



K-State 2025 Undergraduate Studies and Student Life Theme II Implementation Plan

Near-term focus on Student Success, Undergraduate Research, and the University Honors Program supporting long-term retention, engagement, and graduation goals.

By Pat J. Bosco, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students and Steven P. Dandaneau, Ph.D., Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Kansas State University
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Executive Summary

In order to meet K-State 2025's ambitious goals for the "Undergraduate Educational Experience" (Theme II), we propose that during 2013-2015 Kansas State University prioritize development in three strategic areas, namely:

- 1) Student Success
- 2) Undergraduate Research
- 3) University Honors Program

The list is in order of importance as well as probable expense and organizational challenge. Development in each, however, is expected to be mutually reinforcing. While K-State 2025 calls for university-wide coordination, close collaboration is needed during 2013-2015 especially among the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Student Life, and the College of Arts and Sciences. Every college and every unit, however, will play vitally important long-term roles.

The plan's near-term effectiveness will be measured, per K-State 2025 Key University Metrics, in terms of first-to-second year retention rates (from 80% in 2012 to 83% in 2015), six-year graduation rates (from 55.7% for the entering 2005 cohort to 60% for the entering 2013 cohort), and the percentage of undergraduates involved in formalized research experiences (for which a baseline will be established in 2013-2014). Assessment will also reference Thematic Goal II University Metrics (T2-1-T2-6) and college- and department-specific metrics.

In order to achieve recognition as a top 50 public U.S. research university by 2025, Kansas State University will need to achieve 90% first-to-second year retention rates and 70% six-year graduate rates in addition to establishing a national reputation for undergraduate research. Addressing three of eight benchmark metrics, implementation of the proposed 2013-2015 as well as 2015-2025 actions will contribute mightily to the attainment of K-State 2025's overarching goal.

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Background and Overview

Recall the K-State 2025 Undergraduate Educational Experience *thematic goal*:

Build a connected, diverse, empowered, engaged, participatory culture of learning and excellence that promotes undergraduate student success and prepares students for their professional, community, social, and personal lives.

K-State 2025's discussion and elaboration of the "Undergraduate Educational Experience" identifies 10 areas for strategic *action*. Short-hand for each is:

1. "...build a less-siloed...university...to encourage student success...."
2. "[d]ramatically improve advising services...."
3. "...implement...an...effective First Year Experience...."
4. "...expand...high-impact experiential learning and research..."
5. "emphasize student participation in a broad range of...activities..."
6. "[d]evelop, promote, reward, and support excellent teaching...."
7. "[e]xpand our capacity to recruit a talented, diverse...student body...."
8. "[i]mplement...strategies for sharing research...and progress"
9. "...implement...effective, meaningful assessments...."
10. "resource what works best..."

This plan sets out to put the above into practice. It does not presume to modify the strategic goal; its purpose is only to propose specific means by which, working together, we can undertake the suggested actions and realize their lasting value for students, faculty, staff...for Kansas State University as a whole. Consider five orienting guideposts which follow directly from the above list of strategic actions:

- If public support for higher education remains flat or further declines, as many expect as a national trend, Kansas State University will necessarily rely increasingly upon tuition revenue, research expenditures, philanthropic and grant support as the basis for its ambition to remain a prominent, highly respected national university with a growing international reputation. In this context, developing a "student success" culture is essential. Kansas State University will always value access and diversity, as is the defining tradition of land-grant universities, but we will henceforth measure the value of access per se in light of subsequent student success. If admission to the university results in graduation of students who are prepared and positioned for career and professional success, the

responsibilities of citizenship in the 21st century, and, for those who aspire to post-baccalaureate educations, admission to graduate and professional school programs of the highest quality, then “access” has realized its value. This is what is meant by the call for a less-siloed university which encourages student success: emphasis is and must be on the goal of providing our students with an affordable undergraduate education that offers them very considerable in-depth liberal and professional learning and which positions them for favorable post-baccalaureate outcomes.

- Given, first, that 40% of Kansas State University’s undergraduates are first-generation students (who often face greater financial challenges, often have less access to pertinent cultural capital, and who disproportionately cope with minority group status in a society stratified by race/ethnicity as well as by income/wealth)--and given also that the 21st century public university is increasingly specialized, changed by new technologies, and in other ways increasingly complex--the role played by academic advising has increased and will only continue to increase in significance. Academic advising is the principal means by which undergraduate students are introduced to the curriculum and the colleges which organize them, not to mention the structure and culture of Kansas State University as a whole. Indeed, faculty and full-time advisors are also the primary source for knowledge concerning the complex landscape of U.S. higher education, including educational and career opportunities beyond Kansas State University. Faculty and full-time academic advisors thus help undergraduates to develop themselves as university students. They help students integrate intellectual and career goals, scholarship and leadership, the curriculum and extra- and co-curricular enrichment. They help students understand themselves as members of a diverse group of university-educated citizens looking forward to leadership in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. Academic advisors assist students who are exploring the curriculum as well as those possessed of laser focus, student-athletes as well as those who are veterans or members of military-affiliated families, those with technical, professional, and career interests as well as those pursuing knowledge for its own sake. This is why K-State 2025 so heavily emphasizes academic advising: all students benefit, but K-State students need excellent academic advising more than most.

- A student success culture demands intentionality: intentional student recruitment (oriented toward shared goals), intentional teaching (focused on learning outcomes), intentional curriculum design (facilitating engagement), intentional retention strategies (mitigating known pitfalls in the first year and beyond), and intentional course scheduling—including evenings, weekends, intersession, and summer—and use of instructional technologies and formats—including traditional seminars and lectures, flipped classrooms, asynchronous online, synchronous online, blended, service-learning, international study, etc. (facilitating throughput). This is not to imply that a high-quality undergraduate education is some sort of “product” whose steady production is reducible to a management problem; far from it! But we do submit that demonstrably inefficient institutional and ineffective instructional practices, including loosely or uncoordinated seat-of-the-pants pet projects and student-wearying pedagogies, are antithetical to development of a university which aims to maximally facilitate rather than haphazardly encourage student learning. Indeed, when K-State 2025 addresses the need (and we paraphrase) to expand our capacity for recruiting a talented, diverse student body, effective first-year experiences, high-impact experiential learning and research, student participation in a broad range of activities, the sharing of research, the vital importance of excellent teaching, and so forth, the idea underscored is that a student success-oriented university strives to maximize what students learn inside and outside of the classroom during the course of their diverse (but not contradictory) undergraduate experiences. Intentionality fosters interconnections, and, ideally, intensity. Intentionality portends excellence.
- Excellence, diversity, and inclusion are synonymous in that excellence cannot logically emerge from a warped, discriminatory context nor, in the 21st century, will excellence ever be recognized in the absence of diversity and inclusion. Diversity is a “common element” in K-State 2025, alongside international, sustainability, culture, and other similarly key commitments because we all want each to permeate our vision for a nationally leading public research university. A student success culture recognizes that diverse student identities, communities and cultures—whether they reference race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, or any such category of inclusion/exclusion, any such marker of stratification and inequality—influence, and sometimes very significantly

influence, various students' ability to learn, participate, contribute, lead and serve in their university community and beyond. All student success initiatives and programs should therefore recognize and value diversity as well as practice inclusive leadership, while a subset of such initiatives and programs will focus their efforts to strengthen engaged learning around prominent underrepresented identities, communities, and cultures. While all students no doubt benefit from a diverse and inclusive university culture, it is more to the point to underscore that a university cannot meaningfully promote higher learning nor prepare students for their professional, community, social and personal lives by any other means.

- There is need for diversity and there is a need for efficiency. Resources are scarce and needs are many and often pressing. In order to remain accessible and provide a high-quality undergraduate experience, we will need to evaluate what we do in order to increase our knowledge of what works better and what works best. This means that we will need to develop the capacity for systematic self-evaluation. Existing and new programs, existing and new practices: all must be carefully and fairly evaluated in order to determine as best that we can their respective and relative contributions to the total effort, to the overarching strategic goal. K-State 2025 makes this point repeatedly; it is also perhaps common sense.

Using the above guideposts, we have set out to implement K-State 2025's call for what might be called a "student success approach" to undergraduate education.

Selection of specific possible institutional mechanisms has been necessary where the plan was inexact concerning the means needed to achieve the student success goals. Additional caveats are that the Offices of the Vice President for Student Life and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies do not manage all the units whose work bears directly on Theme II issues or our student success goal, nor are our Offices' respective responsibilities limited to Theme II issues. Most importantly, we stress that Kansas State University's ability to attract and serve its superb undergraduate students is premised on our continued affordability, which involves variables over which no institution or individual exercises more than partial influence. Finally, while our research involved visits to Appalachian State University and to Stanford University, we did not (and do not) view either as directly comparable to Kansas State University, nor are they aspirant institutions. Rather, our visits were motivated by specific nationally recognized student

success and enrichment programs in place at each institution and by our search for nationally renowned models of academic affairs/student life collaboration.

It is important to note another perhaps equally obvious point, which is that the implementation of the Student Success, Undergraduate Research, and University Honors Program initiatives herein discussed will require allocation of significant financial resources. It is our expectation, however, that long-term gains in student retention will generate considerable recurring revenue, with a portion of this increased net revenue then reinvested in these efforts (and others to follow) which intentionally and directly support student success, timely graduation, and excellence in undergraduate education. At current tuition, fee, and enrollment levels, an increase from 80% to 90% first-to-second year retention would generate approximately \$9 million in additional *gross* annual revenue. While most of these new resources would be needed to educate retained students, Florida State University, for its part, reported a *net gain* of over \$3 million annually as a result of its successful effort to increase six-year graduation rates from under 62% in 1995 to over 73% in 2004. Initial investment is needed, but retention and graduation programs can, in this sense, largely pay for themselves.

These caveats and clarifications are several of what are probably very many reasons why university-wide collaboration is the key not only to Theme II implementation success but also to the success of K-State 2025 as a whole. Kansas State University cannot build a “connected” university, much less a “participatory culture of learning and excellence,” without the full and focused participation of its many diverse constituents and partners, just as it cannot achieve national recognition as a top 50 public research university without the concerted and conscientious effort of its students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, partners, friends and supporters. Affordability and overall undergraduate excellence are the key factors to reconcile, but Kansas State University’s specific path forward is likely to be as unique as its distinctive 150-year land-grant history.

The implementation plan herein proposed is based on numerous forms of research and consultation. The more prominent among these include:

1. as noted, visits to Appalachian State University (Boone, NC; Oct. 8, 2012) and to Stanford University (Palo Alto, CA; Dec. 7, 2012);
2. participation in the University Leadership Council meeting on student success (Washington, D.C.; Nov. 9, 2012);
3. on-campus meetings with Educational Advisory Board representatives

4. participation (with Christine Wilson, Alison Wheatley, Bente Janda, David Griffin, and Kent Kerby) in the 2013, NACADA Academic Advising Administrators' Institute (Savannah, GA; February 7-9);
5. consultations with distinguished K-State alumnus, Dr. Ron Iman, who has created a statistical model of Kansas State University's student retention;
6. consultations with every dean and dean's leadership team whose colleges serve undergraduate students, as well as consultations with numerous faculty, staff, and student leaders and university-wide leadership groups, whose input, all together, is/was vital to the plan herein described.
7. comments, criticism, and suggestions in response to the first draft of this plan gathered via interaction with myriad groups and individuals (e.g., Faculty Senate, Student Governing Association, Office of Student Life directors, academic advisors in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Agriculture, Business Administration, etc.), as well as via e-mail and a confidential Axio survey available during the 2013 Spring Semester.

We have also drawn upon a wide range of the current literature on student success and excellence in undergraduate education generally, not to mention our respective experience as university administrators and the input of various committees and task forces upon whose previous efforts we hope to build.

We integrate an appreciation for Kansas State University's unique development with study of current best practices. From this fertile nexus, we recommend an implementation strategy that fits K-State's particulars and supports its ambitions.

Priority #1: Student Success

Kansas State University should be proud of the current state of its undergraduate experience. K-State combines access and affordability with robust and diverse opportunities for scholarly and academic achievement in a manner which is true to its historic land-grant mission. But justified pride is not the same as self-satisfaction. Instead, and consistent with the lofty aspirations outlined in K-State 2025, Kansas State University aims to substantially expand student success and meaningfully enhance the quality of its overall undergraduate student experience.

In 2011, Kansas State's 82% first-to-second year retention rate was the highest among Kansas Board of Regents institutions. But, in 2012, this rate fell back to 80%. K-State's 2004 cohort 25.4% four-year graduation rate is notably lower than the 35.6% average for University of Oklahoma Consortium for Student Retention

Data Exchange (CSRDE) peers, while K-State's 55.7% six-year graduation rate is slightly behind the 56.1% rate for CSRDE peer group of public institutions with 18,000 or more students. When compared to the 10 institutions in Kansas State University's self-identified peer group (Auburn, Clemson, Colorado State, Louisiana State, North Carolina State, Oklahoma State, Oregon State, University of Massachusetts, and Washington State), K-State ranks 8th in first-to-second year retention and, more concerning still, 10 out of 10 in six-year graduation rates.

Policy makers and university leaders, not to mention students and students' families, more and more demand improvement in rates of student success. The costs to students (as measured, for example, in terms of tuition expenses), the costs to institutions (measured in terms of capacity underutilized and revenue forgone), and the costs to society (measured in terms of human capital underdeveloped, citizens underprepared, and investments in both areas inefficiently allocated), are, taken together, increasingly deemed untenable and inexcusable. K-State 2025 requires that we do better. It is instructive to note that, in 2010, the 50th public four-year university as ranked by first-to-second year and six-year graduation rates was the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, whose '04 cohort achieved 90% first-to-second year retention and a 70% six-year graduation rates.

In order to intentionally further Kansas State University's undergraduate student success and therein increase first-to-second year retention rates and six-year graduation rates to the levels called for by K-State 2025, we propose and set about to explain the following five major near-term (2013-2015) initiatives:

- A. Engage in strategic enrollment management
- B. Create a university-wide student success collaborative
- C. Nurture developmental academic advising
- D. Establish a comprehensive approach to the First Year Experience
- E. Further enhance student-centered practices and responsibilities

We explain each at a level of detail appropriate at this stage in the planning process. Needless to stress, many specific actions are not yet determined.

Re A: Engage in strategic enrollment management

In 2012-13, K-State enrollment reached record levels. Increasingly, K-State is a destination school for Kansans, out-of-state students, students from diverse backgrounds, and students from abroad. These enrollment successes bespeak Kansas State University's national reputation for quality as well as support the

University as it addresses budgetary challenges in other areas. Nothing in our proposal to establish strategic enrollment management is meant to interfere with K-State's land-grant mission or diminish its growing popularity among diverse prospective students near and far. Quite the contrary, because K-State is so increasingly popular, we are now able--perhaps for the first time in the university's long and storied history--to *actively shape* the undergraduate class in ways that fulfill our mission and better facilitate the university's overarching goal.

Actively shaping the undergraduate student population in light of the University's academic goals and financial requirements—e.g., recruiting students to meet the demands of the Engineering Initiative and/or working to increase student diversity, targeting growth in international student recruitment and/or finding the optimal balance between in-state and out-of-state enrollment, increasing the yield for the most academically high-achieving prospective students and/or targeting students with special talents and evidence of grit and determination, and etc.—this is what is meant by strategic enrollment management. In order to assure fairness as well as effectiveness, the enrollment management team uses a range of tools and relies upon many types of information, from that which is learned using abstract statistical models to that which is learned via holistic review of individual applications (not to mention face-to-face meetings with prospective students and families and additional follow-up with their academic and personal references). In the end, strategic enrollment management requires a close working partnership among those who set the University's many and various academic goals and those who execute its admissions strategy, set financial aid and scholarship policy, and in a thousand seemingly countless ways, welcome students into the rich fabric of Kansas State University's student life.

Establishment of strategic enrollment management requires, then, that we:

- maintain Kansas State University's affordability by offering additional 4-year renewable merit as well as need-based scholarships with annually consistent award levels. K-State must maintain its aggressive posture university-wide to expanding student financial assistance programs
- establish a standing *University Enrollment Planning Committee* charged by the President to determine university-wide enrollment goals, projections, and associated revenue implications, chaired by the Provost and the Vice President for Student Life, with varying membership but including standing membership for the Vice President of Administration and Finance, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Associate Provost for International

Programs, Dean of Continuing Education, Dean of the Graduate School, CEO and Dean of K-State Salina, and CEO of K-State Olathe

- implement 2013 KBOR “exception window” policies (which requires that Kansas State University and all other KBOR institutions provide an individualized student success plan for all students admitted by exception)
- pilot in 2013 an enrollment deadline for “exception window” applicants
- analyze historical “exception window” student success patterns in order to produce increasingly discerning exception window admissions criteria (with a goal of identifying prospective students whose record of achievement and discernible potential makes four- to six-year graduation probable and thus warrants admission by exception, with all due mandatory supports in place)
- prepare for the new and more stringent 2015 KBOR qualified admissions criteria (which, although complicated in structure, generally requires prospective students to earn a minimum 2.0 GPA in an expanded core high school curriculum AND a minimum 21 ACT OR graduate in the top 1/3 of class, AND earn a minimum 2.0 GPA on college credit taken in high school)
- hire two dedicated academic counselors for “exception window” admits
- use statistical modeling to predict the factors which most influence student success and use this data to guide strategic admissions decisions and structure merit scholarship programs in order to maximize the value of each, this, in addition to the more basic goal of “increasing financial aid, including scholarships, for undergraduate students” (K-State 2025)
- “expand targeted recruitment for high achieving students” (K-State 2025)
- expand summer bridge programs to assure continued student diversity, rectify key academic deficiencies, and expand K-State’s viability and attractiveness in strategic regions, among strategic populations, and with respect to strategic college- and department-led growth initiatives (e.g., in engineering, architecture, planning & design, education, and pre-health, focus especially on math and writing skills, for example, via Math Summer Boot Camps for incoming as well as continuing students, provide supplemental instruction for selected mathematics and other STEM course work via an expanded SAS Tutoring Service in the College of Engineering, stage professional as well as outreach-oriented mathematics education conferences, support an interdisciplinary STEM pedagogy consortium that would build on K-State’s noted and diverse strengths in STEM pedagogy, expand the Writing Center, etc.)

- expand “Wildcat Warm-Up” in the fall so that increasing numbers of new students participate in an enhanced on-campus new student orientation experience, and add spring “Week of Welcome” to serve transfer students
- add in 2013 a mandatory pre-orientation online preparatory module which introduces new students to K-State’s academic structure (including academic advising services, the colleges, majors, secondary majors, minors, K-State Online, iSIS, academic support services, Honor & Integrity, etc.)
- inaugurate an annual New Student Convocation during the 2013 Week of Welcome to highlight the university’s academic *raison d’etre* and students’ principal academic identity, academic purposes, and academic goals

Re B: Create a student success collaborative

What do other institutions do to insure a breadth of student success and a greater likelihood that all students are prepared to realize their full academic potential?

One national model is exemplified by North Carolina’s famed Appalachian State University, which enjoys an 87% first-to-second year retention rate and a 65.7% six-year graduation rate and which was among the first universities to inaugurate comprehensive first-year experiences university-wide. Look at U.S. News & World Report’s listing of top undergraduate programs, and find Appalachian State again and again recognized. Among other things, ASU requires all incoming students to undertake a pre-orientation online course and then create a preliminary fall course schedule *before* attending New Student Orientation; this, ASU believes, emphasizes that students themselves must take the lead in shaping their own academic career, and they provide new students and their parents with separate booklets to facilitate this process. Appalachian State University wishes to avoid a type of “learned dependence” on academic advisors as well as render as efficient as possible the precious and highly valuable time which academic advisors spend with students. The idea is to start from a course schedule prepared on the basis of focused online learning before preceding to enriching one-on-one advising sessions that permit a truly “developmental approach” to academic advising.

Appalachian State also features a “University College.” All incoming students are placed in the University College before choosing and entering their principal degree-granting college. During their stay in University College, ASU students receive integrated academic supportive services, undertake required First Year Seminars, and begin ASU’s 44+ credit hour General Education program. All first-

year and new transfer students begin their engagement with ASU via the University College, what they describe as their “portal to academic success!”

It is also notable that Appalachian State adheres to a strictly enforced attendance policy for first-year students, monitored, especially in high-enrollment classrooms, with aid of automatic card readers and clickers. Attendance--or, as the case may be, non-attendance--information is vital to realizing the value of the existing network of academic and non-academic support services and for the rational deployment of scarce intervention specialists’ time and attention. While mere attendance is not, of course, a sure fire measure of meaningful academic engagement, non-attendance is most certainly a valuable measure of its opposite.

All of this and more is the product of close and highly collegial collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Life at ASU. The principal beneficiaries are the students, who enjoy what might be described as a “less-siloed,” “connected” university that “at all levels” encourages “student success.” Appalachian State University presents one model, but there are many from which we might learn.

Stanford University represents a second national model. Stanford created an Office for of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education in 1995 and has since enjoyed 17 years of collaboration between “Undergraduate Academic Life” and “Student Affairs.” Both units are led by vice provosts who report to the Office of the Provost. This coordination in administration facilitates coordination in typical student experience. Where, for example, Stanford University’s Student Affairs is nationally recognized for its innovative “Residential Education” programs, Stanford’s Undergraduate Academic Life is just as concerned with helping students enrich their degree programs via public service and service-learning, internships and leadership development, as it is with helping Stanford students map their four-year educational plan via an online “Cardinal Compass.”

There is no “University College” at Stanford. Instead, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education is dedicated to undergraduate advising and research, community-based learning, study abroad, creativity and the arts, facilitation of double majors and secondary majors, internships and professional development opportunities, competitive scholarships and fellowships, and tutoring and academic support. The Office of the Vice Provost for Student Affairs is a no-less academic office which oversees residential education, new student orientation, career development, diversity initiatives, student activities and leadership, student financial services, and many more. The two offices’

responsibilities overlap, and instead of one seeing the other as competing, they view each other as partners working on behalf of the students. No University College, then, just a high degree of “dotted line organization chart” collaboration.

Given our distinctive history and current needs, we propose to blend elements of both the Appalachian State and Stanford models to form a uniquely K-State approach to enhancing student retention and graduation success via a “student success collaborative.” We propose that K-State pursue the following actions:

- establish a standing *University Committee on Student Success* co-chaired by the Provost, Vice President of Student Life, and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (whose college includes Open Option, Pre-Health, and Pre-Law advisors, the Writing Center, as well as many interdisciplinary and secondary major programs, all of which are vital to university-wide improvement in student success). This committee would be charged with realigning the University’s academic and student life structures, if and when necessary, to facilitate achievement of K-State 2025 goals and otherwise coordinate efforts across units which, in the University College model, for example, would be managed directly under the purview of the Office of the Provost. The *University Committee on Student Success* would address:
 - course availability bottlenecks
 - courses with persistently low rates of student success
 - possibilities for increased use of summer, online, intersession, and evening college courses to improve time-to-degree and degree completion rates
 - university-wide course management, including responding to the needs which result from internal transfers among the colleges, departments, and specific majors, secondary majors, and minors
 - development of, and assessment of, all retention programs
- the *University Committee on Student Success* would also evaluate the possibility of raising funds to establish a newly fashioned organization and dedicated building which would house an university-wide approach to student success by bringing together and creatively integrating advisors who serve students from a variety of colleges (that is, open option, career, and pre-professional advisors), K-State First, retention and tutoring program staff, expanded Writing and Math Tutoring Centers, an expanded Veterans Center, and offices for enrichment initiatives such as the University Honors Program and a would-be Office of Undergraduate

Research. Such a facility would form a visible one-stop university-wide academic support, encouragement, and enrichment center. Perhaps it would be possible to first establish a pared-down version of such a center in existing facilities (e.g., Student Union, Hale Library, Calvin Hall, etc.)

- support college, department, and other units' strategic plans which emphasize student success initiatives, including adoption of progressive, active teaching-&-learning strategies, including, for example, participation in K-State First, studio instruction and other types of flipped classroom models, living/learning communities, service-learning, etc. It is also important to develop summer bridge programs (such as the Office of Diversity's highly successful MAPS Program), and strengthen faculty promotion-&-tenure policies in order to better recognize and reward a balanced approach to teaching, research, and service, reform required curriculum to incorporate career as well as vital liberal arts goals, incorporate writing-through-the-curriculum strategies, research-based capstone courses, e-portfolios, and other "high-impact" practices proven to increase the likelihood of student mastery of faculty-determined learning outcomes, completion of college and department degree program requirements, and post-graduation employment and/or graduate and professional school admissions success. We will also benefit from collaboration with library faculty and staff who are poised to use their unique expertise and resources to promote undergraduate student success, undergraduate research, and myriad scholarly enrichment opportunities
- build upon the College of Engineering's de facto "supplemental instruction" program (SAS) for courses which regularly produce low rates of student success, as systematic peer instruction provided by well-trained and supported upperclassmen is proven to greatly improve student success
- create appropriate online resources (e.g., Cardinal Compass) which permit students to access integrated major and career maps, interest area maps (e.g., Pre-Health, Pre-Law, Social Science, Humanities, etc., exemplified at Georgia State University), and which identify key enrichments over a would-be four-year course of study including opportunities for on-campus, off-campus, online, intersession and summer semester enrichments. Such online resources also help faculty advisors stay current with issues germane both to scheduling as well as relatively involved developmental advising
- examine the academic calendar and undergraduate academic policies and procedures to determine if they maximally supports student success goals

- survey every student who leaves K-State to determine pertinent cause(s).

In time, K-State may cultivate the resources to establish a new student success center with a distinctive and nationally recognized collaborative model, but in the near-term, we need to lay the groundwork for such collaboration. Having created an Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, the next step is to effect similar levels of collaboration as seen between Stanford’s VPUE and VPSA but at K-State including also the vital role played by the College of Arts and Sciences, which directly supports many university-wide programs. We will also need to invest in personnel, both by hiring new people and providing additional training and professional development opportunities for current staff members. We also need to assess the contribution of existing programs in order to determine if continued support, realignment, or even discontinuation is required. We need to tailor our approaches to the different types of advising as often as we seek across-the-board standards and economies of scale. Our students will be the immediate beneficiaries, but available data and experience support the expectation that such developments will also permit realization of the 2025 goal.

Re C: Nurture a developmental approach to academic advising

In order to “dramatically improve advising services for students and develop flexible and effective academic advising models appropriate to the diverse needs of our entire student population” (K-State 2025), we propose that Kansas State University:

- establish university-wide nationally recognized benchmarks of a 300-to-1 maximum student-to-advisor ratio for full-time professional advisors and a maximum 30-to-1 ratio for faculty advisors whose positions entail full engagement in research, teaching, and service. In 2012-13, thirteen full-time advisor’s ratios exceeded 300, while advisee ratios for some faculty advisors in the Colleges of Agriculture and in such departments as Kinesiology, Biology, and Chemistry may have exceeded these benchmarks. While each unit will choose its own approach to academic advising, and while considerable flexibility and individual variation is needed and expected, university-wide maximum ratios serve as helpful guideposts. Quality development advising requires sufficient time to spend with students, which will not be regularly available without reasonable ratios
- create a standing *University Advising Committee* chaired by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and including representatives from

colleges which serve undergraduate students as well as other academic support units. This committee would facilitate university-wide training, professional development, and coordination among both full-time advisors and faculty advisors with a goal of encouraging and supporting state-of-the-art developmental advising practices which bring advising into the teaching/learning paradigm and thus into the core academic mission

- create a sub-committee focused on Pre-Health student advising and the special needs of some 2,000 of K-State's most ambitious students. Create a part-time faculty director who would chair this committee and oversee the coordination and development of Kansas State's many Pre-Health Programs
- further the existing partnership with NACADA with a goal for K-State to become nationally recognized for excellence in academic advising and scholarship related to advising, student support, and student success
- consider the value of a university-wide software platform and/or improvement of the iSIS system either or both of which might streamline advisor appointments, permit sharing of information and data across colleges, departments, and programs, track student progress over four to six years, and, using statistical predictive analytics, facilitate course management university-wide.

The inaugural Kansas State University/NACADA Summer Undergraduate Academic Advising Institute (May 22-23, 2013) is an important step in realizing the above-identified strategies for improving academic advising at Kansas State University. The Academic Advising Institute's recommended actions will serve as the starting point, once it is impanelled, for the standing University Advising Committee.

Re D: Establish a comprehensive approach to the First Year Experience

While one-half of students who leave the university do so *after* the first year, it is equally unfortunate that half do so in the midst of, or even as a result of, their first-year experience. Universities like Appalachian State pioneered First Year Experience programs precisely to remedy this immediate blow to overall student success and its painful long-term consequence for institutional efficiency and effectiveness. Consider how difficult it would be to achieve a 70% six-year graduation rate when shackled by an 80% first-to-second year retention rate; losing 20% of a class after the first year means that, to reach the goal, a maximum of only 10% more may depart over the course the next *five years*. Another way of underscoring the unlikelihood of such a scenario is to note that, after a 20% loss in the first year, only 2% losses on average would be sustainable thereafter.

No, failure to retain students in their first year inevitably undermines even the most productive efforts to facilitate and enrich the undergraduate student experience thereafter. It is therefore vital that Kansas State University support, in the powerful words of its strategic plan, “an integrated, effective First Year Experience (FYE) with strong, long-term leadership...” (K-State 2025).

In order to build upon K-State’s current achievement in this area, we propose to:

- include every first-time, first-year and new transfer student in a FYE program by 2015 (that is, 100% participation in a “student success program”), via
 - increasing the number of K-State First Seminars from 46 to 67, a 55% increase between the 2012-2013 and the 2015-2016 academic years
 - increasing the number of K-State First CAT Communities by 10% annually, including CAT Communities designed for transfer students
 - developing K-State First courses tailored for classroom formats other than low-enrollment seminars (emphasizing, for example, engaged learning in high-enrollment formats through use of peer teachers, undergraduate research, and service-learning, as modeled on Introduction to Leadership Concepts [LEAD 212] and other notable examples of existing high-engagement/high-enrollment courses. We also need to increase use of studio and other types of flipped classroom models as well as use of completely online courses
 - institutionalizing the K-State First Program by funding a half-time K-State First faculty directorship and full- and part-time support staff, funding an annual operating budget, and providing suitable offices
 - communicating to prospective students that Introduction to Leadership Concepts (LEAD 212), Pilots, University Experience, Developing Scholars, the University Honors Program, living and learning communities, and first-year student orientation courses at the college and department level are, all together, FYE offerings, that is, courses and specialized programs designed to integrate new students into K-State’s differentiated yet robust academic life
- build on existing department-driven and faculty-monitored attendance policies to establish and enforce an effective “early warning system” in the form of a university-wide attendance policy for first-time, first-year students (by using card readers, clickers, and other means to facilitate reporting, requesting special involvement from the already highly-involved

faculty in key departments such as English, Mathematics, and Communication Studies, and adding a transition counselor in the Office of Student Life to oversee MAP-Works, the attendance policy, and increased incidences of students who experience debilitating forms of personal crisis)

- increase participation in MAP-Works for all first-time, first-year students
- increase multicultural student group spaces—and, ideally, establish a dedicated multicultural student center—to support and celebrate diversity
- support plans to provide first- and perhaps even second-year retention programming for multicultural students who presently do not enjoy access to existing programs, including creation of a full-time position in the Office of Diversity to develop, track, and assess these newly developed multicultural student retention programs
- facilitate regular and effective university-wide communication about the many and various tutoring services supported by departments, colleges, and academic support units in a variety of locations and at a variety of times (e.g., via strengthening of the existing “Totally Tutoring” program)
- raise the profile of the Honor & Integrity System to support academic values and ethically sound academic practices at Kansas State University
- in collaboration with the Faculty Senate, SGA, and the Office of the Registrar, review undergraduate academic policies/procedures and the university calendar to assess their contributions to K-State 2025 goals
- evaluate current residential-based academic “clusters” in order to further encourage reinvigoration and expansion of opportunities for meaningful and effective “living/learning communities” in a variety of settings
- collaborate with Communication Studies to alleviate the two/three credit hour discrepancy between COMM 105 and 106, and with the Department of English to further support ENGL 100 and ENGL 200, which, together, form the only common curricular experience for most first-year students
- support the Department of English’s proposal to expand and further develop The Writing Center for the benefit of all undergraduate students (e.g., by increasing the number of satellite tutoring sites, increasing the number of tutors, supporting ENGL 500 tutor training course work, and creating a part-time Writing Center directorship to manage this growth)
- reinstate the Department of Mathematics grading/help-session program
- encourage college and department strategic plans to emphasize peer tutoring and mentoring within majors, minors, secondary majors, and so forth, as shared experiences and goals facilitate effective peer engagement.

Together, these actions will sum to provide a comprehensive approach to First Year Experience. Of course, one size does not fit all. K-State cannot reasonably afford a low-enrollment seminar for every first-year and new transfer student. But K-State can, and must, provide every new student at least one context in which they can relate to the University and its academic mission on decidedly human terms, developing personal and hopefully multifaceted relationships with faculty, staff, upperclassmen, as well as one another. Such early connections with K-State's academic mission are vital to initial student success and persistence. Such connections and relationships are the sociological stuff from which a truly enriching and distinctive Kansas State University undergraduate experience arises.

Re: E: Renew emphasis on student-centered practices and responsibilities

It is vital to underscore that "student success" requires students who are willing to accept responsibility for their academic career. All the support systems and incentive structures in the world will not assure student success without the active, purposeful, self-directed participation of students themselves. Students need to understand their rights *and* responsibilities; they need to acquire the knowledge they need to skillfully negotiate the curriculum, degree programs, and university system as a whole; they need to monitor their personal behavior as well as look after their colleagues' well-being. Kansas State University should continue to communicate these basic tenets of student life at a residential research university, but students who seek academic success also need to be receptive to incorporating these values into their pursuit of academic excellence.

The New Student Convocation, for example, should underscore the overriding importance of student success, in part, by bringing attention to the value of K-State as a research institution, our "Principles of Community," the Honor & Integrity system, and K-State's status as the nation's first land-grant university. Our undergraduate policies and practices should also maximally encourage student success, while our Student Governing Association should continue to prioritize student success with its policies, practices, and via its student-centered funding mechanisms. Kansas State University's undergraduate student leadership is diverse and multifaceted, but always remarkably sophisticated and passionately committed to student well-being and academic success. The importance of their leadership for the success of this plan cannot, we think, be easily overestimated.

In addition to initiatives previously described, we suggest four additional actions:

- mirroring Appalachian State University’s practice, provide incoming students and their families with separately designed, information rich student success materials which include a directory of key resources
- mirroring Stanford University’s successful “pre-major advising program,” in which Stanford community members with advanced degrees volunteer to mentor one or more first-year students, expand the K-State First GPS mentoring program and add training, support and recognition for mentors
- institute systematic peer-to-peer encouragement in order to achieve 100% voluntary participation in MAP-Works, and improve use of resulting data
- partner with the School of Leadership Studies for university-wide and specialized peer assistant training based on the successful LEAD 212 model.

Priority #2: Undergraduate Research

Whether they fully appreciate it or not at the outset, Kansas State University undergraduate students should benefit from the fact that K-State is a leading research university whose faculty are regularly engaged in investigation and discovery in their many and various disciplines as well as in cutting-edge interdisciplinary and applied research. Kansas State University is not a liberal arts college nor is it a regional or comprehensive institution of higher learning. Kansas State University is a national research university, and K-State undergraduates should and do benefit tremendously from this animating foundational character.

Hence, undergraduate research is prioritized in K-State 2025, with one of eight benchmark metrics for success dedicated solely to the “percentage of undergraduates involved in formalized research experience.” This is also the background for the creation of the Undergraduate Research Task Force, chaired by Dean Peter Dorhout of the College of Arts and Sciences, which issued its final report in August of 2012. Given that so much work on this issue precedes our own effort, and given also the consensus support this work has garnered university-wide, we propose simply that Kansas State University adopt many of the principal recommendations of the Undergraduate Research Task Force report.

Specific near-term (2013-2015) actions include:

- creation of 0-credit hour courses in each department (modeled on that which already exists in the Department of Chemistry and elsewhere), in which tenure-stream faculty (as well as research faculty, post-doctoral

fellows, and others) present aspects of their on-going or past research for the benefit primarily of undergraduate students, thus helping undergraduates better appreciate faculty research interests as well as providing undergraduate students with a means to introduce themselves to faculty members as prospective research collaborators and assistants

- creation of 0-credit hour courses designed to locate undergraduate research in the curriculum (with faculty oversight and recognition) as well as simplify the university-wide process of measuring meaningful research activities (as defined in the Undergraduate Research Task Force Report) and as operationalized variously through faculty oversight at the unit level
- establish an Office of Undergraduate Research, which would:
 - oversee a university-wide \$500,000 grant program supporting a wide variety of proposals, including proposals from faculty in traditionally under-funded disciplines (Humanities, Social Sciences, etc.) to support hiring of undergraduate research assistants, and proposals from students for direct and indirect research expenses (including summer on-campus living expenses, travel grants for students, etc.)
 - design, organize, and manage an annual celebration of research and creative achievement (probably a “Research Week”) for undergraduate and graduate students that would be pitched at a scale designed to invite national recognition for undergraduate research
 - coordinate the Developing Scholars and McNair Scholars Programs
 - design and manage publication of a student-edited, faculty-vetted *Kansas State University Journal of Undergraduate Research*
 - collaborate in the development of NBAF to facilitate establishment of mutually beneficial sponsored undergraduate research opportunities
 - manage participation in the annual Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol (the inauguration of which being set for February, 2013)
 - design, organize, and manage undergraduate research workshops
 - create an undergraduate research student group to help promote undergraduate research, edit the journal, and staff the office
 - create a faculty, staff, and student oversight committee to assist in the determination of grant awards and to set guidelines and policies
 - serve as primary liaison with the Council on Undergraduate Research
 - promote opportunities for undergraduate research via the National Science Foundation’s Research for Undergraduates (REU) Program, National Institute of Health internships, research opportunities at

- various national laboratories, private and corporate research centers, and international venues which support undergraduate research
- design, organize, and manage regular university-wide assessments of undergraduate research, including data for the K-State 2025 metric
- facilitate inclusion of undergraduate research funding requests in faculty-authored external funding proposals
- encourage development of research-based coursework, such as senior and/or capstone seminars and research-based service-learning
- be staffed by a part-time faculty director and a full-time assistant director, Developing Scholars and McNair Scholars Program staff, as well as the members of an undergraduate research student group
- creation of a “Research Scholars Program” (100 students @\$3,000 each) managed by the Office of Undergraduate Research (in collaboration with Admissions and Scholarships) in which select incoming first-year students are awarded initial research placements and a one-time research support account (parallel, for example, to the Century Scholars Program at Rice University), as competitive recruitment incentives. Research Scholars would be eligible to apply for continuing support via the research grant program.

In order to set a university-wide baseline for current undergraduate research, we propose to make use principally of the proposed 0-credit hour course system but also pertinent research conducted by the Office of Assessment as well as the first university-wide “Research Week” celebration in the spring of 2014 as an additional occasion to survey and assess the quality of undergraduate research and creative achievement as it has developed during the 2013-2014 academic year. Ideally, an inclusive Research Week catalog for the spring celebration would serve as a compendium of the principal efforts of our undergraduate researchers and serve to celebrate the vital instruction and guidance provided by faculty, post-doctoral, and graduate student mentors.

Priority # 3: University Honors Program

Established in 2006, Kansas State’s University Honors Program is playing catch-up in a highly competitive arena dominated by programs 25, 50, and even 75 years and more years in existence. In the Big XII, for example, the famed “Plan II” honors program at the University of Texas-Austin was founded in 1935, whereas in just the past several years, the University of Texas established the

Forty Acres Scholars Program to compete with the prominent UVA Jefferson Scholars and UNC-Chapel Hill Morehead-Cain Scholars Programs, each supported by over \$200 million in dedicated endowments.

In contrast, Kansas State University offers its roughly 250 incoming and additional nearly 500 continuing honors students selection among a modest range of honors courses (including an optional one credit hour first-year student seminar), an optional honors retreat for incoming students, an optional honors floor in Marlatt Hall (serving 34 honors students in 2012), and opportunity for membership in the Honors Student Association and variously newly forming sub-groups. Significantly, the program does *not* independently provide merit scholarships, dedicated advising support, honors student work and study spaces, specialized study abroad programs, nor even priority registration (although this is slated to change in 2013-2014). Given its recent development and paucity of resources, it is not surprising that the University Honors Program is unable to realize its full potential to assist in recruitment of high-achieving students and that only 15% of incoming honors students persist to meet the University Honors Program's own graduation requirements.

It is vital that Kansas State University continue to attract high-achieving students. Their many and diverse contributions often directly support K-State 2025 goals and their participation in the life of the university infuse its rich community of undergraduate scholars with regular doses of artistic creativity and intellectual ferment. And while there are no guarantees that prior high-achievement will lead to especially notable academic achievement at Kansas State, data as well as common sense suggest that high-achieving students succeed and graduate at higher rates and that they form the backbone of a number of strategic academic programs across campus (e.g., Pre-Health, Engineering, Architecture, Planning & Design, and many, many others).

In order to maintain access for all students and to support its academic mission and lofty 2025 goals, Kansas State University must remain an attractive and relatively low-cost alternative to often higher-priced and sometimes more prestigious public and private universities. The high-achieving Kansan deserves the opportunity to matriculate at Kansas State University every bit as much as the student of relatively average academic achievement. Kansas State University must, therefore, continue to strive to

position itself as a viable destination institution for high-achieving students by matching what is typically offered them at public and private competitors.

We propose to support the University Honors Program via these actions:

- by “expanding targeted recruitment for high achieving students” (K-State 2025)
- add priority course registration (i.e., place first-year honors students in good standing at the fore of all first-year students, second-year honors students in good standing at the fore of second-year students, etc.)
- restructure the University Honors Program requirements and curriculum in collaboration with the undergraduate-serving colleges and School of Leadership Studies to add distinctive curricular and “honors experience” programs for first- and second-year honors students
- improve program retention and graduation rates by introducing intermediate recognition for honors students who meet first- and second-year benchmarks, and by providing greater flexibility for third- and fourth-year honors students, in part, by recognizing disciplinary student research as substituting for the Honors Project requirement
- re-locate the University Honors Program offices to enhance its staff’s ability to recruit prospective honors students and to provide current honors students with dedicated meeting and studying spaces
- designate honors courses with a distinctive course code (e.g., HNRS)
- alongside anticipated expansion of residence hall capacity, promote residential “living/learning communities,” including floors for University Honors Program members as well as academic interest floors which serve a variety of high-achieving students with leadership and service aspirations and needs, such as, for example, floors and programs for:
 - Pre-Health students
 - Pre-Law students
 - Student-Athletes
 - Developing Scholars and McNair Scholars
 - Presidential and Kassabaum Scholars
 - Language students (Spanish, especially)
 - International & Intercultural Learning focus
 - Multicultural learning focus
 - Sustainability learning focus

- add an “Honors Peer Advising Program” wherein junior/senior honors students advise first- and second- year students concerning UHP requirements and opportunities
- develop programming appropriate for the “Honors House,” including productive use of the designated seminar room
- affiliate with a newly forming national honors program administrator group composed exclusively of national research university honors programs; benchmark future development against this peer group
- realign university-wide advising for nationally competitive scholarships under the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies
- collaborate with the Office of Study Abroad to create honors-specific study abroad programs (including summer bridge programs for incoming honors students, short-term, summer, semester, and year-abroad programs, research, internship, and exchange affiliations with partner institution, and other international and intercultural opportunities).
- create an individualized major program along the lines of Georgia Tech’s X-College, Tennessee’s College Scholars Program, IU-Bloomington’s or UConn’s Individualized Major Programs, etc.

The University Honors Program must add requirements, challenge, and significantly intensify the integration of community among its members in their first- and second-year, add appropriate privileges, benefits, and scholarly opportunities throughout, and provide greater flexibility for honors students in their majors and during their junior and senior years especially in order to facilitate rapid increase in program completion. K-State’s University Honors Program is a strategic asset whose value for realization of K-State 2025 goals is great. With the near-term developments herein proposed, K-State would be positioned to attract a benefactor dedicated to establishing an honors college.

Beyond 2013-2015 to 2025

As Kansas State University looks toward fulfillment of its 2025 strategic plan, we propose several key long-term goals. These long-term goals are not simply wishful thinking; rather, it is likely that Kansas State University would need to realize them in order to attain 90% first-to-second year retention and 70% six-year graduation rates as well as national recognition for undergraduate research.

Each long-term goal entails substantial resources:

- build a sufficient number of new residence halls to permit K-State to consider requiring an organized group living experience (e.g., residence hall, sororities and fraternities, scholarship communities, etc.), for *all* first-year students
- design new residence halls in such a manner as to exemplify cutting-edge scholarly advances and to incorporate academic activities, including class meeting space, tutoring facilities, and faculty-in-residence apartments
- create and implement a development plan to establish a student success center as a new facility designed to house a distinctively Kansas State University approach to student success programs (including open option, pre-professional, and career advising, tutoring, summer bridge programs, freshman programs, undergraduate research, retention programs, etc.)
- create and implement a development plan to raise approximately \$7.5 million to endow the proposed Research Scholars Program
- position the University Honors Program so that, with the aid of a transformational gift, it could develop into a prestigious Honors College
- expand and support high-quality service-learning university-wide as well as other forms of engaged learning via the School of Leadership Studies
- support the School of Leadership Studies' ambition to develop and sustain international prominence in the growing interdisciplinary field of leadership studies on the basis of an effective development plan
- support college and department student success plans, and the faculty promotion and tenure policies which facilitate them, as the university's faculty and staff continue to integrate active learning pedagogies, academic and career advising, and high-impact co-curricular practices into their various respective degree programs and distinctive academic cultures.

Honors college endowments alone (and the naming opportunity usually associated with them) typically range from \$10 to \$50 million, while K-State's merit scholarship budget of \$18 million may need to double and include need-based scholarships to meet K-State 2025 goals. Other proposed programs may be affordable only by means of reallocation of existing resources or via external funding. We may seek to strengthen the Honor & Integrity and K-State 8 General Education Programs, for example, but we may also need to consolidate or eliminate existing student success programs if and when their contributions are out of sync with changing needs or if their functions are assessed to be

comparatively inefficient or ineffective. It is not feasible to only add and to never subtract from Kansas State University's broad array of student success initiatives.

A new model of 21st century land-grant education may be emerging on the horizon, pushed forward by the fiscal squeeze resulting from declining public support and recession-driven price sensitivity on the one hand, and competitive challenges resulting from new educational technologies and the innovations they demand in current practices on the other. A 21st century Kansas State University may be a 24/7 operation, with a blend of teaching/learning opportunities—from the traditional seminar to so-called MOOCs from other universities—together cohering around long-lasting core institutional values and K-State's long-standing—indeed, pioneering--dedication to the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1863.