

A photograph of two students in a laboratory setting. A male student on the left, wearing safety glasses and purple gloves, is holding a glass beaker and pouring liquid into it. A female student on the right, also wearing safety glasses and purple gloves, is holding a pen and looking at a notebook. The background shows laboratory equipment and shelves. The entire image has a purple overlay.

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
NEXT-GEN K-STATE
STRATEGIC PLAN



INTRODUCTION

After the university developed its strategic plan, the colleges were tasked to develop or update their own strategic plans, and to identify how their plans align with the university plan. The university has established a bold set of goals that invite us to imagine how we want to become a “next-gen” college. The timing for this is good, as the college has been exploring how to address the challenges we have been facing and determine how we will thrive in the new higher education environment.

This plan draws from discussions across the college that started in the fall of 2022 and encapsulates a vision for how our college can grow and thrive in the coming years. It has been shaped by input from unit heads, the College Committee on Planning (CCOP), and the college’s Alumni Advisory Council, and has been revised after input from the college faculty and staff as a whole.

Our strategic plan will be a map—a set of guideposts for our journey together. It will sharpen our focus and remind us to keep our collective path true to what we value as an institution and as individuals. We will regularly refer back to this plan when we make decisions in the coming years.

This plan represents deliberation on the challenges ahead of us and reflection on the priorities we have identified. Reminding ourselves of our mission during change will help ensure that we do not stray from our values. Our vision calls us forward. Keeping an eye on what we want to become will help us advance even when change is hard. We will need to stretch in areas and transform ourselves in others, but we will do so while staying true to our mission.

Strategic plans are only as good as the organization’s commitment to them. We will need all of our faculty and staff whole to work together towards our vision of a thriving, proactive college.



MISSION

- Be the academic foundation of Kansas State University and serve as a hub for interdisciplinary scholarship and inquiry across the university.
- Prepare students and learners at all levels for responsible citizenry, critical inquiry, and career success in a diverse and ever-changing world.
- Contribute to the betterment of society and the advancement of knowledge through 1) innovative fundamental research and creative activity, 2) the application of disciplinary expertise to solve complex problems, and 3) active engagement with local, global, and professional communities.

Arts and Sciences is a diverse college with a breadth of disciplines and excellent faculty and staff. We are committed to the success of our learners and the advancement of knowledge and betterment of society.

An arts and sciences education prepares students for a lifetime of career success, professional responsibility, and personal fulfillment while enriching society. We teach critical thinking, promote understanding of how the world works, and provide opportunities to imagine a better future. Students in Arts and Sciences develop high-demand job skills and the ability to adapt to change, address ethical dilemmas, and negotiate the complexities of a multicultural and global society. Our graduate students gain cutting-edge, discipline-specific training that prepares them for high-level industry positions and academic careers.

We contribute to the betterment of society through engagement with our communities, research that solves problems, and investment in foundational research, creative activity, and scholarly work that generates new knowledge and explores what it is to be human.

We are the core of K-State, serving learners in all colleges and creating frameworks for interdisciplinary work across the university.

Just as we value all the disciplines within our college, we value our people and their contributions and collective and individual identities. We are stronger together through our shared, empathic, and diverse experiences and perspectives. Recognizing this inherent human value, we see our commitment to all embedded in each of our strategic priorities.



VISION

Lead as a thriving, mission-driven arts and sciences college, proactively adapting to meet evolving challenges and opportunities in Kansas, our nation, and the world.

The landscape of higher education is changing. Learners have numerous options and are questioning the value of higher education. Families seek an explicit return on their investment. Businesses increasingly prioritize skills over general credentials when hiring. Meanwhile, societal and scientific challenges have never been as complex as they are today and demands on universities and colleges have never been greater.

The College of Arts and Sciences is prepared and eager to overcome these challenges. We will lead by demonstrating the value of our disciplines to students and our communities, for both today's needs and tomorrow's possibilities. We will be proactive, identifying potential challenges as opportunities before they arise. We will be agile, able and willing to adapt and try new things. While staying true to our values and our mission as a comprehensive arts and science college, we will be a model for others of how arts and sciences can thrive in today's environment, leveraging our faculty's expertise to make critical contributions to local, regional, and global communities.

GOAL 1

Innovate in academics and instruction to deliver relevant, visible, and long-lasting value for our students and the community.

We will provide **continuously-improved programs** that respond to student and employer needs, push boundaries, are future-focused, and prepare students for a lifetime of ethical, culturally aware, and responsible citizenry. Our programs will foster creativity and adaptability that contribute to personal and professional success. We will provide **high-quality instruction** that meets our land-grant mission, brings the expertise of our faculty researchers and scholars into our classrooms, and clearly delivers value to our students.

Strategies

- Excel in all instruction through innovative and effective pedagogy, appropriate technological support, and faculty excellence
- Engage the university's research and land-grant mission in all courses
- Expand focus on skills and career readiness in programs
- Expand novel, interdisciplinary programs that build on current resources
- Expand micro-credentials, stackable credentials, online programs, and professional and concurrent master's degree programs
- Expand and enhance applied learning experiences
- Integrate digital/AI literacy and ethics across the curricula
- Adapt recruitment and marketing to meet or exceed best practices and emphasize value

Outcomes

- Increased total, undergraduate, and graduate enrollment to 4,600 degree-seeking students by fall 2030
- Increased non-degree-seeking enrollment
- High student performance in assessments of student learning objectives

K-State Imperative Alignment

- Imperative 1 (grow our total enrollment)
- Imperative 3 (applied learning experiences)
- Imperative 5 (meet the needs of learners, employers and society)

GOAL 2

Sustain both fundamental and applied work in research, creative activity, and engagement.

We will sustain **research, scholarship, and creative activity** that contribute to the advancement of our disciplines and connect with our land-grant missions of accessible education, public engagement, economic development, and betterment of society. We will maintain our tradition of excellent fundamental research while also making sure that our work remains relevant to Kansans, the nation, and the world in both practice and perception. We will **actively engage** with both Kansans and the global community through our broadly accessible programs, community outreach and involvement, and economic partnerships. We will better support engagement activities across the college and encourage and recognize engagement in all parts of our trifold mission.

Strategies

- Encourage and provide support for faculty to develop intellectual property and creative ventures
- Develop new research service centers to provide consulting and analysis for community groups and governmental bodies
- Develop and increase resources from non-federal sources to support impactful research and creative activity and cross-college collaborations
- Collaborate and share resources with other units in research (e.g., intercollege bioscience advisory group, core facilities)
- Enhance support, locate opportunities, and develop incentives for faculty research and creative endeavors
- Encourage and reward community engagement and engaged scholarship
- Develop corporate partnerships

Outcomes

- Increased research expenditures from non-federal funding sources
- Improvement in non-financial departmental research and creative activity metrics
- Maintained national and international recognition of faculty
- Increased engagement, and recognition and support thereof, across the college

K-State Imperative Alignment

- Imperative 4 (grow our research expenditure)
- Imperative 7 (positive force for Kansans)
- Imperative 6 (aggressively pursue partnerships)

GOAL 3

Practice transparent and agile resource management to support the long-term fiscal health of the college.

We will develop a **transparent, mission-driven budget and college practices** to ensure responsible fiscal management of the college and the capacity to fulfill our vision. The college will generate revenue through multiple streams, practice agile resource management, and raise funds to invest more in faculty, staff and programs. The college will be transparent with its decision-making so that its units can facilitate their own planning consistent with the college.

Strategies

- Build and expand pipelines from both high schools and community colleges
- Expand scholarships for incoming students
- Increase efficiencies and resource sharing across all areas of college work, including instruction, curricula, research, administrative support, and space utilization
- Develop and implement transparent policies and procedures for data-informed budgeting and decision-making
- Diversify revenue streams and fundraising through corporate partnerships, donor naming opportunities, and expanded philanthropy

Outcomes

- Improved annual revenue-to-costs ratio
- Development of reserve/discretionary funds
- Increased investment in strategic hiring and initiatives
- Increased philanthropy
- Increased alternative revenue streams

K-State Imperative Alignment

- Imperative 8 (one K-State/operational excellence)
- Imperative 10 (grow our total fundraising and philanthropic giving)
- Imperative 6 (aggressively pursue partnerships)

GOAL 4

Build and maintain a community of well-supported faculty, staff, and students.

Our most important resources are our faculty and staff. We will provide the work environment, compensation, and development opportunities needed to support a **vibrant workforce**. Together, we will foster our students' **academic and personal success**.

Strategies

- Improve faculty, GTA, and staff compensation
- Expand/develop strong educational support programs for undergraduate students at each stage of their university career (first year, second year, third year, fourth/final year(s), post-graduation) and for special populations such as transfer and non-traditional students
- Improve recognition of all employees, including post-docs and graduate students
- Improve access to professional development opportunities across the college workforce, and establish clear paths for promotion
- Foster strong alumni engagement across all units
- Establish college-wide initiative on faculty, staff, and student well-being

Outcomes

- Decreased salary compression and eliminated inversion
- Improved overall faculty and staff compensation relative to peers
- Improved graduate teaching assistant compensation relative to peers
- Increased retention of first-year students and first-time transfers
- Increased retention of all categories of learners in university plan
- Reduced 4-year and 6-year graduation rates gap between Arts and Science and the university
- Increased recognition of faculty and staff through named excellence awards

K-State Imperative Alignment

- Imperative 9 (employer of choice)
- Imperative 2 (improve our retention and graduation rates across all student populations)
- Imperative 7 (positive force for Kansans)

GOAL 5

Develop modern, adaptable, and multi-disciplinary infrastructure.

We must provide **instructional and research facilities** appropriate for the mission, success, and growth of the college. We will address the challenges presented by our aging infrastructure in order to attract top faculty, provide students with superior experience, and fulfill our promise as a next-gen college in an R1, land-grant university.

Strategies

- Improve current facilities through renovation and prioritized maintenance
- Relocate/consolidate units into facilities better aligned to their current and developing needs
- Collaborate with other colleges for major new facilities such as the Interdisciplinary Physical and Life Science building and the Visual and Performing Arts Corridor
- Develop and maintain robust IT hygiene and device replacement framework for teaching, research and faculty/staff
- Strategically develop core facilities and use areas between units

Outcomes

- Substantially reduced deferred maintenance backlog
- Substantial progress in planning at least one major new facility
- Reduced redundancy in facilities and equipment

K-State Imperative Alignment

- Imperative 4 (grow our research enterprise)
- Imperative 5 (meet the needs of learners, employers and society)
- Imperative 8 (one K-State/operational excellence)

BOLD INITIATIVES

Interdisciplinary Physical and Life Sciences Building

The college will partner with other K-State colleges to conceptualize, develop and implement funding strategies, and plan and build a twenty-first century interdisciplinary teaching and research building for the life and physical sciences. This facility will allow the university to solve challenging problems facing Kansas and the nation and world. It will allow us to effectively attract and retain excellent faculty and prepare undergraduate and graduate students for successful careers.

Visual and Performing Arts Corridor

The college will create a visual and performing arts corridor with performance and creative activity spaces in the southeast corner of campus. This corridor will better integrate the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, Department of Art, McCain Auditorium and Beach Museum of Art. It will provide the university, Manhattan community, and surrounding region with welcoming spaces that promote health/well-being and exploration of the multiple dimensions of what it means to be expressive and creative.

Biosciences Program

The college will co-create a cross-college biosciences advisory board and graduate umbrella program that will guide collaboration in the biosciences across the Colleges of Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Health and Human Sciences, Engineering, and Arts and Sciences in both undergraduate and graduate education.

Artificial Intelligence Across the Disciplines

The college will continue to work with university partners to create an AI Across the Disciplines initiative to address the changes AI will bring to our society. The college will contribute interdisciplinary research and creative activity, instruction and engagement across the natural and quantitative sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts, and will help ensure that students and citizens can critically evaluate and responsibly apply AI.

Kansas Water Institute

As a key contributor to the Kansas Water Institute, the college will develop and broadly support initiatives using a multidisciplinary lens to solve the economic challenges of living and thriving in a water-limited future.

Sustainability

The college will collaborate with all colleges on sustainability initiatives in research, instruction, and engagement to create a broad-based sustainability institute.

Applied Humanities and Social Sciences

The college will develop and expand educational and research programs that explicitly bring humanities and social science expertise to address societal challenges in Kansas, the nation, and the world.

High School Dual and Concurrent Enrollment

The college will build on the pilot high school dual and concurrent enrollment program to deliver foundational and advanced courses to local and rural schools while creating a pipeline of K-State students and providing affordable, high-quality disciplinary graduate education for high school teachers across the state.

Community Health and Well-Being

The college will contribute to initiatives relating to physical and mental health as well as to social and cultural factors that are major components of community health and well-being.

EXPLANATION OF PLANNING PROCESS

In summer 2022, the college initiated the development of a new strategic plan. While university-level efforts were in their early stages, the transition of the dean and needs of the college dictated that we undertake an early and energetic examination of our priorities.

Process for development of strategic plan:

- Input (iterative, with information collected at each step shared in the next)
 - ◊ Work from Joint Budget Committee of department heads and CCOP members (completed fall 2021)
 - ◊ Environmental scan with department heads (summer 2022)
 - ◊ Department head discussions (summer/fall 2022)
 - ◊ Town hall meetings (multiple, fall 2022)
 - ◊ Faculty and staff survey (fall 2022)
- Dean's Office synthesis of information and drafting of priorities (fall 2022/winter 2023)
- Review (winter/spring 2023)
 - ◊ Department heads
 - ◊ CCOP
- Redrafting (winter/spring 2023)
- Review
 - ◊ Faculty and town hall meetings (spring 2023)
 - ◊ Faculty and staff input (spring 2023)
 - ◊ College Alumni Advisory Council input (spring 2023)
- Finalized priorities (April 2023): [Values and Priorities](#)

The resulting foundational commitments and priorities guided substantial revision of the common college requirements from spring 2023 through fall 2023, and shaped college planning throughout AY 2024.

In spring 2024, the college established two task forces to address two major priority areas: teaching effectiveness/quality and workload policies.

A strategic planning task force was delayed due to the cybersecurity incident and the substantial workload of aligning more than 100 B.A. and B.S. programs and subplans to the new gen eds and college requirements.

An initial draft of strategic planning priorities was based closely on the ongoing priorities established by the college through the above process. Particular strategies were identified by the dean's office, CCOP, and department heads.

- Department head review and feedback: summer 2024
- Feedback from provost and university strategy officer: summer 2024
- CCOP review and feedback: August/September 2024
- Alumni Council and other stakeholder input: August/September 2024

Based on these discussions, a focused set of five priorities for future planning was developed. The dean shared these priorities with the college at the October 10 State of the College address. The Dean's Office updated strategies and outcome targets for these focused priorities and shared a draft plan for overall college review. Feedback on this plan was collected via the following steps:

- College review and feedback by survey: November 2024
- Open discussion at faculty meeting: November 21, 2024

The mission, vision, and plan were finalized in December 2024.

The plan was slightly modified in July 2025 to conform with university standards

ADDENDUM

STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR COLLEGES AND MAJOR UNITS

K-STATE STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES	RELATED GOAL(S) IN YOUR PLAN	2027 OUTCOME TARGETS	2030 OUTCOME TARGETS
IMPERATIVE 1: GROW ENROLLMENT TO 30,000 TOTAL LEARNERS	Innovate in academics and instruction	4,400 total fall HC 3,700 undergrad fall HC 200 non-credit-seeking learners	4,600 total fall HC 3,800 undergrad fall HC 500 non-credit-seeking learners
IMPERATIVE 2: IMPROVE RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES FOR ALL STUDENT POPULATIONS	Community of well-supported, successful faculty, staff and students	- FTT first-year retention increased 2% pts - FTF first-year retention increased 4% pts - Reduced gap between A&S and university 4- and 6-year graduation rates - Retention and graduation outcomes improved for all categories	- FTT first-year retention 85% - FTF first-year retention 90% - Reduced gap between A&S and university 4- and 6-year graduation rates by one-half - Retention and graduation outcomes improved for all categories
IMPERATIVE 3: PROVIDE EVERY DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENT WITH APPLIED LEARNING EXPERIENCES	Innovate in academics and instruction	All programs have applied learning opportunities built in	All degree-seeking students participate in an applied learning experience
IMPERATIVE 4: GROW RESEARCH EXPENDITURES TO \$300 MILLION ANNUALLY AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS AND AWARDS TO \$270 MILLION ANNUALLY	- Sustain both foundational and applied work in research, creative activity and engagement - Modern, adaptable, and multi-disciplinary infrastructure	- Sustained core research and creative activities - Increase in the number and amount of non-federal funding sources to support research and creative activity - All units have established overall unit non-fiscal metrics and targets for research and creative activity	- Increased expenditures for core research areas by 10% from 2027 - Further diversified and increased number of non-federal funding sources - Most units meet non-fiscal metric targets
IMPERATIVE 5: NIMBLY AND PROACTIVELY MEET THE NEEDS OF LEARNERS, EMPLOYERS AND SOCIETY	- Innovate in academics and instruction - Modern, adaptable and multi-disciplinary infrastructure	- Student outcome targets for all programs updated - Increase in micro- and stackable credentials	- Most programs meet student outcome targets - All degree programs have some AI or computer/digital literacy component
IMPERATIVE 6: BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AT ALL LEVELS OF K-STATE			
IMPERATIVE 7: BE A POSITIVE FORCE FOR THE KANSAS ECONOMY	Expand foundational and applied work in research, creative activity and engagement	Engagement recognized and incentivized in all dept documents	Engagement increased in teaching, research and services
IMPERATIVE 8: FOCUS ON OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND BEING ONE K-STATE IN ALL WE DO	- Transparent and agile resource management - Modern, adaptable, and multi-disciplinary infrastructure	- College budget neutrality - Increased collaborations with others across university, establishing groups such as a Biosciences Advisory Committee, incentivizing and rewarding interdisciplinary teaching, and hiring for university initiatives like Kansas Water Institute	- College maintains a reserve fund equal to 4% of operating budget - New interdisciplinary centers and plans for interdisciplinary buildings established
IMPERATIVE 9: BECOME AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE IN KANSAS AND HIGHER EDUCATION	Inclusive community of supported and successful faculty, staff and students	Decreased salary compression and eliminated inversion	Overall faculty and staff compensation comparable to peers
IMPERATIVE 10: GROW TOTAL, COMBINED FUNDRAISING TO \$2 BILLION BY 2030	Transparent and agile resource management	\$15M/year in fundraising	\$18M/year in fundraising 100% of units have Alumni Advisory Councils



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