



September 2020



K-State President Richard Myers provides update on the 2020 Fall semester to Legislative Budget Committee

Kansas State University President Richard Myers along with the Chancellor, Presidents, representatives of Community Colleges and Technical Colleges testified before the Kansas Legislature’s Legislative Budget Committee on September 3, 2020. Chair McGinn asked the institutions to provide an Update on the 2020 Fall Semester.

President Myers testimony is below:

**Testimony to the
Legislative Budget Committee
Richard Myers, President
Kansas State University
September 3, 2020**

Chair McGinn and members of the Legislative Budget Committee. I am Richard Myers, President of Kansas State University. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to provide an Update on the 2020 Fall Semester at Kansas State University.

I am proud of how the K-State Family rallied to help open the University in a safe way this fall semester. In addition, I want to acknowledge our city and county leaders who took the steps to encourage good behavior and were our partners in providing a safe community.

Transparency has been a hallmark of my administration at Kansas State University. The University has continually provided informational updates on educational issues, student life, protocols for students, faculty, and staff, with safety of all upper most in mind.

My testimony today is in response to the three questions posed.

Is the University in-person or remote?

Instructional mode* (data as of 8/24/20)

	In-person/ Face- to-face	Hybrid/ Blended	Distance/ Online	Guided study*
Course sections	28%	34%	34%	4%
Seats	13%	42%	45%	0%

**Instructional mode (rounded to the nearest whole number) for the fall semester as reported by the Office of the Registrar for all K-State campuses (Manhattan, Polytechnic, Olathe, and Global). Guided study may be offered in-person, hybrid/blended or online.*

This information can be found on the K-State Dashboard for data which is currently updated weekly.

What are the University contingency plans?

K-State uses several indicators to understand how COVID-19 is affecting the university and local community. These indicators help determine if changes to the university's operating status are necessary for the health and safety of the community, while continuing to advance the university's mission. Data for each topic and indicator is collected and analyzed multiple times per week to provide updated information for the University to make proactive decisions as quickly as possible.

A review of data is conducted within each of the following indicators:

- State and local orders
- Positive cases
- Prevention methods
- K-State community behavior
- Local community behavior
- Hospital operations
- Quarantine / isolation
- Contact tracing
- Testing
- Additional information

Analyzing the indicators together allows the University to take a holistic view of COVID-19's impact on the university and local community. K-State is currently operating in a hybrid mode of learning and operations. A continual review and analysis of data within the indicators will determine when or if the university needs to pivot to a different mode of learning and operations. Currently there is no plan to completely close the University.

What is the University approach to testing?

Kansas State University has the capability for COVID-19 testing of students, faculty, and staff with symptoms and is expanding its capacity for asymptomatic testing.

On-campus testing capability for COVID-19 testing of students, faculty and staff is available at Lafene Health Center. Symptomatic testing for individuals who are presenting COVID-19-like symptoms and enhanced asymptomatic testing, and surveillance testing comprise the university's overall testing plan. Enhanced asymptomatic testing involves isolated areas of congregate living among the student population, and in certain academic programs where prolonged close contact occurs. Lafene Health Center also is conducting random voluntary COVID-19 testing of students as part of the university's enhanced testing for asymptomatic individuals. The Kansas State Veterinary Health Center -- Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory is analyzing the tests conducted on campus by Lafene Health Center.

The university generally will not require employees, students or visitors to undergo testing for COVID-19.

K-State launches online dashboard to track COVID-19 data

Kansas State University is working to keep our campuses and communities safe by constantly evaluating COVID-19 data and making that data publicly available.

K-State has launched an [online dashboard](#) that tracks COVID-19 data in university-connected communities. The dashboard will be updated every Wednesday and will include the previous week's data, including on-campus testing data from Lafene Health Center, the number of students in quarantine and isolation, and data on instructional modes.

The [Return to K-State section of the COVID-19 website](#) now also includes information about the key indicators that determine the university's operational status and includes other valuable community and state resources. For a more complete picture of the COVID-19 situation in our campus host communities, visit websites from the [Riley County Health Department](#), the [Saline County Health Department](#) and the [Johnson County Health Department](#).

Learn more and view the dashboard at k-state.edu/covid-19/communities.

K-State Multifunctional Structures Lab receives NASA funding for joint project with Wichita State University and University of Kansas

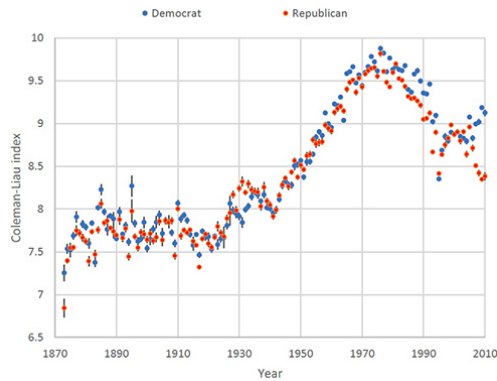
Jared Hobeck, assistant professor in the Alan Levin Department of Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering, has been awarded a subcontract as part of a short-term \$127,000 Seed Research Initiation grant from NASA.

The project seeks to develop a design framework for 3D-printable hybrid internal combustion engines to

power unmanned aerial vehicles on both Mars and Earth missions. Hobeck's [Multifunctional Structures Lab](#) is responsible for designing and simulating an electromagnetic linear generator integrated with the engine to provide electrical power while maximizing system efficiency.

This one-year project, led by Wichita State University, is a collaborative effort between three Kansas universities — Wichita State, Kansas State University and the University of Kansas; three industry partners — KalScott Engineering, Brij Systems and Aerojet Rocketdyne; and the NASA Glen Research Center.

The team expects these early efforts to pave the way for long-term sustained collaboration, STEM outreach events and future funding opportunities.



Computer analysis shows that political speeches now use simpler language, express more sentiments

Research by Kansas State University shows how politicians from both major parties have changed their political speech from previous centuries.

A computer science research team at K-State analyzed nearly 2 million congressional speeches made by Republican and Democrat legislators from 1873 to 2010. Their computer analysis shows that political speeches are in fact very different in their style from political speeches made in Congress several decades ago.

In the research paper "[A data science approach to 138 years of congressional speeches](#)" published recently in the journal *Heliyon*, K-State computer science students Ethan Tucker and Colton Capps and computer science associate professor Lior Shamir used automatic text analysis algorithms to analyze congressional speeches in different years.

"The research results show that more recent speeches use a smaller vocabulary, simpler language, express more positive or negative sentiments, and have more noticeable differences between Democratic and Republican speakers," Shamir said.

The algorithms measured different aspects of the speeches such as the vocabulary, the reading level, the positive or negative sentiments expressed in the speeches, and more. The sentiments are measured by using artificial intelligence reading of the text and associating words and phrases with positive or negative sentiments given their context.

The algorithms also measured the frequency in which different topics were discussed. These quantitative speech elements were computed from thousands of congressional speeches made in each year, and the average of each year allowed to measure the



K-State college experience ranks among best in the nation

A national survey finds Kansas State University students are the happiest in the nation and love being Wildcats. The survey also finds K-State offers some of the best student services and quality of life among institutions of higher learning.

Per the 2021 edition of the Princeton Review's "[The Best 386 Colleges](#)," K-State is No. 1 for happiest students, No. 2 in the nation for students who love their college, No. 3 nationally for best quality of life and [best health services](#), and No. 4 for town-gown relations are great. K-State also finishes in the Top 10 for [best counseling services](#) at No. 7, No. 9 for [best athletic facilities](#) and No. 10 for [best career services](#).

The Princeton Review's list is based on surveys of 143,000 college students from across the country. The survey ranks colleges in 62 categories to come up with its list of the Top 20 schools in each category. In the latest edition, K-State is the only Big 12 school to earn a No. 1 ranking.

"In these challenging times, it is so very gratifying to see just how much Kansas State University students truly value their university and its commitment to their pursuit of educational excellence, personal well-being and lifelong learning," said Thomas Lane, vice president for student life and dean of students. "These rankings show our student-centered approach creates an atmosphere where students can thrive."

Other rankings of note earned by the university include No. 11 for best-run colleges, No. 13 for best campus food, No. 17 for most active student government and No. 20 for best campus dorms.

"These highly rated student services help K-State students get the most out of their college experience and set the stage for their career and life success," Lane said.

changes in the language and topics discussed in Congress during a period of 138 years, Shamir said.

The research showed that the frequency of words related to women's identity — such as she, her, hers, woman, women, etc. — has been increasing consistently since the early 1980s, while the frequency of words that identify men have been decreasing. The frequency of words related to women's identity in the 21st century is five times higher compared to the 1950s, but still lower than the frequency of words related to men's identity. Since the 1990s, terms related to women's identity are more frequent in speeches made by Democratic legislators compared to speeches made by Republican legislators.

The research also showed that the reading level of the speeches changed significantly over the years. The analysis measured the Coleman-Liau readability index, which estimates the reading level of a certain text and associates it with the appropriate school grade. The analysis showed that the reading level of congressional speeches made by both Republican and Democratic legislators increased consistently from the eighth-grade reading level in the 19th century, to the 10th-grade level in the 1970s. But since 1976 the reading level of political speeches has been declining consistently, and as of the 21st century, it is below the ninth-grade reading level. The same trend was also observed with the vocabulary used by congressional members in speeches, which had been increasing consistently until the early 1970s, and then started to decline — and it is still declining, Shamir said.

Nationwide BVLOS waiver granted to K-State Polytechnic Campus

[Kansas State University Polytechnic Campus's](#) Applied Aviation Research Center has received a new waiver from the Federal Aviation Administration which grants permission to fly unmanned aircraft beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) in all Class G airspace nationwide. Class G airspace is where a majority of UAS flights take place, allowing K-State Polytechnic and the Applied Aviation Research Center to enhance research, education and training opportunities.

Along with conducting flights in all Class G airspace, this new waiver also permits the remote pilot in command to fly from a mobile command center. Flying from a mobile command center allows for a controlled environment, meaning pilots can fly distraction-free, out of the elements, and monitor not only the live UAS feed but also weather, manned traffic, telemetry feed and more. This type of training situation will provide students with experience highly sought after in the UAS industry, as well as valuable training experience for professionals in public safety, emergency response, and more. This waiver will also allow K-State Polytechnic to continue research operations that move the industry forward.

A nationally recognized leader in the UAS industry, K-State Polytechnic is a member of the Kansas UAS Joint Task Force and was the first university in the nation to receive a BVLOS waiver from the FAA in 2018, granting permission for K-State Polytechnic to

KSU's business-research-talent hub gets new name

Kansas State University and the KSU Foundation announce the [Edge Collaboration District at K-State](#), formerly known as the North Campus Corridor. This rebranding reflects the strategic move beyond a geographical name to encompass a growing community of diversified corporate, technical and research partners. The Edge Collaboration District is where industry, K-State research and the creation of workforce talent come together to produce meaningful innovations and real outcomes for Kansas and beyond, inspired by the university's land-grant mission.

More than a dozen industry partners and six academic colleges are represented in the Edge Collaboration District, and more are expected. These partnerships and \$2 billion of current and planned infrastructure investment in the district will further inspire industry collaboration along the northern edge of campus, which includes the K-State Research Park, K-State Office Park, National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, Biosecurity Research Institute, the College of Veterinary Medicine, the College of Agriculture's Grain Science and Industry Complex and more.

"Kansas State University has the expertise, the drive for innovation, and the collaborative relationships with industry and government leaders to create extraordinary benefit to Kansans and the country," said K-State President Richard Myers. "The motivation behind the Edge Collaboration District reinforces K-State's resolve to be a leader in research and talent development. Our combined assets and expertise have earned K-State the reputation of the Silicon Valley for global food, health and biodefense."

With the innovative research environment expanding in Manhattan and around K-State's campus in anticipation of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility's opening, the district offers both the research edge and the talent edge, where talent, hard work and passion fuel successful teams and build a workforce for tomorrow. Approximately 5,000 jobs are expected to be housed in the Edge Collaboration District by 2035.

"K-State has long provided a competitive edge with our world-impacting research partnerships and generations of graduates who lead and innovate diverse industries," said KSU Foundation CEO and President Greg Willems. "The Edge Collaboration District makes clear our intention to become the premier industry-serving research university in the Midwest and support regional, state and national economies by welcoming top-tier partners to make their home here at Kansas State University."

To view a video about the Edge Collaboration District at K-State, go to www.k-siteonline.com/edge.

DID YOU KNOW?

Former K-State doctoral student, Dr. Peter Tsai, is the architect behind the essential technology of the N95 mask.

fly beyond the visual line of sight of the pilot and visual observers in a single location.



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