

Executive Summary

As the first public land-grant institution, K-State is a member of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU). The Commission on Innovation, Competitiveness, and Economic Prosperity (CICEP) created the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Designation and Awards program to recognize universities that are leaders in spurring and promoting regional economic development.

With the recent changes in leadership at K-State and a commitment to becoming a top 50 public research institution as part of our [2010 strategic plan](#), the opportunity to embark on this self-study to leverage our many unique assets to improve our university was timely. Senior leadership at K-State along with local and regional leaders in the community endorse and support this initiative because innovation and economic prosperity are tenets of our institutional strategic plan; they complement the talents and strengths at our IEP designated peer, the University of Kansas; and they resonate with the people of the state of Kansas.

President Myers and Dr. Peter Dorhout, Vice President for Research submitted K-State's letter of intent to participate in the 2017 Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Designation Program. As a participating institution, K-State conducted a rigorous self-study to identify three areas of accomplishments/strengths in economic engagement and three areas of improvement for a growth plan. The areas of accomplishments/strengths and improvements were identified through surveys, focus groups, and interviews with internal and external stakeholders. In addition, the process included cataloging programs, centers, institutes, and academic programs that impact economic development.

Designation as an Innovation and Economic Prosperity Institution will allow K-State to join only 60 institutions across the country who have this designation and will serve as a valuable process and step towards achieving our goal to be a Top 50 Public Research Institution. The Innovation and Economic Prosperity Steering Committee defined economic engagement as proactively involving stakeholders to create mutually beneficial partnerships that contribute to prosperity and advance society by realizing individual, industry, community, and regional human potential through our education, research, outreach, and service missions.

Economic engagement is an established priority for the university as evidenced by its designation as a major theme (Theme 4) in the K-State Strategic Plan: Vision 2025. Moreover, engagement is vital to achieving our goal to be recognized as a top 50 public research university by 2025. The IEP Designation process provided a means by which to quantify the multitude of ways K-State focuses on engagement, extension, outreach and service while identifying areas of improvement to ensure K-State remains an economic driver.

A steering committee with broad representation convened monthly to drive the process. Committee members reviewed the APLU survey tools and adjusted survey questions to align with language and terminology that was familiar to our stakeholders, analyzed survey and open forum data to identify accomplishments/strengths and areas of improvement in regards to economic engagement, and assisted with prioritizing the centers, institutes, and programs to be highlighted in the submission.

Stakeholders were identified and characterized as either internal (K-State employees or affiliates) or external (those without direct ties to the university, including alumni). Internal stakeholders were identified from nearly 300 centers and other units who have a connection to innovation or engagement. External stakeholder lists comprised people who had interacted with the university at one or more events, were customers of services, or were from local government or other organizations in or around Kansas.

Based on the survey results and the input received at the open forums, the committee consolidated the responses into themes that comprise our core areas of strength, align with the tenets of the land-grant mission, and resonate with the university strategic plan: Vision 2025. Those themes of *strength/accomplishment* are: local engagement, partnerships, and commitment to the land-grant mission. Both internal and external stakeholders indicated significant consonance regarding where K-State can focus its efforts to *grow and improve*: creating a culture of engagement, communicating a clear point of engagement and being more responsive to external constituents, and connecting teaching and research to 21st-century needs. These themes prevailed throughout the survey comments and during the open forum discussions.

The Innovation and Economic Prosperity self-study was one of discovery and enlightenment. Bringing diverse groups of stakeholders together in one room to discuss where we can improve can be a humbling and empowering experience. Our discovery process revealed that our stakeholders want K-State to be successful so that they can be successful. Their suggestions for improvement did not reveal many new challenges but did help us understand what a five-year plan could reveal when stakeholders are asked these same questions in 2022.