

SUMMER 2021

FOCUS

In a world focused on things, we focus first on people



KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

College of Health and
Human Sciences

Spring 2021 Outstanding Seniors

Leadership Award | This award is given to an individual who has exhibited excellence in leadership. Students will be recognized for their contributions to the campus, college, program, and professional organizations.

Lindsay Augustine <i>Athletic Training</i>	Shaelyn Ward <i>Kinesiology</i>	Martha Jo Hill <i>Apparel and Textiles</i>	Lauren Herbster <i>Communication Sciences and Disorders</i>	Garrett Jackson <i>Personal Financial Planning</i>
Maggie Alyward <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Melinda Moon <i>Dietetics</i>	Anna Spencer <i>Nutrition and Health</i>	Anna Capps <i>Nutritional Sciences</i>	Brooke Errington <i>General Human Ecology</i>
Antonio Fenton <i>Hospitality Management</i>				

Engagement Award | This award is given to a graduating senior who has made exemplary contributions that impact the well-being of the community or individuals in the community.

Leah Willhite <i>Kinesiology</i>	Chloe Gaug <i>Communication Sciences and Disorders</i>	Kelsey Siemers <i>Early Childhood Education</i>	Morgan Elliott <i>Human Development and Family Science</i>	Delaney Johnson <i>Personal Financial Planning</i>
Claire Hermann <i>Personal Financial Planning</i>	Brooke Baird <i>Dietetics</i>	Brooklyn Celebron <i>Dietetics</i>	Lauren Williams <i>Dietetics</i>	Kaci McNally <i>Nutrition and Health</i>
Katlyne Rundle <i>Family and Consumer Sciences Education</i>				

Research/Creativity Award | This award is given to a graduating senior whose research or creative activity has made a significant contribution to their field of study.

Nick Dombrowski <i>Athletic Training</i>	Alyssa Hammond <i>Kinesiology</i>	Jaxson Metzler <i>Apparel and Textiles</i>	Gracie Key <i>Apparel and Textiles</i>
Olivia Baus <i>Communication Sciences and Disorders</i>	Lindy Maska <i>Human Development and Family Science</i>	Andrea Fuhrman <i>Hospitality Management</i>	Gina Reyes <i>Nutritional Sciences</i>

Table Of Contents



What's Inside

[Dean B's Final Message](#)

[New Leadership](#)

[In Her Words](#)

[Nearing the End](#)

[Thank You, Gayle](#)

[Legacy of Learning](#)

[Creating In The Kitchen](#)

[Around The College](#)



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FOCUS Magazine is published twice a year by the College of Health and Human Sciences. This edition was coordinated, written and designed by communications and events coordinator, Chelsi Medved. The photography is from private collections, the Royal Purple Yearbook and the Division of Communications and Marketing Photo Services. Unauthorized use is prohibited. © 2021.



Final Message From Dean B



of Health and Human Sciences and Kansas State University are both entities that I care deeply about. However, even with my departure, I will always remain connected through the lifelong friendships I have made and through my commitment to the health and human sciences students through established scholarships.

I also take pride in knowing all three of my children have degrees from this university. The College of Health and Human Sciences and Kansas State University will continue to be a special place to me.

As I complete my eighth year as dean, this will be the last time I have the privilege of providing an introductory greeting in the College of Health and Human Sciences' FOCUS magazine. I will leave Kansas State University in July 2021 to continue to the next phase of my career.

It has been an honor of a lifetime to serve as the dean of this college. The College

When I reflect on my eight years as dean, the college has changed for the better in fundamental and important ways that will pay dividends long into the future.

Since my arrival in 2013, the college has a new name, we have added numerous new degree programs and academic opportunities for students, remodel existing classrooms, studios and laboratories, and acquired additional space. In addition, we completed a successful capital campaign (Thank you to all the wonderful donors!) that allowed us to award over \$1 million in scholarships to our students, which is roughly double the amount in 2013.

These are only a few of the accomplishments over the last eight years. The triumphs would not have been possible without creative, dedicated faculty and the exceptional administrative team that we have been able to assemble in the college during my time at K-State. Through collaborative efforts, our faculty and the administration have been able to create a shared vision around complex issues such as enrollment management, academic administrative structure and new academic programs to advance our mission. However, even with the notable changes that have occurred, the commitment to promote the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through research, education and outreach remains.

I am proud that in a world focused on things, the college continues to focus first on people.

While we are proud of many notable accomplishments, the college has not paused to admire the progress. We continue to be leaders on campus in advancing K-State. In spite of significant challenges at the university level, enrollment trends in our programs continue in a positive direction. We are well positioned to thrive under the new university budget model, and to continue developing innovative and exciting new academic offerings. There is tremendous positive momentum in the college at this time. The best is yet to come.

In closing I would like to thank all the alumni, friends, students, faculty and staff associated with the College of Health and Human Sciences for all the support you have provided me during my tenure as dean. I will be forever grateful for the hospitality that you have shown me and my family during my time at K-State.

John Buchwalter

UNDER HIS Tenure

College Name Change

Addition of Three Undergraduate Programs

Addition of Three Graduate Programs

Capital Campaign Completion

Acquisition of Mary and Carl Ice Hall

Increased Scholarship Dollars by \$500,000

Creation of the Physician Assistant Program

Development of the K-State & Wichita State Pathway to Nursing Program

Multiple Facility Upgrades

Development of the Professional Mentoring Program

Creation, Reorganization and Renaming of Multiple Departments

New Leadership

This summer, the college will welcome two new faces to the administrative team with a new interim dean and a new associate dean for research and graduate studies. Get to know both of these new college leaders.

Craig Harms

Interim Dean

Craig Harms was appointed to the position of interim dean by Charles Taber, provost and executive vice president, following an internal search. Harms will serve while a national search is conducted to fill the deanship. The search is expected to begin in late August or early September, with a permanent dean hired by spring 2022.

“Dr. Harms has an exceptional record of distinguished academic achievement in research, teaching and leadership, making him well-suited to serve as interim dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences,” Taber said.

As interim dean, Harms will serve as the chief academic and administrative officer of the college. He will be responsible for providing leadership, strategic vision and direction and support for the college, along with inspiring, guiding and facilitating a strong and diverse faculty in the advancement of high-quality teaching, research, service and extension.

“I am honored and excited to be named interim dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences and want to thank Provost Taber and the search committee for this opportunity,” Harms said. “The college has benefited tremendously from the leadership of Dean



John Buckwalter. I look forward to continuing working with our talented faculty, staff, students and alumni to further the mission of our college.”

Harms joined K-State in 1997 as an assistant professor of kinesiology. He was promoted to associate professor in 2001 and to full professor in 2010. He served as associate head of kinesiology from 2013 to 2014 before being named head of the department in 2014. He earned a bachelor’s in biology from Nebraska Wesleyan University, a master’s in exercise physiology from Colorado State University and a doctorate in physiology from Indiana University. He served as a postdoctoral fellow in cardiopulmonary physiology at the University of Wisconsin before joining K-State.

Dr. Harms shared his thoughts with us on assuming this position.

What made you want to take on the interim dean role for the college?

CH: I felt that this was an opportunity for me to use my experience as both a faculty member and administrator

to give back to the college by helping lead during this transition by working with our many talented faculty, staff, and students in meeting our college’s mission.

What part of this role excites you most?

CH: Getting to know the departments and programs in our college better. I am looking forward to better understand the challenges each is experiencing while working together to develop a strategic vision for each of them.

What is one challenge you are excited to take on as interim dean?

CH: One continuing challenge is with enrollment. While we have done a good job with this already, I look forward to continuing to explore and develop strategies to market our degrees and programs to meet the needs and interests of our current and future students.

What will success look like to you in this role?

CH: For me, success will be knowing that I made the effort to do the best of which I am capable, and that the college is well positioned for our next Dean.



Brad Behnke

Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies



Brad Behnke was named the new associate dean for research and graduate studies. Behnke will succeed Michelle Toews who will join the faculty in the Department of Applied Human Sciences.

Behnke, professor of physiology in the Department of Kinesiology and a member of the Johnson Cancer Research Center, brings years of research experience to the position from multiple institutions, including the University of Florida, Texas A&M University, and West Virginia University School of Medicine. His current research focuses on areas of cardiovascular function, including aging, muscle disuse (spaceflight and mechanical ventilation), and cancer, and applies novel interventions to increase the efficacy of clinical treatments (e.g. radiation or chemotherapy). He also has a long history working with graduate students having mentored seven doctoral researchers, two post-doctoral fellows, nine master's candidates, and nine undergraduate researchers.

Outside of research and academics, Behnke is an active faculty member on campus having served on over 20 departmental, college, and university committees since he arrived in 2014. In 2016, he was elected chair of the College of Human Ecology's (now Health and Human Sciences) Faculty Council. During his time as chair, the council organized and wrote bylaws for a new, more focused committee, revised the charge and bylaws of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee, organized and led numerous college meetings to present data, discuss, vote and implement the college name change, which took effect in 2019.

We talked with Dr. Behnke to learn more about his new position and what he is looking forward to in his new role.



What are you most excited about in this position?

BB: Fostering collaborations and the tremendous potential for growth in research and discovery in our college.

What's one challenge you are looking forward to tackling in this position?

BB: Really diving into and understanding the diversity of research and creative activities our faculty and staff (and students) undertake. For example, I am very familiar with health-related research and related metrics of productivity. However, that is only one of the many areas expertise of our faculty and staff. Therefore, it will be a challenge, albeit an exciting one, to learn and comprehend the many other areas of scholarship and creative activities and how they contribute to the preeminence of our college.

What hobbies and interests do you have outside of work?

BB: Always trying to learn new skills; Farming/tractor work (hobby; in a minimal capacity), rebuilding old cars, fishing, camping, boating, reading; building stuff for and with my children; anything that really challenges me to grow in some capacity.

What message would you like to share with alumni about our college's research?

BB: We have incredibly diverse programs and expertise in the college, ranging from interior design to health care through cancer therapeutics. The variety of these programs is a tremendous strength, but also a challenge to forge multiunit research collaborations. I think the alumni should be very proud of how our college has adapted over the years to continuously address community and global needs through our diverse research and creative endeavors.



“For individuals who require lifelong nutrition support, RDNs are skilled at helping them get started and problem solve nutrition issues. While we (RDNs) can be supportive and empathize with our clients, we can never fully understand what it is like to be dependent on nutrition support. As an RDN, Juliana will have a unique and valuable role because she will have the additional ability to understand her client’s concerns as well as provide emotional and psychological support, something that is extremely important to achieve best quality of life for her future clients.”

- Linda Yarrow, instructor

In Her Words

Juliana Tamayo is a master’s candidate in nutrition, dietetics, and sensory sciences. She recently shared what motivated her to become a dietitian with Food and Nutrition Magazine. Below is her story.

I’m Latina, born and raised in Colombia. I have called the United States my home for the last 10 years. Everything changed once I got sick and I remember the day I received my first diagnosis.

I suffer from Crohn’s disease, lupus and postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, among other illnesses, and rely on a feeding tube for my daily nutrition. I owe my team of registered dietitian nutritionists my life. Not only did they believe in me, they also encouraged me. I went from being malnourished and scared to nourished and hopeful. I got a feeding tube — instead of parenteral nutrition — and slowly got my life back.

Even though I had to give up my job as a journalist, the journey into nutrition support gave me a new perspective on what I needed in my future. I decided to pursue a career in dietetics.

Navigating College as a Disabled, Minority Student
Applying to schools when you are disabled and a minority is no easy task. I needed a school that understood my limitations. For instance, that I may need emergency surgery due to a bowel obstruction, or a feeding tube mishap.

I was lucky to find Kansas State University and its Master of Science and Didactic Program in Dietetics distance program. I also had the fortune of finding mentors along the way that understood me. I owe much of my academic successes to Dr. Linda Yarrow, who encourages and guides me in the right direction.

The problem is how hard it was to find this program. Once I did, I still had to make space for myself. Most of my classmates are white and able-bodied. Why aren’t there more disabled students? What about disabled racial minority students? I think this might happen because there aren’t systems in place to help us find

these schools. It took me months of searching. I lost money in applications and hours of talking to advisors. I found a school that worked for me, but not everyone has that luxury.

Digging Deep for Change

Being disabled and Latinx is hard, but it should not stop me from becoming a registered dietitian nutritionist. So, what can we do? I suggest that we first think of what is missing in our schools. Are there resources for minority groups? Are there student organizations minority students can talk to? Begin by questioning those in charge, and they will have no other choice but to hear you. I had the opportunity to find a group of women that are also a minority in the field of dietetics thanks to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ Women’s Health Dietetic Practice Group Diversity Award. They inspired me to talk about these issues and potential solutions. I know I have to focus on the why behind the lack of opportunities and accessibility for disabled minority students. Are schools

unwilling to look at these populations? Are disabled racial minority students not applying to schools because of socioeconomic restraints? Is dietetics perceived as an unapproachable profession in our communities? If we break down the why, we can begin to find solutions.



Finally, I want to finish off by saying that the who in these situations matters. If I look hard, I can find people with similar problems, and together we could strive to make a place for ourselves. But are we working together to help other minority groups? Do we ourselves have certain prejudices? Fighting the fight for inclusion and representation means

fighting it together.

Yes, I am disabled. Yes, I am Latinx and an immigrant. I’m also a future RDN. And I am not alone. The academic structure that I feel left us behind will change, but it requires work, and it needs our voices of advocacy.

Nearing The End

While the pandemic was hard for everyone at K-State, we knew the biggest adjustments would come from our incoming first-year students who were experiencing college for the first time. We visited with Madison Beemiller and Gavin Heger, both first-year students in hospitality, to hear about their experiences during the 2020 school year.

How was it coming to K-State after finishing out high school online?

MB: I was a little hesitant to come to campus during a pandemic because I was nervous it would be just like how high school was when we went virtual, but I have enjoyed it due to making friends and being able to go to some in-person classes.

GH: After finishing out my senior year of high school, I knew transitioning into college was going to be new and different. However, I don't think anyone could have planned to have the COVID-19 conditions their freshman year attending college. Regardless, I did my best to still make my freshman experience as normal as possible!

Do you feel like you got some "normal" college experience this year? If you had expectations for what to expect your first year of college during a pandemic, were your expectations met?

GH: This year, I felt I had a somewhat normal experience, though I did not set my expectations too high, because I knew it was going to be hard for everyone. Two expectations I did have were to feel welcomed by K-State, as well as start to adapt to a college environment. Fortunately, I can say my expectations were met when it came to feeling welcomed, and I can thank the Department of Hospitality Management for that!

MB: I felt that I got some normal college experiences but not all. I still got to go to some in-person classes. I also got to partake in some on campus activities including some of the Hospitality Management Club meetings and activities. I did not have high expectations for my first year of college and I definitely thought that I would



get sent home due to COVID in the first few months, so my expectations were exceeded.

How did you work to connect with your peers when you arrived on campus?

GH: During my first semester, I worked as an Ahearn Fund Hospitality team member, which turned out to be such an amazing experience! I had the opportunity to help manage and create connections with suite holders during the football games here at K-State. As the second semester kicked off, I was selected to be a Hospitality Management Ambassador for the department which has allowed me to interact with prospective students looking to join the department! I also had the pleasure of participating in the development and execution of the 2021 Annual Travel and Dining Auction. I look forward to transitioning into next fall semester and starting my new job at the Alumni Center for Kansas State University and building new connections!

MB: I started by trying to find friends in the dorm. I made a pretty good group of friends in the dorm. I also had some family friends that were up here for school that I was able to count on. Since I had a few in person classes, I was also able to make some friends within the major and also became an ambassador for the department. This summer, I will be interning with Along Came Abby with three other students that I hope to make a connection with.

With the prediction of restrictions for COVID lifting for the fall semester, what is one thing you are looking forward to seeing change? What is one thing that was done during COVID that you would be ok with staying for the future?

MB: I am hoping to be able to be in class with all of my classmates with the COVID restrictions being lifted. I would like to see some of the virtual parts of this year stay. I think that being able to Zoom in on days you aren't feeling the best would be nice so students can still hear the days lecture.

GH: The number one thing I am looking forward to seeing a change of next fall is being able to see all the students walking around on campus! I felt that campus has looked so empty, so I am looking forward to interacting more with students next fall. One thing I would be OK with staying for the future is doing our assignments online, rather than handwritten assignments. I felt that getting grades for our assignments and tests were completed in a timely manner, and it also allowed me to be more organized.

Is there anything you learned about yourself during this school year that you think will help you succeed in the future that you may not have learned if it weren't for the COVID changes?

GH: If there was one thing I learned about myself during this pandemic that will help me succeed is the fact that

in person interaction is so important! Due to the fact that social distancing was put in place, and people were forced to become more distant, I still know in my heart that face-to-face interaction is what is most needed. I feel there is a big difference when it comes to interacting with someone via technology, rather than in person, and I think it affected the mental health of a lot of students throughout the nation. I think I could probably speak on behalf of the students and say that we are ready to have some in person interaction again, because it is vital to success.

MB: I learned that I really need to count on myself because I am the only one who can determine how my grades look or what I can accomplish. I also learned that time management is a huge thing that I need to work on.

COVID On Campus

May 17, 2021-

- Individuals who have been fully vaccinated do not need to wear a face covering when outdoors
- University related travel ban is lifted
- Drinking fountains reopen

June 2, 2021-

- Masks are no longer required on campus indoors or outdoors
- Social distancing no longer required

Aug. 1, 2021- Phaseout of COVID protocols

- Classrooms are back to 100% capacity
- Events of any size may resume both indoors and outdoors
- Masks are not required in the classroom



Thank You, Gayle

Dear Gayle,

You are heading to uncharted territory: retirement. Oh, but you are not new to exploring new, untouched land before. In fact, you taunt it; bring it on. “Here be Dragons,” a saying that you impart on your students, is one of your legacies encouraging students to not be afraid of the unknown. Pursuing your Ph.D. later in life, you tackled that challenge with no problem. Then, you took on a leadership position as the director of the Center on Aging as a new assistant faculty member, growing the center by increasing the number of gerontology secondary majors, expanding the distance master’s program, and bringing in new talent and grants. But those are only a part of your talents and accomplishments.

It is in your teaching and mentoring role where your talents truly shine. In your work, you have inspired countless students to pursue work with older adults and pursue their own dreams, whether that be as a designer, in the medical field, or in human services. You are interested in students living up to his or her talents and believing in themselves. You are gifted in noticing special talent, then growing and recruiting

those individuals. The gerontology field is full of former students, now professionals, touched by your influence and now working with older adults. Because of your leadership, those students are now making a difference in the lives of older adults across the country.

As a leader, one of your most profound signatures is vision. You see the larger picture and surround yourself with talent to execute those visions. Gayle, you also truly see people and work to get to know them and what is important to them. This makes you talented in networking and bringing people together for a common purpose. The center has benefited from these collaborations and the development that has resulted.

Above all else, the mark you have left on the Kansas State Center on Aging and all those you have touched in your position is your passion and tenacity. Here is to your next “Here be Dragons” pursuit. We hope to continue to live out that statement here at the center as your legacy.

From all of us in the Center on Aging





Legacy of Learning

Estate gifts from alumna Varena Mechsner support multiple areas of the college.

By: Marisa Larson, KSU Foundation



the college through four gifts: an excellence fund for the college, faculty support, a scholarship for students, and an excellence fund for the Center on Aging.

Vee (Blattner) Mechsner grew up in rural northcentral Kansas and came to Kansas State University to work toward a degree in home economics education. After graduating in 1959, she taught home economics across Kansas, in Florida and ended up in Memphis, Tennessee. Vee returned to Manhattan toward the end of 2019 and immediately reached out to people at K-State to see how she could get involved.

"I asked her if she would be interested in serving as a mentor to a student in my senior seminar course," said Gayle Doll, director of the Center on Aging. "She enthusiastically said yes. Remarkably, she ended up being matched with a student that was from her same county in rural northern Kansas. This was a purely serendipitous pairing, and they were more than delighted with each other's company."

Vee's financial gift to the center will continue to benefit students and seniors in the community. "The excellence fund from Vee will allow us to offer extracurricular, intergenerational activities to our students, such as sky-diving, zip-lining, attending sporting events and a tour of older adult housing and living opportunities," Doll said. "It's opportunities like these that students recall as being the highlight of their college careers and

sometimes the turning point that makes them commit to working with older adults."

Creating a scholarship is another way Vee continues to help students. "Scholarships for the College of Health and Human Sciences students are invaluable. The scholarship support allows our students to participate in transformational experiences such as research, professional development, education abroad, professional mentoring and internships," said Shawna Jordan, assistant dean. "These opportunities are vital for our students as they prepare for their future careers. The support from our generous donors allows the students to continue in their degree programs while assisting to lessen the financial burden. Besides helping to recruit new students to K-State, scholarships allow us to provide support for the continuing students in their pursuit of a diploma. We are thankful for the generous gifts of our donors who give back to assist all of our students."

Faculty, as well as students, need support and investment in their professional development. Acknowledging this, Vee created a faculty award for the college. "Faculty support has been one of my priorities since I became dean," said Dean John Buckwalter. "We need to support faculty, who often turn around and support students

with their awards. It's nice to have a way to support faculty. With the environment of decreased state funding, being able to reward faculty can be a difference maker in recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty."

Vee's fourth gift to the college, the excellence fund, provides the opportunity for the dean of the college to be financially nimble. "The power of excellence funds is in their flexibility," Buckwalter said. "Something, like what we saw with COVID-19, can create unknown situations where these funds can help. And the unknowns aren't always bad. Excellence funds can provide seed funding to support innovative ideas and research. They help us be more nimble and responsive. It's a powerful statement when a donor trusts an institution to use excellence funds wisely."

Vee spent her life teaching and mentoring. With her estate gifts to the college, that legacy lives on.

Creating In The Kitchen

When the annual Travel and Dining Auction, or TDA, was canceled due to the pandemic, it wasn't only the auction planning team that had to adjust. Students in the hospitality management department's food and beverage capstone course also missed out on an opportunity to prepare food and beverage for a large event.

Junhee Kwon, professor for the class, had to get creative to provide the students a great hands-on learning opportunity. "It was the first time I taught the capstone class," she said. "Typically, capstone students prepared food for the TDA, but since we could not do that this year, I thought having students experience from concept

development to end of production accounting process will teach them the micro-world of the restaurant industry."

And that is how the HM Pop-Up restaurants came to life. Eleven seniors had the opportunity to manage a commercial restaurant as a part of their class. Each week students worked in teams to develop their own restaurant concept, recipes, menus and detailed operational plans.

Eight restaurants were hosted through the spring semester. Themes included: Korean cuisine; vegan cuisine; bbq; Mediterranean cuisine; Philipino cuisine; Brazilian cuisine; and Spanish tapas.

Through this project, students gained experience in leadership, budgeting and cost controls, promotion and marketing, staffing, controlling, service management and financial analysis of their restaurant operation.

"Each week it was fun to learn how to cook a new cuisine and how to run service in different ways," said Antonio Fenton, senior in the capstone course.

"I've learned a lot about planning menus and the cost of food," added Luke Lewis. "It's been a great learning experience."



News From Around The College

Jennifer Miller selected to lead public health program



Following a national search, a K-Stater has been selected to lead the new Bachelor of Science in public health program being offered by the Department of Kinesiology in the College of Health and Human Sciences.

Jennifer Miller will serve as the inaugural program director. “We are

excited that Jennifer will be joining our department and directing our new public health degree,” said department head Craig Harms. “Jennifer has a strong foundation in public health through her education and work experience which will be beneficial for students interested in a public health career and in coordinating our efforts to gain accreditation for this degree”.

Miller brings years of experience to the position. Since 2019, she has served as the director for health promotion at Lafene Health Center on K-State’s campus. In this role she oversaw the health and well-being outreach efforts of Lafene Health Center including working on the Every Wildcat a WellCat campaign. She also oversaw contact tracing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Miller also brings a strong background in teaching to the position, having taught for more than 10 years at both the University of North Texas Health Science Center and K-State.

Active in her field, Miller is a member of multiple national organizations. She is a governing councilor for the American Public Health Association, sexual and reproductive section and is the co-chair for the sexuality taskforce, sexual and reproductive health section. She is a board member for the Flint Hills Wellness Coalition and serves as the member-at-large representative for Kansas for the Central College Health Association. Miller is also a reviewer for the Journal of American College Health and is a member of the American College Health Association, Society for the Study of Social Problems, Kansas Public Health Association, and the Riley County Public Health Advisory Council.

“I am very excited to be joining the kinesiology department and to have the opportunity to lead the Bachelor of Science in public health program,” said Miller. “Public health is my passion and I look forward to the opportunity to share that passion with students and help them build a strong foundation for their future career endeavors.”

Miller has a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Oklahoma State University and a master’s degree in sociology from K-State. She received her Doctor of Public Health Practice, or DrPH, degree from the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

Research

- Emily Oertling, *apparel and textiles*
- Shelby Astle, *applied family science*
- Brooke Kielholtz, *couple and family therapy*
- Katie St. Jacques, *dietetics*
- Soomin Kim, *early childhood education*
- Juhwan Lim, *hospitality administration*
- Korynee Rollins, *kinesiology*
- Sarah Cox, *nutrition*
- Matt Sommer, *personal financial planning*
- Melitza Ramirez, *public health*
- Congcong Zhang, *sensory analysis and consumer behavior*

Teaching

- Nadeeshani Ratnayaka, *apparel and textiles*
- Renee Wilkins-Clark, *applied family science*
- Sydney Pater, *communication sciences and disorders*
- Kara Langin, *couple and family therapy*
- Ingrid Lindal, *early childhood education*
- Hasan Birinci, *hospitality administration*
- Kiana Schulze, *kinesiology*
- Miriam Avila, *public health*
- Grace Deuble, *sensory analysis and consumer behavior*

Overall Outstanding Graduate Student

- McKenzie Zimmerman, *Department of Applied Human Sciences*
- Juhwan Lim, *Department of Hospitality Management*
- Nadeeshani Ratnayaka, *Department of Interior Design and Fashion Studies*
- Trevor Steele, *Department of Food, Nutrition, Dietetics and Health*
- Dryden Baumfalk, *Department of Kinesiology*
- Jodi Lonker, *Department of Personal Financial Planning*

Engagement/Outreach

- McKenzie Zimmerman, *applied family science*
- Emily Brueseke, *communication sciences and disorders*
- Lorin Kelly, *couple and family therapy*
- Sarah Bowman, *early childhood education*
- Anthony Fink, *hospitality administration*
- Victor Andrews, *kinesiology*
- Anna Biggins, *nutrition*
- Renee Earwood, *personal financial planning*

Leadership

- Lati Yeargin, *applied family science*
- Jacey Grogan, *communication sciences and disorder*
- Carmen Gray, *couple and family therapy*
- Angela Meyers-Purkiss, *early childhood education*
- Justin Deblauw, *kinesiology*
- Alissa Towsley, *nutrition*
- Clode Moradi, *personal financial planning*
- Anna Biggins, *public health*
- Gaganpreet Singh, *sensory analysis and consumer behavior*

2021 Outstanding Graduate Students

Erin Yelland named interim director of K-State Center on Aging



Erin Yelland has been appointed the interim director for the K-State Center on Aging following an internal search. Her appointment will take effect May 30 following the retirement of current director, Gayle Doll.

Mark Haub, search committee chair, believes Yelland will be able to maintain

the center’s excellence and begin the process of adapting to new challenges the center may face. “Erin knows the ins and outs of aging and gerontology issues through her work in K-State Research and Extension. She is well aware of factors affecting older Kansans and their caregivers, along with the new pressures facing higher education administrators,” he said.

Yelland is an associate professor and Extension specialist in adult development and aging in the Department of Applied Human Sciences in the College of Health and Human Sciences. Her work is centered on health and well-being across the lifespan to promote optimal aging. Specifically, she has expertise in the social determinants of health; program development, implementation and evaluation; policy, systems, and environmental change; and sexual health in older adulthood. During her tenure at K-State, Yelland has been designated a University Civic Engagement fellow and is currently serving as a national eXtension fellow in health and wellness and an associate editor of the Journal of Extension.

She holds a bachelor’s degree in youth, adult and family services from Purdue University and a doctorate in family science from the University of Kentucky. She also holds a graduate certificate in gerontology and is a Certified Family Life Educator.

“I am honored to be the interim director and represent the center’s work moving forward,” said Yelland. “Because of the drastically aging population in the U.S., the Center on Aging plays a critical role in the university, college, and community. There is a strong need to prepare students to work with older adults in a variety of capacities, produce research that enhances the field, and meaningfully engage with communities and partners; I look forward to contributing to the ongoing success of the center in these areas.”

The K-State Center on Aging is housed in the College of Health and Human Sciences and is home to the gerontology academic program, which includes a secondary major and minor. Gerontology is the multidisciplinary study of aging processes and individuals as they grow through later life. By 2035, the older adult population is projected to outnumber children for the first time in history, which means at some point, everyone will work with older adults in some capacity.

Along with the academic program, the center also coordinates and develops educational and training programs in aging, stimulates gerontology research, coordinates outreach activities and serves as a referral center for information on aging resources in Kansas.

Konza Student Table passes 10,000-meals-served threshold

By: 1350KMAN

The Konza Student Table has officially served over 10,000 meals to K-State students and their families.

The organization began last September as a way to fight hunger among Manhattan’s college-student population. Ericka Bauer, a K-State hospitality management instructor who is in charge of the meals the Konza Student Table provides, credits the success to the nutritious food being served.

“We offer a variety of meals,” Bauer said. “I have yet to repeat an item that we have served and I try to maintain it towards the international component of our campus.” Despite the accomplishment, Bauer says she has mixed feelings about meeting such a threshold.

“I’m very happy that we’re able to fill a certain void, but then I’m also sad because the void is there,” Bauer said. According to Bauer, the Konza Student Table serves between 400 and 600 students per week.

Click the video below to see a recent interview Bauer did with KSNT news regarding the Konza Student Table.



Yarrow earns Commerce Bank and W.T. Kemper Foundation award for undergraduate teaching



Excellence in teaching is earning four Kansas State University faculty members the 2021 Commerce Bank and W.T. Kemper Foundation Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award.

This year’s recipients are Kevin Donnelly, professor of agronomy; Amelia Hicks, associate professor of philosophy; Nicole Meritt, instructor of special education, counseling and student affairs; and Linda Yarrow, instructor of food, nutrition, dietetics and health. They will each receive a \$2,500 honorarium from Commerce Bancshares Foundation and the W.T. Kemper Foundation.

“Commerce Bank and the W.T. Kemper Foundation are proud to continue our more than quarter-century tradition of honoring exceptional teaching at Kansas State University,” said Shawn Drew, market president and CEO of Commerce Bank, Manhattan. “Our congratulations to this year’s winners and their outstanding work in educating K-State students.”

All four of this year’s winners found ways to be effective teachers despite the challenges caused by the pandemic.

To Yarrow, being an effective teacher means getting to know her students and developing relationships with them, something that’s easier to do when you can banter before, during and after class. But when her courses had to shift to Zoom, Yarrow found she and her students were holding back.

“To overcome this, I worked on getting to know students in optional Zoom sessions outside of the regular class time,” Yarrow said. “I also reached out to students in emails and encouraged them to share what was going on in their lives. Finally, I shared a lot of my experiences, both personal and professional, with the hope that it would help students become comfortable doing the same thing with me.”

Yarrow teaches Clinical Nutrition I and Clinical Nutrition 2 for both on-campus and distance learners. She also is on the K-State Faculty Exchange for Teaching, a committee of colleagues from each college on the Manhattan and Polytechnic campuses that creates, promotes and implements professional development opportunities for faculty and graduate students to enhance teaching and learning at K-State.

Read about the other award recipients in the [official university news release](#).

Three-peat: fashion design students make their third appearance at Kansas City Fashion Week

Gracie Key and Jaxson Metzler are no strangers to the Kansas City runway. For the third year, the seniors in the fashion studies program will be showcasing their collections during this year’s Kansas City Fashion Week, or KCFW, which will air virtual runway shows April 29 through May 1.



Key, originally from Louisburg, owns Gracie Key which strives to empower women through affordable and sustainable designer fashion. Her brand’s mission is to provide confidence for women to express their individuality while encouraging sustainable practices along the way.

During this year’s KCJW, Key will debut her collection, “The Phenomenal Feminine,” which is a combination of a 13-piece fashion collection as well as a variety of art gallery pieces that represent the authentic, unstoppable and radiant woman.

Key describes herself as both a fashion designer and an artist. “I take very different approaches to creating both works and until now, have separated both creative paths,” she said. “In my artwork, I create along the way. I find the meaning of the piece with every brush stroke. With my fashion designs, I set up very strict guidelines for theme and inspiration before I even touch my sketch pad to ensure a cohesive collection.

“As I set out to design this collection, I decided to take a more artistic approach by designing without a fully constructed meaning. I began with knowing what design elements I wanted to incorporate: volume, sparkles, floral print, a general color scheme, and took inspiration from designer Oscar de la Renta. My overarching inspi-

ration came from the allure of luxury and diamonds, and the desire they hold. I got inspiration from the idea of a wearable item that is excitedly captivating, much like a diamond. But the question was, how do I combine all these ideas in an effective way while not specifically knowing exactly where I want the collection to go? So, I treated it like an art piece. I designed 13 looks, with my broad ideas in mind. But as I designed, I started to establish a disco/retro style while being mindful and attentive to my thought process along the way. Every piece was crafted to embrace feminism and individuality. I wanted my pieces to be enjoyed by all, whether they simply enjoy looking at them or find empowerment while wearing them. I found the purpose is to be empowering through embracing femininity and fantasy to create a beautifully confident look.”

Along with designing to empower women, Key also looks to have her designs make less of an impact on the environment by practicing sustainable designing. While creating her fashion collection, she was faced with realization of the waste she was creating and set out to use the waste in a meaningful way. “I was practicing sustainability through saving large scraps and using thrifted fabrics, but I was still saddened by the amount of waste I was creating,” she said.

“I really enjoyed thinking of my collection as art, because honestly, women’s bodies should be treated like works of art. So, I decided to save all the fabric scraps to create art pieces that go along with my collection. I created a gallery of pieces that correspond with empowerment, playfulness, and an alluring style.

The creation of these pieces played a large role in discovering the name and meaning of my collection. Therefore, “The Phenomenal Feminine” was born. Combining my interests for art and fashion has led me to create what I consider to be my best work so far. I hope that others find empowerment and inspiration within my pieces and remember that they are beautiful, capable, and most of all, a work of art.”

Originally from Minneapolis, Metzler, who owns Jaxson Wyatt, focuses on creating more environmentally friendly fashion that empowers ALL women. He uses

deadstock and thrifted fabrics and using mostly natural fibers. Manmade fibers are occasionally used, but they are either bought secondhand, or made from recycled materials.



His 2021 spring collection, Ad Astra Per Aspera, is a love letter to his life growing up on a farm in rural Kansas, a place that he will always call home. “The family farm holds a special place in my heart, as I am the fifth generation to grow up in the small and humble white house that stands atop the hill overlooking the rest of the farm,” said Metzler. “This house is like a quilt. Built by hands of my ancestors to provide shelter but also for a place of comfort. Quilts also have a rich history in the culture of rural Kansas and will always remind us of the stories of the people who came before us.”

Kevin L. Sauer Becomes 2021-2022 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics president



Registered dietitian nutritionist Kevin L. Sauer, professor in the department of food, nutrition, dietetics and health at Kansas State University and co-director of the national Center for Food Safety Research in Child Nutrition Programs, began his one-year term on June 1 as

the 2021-2022 President of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals.

“Achieving positive change is a collective effort, requiring a capacity among diverse individuals and groups to think strategically, raise critical questions and advance effective, efficient solutions. Earlier this year, the Academy’s Board of Directors approved a revitalized Strategic Plan to prioritize programs and initiatives in areas where the Academy will focus efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving our vision and mission,” Sauer said.

“Four new overarching, organization-wide goals that address inclusion, diversity, equity and access, known as IDEA, have been incorporated into the Strategic Plan. The goals will form the foundation of an IDEA action plan. The Board empowered the Academy’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee to make recommendations to support this important work,” Sauer said.

“As the global leaders in improving and safeguarding the nutritional health of all people, we continue to be tireless advocates for universal access to the lifesaving benefits everyone can obtain by working with registered dietitian nutritionists, especially in the prevention and treatment of common and costly chronic diseases,” Sauer said.

Read the [full announcement](#) on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website.

Representing more than 112,000 credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation’s health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the Academy at www.eatright.org.

Kansas Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research hires inaugural director



Following a national search, Jennifer Francois has been named the inaugural director of the Kansas Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research.

The Kansas Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research, or KIECER, is a strategic partnership between the College of Health and Human Sciences and the Division of Student Life that launched in summer 2020. Under the institute, academics and service are combined to provide high-quality affordable childcare and education to the K-State and Manhattan communities as well as best practices and current research to all early childhood educators.

“We are excited to have Jennifer as the inaugural director of KIECER because of her vision for the institute and because of her extensive background in early childhood development, education, special education and administration,” said Bronwyn Fees, associate dean and search committee chair. “She brings a comprehensive view of the institute and all the stakeholders that are impacted by professional practice in early childhood education.”

Francois is currently an assistant professor in K-State’s early childhood education program in the College of

Health and Human Sciences. She has been with the program since 2015. Along with teaching, Francois dedicates time to her research, which focuses on personnel preparation in early intervention and early childhood special education and language acquisition.

Along with her academic background, Francois has an extensive and diverse background in early childhood settings. Her previous work experience includes serving as program coordinator for an early care and education and preschool intervention program in Wichita, Kansas, for nine years. In this role, Francois had oversight of early care and education programming for children with and without disabilities ages birth through age 5, as well as oversight of community-based programming serving preschool children with disabilities.

Francois is also involved in state organizations focused on early childhood education. She serves on the board of the Kansas Division for Early Childhood and the Riley County Interagency Coordinating Council. In 2020, she was selected to represent the state of Kansas as a Division for Early Childhood’s Recommended Practices Ambassador.

“I am honored to be the inaugural director of the Kansas Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research,” said Francois. “I look forward to engaging with local, state and national stakeholders to build an institute that is innovative, collaborative and leads the field in issues surrounding early childhood education and development.”

Under Francois’ direction, the KIECER will serve three areas of early childhood education: service delivery, research and outreach and engagement. Her goal will be for the KIECER to be a hub for early childhood education best practices and pedagogy.

More information on the Kansas Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research can be found on the [institute’s website](#).

Hail! Hail! Hail! Alma Mater.

For the first time since 2019, we were able to walk graduates across the stage! Congratulations to all the 2020 and 2021 graduates!





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