Kansas State University tops Money magazine best Kansas educational value list for fourth year in a row

Kansas State University is again being recognized as the top university value in Kansas by Money magazine.

It’s the fourth year in a row that K-State is the highest-ranking Kansas school on Money’s list, which was developed to find schools that successfully combine quality and affordability. The magazine rates schools on factors dealing with quality of education, affordability and student outcomes.

K-State's average starting salary of $51,600 for new graduates leads all Kansas schools on Money's list. In fact, per the university's latest post-graduation survey, 96% of new K-State graduates are employed or continuing their education six months after their graduation.

The Money rankings come on the heels of the survey by SmartAsset, a financial technology company, that also found K-State as the state's top education value. And a third national survey, The Princeton Review’s recently released “America's Best 385 Colleges,” finds K-State is one of the best in the nation for student-centered services. According to the survey, K-State is No. 2 in the nation for best quality of life, town-gown relations and health services. The university is No. 3 nationally for happiest students and for students who love their college, and No. 7 for best-run colleges and for athletic facilities.

“These latest rankings by Money magazine, SmartAsset and the Princeton Review all agree: K-State is a great place to get the quality education needed for a successful career,” said Charles Taber, provost and executive vice president. “At K-State, we make it easy to find a career you’ll love by offering more than 250 academic options. And we make education affordable by awarding more than $248 million in student aid annually, including more than $42 million in scholarships.”

Award-winning faculty and key student services, such as K-State First, the university's first-year student success program, and the Career Center, which last year brought more than 800 global employers to campus to interview students about jobs and internships, are just a few of the ways K-State helps students stay on track to degree completion and be career-ready once they graduate.

Kansas State University and Wichita State University enter planning phase for a WSU satellite BSN program on KSU campus

The current shortage of registered nurses in Kansas and the nation is expected to increase in the next decade, and the Institute of Medicine recommends that 80 percent of registered nurses (RN) obtain a Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) by 2020. In response to these concerns, Kansas State University and Wichita State University have combined resources and started the planning phase of a program that will give students the opportunity to earn both a Bachelor of Science for the College of Health and Human Sciences at K-State, and a Bachelor of Science in nursing from the College of Health Professions at WSU. Both degree programs will be based in Manhattan. A memorandum of understanding was signed by administrators of each university to officially initiate the planning phase, which will culminate in an application to the Kansas State Board of Nursing for the satellite program.

“Our land-grant mission is to serve the well-being of our communities, and this unique partnership, which will bring WSU's excellent nursing program to our campus, will do just that,” said Charles Taber, K-State provost and executive vice president. “Through this program, we will serve the demand for a nursing major at K-State, as well as the growing demand for nurses in Kansas and across the country.”

Students will enroll in K-State's College of Health and Human Sciences for the first three years and, if accepted into
WSU's nursing program, will be WSU students on the K-State campus for the following two years. Students will receive access to all K-State student amenities throughout the program.

John Buckwalter, Betty L. Tointon dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, said the program will bring great things to K-State. "We are extremely excited about developing this program with WSU," he said. "We have students on campus who aspire to be nurses and many more who would have come to K-State if we had a nursing program."

University increases enrollment at three campuses and retention, graduation rates
Kansas State University continues to promote the value of higher education and has increased enrollment in online programs and the Polytechnic and Olathe campuses while total enrollment dips.

The university's Global, Polytechnic and Olathe campuses all had an increased number of students enrolled. Total university enrollment is down 502 students, reflecting a national trend in higher education.

The retention of freshman to sophomores is again highest in university history at 85.8%, and the university graduated a near-record 3,219 students in May. The university's four-year graduation rate is 41.6% and the six-year graduation rate is 64.8% - both records for the university.

Preliminary numbers from the Kansas Board of Regents' report show overall headcount decreased by 2.3%. The board has started reporting full-time equivalency (FTE) in addition to headcount to provide more uniform data. The Regents calculate full-time equivalency by diving the total number of undergraduate credit hours taken in a semester by 15 and graduate credit hours by 12.

K-State is beginning the second year of a strategic enrollment management effort designed to increase its overall enrollment to boost net tuition revenue. Improving the educational experience and making scholarships more accessible remain top priorities for the university as a land-grant institution.

NSF awards team $1.4M to improve research computing in the Midwest
Many colleges and universities across the Midwest need comprehensive assistance with building or improving their cyber-infrastructure, but may not know exactly what they need or where to start.

A team of seven experts from universities across the region - including K-State - recently received $1.4 million from the National Science Foundation to both meet this need and provide workforce development to fill an emerging need in high-performance research computing.

Called the CyberTeam, it is made up of experts from several states who have a wealth of knowledge in the aspects that go into research computing, including hardware, software, computing architecture, cybersecurity and more.

Daniel Andresen, professor of computer science and director of K-State's high performance computing effort Beocat, is co-PI on the team that includes researchers from the University of Missouri, Great Plains Network, University of South Dakota, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, South Dakota State University, and the University of Oklahoma.

Many of these universities would benefit from greater high-performance computing power to aid research across campus and to serve any additional high-performance computing power needs they may have. This program would pair a mentor from the CyberTeam with a mentee at a college or university partner. They would work together to determine the institution's needs and walk through the process together from conception to implementation.

While helping institutions meet their computing needs, the CyberTeam will also work with students to help train them on how to meet the needs of the nascent field of research computing. With so much scientific discovery requiring high-performance computing resources to do modeling, crunch data, store results and more, the field needs well-trained personnel who can help bridge the gap between researchers and their computing needs. It requires someone who can

NSF planning grant to help research team better understand needs of rural communities
A fundamental societal assumption is that current migration toward cities is an ideal resource distribution. But 80% of the U.S. population who live in these urban centers are vulnerable to climate change results such as rising sea levels, storm surges
In light of this, the question that will be addressed at Kansas State University, recently funded by a National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center planning grant, becomes what should be our investment in infrastructure and systems in depopulating rural areas that would create a more resilient infrastructure overall in the areas of food systems, energy resources and healthy environments.

This one-year $99,907 planning grant, the first of its type awarded to the university, will capture a more complete understanding of the rural landscape as defined by a wide range of stakeholders, allowing the team to understand these challenges to rural communities and create better engineered solutions. Information gained through gathering mechanisms such as workshops will be used to create a detailed database that will paint a contemporary picture of rural landscapes, highlighting the differences in human and natural capital, and providing the information needed to make informed decisions.

Researchers from K-State’s Carl R. Ice College of Engineering will partner with colleagues from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Washington State University to plan for an Engineering Research Center for ENgineered Solutions for rUral Resilience - ENSURE: Food, Energy, Environment, and Infrastructure. ENSURE will then seek to create sustainable rural communities through engineering innovations and in partnership with rural stakeholders.

Following completion of the planning grant year, the team intends to submit a full center proposal to the NSF. If successful, it will be the first such center in the state of Kansas and Kansas State University will be the lead institution on this effort to generate resilient, engineered systems in conjunction with rural stakeholders, creating sufficient capacity in rural communities - those across the U.S. and worldwide - to adapt and respond to adverse climate, environmental and economic conditions.

DID YOU KNOW?
Manhattan, KS, home to Kansas State University’s main campus, was ranked No. 2 Best College Town by Livability.com.