Hats off to the graduates: University's commencement ceremonies May 11, 17 and 18

May 2019 Kansas State University commencement will be Saturday, May 11, at Kansas State University Polytechnic Campus in Salina and Friday, May 17, and Saturday, May 18 on the Manhattan campus.

The class of 2019 is the 152nd to graduate from Kansas State University. In all, more than 3,250 students are candidates for graduation. To be awarded will be more than 2,300 bachelor's degrees, nearly 100 doctoral degrees, nearly 700 master's degrees, and more than 100 students will receive a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

At the Graduate School commencement, James "Jim" Haymaker, retired Cargill corporate vice president of strategy and business development, will receive an honorary doctorate from his alma mater and serve as commencement speaker. Haymaker earned bachelor's degrees in economics and French from Kansas State University in 1969. He joined Cargill in 1973 as a financial analyst and rose through ranks, retiring in 2011.

"It is fitting that Kansas State University recognize James Haymaker with the university's highest honor," said Charles Taber, university provost and executive vice president. "He exemplifies how higher education can truly make a difference, using his K-State degree to have a successful lifetime career with Cargill both domestically and internationally."

The university's request to recognize Haymaker with the degree was approved by the Kansas Board of Regents at its Feb. 20 meeting.

Commissioning ceremonies for the university's graduating Air Force and Army ROTC cadets will both be May 17 in the K-State Student Union.

Kansas State University to host May 7 advance screening of National Geographic’s THE HOT ZONE; highlight work of alumni, leaders

Two Kansas State University veterinarians and leaders - Nancy and Jerry Jaax - and their response to an Ebola-related outbreak have inspired the upcoming National Geographic limited series, THE HOT ZONE.

The six-part limited series premiere on National Geographic at 8 p.m. on Monday, May 27, and will air over three

"Nancy and Jerry Jaax are renowned leaders, scientists and veterans," Kansas State University President Richard Myers said. "We are honored that National Geographic is telling their story through THE HOT ZONE and we want to recognize these two K-Staters for their bravery and heroic research contributions. Leaders like Nancy and Jerry Jaax are true examples of what makes K-State the 'Silicon Valley for biodefense.'"

THE HOT ZONE is based on the 1994 best-seller by Richard Preston and is inspired by the true story of the arrival of Ebola on U.S. soil in 1989 in Reston, Virginia.

The story involves two prominent Kansas State University leaders: Nancy and Jerry Jaax. Both graduated with veterinary medicine degrees from the 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. Jerry joined the university and served in a prominent research leadership position to further the university's biodefense mission.

Both Jerry and Nancy played important roles in the development of K-State's biocontainment facility called the Biosecurity Research Institute (BRI) at Pat Roberts Hall. Nancy inspired the need for a training lab based on her experience with Ebola. They also assisted in winning the national competition for the National Bio and Agro-defense Facility (NBAF) which is under construction north of the university's Manhattan campus. Once NBAF becomes operational in 2022-2023, it will be America's foremost animal disease research facility.

Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge to award $75,000 to student entrepreneurs from around the state

The Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge is a statewide student entrepreneurship competition featuring high school and collegiate teams from across Kansas.

The contest was presented by the Kansas Masonic Foundation on behalf of all Kansas Masons, and hosted by Kansas State University with the support of Network Kansas. It offers $75,000 in prize money to student entrepreneurs who pitched their businesses to a panel of judges consisting of entrepreneurs, bankers and investment experts in a "Shark Tank-like environment.

This year's competition featured 55 high school teams representing communities around the state, including Allen, Altamont, Atwood, Baldwin, Basehor-Linwood, Belleville, Bird City, Cherokee, Clay Center, Colby, Cottonwood Falls, Elkhart, Girard, Hillsboro, Hoisington, Hoxie, Jetmore, Kansas City, Leoti, Lincoln, Manhattan, Norton, Oakley, Overland Park, Phillipsburg, Salina, Scandia, Scott City, Sedan, Sterling, Stockton, Topeka, Tribune, Wamego and Wichita.

The following universities had teams participating in the event: Kansas State University, Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, Pittsburgh State University, University of Kansas, Washburn University and Wichita State University.

K-State Sales Team shines at 2019 National Collegiate Sales Competition

The Kansas State University Sales Team recently took on the best and brightest sales students from around the country at the 2019 National Collegiate Sales Competition, bringing home fifth place overall out of a field of 144 students representing 72 universities.

Representing K-State at the contest were Cecilia Nancarrow and Lanessa Aurand, both juniors in professional strategic selling. This marks the fourth straight year that K-State has placed in the top 10 at the competition.

The National Collegiate Sales Competition, now in its 21st year, is the longest-running and largest university sales role-play competition in the country. Sales competitions allow students to test their selling skills against their peers from other universities with a focus in sales through role play scenarios.

Two K-Staters receive prestigious NSF CAREER awards

Two K-State faculty members have recently received the Faculty Early Career Development Award, or
immune system studies
Forty mice with Kansas State University ties were launched to the International Space Station to learn more about human health.

A team of researchers that includes Stephen Keith Chapes, KSU professor of biology and interim director of the university’s Johnson Cancer Center Research Center, is studying the impact of space flight on the immune system’s ability to respond to things that make people sick.

Space flight causes changes to the immune system. One of the most important components of that system is the B cell. B cells make antibody molecules that are secreted into the body to gather up and help rid the body of harmful substances, including bacteria, fungi and viruses.

The TARBIS project - Tetanus Antibody Response by B cells in Space - will determine if mice are able to mount the same kind of B-cell response they do on Earth. Chapes and his students at K-State are collaborating with Loma Linda University.

The study also will investigate whether the diversity of the B-cell population is affected by the space environment. This unique study involves injecting the mice with Tetanus toxoid while on the International Space Station. This is the same type of vaccine humans get when cut or scraped by contaminated objects like dirty nails.

Chapes’ group is not new to the space environment. They have had experiments on 13 different Space Shuttle missions.

CAREER award, which is one of the most coveted awards for researchers working in areas funded by the National Science Foundation: Ryan Rafferty, assistant professor of chemistry, and Yi Zheng, assistant professor of grain science and industry.

CAREER awards are five-year grants for early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education and lead advances in the mission of their department or organization. They differ from standard NSF research proposals in that those submitted to CAREER must address the career goals and plans of the investigator and present an integrated plan that includes both their future research and educational activities.

Rafferty’s project involves development of both scientific and educational tools to address barriers of various sorts: specifically, complex biological barriers such as separating the brain from the bloodstream of mammals and those of gram-negative bacteria. In both cases, the barriers have evolved to restrict transport in order to protect the brain or the bacteria.

Zheng’s long-term career goals are to establish internationally recognized research and educational programs in biomanufacturing. Different from traditional manufacturing, biomanufacturing uses cells as a factory to produce bio-based products of industrial interest which have been historically produced through conventional petroleum refinery.

DID YOU KNOW?
Kansas State University won the 2019 Big 12 Recyclemania competition.