that in future years, MSUM will see transfer applications from many, many associate in arts degree graduates from your campus.

Yours Very Truly,

Bette

Bette G. Midgarden  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Cc: Academic Affairs File