



# FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY



## FHSU announces partnership with the Community College of the Air Force

The university that delivers the best value in online education anywhere is expanding to meet the educational needs of career-minded airmen serving in the United States Air Force. Fort Hays State University is now a partnering school in the Community College of the Air Force's General Education Mobile (GEM) program initiative. The USAF established the GEM program to help service members earn an associate in applied science degree and advance in their military career or civilian life.

The current average graduation time for CCAF students is eight years because general education courses are usually the last taken. By partnering with institutions like FHSU, with the ability to deliver high-quality, flexible online courses, the CCAF expects to reduce the average graduation time to less than four years.

In an expansion of FHSU's ongoing commitment to military service members, veterans and their families, this new partnership provides Airmen access to a high-quality online education while keeping their costs under the annual Tuition Assistance (TA) cap. Keeping our tuition low allows service members to only use TA and save their GI Bill benefit to pursue a higher level degree later or pass the benefit along to their dependents.

## Limited broadband in rural Kansas moves FHSU to expand campus access

Kansas ranks 28th in the nation for broadband access, and according to Federal Communications Commission data, more than 95,000 Kansans – or around 3.5 percent of the population – have no access to the internet.

The onset of the global pandemic forced nearly all teaching and learning in the nation to move online. In FHSU's service area in rural Kansas, where broadband internet access is often very limited, this abrupt transition proved especially challenging.

Recognizing the scope of the problem in its service area, Fort Hays State University secured CARES Act funding to significantly expand broadband access to cover the areas around all campus academic and administrative buildings. This expansion of broadband access allows students and faculty who may not enjoy ready access to broadband connectivity at home or off campus to study, teach, learn and collaborate on campus in locations where they could still adhere to necessary social distancing standards.

FHSU's broadband expansion is built around the implementation of WiFi 6 technologies that are faster and more efficient and can handle more devices simultaneously than ever before. The new system also provides a seamless transition from indoor to quality outdoor WiFi connection without dropping any calls or live videos.

## FHSU Online ranked among the best in the nation

In a report released last month, U.S. News & World Report recognized Fort Hays State University as among the best in the nation in six different online education categories. Fort Hays State's online programs were among more than 1,200 programs reviewed by U.S. News.

Heading that list in 2021 was FHSU's master's in education programs for veterans, which was ranked in the top 20 – 19th among the top 30 schools ranked. The latest U.S. News rankings also recognized Fort Hays State for its bachelor's programs for veterans.

FHSU's master's in nursing program tied for 27th among 88 programs. Three other programs also were mentioned among the nation's best: master's in education programs, bachelor's programs and MBA programs.



## FHSU online nursing students post 100 percent pass rate on national certification exam

An online program in Fort Hays State University's Department of Nursing – Bachelor of Science in Nursing to Doctorate of Nursing

Practice (BSN to DNP) – was a huge success in its inaugural year in 2019-20, thanks in part to grants from the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) and the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA).

In its report released in January, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners officially confirmed that FHSU's class received a 100 percent pass rate on its national certification examination. All 12 graduates passed the exam on their first try.

At the time of their graduation, or shortly thereafter, all 12 of the advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) had secured employment in medical facilities all across the state, in a wide variety of healthcare services: family practice, public health, cardiology, rheumatology and psychiatry.

Contributing to that perfect pass rate were several measures implemented by the nursing department and its staff before the program even started. KBOR and HRSA grants helped fund the procurement of new equipment and the addition of extra classes – some specifically geared to help students prepare for the certification exam.



### Erika Essman

*Current FHSU Online Student*

FHSU Online student, Erika Essman, serves as a staff sergeant with the Kansas Air National Guard in Topeka. Her work ranges from overseeing military transportation operations to supporting our nation's most important land and space-based strategic defense systems.



**FORT HAYS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

*Forward thinking. World ready.*

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