



May 2022



## K-State commencement ceremonies May 7, 13 and 14

More than 3,000 students are candidates for graduation from Kansas State University this spring, with [commencement ceremonies](#) set for Saturday, May 7, at K-State Salina and Friday, May 13, and Saturday, May 14, on the Manhattan campus.

Information on the ceremonies, parking, accommodations and more is available at [k-state.edu/graduation/](https://k-state.edu/graduation/). A live webcast of the Manhattan campus ceremonies also will be available at [k-state.edu/graduation/](https://k-state.edu/graduation/).

The Class of 2022 is the 155th to graduate from K-State. To be awarded this spring will be nearly 2,350 bachelor's degrees, 635 master's degrees, more than 100 doctorates and more than 110 Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degrees. More than 150 students are earning multiple degrees. The graduates-to-be also include 470 students who are earning their degrees through a K-State Online program. These graduates are being recognized at the K-State Global Campus virtual commencement site, [online.k-state.edu/student-support/virtual-commencement](https://online.k-state.edu/student-support/virtual-commencement).

Graduate degrees will be awarded at ceremonies on May 13 in Bramlage Coliseum. The Graduate School commencement will be at 1 p.m., while the College of Veterinary Medicine ceremony will start at 3:30 p.m. Regent Shelly Kiblinger will represent the Kansas Board of Regents at both ceremonies.

## K-State leads state universities in retention, graduation rates

The latest data from the Kansas Board of Regents shows that Kansas State University is the best among state universities in Kansas when it comes to students successfully completing a college degree.

K-State has the highest freshman-to-sophomore student retention rate and six-year graduation rate among the state's six public universities, both of which are key metrics for determining student persistence and success.

According to the Kansas Board of Regents' 2020 data, the most recent available from all Regents' institutions, the university's retention rate was 86.1% and six-year graduation rate was 67.2%.

K-State's 86.1% student retention rate is the highest systemwide among Kansas Regents institutions, which includes the six state universities, Washburn University and the state's 19 community colleges and seven technical colleges.

When it comes to six-year graduation rates, the average time nationally it takes a student to finish a bachelor's degree, K-State leads the pack by a wide margin. Per the 2020 data, the university's rate was 6.3 percentage points higher than any other public university in the state. K-State data for 2021 shows the six-year graduation rate continues to improve and reached 68.4% in 2021 for the first-time full-time freshman cohort who entered the university in fall 2015. K-State's latest retention and graduation rates are available at [k-state.edu/pa/data/student](https://k-state.edu/pa/data/student).

"K-State offers enrichment and support programs to students to help them complete their degree programs and pursue exciting career and advanced study opportunities," said Jeannie Brown Leonard, vice provost for student success.

Helping K-State students persist through to graduation are programs such as [K-State First](#) for first-year students, free [academic tutoring](#), [career and internship assistance](#), and more than \$54 million in scholarships and awards to help students pay for their education.

"Our comprehensive student services, distinguished faculty and 250-plus degree programs and options make K-State the place for students to succeed," said Karen Goos, vice provost for enrollment management. "K-State supports students from the first time they step foot on campus to when they walk across the commencement stage with their degree."

A K-State degree pays off in the job market, too, with [97% of the university's 2020-2021 graduates](#) reporting finding a job or continuing education within six months of their graduation. [Niche.com](#) and [SmartAsset](#) rank K-State as the best college in the state and where graduates typically earn the highest average starting salaries.



## Kansas State University community mourns loss of former President Jon Wefald

Jon Wefald, Kansas State University's 12th president, who is credited with growing the university into a Top 10 land-grant university, died April 16 in Minnesota. He was 84 years old.

Wefald served as president from July 1986 to June 2009. At his inauguration, the chairman of the Kansas Board of Regents, Frank Becker, charged Wefald to "transform students into scholars and invigorate alumni and the citizens of Kansas." He did just that.

During his 23 years of leadership, the university added more than 2.2 million square feet of new buildings, including the addition to Hale Library, the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art and the K-State Alumni Center. As K-State's president, he helped philanthropy increase from \$6 million a year to nearly \$100 million annually and research funding grew from \$18 million annually to nearly \$134 million.

This growth in research funding, along with the university's burgeoning expertise in biosecurity and



## K-State lands \$12M grant to lead agricultural growth in Haiti

Kansas State University's Feed the Future Sustainable Intensification Innovation Lab has been awarded a five-year \$12 million grant from United States Agency for International Development to establish a Center of Excellence that will enhance capacity of six universities to support agriculture-led growth in Haiti.

Vara Prasad, director of the innovation lab (also known as SIIL), said the grant will help to create the Center of Excellence on Mitigation, Adaptation, and Resilience to Climate-Change (CEMARCH) to foster agricultural education, training, research and extension through improved collaboration, communication and knowledge sharing.

The effort will address agricultural problems, and food and nutritional security in the Caribbean country.

biodefense, positioned K-State as one of the nation's distinguished research and doctoral universities. In 1999, Wefald and several university and legislative leaders wrote "Homeland Defense Food Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness Program" — also known as "The Big Purple Book." The book outlined the university's infectious disease research programs and established K-State as a biodefense and agrodefense leader. This reputation, built under the direction of Wefald, was also critical in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's 2009 decision to name Manhattan as the home of the National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility, or NBAF. Wefald's efforts for the construction of the Biosecurity Research Institute on the Manhattan campus played an integral part in landing NBAF.

During his tenure, Wefald oversaw an increase in enrollment from around 16,000 students to more than 23,000. Also, during this time, K-State produced 125 Rhodes, Truman, Goldwater and Udall scholars — more than any other public university in the nation. Wefald Hall, a residence hall on the Manhattan campus, is named in his honor for his efforts to support students and student life.

Outside of academics, Wefald revitalized K-State Athletics, particularly with the hiring of Bill Snyder as football coach in 1989, who went on to lead K-State to two Big 12 championships and unparalleled national prestige.

A celebration of life was held for Dr. Wefald on April 23 at K-State's All Faiths Chapel in Manhattan.

## Veterinary team eyes the road to provide vision exams for working dogs

As part of a national event, an ophthalmology team from the [Veterinary Health Center](#) at Kansas State University will provide free eye exams in May for guide dogs, disability assistance dogs, detection dogs, military working dogs and other search-and-rescue dogs that selflessly serve the public.

Each year, board-certified veterinary ophthalmologists across the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico collectively provide more than 7,500 free eye exams as part of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists/Epicur Pharma National Service Animal Eye Exam event. The Veterinary Health Center has participated in this philanthropic event since 2013. After a two-year hiatus due to the global pandemic, the event resumes in 2022.

The event is sponsored by the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists and Epicur Pharma, as well as several generous industry sponsors. The doctors and staff at the K-State Veterinary Health Center and participating board-certified ophthalmologists volunteer their services, staff and facilities at no charge for service and working animals and their owners/agents to participate in the event.

This year the K-State team of Jessica Meekins, associate professor of ophthalmology, and Amy Rankin, professor of ophthalmology, both in the [College of Veterinary Medicine](#), along with

According to Prasad, CEMARCH will focus on building institutional and human capacity so that Haiti is able to identify and seek solutions to its agricultural problems in partnership with U.S. universities.

SIIL will work closely with a consortium of six universities, including:

- Quisqueya University in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.
- Faculté d'Agronomie et de Médecine Vétérinaire in Port-au-Prince.
- Campus Henry Christophe de Limonade in Limonade, Haiti.
- North Christian University, Cap-Haitien
- American University of the Caribbean in Les Cayes.
- University Notre Dame, Les Cayes, Haiti.

Together, those universities will help identify areas of research, curriculum development, and opportunities to engage the farming community and other local partners to redesign agri-food systems.

"Engaging with scholars, educators, policy makers, smallholder farmers, and building social capital and human resources is a hallmark of SIIL's portfolio, and we have successfully done this in multiple countries around the world," said Prasad, who is also a University Distinguished Professor and the R.O. Kruse endowed professor at K-State.

According to Prasad, SIIL has built capacity around the world by training 160 students and establishing seven agricultural technology parks in Cambodia; and one in Senegal. The lab has plans to establish more in West Africa (including Burkina Faso, Niger, Ghana and Mali).

Work at CEMARCH focuses on three objectives:

- Increasing institutional and human capacity and social capital to better meet the demands of the agricultural economy and workforce needs.
- Developing revenue-generating services to provide to the region.
- Establishing technology parks to showcase high-potential Climate Smart Agriculture technologies and strategies to sustainably intensify smallholder production systems.

The SIIL will work directly with the universities to provide support for management, reporting, communications and outreach, and organizing events. The SIIL at K-State will work with the Haitian institutions to develop a five-year plan based on the needs, priorities, opportunities and commitments of Haiti.

## KSU receives \$1.5M grant for food, agriculture and veterinary defense project

The [National Agricultural Biosecurity Center](#) at Kansas State University is receiving a more than \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to protect the nation's food supply.

Jennifer Klingele, a registered veterinary technician and a veterinary nurse in the Veterinary Health Center's ophthalmology department, will go on the road in May to conduct eye exams at KSDS Assistance Dogs Inc. in Washington. KSDS is a nonprofit organization that provides guide dogs for the visually impaired, service dogs to assist individuals with physical disabilities, and facility dogs that assist professionals in the field of education, counseling, health care, retirement or the legal system. Meekins, Rankin and Klingele also will go to Wichita and make stops at McConnell Air Force Base and the Wichita Police Department to provide exams for military and police working dogs.

"Our goal is to screen active working animals for eye diseases that could impair their ability to perform their jobs, and in doing so, help them better serve their human owners and handlers," Meekins said.

During the complete eye exam, Meekins and Rankin will look for problems including redness, squinting, cloudy corneas, retinal disease, early cataracts and other serious abnormalities. Early detection and treatment are vital to these working animals.

Read more information about [American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists/Epicur Pharma National Service Animal Eye Exam events](#).

## DID YOU KNOW?

Kansas State University's Classy Cats earned the title of Division 1A Pom National Champions at the College Classic National Invitational.

With the grant from DHS's Food, Agriculture and Veterinary Defense Division, the center will seek ways to support the production and economic health of the food and agricultural sectors and sustain human health through a stable and resilient food and agricultural supply chain.

The center will support the Food, Agriculture and Veterinary Defense Division in its role to address vulnerabilities, threats and capabilities needed for food, agriculture and veterinary readiness, overall critical Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency sector resilience, and further aiding in efforts to secure the nation's food supply, agricultural, economic and human health.

The National Agricultural Biosecurity Center has performed similar work on behalf of the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Office of the Director for National Intelligence. The center also has collaborations with K-State colleges, departments and units, in addition to the federal National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility and the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

The projects involved in these undertakings include assessing county-level readiness and capacity to respond to a high-consequence food or agricultural incident; updating animal disease response training; framework development for sharing food and agriculture information, data, and analysis; and assisting the integration and collaboration amongst federal, state, local, research and industry stakeholders.



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

*[Sue Peterson](#), Chief Government Relations Officer*

*[Kristin Holt](#), Government Relations Coordinator*

*[Logan Long](#), 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)*