Portion of Hale Library to open for Fall classes

Renovations continue on Kansas State University's Hale Library following a devastating fire on May 22, 2018. Hale Library will reopen in phases, with the first floor Dave and Ellie Everitt Learning Commons opening for students to utilize when the Fall semester begins on August 26, 2019. The new space will be filled with collaborative seating arrangements and technology-equipped, reservable study rooms, which was a top request from K-State students.

It is estimated the entire renovation will be complete by the end of 2020.

More in-depth information about the vision for rebuilding and behind-the-scenes photos is available via the Libraries' blog, Hale Library: The Next Chapter, at blogs.k-state.edu/hale.

Kansas State University partners with Rutgers University to expand the Policy Impact Research Consortium

Reducing hunger and poverty through agriculture requires a vast array of systems and approaches - and experts who review and share their work on the policies that govern them.

Kansas State University experts recently joined a collaborative effort to organize and share such policy analyses.

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Sustainable Intensification (SIIL), based at K-State and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has joined with Rutgers University to strengthen the activities of its Feed the Future Policy Research Consortium.

The consortium, which was initially formed at Rutgers in 2014, brings together leading experts in agricultural development policy from multiple U.S.-based institutions and selected Feed the Future focus countries, to conduct a series of impact studies related to agricultural and food security policy and to be a forum for independent and innovative research on policy analysis.

The Policy Research Consortium will support USAID's Global Food Security Strategy objectives through contributions to the improvement of policy approaches and outcomes. The consortium is a welcome addition to an already broad and diverse SIIL program portfolio and it will help link together resources from a range of projects to help create sustainable strategies for future work.

Vara Prasad, Kansas State University Distinguished Professor and SIIL director, said, "It is clear from past experiences working on the ground in the consortium's target countries that you may have the best technologies available to you, but without appropriate policies and effective implementation of those policies to create enabling environment, it is very hard to scale up the innovations to larger geographical areas. This can have a direct impact on food and nutritional security in those areas, and affect those most in need of assistance."

Biology professor receives $1.9 million grant from National Institutes of Health to study vaccinia virus

Zhilong Yang, an assistant professor in the Division of Biology, is the principal investigator on a new, nearly $1.9 million grant from the National Institutes of Health. The five-year project will study how vaccinia virus - a member of the poxvirus family - produces its proteins. This award is from the Research Project Grant Program, usually referred to as R01, and is considered the bread and butter grant of the NIH for biomedical researchers.
The NIH has continuously supported Yang's research on vaccinia virus through multiple awards in the past five years, when he opened his laboratory at K-State, including a Pathway to Independence award, an Exploratory/Developmental grant award and a Centers for Biomedical Research Excellence project, in addition to the R01 award. Yang's group has made a series of remarkable discoveries on this topic.

Vaccinia virus was used as the vaccine to eradicate smallpox, one of the deadliest infectious diseases in human history. Both vaccinia virus and variola virus, the latter is the causative agent of smallpox, belong to a large family of virus called poxvirus. Although smallpox was eradicated 40 years ago, many members of poxviruses currently cause significant public health issues in humans and economically important animals. There is also a concern that smallpox may arise from unknown stocks or other means.

But poxviruses do not always cause harm. In fact, many poxviruses, including the vaccinia virus that Yang is studying, can be used to fight other human and animal diseases. A number of currently used veterinary vaccines are generated based on vaccinia virus.

Vaccinia virus, along with many other poxviruses, also has tremendous potential in fighting cancers, because it can selectively kill tumor cells. By engineering the virus to be less harmful to healthy tissues but to kill tumors more efficiently, scientists are developing highly promising new cancer therapeutics.

This grant will help Yang and his colleagues in his laboratory to answer a fundamental question: How does vaccinia virus produce viral proteins? This is an important question to understand how the virus amplifies itself, as proteins are building blocks to make viral particles. Interestingly, viruses do not have the machinery to make proteins by themselves. Instead, they must use their hosts' protein-making machinery. This makes the question even more intriguing: How does the virus redirect the host protein-making machinery to produce viral proteins after infection?

Answers to this fundamental question could provide new strategies to block poxvirus infection and improve the efficacy of poxviruses used in vaccine development and cancer therapy.

High schoolers solidify decision to become teachers at College of Education academy

A program offered by the Kansas State University College of Education is helping high school students from across Kansas prepare for careers as teachers.

The Kansas Advanced Teacher Academy started as a pilot program in 2018 and this year attracted 25 students in grades 10-12 to Kansas State University's Manhattan campus in June for a six-day immersion program. The academy is designed to foster professional growth in high school students planning to pursue a bachelor's degree in education. The program included sessions with educators, observing current Kansas State University education majors as teachers in hands-on classes as part of the College of Education's Summer STEM Institute, and recreational activities to build comradery.

The College of Education is the largest producer of teachers in Kansas.

"The Kansas Advanced Teacher Academy is the College of Education's concerted effort to bring quality career exploration to any student in Kansas who is interested in teaching," said Todd Goodson, professor

Deere & Company funds precision planting project with university research team

Development of a precision planting system, offering producers the ability to plant large areas of acreage rapidly while maximizing yield per acre, will be the goal of a research team at Kansas State University.

Deere & Company has invested more than $300,000 in the project, "Precision Planting System with Hydraulic Downforce Technology for Seed Placement Uniformity," headed by Ajay Sharda, associate professor of biological and agricultural engineering in the Carl R. Ice College of Engineering, and co-investigator Ignacio Ciampitti, associate professor of agronomy.

The project will focus on evaluation of a planting system control response to manage real-time seed spacing and depth uniformity during diverse field and operating conditions. They system's ability to rapidly and accurately control seed metering and liquid nutrient rate on each row unit, during planting of both straight and curvilinear paths, can greatly benefit seed spacing, plant growth and population uniformity.

Similarly, the individual-row, hydraulic downforce
and chair of the college's curriculum and instruction department. "We believe that by reaching out to our neighbors, as well as to those in distant corners of the state, that we can be an ally in helping each community meet its need for highly prepared professional educators."

Kansas needs more teachers. In 2018, the Kansas State Department of Education reported more than 600 vacant positions at Kansas schools, mostly in rural and urban areas of the state. That's why the majority of academy participants were from Kansas City and Liberal, participating through the College of Education's K-STEP Up grant, which funds a pathway for teaching for underserved and place-bound students. The academy also attracted participants from Abilene and Dodge City, as well as from St. Louis and Belgium.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

K-State has been ranked No. 25 on LendEDU's list of top 50 financial literacy programs at colleges and universities across the United States?

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control system can optimally control and implement planter operation for accurate seed trench development and seeding depth.

"Successful completion of this project will deliver the metrics of a planting system's ability to manage seeding, nutrients and depth control on a row-by-row basis," Sharda said, "allowing producers to adopt intelligent practice for more productivity and profitability in their crop production."

Graduate students involved in the project will work with new equipment provided by Deere & Company. Such engagements and opportunities will directly serve both the Kansas State University and Carl R. Ice College of Engineering 2025 goals to further research and train students for the best opportunities in their professional endeavors.

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