



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY



MSW program meets needs of students, communities

Fewer than 5 percent of all clinical social workers in Kansas live in the western half of the state, and the latest initiative by the university to serve rural Kansas seeks to meet this need. The new graduate social work program, leading to the Master of Social Work (MSW) degree, serves students where they live.

Dr. Tim Davis, chair of the Department of Social Work, said FHSU's MSW takes advantage of the flexibility and accessibility of online education while maintaining a strong emphasis on clinical training. Three aspects of FHSU's program are innovations designed to create opportunity in rural areas:

- Hands-on clinical skills training will be provided near where students live, thanks to creative use of video conferencing technology, intensive, face-to-face clinical training, and partnerships with agency field instructors.
- In addition to the standard requirement of 16 to 24 hours a week of clinical training, students will complete several short clinical rotations at health clinics, mental health clinics or other clinical sites.
- After graduation, the department will help alumni find the clinical supervision necessary for the two-and-a-half to three-year residency required to gain licensure as independent clinical social workers.

"This is particularly important for western Kansas," said Davis. "There is an acute, unmet need for social workers across Kansas, and particularly in the FHSU service area."

Military outreach initiative to expand offerings to include officer training

Fort Hays State University's first-in-the-nation Associate of Applied Science degree in technology and leadership launched in the spring of 2019. The program is a way for military service members and veterans who do not hold a college degree to earn education credentials that will help them advance in their military and civilian careers.

Under the degree plan designed by FHSU's new director of military program innovation, Dr. Seth Kastle, a combat veteran and an assistant professor of leadership studies, students can earn credit for rigorous military leadership training and experiences already completed.

For students who enter the program with the 36 maximum possible credit hours, it is possible to complete the AAS program in one year, a bachelor of science degree in two years, and a master's degree in one more year – that's three credentials in four years.

Kastle is working closely with Kansas Army National Guard leadership on the course of study for an innovative approach to military officer training. The program blends the post-college officer candidate school model and the ROTC model, which integrates military education and training with the undergraduate college experience.

The new model will allow the Guard to expand career opportunities in its officer corps to enlisted service members.



Meet Darby Hirsch: FHSU nursing student. Honors College scholar. Academic All-American.

Google Fort Hays State University’s Darby Hirsch, and you will find the words Academic All-American near the top of the results. While this is a sterling achievement that any collegiate athlete would be proud of, Darby’s path was decidedly more challenging than most.

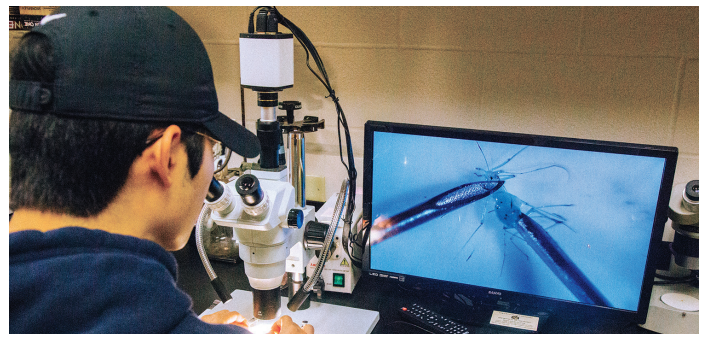
The remarkable Topeka senior is living proof that it’s possible to excel in the classroom, complete a rigorous academic and community-service focused Honors College program, and maintain a 4.0 GPA as a nursing student.

The youngest of five siblings, the former all-state soccer star from Washburn Rural High School chose Fort Hays State University, where Coach Blake Reynolds supported Darby’s desire to pursue her four passions – soccer, scholarship, service and nursing.

Awaiting Darby at FHSU would be four years of weightlifting sessions that began well before dawn, classes, labs and clinical experiences that consumed her daylight hours, team practices that lasted long after dark, and late nights of intensive study.

Never one to shy away from challenge, Hirsch’s post-graduation plan later this spring is to return to eastern Kansas and begin her professional life as an operating room nurse.

On campus and online, approximately 600 students are currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Fort Hays State University. More than 470 of these students are Kansans.

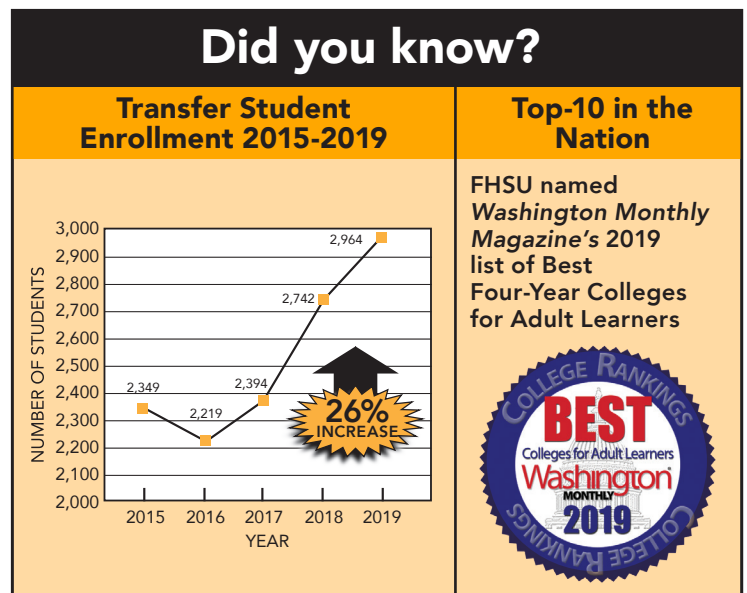


Pest control research on display during Research Day at the capitol

Two graduate students at Fort Hays State University are using genetic research to take aim at an agricultural pest that causes billions of dollars in crop damage each year – the pea aphid, which attacks alfalfa and similar crops.

Paul Hess, Dallas, Texas, and Spencer McCue, Hays, are both biology majors. A poster of their work will be on display at the Capitol in Topeka on Feb. 26, at the 17th annual Capitol Graduate Research Summit.

Their work seeks a non-pesticidal way to control the aphid. Hess and McCue want to use RNA molecules to alter how the aphid’s cells process protein. The goals are to decrease the life span and survivability of the aphid and reduce its reproductive capability. Their work has the potential to benefit Kansans in medical research, food safety and agriculture.



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

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