Study finds Kansas State University is top value in Kansas

For the fifth year in a row, Kansas State University tops a national study of the best education value in Kansas.

The study by SmartAsset determines which schools provide the best bang for the educational buck in the Sunflower State. The study measures tuition, living costs, average scholarships and grants, starting salary upon graduation, and retention rates at 10 Kansas schools to determine its best value schools. SmartAsset is a financial data and technology company.

Among the factors keeping K-State at the top of the list include having the highest average starting salary for new graduates and the highest student retention rate in the state.

Other Kansas schools surveyed by SmartAsset include the University of Kansas, Washburn University, Baker University, Pittsburg State University, Mid-America Nazarene University, Fort Hays State University, Wichita State University, Emporia State University and Southwestern College.

July 15 event features Nancy and Jerry Jaax, real-life subjects of National Geographic's THE HOT ZONE

Kansas State University and Johnson County Community College are hosting an evening with Nancy and Jerry Jaax, two Kansas State University veterinarians and leaders whose response to an Ebola-related outbreak inspired the recently release National Geographic series, THE HOT ZONE.

The event, "THE HOT ZONE: An evening with Nancy and Jerry Jaax," will be Monday, July 15, at the Nerman Museum's Hudson Auditorium at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park. The event is free and open to the public, but registration is required.

The presentation begins at 4 p.m. and will include clips from THE HOT ZONE and a discussion with Nancy and Jerry Jaax. Kansas State University President Richard Myers will serve as moderator. A networking event with light refreshments will follow around 5:30 p.m.


THE HOT ZONE is inspired by the true story of the arrival of Ebola on U.S. soil in 1989 in Reston, Virginia. The story involves Nancy and Jerry Jaax, both graduated with veterinary medicine degrees from Kansas State University and served in medical defense with the U.S. Army, during which time they became involved in the events depicted in the series.

Following the events of 1989 and after stellar military careers, Jerry and Nancy returned to Manhattan and Kansas State University. Jerry served in a prominent research leadership position to further the university's biodefense mission. Nancy participated in innumerable infectious disease initiatives at the university.

Learn more about the July event and register to attend at k-state.edu/hotzone.

Federal grant to establish Rural Railroad Safety Center at Kansas State University
The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration has announced the recipients of more than $326 million in grant funds under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program and the Special Transportation Circumstances Program, for a wide variety of state and local railroad infrastructure projects.

The grants will fund 45 projects in 29 states, including just over $2.5 million for a Rural Railroad Safety Center at Kansas State University.

Heading up the project will be Eric Fitzsimmons, assistant professor of civil engineering in the Carl R. Ice College of Engineering. His collaborators are civil engineering faculty members Robert Peterman, professor; and Christopher Jones and Stacey Kulesza, associate professors.

“Our state's economy depends on safe, reliable rail transportation to connect farmers and businesses to the nation and deliver goods to market," said U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, Kansas. "This grant to establish the Rural Railroad Safety Center at K-State will help solidify Kansas as a leader in rail transportation and share the expertise of officials at K-State with the rest of the country and industry. I was pleased to support efforts to help secure this funding from the Department of Transportation, and look forward to working alongside the university to build and grow this innovative program.”

Partner institutions include the University of Nebraska, Lincoln; University of Florida; Pennsylvania State University, Altoona; and California State University, Chico.

"I often brag that the two things American agriculture does is produce more per acre and get our goods to market cheaper and more reliably than any other country in the world," said U.S. Representative Roger Marshall, also from Kansas. "Rail transportation is an important component of this, and I'm proud of the work done to support workforce development and ensure future rail industry safety research through the establishment of the Rural Railroad Safety Center at Kansas State University."

The Rural Railroad Safety Center will have four strategic goals:

- Conduct and promote railroad safety research selected by industry partners and the Federal Railroad Administration.
- Develop a comprehensive unified railroad education curriculum to be delivered at all partnering universities.
- Facilitate novel rail-focused outreach activities, including a bimonthly railroad seminar and undergraduate summer research experiences.
- Disseminate research results and technology transfer to be used by the railroad industry via various outlets.

"I certainly want to thank the entire Kansas Congressional delegation for their support and assistance in securing this grant," Fitzsimmons said.

"By the end of the three-year grant period, it is our goal to have evolved into a vibrant center for industry-relevant railroad research," Fitzsimmons said. "Additional educational and outreach programs will be in place to train and develop a diverse workforce for the railroad industry and our research outcomes will help ensure the future of the rail industry is as safe and efficient as possible."

New leadership named for the Colleges of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine

Following national searches, Dr. Ernie Minton has been named Dean of the College of Agriculture and Director of K-State Research and Extension, and Dr. Bonnie Rush will serve as Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine.

As the College of Agriculture dean and KSRE director, Minton is charged with advancing both on a variety of fronts, including program development; faculty and student development; research, teaching and extension; program accreditation; and the college's and university's goals in K-State's visionary 2025

DHS, USDA sign NBAF transfer agreement

Officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security signed a memorandum of agreement on June 20 that formally outlines how the departments will transfer ownership and operational responsibility for the National Bio and Agro-defense Facility (NBAF) from the Science and Technology Directorate of DHS to the USDA.

According to the USDA, DHS will retain responsibility for completing construction and commissioning of the $1.25 billion facility being built in Manhattan adjacent to the Kansas State University campus, while USDA
"The College of Agriculture and K-State Research and Extension are central to achieving our land-grant mission, and it's important we have balance and stability in this time of change," said Charles Taber, university provost and executive vice president. "Based on his years of steady leadership as interim dean and director and associate dean and associate director, Dr. Minton is the right leader for the College and KSRE at this time."

Minton had been serving as the interim college dean and KSRE director since July 1, 2018. Under his leadership, the college reached its Innovation & Inspiration Campaign goal of $120 million earlier this year. He also has led college-level planning for major infrastructure improvements and renovations to key college facilities, including Shellenberger Hall, Feed and Technology, Waters Hall and the Waters Hall Annex, as well as plans to modernize the dairy teaching and research facility.

Before his appointment as interim dean, Minton served as the college's associate dean of research and graduate programs and associate director of research for K-State Research and Extension from 2016-2018. A processor of animal sciences since 1995 and a member of the Kansas State University faculty since 1983, Minton was interim associate director of research and technology transfer for the Kansas Agriculture Experiment Station from 2008-2009 and associate director of research and technology transfer for the Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station from 2009-2016.

Bonnie Rush has been selected as the new dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Dr. Rush emerged as the clear leader following a competitive national search process. With her strong history of leadership for the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Rush is the right choice to lead this college and its vital teaching, research, service, and outreach programs into the future," Taber said. "The college not only supplies the state of Kansas, the nation and the world with highly trained and skilled veterinarians, it is also a leader in infectious disease research that affects both animals and humans."

As dean, Rush will be charged with leading the college on a variety of fronts, including program development, faculty and student development, research, teaching and extension, program accreditation, diversity and the 2025 plans for both the college and university.

Rush began her career as a faculty member at Kansas State in 1993. She served as the head of the clinical sciences department from 2006 to mid-2017. She has been a core course coordinator, led curriculum reform and maintained responsibility for clinical outcome assessment. She is committed to the scholarship of teaching and has authored or co-authored more than 20 manuscripts in the Journal of Veterinary Education on effective instructional practices, communication training, and student welfare.

DID YOU KNOW?

K-State returns $12 to the state economy for every $1 invested.
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