

Riverland Community College History, 1940 to Present

1940: Austin Junior College

This excerpt was taken from Academic Dean Ruben Meland's document titled "Austin Junior College – Nine Years of Community Service." "*Austin Junior College opened its doors of opportunity to the youth of this community on September 3, 1940. The enrollment the first year was comprised of 138 freshmen, served by a faculty of five full-time and four part-time instructors.*" (See 1966 for name change)

1951: Austin Area Vocational-Technical School

The "Selected Report on Austin Junior College Prepared for Minnesota Junior College Board dated December 1963" (last page) states: "*The Austin Area Vocational-Technical School was established in Austin, Minnesota as a part of the public school system in 1951 and at present (Dec. 1963) provides post high school training to an enrollment of about 250 in: Carpentry, Farm Equipment Mechanics, Welding, Machine Shop (tool & die), Automotive Mechanics, Auto Body Rebuilding, Industrial Electronics, Practical Nursing, and Cosmetology (beauty school).*" (See 1972 for name change.)

1966: Austin Junior College moves to new location, changes name to Austin State Junior College

Ruben Meland, college dean and president, wrote in his memoirs some observations about the beginning and the early years of Austin Junior College, "*In June 1966, we moved our offices into the new administration wing and we opened for classes September 22, 1966, (our 26th year) with about 850 students and a faculty of 40. At this same time our name was officially changed to Austin State Junior College. The new college campus was officially dedicated on January 29, 1967.*"

1968: Albert Lea Area Vocational-Technical School Established

"A Brief History of the MN AVTI System and Directors" (page 13) states, "*Albert Lea was tentatively approved by the State Board of Education on September 30, 1968. They received the final approval on November 4, 1968.*" Mr. Wayne Broecker is the Director of the AVTI at Albert Lea." (See 1972 for name change.)

1971: Austin State Junior College Owatonna Extension Center opens

An excerpt from a laminated *Owatonna People's Press* advertisement dated September 16, 1971 states, "*Austin State Junior College Owatonna Extension Center, classes starting Monday, September 20, 1971 at 12:30 p.m.*" Another excerpt from a *Owatonna People's Press* advertisement headline dated November 17, 1971 states, "*Let's start college in Owatonna, Minnesota, Austin State Junior College. Owatonna campus [sic] located on the beautiful grounds of the State School.*"

1972: Austin Area Vocational-Technical School changes name to Austin Area Vocational-Technical Institute

In an undated document created for the Mower County Historical Society Page 4 states, "*During February of 1972 the move from the various sites started and the total moving of all programs to the new Austin Area Vocational-Technical School was completed in March of 1972. It was also during this time that the State Department of Education changed the names of all Area Vocational-Technical Schools to Area Vocational-Technical Institutes.*"

1985: Owatonna Higher Education Center opens

A memo dated March 3, 1998 from Tim McManimon, Owatonna community leader, to John Gedker, college president, states, “*Riverland Community College has served the Owatonna area for the past 13 years, primarily in the area of customized training for business and industry. It is the Owatonna community vision to create a seamless link between education, work and the community.*”

1991: Minnesota Riverland Technical College

A “Historical Overview 1945 – 1995, 50 Years Minnesota Technical College System,” (page 46) states, “*Minnesota Riverland Technical College, District #2501, was formed on July 1, 1991. MRTC is comprised of the Austin, Faribault, and Rochester campuses and the Owatonna Technical Training Center.*”

1996: Riverland Community College Established on July 1, 1996

(name continues today)

A memorandum from John Gedker, college president, dated 11/7/96 states, “*Riverland Community College was established on July 1, 1996. Austin Community College (established in 1940 as Austin Junior College), Riverland Technical College – Austin (established in 1951 as Austin Area Vocational School) and Owatonna campuses [sic], and South Central Technical College – Albert Lea (established in 1968 as Albert Lea Technical Education Center) campuses merged together to form Riverland Community College.*”

2001 Owatonna College & University Center:

An *Owatonna People's Press* news story dated March 22, 2003 states, “*January 14, 2002 was the first day classes were held at Owatonna College and University Center. Currently, Riverland is the host institution at OCUC and also offers classes at the site. Concordia University, St. Paul; Minnesota State University, Mankato; Southwest State University; University of St. Thomas; and South Central Technical College also offer classes.*”

2008: The Owatonna College and University Center (OCUC) is acquired by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities as its 54th campus and designated as Third Riverland campus

The OCUC Celebration brochure dated February 17, 2009 states, “*In April 2008, Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed into law a bonding bill that allowed the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system to acquire the Owatonna College & University Center. On December 31, 2008, MnSCU finalized the sale. Three Partners. One Purpose. Minnesota State University, Mankato, Riverland Community College, and South Central College.*”