

February 6, 2018

The Honorable Kevin Jones  
Chairman House Higher Education Budget Committee  
151-South, Kansas State Capitol  
300 SW 10th Ave.  
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairman Jones and Members of the House Higher Education Budget Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in lieu of in-person testimony to you, Mr. Chair, and Members of the Higher Education Budget Committee.

Improving the lives of our citizens and building the economic prosperity of Kansas continues to be a priority at Kansas State University. The Association for Public and Land-grant Universities recently named K-State the winner of a national award for extraordinary economic engagement efforts. The Innovation Award was given to K-State in recognition of outstanding work in technology transfer, entrepreneurship, and business development with our public and private sector partners across the state. Through the efforts of our faculty, staff, and students, we continue to build economic partnerships across the region, while our research and education programs add value to the people and the industries of our state. We strongly believe that a robust higher education system with our State's continued investment is a critical factor in our job to produce a well-prepared workforce and a productive citizen.

Recent national data indicates lifetime earnings could be as high as \$1.0 million or more for college and advanced degree holders. A fall 2017 survey of recent K-State graduates reports 69% are employed in Kansas or in the surrounding metro area. *Smart Asset* ranked K-State Number 1 in average starting salary in Kansas for college graduates.

The University fully supports the Kansas Board of Regents' request to restore the balance of the State General Fund allotments totaling \$23.9 million implemented in FY 2017. For K-State, this would restore approximately \$4.8 million in our base operating budget. These funds directly impact the educational, research, and extension activities of the university. Restoration of the allotment is critical for achieving the K-State 2025 visionary plan be recognized nationally as a Top 50 public research university. Moreover, stable State funding is vital for the university to maintain affordable tuition for our students and to fulfill our land-grant mission for access and availability of educational opportunity to all who might benefit. We are particularly mindful of accessibility for Kansas students. K-State continues to be the Number 1 choice for college of Kansas high school graduating seniors.

We appreciate the State's support for faculty and staff salary increases in FY 2018 - the first State-funded salary increases since FY 2009. Unfortunately, even with that support, the net pay for many employees did not increase because benefit rate increases in retirement and health insurance

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costs to employees offset any gains in salary. Year after year, K-State ranks at or near the bottom of our peer institutions when comparing faculty and staff salaries. Continued investment in faculty and staff salaries must remain a priority if we are to attract and retain high quality faculty and staff who deliver value to the education of every student at K-State.

In closing, I want to remind the Committee that I value the State as a partner in higher education in Kansas. At Kansas State University, we are transparent with State dollars; we believe in efficiencies wherever possible; we value the 5,500 Kansas residents who are employed by the university; and we take pride in the 22,795 students who have chosen K-State as the place to spend the time in their career to study and earn a degree.

Thank you, again, for allowing me to tell you the story of Kansas State University. It truly is my honor to serve as President of my alma mater. If I can ever be of assistance to any member of the Higher Education Budget Committee, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Sincerely,



Richard B. Myers  
President

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cc: Dr. Susan Peterson, Chief Government Relations Officer, Kansas State University  
Ms. Shirley Morrow, Kansas Legislative Research Department