



Executive Position Profile

Eldon Gideon Dean of the College of Agriculture 2025

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY®



Quick Facts

Founded in **1863**

Led by **President Richard Linton**

21,200+ students

4,550 full-time faculty and staff

250+ undergraduate academic programs

Fight Song: **Wildcat Victory**

Mascot: **Willie the Wildcat**

School Color: **Royal Purple**

Big 12 athletic conference

ABOUT KSU

Founded in 1863 as the nation's first operational land-grant university, Kansas State University has grown into a comprehensive research university with more than 21,200 students, 1,250 faculty and 3,300 staff members. It spans three physical campuses: the main campus in Manhattan; K-State Salina, home to aviation and technology programs; and K-State Olathe, which serves the industry and workforce needs of Greater Kansas City.

K-State has nine colleges, Graduate School and K-State Online and offers more than 400 degrees and options, from bachelor's to doctoral degrees. K-State Research and Extension also serves the citizenry with a presence in every county throughout Kansas and supports research in more than 20 K-State departments. K-State has an annual budget of more than \$900 million.

K-State is known for the passion and pride of its alumni. With more than 200,000 living graduates, the K-State Alumni Association ranks in the top 10 among Power Five conferences for the percentage of graduates who are members. Private giving to the university is around \$200 million per year, and the value of K-State's long-term investment pool is \$1 billion. The university and foundation recently completed a major fundraising campaign that raised \$1.6 billion.

The Princeton Review recognizes the university as one of the nation's best colleges. K-State also has been designated as an Innovation and Economic Prosperity University by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and is recognized as a Carnegie Community Engaged Institution. Commonly referred to as K-State, the university is proud of its welcoming environment.

A man with a white beard, wearing a blue baseball cap and a blue t-shirt with a "NATIONAL COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE KANSAS STATE" logo, is kneeling in a field. He is looking down at a soil profile that has been dug into the ground. The soil profile shows distinct layers of soil. In the background, there is a green field with a fence line and a clear sky.

ABOUT K-STATE AGRICULTURE

We're proud to be recognized as one of the nation's top agricultural schools. It's not something we seek out. It's an outgrowth of our dedication to advancing the science of agriculture and the art of teaching. Our faculty truly care about students, colleagues and the world we serve. Every day, we put our hands and minds together to work on better ways to achieve sustainability, feed billions, build agribusinesses and improve lives with thoughtful, well-researched use of plants, animals, numbers and words.

Mission

The mission of the College of Agriculture is to advance agriculture; protect natural resources; increase economic activity; and improve the lives and livelihoods of all Kansans through education, research and outreach.

Core Values

The College of Agriculture is guided by the following core organizational values:

- INTEGRITY to develop and deliver credible information.
- COMMUNICATION to provide common understanding.
- SCHOLARSHIP to foster lifelong learning.

By the Numbers

- 1863: K-State opened as the country's first operational land-grant university.
- 2,750+: College of Ag undergraduate and graduate student enrollment
- \$88 million: College's average annual research expenditure
- Nine academic departments offering 16 undergraduate majors, 16 minors and graduate programs in 11 fields



ABOUT THE ROLE

Kansas State University seeks a dynamic and experienced leader to advance the missions of the College of Agriculture by serving as the next Eldon Gideon Dean. The successful candidate must have the experience and vision to inspire, guide, and facilitate the College's faculty and staff in the advancement of high-quality teaching, research, engagement, and extension while providing leadership that assures the integrity, excellence, relevance, and success of the College's multi-faceted programs. The Dean reports directly to the Provost and Executive Vice President, [Jesse Perez Mendez](#), and serves as a member of the Academic Leadership Council and Deans Council.

This position is ideal for a cutting edge, learner-centric leader with a proven history of successful growth initiatives, strong partnership and collaboration skills, strategic vision, and results-focused leadership. The next Dean is expected to grow the College's excellence in teaching, research, extension, and engagement; promote a team-oriented leadership approach; drive further development and growth in enrollment, disciplines, and degrees; and cultivate internal and external partnerships to advance the College's [Next Gen K-State Strategic Plan](#).

As an institutional leader, the Dean will be highly involved in developing University-wide strategies for increasing interdisciplinary research, building external partnerships, and promoting outreach efforts that engage the University in responding to statewide, national, and international issues.

Unique opportunities for the new Dean include:

- utilizing the new Agricultural Innovation Initiative, a \$220 million construction project scheduled to be completed by fall of 2026, which includes the construction of three new buildings: the Agronomy Research and Innovation Center, the Global Center for Grain and Food Innovation, and the Bilbrey Family Event Center;
- partnering with the University's Executive Vice President for External Engagement and Chief of Staff, [Marshall Stewart](#), in enhancing an environment that promotes community-engaged scholarship and delivers innovative and relevant education through extension to the residents in the state's 105 counties;

- building on and expanding partnerships with community colleges and other 4-year institutions to expand agricultural education;
- expanding and strengthening existing partnerships between the Manhattan and Olathe campuses in urban food systems and the Food as Medicine initiative;
- leveraging K-State's new research foundation infrastructure and architecture to expand university-industry collaborations, partnerships and licensing.

Responsibilities and Core Duties

The Dean will serve as the chief academic and administrative officer of the College of Agriculture and the Agricultural Experiment Station, providing leadership, strategic vision and direction, and support. Specific responsibilities include:

- leading all academic programs in the College;
- promoting high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and non-credit experiences;
- supporting effective academic advising and mentoring;
- building continued excellence and growth in research, extension, and engagement programs serving the state, nation, and world;
- being actively involved in the recruitment and retention of high caliber learners, faculty, and staff to the college, as well as promoting a welcoming environment;
- working productively with learners, faculty, staff, department heads, deans, administrators, and the broader community on interdisciplinary and collaborative initiatives;
- providing strategic leadership for advancing the College's strategic plan with the University's vision to become a Next-Generation Land-Grant University;
- leading fundraising efforts on behalf of the College with a high degree of personal involvement;
- strengthening strategic relationships and engagement with the community stakeholders, alumni, legislators, industry, and benefactors across the state and beyond, working closely with constituents on issues related to the enhancement of the College and the University.

Educational Requirements

- An earned doctorate in one of the disciplines represented in the College, or in a closely related field.

Required Competencies/Qualifications

- A strong record of distinguished academic achievement in teaching, research, and/or extension which merits appointment as a tenured, full professor in one of the College's departments, with evidence of professional distinction and national or international recognition in their field.
- Demonstrated success as an innovative and strategic leader with the ability to plan, coordinate, articulate, and execute a strategic vision and initiatives while engaging others.
- Demonstrated success as a strategic and creative planner and as a relationship builder with exceptional collaboration, communication, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills.

- A proven record as a successful administrator in higher education, with responsibility for guiding strategy, managing finances, evaluating personnel, motivating faculty and staff, acquiring and allocating resources, engaging external constituencies, and fostering teamwork to create collaborative relationships across varying groups.
- Demonstrated success in fund development and external fundraising.
- A demonstrated understanding of and commitment to all aspects of the land-grant mission, including teaching, research, extension, and engagement.
- A recognition and appreciation for educational access and opportunities in a positive working environment.

Preferred Competencies/Qualifications

- A proven ability to develop and implement successful interdisciplinary and/or international programs.
- A proven ability to initiate, lead, and facilitate transformational change and innovation initiatives, be adaptable with changing conditions, and comfortable with the ambiguity that accompanies a large public university.
- Firm grasp of the opportunities and advantages of a land-grant university with R1 status
- A history of building, enhancing, and sustaining partnerships across a university, local communities, state, region, and nation.
- Understanding of and commitment to shared governance to achieve college and university-wide goals.





Why K-State?

At K-State, passion drives our purpose. Our faculty and staff are deeply committed to the meaningful impact of their work, collectively shaping the future of our next-generation land-grant university. Every employee plays a vital role in advancing our mission, touching the lives of Kansans and communities worldwide. Through our research, teaching, and service, we strive to create positive change and realize K-State's vision of becoming a leading land-grant institution.

Next-Gen K-State Strategic Plan

In September 2023, K-State launched its [Next-Gen K-State Strategic Plan](#), which charts our path forward, driven by ambitious goals and a deep connection to our mission and vision. The plan was supported by a strategic planning process that engaged more than 10,000 members of the K-State community — students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends and community members all lent their voices to the planning effort.

Guided by the greater good.

Through the Next-Gen K-State strategic planning process, the university community identified six core values that orient our thinking, inspire us to be the best versions of ourselves and serve as our guideposts as we make the decisions that drive us forward. As we live these values together, we collectively express our unity as One K-State in all that we do.

Connection. We are stronger together — cultivating trust and building relationships to connect our K-State community with our state, nation and world.

Courage. We lead with bold conviction — rising to the moment, even when the course is uncharted, to deliver the greatest good for areas of greatest need.

Impact. We listen, adapt and challenge the status quo — leading change through learning and discovery that transforms lives and creates shared prosperity for all.

Learner-Focused. We welcome all who seek to learn and grow — providing an accessible, inclusive and exceptional experience that helps them achieve their potential.

People-Centered. We are everything because of our people — supporting, valuing and inspiring our entire K-State community and championing a culture of belonging for all.

Stewardship. We are committed to our future — using our resources responsibly to leave a positive, lasting legacy.

University and student achievements.

- Innovation and Economic Prosperity University designation, *Association of Public and Land-grant Universities*.
- Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, *Carnegie Foundation*.
- 96% of graduates are employed or furthering their education.
- 85.5% sustained freshman-to-sophomore retention rate.
- 15 times in the last 19 years, K-State's Black Student Union named Big 12's most outstanding Black student government council.
- 21% of students are first-generation.
- 500+ student clubs and organizations.
- \$91M in scholarships and awards in 2023-24.

Athletics

As a founding member of the Big 12, K-State competes in the Football Bowl Subdivision of NCAA Division I. The university has garnered 18 Big 12 championships, including a 2022 title in football, and is coming off a memorable Elite Eight run in men's basketball in 2023. K-State Athletics has maintained national acclaim as one of the NCAA's most financially solvent programs and remains one of just a few dozen universities nationwide, and the only institution in Kansas, to operate without use of state tax or university tuition dollars. Wildcat student-athletes continue to shine in the classroom as all programs exceeded benchmarks for the eight straight years in the latest NCAA APR rankings while also ranking among the best in the Big 12 in graduation rates.





Principles of Community

Kansas State University is a land-grant, public research University committed to teaching and learning, research, and service to the people of Kansas, the nation, and the world. We believe our collective mission is best accomplished when every member of the University community acknowledges and practices the following principles:

- **We** affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain an atmosphere of justice based on respect for each other.
- **We** affirm the value of human diversity and inclusion for community. We stand united against all forms of discrimination.
- **We** affirm the right of each person to freely express thoughts and opinions in a spirit of civility and decency. We believe that diversity of views enriches our learning environment, and we promote open expression within a climate of courtesy, sensitivity, and mutual respect. For more information, please see the University's [Statement on Free Speech and Expression](#) and the University's [Statement on Academic Freedom](#).
- **We** affirm the value of honesty and integrity and will act accordingly in all professional endeavors and expect the same from our colleagues.
- **We** acknowledge that we are a part of multiple communities, and we have a responsibility to be engaged in a positive way with our civic partners.
- **We** recognize our individual responsibilities to the University community and to the principles that sustain it. We will each strive to contribute to a positive spirit that affirms learning and growth for all members of the community.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Situated in the heart of northeast Kansas' scenic Flint Hills, Manhattan's 55,000 citizens enjoy a dynamic region with shopping, dining, entertainment and nightlife. Manhattan is also conveniently located for quick access to major urban centers. In addition to being less than two hours from Kansas City, the Manhattan Regional Airport offers multiple jet flights daily to Dallas-Fort Worth and Chicago.

Additionally, the city of Manhattan has been a valuable partner to Kansas State University in facilitating growth of the institution. That's why the Princeton Review routinely recognizes Manhattan and Kansas State in the Top 5 community Town & Gown Relations. Manhattan has also been ranked No. 2 Best Place to Live in America by Livability.com. Manhattan is affectionately known as the "Little Apple," a nod to its East Coast namesake, but has a vibrant culture all its own.

A sampling of what residents look forward to year-round:

- A cost-of-living index of 89% of the U.S. average, according to the Council for Community and Economic Research.
- Shopping, dining and socializing in Aggieville, a local entertainment district with a fun, energetic vibe.
- A vibrant, revitalized downtown area with fine dining options and local boutiques.
- Recreation opportunities at the Konza Prairie, Tuttle Creek Lake and State Park, Linear Trail and more.
- A vibrant health care community, including a 150-bed acute care facility and an independent state-of-the-art surgical center.
- The university's McCain Performance Series, which hosts acclaimed Broadway musicals, comedians, musicians and other entertainers.
- Exciting Big 12 athletic events from a Power 5 conference.
- Colbert Hills Golf Course, ranked as the top public golf course in Kansas.
- Excellent K-12 education. The local high school ranks among the top 5 percent of U.S. high schools, and the district is home to several Kansas Master Teachers.





APPLICATION PROCESS

Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Review of applications will continue until the position is filled. For fullest consideration, application materials should be received no later than November 24, 2025. Candidates should provide a letter of application describing their interest and qualifications for the position, current vita, a one-page leadership statement, and five references. References will not be contacted without permission. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Nominations and application materials should be sent electronically via email to Martin Baker and Chelsie Whitelock of Buffkin / Baker at ksudeanofag@buffkinbaker.com.