

**College Reports on Areas of Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities, and Discovery  
(RSCAD) Strengths – Summary Overview  
June 2014**

**Background**

Kansas State University aspires to become a Top 50 public research university by 2025. *Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities, and Discovery (RSCAD)* is one of seven themes in the K-State 2025 strategic plan with a stated goal to “create a culture of excellence that results in flourishing, sustainable, and widely recognized research, scholarly and creative activities, and discovery in a variety of disciplines and endeavors that benefit society as a whole.”

As the university enhances its reputation as a public research university integrating education, research, and engagement as part of our land-grant mission, it is important to identify and report on strategic areas of RSCAD strengths. Indeed, the need to identify lists of RSCAD strengths has been called for in various reports and plans since 2010, including the [Research Infrastructure Task Force Report](#) (2010), the [K-State 2025 Visionary Plan](#) (2011), the [Research Themes Committee Report](#) (2012), and the Kansas Board of Regents/Council of Research Officers strategic planning (2013).

The Research Themes Committee identified twelve areas of research strengths for the university based on two criteria: the likelihood of attracting support from funding agencies in the future and a strong base of success already established at K-State. The Committee also recommended that the process be extended to include RSCAD areas where criteria other than external funding could be used as a basis for identifying strengths.

As a follow-up to that report, President Schulz and Provost Mason requested that each College identify their RSCAD strengths by May 23, 2014 using a report format designed to answer two simple questions: “What are a College’s areas of RSCAD strengths and why?” The goal was to provide “ready lists” of RSCAD areas of College strengths that could be shared with both internal and external audiences and used in a number of ways to:

- 1) highlight the value and potential of our RSCAD work to external stakeholders, such as the Kansas Board of Regents, legislators, funding agencies, and potential corporate/industry partners;
- 2) promote interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and multi-institutional teaming and collaboration;
- 3) promote outreach to attract and recruit outstanding graduate students, faculty, and staff in our RSCAD areas; and
- 4) assist the new Vice President for Research by providing her with a portfolio of RSCAD strength areas.

**Process**

The guidance and reporting format developed to facilitate the process of identifying College RSCAD strengths was built from discussions at two mini-retreats with the Provost, Vice President for Research, Deans and Associate Deans for Research during the spring and fall 2013 and a report to the Deans from Associate Deans Ernie Minton, Noel Schulz, and Linda Thurston in December 2013. A reporting approach was developed to provide consistency but also maintain flexibility for Colleges to determine their

strengths, recognizing that one size does not fit all. Guidance and a set of slides explaining the background and purpose of the reporting effort were provided to the Deans in February 2014.

The guidance includes a reporting template focusing on the questions of “what are a College’s RSCAD strengths and why”. The guidance also includes twenty criteria to be considered as a basis for identifying a RSCAD strength and for explaining why a particular area is considered a strength. Colleges also had the option to add criteria or provide additional narrative explanation and add keywords or “tags” to facilitate searching across the reports. Colleges were asked to use the guidance and reporting template to allow for easy import of the various fields into a database to facilitate producing a variety of reports across all Colleges.

### **Organization of the Report**

Reports were submitted by all colleges except the College of Engineering. Due to the leadership change with a new Dean, the College of Engineering will submit its report in September 2014.

The overall report is organized into five sections.

1. [Summary Overview](#)
2. [Summary Report of Strengths by College](#)
3. [Summary Report of Strengths by Criteria and College](#)
4. [College Reports](#)
5. Appendices
  - a. [Guidance for College Reports on Areas of RSCAD Strength](#)
  - b. [Reporting Template](#)
  - c. [Slide Presentation: Identifying and Reporting Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities, and Discovery \(RSCAD\) College Strengths](#)

Lynn Carlin, Special Assistant to the Provost, and Jan Middendorf, Director of the Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation (OEIE), were asked to coordinate the submission and compilation of the College reports. Sandra Brase and Joel Wallace (OEIE) and Janelle Corkill (Communications and Marketing) assisted in the compilation and publication of this online report. For further information or questions about this report, please contact Lynn Carlin at [lcarlin@ksu.edu](mailto:lcarlin@ksu.edu).