



January 2021



## **K-State Polytechnic receives grant for targeted skills development to advance manufacturing**

[Kansas State University Polytechnic Campus](#) has received a \$398,100 grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce to support the needs of the advanced manufacturing industry in Kansas by reskilling and upskilling workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

K-State Polytechnic will use the funds to purchase equipment to upgrade and expand instructional offerings related to information technology and advanced manufacturing. Training equipment will also allow for the development of apprenticeship degree programs in areas of advanced and smart manufacturing.

The principal investigators for the grant are all faculty members in the Department of Integrated Studies at K-State Polytechnic.

"We are proud of our faculty for identifying this need and using their expertise to proactively create a solution to benefit the advanced manufacturing industry — as well as Polytechnic students," said Alysia Starkey, CEO and dean of K-State Polytechnic.

Practitioners of smart manufacturing are responsible for integrating what's new in manufacturing with existing methods, processes and procedures. The combination of courses, certificates and degree options at the K-State Polytechnic Campus offers students stackable educational opportunities. Programs are built around a project-based education model, and on-campus labs provide students the hands-on experience with current technology used by industry.

## **K-State medical director contributes to research behind updated CDC quarantine guidelines**

Kyle Goerl, the medical director of Kansas State University's [Lafene Health Center](#), is part of a collaborative team that is providing research-based guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team's latest research contributed to the updated [quarantine guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

[Goerl](#) is a co-author of the publication "[Time from Start of Quarantine to SARS-CoV-2 Positive Test Among Quarantined College and University Athletes](#)." The publication appeared in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report from the CDC on Friday, Jan. 8, and involved researchers from multiple organizations and universities.

The publication was one of many that the CDC considered for its [update that provided shortened options for quarantine](#), Goerl said.

In the publication, Goerl and collaborators describe findings among a sample of COVID-19-exposed collegiate athletes in 17 states from June to October 2020. Twenty-five percent of the athletes tested positive during quarantine and the positive test occurred an average of 3.8 days after their quarantine started.

Yet, the probability of testing positive decreased as quarantine progressed. The probability of testing positive dropped from 27% after day five to less than 5% after day 10.

"These findings show that after 10 days of quarantine, the risk of COVID-19 is relatively low," said Goerl, who is also the team physician for Kansas State University Athletics. "This helps to support a quarantine period that is shorter than 14 days. If the quarantine period is shortened, it may become more likely that people would follow important quarantine measures."

In June 2020, higher education and collegiate athletic programs — including athletic programs at K-State — developed plans to safely resume sports. The plans included mitigation measures, such as physical distancing, face coverings, outdoor training activities, routine testing, isolation for COVID-19 cases and quarantine of close contacts.

The published study included data from 1,830 quarantined athletes at 24 colleges and universities.

Some of the important findings from the study:

- The most common reported exposures varied: 40.7% of COVID-19 exposures were from social gatherings and 31.7% were from roommates.
- Only 12.7% of athletes reported being exposed in their sports setting.
- The most common sports played by quarantined athletes included football, track and field or cross country and soccer.

The published findings show that the safety measures work for collegiate athletic programs, Goerl said.

"The majority of exposures in college athletes came from social gatherings and roommates, not during sporting activities," Goerl said. "Our results continue to show that the best way to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is to follow important mitigation measures at all times, not just during athletic programs. Continue to wear your face covering, practice physical distancing and follow good hand hygiene."

The publication involves more than 12 authors from several organizations, including the CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service, the CDC COVID-19 Response Team, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, University of Arizona, University of Washington School of Medicine, University of Kansas School of Medicine, Duke University Medical Center and North Carolina State University. The publication also involves other researchers with the COVID-19 Collegiate Testing Group as well as Matt Thomason, the head athletic trainer for the Kansas State University football team. Christine Atherstone with the CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service and CDC COVID-19 Response Team was the publication lead author.



## Tiny is Big in Nicodemus

A research project by Kansas State University College of Architecture, Planning & Design students has provided a tiny solution to a big housing problem in Nicodemus, KS. Residents of Nicodemus, the only continuously settled African American town west of the Mississippi River and a national historic site, have been working to keep their community economically



## Beth Montelone to serve as interim vice president for research

A highly experienced researcher and administrator will serve as Kansas State University's interim vice president for research. After an internal search, University President Richard Myers has appointed

viable since the 1970s.

K-State interior architecture & industrial design and landscape architecture students came up with the solution with their fall 2017 studio project: "The Nicodemus Campus of Small Homes."

Their plans for a tiny community of tiny homes were based on meeting with Nicodemus residents JohnElla Holmes, a K-State faculty member, and Angela Bates, director of the Nicodemus Historical Society, and learning about community needs and goals. The residents loved the students' idea and garnered a \$120,000 grant from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation to launch the Nicodemus Tiny Homes Project.

Two homes have been built: one is a residence for a retiree and the second is the Cabin, which provides short-term residential living for groups, artists-in-residence and other visitors. Construction of a third home, for a retiree, was put on hold because of COVID-19. To raise funds to build the next four tiny homes, the town sponsored a tiny home giveaway a part of the virtual 142nd Nicodemus Homecoming Emancipation Celebration and the community's Pioneer Day Festival.

College of Architecture, Planning & Design involvement in Nicodemus has been ongoing for nearly 40 years and has been a focus of La Barbara James Wigfall, association professor of landscape architecture and regional & community planning, with several award-winning projects.

## **Agronomist receives \$3M grant to develop digital geospatial tools for improving resilience of farming systems**

A Kansas State University researcher received a \$3 million grant from the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Sustainable Intensification, or SILL, to improve the resilience of smallholder livelihoods through the application of digital and geospatial decision support tools under diverse farming systems.

Ignacio Ciampitti, associate professor of agronomy, will lead the three-year project and serve as the director of the Digital, Geospatial and Farming Systems Consortium — Building a New Era of Predictive Agricultural Innovation. The new consortium will involve experts in farming systems involving crop-livestock integration, modeling, mobile technologies and remote sensing for crop mapping, production and human nutrition.

The consortium team comes from five U.S. universities, establishing a strong collaboration with team members in the targeted countries: Senegal, Cambodia and Bangladesh.

"This consortium will build upon the five domains — productivity, economics, environment, social and human condition — of the sustainable intensification framework, developing an interdisciplinary and solution-oriented geospatial framework, integrating remote sensing, farming systems modeling, and geospatial data layers to provide innovative data products to take actions toward more resilient farming systems, benefiting families and communities," Ciampitti said.

Beth Montelone, the university's senior associate vice president for research, to the post.

Montelone's appointment takes effect on Jan. 3, 2021. Current vice president for research, Peter Dorhout, is leaving K-State to become Iowa State University's vice president for research in January.

"A longtime researcher and administrator, Dr. Montelone has extensive knowledge of K-State's research enterprise and is ready to step in and guide the university's research efforts while a national search is conducted to find our next vice president for research," Myers said.

In her new role, Montelone will be responsible for encouraging and facilitating the integration and enhancement of research and scholarly work activities across the university's colleges and multiple research centers, and will lead universitywide strategic research growth activities. She will provide leadership for the acquisition of research funding, the planning and development of academic research space, patenting, commercialization, the incubation of new companies and recruiting of corporate research partners, and public outreach.

Montelone has served as senior associate vice president for research since 2017 and is responsible for operations and staff of the Office of Research Development. The office monitors funding opportunities from federal, state and private sources for an online database and conducts three internal small grants programs — Faculty Development Awards, Global Food Systems Seed Grants and University Small Research Grants — that provide funding for international scholarly travel, starter grants and supporting work in disciplines in which it is difficult to obtain external funding. In addition, the office conducts multiple training and awareness sessions on a wide array of funding activities for faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers.

Before joining the Office of the Vice President for Research, Montelone served as associate dean for research for the College of Arts and Sciences from 2004 to 2016 and was interim research director at the Biosecurity Research Institute from 2008-2011. Among her many other leadership roles include serving as associate director and acting director of the Division of Biology.

A professor of biology, Montelone joined K-State in 1988. She is a member of the graduate faculty in the biology, genetics and Master of Public Health programs. Her research in DNA repair, mutagenesis and science outreach has been funded by the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.

Montelone also has had key leadership roles in several university research and outreach initiatives. She directed the Pathways to Public Health and One Health Kansas education and outreach projects funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Health Foundation. She was a co-principal investigator of a five-year, \$3.5 million National Science Foundation grant K-State received for the [ADVANCE Institutional Transformation](#) grant to improve the recruitment, retention, and success of women faculty members in the sciences and engineering. She also was the principal investigator for the NSF grants which helped establish the [GROW](#) — Girls Researching Our World — program at K-State, which encourages girls' interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Ciampitti said the expertise of the consortium team provides critical opportunities for innovation in the digital agriculture space.

"Providing access to simple digital tools to researchers, extension personnel, policymakers and practitioners will allow them to make informed decisions to minimize risk and improve the resilience of people and farming systems," said Vara Prasad, university distinguished professor and director of the Sustainable Intensification Innovation Lab.

The Sustainable Intensification Innovation Lab is managed by K-State and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development as part of Feed the Future, the government's global hunger and food security initiative.

Along with Ciampitti, consortium researchers are included from the University of Colorado, University of Minnesota, Michigan State University, University of Maryland; as well as the critical integration of industry partners with the opportunity of expanding the number of members on the consortium

In addition, Montelone is currently a co-principal investigator of the [Kansas Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation](#) project funded by the NSF to increase degree attainment in STEM fields by diverse students.

Montelone received a bachelor's degree in biology from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a master's degree and a doctorate in biology from the University of Rochester. She carried out postdoctoral research at the University of Miami School of Medicine and the University of Iowa

## DID YOU KNOW?

Kansas State University's Carl R. Ice College of Engineering was ranked No. 3 in [greatBusinessSchools.org's 15 Best Online Bachelor's in Engineering Management Degrees for 2021](#).



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### **K-State Government Relations Staff**

Sue Peterson, Chief Government Relations Officer

Kristin Holt, Government Relations Coordinator

Logan Long, Legislative Assistant

Justin Watkins, Legislative Assistant

### **Contact Information**

Office of Government Relations

110 Anderson Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506

785-532-6227

[www.ksu.edu/govrelations](http://www.ksu.edu/govrelations)