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As the chair of the K-State Salina Dean's Advisory Council, I wanted to publicly weigh in on the name change proposal recently approved by the Kansas Board of Regents. I have served on this board for several years and throughout that time I have felt as my voice was considered and my recommended direction often taken. The dean and I began speaking about the proposal presented by the internal working group in 2014. After many discussions and further exploration by that internal group, it was presented officially to the Dean's Advisory Council (DAC) during our January 2015 meeting. That discussion opened up a tremendous dialogue with many key points made by all. The DAC encompasses alumni, business leaders, city officials and industry leaders, which we see as giving a very well-rounded opinion overall.

The group has the responsibility to advise the leadership on challenges facing the campus, our degree programs, our students/faculty/staff, etc. Throughout our discussion, the need to delve into our declining enrollment numbers continuously became our primary challenge. With the numbers of Kansas students decreasing, we are all tasked with a way to think more nationally and globally. With the presentation of this proposal, we began to review peer institutions that had done this and explore further what it could look like for us. Throughout that exploration and multitude of conversations, it became apparent that we were in fact, already operating as a polytechnic campus, although we were not named as such.

While the term "polytechnic" is not universally defined, those peer institutions shared many characteristics that we have always been known for. We see this as a career-focused campus with faculty and staff utilizing an applied learning style of teaching and students graduating prepared to excel in their chosen careers very successfully. It begins to broaden the discussion of this campus and the degree programs that we offer. Subsequently, when partnered with many other advances we are working on for recruiting, we expect to see an increase in enrollment for this campus. That subsequent increase in enrollment will realize more revenue for the city of Salina and raise the profile of the degree programs offered here and as part of Kansas State University. Our expectation is that we, as K-State, will continue to be a solid contributor to both our local community and the global community as well.

While the Transformation webpage can give you additional details on this proposal and answer some of the more frequently asked questions, I wanted to communicate from the perspective of both a DAC member and a resident of Salina. I am eager to see the campus succeed and committed to engaging in its future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd W. Smith".

Todd W. Smith

General Manager of Coperion K-Tron Salina  
Chairman of K-State Salina Dean's Advisory Council