

Chair Aurand and members of the Senate House Education Committee,

On behalf of the Sedgwick County Training and Technical Authority board of WATC and serving as Chairman of the Board, I am here to communicate our full support of the proposed affiliation between Wichita State University and Wichita Area Technical College. It is our belief that this affiliation will increase our workforce development efforts and encourage economic growth in Kansas.

A strong education and training system is the pipeline for our employers and industries to ensure they have access to a globally competitive workforce. The proposed affiliation between WSU and WATC creates a stronger connection to industry to better work with them to understand what is needed in workforce development and how we can achieve the best entry-level workforce possible, while providing advanced educational career pathways in applied disciplines. The benefits of these two organizations coming together will be seen in the creation of 2 and 2 programs and opportunities for continued education. By WSU and WATC sharing their resources, knowledge and joining their efforts, we'll be able to provide more solutions for our businesses and ensure that we can deliver a qualified workforce for generations to come in Kansas. The proposed WSU Campus of Applied Science and Technology will be uniquely positioned to serve the needs of Kansas industry, training students not merely in hypothetical concepts but in the exact skills and proficiencies required by the market at a given point in time.

Ultimately, the affiliation of Wichita State and WATC will benefit all Kansans by helping to boost our state and local economies. WATC has been led by a board of industry representative that have directed the institution to be responsive and timely to meet their training needs. If we continue to work alongside industry to identify what it is they need and then, in turn, deliver that type of skilled workforce, employers will be more likely to stay in our region. Employers will also be more likely to relocate to Kansas and boost our economy further. The possibilities are endless, but it starts with the education and training of the workforce. It's an invaluable

resource that cannot be overlooked. The affiliation of these two strong organizations will help to ensure that Kansas has a well-trained workforce that employers need.

Lyndon Wells,

Chair of Wichita Area Technical Colleges Governing Board