

2030

Strategic Plan

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

College of Health and
Human Sciences

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Human Sciences

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LETTER FROM THE DEAN

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, Kansas State University launched a bold new strategic initiative entitled Next-Gen K-State. This comprehensive plan challenges us to rethink the role of a land-grant institution and redefine our mission in promoting societal well-being in the 21st century. The strategy sets forth ambitious goals: broadening our understanding of the communities and individuals we serve, expanding our reach to all learners, deepening our commitment to public health, continuously enhancing the quality and accessibility of applied experiences, and elevating our research investments to address critical challenges.

A central theme of Next-Gen K-State is the concept of One K-State—a unified approach that fosters collaboration and shared accountability across all colleges and units. I am exceptionally proud of the work our college has undertaken throughout this strategic planning process, as we have thoughtfully aligned our priorities with these broader university goals. In particular, I want to express my appreciation to the steering committee for guiding this important work, and to all members of our community who actively participated in interviews, listening sessions, and surveys. This strategic plan, crafted by our faculty and staff with minimal input from the Dean's office, stands as a testament to our core value of shared governance. It is truly a grassroots initiative, reflecting the collective vision and dedication of our college. Together, we have outlined a future that emphasizes our commitment to fostering individual well-being, strengthening communities, and positioning our faculty as leaders in advancing knowledge across disciplines.

Our mission—to promote the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through research, education, and engagement—remains the driving force behind all that we do. This strategic plan reaffirms our emphasis on health and wellness, particularly in underserved and rural communities. In alignment with K-State's broader strategic objectives, HHS is poised to emerge as the flagship college for human health, partnering with other colleges to tackle the many health and wellness challenges facing our state and nation. Our initiatives focus on addressing pressing public health issues, from combating chronic disease and mental health disparities, to promoting preventive health practices and improving access to healthcare in rural areas.

As we look ahead, we are reminded of the power of collaboration—understanding that our greatest achievements come from working together. The strategies outlined in this plan are designed to enhance our internal structures, expand access to education, amplify community engagement, and maximize our research impact. In particular, our focus on health, human, and consumer sciences will drive innovative research, leading to tangible improvements in the well-being of individuals and communities across Kansas and beyond.

I am deeply energized by the future of our college and the impact we will continue to have. Our collective efforts will ensure that we remain at the forefront of health and human sciences, strengthening communities and improving lives. As we continue to respond to the evolving needs of our society, we will reaffirm our leadership in health research, education, and service.

Thank you for your commitment to this vital work and for your contributions to our college and university. The road ahead is bright, and I am confident that, together, we will achieve remarkable progress in promoting health and well-being in our state and beyond.

Sincerely,



Brad Behnke, Ph.D.

Dean | College of Health and Human Sciences | Kansas State University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The College of Health and Human Sciences (HHS) extends heartfelt gratitude to our vibrant community for their dedication to the college and active participation throughout the strategic planning process. This comprehensive plan stands as a testament to their invaluable insights and collective efforts. Through multiple surveys, one-on-one interviews and department and school-level listening sessions, we gathered 685 points of input to help inform this plan and the decisions of the steering committee.

We also express deep appreciation to the members of the steering committee whose guidance has been instrumental in shaping this roadmap for our future. Their commitment and expertise have been crucial in navigating this process, and we are profoundly thankful for their time and service.

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Program Director and Instructor, Center on Aging

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Assistant Professor and Verna Sullivan-Marler Professor, Fashion Studies; CCOP Member

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Associate Professor, Director of Sensory and Consumer Research Center at K-State Olathe

Yue Teng Vaughan

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INTRODUCTION

Rooted in the university's founding, HHS has served as a cornerstone in health and human sciences and fostered a vibrant interdisciplinary environment dedicated to promoting well-being since 1873.

We are proud of how we have evolved over the past 150 years and risen to face challenges over time, consistently working together to provide access to high-quality education for our learners, innovate and discover new knowledge and disseminate such knowledge to bolster and transform individuals and communities across our state.

This strategic plan is the next chapter for our college. It outlines innovative ways to work together, fostering collaboration unlike ever before. The plan details how we will seamlessly coordinate across all aspects of our work, staying true to our land-grant heritage – a heritage that positions people at its core. As Kansas State University redefines the 21st century land-grant university through its Next-Gen K-State plan, HHS embraces this call to lead the way.

This plan isn't merely a document; it's the culmination of a comprehensive engagement process. We are deeply grateful to the over 685 points of input gathered from our college community – faculty, staff, learners, university leadership, alumni and external partners – who provided invaluable insights over the last year. Their ideas and thoughts form the bedrock of this plan, ensuring it reflects a collective, shared vision for the future of HHS.

To realize this vision, our work is strategically organized into five key areas: Operational Excellence, External Engagement, Research and Scholarship, Learner Success and Support and Infrastructure. These priorities were intentionally chosen - they represent the greatest opportunities for us to reimagine our work, focus our efforts for maximum impact and make a transformative difference in the years to come.

As the needs of our learners, the world and the communities we serve evolve – the challenges we face today are different from the past and those on the horizon – our college will continue to evolve and innovate, changing with the times to rise to these challenges and needs and fulfill its mission. Through the collaborative efforts outlined here, the College of Health and Human Sciences remains poised to build upon its rich history. We will forge an even brighter future, solidifying our legacy of excellence for generations to come.



OUR MISSION

To promote the well-being of individuals, families and communities through research, education and engagement.

OUR VISION

The College of Health and Human Sciences serves as a model for interdisciplinary and forward-looking research, teaching and engagement that transforms lives, communities and disciplines.



OUR VALUES

CONNECTION

We are stronger together — cultivating trust and building relationships to connect our K-State community with our state, nation and world.

COURAGE

We lead with bold conviction — rising to the moment, even when the course is uncharted, to deliver the greatest good for areas of greatest need.

IMPACT

We listen, adapt and challenge the status quo — leading change through learning and discovery that transforms lives and creates shared prosperity for all.

LEARNER-FOCUSED

Providing an exceptional experience that helps them achieve their potential.

PEOPLE-CENTERED

We are everything because of our people — supporting, valuing and inspiring our entire K-State community and championing a culture of belonging for all.

STEWARDSHIP

We are committed to our future — using our resources responsibly to leave a positive, lasting legacy.





STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

This strategic plan delineates the direction of the College of Health and Human Sciences for the years ahead, emphasizing five critical priority areas for its future success.

Within each area, the plan specifies key strategies, accompanied by related actionable initiatives and measurable metrics, chosen to foster accountability and guide the college in implementing this plan.



PRIORITY 1:

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The College of Health and Human Sciences (HHS) is committed to creating structures and processes that foster a collaborative and interdisciplinary environment and enable focused, efficient and impactful work across the organization. This commitment recognizes that effective structures and processes serve not only as guiding frameworks for directing investments and minimizing duplication, but also as a foundation for building a strong, shared culture of collaboration. HHS thrives on the unity of different disciplines working together towards the common goal of well-being. By integrating these collaborative tenets into our internal processes, we are committed to creating seamless methods that strengthen collaboration across all facets of the college, ultimately positioning and empowering each individual to do their best work and contribute to the college mission.

KEY STRATEGIES

Marketing and branding

- Invest in central communication staff to support college communications, marketing and digital branding
- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy that elevates the teaching, research and engagement of the college
- Expand support for units related to digital storytelling across mediums
- Establish and support implementation of clear and consistent brand guidelines for use by the college and in university references to HHS

Position and equip people for success

- Assess and restructure role-specific promotion and tenure documents to align with faculty contributions and skill sets as well as with the general themes of the HHS Strategic Plan
- Invest in leadership development programs for current and aspiring unit and college leaders
- Continuously assess and update positions to accurately reflect the responsibilities and tasks performed by individuals in their roles and the needs of the college
- Assess units and schools for specialty gaps and opportunities to determine investments that need to be made for new educators and researchers

Prioritize coordination and efficient resource utilization

- Audit the support functions across the college to identify opportunities for resource sharing and coordinated skillset utilization at the school or college levels
- Audit existing college-wide processes, prioritizing the development of consistent, modernized and streamlined pathways for completing administrative tasks
- Communicate and educate the college and university communities on how to navigate the new structures and processes resulting from the reorganization
- Establish school-level leadership structures that reflect collective agency, fostering informed decision-making and shared governance

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increased retention of faculty and staff and reduction in turnover rates
- Creation and reorganization of support services and positions
- Creation of processes that allow for reallocation of faculty efforts and workloads
- Improved alignment of position descriptions with role responsibilities and expectations
- Improvement of culture and climate survey results
- Increased faculty and staff compensation in alignment with university peers



PRIORITY 2:

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

External service and engagement with our communities, state and nation are an integral component of our identity as the College of Health and Human Sciences. Our commitment to community engagement is deeply ingrained in our mission as the country's first operational land-grant institution, reflecting our dedication to making a meaningful impact on people's lives and, in turn, on the research and teaching missions of the institution. At the core of all HHS disciplines lies a shared focus on people and impact, driving our mission to support community sense of place and to forge transformative relationships.

Our commitment to fostering collaboration extends beyond our college as we focus on creating opportunities to interdisciplinarily work with individuals and communities across our state. By strengthening our relationships with external partners and leveraging the full breadth of HHS's capabilities, we can ensure our partners benefit from the combined expertise of multiple disciplines.

This section outlines key strategies aimed at amplifying our engagement with industry partners and broadening the scope of community engagement initiatives. From deepening advisory board partnerships and leveraging K-State Olathe as an industry nexus and hub for consumer engagement to establishing wellness centers throughout the state and expanding educational and mutually beneficial partnerships, these strategies epitomize our commitment to fostering collaborative relationships that drive positive change and advance societal well-being.

KEY STRATEGIES

Expand engagement with industry

- Develop, strengthen and regularly engage unit-level advisory boards
- Utilize and leverage K-State Olathe as a connection to industry and a pathway for partnerships, fee-for-service agreements, continuing education or professional development offerings, consumer and product outreach, research partnerships and applied learning opportunities
- Equip faculty and staff with the tools, skills and knowledge to engage with industry in appropriate and meaningful ways
- Collaborate with the College of Business on the development of an industry-partnered consumer science business incubator located at K-State Olathe

Broaden the scope and depth of community engagement and outreach

- Champion interdisciplinary teams that grow and expand innovative programs and initiatives focused on engagement
- Expand outreach and educational partnerships throughout the state, with a particular focus on hard-to-reach communities
- Sustain and expand existing community-serving clinics, programs and community services
- Establish a Health Careers Academy, in collaboration with the Colleges of Arts & Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, in Kansas school districts with a focus on Kansas specific Career and Technical Education (CTE) standards
- Establish a multidisciplinary wellness center focused on improving health outcomes of those in the Kansas community through in-person and virtual care, providing interprofessional practice and educational opportunities for learners
- Acknowledge and enhance the community expertise and roles of KSRE agents through strengthened partnership when interacting with communities across Kansas
- Develop a comprehensive applied exploratory year with local health care providers for learners in transition to professional programs post-baccalaureate
- Provide opportunities for faculty and staff to gain field experience with communities throughout the state
- Build out opportunities to increase overall philanthropic engagement through a variety of methods and levels (including low-dollar, young alumni, recurring, etc.)

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increased number of partners/industry collaborators
- Establishment of faculty engagement program for state, national and international audiences
- Improved national rankings at the college and program levels
- Increased annual Extension educational contacts (direct and indirect)
- Increased total contacts through all university engagement programs
- Positive growth in annual economic impact on the state through elevated placement of new learners in Kansas
- Improved learner post-graduation employment and advancement
- Increased philanthropic support from industry partners



PRIORITY 3:

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

The College of Health and Human Sciences is dedicated to maximizing research innovation and productivity, ultimately aiming to unlock groundbreaking discoveries that improve individual lives, community systems and advance knowledge across disciplines. We believe the greatest challenges facing our society, communities and even individual disciplines benefit from a multitude of perspectives.

We are committed to fostering a collaborative research environment through the deployment of key strategies, including streamlining processes for joint appointments, actively facilitating interdisciplinary research endeavors and enhancing research infrastructure. This includes shared facilities, technologies and community-engaged spaces that encourage collaboration, and expanding support for staff and learners who play critical roles in research enterprise. Parallel to this is the imperative to invest in enabling technologies that support effective and innovative research.

Furthermore, we recognize the importance of knowledge sharing within the college and beyond. We will implement strategies to improve awareness of ongoing research efforts and enhance the visibility of our discoveries through clear and accessible communication channels. By leveraging the collective expertise of our faculty and fostering community and industry collaborations, we strive to advance transformative research and discovery that addresses complex challenges and promotes holistic well-being.

KEY STRATEGIES

Maximize research productivity and impact through efficient processes

- Develop a process to support and implement joint appointments across schools and colleges
- Assess and, when necessary, develop consistent guidelines for course buyouts
- Financially support sabbaticals to other states and abroad
- Establish a college-level postdoctoral program to facilitate postdoc hiring across the college
- Audit and expand supports for grant submission and management to ensure researchers and research teams receive adequate support at all stages of their work
- Establish an all-career stage mentoring program

Support interdisciplinary research and scholarship

- Develop structures to drive and reward the pursuit of interdisciplinary research efforts
- Identify opportunities for the strategic investment in interdisciplinary hires
- Increase cross-college research and scholarship opportunities

Invest in physical research environments, infrastructure and systems

- Invest in college-level shared lab and equipment, with related maintenance and management plans
- Identify and build out space for community-engaged research
- Establish virtual environments and settings that facilitate partnerships across Kansas

Expand support and scale of learner research opportunities

- Increase the number and diversity of research opportunities available to undergraduate students
- Increase graduate research and teaching assistant funding packages to competitive levels (including funding, stipends and tuition waivers)

Improve research visibility

- Build internal communication pathways to expand awareness of current research endeavors and opportunities for collaboration
- Host discipline specific national or regional conferences supported, in part, by the college
- Develop tools and supports for translating research into accessible mediums for a variety of non-academic audiences

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increased annual research expenditures per research FTEs to median values of peer programs
- Group faculty offices by interdisciplinary thematic areas
- Increase the total research FTEs in the college
- Improved proposal submission rates and award metrics
- Increased number of publications in top-tier journals (specific to discipline)
- Increased annual number of presentations given by HHS researchers at national and international professional conferences
- Increased submitted and awarded multi-PI grants
- Increased number of post-doctoral fellows in the college
- Increased number of faculty that hold editorial positions
- Provide graduate student stipends at the national median value
- Increased extramural REU funding from federal and national funding agencies/organizations
- Increased percent of HHS faculty with Outstanding Scholar Appointments
- Use internal and external funding sources to modernize HHS laboratory space and equipment
- Host at least one annual conference on a K-State campus



PRIORITY 4:

LEARNER SUCCESS AND SUPPORT

The College of Health and Human Sciences is dedicated to setting the standard for applied, meaningful and innovative educational practices. This dedication involves broadening access to educational courses and degrees for all learners both within and beyond our state through a variety of best practice modalities and offerings, while also fostering interdisciplinary teaching endeavors.

Recognizing the evolving nature of learner needs, industry demands and societal expectations for higher education, we prioritize adaptability as a cornerstone of our approach. Our strategies encompass expanding the HHS learner community, strategically expanding educational offerings, developing novel pathways to degree completion, and enhancing educational access. However, a forward-thinking educational experience requires more than just acquiring discipline-specific knowledge.

To prepare learners for long-term success in their lives and careers, We are committed to preparing learners for long-term success in their lives and careers by fostering the development of well-rounded graduates through enhancing cross-program coordination, fostering interpersonal skill development and embedding applied and experiential learning opportunities within our curriculum. By exposing our learners to learners to experiences and fostering critical thinking skills, we equip them to become not only experts in their chosen fields, but also adaptable and engaged citizens prepared to thrive in a rapidly changing world. This comprehensive educational approach ensures learners will be well-equipped for their futures, regardless of their chosen paths.

KEY STRATEGIES

Expand educational access

- Develop structure and process for awarding credit for prior learning
- Identify and build alternative pathways to degree completion, including stackable credentials
- Build market- and industry-aligned credit and non-credit professional development offerings
- Diversify delivery modalities and times for offered courses
- Expand program presence and course offerings at K-State Olathe campus

Intentionally coordinate learner recruitment

- Develop a college-wide recruitment strategy that sets clear goals for enrollment, including enrollment for traditional, credential, online and pre-college learner populations
- Develop consistent strategies to communicate the value and return of an HHS degree, credential or academic experience to prospective learners
- Expand high-school applied learning programs
- Build faculty relationships and course/curriculum alignment between institutions for seamless transitions between programs
- By 2030, reach a total enrollment within HHS of 3,200 learners, including 2,521 undergraduates and 679 graduate learners

Equip learners for success

- Create a robust interdisciplinary education experience that includes knowledge of different perspectives guided by professional ethics
- Assess current programs to identify opportunities for cross-program coordination of resources and courses
- Explore the possible creation of school-level core curricula or shared courses with embedded interpersonal skill development and other topics to address immediate workforce needs
- Expand course-embedded applied and experiential learning opportunities for learners
- Implement a consistent approach and structure for learner advising across programs and schools
- Support faculty in developing and implementing best-practice teaching methodologies, including integration of emerging technologies
- Develop staff professional development opportunities, including travel and mini-sabbaticals to peer and aspirational peer institutions

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increased annual learner enrollment
- Increased number of degrees and credentials awarded by type (undergraduate, master's, doctoral, microcredentials and certificates)
- Improved learner placements at graduation – includes job placement and acceptance into post-graduate study programs
- Increased annual learner participation rates in applied learning experiences (internship participation, research participation, etc.)
- Positive response on NISS student success playbook metrics
- Achieve an undergraduate learner retention rate of 88.4% and a graduate learner retention rate of 92.0%



PRIORITY 5:

INFRASTRUCTURE

The College of Health and Human Sciences recognizes the crucial role physical and virtual spaces play in supporting our mission. Well-designed spaces can accommodate our growth while actively enabling and reinforcing the collaborative structures and culture we are committed to building.

This section outlines a two-pronged approach to optimizing our infrastructure. First, we will focus on maximizing the utilization of our existing resources through implementing flexible office plans, co-locating educators from across disciplines and centralizing administrative functions. These changes will foster interaction and collaboration across the college.

Second, we acknowledge the need for long-term growth. We are committed to exploring opportunities for expanding HHS space, whether through renovation of existing structures or new construction. Regardless of the path chosen, any new or renovated space will prioritize flexibility, accessibility and innovation. We envision environments that encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, facilitate the implementation of innovative teaching methods and promote the well-being of learners, faculty and staff. Through these strategic investments in infrastructure, we aim to create a physical environment that reflects and reinforces our commitment to collaboration and excellence, ultimately supporting the college's mission and future growth initiatives.

KEY STRATEGIES

Improve current utilization of space and infrastructure

- Develop plan for flexible or rotational office space utilization
- Identify and build out space for co-location of programs
- Build central location for all administrative functions that serves as a unified point of service for learners, faculty and staff
- Develop processes for faculty-led technology integration into current and future classrooms
- Expand physical and programmatic footprint at K-State Olathe

Initiate process for expanding available space

- Assess opportunities for the build out of additional space within Justin Hall or other buildings occupied by HHS faculty and staff vs. new construction
- Launch comprehensive capital campaign to develop high quality multidisciplinary teaching and clinical space for future health professional programs
- Ensure additional or renovated space is developed with consideration towards:
 - » Flexible, accessible learning spaces of varying sizes and formats (ADA compliant, technology-enabled)
 - » Innovative, best-practice teaching spaces (e.g., simulation center)
 - » Shared laboratories for cross-unit collaboration
 - » Interdisciplinary wellness center

OUTCOME MEASURES

- Increased percent of space reallocated
- Increased percent of flexible space square footage
- Improved HHS space utilization across campus
- Increased square footage for funded projects
- Development of dedicated applied learning spaces
- Increased total cumulative donor dollars towards infrastructure revitalization
- Increased total cumulative investment in facilities (renovations and new construction)

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